



JESUS AND MARY COLLEGE

GOLDEN JUBILEE  
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE  
on

*Empowering Women Through  
Transformative Education*

**REPORT**

Wednesday, 3 October  
& Thursday, 4 October 2018

**Patron:**

Sr. (Dr.) Rosily T.L. rjm, Principal

**Conveners:**

Dr. Ameeta Motwani, Associate Professor

Dr. Alka Sehgal, Associate Professor

Dr. Alka Marwaha, Associate Professor

Dr. Renu Gupta, Associate Professor

## Preface

Jesus and Mary College (JMC), a constituent College of the University of Delhi, was established in 1968 by the Religious Congregation of Jesus and Mary. Starting with a few hundred students, JMC today holds a prestigious position as one of the leading women's colleges in the country. The College celebrated its Golden Jubilee Year during 2017-18.

The Jubilee Year celebrations began on a befitting note with an inaugural function on 20<sup>th</sup> September 2017. We were deeply honored and privileged to have President of India Shri Ram Nath Kovind as the Chief Guest on this occasion. In his speech, Shri Kovind emphasised the role of education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and the importance of educating women in India. He lauded contribution of the College in higher education for women. Many eminent guests like the Archbishop of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Delhi, Fr. Anil Jose Thomas Couto, the Chairman of UGC Dr.V.S.Chauhan, the Vice Chancellor of Delhi University, Prof. Yogesh Tyagi, retired faculty and non-teaching staff, prominent alumnae along with the current students and staff joined the inauguration. The programme was compered by the well-known television news anchor and an alumna of JMC, Ms. Rini Simon Khanna and was telecast live on Doordarshan. A photo exhibition showcasing vignettes spanning this journey of fifty years was also showcased.

It was decided that the yearlong celebrations would focus on the theme "Empowering Women through Transformative Education". The celebrations during the Golden Jubilee year, included academic and cultural events giving testimony to JMC's pursuit of academic excellence, faith in humanity and pride in the rich cultural heritage of India. Each department organised an Academic Day where eminent academicians and scholars were invited to address the students and faculty to enhance the academic ethos of the college. The various cultural societies of the College organised competitions during the Annual festival 'Montage' showcasing the talent of our students in dance, music, quiz, debate etc. An Inter-faith Peace Seminar was held to bring together the many threads of faith and spirituality into one common bond of humanity and love. As part of the Golden Jubilee celebrations, the Sports Day this year was a memorable one, its grandeur enhanced by the presence of distinguished sports personalities of the country.

Education and productive, secure employment are vital tools for empowering women, especially in the context of economies that have historically reproduced sharp social divisions and hierarchies. University education plays the role of a catalyst in women's development by supporting women to be free thinkers, explore channels

of self-discovery, and determine the ways in which they want to participate in the public and private domains. Nevertheless, attaining university education in the first place, and the persistence of gender-based violence and discrimination in the larger society are challenges which women continue to be confronted with.

In the light of above, it was decided to conclude the Golden Jubilee Year Celebrations with a two-day International Research Conference titled "Empowering Women through Transformative Education" on October 3 - 4, 2018. Eminent academicians and scholars from India and abroad participated at the well-attended Panel Sessions.

It was brought out that the journey towards attaining women empowerment encapsulates unceasing resistance, introspection, and critical review of social structures/institutions, state policy. In this light, the following sub-themes were explored in the conference:

- Political, Cultural and Ideological Dimensions of Women Empowerment
- Victimization to Empowerment: Journeys of Indian Women
- Gender Violence and Resistance
- Diversity and Inclusion in Higher Education
- Empowering Women in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: The role of University education
- Global Perspectives on Reforms in Higher Education
- Women Entrepreneurship and Financial Independence
- State or Community-driven Empowerment Initiatives and Transformed Living Realities.

The Conference had many eminent speakers at three Panel sessions which included Padma Shri Meenakshi Gopinath (ex Principal, LSR); Prof. Shyam Menon (CIE Delhi and Former Vice Chancellor, Ambedkar University); Prof. Ravinder Kaur (IIT Delhi); Prof. and Ambassador (Retd.) Veena Sikri (Convenor, South Asia Women's Network); Prof. Anita Ghai (Ambedkar University Delhi); Dr. Mary E. John (CWDS Delhi); Ms. Kanta Singh (UNDP India); Foreign experts: Finnish Professor Marja-Liisa Tenhunen (SHU MBA Shanghai University), British Education Expert Ms. Beckey Smith (Asst. Director, International Advance Higher Education, UK); American Professors Akhilesh Chandra (Akron University, Ohio) and Huma Ghosh (San Diego State University).

The panel discussion sessions presented different facets of conceptualization of women empowerment and agreed on the need to redefine women empowerment as autonomy and agency of the women to make informed choices and decisions.

Economic growth along with education emerged as the key facilitators of women empowerment.

The Conference received an overwhelming response from researchers from all parts of India (from University of Kashmir to Calicut University in Kerala). Around 40 scholars, whose papers were scrutinised by rigorous review process, presented their papers in Technical Sessions organised in four inter-linked themes. This document is a compilation of the Abstracts of these papers along with brief reports and glimpses of the Panel sessions and other highlights of the Golden Jubilee Conference.

### **Inaugural Session**



**Address by Chief Guest Prof. Yogesh Tyagi (Vice Chancellor, DU)**



Prof. Tyagi appreciated the need for creating awareness about empowerment of women. He said that women's rights are a part of human rights and women's empowerment and human empowerment have common objectives: (1) Self-preservation, (2) Self-realisation, (3) Contribution to community development and more importantly (4) Enlightenment. He elaborated that it has taken a long time for law to recognise equality - be it of castes, races or gender. However, women empowerment has emerged as an important concept relatively recently. The second aspect that Prof Tyagi elaborated was the need to positively impact behaviour and attitudes of students for education to be truly transformational and empowering. He stressed that education is the most important, easiest and most celebrated means of empowerment and that both teachers and students empower each other through questions and that attending classes contributes to empowerment.

## Keynote Address by Prof. Karuna Chanana



Prof (Retd.) Karuna Chanana in her Keynote Address proposed that there is an adherent need to overcome certain institutional barriers and existing organisational structures that reinforce the narrow perceptions and stereotypes related to women. Therefore, it is required that colleges and universities have a long-term vision for women to build their self-confidence and enhance their capacities to be the agents of change in the society.

She further elaborated that education is not free from gender issues such as presence of masculine and feminine subjects, which are chosen not on merit but emerge in complex social practices. She expressed her concern that success of women in traditionally male dominated professions has not translated into women's representation in decision making roles. Therefore, there is an urgent need to dismantle the institutional barriers and change the existing organizational structures that reinforce the traditional perceptions and stereotypes about women.

## Panel Discussions

### WOMEN EMPOWERMENT: MEANINGS AND CONTEXTS

#### MODERATOR & DISCUSSANT

Dr. Nilima Chitgopekar

**Prof Ravinder Kaur** discussed the ideas of autonomy and agency in understanding women empowerment. She explained that social practices of sex selection abortions and daughter aversion are a reality and deterrent to women empowerment. She raised the pertinent question that though data shows increase of women in higher education, does the woman have autonomy and agency in issues concerning childbearing. Prof Kaur emphasized that empowerment is needed most in making fertility decisions and in making education political.

**Prof Mary E. John** said that public debate in the context of women empowerment often relates to violence against women. This debate has seen an increase after the Delhi gang rape case of a young girl by strangers at night. She argued that statistics from crime branch bring forth a different picture- that 98% abusers are known to the victim and only 2% abusers are strangers. In some cases, the abuser is the caretaker. She stressed that higher education and employment are important for women empowerment but mere increase in numbers is not enough and that more attention should be paid to economic autonomy of women.

**Ms Kanta Singh** talked about the UNDP's Disha project for women that focuses on developing awareness, linking aspirations with skilling opportunities and helps to set up small enterprises. Her data about economic indicators brought forth that 95% women are in informal economy. She encouraged the students to reach their potential and negotiate their own spaces within the family.

**Overall:** The panelists Prof Ravinder Kaur, Prof Mary John and Ms Kanta Singh presented different facets of the definition of women empowerment such as sex-selection and violence; and agreed on the need to redefine women empowerment as autonomy and agency of the women to make choices and decisions. Economic growth along with education emerged as the key facilitators of women empowerment.

## UNLEASHING THE POTENTIAL OF WOMEN: ROLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

### CHAIRPERSON

Prof. Shyam Menon

**Padma Shri Meenakshi Gopinath** stressed the need to have more girls' colleges at University level so as to provide spaces for learning and growing for women. She also discussed few community outreach programmes taken in this direction at Lady Sri Ram College and how such programmes have enabled girls of those communities to have better access to higher education.

**Prof Anita Ghai** shared her insights and experiences of making institutes of higher education more accessible to all women, particularly those who are differently-abled. She stressed that the access needs to be physical as well as social so as to ensure continued participation of women from diverse backgrounds.

**Ms. Becky Smith-** Ms. Smith stressed on significance of various support mechanisms to advance and empower women in Higher Education. While citing examples and statistics from UK, she identified key challenges for women in Higher Education and also suggested feasible alternatives. Some of the discussed alternatives were - more training for women for key roles in universities, development of women's support groups, developing leadership roles in part-time, job-share and flexible basis and so on.

**Prof Huma Ghosh** stressed that education and productive secure employment are vital tools to empower and uplift women, especially in the context of economies that have historically reproduced sharp social divisions and hierarchies. She further discussed that University education plays the role of a catalyst in women's development by supporting women to be free thinkers, explore channels of self-discovery and determine the ways in which they want to participate in the public and private domains.

**Overall:** The panelists - Padma Shri Meenakshi Gopinath, Prof Anita Ghai, Ms Becky Smith and Prof Huma Ghosh shared varied ways in which Higher Education can unleash the potential of women of different backgrounds. Some of the highlighted ways were development of community outreach programmes and women's support groups, making institutes of higher education physically and socially inclusive and creating avenues to do jobs on sharing and flexible basis for women.



## GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES ON WOMEN AND HIGHER EDUCATION

### CHAIRPERSON

Prof. Veena Sikri

**Prof. Marja-Lisa Tenhunen** highlighted five universal factors that encourage women to achieve success in higher education- Basic skills, International exposure (Experience), Mentoring, Role Models and Early Starting. She also shared examples and statistics from Finland, one of the most gender-equal countries in the world. She suggested few ways to ensure participation of women in key roles and responsibilities in Higher Education by making certain fundamental changes in Education system from early on. Some of the suggested ways are - focus on successful implementation of educational apps, to view teachers and professors as facilitators, encourage students to work and learn in groups or teams and to give space to creativity and design in learning process of students.

**Prof Akhilesh Chandra** discussed the global trends in Higher Education with specific focus on US. He highlighted some key issues in attainment of higher education - market being the key player at the University level, data driven management, rising cost of tuition for higher education / school loans and so on. He further added that women (especially belonging to ethnic groups or minorities) lag behind in terms of enrolment and continuation in higher education as compared to men. He claimed that higher education for women is important as it can lead to workplace gender equality, women's exercise of choice in family planning and better health coverage for women.

**Overall:** The panelists Prof Tenhunen and Prof Chandra discussed Global Perspectives through which gender disparity could be addressed in Higher Education. Some of the perspectives focussed on inculcation of basic skills, international exposure, mentoring, role modelling and early starting for all women (especially women of ethnic groups or minorities).

## Brief Report of the Valedictory Session



The two-day conference culminated in a Valedictory session on the evening of October 4, 2018. The Valedictory speech was delivered by the Chief Guest Prof. Sudesh Nangia, Member of the Governing Body, Jesus and Mary College. Prof. Nangia talked about her own experiences as a student in order to connect with the students and inspire them to be their best selves.

Dr Alka Sehgal (Convenor, JMC Golden Jubilee Committee) presented a report of the Conference. She highlighted that the role of the conference was to continue the dialogue on the issues of women empowerment, its meanings, importance and role of various agencies in general and higher education in particular.

All the delegates who presented papers at the four Technical Sessions were given certificates.

Dr. Ameeta Motwani (Co-convenor of the Conference) proposed Vote of Thanks on behalf of the Organising Committee and hoped that we should be able to organise more International Conferences in future.

Photo Gallery











## Organizing Team

**Conference Chief Patron:** Prof. John Chathnatt sj, Chairman, Governing Body, JMC

**Patron:** Sr. (Dr.) Rosily T.L. rjm, Principal

**Conveners:** Dr. Ameeta Motwani, Associate Professor

Dr. Alka Sehgal, Associate Professor

Dr. Alka Marwaha, Associate Professor

Dr. Renu Gupta, Associate Professor

## Technical Sessions

**I Chairperson:** Dr. Mani A. Nandhi, Associate Professor

**Discussant:** Mr. Naveen Thomas, Assistant Professor

**II Chairperson:** Dr. Alka Sehgal, Associate Professor

**Discussant:** Dr. Amya Agarwal, Assistant Professor

**III Chairperson:** Dr. Ameeta Motwani, Associate Professor

**Discussant:** Ms. Deepali Kulkarni, PhD. Scholar, Syracuse University, USA

**IV Chairperson:** Dr. Jayanti Seth, Associate Professor

**Discussant:** Dr. Sandhya Nambiar, Assistant Professor

## Student Activities & Stalls Management

**In-Charges:** Dr. Rekha Dayal  
Associate Professor

Ms. Smita Gupta  
Associate Professor

**Judges:** Ms. Shalini Shrivastava  
Associate Professor

Ms. Sunita Narain  
Associate Professor

Dr. Anu Ahuja  
Associate Professor

Dr. Neelam Rishi  
Associate Professor

## Finance & Hospitality

**In-Charges:** Dr. Renu Gupta.  
Associate Professor

Dr. Sona V. Andrew  
Associate Professor

Dr. Saumya Varghese  
Assistant Professor

Ms. Monica Chhabra  
Assistant Professor



### **Venue Management**

**In-Charges:** Ms. Sheel Sabu  
Associate Professor

Dr. Amita Tiwari  
Associate Professor

Dr. Shefali Mishra  
Assistant Professor

Dr. Joan Antony  
Associate Professor

Dr. Nishwan Bhatia  
Associate Professor

### **Rapporteurs**

Ms. Mansi Aneja, Assistant Professor  
Ms. Gurpreet Kaur, Assistant Professor  
Ms. Asha Sundaram, Assistant Professor

Ms. Ishita Singh, Assistant Professor  
Dr. Prabhjot Kaur, Assistant Professor  
Dr. Neetu Duggal, Assistant Professor

### **Registrations & Online Communications**

**In-Charges:** Dr. Amita Palliwal  
Assistant Professor

Dr. Amrita Sastry  
Assistant Professor

### **Designing, Printing & Photography**

**In-Charges:** Mr. Jobin Thomas  
Assistant Professor

Ms. Charu Sarin  
Assistant Professor

Ms. Rashi Mukhopadhyay  
Assistant Professor

Ms. Ruhi Ghai  
Assistant Professor

### **Technical and Administrative Assistance**

Mr. Gaurav, IT Consultant  
Ms. Sylvia Lal, Sr. PA to Principal

Mr. R. S. Pathania, Sr. Caretaker  
Mr. Ram Kailash, Sound and Light