

Paper Presentations

Room D

Session 1:

Dr Sheila Bunwaree presented her paper on “women on the margins of the Mauritian labour market- a view from a ‘cyber’ island to be!” She argued that although there is a political will to address the Science and Technology deficit of the country that ‘political will’ itself is not sufficiently genderised. In the broad African context, she also highlighted a number of factors, which have contributed to the Mauritian success story. Mauritius continues to be a highly patriarchal society with various forms of ‘male biases’ and labour market is one sector where this phenomenon is most prevalent. She discussed on gender and the question of the cyber/intelligent network island. Finally she concluded that unless efforts are made to utilize the country’s human resources in a gender equitable manner, the country’s intention of becoming a ‘cyber’ island may just remain a dream.

Session 2:

Dr Frances Grundy discussed that there is an increasing number of women entering some of the traditional Sciences at undergraduate level, but very few follow through to later career stages. Women are not staying in the scientific professions nor are they being promoted in sufficient numbers. This stagnation leads to several pertinent questions such as ‘What are really the goals of women’s movements?’ ‘Do they have an ultimate shared goal’ and ‘Can they have a shared goal at all’. She also reflected on the essential qualities of women and the meaning of ‘essentialism’. Finally she used Foucault’s ideas on power, discipline and its normalising effects to our lives in the scientific workplace.



Session 3:

The two presenters (**Mrs Inga Lill ST Jerndahl and Mrs Bulle Davidson**) discussed how women and girls reflect on the concept of technology. Despite the fact that young people in Sweden are very active users of technology, only few are interested in studying and working in the technological sector. This is a great concern to the country and the Municipal technological Centres have been created to overcome and

change this discrepancy between girl’s interest in using technology and their interest in learning about technology. Swedish Business Development Agency (NUTEK) established these Centres in cooperation with the Swedish National Labour Market Board (AMS). Finally it was outlined how women and girls in Sweden apprehend and reflect on the concept of technology.

Session 4

Dr Barbara Hodgson’s presentation was based on two major studies. The first one explains the participation, progress and equity of women in Science in Higher Education. She said that although the numbers of women successfully studying science at higher education and entering the scientific workforce continues to increase, women are still not making the headway with careers that we might expect. She then outlined the research findings of the study conducted among women PhDs of different ages. Several

issues such as isolation, departmental culture, harassment and compromises were found to cause difficulties and created barriers at various points in their careers. Finally she spoke about the Athena Project which includes the development programmes involving

mentoring, networking and staff development and also the changing organisational culture, practices and processes.

Session 5

Shauna Paul talked on ‘the immigrant women professionals Canada’s innovation strategy: the impact of social and economic policy’. She pointed out that this project was initiated in response to cope with problems faced by the immigrants skilled female workers in Science and Technology that is promoting career continuity and professional advancement of the women. To overcome the multiple barriers like language biases, lengthy and expensive accreditation processes, Canadian work experience, lack of adequate bridging support in the community, the project provides relevant information, resources and mentoring services to support these women. She also discussed about the three major categories of Immigration for women with respect to the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (2002).