

The Influencer Bulletin

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In a step towards joining global discussions on women's empowerment, India has been elected as a member of the United Nations Commission on Status of Women (CSW), a body of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). Conforming with the ECOSOC and furthering India's commitment to the gender specific work in the same, this issue, we bring to you highlights from our grassroots partners ANANDI, CORO India, Sanjog and Milaan to give you a glimpse of the significant developments and efforts made by them towards increasing the participation of women, hearing their voice, giving them their choice and in a way reflecting the concerns of the women. Read more on the Influencers Meet marking another successful year of this collective journey towards empowering women.

I-Witness: Influencers' Meet

As 2020 marks the completion of another year of the Influencers initiative, on September 10th the members of the coalition connected remotely to commemorate and deliberate upon the pressing issues encountered by women at the threshold of a new decade. [Read more](#) about the details of the progress made in the past year.

The Meet was an attempt to trigger conversation on the current state of affairs worldwide that threatens to push back the gains of the women's rights work, and discuss how women are disproportionately affected during emergencies, like the current pandemic. Pradeep Nair, Regional Director, Ford Foundation reinforced his hope in collaborations like the Coalition for Women Empowerment and Influencers in shifting the focus on system change of small and medium-sized organisations working in the space. Nandita Das through her short film, '[Listen to Her](#)' emphasised that as cases of violence against women in the lockdown surged the normalisation of safe spaces for women is the need of the hour. Entrusted with the responsibility of Women Power Line, Ms. Anju Gupta, IPS, ADG, UP Police elaborated on the different methods to reach out to the victims of violence immediately. She left us with two valuable lessons. Firstly, it is time for the empowerment of the victims and secondly, a systemic change in the way programmes and policies centred on women are implemented.

Sushma Iyengar of KMVS voiced about how the pandemic carries within itself a larger gender crisis characterised by visible violence within the four walls of the home. Arathi Shetty, while acknowledging the pandemic's effect on women from all sections of society voiced concerns about how the reverse migration is pulling us back into the vicious trap of age-old evils like slavery, flesh trade and indebtedness. Svati Chakravarty Bhatkal highlighted the phenomenon of women against violence as a positive step forward and shared the example of Gauravi - A one-stop emergency centre for women in Bhopal. Bala Deshpande acknowledged the concern about resources being woefully limited for dealing with a problem as large as this one. The Meet also saw the participation of Shreevar Kherukha, Archana Chandra, Nirajan Rajadhyaksha, Anita George, Dheeraj Vashisht, Vinay Raizada, and Satyajit Bhatkal.

Voices from the Grassroots:

On September 4th, **Area Networking and Development Initiatives (ANANDI)** released their documentary "Young women in Gujarat ask | Whose Choice Should It Be ?" that emerged from the findings of an exploratory research conducted around the issue of abduction and kidnapping of young girls. The research study revealed insights on consent, choice and agency of women especially in the context of



sexuality. Stringing together the narratives from the grassroots the documentary effectively gives a glimpse of the many layers of impediments faced by young women to exercise their own agency and create choices for themselves which becomes all the more relevant in the current times with the current discussions on revision of marriageable age for females in India. Click [here](#) to watch the full documentary.

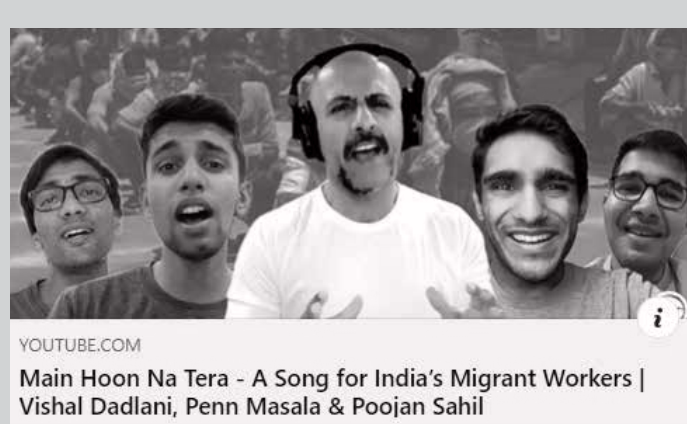


ANANDI along with other civil society collective has also prepared a memorandum to be submitted to state government authorities including state commission for protection of child rights (GSCPCR), state commission for women, education and health department. The Proposal sheds light on the state-level ramifications of the Centre's proposal to reconsider the minimum marriage age for women. [Read More](#)

Collective Efforts!

Sanjog along with multiple other NGOs started the #MigrantLivesMatter campaign digitally to ensure continued support to the vulnerable population of migrant workers, who have reached home, but need assistance to lead their lives with dignity and respect in the face of the existing adversities.

The campaign garnered support of notable names from the music industry such as singer-composer Vishal Dadlani, globally acclaimed acapella group Penn Masala and renowned lyricist Poojan Sahil, who collaborated to create an original composition, Main Hoon Na Tera, a song of hope, empathy and solidarity dedicated to migrants and daily wagers struggling in times of COVID.



Collective Conversations

Through the **Lok Pudhakar** process - a people's led initiative at grassroots, leaders from **CORO INDIA** across 6 regions of Maharashtra submitted a charter of demands accumulated by people from 292 villages, was submitted to 18 district collectors in the state of Maharashtra, raising several issues that needed immediate attention from the state government. To sensitise and increase people's participation CORO INDIA had organised various sessions under the umbrella of Lok Pudhakar campaign.



Further, to the initiative an interactive session with Minister of School Education - Varsha Gaikwad was also organised on August 11th to help understand the various nuances of the New Education Policy, Varsha Gaikwad also elaborated on the various ongoing concerns over online teaching methods in lockdown, the increasing rate of child labour due to school closures, difficulties in starting schools, and budget for school facilities



Later, on August 30th a webinar with Cabinet Minister of Maharashtra for Women and Child Development - Yashomati Thakur was also conducted under the Lok Pudhakar initiative which shed light on the current problems being faced by women and children during the ongoing pandemic.

In the News

Sanjog recently has compiled a detailed report responding to the Right To Information (RTI) queries on the discrepancies in the composition and functioning Anti Human Trafficking Units (AHTU) to be setup across different districts and states. The report provides a detailed response to the RTI applications filed by five lawyers from the different parts of the country revealing variations in the terms of notifications of AHTUs; the utilisation of allocated funds; training undertaken by them. Additionally, it also highlights aspects of functioning of AHTUs, particularly in the types of cases handled by these units. [Read More](#)



Save The Date



We are super excited to invite you to the 'Girl Icon Leadership Summit' organised by our partner **Milaan Foundation** on October 8th to commemorate International Day of Girl Child with voices of Grassroots Girl Leaders. [Click here](#) to register