

National Seminar on Indian Women Past, Present and Future

WDC organized a one-day National seminar on the topic “Indian Women Past, Present and Future” with Professor Kapil Kumar Director, Centre for Freedom Struggle and Diaspora Studies and activist Ms. Sunita Duggal as resource persons on 6th April, 2018. Prof. Kapil Kumar talked the status of women in the past and present times while Ms. Duggal focused on issues of women empowerment in India. The seminar was attended by students and teachers from SLC and other colleges of Delhi University. In all, there were 126 participants in the seminar. The Seminar was introduced by Dr. Alka Sharma, WDC Convenor who talked about the relevance of organizing such an event to deliberate upon the issues of women empowerment in India. Prof. Rabi Narayan Kar, Principal SLC gave the Welcome Address in the seminar and talked about his experiences as an administrator in dealing with issues surrounding prioritizing girl education in the country, encouraging girls and women colleagues to come forward and take the lead in educational institutions and other public forums.

The session began with Prof. Kapil Kumar talking about the evolving status of women in India from the past to the present and what does future hold for women’s rights and women empowerment. He started with how a country can progress only when its women are empowered and treated equally in all domains of life. He focused on how India has progressed in terms of improving girl education, health services for women, generating more economic opportunities for women and their political participation. Achieving gender equality and women empowerment is an integral part of achieving Sustainable development goals where India is a signatory. Prof Kumar, further said that gender inequality in countries like India hinders in the economic, social and environmental progress for nations and its

people. He connected the teaching of ancient Indian granths that advocate honouring and respecting women for social and family stability and growth. Prof. Kumar continued to talk about the degradation of women's position in Indian society afterwards with women being treated as possession and objects and oppressed by patriarchal structures. All this began to change with the participation of women in Indian national freedom movement with women freedom fighters like Sarojini Naidu and others paving the way for women's greater participation in the public and political sphere of the nation. He then concluded by talking about position of women in the 21st century Indian society.

Ms. Sunita Duggal took forward the discussion by talking about women empowerment in present Indian society. She talked about how women are taking lead in all spheres of life: public, political, economic, social, family, medical sciences, education etc. However, women still encounter discrimination in domains of life which demonstrates that there are still gaps to achieving complete women empowerment. Ms. Duggal focused on social position of women in rural and urban India and how women belonging to low class and low caste are at the lowest rung of the society. There need to be action-oriented approaches to empowering such women. She concluded her talk by calling upon young educated individuals towards community work that can uplift women belonging to the lower strata of society.

The Seminar further progressed with opening the floor for discussion and questions from the audience. Many students and teachers asked questions, gave comments and contributed to the discussion. The Seminar ended with a collective pledge to encourage young educated and capable citizens of the country towards working for the welfare and rights of suppressed people including women. The seminar ended with a vote of thanks to the chair.

