



Cultural and social norms within Justice systems affect Women's Access to Justice

February 28, 2020

The combination of cultural and social norms, religious beliefs, and structural constraints inside the justice systems directly affect women's access to justice, according to the "Gendered aspects of access to justice in Southern Mon State" research report.

As described in the report, unequal power relations between

men and women are deeply embedded in society at large. This paper was compiled by Mi Thang Sorn Poine, senior research officer of Enlightened Myanmar Research Foundation (EMReF). The two villages in southern Mon State were studied in 2016-2017. This paper explores the gendered aspects of access to justice in Mon village (Kwan Sar Yar village), which is officially under Myanmar government control; and Kwan Jaral Chan village that is controlled by the New Mon State Party (NMSP), which is the main Mon ethnic armed organisation (EAO). This article highlights that Mon women in rural areas face a number of

obstacles in getting access to justice, not only in the formal system, but also in the informal system via the NMSP, and at the village level.

The report indicated that rural Mon women's lack of knowledge regarding legal procedures and language barriers were also important to consider when discussing women's access to justice in the formal system. The concept of "spiritual justice" often makes women reluctant



to report cases to secular institutions, the author provides several case studies.

Apart from feeling shame and loss of dignity, women also refrain from reporting cases to secular institutions, because they interpret cases as spiritual and religious matters. The paper highlighted women's greater use of spiritual justice rather than secular justice, as compared with men. This social trend is due to stronger beliefs in spiritual security among women. However, it may also be seen as a consequence of the lack of access to secular justice, which means we could see spiritual justice as a kind of substitute for the secular

justice which was lacking for women, according to key research findings outlined in the report.

Mi Thang Sorn Poine, Senior Research Officer from Enlightened Myanmar Research Foundation (EM-ReF) recommends that, "This article is one step in that direction, and I hope it can help inform efforts by the government to improve women's access to justice. With respect to the formal justice system, it is important that there are justice providers who can speak local languages, as many rural Mon women do not adequately master Burmese."

Other recommendations for justice

providers included in the paper are that legal language and procedures should be more clear and understandable, in order to accommodate women with a lower level of education. The Myanmar government must focus more on investigating women's legal rights and consider setting aside a budget for gender mainstreaming in the justice system. Legal advisors for women are also important.

The full paper is available on the Independent Journal of Burmese Scholarship (www.journalofburmesescholarship.org) website.

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“The lives of women and Tissue Culture Banana Cultivation” report was published

March 3, 2020

Women’s participation in tissue culture banana cultivation has also been high in Myanmar, and as a result, women have experienced more problems due to lack of rights to speak out, lack of knowledge, and negotiating power, according to the report “The lives of women and Tissue Culture Banana Cultivation”.

This report summarizes key research findings regarding the gendered impacts of tissue culture banana farming in Kachin State. The qualitative data was collected in 12 villages in Waing Maw, Moe Mauk, and Laiza Townships in May, 2019.

The report explained that the community meetings for tissue culture banana farming lacked transparency, and it limited women’s participation. Also, in the case of land sales and the process of rent negotiations, the head of the household is considered as the owner of the land. This reality leaves little opportunity for women’s voices and limits opportunities, to get involved in decision-making. In the villages where the study was conducted women’s representation groups were hardly or (not found) to raise women’s voices; as well as lack of awareness about women’s rights and lack of mobilization among women’s communities. As a result, women have remained a vulnerable group in the region, in the context of social, economic, and environmental issues.

After mass migration has risen due to tissue culture banana farming, the respondents highlighted about the rise of gambling, theft, and insecurity problems. Sexual violence such as rape was mentioned less by



Photo: Shwe Lay

respondents, according to the report. However, some sexual harassment and sexual abuse cases were reported. There were a number of sexual misconduct cases in the tissue culture banana farming, which occurred due to power differences based on class between employees and employers, as well as gender.

In Myanmar, the number of women involved has been high in the tissue culture banana agricultural industry. There have been some studies conducted about tissue culture banana cultivation and land ownership; and the impacts of tissue culture banana cultivation on the environment; but there is an evidence gap in research due to lack of gender analysis.

Therefore, this study aims to fill that evidence gap. The objectives of this study are: 1) to explore local perceptions and attitudes about the tissue culture banana industry; 2) to understand the gender dynamics in tissue culture banana cultivation; 3) to examine women’s experiences in tissue culture banana farming; 4) to identify the challenges that women are facing, and their coping strategies to access justice. The study was conducted in collaboration between Enlightened Myanmar Research Foundation (EMReF) and the Htoi Gender Development Foundation in May, 2019, and the report was published in December, 2019.

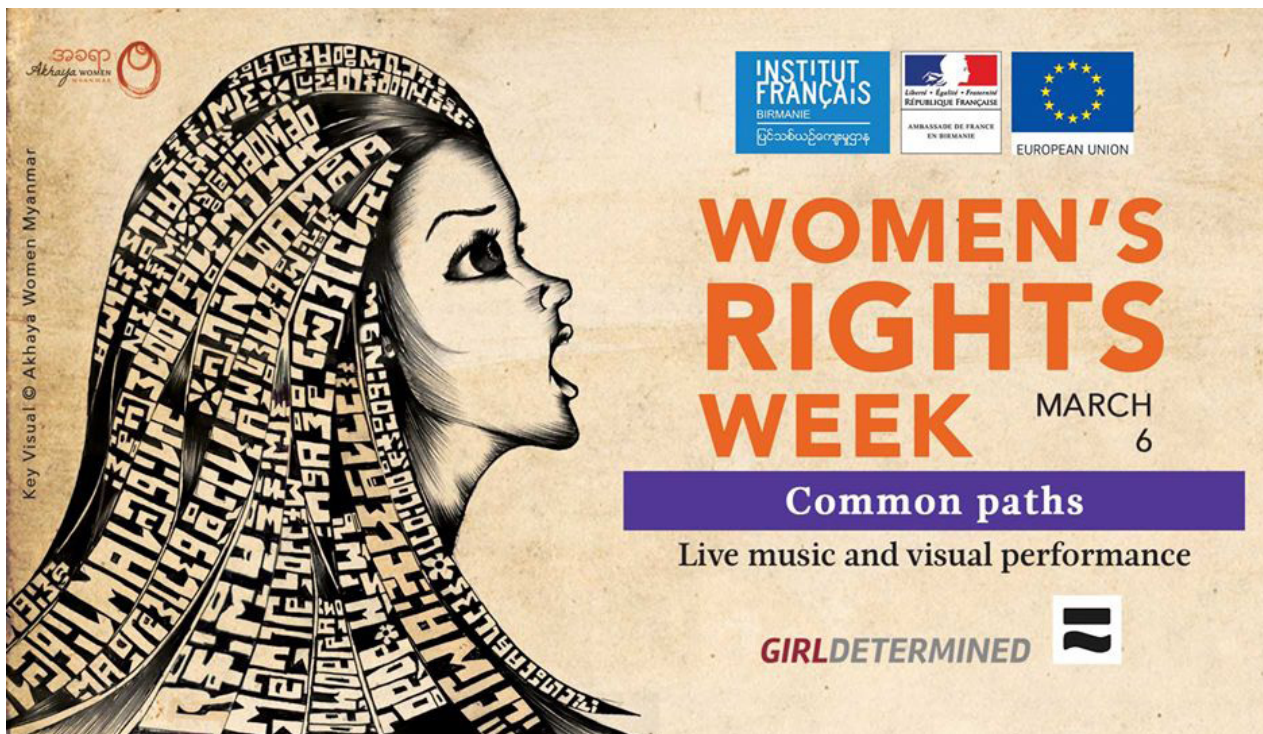
Shwe Lay

The Commemoration of International Women's Day (March 8, 2020)

March 10, 2020

March 8 marks International Women's Day, which is celebrated every year and the whole month of March is celebrated as Women's History Month. This year, smaller events and online campaigns were held rather than public events, because of concerns about the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19). We would like to present some of the activities held by women's organizations in March for the International Women's Day movement.

French Institute's Women's Rights Week



Key Visual © Akhaya Women Myanmar

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WOMEN'S RIGHTS WEEK MARCH 6

Common paths
Live music and visual performance

GIRLDETERMINED

International Women's Day (March 8, 2020), was celebrated as women's rights week by the Institut Français de Birmanie. The Women's Rights Week was held from March 3 to 6, which included various programs such as films, exhibitions, panel discussions, live performances, and live podcast recordings.

Photo: Institut Français de Birmanie Facebook page



“To Our Lives We Want” Campaign addressing Gender Equality



"To Our Lives We Want" campaign aiming to promote gender equality was launched on March 6. In this campaign, the short animation film "My Life I Don't Want" was posted on the "To Our Lives We Want" Facebook page. The goal was to donate 3 kyats per one view. This short animation film is a story about several kinds of discrimination faced by a Myanmar woman since she was born. The film aims to bring better justice for individuals. The short video was created by Director Nyan Kyal Say, the Founder of Pencell Animation Studio. Proceeds from the film will be donated to women's organizations which are working on women's capacity building; knowledge sharing on sexual and reproductive health; awareness raising to reduce violence, and strategies to eliminate discrimination against women and girls.

မြန်မာ အမျိုးသမီးများ၊ ကလေးများနှင့်
ဒို့တတွေရဲ့ ဘဝလေးတွေ
သာယာလှပစေဖို့
'ကျွန်မတို့ လိုချင်သော ဘဝများဆီသို့'
Campaign ကနေ
ဝိုင်းဝန်းကူညီထောက်ပံ့ကြရအောင်

Photo: To Our Lives We Want Facebook page

facebook.com/toourliveswewant

Women's Day event organized by Women's organizations



The International Women's Day event was held on March 8 at Inya Lake Hotel with the slogan "I am Generation Equality: Realizing Feminism" by the collaboration of Women's Organizations Network (WON-Myanmar), Win-Peace, and Women's League of Burma (WLB).

Photo: Women's League of Burma (WLB) Facebook Page



Photo: <https://www.facebook.com/melindagates>

World Famous Quotes

“A woman with a voice is, by definition, a strong woman.”

..... Melinda Gates (American philanthropist)

Implementing the policy on Gender Equality and promoting the role of women (2019-2022) for the 2020 General Election

March 19, 2020

In order to promote women's participation in 2020's general election, the Union Election Commission (UEC) said that they are implementing the (2019-2022) policy on gender equality and promoting of women's role in politics.

U Myint Naing, a member of the UEC, made the above statement at the seminar for countering disinformation and hate speech against women candidates, and supporting women leaders for the 2020 general election, which was held in Nay Pyi Taw on March 6.

He said, “Participating in the elections and voting are an opportunity to promote gender equality for all. Violence against women in elections, and attacking with hate speech are the kind of distortion of the basic standard of elections and the foundation of democracy. Thus, more women are needed to get involved in politics, and to ensure equal and fair elections, in accordance with democratic standards.”

According to the 2014 census,



Photo: Union Election Commission Facebook Page

there are more women than men in the total population, but women are still less involved in politics than men. Women's participation in Parliament was 4% in the 2010 general election, and 13% in the 2015 general election.

He urged participants to discuss

strategies to counter disinformation and hate speech against women candidates in the 2020 general election. The seminar was organized by the UEC and the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES).

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