



International Women's Day Celebrated At IIT Bhubaneswar

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Bhubaneswar: International Women's Day is celebrated on 8th March every year to celebrate the womanhood and is a time to reflect courage and determination by ordinary women who have played an extraordinary role in the history of their countries and communities. A three-day programme starting from 6th March – 8th March 2020 was organized at IIT Bhubaneswar by Women Welfare Committee (WWC), as part of International Women's Day Celebration.

This year's theme for International Women's Day, "I am Generation Equality: Realizing Women's Rights." explores the way to mobilize global action to achieve gender equality and human rights of all women and girls. The Chief Guest of the event was Dr Sanghamitra Pati, Director, ICMR-Regional Medical Research Centre, Bhubaneswar. The event was presided over by Prof. R.V. Raja Kumar, Director, IIT Bhubaneswar.

Speaking on the occasion, Prof. R.V. Raja Kumar, Director, IIT Bhubaneswar said, "International Women's Day encourages us all to reflect on the importance of maintaining gender equality, to celebrate the successes of women, and to acknowledge the work that is still left to be done. We are all here to recapitulate about the status of the world today particularly on the eve of International Women's day and express our commitment towards our functioning for gender parity with deep feelings and in a spirited manner. We should take actions such that automatically they come to parity and they claim their right to a position in the society. Needless to mention, there is strong need for us to work assiduously on providing gender parity. Fortunately, the MHRD has arranged supernumerary seat allocation and as a result, we had last year 17.06% women admitted and this year it is going to be 20% including the 8 % which nationally automatically gets admitted to the IIT system. Fortunately, the percentage is

better in MSC, Master's and PhD programme, this is a positive sign in this direction. I would also want to share with you my experience of Rajiv Gandhi University of Knowledge Technologies as the founding Vice-Chancellor where I got the opportunity to witness the pass out of more than 5800 students from the first batch out of which 45% were women and about a third of them were toppers of the branches, so that was the changing scenario, they were all from rural areas, so given an opportunity they can come up well. I would like to share that these days the concern certainly went up and in various selections and selection processes the sensitivities are functioning in the right direction, I do agree that there is discrimination happening in certain parts of society but nevertheless the reforms should start at home, the concern for gender parity should start at home, so everybody at IIT Bhubaneswar should commit ourselves to gender parity in all our functioning, admission processes, selection process and providing equal opportunities for women.

Dr Sanghamitra Pati, Director, ICMR-Regional Medical Research Centre, Bhubaneswar and Chief Guest of the evening expressed her heartiest congratulations to the students and faculties for toiling hard to reach IIT Bhubaneswar, the elite class and Institution of National Importance in the country along with special mention to Prof. R.V. Raja Kumar, Director, IIT Bhubaneswar for his dynamic leadership and for being culturally oriented. She also expressed heartfelt congratulations to all the faculty members at IIT for moulding the best brains in the country. She emphasized that she is passionate about gender equity and not gender equality. She stressed that while women's rights are human rights, in these troubled times, the rights of women and girls are being reduced, restricted and reversed. She emphasized that only by empowering women and girls their rights can be protected and their full potential be ensured. She further added that gender equality has a transformative effect that is essential for fully functioning communities, societies and economies. She also talked about the disparity in health care when it comes to maternity care, so there is a strong need to make this experience respectable, enjoyable and joyous. She further added that our country believes woman as the engine of growth and it is committed to advance the rise of women nationally and globally.

The celebration was a three-day affair with a series of activities ranging from the debate, poetry writing on the first day followed by interesting talks. Also present at the event were Dr. (Col) Subodh Kumar and Dr Sankarsan Mohapatra, President, Student Gymkhana. The event was followed by the illumination of the lamp, welcome address by Dr Remya Neelancherry, Chairperson, WWC, IIT Bhubaneswar, prize distribution ceremony, cultural programs followed by a vote of thanks.