

A Session on Gender Perspective in Population Studies for World Population Day

The 11th of July marks the arrival of World Population Day. It gives us a chance to draw attention towards the exploding population issues around the globe. The Women Development Cell of St. Xavier's Institute of Education, Potentia, in collaboration with Sophia Centre for Women's Studies and Development held an enlightening session on '**Gender Perspectives in Population Studies**' on 10th July, 2021 to solemnize the occasion.

The session was held on the Zoom platform and was presided by Potentia's chairperson- Dr. Sosamma Samuel, the convener- Dr. Vini Sebastian, and the faculties-in-charge – Dr. Shadab Paloji and Professor Nishi Kumar. The attendees for the session included 44 students from St. Xavier's Institute of Education, 32 students from Sophia Centre of Women Studies and Development, 3 YWCA representatives, and 8 teachers from both the colleges along with 2 resource persons.

The session began with Ms. Renita Sequeira, a student-member of Potentia and the compere for the day, introducing the event, the theme of the session, and welcoming everyone. This was followed by some extremely relevant words from Dr. Sosamma Samuel, who brought to light how population and gender are entwined together and especially impactful amidst this pandemic. Next was Dr Shadab Paloji, who introduced the Women Development Cell of St. Xavier's Institute of Education, Potentia, and talked about when and why it was formed.

Ms. Madhulica Sharma, a student-member of Potentia introduced the first resource person of the session: Dr. NVR Kapali from University of Madras. Next was Ms. Jesslyn Gomes, another student-member, who introduced the second resource person of the say: Dr. JP Dubey from University of Delhi. The long list of credentials and contributions of both the resource person were impressive and inspiring.

The main session commenced with Dr. NVR Kapali taking the stage and enlightening us about the paradigm shift in population education. With years of experience in teaching and spreading awareness about the ill-effects of population, Dr. Kapali broadened our perspective to deal with such issues. This was followed by our next resource person of the session, Dr. Dubey, who threw light on Gender Parity, how education plays a crucial role in the social development, and importance of removing gender biases. He enlightened us with numerous real-life occurrences that highlight why population education is the need of the hour. Their words were educative, empowering, and motivating for all the attendees.

Once both the resource persons had given their input, it was time for a group activity. All the attendees were divided into 5 groups and allotted breakout rooms. They were given 5 topics to discuss:

- Population parameters affective the education system
- Changing gender roles affecting the teachers
- Women's role in managing COVID
- Ways to spread awareness of population studies as teachers
- Criteria for measuring quality of population

The attendees had an extremely relevant and fruitful discussion in the breakout room. One attendee from each group volunteered to represent the group and talk about the points they discussed. Once

the breakout room was closed, the group representatives took the stage one by one to talk about their topic. The contributions were articulate, relevant, and very enlightening for all the attendees. The new perspectives put forward by the group representatives were appreciated by the resource persons as well.

Next, Ms. Perna Jain, a student-member of Potentia, came forward to showcase students' creative artworks on the theme of the day. A presentation slide was showcased with slogans, poems, and posters. Mr. Daris Lobo, a student of SXIE recited his poem. Ms. Deepika Nayak, another student, read out her slogan. All the showcased artwork was thoughtful, creative, and awe-inspiring.

The main session was concluded with some pearls of wisdom from Manager Father Blaise. Fr. Blaise talked about gender parity and our responsibility to create a harmonious blend of different groups that will enrich our society. Just like how a forest contains a balance of all living beings, be it a variety of plants or animals, we need to make space for everyone to live a harmonious life on our planet. Dr. Blaise's words perfectly summed up the theme of the session.

Lastly, Ms. Malvika Tiwari, a student-member of Potentia, delivered a vote of thanks where she brilliantly summarized all that we learned from the session. She thanked the resource persons, all the attendees from St. Xavier's Institute of Education as well as Sophia Centre for Women's Studies and Development, the YWCA representatives and all the professors.

As we left the meeting, all of us had gone through some transformation in the way we think about population and the gender perspective related to it. It was an extremely inspiring, educative, enriching, and eye-opening session which instilled in us a sense of responsibility to take the first step.