



DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY LOYOLA HISTORY ASSOCIATION (2024-25)

Dr. M.X. MIRANDA'S ENDOWMENT LECTURE

The Department of History, Loyola College, Chennai, organized the M. X. Miranda Endowment Lecture on “Women’s Rights during the Colonial Period,” held on March 8, 2024, at YD Hall, which was a remarkable event aimed at shedding light on the historic challenges and progress made by women during colonial time. The event opened with Tamil Thai Vazhuthu and a prayer song, setting a reverent atmosphere. Dr. A. Arputha Selvi, head of the department, welcomed the gathering and chief guest and briefed them about the endowment lecture. Ms. A. Karoliya Jansirani served as the convener, steering the program seamlessly.



Dr. Biju Joseph honored the chief guest with a shawl and Ms. A. Karoliya Jansirani with a memento. The chief guest was introduced by Rev. Dr. Arokiasamy J, followed by which the chief guest, Dr. Venkatraman, delved deep into the pivotal roles that women played in the Freedom Movement, highlighting their courage, resilience, and contributions to India’s struggle for independence. He brought attention to significant reforms such as the Divorce Act of 1869,



which, despite its limitations, marked a crucial step in granting legal recognition to women's rights during the colonial era. Furthermore, he shared the inspiring but challenging journey of Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddy, who was instrumental in the fight to abolish the Devadasi system—a practice that subjugated women and limited their autonomy.

Beyond historical reforms, Dr. Venkatraman examined the portrayal of women in the media during the colonial period, emphasizing how these representations influenced public perception and societal roles. He also highlighted women's growing participation in elections as a sign of their assertion of political agency, even in the face of systemic challenges.



After Dr. Venkatraman's address, a lively question-and-answer session took place. During this session, he urged final-year students to direct their attention towards studying the conditions of women in education and the press during colonial times, encouraging them to pursue meaningful research in these areas.

The event concluded on a note of gratitude, with Mr. Abdul Khadar, Convenor delivering the vote of thanks, appreciating the speaker, the organizers, and the audience for making the program a success. Overall, the lecture served as a rich source of historical insights and an inspiration for contemporary discussions on gender equality.