



Institute of Chinese Studies

WEDNESDAY SEMINAR

*A Review of China's
Implementation of the UN's
Women, Peace and Security
Agenda since 2015*

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Speaker:
Li Yingtao

19 March 2025

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Speaker: Prof. Li Yingtao, Professor, International Relations, School of International Relations and Diplomacy, Beijing Foreign Studies University, Beijing.

Chair: Dr. Usha Chandran, Assistant Professor, Centre for Chinese and South East Asian Studies, School of Language, Literature and Culture Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi; and, Honorary Fellow, Institute of Chinese Studies, New Delhi.

Date: 19 March 2025

Venue: Zoom Webinar

- The speaker provided a critical examination of China's engagement with the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) agenda, with particular emphasis on policy evolution, international positioning, and the gap between commitments and implementation. Prof. Li Yingtao offered key insights into China's shifting stance on gender and peacebuilding within global and domestic contexts.
- Prof. Li described the trajectory of China's engagement with WPS, noting a transition from broad diplomatic support to more concrete policy actions post-2020. This shift includes enhanced participation in UN peacekeeping operations, integration of gender-sensitive strategies into diplomacy, and active involvement in international gender forums.
- Unlike many nations that have adopted National Action Plans (NAPs) to institutionalise WPS frameworks, China has opted to embed WPS principles within broader governance and foreign policy structures. While lacking a dedicated NAP, recent policy developments suggest incremental alignment with global WPS norms.
- The speaker underscored the importance of sovereignty in China's multilateral approach, emphasising that international cooperation on gender issues must respect national priorities and avoid external imposition. This stance continues to shape China's role in forums like the UN Security Council, where it supports WPS initiatives within the bounds of non-interference.
- The speaker addressed the paradox of economic progress and gender inequality, where Chinese women benefit from increased economic opportunities yet continue to face structural and institutional barriers. Prof. Li stressed that without cultural and policy reforms, economic growth cannot resolve deep-rooted gender disparities.

- The Chair, Dr. Usha Chandran drew attention to the persistent under-representation of women in senior governance roles, highlighting the disjuncture between policy rhetoric and practical outcomes. She advocated for the implementation of targeted mechanisms to promote women's leadership in political and security sectors.
- Both the speaker and the Chair concurred that sustained policy innovation and bilateral research collaboration, particularly in the realm of gender-sensitive governance was the need of the hour. It was agreed that bridging the implementation gap is critical for advancing the WPS agenda and ensuring meaningful participation of women in the peace and security processes.

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