

# “Lead, not Plead” opines woman speakers

- At conclusion of TEDx event of IIM (R)
- Women experts from different walks of life commented on women empowerment

Raipur, Nov 30:

It's not just about one big idea but about making it happen. That was the theme of the TEDx event organized by Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Raipur. A one of its kind event which featured all women speakers reminded us that there is an incubation period for every great concept, a short period of imperfection until the rough edges are smoothed out. The event tried to drive home the belief that fear of imperfection or failure should not scare one from taking his or her idea forward.

This year's theme: "The Next Big Idea" focused on the sparks created by the ideas that fueled inspiration. Speakers discussed the myriad of moments about what the next big idea today in the world is for women.

Motivate and value who you are: Seema

The event kicked off with a beautiful mime performance by students of IIM Raipur which very vividly narrated the life of a woman, the roles played by her from a daughter to a wife. The first speaker Ms Seema Azharuddin, Actor-Activist-Consultant, started with a quote from Mother Teresa that, "Power comes from within, not from the mind". Women empowerment is not something which a woman should learn at 25 rather having learnt this in school, a woman should execute empowerment by the age of 25. It's not about holding a placard saying that we are women, it's about motivating and valuing who you are and what you are doing. I'm my best investment and no one else can take the onus of this.

**Attitude on how to face obstacles matters: Archana**

Next speaker was Ms Archana Sadanna, India's first Building Aerial Spanning Earth (B.A.S.E.) jumper. Coming from a small city of Jammu and brought up in a conservative family, her life changed when she married a man from the Indian Navy, who helped her realize her true potential. It's

not about the obstacles which you encounter but about the attitude with which we face them. If you have to achieve something one has to come out of their comfort zone and keep pushing yourself to achieve new things.

**Give back something to society: Dr Jain**

Dr. Rachna Jain, Founding member, Jan Swasthya Sahyog (JSS), the next speaker talked about the condition of women in rural India and the need for immediate attention. With barely any specialized services available, she along with her husband and a team of 7 other doctors decided to give back to the society and initiate a wave of change. The organization has brought upon a new awareness among the villagers, which results in early diagnosis of severe problems and prevents labor pain deaths. The idea of empowerment is not about reaching out to masses but about being able to think and execute a change in oneself.

**Need to work for causes not symptoms: Nilima**

Ms Nilima Achwal, a Social entrepreneur, started her talk with a question- What it means to empower women? Is it giving her more money or providing her



safety or giving her the right to speak up. No amount of these things can improve the situation as we need to work for the causes and not the symptoms. Contaminated milk has become a norm as we have become used to living in a society where women are considered second to men. Teaching in one of the municipal school in Mumbai, she realized how pornography has penetrated into the domain of school going kids and what the possible consequences of this are. Conventionally boys are always left and neglected on such gender

issues. As said by Swami Viveknanda, "India cannot fly with one wing. India can grow only if she spreads both her wings and flies high."

**Shed Victim Syndrome: Smita**

Ms. Smita Nair Jain, COO - Barclays Technology Centre India, started off her talk as, "We all know and believe that, we got an India and a Bharat and women at every juncture face challenges. India and Bharat offer different challenges." Focusing on India and Corporate India she chalked out the definition of empowerment as the power and freedom to

choose opportunities and enhance one's ability and skill to do what one wants to do. She also highlighted the fact that how the norm of mandatory women board member in listed companies received significant lobbying against it and also this positions being primarily being occupied by members from promoter's family. She urged women to shed the Victim syndrome, feeling discriminated if something doesn't happen as per her wish, and rather have to take charge of the situation.

**Give freedom of expression to every individual: Gulyani**

Ms. Manisha Gulyani, an ICCR Kathak Artiste, exclaimed that art is the supreme form of human expression and an artist sees the real world and then turns that into poetry, music and dance. "India as a land of brave and amazing legends is known for its art and culture. Although women constitute half of the human race but, in Indian art and culture women have 25-30 percent participation. So can we say that the Indian art is the true representation of Indian culture?? All of us should come forward and give the freedom of expression to each and every individual," were her views.

**Understand strength, weaknesses and hone your strength: Hema**

Ms. Hema Balakrishnan, Founder - Color D Earth, a social entrepreneur who works towards the sustainable and economic growth of the Terracotta Artisan community, started with a group of 6 artisan groups, today constitutes of a group of 200 artisan groups. She said her mantra is to identify, collate and then empower, and she believes sustainable growth of the whole system. Acknowledging her customers as her brand ambassadors, she noted that women now prefer terracotta jewellery over gold or diamond jewellery. According to her the top challenges that social enterprises face are attracting top talent, raising capital and building value chain.

According to her empowerment comes from vulnerability and by vulnerability she means to be open, to understand your strength and weaknesses and to hone your strengths. She urged, "Each of us has these innate power of empowerment, of collaboration, and I may be a drop in this infinite cosmos but I believe, I have made a difference and you can make it too."