

Sophia Centre for Women's Studies and Development

Annual Report 2020-2021

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INTRODUCTION

The Sophia Centre for Women's Studies and Development (SCWSD), which was launched in 2001 has been diversifying in scope over time. The year 2020-2021 has been an extremely testing and challenging one for us as it was the case the world over. The Covid-19 pandemic stalled life as well as activities at the Sophia Centre for Women's Studies and Development for a brief period. We later regrouped and strategized to continue our programs online which was an eye opener as now we had a larger reach and our programmes were not just limited to a small audience but available to interested people all over India and the world.

We are extremely grateful to the eminent scholars who have come aboard on the peer review committee for "*Urdhva Mula*" our multidisciplinary journal. This has elevated the academic status of our journal. We are also thankful to all our sponsors, well-wishers and the organisations we have partnered with. It is because of their ongoing contribution and cooperation that all our projects and the functioning of SCWSD itself, have gone by efficiently for the current year. We hope to gain the much-needed funding and support for the next year as well.

STAFF OF THE CENTRE

Honorary Director	:	Dr. (Sr.) Ananda Amritamahar (English Literature)
Coordinator	:	Dr. Lata Pujari (History)
Academic Advisor	:	Dr. Vibhuti Patel (Economics)
Programme Officer	:	Ms. Deepti Anil (Foods, Nutrition, Dietetics)
Librarian	:	Ms. Sharayu Kamble
Office Assistant	:	Ms. Merlin Coutinho
Attendant	:	Mr. Hayward Lopez

THE CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE OF SCWSD

Dr. Laxmi Lingam (Women's Studies)
Dr. Maithreyi Krishnaraj (Economics)
Dr. Nandita Gandhi (Women's Studies)
Dr. Nasreen Fazalbhoy (Sociology)
Dr. Roshni Gawankar (Political Science)
Dr. Suma Chitnis (Education)
Dr. Usha Thakkar (Political Science)

LIBRARY AND DOCUMENTATION

- Library membership is open to all students.
- The library subscribes to two journals, *Perspectives in Social Work* and *Indian Journal of Gender Studies* and to six magazines.
- The library has started an online subscription to four journals by Sage Publications: *Feminist Theory; An International Interdisciplinary Journal*, *Gender and Society*, *Indian Journal of Gender Studies*, *Psychology and Development Societies* and *Sage Open*.
- The library has purchased the latest books on women's issues for use by the members of the library.
- The library software: SLIM (++) is utilised in the library to maintain a softcopy record of all literature available in the SCWSD library.
- The SCWSD collection of fiction and non-fiction books has been greatly enhanced through the generous donation of institutions and individuals. The library has a stock of posters on gender issues collected from national and international NGOs.
- Inter-Library Loan system is available for use on demand.

NUMBER OF BOOKS/JOURNALS SUBSCRIBED TO

Books	21
Newspapers/Journals	14

Urdhva Mula

PEER REVIEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Sr. No.	NAME
1	Sr. Anila Verghese (Sophia Polytechnique, Mumbai)
2	Prof. Kunal Chattopadhyay (Jadavpur University, Kolkata)
3	Dr. Swarna Rajagopalan (The Prajnya Trust, Chennai)
4	Prof. Samapti Guha (Tata Institute of Social Science, Mumbai)
5	Prof. Bulbul Dhar (Jamia Millia Islamia University, New Delhi)
6	Dr. Veena Devasthali (SNDT University, Mumbai)
7	Jaya Singh (NCERT, New Delhi)
8	Prof. Geraldine Forbes (State University of New York Oswego, USA)
9	Dr. Sucharita Pujari (Centre for Gender Studies and Development, NIRD, Hyderabad)
10	Dr. Michelle Stack (University of British Columbia)
11	Dr. Linda Lane (University of Gothenburg, Scotland)
12	Dr. Alice Clark (University of California, Berkeley)
13	Dr. Geeta Balakrishnan (Nirmala Niketan College of Social Work, Mumbai)
14	Dr. Kumkum Roy (Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi)
15	Dr. Shagufta Kapadia (M.S. University, Baroda)

RESEARCH

SCWSD has always been actively involved in research projects focussing mainly on women and issues related to them, since its inception in 2001. In keeping with this ideology, SCWSD in the year 2017-18 secured a research grant from ICSSR (Indian Council of Social Science Research) to study three unique forms of traditional folk art in Maharashtra. The folk art of Maharashtra is multi-faceted and fascinating. For centuries, these folk arts operated with the intention of reaching out to the masses, to the lay population, with the purpose of entertaining, educating and enlightening them. Folk culture exhibits the values, beliefs, behaviour of people in society. With the advent of the phenomenon of the 'Global village,' the forms of folk art of Maharashtra demand special attention and acknowledgement. This project attempts to analyse four folk art forms of Maharashtra - *Kirtana*, *Bharud*, *Lavani* and *Povada*, using two ascribed identities of society members - Gender and Caste. Traditionally some of these folk arts, *Kirtana* and *Povada*, were dominated by male performers, while *Lavani* was performed by women along with their female singers and male musicians. This project is a conscious, systematic effort to unearth the existent but subtle inequalities in the multiple folk expressions to comprehend the impact in its totality. This study aims to appraise the folk art forms in Maharashtra to describe gender and caste hegemonies. In addition, this exercise would scientifically describe the power equations within, thus arriving at a deeper insight and clearer understanding of the politically meaningful hegemonic configurations. The compilation of this research work continued after the initial field work from 2018 to 2020.

THE COURSES AND INSTRUCTIONS

The Activities of SCWSD in the academic year 2020-2021

1. The ten month long Certificate Course in Food and Nutrition started on the 14th of June 2020 and concluded on 5th of February , 2021. The Certificate Course on Basics in Food and Nutrition aims to equip students with holistic knowledge, that is, both theoretical and applicable, in food and nutrition. The course is designed to be intensive with students meeting four times a week, three hours per session, for ten months. The resource persons for this course are specialists in their respective areas of specialisation. The Course in Food and Nutrition imparts knowledge to its participants on the basics of nutritional science, the importance of fitness and understanding the physiology of development through the ages. The course involves both theory and practical components with a unique focus on teaching counselling techniques to students. This year **fourteen women enrolled for the course from which eleven of them successfully completed the course.** While some of the students were working professionals seeking additional certification in this field, others were homemakers desiring knowledge on health and nutrition. The practical sessions comprised of product development, counselling techniques and case studies.

2. **ALL ABOUT EVE:** This was an online panel discussion organized with the authors (Anju Kapoor and Harry Kurup) of the book “Seven Personas of Eve” in association with The Crossword Book store on July 4th 2020.

3. FES GENDERLOGUE

This was a two day online Genderlogue programme. On August 14th 2020 there was an online panel discussion on Gender Stereotypes and Care Economy organised jointly by Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, India & Sophia Centre for Women’s Studies & Development, Sophia College, Mumbai. The Panelists included Dr. Geeta Balakrishnan, Former Principal, Nirmala Niketan College of Social Work, Mumbai, Dr. Sandhya Iyer, School of Development Studies, TISS, Mumbai and Shri. Anil Hebbar, Helping Hands Charitable Trust, Mumbai.

Age-old stereotypes about the way men and women think and behave are persistent widely in all walks of public as well as private life and in all sectors of the economy. However, stereotypical

expectations not only reflect existing differences, but also impact the way men and women define themselves and are treated by family members, kith and kin, employers and colleagues, political systems, and decision-making institutions. The nature and content of gender stereotypes result in gender differences in important life outcomes in terms of education, health, employment, public profile. Empirical studies show that gender stereotypes affect the way people attend to, interpret, and remember information about themselves and others. Considering the cognitive and motivational functions of gender stereotypes helps us understand their impact on implicit beliefs and communications about men and women.

Around the world, women spend two to ten times more time on unpaid care work than men. This unequal distribution of caring responsibilities is linked to discriminatory social institutions and stereotypes on gender roles. Gender inequality in unpaid care work is the missing link in the analysis of gender gaps in labour outcomes, such as labour force participation, wages and quality of work. Tackling entrenched gender norms and stereotypes is a first step in redistributing responsibilities for care and housework between women and men. Unpaid care work is both an important aspect of economic activity and an indispensable factor contributing to the well-being of individuals, their families, and societies. Every day individuals spend time cooking, cleaning, and caring for children, the ill and the elderly. Despite this importance for well-being, unpaid care work is commonly left out of policy agendas due to a common misperception that, unlike standard market work measures, it is too difficult to measure and less relevant for policies. Yet, neglecting unpaid care work leads to incorrect inferences about levels and changes in individuals' well-being and the value of time, which in turn limit policy effectiveness across a range of socio-economic areas, notably gender inequalities in employment and other empowerment areas.

Women typically spend disproportionately more time on unpaid care work than men. Because of gendered social norms that view unpaid care work as a female prerogative, women across different regions, socio-economic classes and cultures spend an important part of their day on meeting the expectations of their domestic and reproductive roles. This is in addition to their paid activities, thus creating the “double burden” of work for women. How society and policymakers address issues concerning care has important implications for the achievement of gender equality: they can either expand the capabilities and choices of women and men, or confine

women to traditional roles associated with femininity and motherhood. The unequal distribution of unpaid care work between women and men represents an infringement of women's rights and also a brake on their economic empowerment key measures needed to address the increase in unpaid care work as a result of the pandemic, ensure adequate compensation and decent working conditions for paid care workers, and enable the participation of paid and unpaid caregivers in the policy decisions that affect them.

These were the different ideologies discussed in the forum.

Webilogue 2- Viewing the Impact of Covid-19 on Youth Through a Gender Lens

We invited student body leaders from universities/colleges in Mumbai for an open house session wherein each one shared the experiences collated by them on the topic. This was followed by a **Creative Quarantine Session** where students presented 3 min short videos/ films, poetry and posters based on positive and creative themes that had been generated during the lockdown. E.g.: Gender Role reversals, fathers cooking, brothers cleaning the house, mothers working from home etc. The session was well received with over a 100 students attending from colleges all over Mumbai.

4. The SCWSD also organized the WLTP (Women's Leadership Training Programme)

Conceptualised as a programme to empower Catholic women; the course is the result of collaboration between SCWSD and the Bombay Archdiocesan Women's Commission. Held between 21st July, 2020 and 31st August 2020, at Holy Cross High School, Mumbai, the participants were drawn from different dioceses in Mumbai. The aim of the course is to infuse the participants with leadership qualities, and inspire them to take charge of a larger locus of control within their lives as well as within their own parishes.

5. The SCWSD organized an All India programme as a Western region centre for IAWS (Indian Association for Women's Studies) for IAWS (Indian Association for Women's Studies) on the topic **"Gender and Challenges: Work Continuum During and After Lockdown"** on 26th November 2020 from (3.00pm – 6.00pm). The programme included a panel discussion with eminent panelists like Ms Mariam Dhavale General Secretary AIDWA, Dr. Dhammasanghini WSC, STM Nagpur, Dr Sona Mitra, Principal Economist IWWAGE and LGBTQ rights activist Vicky Shinde. There were scholarly paper presentations from researchers pan India.

6. The SCWSD organized a **SHORT-TERM COURSE ON GENDER SENSITISATION: A SHIFT IN PERSPECTIVE** in association with UGC HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT CENTRE, UNIVERSITY OF MUMBAI. From 4th To 10th FEBRUARY 2021 for the lecturers from different institutions across the country . The following is a report on the same.

The session commenced with National anthem. This was followed by a welcome note by Dr Anagha Tendulkar, the STC Coordinator. Further, Dr. Amritmahal, The Principal of Sophia College (Autonomous), Mumbai, addressed the course participants. Dr. K. Shanthi, Director, UGC HRDC, University of Mumbai, then addressed the gathering on the role UGC HRDC and the importance of short-term courses for enhancing teachers' academic profile. Our chief-guest Ms Kamla Bhasin, Founder of Sangat and Gender activist, shared her own experiences and emphasised on the need for gender sensitisation in academics and in society. The inaugural session concluded with a thank you note by Dr. Lata Pujari.

04.02.2021

The first session was conducted by **Dr. (Sr.) Ananda Amritmahal** emphasising on the need of understanding the roots and trends of gender discrimination in religious traditions. The interface between religion and gender with references to feminist movement was explained. The second resource person of the day **Dr. Mitra Mukherjee Parikh** opened with a discussion on how literature engage with gender. She covered wide range of areas from Indian literature, main stream, ancient literature, American literature, Feminist criticism so on and so forth. In the last session of the day **Dr. Uma Chakravarti** spoke on Women's Studies in Mumbai and Maharashtra in 19th century and onwards. Giving wide range of women's work, she commented on women writers of the period saying that women did not write revolutionary work but they wrote their autobiography. She shed light on women and their writings, how society suppressed women's voices. Their struggle for their own identity, however, not always in the society but also withing themselves.

05.02.2021

Kamala Ganesh spoke on *Gender Sensitization at the First Level of Socialisation*. **Adv. Persis Sidhva** conducted the second session of the day. While speaking on Demystifying the Law and Stereotypes

relating to Crimes against Women, she discussed various known rape cases i.e. Mathura rapa case, Nirbhaya rape case, Kathua rape case etc. Adv. Sidhva gave a clear insight of recent laws against rape, domestic rape cases, the sexual harassment at work place, criminal and civil remedies. The next session resource person **Dr. Swati Dyahadroy** discussed how minorities fought for their space, rights, and against discrimination. She also explained number of organisations working for the upliftment of minority workers, especially Muslim workers, their struggle for equality and legal rights. After this session **Ms Nidhi Dugar Kundalia** explained the culture of six tribes from the northern and north-east side of India. While explaining the work and cultural pattern of these tribes Ms Kundalia made it clear that the tribal' division of work does not mean patriarchy. She also spoke about the difference between North Indian tribes and various tribes from west to east.

06.02.2021

The third day session commenced with **Prof. Anita Ghai** on '*Gender and Disability*'. Prof. Ghai discussed the difference between 'disability' and 'handicap'. She also spoke on how the society and the government conveniently ignore this section of people while designing policies, and especially the norms enforced during pandemic. She explained the dearth of sensitisation towards disable people, especially women, in society. **Dr. Sona Mitra** conducted the next session '*Development and Governance through a Gender Lens*'. She spoke on Economics of Gender and Development. She emphasised on the need for studying Gender Economics as it provides an analytical tool and worldview. She criticised home economy and specified that even markets are socially constructed. The third session of the day was conducted by **Ms Jeroo Mulla** offering insights on '*The portrayal of women in advertising*'. She commenced her session by screening a video of various ads and representation of women in it followed by reading passages appropriate to the topic. An active question-answer session brought various points in the limelight. Later, **Mr. Ashok Row Kavi** spoke on need of sex-education in academics. According to him such curriculum or open discussion would be eye-opener to society to accept the other gender communities as well.

08.02.2021

The day commenced with **Dr. Geeta Balakrishnan's** session on '*Gender Lens in Social Work Education and Practice*'. Being a hardcore social worker, she shared her own experience, her programmes as a student, policies as a principal and various project run by Nirmala Niketan college of Social Work, Mumbai. In the next session **Prof. Amita Dhanda** simplified the term gender and why one should look at

gender and law and its relationship. She criticised the law through a gender lens. **Dr. Lakshmi Lingam** commenced her session by explaining the difference between sex, gender and sexuality. Through various video clips she described different forms of love that vary often play a key-role of violence in various relationships. She touched upon the other gender issues as alpha men, cross dressing etc.

09.02.2021

Participants had MCQ test in the first session of the day. The next session was conducted a transgender **Ms Rashana Mudraboyina**. She explained the life and issues faced by transgender across India. **Mr Harish Sadani** conducted a session on explaining the role of men and college students in raising voice against violence against women.

10.02.2021

The day began with participants video assignments presentation. The screened the YouTube videos provided by the host of the course, followed by their group analysis and defence on the questions posed by examiners – **Ms Reena Agarwal** and **Dr. A.L. Sharada**. In the valedictory session the course concluded with the address and remarks by a renowned historian and gender expert **Prof. Kumkum Roy**. Her presentation focused on the significance of intersectionalities, our locations, the significance of higher education institutions, FAQs about gender, the importance of addressing sexualities and masculinities, the implications of sexual harassment and possible responses at a variety of levels.

The number participants who successfully finished the course was 43.

7. The Sophia Centre for Women’s Studies and Development & St. Xavier’s Institute of Education in collaboration with The Russian Centre for Science & Culture, Mumbai are organizing a Panel Discussion on “**Emerging Avenues for Women in the 21st Century**” under the overarching event theme of celebrating “**21st Century Generation Equality**” on the occasion of **INTERNATIONAL WOMEN’S DAY, 8th March 2021**. The Keynote speaker for the event was Adv. Flavia Agnes (Women’s Rights Lawyer and Cofounder –Majlis)

There was also a panel discussion on the topic with Ms Vaidehi Vaidya (Founder & MD at Women in Sport India Pvt Ltd), Mr Harish Sadani (Founder, MAVA), Ms Aloka Majumdar

(Director & Head of Corporate International Sustainability, HSBC, Mumbai) Discussion Moderator: Ms Reena Agarwal (Co-founder, Xpress Story Telling)

The audience comprised mainly of students from the age range of (18-25) years from colleges all over Mumbai. We encouraged student participation as the aim of the program was chiefly to empower and equip young women with life skills needed for their excellence.

8. Our interdisciplinary journal Urdhva Mula (Volume 13) was published in December 2020.

9. International Women's Day Celebration on March 8th 2021 in collaboration with The Russian Centre for Culture and Science and The St.Xavier's Institute for education (SXIE)

On the 8th of March 2021, Sophia Centre for Women's Studies & Development, St. Xavier's Institute of Education and Russian Centre for Science and Culture organised an online event to celebrate International Women's Day. The theme for the event was '21st Century Generation Equality' and focused on the ground reality of gender equality around the world today.

The event began with a brief introduction by the comperes on International Women's Day and the theme for the year 2021- 'Women in leadership: Achieving an equal future in a COVID-19 world'. This was followed by the representatives of each institution introducing their institution and work that they have been doing in the field of women empowerment.

The event was commenced officially with the opening remark by Fr. Blaise D'Souza, manager of St. Xavier's Institution of Education. He focused on how women play an important role in society since time immemorial and that the future of the world is in their hands. He also shared his experiences while working with the tribal communities of interior Maharashtra and how their society promotes equality than that of us. This was followed by opening remark by Dr. Sossamma Samuel, principal of St. Xavier's Institution of Education which highlighted on how women need to be empowered in various fields and different ways to achieve that. This was followed by an open remark by Dr. (Sr.) Ananda Amritmahal, principal of Sophia College for Women. She recited a poem- 'Laughter of Women' by Lisel Mueller and highlighted how all human beings are equal irrespective of their gender.

The opening remarks were followed by the talk by the keynote speaker of the day- Adv. Flavia Agnes, founder of Majlis. She, with her powerful words highlighted the right to equality

guaranteed by the Indian Constitution and the ground reality of the same. She threw light on various cases of violence against women across India and how at times the stakeholders violated the victim further. She raised a question on how capable the teachers who guide young minds are regarding the legal aids provided to a victim in case of any kind of abuse. She proposed that it is the teaching community which needs to be sensitized about the rights of women who can then educate and guide students regarding the legal aids and life-skills.

Another keynote speaker for the day was Ferina Duggan Polichtchouk, who threw light on the genesis of International of Women's Day and the colourful celebrations in Russia to honour women on this special day. She highlighted how the celebrations have changed throughout the years and the significance of the day is being lost due to consumerism.

The highlight of the event was a panel discussion on 'New Avenues for Women in the 20th century' which was moderated by Ms. Reena Agarwal, co-founder of Xpress Story Story-telling. The panellists included Mr. Harish Sadani- co-founder of Men Against Violence and Abuse, Ms. Vaidehi Vaidya- founder at Women in Sport India Pvt. Ltd. And Ms. Aloka Majumdar- head of corporate sustainability at HSBC bank. The moderator engaged the panellists with an apt set of questions and discussed about various new fields where women are being empowered.

As a part of the event a poetry competition and poster-making competition were organised and the winners were felicitated. The plethora of creativity enriched the event to many-folds. The event ended with a vote of thanks, proposed by Wasim Khan of St. Xavier's Institute of Education.

OUTREACH INVOLVEMENT

The outreach programmes conducted by the SCWSD have over the years multiplied and expanded in scope thanks to the munificence of those who have made contributions for these courses. These activities are directed towards economically disadvantaged young girls and women who have been unable to continue their formal education for a variety of reasons. The participants for these courses are affiliated with various NGO's with whom SCWSD collaborates. If needed the courses are repeated as per the demand. Resource persons also go to different parts of the city, if the participants are unable to come to Sophia College which is located in South Mumbai. Due to the Covid 19 pandemic unfortunately these programmes could not be executed this year.

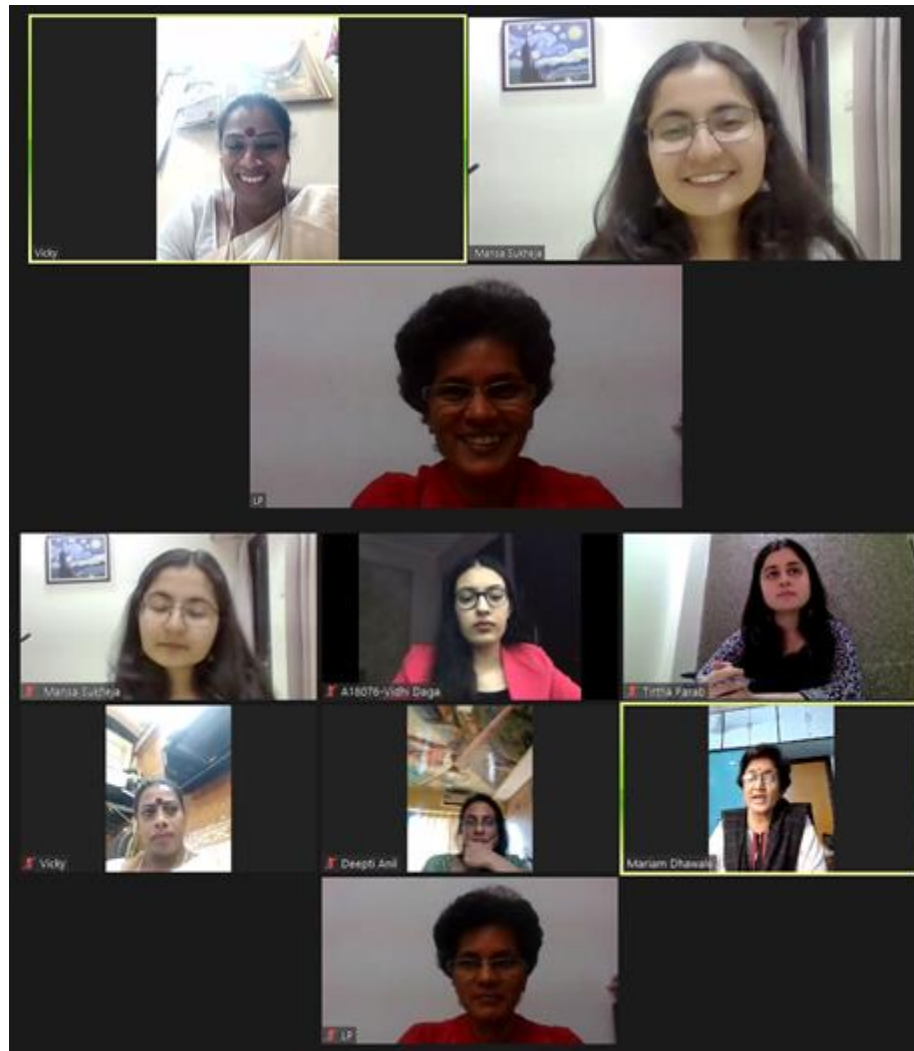
1. FES Genderlogue Panel Discussion 14th August 2020



2. FES Genderlogue Students Event 18th August 2020



3. Gender and Challenges: Work Continuum During and After Lockdown” on 26th November 2020





Sophia Centre for Women's Studies and Development &
St. Xavier's Institute of Education

in collaboration with

The Russian Centre for Science & Culture, Mumbai

present

"21st Century Generation Equality"

on the occasion of

International Women's Day

A Panel Discussion on

"Emerging Avenues for Women in the 21st Century"

Keynote speaker



Adv. Flavia Agnes

Women's Rights Lawyer & Co-founder MAJLIS

Our eminent panellists



Ms Reena Agrawal

Co-founder, Xpress Story Storytelling
Panel discussion moderator



Mr Harish Sadani

Co-founder & Executive Director
Men Against Violence & Abuse



Ms Vaidehi Vaidya

Founder & MD
Women in Sport India Pvt Ltd



Ms Aloka Majumdar

Head of Corporate Sustainability
HSBC India

as well as Poem Recitation and Poster making by students

Date: 8th March 2021

Time: 3:30pm - 5:30pm

Live on Zoom and Facebook

For registration click on - <https://forms.gle/Kkpo3ZwWaH86oFMz8>