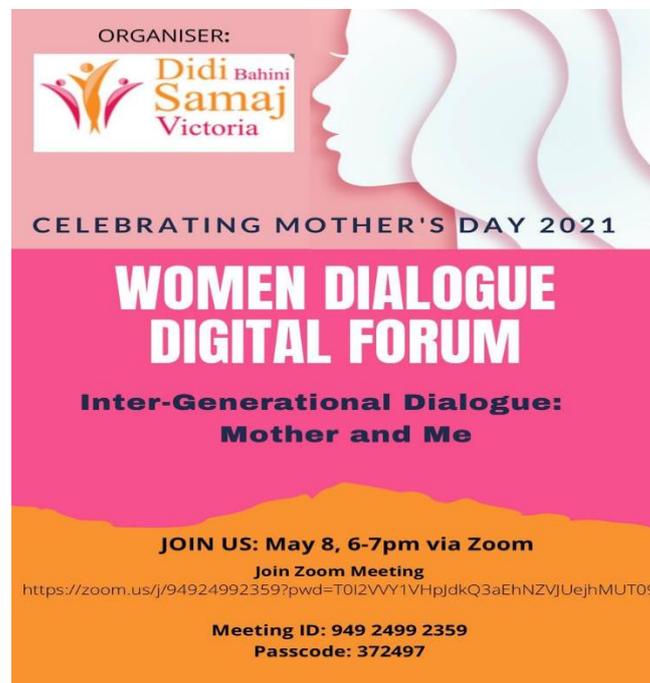


# **DIDIBAHINI SAMAJ VICTORIA**

## **CELEBRATING INTERNATIONAL MOTHER'S DAY 2021**

### **WOMEN DIALOGUE DIGITAL FORUM**

### **INTER-GENERATIONAL DIALOGUE: MOTHER AND ME**



**Report Prepared By:**

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## **BACKGROUND**

Didi Bahini Samaj Victoria (DBSV) organized the women dialogue digital forum “Mother and Me” on the occasion of Mother’s Day 2021 via Zoom meeting. Through the session DBSV aimed to celebrate, acknowledge, and remember mothers and her incredible contribution that every mother makes in our world. The program also aimed to discuss inter-generational gaps, privileges, struggles, and challenges confronted by women between generations including various dimensions of mother-daughter relationship via experience sharing by the panel guest speakers from three generations.

## **INTRODUCTION**

In Australia, Mother's Day celebration occurs on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of May. This year the mother’s day in Nepal happened to be on the same week as well. Mother’s Day celebration has been happening everywhere in the world over the generations to celebrate the contribution, unconditional love and sacrifices made by mothers for their children and family. Like every year, this year DBSV celebrated Mother’s Day 2021 on 8 May 2021 via a digital platform, Zoom and guest speakers from Nepal and interstate were invited to be a part of this event.

During the session, the panel speakers delivered key messages and shared lived experiences on inter-generational gaps and relationship between their mother, themselves, and their children. The overall objective of the program hence was to honour motherhood and the role of mothers in the family as well as in society. Furthermore, the digital forum also intended to facilitate an interactive discussion on the various dimension of the mother-daughter relationship, the inter-generational and cultural gaps, issues, and challenges confronted by mothers and women between generations and to confer experiences concerning international learning and adaptation, language barriers and cultural gaps experienced by Nepalese migrant women. The program, therefore, was successfully facilitated by Anjana Nepal, program coordinator of DBSV. Technically, the session was coordinated by Benju Gnawali Nepal and Anita Bhandari. Live session via DBSV’s Facebook was also facilitated during the session.

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAM**

Women are the key to sustainable development and quality of life in the family and society. Hence, the women dialogue digital forum “Inter-generational talk: Mother and Me” aimed:

- ❖ To celebrate and acknowledge International Mother’s Day 2021.
- ❖ To pay tribute and show boundless love to mothers.
- ❖ To bring collective awareness and attention to the roles and contribution of the mother.
- ❖ To discuss and highlight inter-generational differences, relationships, gaps, changes, cultural differences, privileges, challenges of women of past and present generation including challenges and privileges confronted by migrant Nepalese women and their children.

## **SHORT DESCRIPTION AND KEY MESSAGES OF PANEL SPEAKERS**

- a. Dr Aruna Uprety:** Currently she is living in Kathmandu Nepal with her daughters and husband. She is working with Rural Health Education Service Trust, Nepal. She worked with the Ministry of Health and has written five books on women, health, nutrition and has conducted research on reasons for malnutrition and advocated against it.

During the session, Dr Aruna Uprety pointed out how the mental, physical, economic, social, geographical, and educational status of women affect the childbearing and child-rearing process. Furthermore, she also pointed out the privilege and challenges of women of past and present. She also expressed a word of gratitude to those women in leadership, as such Sahana Pradhan, Mangala Singh who played an essential role in the overall development of women.

In addition, Dr Aruna reasoned the equal responsibility of both mother and father in childbearing and child-rearing, that foster women to get involved in work and other economic and social empowerment activities.

- b. Punam Panta:** Senior Network Engineer. Mother to two teenagers, one son and one daughter. She was brought up in the UK and has a highly successful career.

During her speaking, Punam Panta addressed some generational differences and gap among women and parents of past and present, such as educational opportunities, family support, changing role of mothers as a mother, wife, and income earner. Moreover, she also mentioned the merits and demerits of modern communication technologies in terms of parenting, a child's upbringing, education, learning process, and overall development of a child.

“World is changing very fast. And there is a huge difference in family support and education in past and present generation. Our mothers were privileged of family support while we are not. On the other hand, we are privileged with education awareness while our mothers were not.”

- c. Hanisha Sharma:** She arrived in Australia from Bhutan in 2003 as a refugee with her family. She currently works in the office of Hon Senator Kimberley Kitching, Senator for Victoria. Hanisha is also the founding chairperson of Help-Himalayan Youth Foundation (HHYF) Inc, an initiative led by youth from Bhutanese, Nepali, and Karen communities.

According to Hanisha, the mother is the glue that holds the family together. She, furthermore, indicated a major issue confronted by immigrant children and their families, such as the acculturation gap, political climate, society and its expectation, language barrier, mentality, changing role as a survivor and role in the process of making parents proud, respectively. She also pointed out that moving to Australia was a significant event in her mother's and her life in terms of freedom, independence, opportunities, and choice.

“I never had the pressure of getting married, being pregnant as my mother had.”

**d. Ishwori Khanal:** Senior Nurse (Retired now)

On the digital forum “Mother and Me”, she discussed the greater relationship, leadership, patience, protective qualities of mothers.

“Growing up in a joint family was a privilege to me. I was always supported by my parents. As a result, I then pursued a successful career in nursing.”

In addition, she addressed that how even being brought up in a joint family with 22 members we always had a sense of togetherness, equality, task division, sharing of thoughts and ideas among each other’s which is lacking in current days due to modern technical devices and technologies, internet, and social media. She added the benefits of the internet and science are indeed too great to ignore but there are some drawbacks as well, for instance, lack of socialization and togetherness due to access use of modern technological devices.

**e. Ranju Shrestha:** She is running a daycare service in Australia and she has been a loving caring mother for many children.

She discussed the role of the mother as a mother, wife, and worker. In addition, she discussed the importance of Nepali culture and language and explained how our mothers of a past generation played an essential role in saving and promoting our culture and tradition.

According to Ranju, “Every child are the star and precious gift of God. And every mother is the first teacher of the child.”

She then urged everyone not to treat their children as a thing, understand their feelings, spend some quality with their children, teach them your culture and language in the best possible ways.

**f. Dr Sambridhi Adhikari:** She is a second-generation Nepali doctor living in Melbourne. She was born in Nepal and migrated to Australia at an early age, but she remains deeply passionate and proud of her Nepali heritage. During her speaking, she highlighted the following major points:

“Freedom of living is about living with independence, searching for identity, and chasing for dreams. In contrast, for my mother freedom means sacrificing and securing a better future for her family and children.”

Dr Sambridhi also emphasized how education broadens women’s freedom. Our mothers had to work extra hard to study and secure the jobs, but we have a different strain, such as constant pressure to pursue certain types of the degree such as medicine and law and to pursue other subjects of interest to be ourselves.

On reflection, she thanked her mother and family for their sacrifices and constant support to give her a better life and freedom to pursue a better job including other freedom to choose and be herself and to have her dreams. Adding to this, she asked all mothers and daughters to reflect on what do their daughters really need and what do our mother really wants.

- g. Roshani Shrestha:** She is from the central part of Nepal and graduated from New Zealand. For nearly 14 years she is working for the state government of Victoria. She highlighted three major gaps between mother and children among generations, family belief and perception, social norms, and cultural values.

In her talk during the session, Roshani Shrestha discussed that the second-generation Nepali kids in Australia have few opportunities to participate in and learn about their own culture and norms. They are more exposed to the new language, culture, norms, and living standards to become socially integrated into their new society and country. She also highlighted that:

“We should self-assess and reflect to teach and pass our culture, traditions and values among our children of second-generation living in Australia to protect and promote them.”

## **PROGRAM EVALUATION AND CONCLUSION**

Overall, the program was very well-organized, thoughtful, informative, and inspiring. The program reflected the generational gap, a changing role of mother and differences between the societies of yesterday and today. The session also reflected a ‘clash’ between generations relating to their differing perceptions, values, norms, and way of living and pursuing goals especially among first- and second-generation Nepalese residing in Australia. The panel speakers shared that they feel privileged to be honoured and to be part of the session. In addition, they thanked the DBSV team for celebrating Mother’s Day with them.

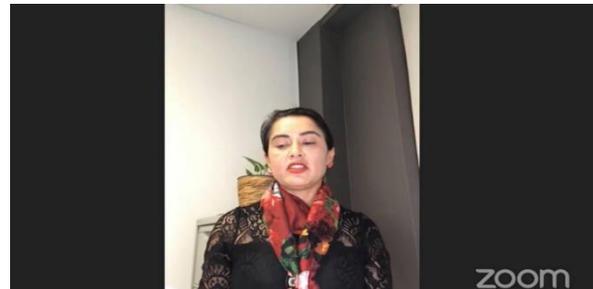
At the end of the session, DBSV’s president Dr Jamuna Parajuli summarized the key messages delivered by the panel speakers. While stating the importance of Mother’s Day, she described the importance of the mother’s roles for the family and society. She emphasized the challenges of various roles that a woman plays in modern days and the importance of balancing those roles to an ideal mother of a real-time.

Upon reflection, it was a great experience that truly brought everyone together and it meant a lot to each of the participating in the session. Inter-Generational Dialogue: Mother and Me” emphasized the responsibility and influence of women to sustain the growth of society and shape the future of family, society, and nation overall. As noted, and discussed by the guest speakers, in the emerging complex social scenario, women have a vital role to play in different aspects as a mother, wife, leader and as working woman. Mother is, hence, the symbol of power and progress.

## SNAPSHOTS OF THE EVENT



Dr. Jamuna Parajuli, President, DBSV



Anjana Nepal, Program Facilitator, DBSV

