

*Education and Economic Development
Presented by Jameela Jadoo*

Mauritius SADC GENDER PROTOCOL SUMMIT

26th March 2013

Hennessy Park Hotel, Ebene

GENDER EQUALITY BY 2015, YES WE MUST!

DEFI MEDIA GROUP – AN OVERVIEW

- Le Defi Media Group offices are located in Port Louis with a back up radio station at Trianon.
- Newspaper remain our main media support. However, the Group is also affiliated with a radio station and has its own web site and web TV. News on Sunday is printed media with our articles regularly hosted on our website.
- Print volumes for our publications Le Defi Quotidien-20k, Le Defi Plus-60k, Le Dimanche Hebdo-40k, News on Sunday- 10k & Le Defi Turf-15k
- Le Defi Media Group has a headcount of 157 employees including 51 female. Our affiliated radio station has 78 employees with 23 female.
- Yes! Le Defi Media Group is part of the COE since 2011.



MY SUBMISSION

Preamble of My Submission

The item submitted is about **Dr. Jayantee Naugah**, fellow of the Society of Biology, UK, who has based much of her works on Gender and Science. She raises concern about the number of girls choosing science subjects in the education as well as working field. Dr. Naugah is convinced that girls should be encouraged to learn science subjects at school as they have an important role to play in the society.

After graduating in B.Sc. in Botany and Zoology Dr. Naugah taught science for some years in high schools in the UK.

She was the Chairperson of Gender and Science and Technology (GASAT) Association from 2003 to 2006. She successfully completed her PhD in 2011 at the **Brunel University UK**, on the topic "Factors affecting girls' choice of science subjects at the upper secondary level in Mauritius." She believes that if the number of women in the science fields still under numbers those of men, the country's economic and national development is at stake.



MOTIVATION AS TO WHY IT IS A GOOD EXAMPLE OF GENDER IN MEDIA CONTENT?

The article raises questions about why is there a low intake of science subjects by girls in schools and focuses on the future of women working in science field and contributing to the economic development of Mauritius. Through the article Dr. Naugah gives reasons as to why girls should be encouraged to learn science and why the contribution of women in science field is primordial for the national development of the island.

As she said, "Girls have an important role to play in the scientific, technological, economic and social development of Mauritian society. A low participation in these subjects may impact on the level of scientific literacy of girls and the future workforce of the country as girls will lack important knowledge, conceptual understanding and skills needed for facing the challenges of a fast changing world."

Dr. Naugah sets herself as an example for others to follow. She was the first girl residing in the north of the island to have obtained her HSC (Higher School Certificate) in 1965. Even after her retirement in 2008, she continues to contribute in the uplifting of science teachings methods in the country and participates in workshops to raise awareness about the situation.

HOW THIS DOCUMENT SHALL CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS ACHIEVING THE 28 TARGETS OF THE SADC GENDER PROTOCOL?

PROTOCOL TARGET	ACTIONS
<p>Article 14: Education and Training Enact laws that promote equal access to and retention in primary, secondary, tertiary, vocational and non-formal education in accordance with the Protocol on Education and Training and the Millennium Development Goals. Adopt and implement gender sensitive educational policies and programmes addressing gender stereotypes in education and gender-based violence, amongst others.</p>	<p>The article seriously takes into account women's contribution to science field and economic development in Mauritius. It challenges stereotypes in science education and science work field and encourages eradicating gender inequality at both levels.</p>
<p>Article 15-19: Productive Resources and Employment, Economic Empowerment Ensure equal participation by women and men in policy formulation and implementation of economic policies. Review all policies and enact laws to determine access to, control of and benefit from, productive resources by women.</p>	<p>The article appeals to curb the disproportionate number of women in scientific and engineering disciplines. It calls for an equal participation of men and women in the science field and to women empowerment. Moreover it appeals women to develop their potential in science and bring economic benefits to their families and society at large.</p>

PERTINENCE OF THIS HISTORY TO CURRENT CONTEXT AND GENDER ISSUES.

- ◉ I produced the story because science is a topic which is not very popular in Mauritius. I wanted to sensitise people about the significance of science and how it has invaded realms of life at not only individual level but as well as socio-economic and political level in Mauritius.
- ◉ As scientific knowledge has become very crucial for most of our actions whether being a housewife, student, skilled and office worker, the article is responding to the context of the lower number of girls and women who study or work in the science field in Mauritius compared to their male counterparts.
- ◉ In addition, it responds to students' lack of interest in the subject as well as the very few scientific research institutions that exist in Mauritius. This paves the way to very little recruitment whether being for teaching, research and labour market.

OBJECTIVES OF THIS COVERAGE

This was my attempt to inform the population, especially youngsters, about the influence of science and to increase their interest in the subject. By giving the example of Dr. Naugah and her research works, this will boost the self-confidence of girls/women and encourage them to exploit their full potential.

I mostly wanted to break the myth that science is a field reserved for the male only. Teachers can become aware of the situation and they can improve their teaching lessons. For example, science should not only be taught between the four walls of the classroom or being only syllabus-oriented. The world outside is a laboratory in itself.

Moreover, I wanted to give food for thought to the higher institutions and governmental bodies about the situation regarding the science sector in the country so that they can take remedial actions.



TARGETS...

WHO DID YOU HOPE TO REACH?

I wanted this article to reach to youngsters and encourage girls to take science at upper secondary level and even tertiary level. This article was expected to create awareness amongst young girls and boys, who are the future of the country, as regards the contribution of science to daily life and future progress of the country.

I also targeted parents so as to motivate them to encourage science literacy. In addition, I targeted policy makers, educators and even researchers who can take the steps further to make Mauritius really achieve its' objective of becoming a knowledge hub. This can lead to create more science-oriented jobs, institutions and developments.

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Impacts...

IMPACT...

Parents, teachers and even people who work at higher levels (e.g. a senior lecturer at the MIE), have read the article. They verbally commented on it and some even said that they have been impressed.

Teachers acknowledged that science is still male oriented in the country and confided that unfortunately, they do not have the opportunity to take the science lessons outside the classroom as the focus. Because as Dr. Naugah stated in her PhD. Research “Gender imbalance in science enrolment beyond the compulsory level may have serious implications for individuals ‘ autonomy and quality of life and for national development.

PROCESS

- I interviewed Dr. Naugah. I also used her PhD thesis as source of information to know what
- I have also gathered qualitative data on science. I had a look at the statistics of the Mauritius Examination Syndicate regarding entries at School Certificate Level.
- The proceedings of the International Conference held by Gender and Science and Technology (GASAT) Association in 2003 and 2005 also helped me in my work. GASAT a world wide association which aims to to encourage research into all aspects of gender differentiation in science and technology education and employment;
- to foster gender equity in science and technology, in education and in the workplace;
- to facilitate the entry of women into employment in the fields of science and technology and their progress within such employment

Feedback

- ◉ The feedback below come from ledefimedia.info where the articles have been posted.
- ◉ Dan says: “It is women like this one who should have been made President of the Republic. The supreme post should not be reserved for retired politicians who are rewarded for party loyalty but should be given to those Mauritians who have excelled in fields such as science and technology.”
- ◉ From JHDMAN: “Well written article on a high achiever who always perceived the retirement age to be just a simple number. In a society full of 'ism's' such as ageism; here is one clear example of why age isn't a barrier but a catalyst to realize your potential.”

Follow up – What NEXT!!!

- I have maintained regular contact with my interviewee. This is an example of the steps being taken further by Dr. Jayantee Naugah to promote science since pre-primary level. In the first picture Dr. Naugah is with Lady Dr. Sue Dale Tunnicliffe who came as a resource person from the Institute of Education, London University, for a workshop organised by the Ministry of Education in which Dr. Naugah acted as resource person too. The second picture was taken at that workshop with pre-primary educators; the workshop was held in November 2011 on how to teach science in the early years to children. In November 2012, she did the same workshop for the Early Childhood Development Authority.



SOME FIGURES NOW...

- I have also checked whether there have been improvements in the intake of science at the point of choice. (after Form 3).
- The next slide shows statistics from the MES (2000-2010).
- The percentages show the enrolment in each science subject, separately for boys and girls, relative to the number enrolled for English. Throughout the years, they still indicate that there is a lack of uptake of science subjects.

MES Statistics

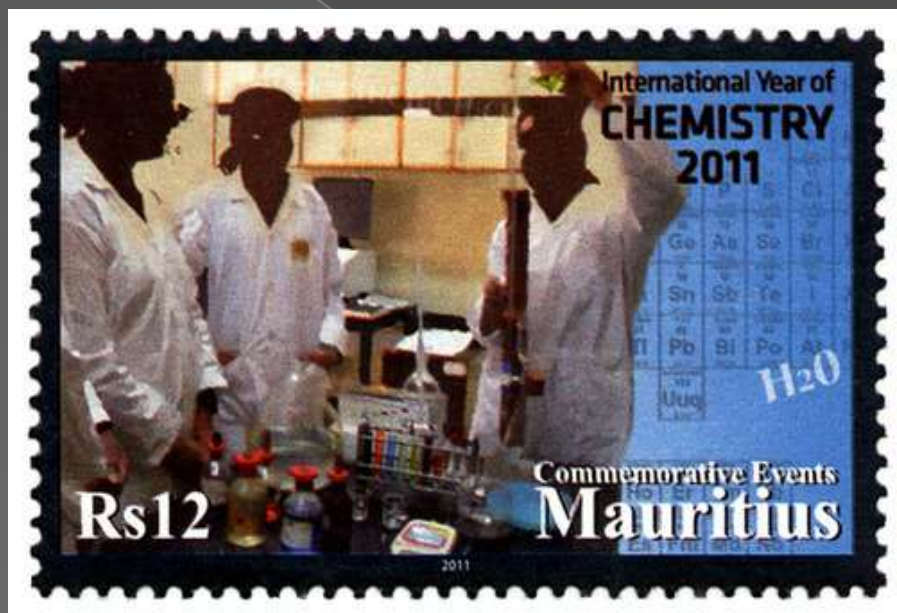
Year	Biology		Chemistry		Physics		English	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
2000	1214 19.8%	1173 17.8%	2122 34.5%	1675 25.3%	2029 30.7%	900 13.6%	6143	6608
2001	1147 19.4%	1122 16.9%	2016 34.1%	1661 25.1%	2076 35.1%	904 13.7%	5909	6612
2002	1131 16.4%	1234 16.9%	2055 29.9%	1703 23.3%	2191 31.8%	980 13.4%	6883	7306
2003	1795 25.5%	2014 27.2%	2774 39.4%	2206 29.8%	2782 39.5%	1162 15.7%	7048	7404
2004	1761 25.1%	1966 26.3%	2700 38.5%	2222 29.7%	2723 38.8%	1113 14.9%	7018	7474
2005	1829 25.3%	2017 27.0%	2654 36.7%	2259 30.3%	2776 38.4%	1209 16.2%	7231	7468
2006	2014 25.6%	2387 29.0%	2879 36.5%	2568 31.2%	2915 37%	1419 17.2%	7876	8227
2008	1997 23.2%	2498 26.9%	2878 35.5%	2749 29.6%	3265 38%	1673 18%	8589	9272
2009	1948 22.9%	2424 26.2%	2805 33%	2668 28.8%	3203 37.7%	1670 18%	8496	9260
2010	1991 23.1%	2376 26.2%	2911 33.8%	2645 29.2%	3250 37.7%	1719 19%	8612	9053

Some data gatherings

I have also collected feedback from science teachers at secondary level to know how they perceive the situation.

- The first teacher has been teaching Chemistry over the past 13 years in secondary schools. He told us that through out his career he has had more boys students than girls. “For example in boys schools, I can have over two class of 38 SC students. Whereas in girls school, there can be only one class of 15 SC students.”
- The second educator has started teaching Biology since 2007. Working in a mixed school, he told us that overall, the number of boys exceed that of girls. “The ratio of male to female students taking science at upper secondary level is two to one. But the number fluctuates. Some years there it be three to one. ”

March towards progress



- Mauritius joined the celebrations of the International Year of Chemistry in 2011. The government has issued a postage stamp related to chemistry. It aimed to provide a resource for educators and postage stamp enthusiasts alike.