

Report on Training Programme on Technology Facilitated Gender Based Violence (TFGBV) – Coimbatore (22th November, 2023)

Socio-demographic of Coimbatore

Coimbatore is one of the major metropolitan cities located in the western part of Tamil Nadu, India. Coimbatore is a derivation of Kovanpudhur (meaning ‘a new town of Kovan’, after chieftain Kovan) and is also known as Kovai (named after ‘Kovaiamma’, the goddess worshipped by Kovan). Coimbatore has a rich history dating back to Sangham period (3rd century BCE- 4th century BCE). It is also home for several museums, galleries and theatres which proudly showcase the region’s rich culture and heritage. With several historical landmarks, some of the most famous places include Marudamalai Temple and Dhyanalinga Yogic Temple (Isha). Coimbatore is home to numerous temples that attract devotees from all over India. Some of the famous temples in the city include the Perur Pateeswarar Temple, Eachanari Vinayagar Temple, and the Velliangiri Andavar Temple. The city is also known for its mosques and churches, including the St. Michael’s Cathedral and the Masjid-ul-Mahaboobiya Mosque.

Coimbatore earned nick names such as ‘Manchester of South India’ for its growth in textile industry and ‘Pump City’ for its excellence in engineering. The rich black soil of the region has contributed to Coimbatore’s flourishing agriculture industry and to the successful growth of cotton that served as a foundation for the establishment of its famous textile industry. The first textile mill was dated back to 1888 and after that many textile mills were started and provided many employment opportunities to within as well as neighbouring Districts. The result has been a strong economy and a reputation as one of the greatest industrial cities in South India. Coimbatore is also a significant educational center, with several numerous engineering and management colleges, medical schools, and research centres. Some of the notable institutions include the Coimbatore Institute of Technology, PSG College of Technology, and the Indian Institute of Technology Madras.

The city also regularly features among the top ten best cities to live in India and is amongst the safest cities in India for women according to National Crime Records Bureau report in 2015.

Training Program – Coimbatore

The Program commenced with inaugural address, which Dr. Bharathi Harishankar. She has been Professor of English and Founding Head of the Department of Women’s Studies, University of Madras. She has held several administrative positions such as Dean Student Affairs, Director IQAC, Director International Centre, Coordinator RUSA, Director UGC HRDC and Member Syndicate. She was instrumental in setting up a Gender Lab, the first of its kind in the country, to offer online workshops on gender sensitization, in collaboration with Sutherland Global Services. She is currently the Vice Chancellor of Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science & Higher Education for Women. She spoke about how we should normalize gender-based violence, how an attitude has been created in our environment where violence against women is seen acceptable or even justified. She spoke about how we should provide more awareness about gender-based violence and its impact. She also shined light on the relevance of awareness on Technology Facilitated Gender-Based Violence.

Dr. Priyamvadha then explained how the program was introduced and also the main motto of the training i.e., how the women who attends this training program can help others who need it and share the knowledge they gain.



Image1: Inaugural session in Coimbatore

About the partnering institution

In Coimbatore, the partnering institution was Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science & Higher Education for Women.

Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science & Higher Education for Women is a women's Deemed University in Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India. It was started in 1957 by the Avinashilingam Education Trust founded by T. S. Avinashilingam Chettiar as Avinashilingam Home Science College for Women which later grow into a university in 1988. He also served as a member of the Imperial Legislative Council and later, education minister of Madras. He is also credited with introducing reforms in Indian society.

About the trainers

Three trainers were involved in training program. First, Dr. M. Priyamvatha, Professor, Department of criminology, University of Madras. Second was Mr. Thomas Gowthaman, who is currently a Ph.D. research scholar in Criminology from University of Madras. He is also Junior Research fellow, University grant Commission and is also qualified for assistant professor. Third was Ms. Syama, who is also Junior Research fellow, University grant Commission and is qualified for assistant professor. They trained the participants and provided them with awareness on technology facilitated violence against women and the preventive measures that they can adopt to stay safe.

Training program details

Program Schedule		
10am to 11am	Inauguration	
11am to 12 noon	Session - 1	Introduction to Digital Technology
12 noon to 1pm	Session - 2	Overview of TFGBV
1.00pm to 2.00 pm	Lunch	
2.00 pm to 3.00 pm	Session - 3	Forms of TFGBV
3.00 pm to 4.00 pm	Session - 4	Awareness, prevention, and detection on TFGBV
4.00pm to 5 pm	Session - 5	Response to TFGBV
5.00pm to 5.30pm	Evaluation, Feedback and Closing Remarks	

About the venue and participants

Participants for the program includes women from Self Help Group, Health sector, Advocate, World Council for Women's Right, Research Scholars and home makers. A total of 58

participants were present for the program. The venue of the program was Hi-Tech Seminar Hall, Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science & Higher Education for Women, Coimbatore. Women of all age group were actively participating through out the program, from asking questions to being fully involved in group activities.

Session 1

This session started with resource person giving a basic idea on what digital technology is. She spoke in depth on the boon and bane of cyber space. Quoting a real-life example where an Indian actress gained fame overnight with just one scene from her first movie and how turned into cyber bullying a few months later. This shows how unpredictable and dangerous cyber space is, although it has multitude of advantages. Some of the advantages mentioned by participants were that through internet they were able to build their business, for students, it was information relating to their curriculum. But the downside to this is that although all information is available in internet, some important information is paid access only. These shows the class differences in cyber space. Nowadays almost everyone has an account in any one of the social media accounts. Although social media have benefits like sharing notes, managing business and having long distance communication made possible, it also have same amount of disadvantages. Some of the disadvantages include cyber bullying, spreading of misleading information, online harassment, etc. A brief on cyber ethics and how one can use internet to their advantage without their information being misused was provided to the participants. With the session being very interactive, several real-life examples were quoted by both resources' person and participants.

Session 2

In this session the resource person started the session with asking the participants with their daily activity. While some of the working women said their husband help them out with some of the works at home, they end up doing most of the work while homemakers mentioned that they do all the work. Even in today's day and age women tends to do all the house hold work as men even don't consider doing any household works. Not all, but in some households both boys and girls are being treated equally with equal chores to equal freedom in everything, while in other households, boys are treated differently when compared to girls as they are not asked to do any household works and are given ample freedom while girls are taught household work and are not given the opportunity to step out often. In this session the resource person defined

what Gender-Based Violence is and its impact on people in depth and also spoke about Technology Facilitated Gender-Based Violence and how it has been affecting people, sometimes people are unaware that they have fallen victim to it. He also gave importance to mindful sharing of content in social media and also explained how it can be misused if one is not being careful.

An activity was given to where 8 professions were given such as Nurse, Politician, Street Hawker, Lawyer, Fire Fighter, School Principal, Care Taker and Village Chief to the participants and were asked to guess the gender that first came to mind when they heard the profession. When it comes to nurse, majority mentioned women while only very few people mentioned men; When it comes to Politicians, majority mentioned men while only very few people mentioned women; When it comes to Street Hawker, all the participants mentioned men; When it comes to Lawyer, participants equally mentioned both male and female; When it comes to Firefighter, all the participants mentioned men; When it comes to School Principal, majority mentioned women while only very few people mentioned men; When it comes to Care taker, Participants equally mentioned both male and female and when Village chief was mentioned all the participants mentioned male. This shows that how gender roles are assumed for a job while most women were actually surprised when said that there are also women fire fighter.

Session 3

In this session, information on forms of Technology facilitated gender-based violence was given in detail. Although through social media people know some forms of Technology facilitated gender-based violence, not all are aware of the impact and consequences. Some of the major forms that were explained in details are online harassment, cyber bullying, sexting, nonconsensual sharing of intimate images, digital stalking, online grooming and exploitation, Gaslighting, catfishing, morphing, doxing etc. All these forms were explained with real life examples so that everyone can understand. Many youngsters, when they face such forms of abuse does not tend to open up to their parents or any one and end up taking drastic measures not knowing that if properly approached, the problems can be solved. By giving more awareness on this, we can remove the taboo on how people view cybercrime. Using social media careful can help prevent misuse of personal information. The main focus in this session was given to factors such as how one shouldn't be afraid if they become a victim; the necessity of awareness and how rationally one should use social media.

Session 4

This session started with group activity where participants were divided into four groups and each group was given a topic for which they have to discuss among themselves and one person among the group should come and present in front of the participants. Group 1 was given domestic violence where the participants first started with definition followed by how people aren't even aware that they are being victimized and how awareness about what they can do if they want to proceed legally and how they can get help if they ever are in such situation. The topic given to second group was Child abuse for which the participants started with the definition followed by how awareness among children should be given so that they will come forward if they come across such situations and also how parents should create a safe environment for the children so that they don't feel cornered. The topic given to third group was sexual harassment for which the participants started with definition followed by what one should face if they ever faced with this situation and how they can proceed legally and also spoke about how more awareness and protection has to be provided so that no one faces such situation and many legal aspects relating to the topic was also covered. The topic given for the fourth group was acid attack for which participants spoke about case studies, preventive measures that can be adopted, victim compensation scheme for acid attacks.

In this session resource person spoke about how one can use social media safely by keeping their setting and keep privacy mode; how one should be responsible online and also focused on the precautionary measures to protect women from getting victimized by cybercrime.

Session 5

This is the most important session as this session gives attention on what one should do if they or someone they know become a victim to cyber-crime. The necessity to register a complaint was explained in this session A live demonstration of how one can register complaint on online portal called National Cybercrime Reporting Portal was given by the resource person. Acts pertaining to crimes against women was explained in detail so as to spread the awareness that there are legal consequences for unfavourable acts committed against them. Some of the other important features discussed in detail include Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules 2021, which introduced grievance redressal mechanism which in turns helps people to report any kind of social media grievances. The resources person also explained Protection of children from sexual offenses act (POCSO), 2012 in detail. Some of the other aspects that were discussed include Cyber Swachhta Kendra, Cyber Dost, Digital Shakti, Kavalan SOS APP which is widely used in Tamil Nadu and Personal Data Protection Bill.



Image 2 & 3: Resources person during sessions



Image 4: Participants interacting during the session



Image 5: Participants during Group activity



Image 6: Group Photo including participants and the resources persons