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14 March 2023
8:30 - 11:00 EST

WOMEN'S MACHINERY AND CHALLENGES OF INEQUALITY AND VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Our speakers



PROF RASHIDA MANJOO



DR. SIMA SAMAR



KHAWAR MUMTAZ



DR MONA TAJALI



SHIREEN PERVIN HUQ



DR SRI WIYANTI EDDYONO



PROF VRINDA NARAIN



PROF HOMA HOODFAR



SELEN LERMIOĞLU YILMAZ

Since the setting up of the Committee of Women's Status by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), Women's Machinery at both the state and the UN level has been identified by women's movements and experts as a channel to effectively address women's rights and gender equality, particularly in the areas of education, legal reform, economic empowerment and political participation and the eradication of violence against women.

However, over the last decade, we have observed that many states in the North and South, under various pretexts, have been disempowering women's machinery. As the pendulum of the world's politics is moving to the right with both overt and covert attack on women's rights. It is clear that there is an urgent need for more proactive types of machinery and mechanism to push back the negative trend against social, legal and political equality at all levels of society.

This panel is proposing to revisit the debates surrounding various forms of women's machinery in Muslim contexts where, despite much advancement, women continue to face serious gender-based violence and discrimination justified in the name of religion and traditions, particularly in the political and public sphere.



PROF RASHIDA MANJOO

She is Professor Emeritus at the University of Cape Town in the Department of Public Law where she convened the Human Rights Program. Prof Manjoo has over four decades of experience in social justice and human rights work both in South Africa and abroad. Until July 2015, she held the position of UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, its Causes and Consequences. Prof Manjoo is the former Parliamentary Commissioner of the Commission on Gender Equality, an institution created by the Constitution of South Africa, with a mandate to oversee the promotion and protection of gender equality and women's rights.

DR. SIMA SAMAR

Dr Samar is a Nobel Peace Prize nominee, renowned human rights advocate and an identified global influential female figure. Since 2002 she has been the Chairperson of the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC). She is the Chairperson of the Commission for the Prevention of Torture and was the Chairperson of Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions (APF). Prior to her appointment as the chair of AIHRC, she was the Vice President of the Interim Administration of Afghanistan and the first Minister of Women's Affairs. Dr. Samar served as the UN's Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Sudan between 2005 and 2009 and has newly been appointed as a member of the UN's Secretary-General's High-Level Advisory Board on Mediation.

KHAWAR MUMTAZ

She is a Pakistani women's rights activist, feminist author and university professor. She is the Former Chairperson of the Pakistan National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW) between 2013-2019. She is one of the founders of Women's Action Forum (WAF), which was formed to reject regressive laws justified in the name of Islam, introduced by General Zia-ul-Haq (1978-1988) regime, and to bring women's issues on political and legislative agenda, and to assert women's equal rights in Pakistan. She served as the Coordinator and the CEO at Shirkat Gah before joining NCSW as its Chairperson. Mumtaz received many awards for her contribution to women's empowerment: The Prime Minister's award (1989) for her book Women of Pakistan; Two Steps Forward One step Back? which she co-authored with Farida Shaheed; the Sitara-e-Imtiaz(2006) for promotion of women's rights and social service; She was one of the 100 nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize.

DR MONA TAJALI

She is Associate Professor of International Relations and Women's Studies at Agnes Scott College and an affiliate of the Middle East Studies programme at the Oxford School of Global and Area Studies. Her current book manuscript investigates how religious and cultural norms, attitudes, institutional structures, and voter behavior affect the representation of women and quality of democracy in Muslim contexts, with a comparative focus on Iran and Turkey, which is based on her APSA's 2015 Best Dissertation Prize in Women and Politics award-winning doctoral dissertation, and subsequent update and ethnographic field-research in the Middle East in 2015 conducted during her Postdoc Fellowship at Oxford University. She has co-authored a book, titled Electoral Politics: Making Quotas Work for Women(WLUML 2011) and her latest book is Women's Political Representation in Iran and Turkey: Demanding a Seat at the Table (Edinburgh University Press, 2022)

SHIREEN PERVIN HUQ

As a women's rights activist working on gender, human rights and development, she is a founder member of Naripokkho. Currently, Shireen is the Honorary Coordinator of Naripokkho's programme 'Standing with Rohingya Women', and is member of Naripokkho's Working Groups on 'Women's Sexual and Reproductive Health & Rights', 'The Forgotten Women of 71', and 'WarChildren71'. She is also a founder member of Mouluk Odhikar Shurokha Committee, which is a platform of human rights defenders and co-convenes the Bangladesh Civil Society Platform on Justice and Accountability for the Rohingyas. Most recently she has been involved with the founding of Feminists Across Generations, an inter-generational alliance to combat gender-based violence. From 1987-2006 she was employed as an Advisor to the Danish International Development Assistance Programme (DANIDA) in Bangladesh on women's development, poverty reduction and human rights. During her tenure with Danida, Shireen initiated the Government of Bangladesh's Multi-Sectoral Programme on Violence Against Women.

DR SRI WIYANTI EDDYONO

Sri Wiyanti Eddyono SH, LL.M, Ph.D or IYIK Eddyono is academician, feminist lawyer, researcher, and women activist. She is an assistant professor at Criminal Law Department and the head of Master in Law, faculty of Law Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM) Yogyakarta, Indonesia. She is chairing Law, Gender and Society Research Centre. She is conducting the research project on Preventing Conflict and Countering Fundamentalism through Women's Empowerment and Civil Society Mobilization in Indonesia with Monash Gender Peace and Security Centre and Semarak Cerlang Nusa Consultancy, Research, and Education for Social Transformation (SCN CREST), Indonesia, funded by DFAT. Her previous research project was 'When and Why do States Respond to Women's Claims: Understanding Gender-Egalitarian Policy Change in Asia', a comparative study on India, Indonesia, and China under UN Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD). She is in charge with advocacy for the establishment of anti sexual violence bill in Indonesia. She was involved with the advocacy for the Law on Domestic Violence established in 2004. She was a commissioner in National Commission on Violence Against Women in Indonesia (2007-2009).

PROF VRINDA NARAIN

Vrinda Narain is Associate Professor in the Faculty of Law, McGill University. Professor Narain is a Member of the Centre for Human Rights and Legal Pluralism, Faculty of Law at McGill University. She is the recipient of the Canadian Institute for the Administration of Justice's 2017 Charles D. Gonthier Fellowship. Her research and teaching focus on constitutional law, social diversity and feminist legal theory. Her publications include: Reclaiming the Nation: Muslim Women and the Law in India (University of Toronto Press, 2008) and Gender and Community: Muslim Women's Rights in India (University of Toronto Press, 2001). She has been involved in the WLUML research and publication in various capacities for over a decade.

SELEN LERMIOĞLU YILMAZ

As a feminist activist, she has been advocating for women's human rights and gender equality for more than 20 years, both in Turkey and internationally. Since 2000, she took active part in advocacy platforms or campaigns such as the campaigns on Civil Code, Penal Code and Constitution reforms, Abortion Cannot Be Banned Campaign, the End to Violence Platform and the Istanbul Convention Monitoring Platform. More recently, Selen Lermioğlu Yılmaz is actively involved in the Women's Platform for Equality (EŞİK). At international level, she has been a member in the Women's Initiative for Peace between Greece and Turkey (WINPEACE), attended the 59th and 69th sessions of the UN CSW, engaged as an expert in the Women's Leadership Network in the Muslim World convened by the Wellesley Centers for Women, and Gender Advisory Committee (GAT) convened by the Good Offices Mission of the UN in Cyprus for effective implementation of UN SCR 1325. Her experience covers also other geographies such as Greece, Western Balkans, Palestine, Israel, Jordan, the Gambia, Myanmar, Armenia, Egypt and Iran. Since 2015, she has been working as the capacity building expert in an EU funded civil society and reconciliation project in Cyprus, along with other short-term missions she undertakes in different parts of the world.