Initiatives For Women In Need (IWiN) Newsletter

April 2016, Issue No 5

Gender Inequality is not a woman’s issue, it is a human issue. It affects us all.

In this Issue

- Welcome from the Chair
- Recent IWiN Activities
- Gender Inequality: some facts
- Local Arts: Artist- Mrs Naela Chohan
- Book/Movie Reviews: The Diviners (Book), Aladdin (Movie)
- Gender Inequality Statistics: Australia
- The Cartoon Page: Gender Inequality
- IWiN’s NGO Partners
Welcome from the Chair

Welcome to this issue of IWiN newsletter.

The year 2016 has started with a very positive note for IWiN. Together with the ACT community, IWiN has embarked into a journey of raising awareness and voice against gender inequality that still persists in the Australian society and across the globe.

Gender inequality, which refers to the unequal and unfair treatment to women with a perception that they are inferior to men, is also an important driver of family violence. This is an issue that works against most women at work or at home, irrespective of their social or economic status. As IWiN's mission is to empower disadvantaged women, IWiN finds that the issue of gender inequality needs to be addressed seriously as it poses a big stumble block to the empowerment of today's women.

Therefore, IWiN Committee has decided to focus on the gender inequality issues in 2016 through various community awareness events and policy advocacy actions. IWiN's first event of the year, International Women's Day (IWD) 2016, was celebrated at the iconic National Library of Australia with a forum on this very issue, where five eminent women leaders shared their views and experience on gender inequality. The forum is discussed in detail in the 'Recent IWiN Event' section. I acknowledge here the support IWiN received from the National Library and its Bookplate Café through their generous sponsorships, which made IWiN's IWD event possible and a big success.

Moving forward, IWiN is planning on a half-day interactive workshop to discuss the nexus between gender inequality and domestic violence, in association with other organisations including academic institutes. Please keep an eye on your emails for further details including date, time, venue and speakers. We also intend to hold a range of IWiN events throughout the second half of 2016. So, please stay tuned.

This year, Mother's Day was celebrated on the 8th of May all over the world. On behalf of IWiN, I wish all our readers and patrons a very Happy Mother's Day 2016. I strongly believe that today's mothers have the unique power to reduce the gender inequality and family violence significantly by teaching their sons about respecting women from an early age; while teaching their daughters not to accept any form of gender based maltreatment and/or domestic violence. 'Being respectful to women' is an essential lesson for all young boys as it is observed that 'all violence against women begins with disrespecting women' (PM Turnbull, 24 Sept 2015). I urge you all to start educating your young sons about respecting their mothers, sisters and other women.

We are constantly trying to improve the content and narratives of our IWiN newsletter. In this issue, we are introducing two new columns – a cartoon page on the theme of the newsletter and a page on local arts and artists. Hope you would enjoy reading these new columns.

I encourage you all to visit IWiN's website (www.iwinact.org) and contact us if you have any concerns or just want to get involved or simply wish to DONATE to help our partner NGOs providing free education to poor and street children in India. If you want to share your story and experience with our newsletter readers, please send to: contact@iwinact.org OR h_madhumita@hotmail.com

With best wishes,

Madhumita
**IWiN Event:**

**IWD 2016**

International Women's Day (IWD) is celebrated across the globe on the 8th of March every year. And IWD is a very special day for IWiN as women empowerment is the mission of the organisation. We all at IWiN feel very proud to be working for women who play so many roles simultaneously - an individual, a friend, a sister, a daughter, a spouse and a mother.

IWiN celebrated IWD 2016 on Sunday 6 March at the iconic National Library of Australia with a session on "Gender Inequality" where five very successful and respected women leaders shared their works, experiences and thoughts with the audience.

Ms Gai Brodtmann was the first speaker of the event being the patron of IWiN, followed by the Pakistan High Commissioner to Australia, Her Excellency Mrs Naela Chohan.

While Ms Brodtmann focussed on the nexus between domestic violence and gender inequality, Mrs Chohan emphasised on the impacts of gender inequality through her series of powerful paintings, particularly for the women coming from a south Asian ancestry.

Mrs Giulia Jones MLA spoke on fighting against gender bias at work with the example of her own fight for breastfeeding mothers at the ACT Parliament (during the seating time).

The event was well attended by the ACT community leaders and an interested audience including a good number of youths. Thanks to everyone for attending the IWD event to make it a big success.

---

**Rashid and Dr Evelyne Miere on the occasion of IWD.**

**Prof Tahmina Rashid delivering her speech**

In her fiery speech, Prof Tahmina Rashid (from the University of Canberra) pointed out the high incidence of domestic violence experienced within the South Asian migrant community and how gender inequality has contributed to that.

**Prof Tahmina Rashid delivering her speech**

**IWiN Patron Gai Brodtmann speaking**

**IWiN members with the speakers**

**H E Mrs Naela Chohan speaking**

**The last speaker was Dr Evelyne Miere, who talked about the nature of gender inequality in the western society including the Australian one.**

---

**IWiN cake was baked by Sandra Javanovic**

**Thanks to everyone for attending the IWD event to make it a big success.**
**Let’s meet our local Artist:**

**H E Mrs NAELA CHOHAN**

IWiN Chair Dr Madhumita Iyengar attended the exhibition to support the cause.

**Artist Mrs Naela Chohan**

Mrs Naela Chohan is a strong advocate of Women's Rights through the medium of visual arts, and exhibitions of her art have taken place on four continents. Her most notable work is *Souffrance*, which has been kept on permanent display at the UNESCO headquarters in Paris since 2002. Her work *Enlightenment*(1999) is on permanent display at the Museum of Islamic Heritage, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Other major displays and exhibitions of her work took place in Paris(2002), Buenos Aires (2011), and in Ottawa(2008),Canada.

This page has included her two brilliant paintings on oppressed women, ‘ignorance’ and ‘silent screams’.

---

On the 13th of May 2016, Canberra hosted an exhibition of vibrant paintings, ‘Arise Woman’ by Her Excellency Mrs Naela Chohan, Pakistani High Commissioner to Australia. It was an emotional plea against domestic violence in support of Mrs. Rosie Batty’s (the 2015 Australian of the Year) ongoing fights against this social evil. Mrs Chohan’s powerful painting “Betrayal Of Love”, where an woman was portrayed as confined (in a sitting position) within the four walls of her home, was unveiled at the exhibition and auctioned to raise fund for the Luke Batty Foundation.

Mrs Chohan with Rosie Batty, Dr Iyengar, Dr Miere and Ambassador Nineta Barbulescu at the unveiling of the painting “Betrayal of Love”

It was truly an exhibition of 'arts from heart' – beautiful paintings of Mrs Chohan reflecting her deep feelings for those women who silently suffer from abuse, recluse and injustice for just ‘being women’.

---

**Betrayal of love**

Silent Screams

Ignorance
Gender Inequality: some facts

Ms Shubhra Roy, Secretary, IWiN

Gender inequality refers to unequal treatment or perceptions of individuals based on their gender. It arises from differences in socially constructed gender roles.

One of the important visible indicators of gender inequality is the pay-gap between men and women employees at work. Irrespective of the level of economic development, across the globe women continue to earn less than men, are less likely to advance their careers as far as men, and are more likely to spend their final years in poverty. At the same time, men find it more difficult to access flexible working arrangements than women. According to a report by the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA 2014), "the average Australian woman has to work an extra 66 days a year to earn the same pay as the average man" (note 3, p 4, Gender Pay Gap Statistics 2014).

International gender inequality statistics

Though Australia has made significant progress in reducing gender inequality in recent decades, it is important to consider Australia’s position within a global context (Chart 1).

Of the 22 countries listed by the OECD (2013/2014):

- There is a gender pay gap favouring men in every country.
- Only five countries have gender pay gaps below 10%: Denmark; Norway; Belgium; New Zealand; and Hungary.
- Three countries have gender pay gaps that exceed 20%: Korea; Japan; and Finland.
- Australia ranks 16th, with a gender pay gap of 18.0% (based on 2014 results; Figure 1).

- Note that the current national gender pay gap for Australia is 17.3% (November 2015), while the Australian data from Workplace Gender Equality Agency’s (WGEA) gender pay gap for non-public sector employers with 100 or more staff is 24.0% (WGEA 2015).

Professional Gender Inequality in Australia

Like most countries, the representation of women at workplace declines steadily with seniority showing less women in decision-making and leadership roles.
The WGEA 2015 report shows that in Australian workplaces:

- the most senior levels of management are heavily male-dominated
- the Australian data for 2014-15 reveals that women make up only 40% of ‘other managers’ – the lowest level of management – but just 15.4% of CEOs or Heads of Business in Australia.

Why do we need Gender Equality

Research suggests that organisations that respect and value the diversity brought by both women and men are better able to attract and retain high performers and improve operational performance. It is not, however, simply about having token women (or men). While diversity is fundamental, gender equality is paramount. Gender equality is achieved when people are able to access and enjoy the same rewards, resources and opportunities regardless of whether they are a woman or a man. The aim is to achieve broadly equal outcomes for women and men, not exactly the same outcome for all individuals. It is argued that fostering a workforce that promotes gender equality can help any organisation to:

- Attract the best employees
- Reduce cost of staff turnover
- Enhance organisational performance
- Improve access to target markets
- Minimise legal risks
- Enhance reputation
- Engage men

Read more here -

Gender workplace statistics at a glance (WGEA 2015) -
The Diviners is set in 1926 America and features a diverse range of characters.

The basic plot is that Evie is sent to stay with her uncle Will at his museum of supernatural artefacts. When people start getting murdered, Will is brought on to investigate the string of what appear to be occult murders and Evie gets pulled in along with others. Through the murders, the characters and their stories are slowly revealed.

To start with, there's our main character Evangeline “Evie” O’Neill who has been sent to New York to escape the shame of a party gone wrong. At the said party, Evie exposed the town’s golden boy for the lying scum he was – he made a maid pregnant and then denied it, threatening Evie when she used her gift and accidentally chanced upon the knowledge. The fact that Evie has to leave for telling the truth while the boy got to ask for a public apology was despicable, even more so when it’s just as applicable today. How many times are girls forced to say sorry for things that aren’t their fault? And how many times are they expected to say sorry?

Evie herself mentions that she hates her small town Zenith and is glad to be going to New York because at least she can escape that small town mentality. She says that the people call her “too much” but that “it’s not a compliment”. She delves deeper into this idea – “If I am too much, how come I am never enough?” It’s a problem that women face – everything they do is criticised, we’re never enough but somehow always too much. And this same theme comes around again, with Evie’s friend Theta. Theta is a “Ziegfeld” girl – a model. In fact, women only aspire to one thing it seems – the glamour of starlets or models.

In this story, women are only seen as objects to admire, nothing more. They don’t attend university and even the women who attend Evie’s uncle’s lectures do so as part of off-campus groups. Evie attends a university and talks about how she’s the only girl on campus. In fact, the world-building itself is very subtle. While realistic, we learn about sexism and racism through off-hand comments or discussions among characters.

Even as a Ziegfeld girl idolised for nothing but her looks with petty people constantly mocking her however, Theta is in a better position than before. As it turns out, her parents left her and her foster mother kept putting her in show after show at the age of 4, hitting Theta (then called Betty) with a hairbrush while telling her “not to...
screw this up”. She eloped with her boyfriend but he slowly became obsessed with her and started acting more abusive, locking her in the bathroom, beating her up, etc. She starts trying to be a good wife but “every little thing seemed to set Roy off” and “Nights were the worst”. It’s implied that he raped her multiple times and that she had no way out – no family willing to take her and no money so she instead tried to appease him (“her mind whirled with preparations”) to no avail.

While Theta’s case is a horrific case of domestic violence, instances of sexism are peppered throughout the book – from old men trying to flirt with them at a club to the objectification, lack of women in university (or anywhere for that matter), sexism is rife.

Since Theta’s love interest is a black man, there are also multiple references to segregation, lynching, discrimination and general prejudice (especially when they include the religious element...) .

Speaking of the religious element, the murders being committed are human sacrifices following a pattern set out in a cult “Bible” and the cult in question is pretty much all about white male supremacy – read it and you’ll see what I mean.

The Diviners was a fantastic book – with diverse and powerful characters and a plotline that gripped me from the start to the end (no really, I considered sneaking out to read it during the night because I needed more), the addition of social commentary made the book even better than it already was.

So I highly recommend this book if you want to read about ghastly murders, cyborgs, psychics and activists set in the 1920s with strong friendships, great dialogue and commentary on everything from religion and the nature of evil to “cloche hats are the elephant’s eyebrows”. Ok that was a pastiche of quotes but really, that compliment beats all of them (though I don’t recall elephants having eyebrows...).
Movie Review: Manaswini IYENGAR

Release: November 25, 1992 (USA)
Directors: Ron Clements, John Musker
Running time: 1h 31m
Film series: Walt Disney Animated Classics

Everyone knows the story of Aladdin – unless you’re living under a rock. But sometimes you just need a re-watch and conveniently, your sister is watching it for her project about sexism in Disney.

So Aladdin is about a boy named Aladdin who finds a magic lamp and gets a Genie to grant him three wishes. He’s in love with the Princess and must fight an evil sorcerer before getting his happy ending, aided by a magic carpet and his best friend a monkey. You know the basics.

While I agree that Jasmine is a strong and powerful princess in her own right, I’d like to point out a glaringly obvious fact. She is the only woman featured in the story. There are literally no other women besides the dancer girls and prostitutes. Jasmine herself is clothed in some weird historically inaccurate outfit that the animators probably just thought was sexy (seriously, why are all Arabian outfits a combination of crop tops and harem pants??). How do you expect a movie to be feminist with ONE woman in it, surrounded by men who treat her like an object?

Her father treats her like a delicate porcelain doll, Jafar considers her a means to an end and her suitors all think of her as a trophy wife. Aladdin is the one man who actually pays attention to her. As a prince, however, he is expected to “win her” which Jasmine appropriately responds to with: “Look at all of you, standing around – I am not a prize to be won!”

It’s interesting to note how often the language surrounding women is about their value – as if we’re simply accessories that you can stick a price on or win at a showgrounds.

Aladdin eventually manages to convince Jasmine he’s genuinely in love with and cares about her – by being himself. They make an amazing couple and Jasmine’s ability to choose him and her general agency pleases me. However while I enjoy and appreciate the story, I don’t get why there are no other women in the movie. In the line-up, she’s one of the few Princesses who isn’t actually the titular character. That’s a bit suspicious...

But despite that one misgiving (I have this misgiving with all media because holy smokes, female characters are profitable and not just when they’re white and gorgeous so there really need to be more of them) Aladdin is my favourite Disney film.

In fact, come talk to me one day and we can discuss Aladdin fan casts and remakes 😊
Gender Inequality Statistics: Australia

The latest findings of the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC 2014) reveal that gender inequality is still a serious concern in Australia, in spite of progressing well on bringing equality between men and women during the past decades. The infographics below snapshots the reality.

- **The average full-time weekly wage for a woman is 18.2% less than a man’s.**
- **In 2009-2010, average superannuation payouts for women were just over half (57%) those of men.**
- **$198,000 average super payout for men**
- **$112,600 average super payout for women**

**WOMEN ON THE BOARDS OF ASX 200 LISTED COMPANIES HAS GROWN FROM**

- **8.3% in 2010 to 18.6% in 2014**

**1 in 2 mothers reported experiencing workplace discrimination as a result of their pregnancy potential leave or an offer to work while...**

**1 in 5 mothers indicated that they were made redundant, restructured, dismissed or that their contract was not renewed.**

**1 in 3 women aged 15 years & over have experienced physical violence in the last five years.**

**1 in 4 women have experienced physical violence since the age of 15.**

**1 in 5 women have experienced sexual violence since the age of 15.**

- **92%** of primary carers for children with disabilities
- **70%** of primary carers for parents
- **52%** of primary carers for partners

**Mothers spend more than twice as many hours each week looking after children compared to fathers.**

- **6 hrs, 33 mins per day for mothers**
- **3 hrs, 55 mins per day for fathers**

Domestic and family violence is the leading preventable cause of death, disability and illness in women aged 15 to 44 yrs.
The Cartoon Page: Gender Inequality

This illustration created by Emilio Morales Ruiz of Spain and available on UN Women's website (cited below) captures the very essence and spirit of the theme of this month’s newsletter - gender inequality. At once it demonstrates the status quo, the idea that gender inequality is a very real issue affecting everyone in society and the dream of achieving equality.

Upon encountering the imbalance between the two balloons, the little girl's eyes widen which shows inequality is often very visible in our society. The little girl decides to do something about the imbalance by blowing into the pink balloon. This shows that achieving equality is not easy and it is something which society must strive towards.

Source: Emilio Morales Ruiz, 2015
EK Prayas, Kolkata, India

Ek Prayas school continues to be one of our the IWiN partner in India, houses about 200 children from slums, aged 4-14yrs. The School provides both academic and vocational training in English medium through a systematic curriculum, appropriate to students’ specific needs. Breakfast and lunch are provided to the children in school daily, in addition to their school uniforms, textbooks and stationaries - mostly sponsored by generous donors. IWiN is supporting this school in setting up of a Computer Training Centre for the students, starting in the 2014-15 academic year.

**Make a difference today!**

*Sponsors can choose an option as below:*

- Educate a child for one year (@ approx. Aus$ 135 per child) (Inclusive of utility pack)
- Gift utility pack to children for one year (@ approx. Aus$ 30 per child)
- Sponsor a meal for all 200 children (@ approx. Aus$ 50 (Breakfast + Lunch)
- Sponsor a breakfast for all 200 children (@ approx. Aus$ 15)
- Sponsor a lunch for all 200 children (@ approx. Aus$ 25)

---

IWiN’s NGO relationships

**Children learning in classroom in Ek Prayas**

**Pazhassi Raja Tribal School, Kerela, India**

Pazhassi Raja Tribal School is located at Wayanad in the southern Indian state of Kerala. It is a residential school for tribal children who are among the most neglected community – providing food, accommodation, and medical needs as well as a full education, completely free of cost to the students.

Wayanad has the highest population of tribal people in Kerala. The tribal people have had no access to education any time in their lives. Today tribal people are exploited as the work force for cash crop estate works like coffee and vanilla, and other illegal activities. Dr. Appanu Nambiar, a retired professor of education, founded this school in 1997 with an objective of providing a safe environment to educate the tribal children to adapt to modern day challenges and still retain their age-old cultural customs.

The school that started with 41 students has more than 250 students now.

The school is following the ‘Gurukula’ system of education where teachers and students live together as in a family. Agriculture, stitching and tailoring, carpentry work, basket making, book binding, yoga and music are part of the school syllabus. Paddy, pulses, bananas and vegetables are cultivated by students and teachers. Significant change has come in the attitudes of the tribal community towards education and health care. Senior students participate in rural development activities of the area.

Both boys and girls are also taught traditional martial arts for self-defense and psychological self-development. As a practical idealist, Dr. Nambiar knows the day-to-day side of life these children will face in the real world and feels teaching self-defense skills as important as the standard curriculum. the school started with 40 boys and just one girl. Today, out of 250 students, 129 of them are girls, while boys number at 121.

Another significant change that happened is about the caste system mindset which exists among the tribal people. During the initial days of the school, the divisions based on the caste were very evident among students. Students of the ‘so called’ upper caste did not interact or eat with the rest of the students, reflecting their family customs. Significant progress has been made in this aspect.

**Sponsorship packages include:**

- Educate a child for one year (@ approx. Aus$ 135 per child) (Inclusive of utility pack)
- Gift utility pack to children for one year (@ approx. Aus$ 30 per child)
- Sponsor a meal for all 200 children (@ approx. Aus$ 50 (Breakfast + Lunch)
- Sponsor a breakfast for all 200 children (@ approx. Aus$ 15)
- Sponsor a lunch for all 200 children (@ approx. Aus$ 25)

---

**Children learning archery outdoors at the Pazhassi Raja Tribal School**
WISHING ALL PATRONS AND FRIENDS

WE HOPE YOU HAVE
A WONDERFUL YEAR AHEAD
with your mother and children
STAY SAFE, PROSPEROUS & HEALTHY

Please consider donating to IWiN Fund for its NGO partners providing free education to disadvantaged children