



## WHEC UPDATE

Briefings of worldwide activity of Women's Health and Education Center (WHEC)

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### *Practice & Policy*

Happy New Year from @ of us at Women's Health and Education Center (WHEC)

Much has changed since the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were first formulated soon after the Millennium Declaration in 2000. Or has it? It is undoubtedly true that, as compared to the formulation of the MDGs, the sustainable development goals (SDGs) has been a more open and more inclusive process driven by United Nations Member States, and generating intense and wide debate. SDG 5 (as agreed thus far through the process of the General Assembly's Open Working Group (OWG), United Nations 2014) calls to "Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls". However, two important differences at this level are the explicit inclusion of girls, and of the word "all", which can be used to address the challenges faced by the most marginalized and oppressed. More differences appear at the level of the targets under the goal: whereas MDG 3 had a single target focused on education, SDG 5 proposes a range of targets to end discrimination, violence and harmful practices, recognize and value unpaid care work, participation and leadership in decision-making, and universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights. How SDG 5 and its proposed targets will finally translate into indicators, and whether these will be effective and usable for monitoring (where the rubber hits the road) remains to be seen.

Nonetheless, despite advances over the MDGs, there is still a worrying limitation to SDG 5: the absence of a clear recognition of the human rights of women and girls. This piece is being written even as the battle over the affirmation of women's human rights and the role of women human rights defenders has been bitterly fought at this year's meeting of OWG, United Nations 2015. What happens at Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), such as The Women's Health and Education Center (WHEC) and its non-profit entity, The Women's Health and Education Organization, Inc. (WHEO, Inc.) is important because it is an established institution for review and monitoring, and because it works in closed collaboration with the United Nations, which will be an asset for meeting SDG 5.

Human rights are contentious because, unlike policies and programs, they are often more clearly justiciable, and can be used to hold Governments and others to account for their acts of commission or omission. The backlash against women's human rights has been led by Member (and observer) States of the United Nations with poor records on discrimination against women, as well as laws, policies and practices that sustain gender inequality across a wide spectrum of issues. A telling reminder of who is principally behind the backlash was the Political Declaration's refusal to recognize the key role of women's human rights defenders who often risk their liberty and their lives to protect and advance the human rights of girls and women at risk. However, the fault is not only here. The refusal by other Member States to recognize that economic, social and cultural rights are interlinked and inseparable from civil and political rights is also a serious challenge to advancing towards the fulfillment of SDG 5.

Finally, one also has to ask the question: where is the beef? Each SDG (as enunciated in OWG's report) has its attached targets and means of implementation. Those linked to SDG 5 mention legal reforms and technology (5.a, 5.b, and 5.c), but there is no reference made about funding. Given that a major weakness in the fulfillment of MDGs was the inadequacy of funding, the challenge of funding SDG 5 will remain as a major stumbling block unless it becomes central to its means of implementation.

Make your voice heard and join the conversation @ [WomensHealthSection.com](http://WomensHealthSection.com)

Beyond 2015

**Rita Luthra, MD**

## Your Questions, Our Reply

What is the United Nations? Why is peace in the post-2015 agenda so important?

**Global Platform and Global Efforts:** The United Nations is a unique organization composed of independent countries that have come together to work for world peace and social progress. The Organization formally came into existence with just 51 countries in 1945. 70 years later, by 2015, the membership of the United Nations has grown to 193 countries. The term “United Nations” was first used by an American President. The name was suggested by U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt. It was first officially used in 1942. As a tribute to President Roosevelt, who died a few weeks before the signing of the Charter, all those present at the San Francisco Conference agreed to adopt the name “United Nations”.

It is a forum / global platform for all countries; it is NOT a world government. Governments represent countries and peoples. The United Nations represents neither a particular government nor any one nations. It represents all its Members and does only what the Member States decide that it should do. Guiding principles of the United Nations is The Charter of the United Nations; and it is the founding document guiding all of its under-takings. It is a set of guidelines that explains the rights and duties of each Member country and what needs to be done to achieve the goals they have set for themselves. When a nation becomes a Member of the United Nations, it accepts the aims and rules of the Charter.

The United Nations has four main purposes:

- To keep peace throughout the world;
- To develop friendly relations among nations;
- To work together to improve the lives of poor people, to conquer hunger, disease and illiteracy and to encourage respect for each other's rights and freedoms;
- To be a center for helping nations achieve these goals.

We cannot achieve poverty eradication, universal access to good healthcare, and sustainable development without tackling conflict and insecurity: there is a large and increasing gap in MDG performance between States affected by high levels of violence and other developing countries. Strikingly, all of the seven countries unlikely to meet a single MDG by the end of 2015 have been affected by high levels of violence in recent years.

However, violence and insecurity are universal issues affecting people's well-being in all nations, not just conflict-affected ones: for example, in Brazil, the homicide rate one of the highest in the world with 56,000 people violently killed in 2012; in South Africa, the murder rate from 2014 was around 5 times higher than the 2013 global average, and in the United States of America, the number of homicides in 2013 was 4.9 per 100,000 (compared to the average homicide rate of below 0.8 per 100,000 in developed countries). It is often those in the most marginalized sector of society are affected by violence. For many of the poorest countries in the world, it is impossible to reduce poverty significantly and achieve economic growth as long as violence and insecurity prevail – by 2030, 75% of people in extreme poverty will be living in countries at risk from high levels of violence. Peace, justice and effective governance are increasingly seen by people as not only development enablers but development outcomes in their own right.

The post-2015 framework should put people at the core of the peace agenda – everyone, not only those in conflict-affected States, should be able to lead peaceful, fulfilling lives, free from violent conflict and insecurity. The international community must focus on ensuring a positive, sustainable peace and not solely “negative peace” – the mere absence of violence – as it can often mask latent instability.

Join our efforts – health and healthcare development is not possible without peace; and peace is not possible without universal access to good healthcare.

We welcome everyone on **WHEC Global Health-line** and **WomensHealthSection.com**

## United Nations At A Glance

### Permanent Mission of India to the UN

India became Member State of the United Nations on 30 October 1945.

India's engagement with the institutions of modern multilateral diplomacy began when, on 28 June 1919, India signed the Treaty of Versailles which ended the First World War. Article 1 of the Treaty created the League of Nations, the precursor of the United Nations. India was a founder member of this organization, as well as of the International Labour Organization (ILO), which was created by the Treaty of Versailles. In 1922, India became one of the permanent members of the Governing Council of the ILO, a position it has maintained to this day.

India was among the original members of the United Nations that signed the Declaration by United Nations at Washington on 1 January 1942 and also participated in the historic UN Conference of International Organization at San Francisco from 25 April to 26 June 1945. As a founding member of the United Nations, India strongly supports the purposes and principles of the UN and has made significant contributions to implementing the goals of the Charter, and the evolution of the UN's specialized programs and agencies.



26 June 1945: Signing of UN Charter, Sir A. Ramaswami Mudaliar, Signing the UN Charter at San Francisco

Source: United Nations

Independent India viewed its membership at the United Nations as an important guarantee for maintaining international peace and security. India stood at the forefront during the UN's tumultuous years of struggle against colonialism and apartheid. India's status as a founding member of the Non - Aligned Movement and the Group of 77 cemented its position within the UN system as a leading advocate of the concerns and aspirations of developing countries and the creation of a more equitable international economic and political order.

India is today at the forefront of efforts on UN reform, including expansion of the Security Council in both the permanent and non-permanent categories to reflect contemporary realities. India was amongst the most outspoken critics of apartheid and racial discrimination in South Africa, being the first country to have raised the issue in the UN (in 1946). India played a leading role in the formation of a Sub-committee against Apartheid set up by the General Assembly. When the Convention on Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination was adopted in 1965, India was among the earliest signatories. India also contributed generously to UN Funds for assistance to victims of apartheid and for revitalization and economic regeneration of Africa and remains a fervent supporter of Africa's development and aspirations.

Details: <https://www.pminewyork.org/>

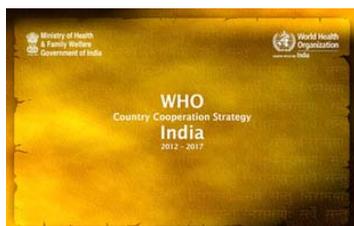
## Collaboration with World Health Organization (WHO)

### WHO | India

World Health Organization (WHO) is the United Nations' specialized agency for Health. It is an inter-governmental organization and works in collaboration with its member states usually through the Ministries of Health. The World Health Organization is responsible for providing leadership on global health matters, shaping the health research agenda, setting norms and standards, articulating evidence-

based policy options, providing technical support to countries and monitoring and assessing health trends.

India became a party to the WHO Constitution on 12 January 1948. The first session of the WHO Regional Committee for South-East Asia was held on 4-5 October 1948 in the office of the Indian Minister of Health. It was inaugurated by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Prime Minister of India and was addressed by the WHO Director-General, Dr Brock Chisholm. India is a Member State of the WHO South East Asia Region.



The WHO Country Office for India is headquartered in Delhi with country-wide presence. The WHO Country Office for India's areas of work are enshrined in its new Country Cooperation Strategy (CCS) 2012-2017.

WHO is staffed by health professionals, other experts and support staff working at headquarters in Geneva, six regional offices and country offices. In carrying out its activities and fulfilling its objectives, WHO's secretariat focuses its work on the following six core functions:

- Providing leadership on matters critical to health and engaging in partnerships where joint action is needed;
- Shaping the research agenda and stimulating the generation, translation and dissemination of valuable knowledge;
- Setting norms and standards and promoting and monitoring their implementation;
- Articulating ethical and evidence-based policy options;
- Providing technical support, catalyzing change, and building sustainable institutional capacity; and
- Monitoring the health situation and assessing health trends.

These core functions are set out in the 11th General Programme of Work, which provides the framework for organization-wide programme of work, budget, resources and results. Entitled "Engaging for health", it covers the 10-year period from 2006 to 2015.

### **Country Cooperation Strategy (CCS) 2012-2017**

The WHO Country Cooperation Strategy – India (2012-2017) has been jointly developed by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoH&FW) of the Government of India (GoI) and the WHO Country Office for India (WCO). Its key aim is to contribute to improving health and equity in India. It distinguishes and addresses both the challenges to unleashing India's potential globally and the challenges to solving long-standing health and health service delivery problems internally. The CCS incorporates the valuable recommendations of key stakeholders garnered through extensive consultations. It balances country priorities with WHO's strategic orientations and comparative advantages in order to contribute optimally to national health development. It includes work on "inter-sectoral" actions, regulations and reform of the provision of (personal and population) health services that impact on the health system outcomes – health status, financial protection, responsiveness and performance.

Details: [http://www.searo.who.int/india/areas/country\\_cooperation\\_strategy/en/](http://www.searo.who.int/india/areas/country_cooperation_strategy/en/)

**Bulletin of the World Health Organization; Complete list of [contents](#) for Volume 94, Number 1, January, 1–76**

## **Collaboration with UN University (UNU)**

UNU-WIDER (World Institute for Development Economics Research) *Expert Series on Health Economics:*

### **Disadvantage and discrimination in self-employment**

#### **Caste gaps in earnings in Indian small businesses**

Using the 2004-05 India Human Development Survey data, we estimate and decompose the earnings of household businesses owned by historically marginalized social groups known as Scheduled Castes and Tribes (SCSTs), and non-SCSTs across the earnings distribution. We find clear differences in characteristics between the two types of businesses with the former faring significantly worse. The mean decomposition reveals that as much as 55 per cent of the caste earnings gap could be attributed to the unexplained component. Quantile regressions suggest that gaps are higher at lower deciles, providing some evidence of a sticky floor. Finally, quantile decompositions reveal that the unexplained component is greater at the lower and middle deciles than higher, suggesting that SCST-owned businesses at the lower and middle end of the conditional earnings distribution face greater discrimination.

In this paper, our objective has been to assess the presence of caste based discrimination in small household businesses using the large-scale nationally representative India Human Development Survey of 2004-05. Our results show that businesses owned by SCSTs fare significantly worse in terms of owner's education, household economic status and business characteristics, as compared to their non-SCST counterparts. Depending upon the specification of variables used, 19-55 per cent of the mean earnings gap between businesses owned by SCSTs and non-SCSTs cannot be explained by differences in characteristics. Further, we find that there is substantial heterogeneity in earnings gaps across the earnings distribution, thereby necessitating the use of quantile regression based decomposition methods. These indicate that the proportion of the earnings gap on account of differences in characteristics increases in the higher deciles of the conditional earnings distribution.

In addition to being the first to examine this question for India, this paper's findings confirm patterns that have been observed in the context of racial and ethnic differences in entrepreneurship in other countries such as the United States and United Kingdom. However, unlike the United States, for instance, where a number of migrant groups such as the Koreans and Japanese have used self-employment as a way to achieve upward economic and social mobility that does not appear to be the case for India, as suggested by our findings and also those in Iyer et al. (2013) and Deshpande and Sharma (2013). This also suggests that the exuberance surrounding Dalit Capitalism may be somewhat misplaced since the reality of most SC and ST businesses is in stark contrast to the success of a few established low-caste industrialists.

A larger question is the relationship between earnings and wealth, and whether an increase in earnings (from businesses and elsewhere) is sufficient to close the wealth gap between communities. Barsky et al. (2002) find that roughly two-thirds of the mean difference in wealth between blacks and whites in the US can be explained by differences in earnings from all 13 sources, which suggests that substantial wealth gaps remain even after controlling for earning differences. Whether an increase in business ownership by SCs and STs translates into narrowing wealth gaps would have to be the subject matter of a future exercise.

Publisher: UNU-WIDER; Authors: Ashwini Deshpande and Smriti Sharma; Sponsors: We are grateful to Deepti Goel for detailed comments on an earlier draft; to Shantanu Khanna for discussions on the quantile regression decomposition methodology; and to seminar participants at Delhi School of Economics, Brown University, New Delhi office of the World Bank, UNU-WIDER, Nordic Conference on Development Economics 2014, IEA-World Bank Roundtable on Shared Prosperity, and the IHDS-NCAER 2014 conference on 'Human Development in India: evidence from IHDS' where earlier versions of the paper were presented, for useful comments. We are responsible for all remaining errors and omissions.

(Details of the paper can be accessed from the link of UNU-WIDER on CME Page <http://www.womenshealthsection.com/content/cme/>)

## United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI)

*The Effort to Advance the Global Strategy  
(Continued)*

### India: Newsline

Education Project in Rajasthan



#### Transforming village girls

Since she first came to the residential school a year ago, the change in Madhubala has been striking. “When the girls first come, they usually have lice as well as stomach and skin disorders,” says Seema Bishnoi, the young teacher and warden who helps look after Madhubala and the 77 other girls who stay at the KGBV hostel in Jodhpur’s Popavas block.

“Many of them are anemic,” she adds. “We treat them and teach them basic hygiene – from how to brush their teeth, to always wash their hands with soap before a meal, and even how to use a toilet.” Madhubala’s squeaky-clean look is testimony to the constant efforts of her teachers. Her uniform is spotless and her once-disheveled hair has been cut short to make it easier to keep clean. Jamku Devi, (right) widowed when she was a child, earns Rs.3000 a month cooking for the girls at the KGBV near her home. The hostels receive strong support from the local community. The parents too are proud of their daughters’ transformation. From beneath her veil, illiterate Pappu Devi, the mother of Mamta, another hostel resident, beams as she surveys her young daughter. “Her whole look and demeanor has changed,” she says approvingly, breaking into a broad smile. “Even the way she speaks is now much nicer.”

It is also of great comfort to the parents to know that their daughters are in safe hands and living in far better conditions than they could ever provide. All the hostels have electricity, toilets and running water, a luxury in this poor desert region. Moreover, all the girls’ expenses are provided for by the program – from board and lodging, to medical check-ups, uniforms, toiletries, stationery, and books – expenses that parents could be willing to spend on their sons but not often on their daughters.

#### Strong community support

Yet, despite the numerous benefits that the residential schools provide, convincing tradition-bound parents to send their young daughters into the great unknown – a hostel far from home – has not been easy.



Jamku Devi, (right) widowed when she was a child, earns Rs.3000 a month cooking for the girls at the KGBV near her home. The hostels receive strong support from the local community

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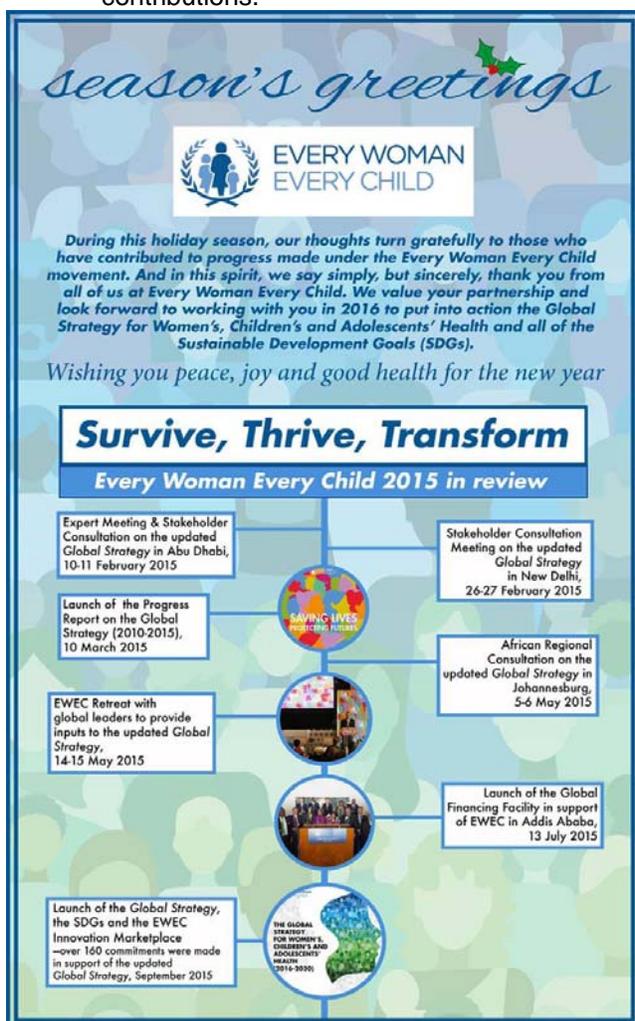
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*To be continued.....*

## Top Two-Articles Accessed in December 2015

1. Human Trafficking and Exploitation; <http://www.womenshealthsection.com/content/vaw/vaw014.php3>  
WHEC Publications. Special thanks to WHO, NIH, CDC and our editors for compiling the review.
2. Recurrent Pregnancy Loss; <http://www.womenshealthsection.com/content/obs/obs030.php3>  
WHEC Publications. Special thanks to our physician’s board for helpful suggestions and contributions.



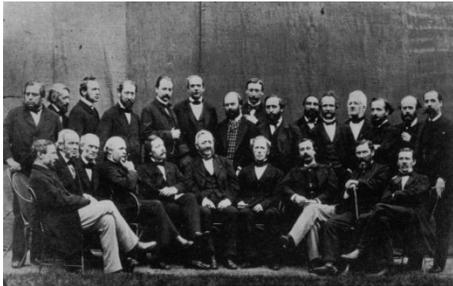
## From Editor's Desk

### International Telecommunication Union (ITU)

For a century and a half since 1865, the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) has been at the center of advances in communications – from telegraphy through to the modern world of satellites, mobile phones and the Internet. The story of ITU is one of international cooperation, among governments, private companies and other stakeholders. The continuing mission is to achieve the best practical solutions for integrating new technologies as they develop, and to spread their benefits to all.

#### From telegraph to telephone to radio to television to space / satellites; and to THE INTERNET

For thousands of years, the quickest method of sending complex messages over long distances was with a courier on horseback. At the end of the 18th century, Claude Chappe inaugurated a network of visual semaphore stations across France. Then came the electrical revolution. Experiments were conducted in sending electric signals along wires, and in 1839, the world's first commercial telegraph service opened in London with a system created by [Charles Wheatstone](#). In the United States, Samuel Morse used the new Morse code to send his first telegraph message in 1844. Already in 1843, a precursor of the [fax machine](#) for transmitting images had been patented in the United Kingdom by Alexander Bain.



Delegates at the first Telegraph Conference (Paris, 1865)

Source: ITU

### ITU Based in Switzerland

The 1868 International Telegraph Conference, in Vienna, decided that ITU would operate from its own bureau in Berne, Switzerland. It began with just 3 members of staff. In 1948, the headquarters of ITU were moved from Berne to Geneva.

### A UN Agency

On 15 November 1947, an agreement between ITU and the newly created United Nations recognized ITU as the specialized agency for telecommunications. The agreement formally entered into force on 1 January 1949.

### THE INTERNET



It started in 1969 with a packet-switched network of computers – ARPANET – in the US Defense Department. This carried the first e-mail, sent in 1971. Then, in 1989, an important advance was made at the European Organization for Nuclear Research (or CERN), close to Geneva. British scientist Tim Berners-Lee, working with Belgian Robert Cailliau, proposed a distributed hypertext system that became known as the World Wide Web. The necessary software was developed in 1990, and crucially, the system was used not only within CERN, but also made freely available to all. The Internet that carries the World Wide Web comprises many types of equipment and telecommunication infrastructure, which must operate together seamlessly. The worldwide expansion of the Internet owes much to technical standards from ITU, from the early days

of modems through to today's broadband. Hardly anyone would be able to use this powerful resource without ITU-brokered and approved global standards for the critical transport layers and access technologies. And the future is continually under consideration, including such issues as the transition to IPv6 to overcome the urgent need for Internet Protocol addresses, especially given the burgeoning "Internet of Things."

Details: <http://www.itu.int>

## Words of Wisdom

In the end, our society will be defined not only by what we create, but by what we refuse to destroy.

– John C. Sawhill (June 12, 1936 – May 18, 2000); President and CEO of the Nature Conservancy and the 12<sup>th</sup> President of New York University (NYU)

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*Monthly newsletter of WHEC designed to keep you informed on  
the latest UN and NGO activities*

