

**2nd International Research Symposium on
Gender Equity and Equality
[IRSGEE-2024]**

**“Intersectional and Integrated Perspectives on
Gender Mainstreaming”**

CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS



Center for Gender Equity and Equality, University of Jaffna, Sri Lanka

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GENDER EQUITY AND EQUALITY
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**“Intersectional and Integrated Perspectives on
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A Blind Woman's Journey of Education and Empowerment Against Gender-Based Harassment

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Introduction: A blind girl from Santhapuram, Kilinochchi, Sri Lanka, overcame poverty and discrimination with resilience, pursuing education despite challenges, inspiring others with her determination and courage amidst adversity.

Context and Challenges: Growing up in a financially struggling household, she faced significant gender-based discrimination. With limited resources and undergoing 26 surgeries during Sri Lanka's war, she persevered to pass her O/L and A/L exams. However, attending the University of Colombo posed new challenges, including high bus fares and daily harassment on public transportation. Complaints were ignored, and the societal stigma around her disability left her vulnerable, exacerbated by insufficient financial support from Iniya Vaal Illam.

Action taken: To ensure her safety during travel, she employed creative strategies such as pretending to be married, booking the seat next to hers, and avoiding interaction with individuals who offered help but displayed inappropriate behavior. These measures allowed her to navigate daily challenges while continuing her education.

Achievements: She graduated from the University of Colombo, becoming a beacon of hope for women with disabilities and inspiring her community. In addition to her academic success, she is a talented music composer, capable of playing multiple instruments and singing. Her achievements prove that determination can overcome adversity and create meaningful change.

Future Aspirations: She aims to advocate for the rights of disabled women in Sri Lanka, raising awareness about their challenges and creating safer public spaces. She plans to pursue her passion for music, using her talents to inspire others through composition and performance. Her vision is a future where women can pursue their education and dreams without fear of harassment, while also contributing to the arts in meaningful ways.

Keywords: Disability, Education, Gender Equality, Harassment, Resilience