



General Assembly

Distr.: General
21 July 2023

English only

Human Rights Council

Fifty-third session

19 June–14 July 2023

Agenda item 3

**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,
political, economic, social and cultural rights,
including the right to development**

Written statement* submitted by Rajasthan Samgrah Kalyan Sansthan, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[24 May 2023]

* Issued as received, in the language of submission only.



Empowering Women: Advancing Rights, Equality and Equitable Practices

Attaining equality between women and men and eliminating all forms of discrimination against women are fundamental human rights and United Nations values. The United Nations has a long history of addressing women's human rights and much progress has been made in securing women's rights across the world in recent decades. Some groups of women face additional forms of discrimination based on their age, ethnicity, nationality, religion, health status, marital status, education, disability and socioeconomic status, among other grounds. These intersecting forms of discrimination must be taken into account when developing measures and responses to combat discrimination against women.(i) Gender inequality is a major cause and effect of hunger and poverty: it is estimated that 60 percent of chronically hungry people are women and girls. Women make up more than two-thirds of the world's 796 million illiterate people. Every additional year of primary school increases girls' eventual wages by 10-20 percent. It also encourages them to marry later and have fewer children, and leaves them less vulnerable to violence. In most countries, women in rural areas who work for wages are more likely than men to hold seasonal, part-time and low-wage jobs. Women also receive lower wages for the same work.(ii) The United Nations has long been at the forefront of promoting gender equality and women's rights worldwide. Despite progress, gender disparities and discrimination persist, particularly in developing countries. Rajasthan Samgrah Kalyan Sansthan, a non-profit organization based in Rajasthan, India, has been working tirelessly from last 30 years to empower women and advance gender equality in the region. RSKS India has been granted Special Consultative Status (2015) by The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of The United Nation.

Rajasthan Samgrah Kalyan Sansthan is a grassroots non- profit organization established in 1992 with the mission of Alleviate Illiteracy, Poverty, Violence Against Women, Social Evils by Facilitating Empowerment of Women's & Girls From Deprived and Marginalised Communities. Rajasthan Samgrah Kalyan Sansthan operates in the state of Rajasthan, which is known for its deeply entrenched patriarchal norms and gender-based inequalities. Recognizing the urgent need to address these issues, Rajasthan Samgrah Kalyan Sansthan has been implementing a range of programs and initiatives to promote women's rights, gender equality, and women's empowerment.

Legal Literacy and Empowerment:

Rajasthan Samgrah Kalyan Sansthan recognizes the importance of legal literacy in promoting women's rights and empowering women. We conduct workshops and awareness programs to educate women about their legal rights and entitlements. Rajasthan Samgrah Kalyan Sansthan also provides support and guidance to women in accessing legal services, enabling them to seek justice and protection from violence, discrimination, and other forms of gender-based abuse. This is done through the use of story-telling sessions, flip-charts, awareness video sessions, card sheets etc.

Gender Sensitization and Community Engagement:

Rajasthan Samgrah Kalyan Sansthan firmly believes that transforming social attitudes and beliefs is essential for achieving gender equality. We conduct extensive gender sensitization programs targeting communities, including men in the positive fatherhood program, to challenge regressive gender norms and promote a more inclusive society. Rajasthan Samgrah Kalyan Sansthan actively engages with community leaders, influencers, and local authorities to garner support and create an enabling environment for women's empowerment. Rajasthan Samgrah Kalyan Sansthan 's comprehensive support services for survivors of gender-based violence have made a substantial difference in the lives of countless women and girls. Survivors have been provided with the necessary care, protection, and skills to rebuild their lives with dignity and confidence.

Sustainable Livelihood Support and Skill Development:

Rajasthan Samgrah Kalyan Sansthan recognizes that economic empowerment is a crucial aspect of women's empowerment. We provide vocational training programs and skill development initiatives in different trades like beautician, garments making, handicraft making, bag making etc that equips women with marketable & income skills. Rajasthan Samgrah Kalyan Sansthan also facilitates access to credit and microfinance services, enabling women to start their businesses or engage in income-generating activities. By promoting economic independence, Rajasthan Samgrah Kalyan Sansthan empowers women to make decisions, exercise agency, and break free from the cycle of poverty. Rajasthan Samgrah Kalyan Sansthan's interventions have significantly improved the economic well-being of women in Rajasthan. Through skill development programs, access to credit, and entrepreneurship support, women have gained financial independence, improved their living conditions, and contributed to the economic growth of their families and communities.

Women's Self-Help Groups and Entrepreneurship:

Rajasthan Samgrah Kalyan Sansthan has established women's self-help groups that serve as platforms for collective action, financial inclusion, and capacity-building. These women's self-help groups provide a support system for women to share experiences, discuss social issues, and collectively address challenges. Rajasthan Samgrah Kalyan Sansthan also promotes entrepreneurship among women by providing them with mentorship, market linkages, and business development support. Through these initiatives, Rajasthan Samgrah Kalyan Sansthan has empowered countless women to become leaders, change-makers, and catalysts for social transformation.

Ending Violence Against Women and Girls:

We are committed to combat gender-based violence and ensure the safety and security of women and girls in Rajasthan. We actively raise awareness about violence against women, its consequences, and available support services. Rajasthan Samgrah Kalyan Sansthan offers women and girls a safe space, counseling and skills education. Moreover, Rajasthan Samgrah Kalyan Sansthan conducts awareness rallies, street plays, poster making competitions; role plays etc in different rural areas so that small changes could be developed. Rajasthan Samgrah Kalyan Sansthan's efforts have resulted in increased awareness about women's rights and gender equality among communities in Rajasthan. Through their awareness campaigns, workshops, and community engagement programs, Rajasthan Samgrah Kalyan Sansthan has challenged stereotypes, dismantled discriminatory practices, and transformed attitudes towards gender roles. This has laid the foundation for a more inclusive and equitable society.

In recent years in India, the empowerment of women has been recognized as the central issue in determining the status of women. The National Commission for Women was set up by an Act of Parliament in 1990 to safeguard the rights and legal entitlements of women. India has also ratified various international conventions and human rights instruments committing to secure equal rights of women. Key among them is the ratification of the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women in 1993.⁽ⁱⁱⁱ⁾ The status of women in India has improved significantly in recent years, but there is still a long way to go. It is essential to recognize the achievements made so far and continue to work towards a more equitable and just society for women. By addressing the challenges that women in India face and promoting gender equality, we can ensure that women can fully participate in all aspects of life and contribute to the development of the country.^(iv)

Rajasthan Samgrah Kalyan Sansthan has been a champion for women's rights, gender equality, and women's empowerment in Rajasthan. Through rigorous approach, Rajasthan Samgrah Kalyan Sansthan has made significant strides in raising awareness, challenging societal norms, and providing women with the necessary tools to achieve economic independence and social empowerment. However, gender inequality and discrimination continue to persist, so it is our urge to United Nations to strengthen the rules and policies for

all the governments who are not considering women's rights as an important issue. By joining forces and investing in women's rights, we can create a future where women and girls enjoy equal opportunities, realize their full potential, and contribute to the development of a just and inclusive society.

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- (i) <https://legalserviceindia.com/legal/article-8274-women-s-human-rights.html>
 - (ii) <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/commission-on-the-status-of-women-2012/facts-and-figures>
 - (iii) <https://wcd.nic.in/womendevlopment/national-policy-women-empowerment>
 - (iv) <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/readersblog/lawpedia/status-of-women-in-india-51422>