



Report: One Day National Seminar on Advancing Gender Equality: Policy and Practice in Contemporary India, sponsored by the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR), New Delhi and held at Loyola College, Chennai

Introduction

The One Day National Seminar on **Advancing Gender Equality: Policy and Practice in Contemporary India**, sponsored by the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR), New Delhi, was held at Loyola College, Chennai. This significant academic and intellectual endeavour aimed at fostering discourse on gender-related issues in India. The event brought together distinguished academicians, scholars, and researchers to deliberate on various aspects of gender equality, including its historical evolution, policy implications, socio-cultural dimensions, and future challenges. Organised by the Department of History, the seminar served as a platform to analyse and discuss critical themes concerning gender justice and social inclusivity.

Inauguration Ceremony

The seminar commenced with a solemn prayer led by the Department Choir, followed by the traditional rendition of "Tamizh Thai Vazhthu." The welcome address was delivered by Dr. A. Arputha Selvi, Head of the Department of History, who underscored the significance of gender equality in contemporary Indian society. She emphasised the need for interdisciplinary discussions to address the multifaceted challenges that impede gender justice.

The event was formally inaugurated by the chief guest, Dr. Yuthika Mishra, Professor of History, Vivekananda College, University of Delhi, who also had the honour of releasing the Loyola Forum for Historical Research (LFHR) Proceedings. This momentous occasion was marked by a bouquet presentation by Dr. I. Princes, Assistant Professor, Department of History, followed by the presentation of a memento to the chief guest by Rev. Dr. J. Arockiasamy. These symbolic gestures marked the commencement of a day-long intellectual exchange aimed at contributing to the discourse on gender equality.

Speaker Addresses and Paper Presentations

Throughout the seminar, distinguished speakers provided valuable insights into various facets of gender equality. They discussed historical perspectives, contemporary challenges, and policy frameworks aimed at fostering gender justice. Speakers highlighted the role of education, law, workforce participation, and social activism in bridging gender disparities. They also emphasised the importance of collective efforts from the government, private sector, and civil society in addressing gender-based inequalities. In addition to the invited speakers, researchers and academicians presented their papers in each session, contributing scholarly perspectives and empirical studies to the discourse. These presentations facilitated robust academic

discussions and provided new insights into gender equality policies and practices in contemporary India.

Session I: Speaker - Ms. B.S. Ajeetha, Advocate, Women and Child Rights Activist

The first session, moderated by Dr. P. Nansi, Coordinator, Department of International Relations, Loyola College, explored the legal dimensions of gender equality. The discussions revolved around significant legislative milestones, judicial interventions, and the need for greater legal awareness among women to safeguard their rights. Several research papers were presented on topics related to gender justice, legal frameworks, and policy implementations.

Session II: Speaker - Dr. M.V. Usha Devi, Professor of History, Bangalore University

Moderated by Dr. D. Felicita Mary Prabha, Assistant Professor, Department of English, Loyola College, this session focused on the role of education in empowering women. Speakers examined government initiatives, gender biases in curriculum design, and the need for inclusive educational policies to enhance female literacy and participation. Researchers presented papers analysing educational disparities, policy effectiveness, and grassroots efforts in bridging gender gaps in education.

Session III: Speaker – Dr. C. Aruna, Professor & Head, Department of Sociology, Pondicherry University

The third session, moderated by Dr. D. Sweetlin Rajula Rubavathi, Assistant Professor, Department of Chemistry, Loyola College, addressed women's economic participation. Discussions centred around employment opportunities, workplace policies, and strategies to close the gender wage gap and promote equal opportunities in the labour market. Academicians and scholars contributed by presenting research on topics such as gender disparity in employment, workplace inclusivity, and economic policy impacts on gender equality.

Session IV: Speaker – Dr. Bhuwan Kumar Jha, Associate Professor of History, University of Delhi

The final session, moderated by Ms. Saritha, Assistant Professor, Department of Economics, Loyola College, explored the intersectionality of gender with caste, class, and other social stratifications. The session underscored the importance of adopting an inclusive approach to policy formulation to address the unique challenges faced by marginalised groups. Research presentations in this session examined case studies, statistical analyses, and theoretical perspectives on intersectionality and gender justice.

Valedictory Ceremony

The valedictory session commenced with a prayer led by the Department Choir, followed by a welcome address by Dr. A. Arputha Selvi. The concluding ceremony featured the presentation of a bouquet by Mr. A. Jeevith Anuguram and a memento by Dr. P.J. Biju Joseph, symbolising gratitude towards the dignitaries for their contributions.

The chief guest for the valedictory ceremony, Dr. Bernard D' Sami, Senior Fellow at LISSTAR and Former Head, Department of History, Loyola College, delivered the closing address. The

address summarised the seminar's key takeaways and reiterated the necessity for sustained academic engagement and policy advocacy to advance gender equality in India.

The event concluded with the distribution of certificates to participants, followed by a vote of thanks delivered by Dr. I. Princes, Assistant Professor, Department of History. The national anthem was then rendered, marking the formal closure of the seminar.

Conclusion

The **one-day National Seminar on Advancing Gender Equality: Policy and Practice in Contemporary India** at Loyola College was a resounding success, bringing together intellectuals, policymakers, researchers, and academicians to engage in meaningful discussions. The event provided a platform to critically evaluate gender policies, social norms, and institutional frameworks. While acknowledging the progress made, the seminar also highlighted persisting challenges that require concerted efforts from multiple stakeholders. The insights gained from the discussions and research presentations are expected to contribute to ongoing scholarly research and advocacy efforts aimed at achieving gender justice in India.



Chief Guest & Keynote Speaker - Dr. Yuthika Mishra, Professor of History, Vivekananda College, University of Delhi, New Delhi



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Chief Guest – Valedictory – Dr. Bernard D Sami, Senior Faculty, LISSTAR, Loyola College





Department Choir