



# ALL INDIA WOMEN'S EDUCATION FUND ASSOCIATION (AIWEFA)



## Concept Note

### **A World We Women and Girls Want: Technology enabled Social and Economic Advancement**

#### **Hosted by**

All India Women's Education Fund Association (AIWEFA) in partnership with the Permanent Mission of India (PMI) to the United Nations in New York.

Date: 9 March 2023

Time: 0830 hours to 0945 hours (EDT) / 1900 hours to 2015 hours (IST)

Mode: Virtual

#### **Objective & event focus**

- To discuss key challenges and barriers women and girls face in access to technology for social and economic advancement.
- To deliberate on technological innovations in the fields of education, health and livelihood leading to empowerment of women and girls
- To share best practices and initiatives taken by UN, Member States, NGOs and private sector for deploying information and technology for women empowerment
- To deliberate on recommendations on future of innovation and technological change, and education in the digital age for advancement of women and girls

#### **Background**

In 2022, AIWEFA was privileged to partner with the Permanent Mission of India to the UN for a virtual Side Event during CSW66 entitled 'A World We Women and Girls Want: Lifestyle for the Environment (LIFE)'. The Permanent Representative of India to the UN, Hon'ble Minister of Women and Child Development of India, UN Under-Secretary-General and UN Women Executive Director, Permanent Representatives of Co-operative Republic of Guyana, Bangladesh, and Kingdom of Bhutan participated in the event. It focused on environmentally safe policies and programmes that assure gender-responsive development for all, and safe-guard and advance the SDGs. A short film showcased gender-responsive actions that are women-led, promote environmentally safe lifestyles, use technology, and provide economic empowerment.

The CSW67 side event, based on the priority theme 'Innovation and technological change, and education in the digital age for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls', will focus on the trifecta of entrepreneurship, education and health initiatives spawned by technological innovation in the digital age across countries. These support women in a variety of ways and influence the direction of developing resilient communities through paradigm shifts in beliefs, attitudes, and lifestyles. It will emphasise sustainable communities that support inclusive education in safe settings, participation in the digital economy, and the development of new and improved skill sets. Technology is affecting a variety of fields pertinent to women's health, including patient communication, physician education, and health care performance. In addition, there is a need for appropriate and coherent policies that facilitate systemic transformation to reduce gender divide in digital access, are responsive to current and future technology-driven sustainability challenges and emphasise the need for UN agencies to recognise the multiplier effect on the attainment of SDGs. There is an urgent need for international cooperation to pave the path for women's successful adoption of the new prospects presented by the digital age.

India has embraced the innovation and technology changes which has resulted in impacted gender equality positively. For instance, India's Unified Payment Interface (UPI) is among the most appreciated and useful interface that has eased the process of making payments. Similarly, online orders, transactions and delivery facilities have helped in the increase of women artisans. Be it rural or urban settings, women artisans are emerging, setting up their own enterprise. The Government of India is also playing a vital role towards gender equality and women empowerment by providing platforms through Innovation and Technological change through different schemes under National Rural Livelihood Mission(NRLM) and State Rural Livelihood Mission (SRLM), by setting women Self Help Groups (SHG's).

In rural areas, with the emergence of learning apps, having access to quality education is no more a luxury for people in remote areas. The advanced learning apps have also nipped out the financial factor and the worry about the extortionate school fees. The increasing growth and use of internet in the remote areas back the promising future of e-learning that is constructively impacting women and girls. Beyond attracting women and girls to STEM education, retaining, and promoting women in STEM careers is also a priority, where there are fewer women than men at every career step.

The role of technology in healthcare, has reshaped how we look at patientcare, hospital management, discovering and innovating better drugs, and predicting the course of treatment based primarily on data. The importance of technology in healthcare is deeply rooted. The innovations in public health care delivery made possible by technology, with more individuals now having access to treatments and information that might have been previously unavailable.

All these innovations and technology revolutions, impact gender equality and pertinent recommendations will allow for a more inclusive and equitable digital evolution. This will ensure meaningful connectivity for women and girls, beyond access, to meaningful access and use of digital technologies, and access to STEM education, and ways to address them, including barriers such as affordability, and social norms.

## **Guiding Questions**

What are the barriers to ensure equitable access to technology especially for women and girls? How these barriers can be overcome?

What steps should be taken to enhance the role of Innovation and technological change, and education in the digital age, especially in education, health, livelihood?

What are the challenges and best practices in use of technology and innovation for socio-economic advancement of women around the world?

What role governments, civil society and private sector can play to bridge the gender digital divide?

## **Moderator**

Ms. Rita Menon (IAS), President, All India Women's Education Fund Association (AIWEFA)

## **Speakers**

- H.E. Smt. Smriti Irani, Hon'ble Minister of Women and Child Development, Government of India
- H.E. Ms. Ruchira Kamboj, Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations
- H.E. Ms. Anita Bhatia, Assistant Secretary-General, and Deputy Executive Director of UN Women
- H.E. Ms. Ilana Victorya Seid, Permanent Representative of Palau to the United Nations
- H.E. Ms. Anna Karin Eneström, Permanent Mission of Sweden to the United Nations
- H.E. Ms. Inga Rhonda King, Permanent Mission of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
- Dr. Sangita Reddy Joint Managing Director of Apollo Hospitals Enterprise Limited, India

## **Summing up**

Ms. Chitra Sarkar, Vice President, All India Women's Education Fund Association (AIWEFA)

## **Film**

A 5-minute film, with support from the PMI to the UN, will highlight examples of women-led movements in India in the fields of innovation and technological change and education in the digital age that have contributed towards gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in India.