



NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR WOMEN
in collaboration with
JESUS AND MARY COLLEGE

AWARENESS AND CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAM

**RISE AND LEAD: YOUNG WOMEN PIONEERING
TECHNOLOGY, BUSINESS AND PUBLIC LIFE**

Date: 29th April 2024

**Venue: Thevenet hall, Jesus and Mary College
University of Delhi**

INAUGURAL SESSION

- ▶ The inaugural session of the Capacity Building and Awareness program commenced with the symbolic lighting of the lamp, accompanied by the melodious background of the JMC Choir group. Hitika Kalra from the Sociology department and Kirti Agarwal from the Commerce department were anchors for the program.
- ▶ The Inaugural ceremony was graced by esteemed guests, including Chief Guest Shri A. Asholi Chalai, Joint Secretary of the National Commission for Women, along with NCW officers -Ms. Bipasha Barua and Ms. Chandrika Prakash.
- ▶ The convenor of the program Prof. Reena Marwah along with co-convenors Dr. Pavitra Bhardwaj, Dr. Anju Luthra, Dr. Anuradha Sharma, Dr. Bipasha Rosy Lakra partook in lighting of the lamp.



Welcome Address

- ▶ Professor Reena Marwah, Convenor of the organising committee, delivered the welcome speech, emphasising the significance of empowering women in Technology, Public Life, Commerce, and Business. She underscored the importance of women's capacity building, urging them to dream more, learn more, and become more. Professor Marwah also extended a warm welcome to the Chief Guest and NCW Officers, Ms. Bipasha Barua and Ms. Chandrika Prakash. She concluded her speech by envisioning a new India led by transformative women leaders, fostering inclusive growth, sustainable development, and global partnerships.



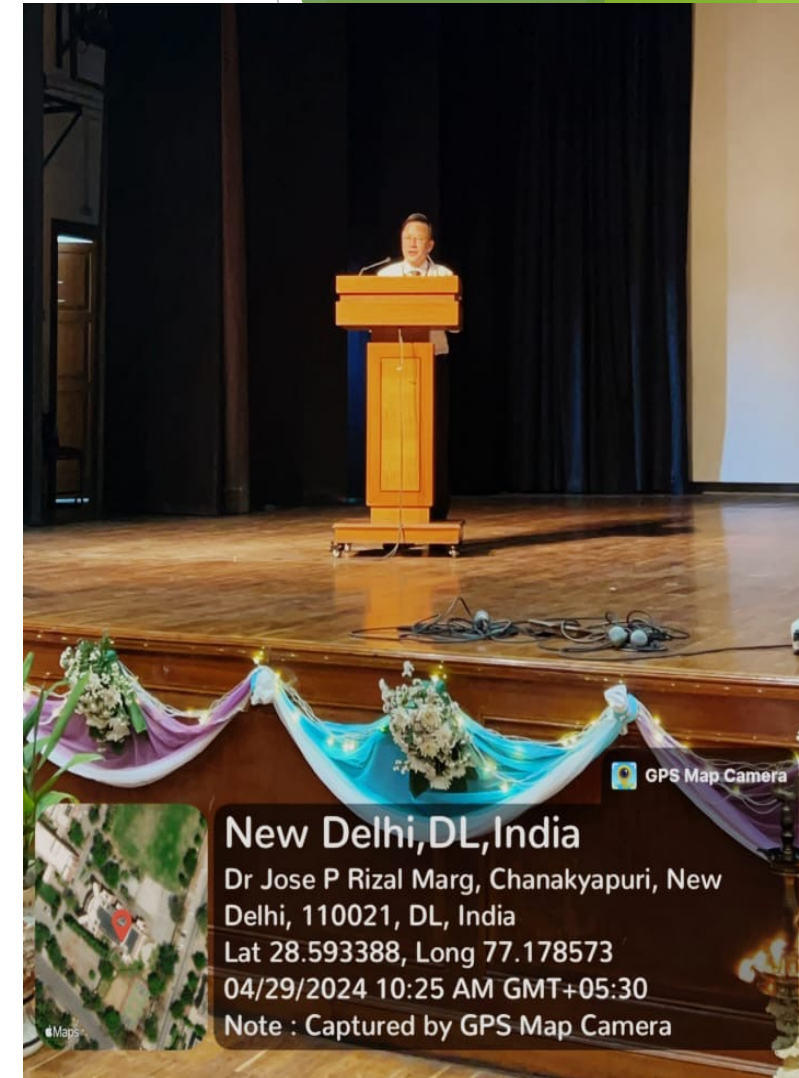
Message from Principal

- ▶ Dr. Pavithra Bhardwaj delivered a message on behalf of Professor Sandra Joseph, Principal-Jesus and Mary College, who was absent due to unforeseen circumstances. The message commenced with a poignant quote from *Maya Angelou*, emphasizing the values of competence, compassion, and confidence that women should embody. She highlighted the pivotal role of women in societal transformation, emphasizing the illustrious 56-year legacy of Jesus And Mary College. She emphasised the college's commitment to transformative education, delivered in innovative, engaging, and compassionate ways, alongside its provision of competitive education and life skills for holistic development.
- ▶ Acknowledging the honour of collaboration with the National Commission for Women (NCW), Prof. Sandra Joseph in her message introduced the NCW as a statutory body in India established to safeguard and promote the rights and interests of women under the National Commission for Women Act, 1990. She elaborated on the NCW's multifaceted approach, which includes conducting research, awareness campaigns, and advocacy initiatives to raise public awareness about issues facing women.
- ▶ She extended a warm welcome to all panellists, affirming the forthcoming insightful session's significance for each woman in attendance, highlighting the collective commitment to advancing women's rights and empowerment.



Inaugural speech by A. Asholi Chalai

During his speech, Shri A. Asholi Chalai highlighted India's economic projections, forecasting a rise of the nation's GDP to \$5 trillion by the end of 2025 and \$10 trillion by the decade's close. He stressed the imperative of empowering girls and women, advocating for their inclusion in cooperative decision-making processes. Notably, he addressed India's gender gap, ranking 146th globally, underscoring the National Commission for Women's objective to mitigate this gap and promote gender equality. With women constituting 49% of the population and 32.68% of the labour force, Shri Chalai lamented the underrepresentation of women in legislative bodies, including 30% in Rajya Sabha and 15% in Lok Sabha, and within the justice system, both in High Courts and the Supreme Court. He called for widespread awareness of opportunities in technology, cooperatives, and leadership to bolster women's participation. Shri Chalai elaborated on the NCW's initiatives, including research studies on cyber security, webinars addressing misogyny online, and support for victims of sexual harassment through Internal Complaint Committees and workshops on relevant legislation. He lauded government policies such as extended maternity leave and reserved seats for women in Parliament while stressing the importance of fostering women entrepreneurs. Concluding with congratulations to inaugurated initiatives, Shri Chalai extended best wishes to all participants.



TECHNICAL SESSION 1

This session included various eminent speakers. The first speaker, Professor Sona Jharia Minz who is the first from Jharkhand to be a professor in Jawaharlal Nehru University in the field of Computer and System sciences. Prof. Minz is the second tribal woman to hold the esteemed vice chancellor post in India. The other panelists were Dr. Kalpana Johari who is a senior scientist at CADC Noida and Ms. Upasana Pandey, Marketing Manager for Accenture Technology.

Professor Sona Jharia Minz was felicitated by Dr. Pavitra Bharadwaj. She has been actively engaging with the tribal communities to spread more awareness about technology and education. Dr. Johari was also felicitated by Dr. Pavitra Bharadwaj alongside Professor Minz. Dr. Johari has experience in artificial intelligence, unmanned aircraft. Ms. Upasana Pandey was felicitated by Dr. Garima Bajaj. Ms. Pandey has two decades of being a marketing manager and has been a journalist at The Times of India. The panelists were thanked by the anchors and the discussion started with Professor Minz taking the lead. Professor Minz started the discussion by appreciating JMC. She has been teaching in JNU since 1990. She is also a trained mathematician. She did her MPhil and PhD in computer sciences. She talked about how universities spread programmes in such technological fields and help students accommodate such programs. She said that two important things that should be kept in mind that neither study nor career should be a burden on an individual and that the mind doesn't get tired, rather it is continuously learning.





- ▶ The sine curve of learning is around all of us, and change is the only permanent thing. Two other things which are required are adaptation and resilience. She gave the idea that women are gifted with multi-tasking and should make the best use of this ability to handle both their personal and public lives. She gave the example of some people using academics for their survival and said that it should not just be seen as a career option. She believed that young minds are prone to be innovative and should open up to more opportunities coming their way. In JNU, she said, McKinsey recruits more from the school of languages and gave an example of language technology in which young adults can broaden their horizon. She also gave an example of Med Tech in the pharmaceutical department. Opportunities have opened on a wider spectrum in the sense that a vast number of online courses have come up to provide students with more options to choose from. She ended the discussion with a quote-
- ▶ “Go by passion, self- educate and take off from there.”
- ▶ The second panellist was Dr. Kalpana Johari. She started by giving an example of women in the field of beauty products and other women being entrepreneurs in the fields of technology, fashion designing etc. The highlight of her discussion was to ask the questions of ‘what’, ‘why’ and ‘where’ and the students were asked to ponder with the remaining question of ‘how’. Her first question of ‘what to do?’ included connecting language with technology where she gave an example of You Tube captions. She also suggested that the youth can engage in such jobs also since machines have not been working correctly on Indian languages.

▶ She introduced the concept of toy designing to students. It is basically, engaging young people in helping design and support the Indian toys industry. She also warned that technology is constantly changing and gave examples of CD's, pacers which were prevalent in her time and is not as much relevant now since smartphones and other touch screens are in use. One quality which is important according to her is the art of learning and it is important that an individual learn this art of learning. One should also develop skills which can empower themselves in real life. Such skills include cooking, artwork, orator-ship etc. She ended the discussion with the idea that it is important to learn the art of tuning your mind to be happy.

▶ Next panellist, Ms. Upasana Pandey who works for Accenture Technology, advised students to be critical and question oneself each day. She said that technology is involved in everything we do. She asked about the various roles which were there in technology and gave the students a new opportunity to venture in. This opportunity came in the form of programme management. She highlighted women being counted in mainstream development. She mentioned some challenges including lack of family support, lack of mental strength, gender gap pays roles among other things. There are also lesser role models for women to look up to.

▶ She mentioned that her inspiration was Dr. Bedi whom she had the pleasure of meeting. Through her, she felt that two things were most important. One, the need to have perseverance and the other, the willingness to be uncomfortable to achieve anything in life. She said that one should be ready to celebrate other fellow women in life.

▶ A report by the US Bureau said that lots of women went away because of childcare. There is still a need to equip more women with technology and she concluded the discussion with the following quote-

“Stand against yourself and win the battle.”



TECHNICAL SESSION 2

▶ The second technical session focused on the theme of "Women in Decision Making: Women Leading in Public Life," featuring three distinguished speakers from diverse backgrounds.

▶ Before the session, Professor Alka Chawla received felicitation from Dr. Anju Luthra, while Ms. Himani Vasal was honoured by Dr. Anuradha Sharma. Additionally, Ms. Neha Sethi was felicitated by Dr. Bipasha Rosy Lakra. Each speaker was felicitated with a plant as a token of appreciation for their contributions to the session.

▶ Professor Alka Chawla, renowned for her expertise in Intellectual Property Law, highlighted the significance of self-assertion, punctuality, and the importance of consent in professional and personal spheres. She urged women to prioritise their happiness and journey, advocating against the pressure of competition while emphasising self-belief and multitasking abilities.





- ▶ Following Professor Chawla's insightful presentation, Ms. Himani Vasal, IPS officer, shared her decade-long journey in law enforcement, shedding light on the persisting underrepresentation of women in the field. She challenged stereotypical perceptions by highlighting women's unique contributions, including their sensitivity and compassion. Vasal encouraged women to embrace challenges, emphasising their potential to effect positive change in society through active participation in public service.
- ▶ The session concluded with Ms. Neha Sethi's compelling insights into the intersection of media and public life. She emphasised the importance of passion, fearlessness, and continuous learning in navigating the dynamic media landscape. She thrust upon the necessity of robust support systems for women to thrive in the industry, while advocating for a positive attitude towards challenges and failures. Sethi's remarks resonated as empowering principles for women navigating diverse professional domains and contributing to societal progress.

TECHNICAL SESSION 3

The Technical session was titled “women in corporate area” with three panellists. The session commenced with the warm welcome of Ms. Madhu Jain (textile conservationist and designer), Ms Nikita Khanna (founder and CEO of group Indigo) and Ms. Dhirta Rikhye (CEO, Love Change and CCO of Daily Chef)

Before the session, Ms Madhu Jain received felicitation from Professor Reena Marwah while Ms. Nikita Khanna was honoured by Ms Trisha Choudhary. Ms Dhirta Rikhye was acknowledged by Dr. Devika Mittal. Each speaker was felicitated with a plant as a token of appreciation for their contributions to the session.

The session began with a speech by Ms. Madhu Jain. She presented herself as a proud JMC alumni and not only as an Indian fashion designer, but as her path towards the textile conservation and craft revival. She explained what women empowerment is, what fashion is all about and what you choose to do in fashion. Her speech was deeply rooted in the value of education, how education empowers and teaches having a goal in life. She explained through her own life experience, even after her marriage, how she managed to attend Delhi school of Economics and, after being a mother of two children, not stopping her from going beyond her passion for textiles. She spoke about her decision to formalise the passion for textiles into a commercial avenue and worked to developing this as a successful career. She concluded by highlighting the bamboo textile’s potential in India, emphasising the policymaker’s role in supporting artisans and the issue of digital printed textiles, harming artisans' livelihood.



- ▶ The next panellist was Ms. Nikita Khanna, who began her talk by thanking everyone. She shared her personal journey of entrepreneurship, motherhood, and resilience. She also emphasized the importance of self-belief, creativity, collaboration, the importance of passion, planning, and sustainability in entrepreneurship. She proudly shared that 70% of the staff in her organisation are women. This reflected her dedication to diversity and inclusivity.
- ▶ The next speech was by Ms. Dhirta Rikhye. She talked about the opportunities and challenges faced as an entrepreneur. She mentioned the opportunities such as the increasing mindset of curiosity and creativity, being informed and networking, building strong networks, social impact and staying consistent. She talked about the challenges faced by women in entrepreneurship, mainly gender issues, self-confidence and impostor system, cultural norms and gender bias, limited access to support systems and mentors and work-life balance. Even in the middle of all these circumstances, she remarked how work-life integration and self-care helped her achieve her dreams.
- ▶ The session concluded with a vote of thanks by Hitika Kalra and Keerti Agarwal.

OPEN HOUSE DISCUSSION

- ▶ The program concluded with an Open House Discussion conducted by Dr. Bipasha Rosy Lakra (Co-convenor of the program). The session brought about questions by students from various departments. The 1st question was asked by Janvi Ali from BA Programme. She asked as to how as female entrepreneurs one can resolve issues surrounding earning more than male counterparts that can be problematic for males. The question was directed to Ms. Dhirta Rakhiye (CEO, LoveChange). Her answer was that even though there is still male domination in the industry, there is a need to overcome these barriers digging deep into research and extending one's own knowledge. And if one's own family produces social stigma and are dismissive of what one is doing, then one needs to handle such issues with care.
- ▶
- ▶ The next question was asked by Astha Bharadwaj from 2nd year, B.A. Political Science (Hons.). Her question was to Ms. Madhu Jain (Textile Conservationist and Designer). She asked, “As there is an urgent need to revive Indian handloom products which are expensive as compared to modern textile clothes. In this scenario how can we achieve a balance between increase in sale of handloom clothes with affordability?” Ms. Jain answered that it is due to the fact that weavers are turning away from the natural sources of livelihood and the affordability of handloom depends on the demand and consumption as well. Huge demands would also make handlooms more reasonable like they used to be. Also, handlooms need support from the government to make it more affordable for example, having policies promoting such craft among the general public and creating awareness between them.





- ▶ The next question was asked by Dr. Phuireingam Hongchui from the political science department. His question was, "how does one strike a balance between creativity and originality as a cultural heritage in the industry?" This question was posed to Ms. Madhu Jain. Her answer was that the printing methods which are used in the industry are the same which were used from the time of Madhubani itself. It is now discontinued but for 30 years, the revenue came from such printing methods only. One student went abroad to study fashion designing and came back to revive old handloom culture, but in the present times, there are no takers for it, answered Ms. Jain.

- ▶ The open house discussion concluded with the question by Dr. Amrita Sastry from the sociology department. She asked, "When women are in the backside, who are mostly involved in weaving, and men are in the forefront with regards to designing. How do you address this issue being in the field?" Ms. Madhu Jain started answering by giving an example of how she faced difficulties from her own family and converted her anger into something positive by achieving the position of where she has reached now. Those days, there was no support system. In 1996, she had the opportunity to work with Bangladesh Rural Committee and travelled to various places to see embroideries from various places. It were the women who were doing things, were being producers supported by men who would do most of the marketing. They were some of the finest handicrafts which were produced by them and also were able to revive Dhaka muslin in India. Most of the embroideries in India after partition were able to be revived because of women.



VOTE OF THANKS

- ▶ The official session concluded with a vote of thanks delivered by Dr. Anuradha Sharma (Co-convenor of the program) during the closing ceremony. Dr. Sharma expressed gratitude on behalf of the institution for the invaluable opportunity provided to students to interact with the esteemed speakers. She first extended appreciation to the National Commission for Women for facilitating such enriching engagements for young women. Acknowledgments were then extended to Shri A. Asholi Chalai and his team for their presence and contributions, as well as to each of the panellists for their insightful presentations. Dr. Sharma also expressed gratitude to Principal Prof. Sandra Joseph for her dedicated commitment to the event's success, along with appreciation for the student volunteers whose efforts ensured smooth execution.
- ▶ Further thanks were extended to the faculty members and students who actively participated in the event, highlighting their integral role in fostering meaningful dialogue. Special recognition was given to technical team at JMC, including Mr. Kailash, Mr. Thomas, Mr. Gaurav, Mr. Yum Bahadur, Mr. Kishan, and Mr. Pavan, for their efficient coordination and support. The vote of thanks concluded with appreciation for the organizing committee convenor, Prof. Reena Marwah, whose meticulous planning and execution contributed significantly to the success of the endeavour.



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Thank You!