

International Women's Day report

8th March, 2021

ON ZOOM

On the 8th of March 2021, Sophia Centre for Women's Studies & Development, St. Xavier's Institute of Education and Russian Centre for Science and Culture organised an **online event to celebrate International Women's Day**. The theme for the event was '21st Century Generation Equality' and focused on the ground reality of gender equality around the world today. We had 175 participants for the event.

The event began with a brief introduction by the comperes on International Women's Day and the theme for the year 2021- 'Women in leadership: Achieving an equal future in a COVID-19 world'. This was followed by the representatives of each institution introducing their institution and work that they have been doing in the field of women empowerment.

The event was commenced officially with the opening remark by Fr. Blaise D'Souza, manager of St. Xavier's Institution of Education. He focused on how women play an important role in society since time immemorial and that the future of the world is in their hands. He also shared his experiences while working with the tribal communities of interior Maharashtra and how their society promotes equality than that of us. This was followed by opening remark by Dr. Sosamma Samuel, principal of St. Xavier's Institution of Education which highlighted on how women need to be empowered in various fields and different ways to achieve that. This was followed by an open remark by Dr. (Sr.) Ananda Amritmahal, principal of Sophia College for Women. She recited a poem- 'Laughter of Women' by Lisel Mueller and highlighted how all human beings are equal irrespective of their gender.

The opening remarks were followed by the talk by the keynote speaker of the day- Adv. Flavia Agnes, founder of Majlis. She, with her powerful words highlighted the right to equality guaranteed by the Indian Constitution and the ground reality of the same. She threw light on various cases of violence against women across India and how at times the stakeholders violated the victim further. She raised a question on how capable the teachers who guide young minds are regarding the legal aids provided to a victim in case of any kind of abuse. She proposed that it is the teaching community which needs to be sensitized about the rights of women who can then educate and guide students regarding the legal aids and life-skills.

Another keynote speaker for the day was Ferina Duggan Polichtchouk, who threw light on the genesis of International of Women's Day and the colourful celebrations in Russia to honour women on this special day. She highlighted how the celebrations have changed throughout the years and the significance of the day is being lost due to consumerism.

The highlight of the event was a panel discussion on 'New Avenues for Women in the 20th century' which was moderated by Ms. Reena Agarwal, co-founder of Xpress Story Story-telling. The panellists included Mr. Harish Sadani- co-founder of Men Against

Violence and Abuse, Ms. Vaidehi Vaidya- founder at Women in Sport India Pvt. Ltd. And Ms. Aloka Majumdar- head of corporate sustainability at HSBC bank. The moderator engaged the panellists with an apt set of questions and discussed about various new fields where women are being empowered.

As a part of the event a poetry competition and poster-making competition were organised and the winners were felicitated. The plethora of creativity enriched the event to many-folds. The event ended with a vote of thanks, proposed by Wasim Khan of St. Xavier's Institute of Education

Samples of the e-posters:

