

**REPORT
ON
AWARENESS PROGRAMME**
“GENDER MAINSTREAMING FOR ENSURING EQUALITY”

**Organized by
Women Cell, St. Edmund’s College**

**In Collaboration
with
IQAC, St. Edmund’s College**

**Date: 26th July 2022
Time: 11:00 am onwards
Venue: College Auditorium**

The Women Cell, St. Edmund's College in collaboration with the IQAC of St. Edmund's College organized an awareness programme on "Gender Mainstreaming for Ensuring Equality" on the 26th of July 2022,. The programme was aimed at sensitizing students and staff about the need and importance for ensuring gender equality at home, workplace and society at large. The programme was attended by both students and faculty members of different departments of the college, Dean of the College, and the Vice Principal.



The programme began with a welcome address by Ms. Iasylloklang Rynjah, Faculty of Department of Environmental Science followed by a felicitation of the Resource Person Ms. Joy. Grace Syiem by Dr. Rituparna Rajendra (Convener, Women Cell). Dr. B War Nongbri (Dean of St. Edmund's College) invoked God's blessings for the day and the programme in particular through a short prayer. This was followed and a short speech by Sir. Monotosh Chakraborty (Vice Principal, St. Edmund's College) who assured that St. Edmund's College as an institution has always been gender sensitive in more ways than one.

A brief introduction about the Resource Person was given by one of the members of the Women Cell, Ms. Edaneolla Kynta (Department of Social Work). It was mentioned that the speaker Ms. Joy Grace Syiem is an experienced Advocate for Women and Child Rights with a Masters Degree in Law in International Crimes and Justice from the United Nations Interregional Crimes and Justice Research Institute in Turin, Italy. Ms. Eda Kynta also mentioned that the resource person has an experience of over 10 years and that she has



worked with a range of organizations - as a Legal Counsel with International Justice Mission in Mumbai prosecuting cases of commercial sexual exploitation, with International Humanity Foundation working for stateless children in Chiang Rai, Thailand. Ms Joy Grace Syiem is currently engaged with North East Network, a Women's Rights Organisation in Meghalaya. She is a keen

advocate for Gender and Legal Rights in her home State, Meghalaya. Joy's skills range from being a trainer, researcher and a legal counsel for women seeking legal support.

Following the introduction, Ms. Joy Grace Syiem introduced the topic on “Gender Mainstreaming for Ensuring Equality” by using the concept of ‘Gender Box’. This box talks about how and why society teaches us to conform to certain acceptable ways. She went on to talk about ‘Gender’ as it refers to the social identity of being a female or a male human being. She also spoke about the difference of ‘Sex & Gender’ as most people are still confused with the two thinking that they are synonymous



whereas it is not. Sex is defined as a person’s biological identity where their chromosomes play an important role on the physical manifestation of one’s identity and on the other hand Gender is a term used for socially assigned or constructed roles given to men and women. It defines the boundaries of what women and men can and should be and do for a living. She went on to talk about the classification of Sex and Gender which our society recognizes us on terms of being a Female or Male which is Biological sex, on grounds of Gender Identity which is a Woman or a Girl, Man or a Boy. Gender Roles also plays a part that are being laid out by our society in terms of our behavior that one must play that is a Feminine or Masculine roles.



Thus, due to such classification by the society our socialization has always been governed by Gender. Gender socialization is the process of learning the social expectations and attitudes associated with one’s sex. Many sociologists have explained the reason as to why human males and females behave in different ways and the

reason is socializing their behavior on grounds of their identity where they learn different social roles from birth.

Ms. Joy Syiem clearly stated that Gender Sensitization is the need of the hour because gender sensitization is the process of understanding how this socialization creates inequalities between men and women

She went on to speak about cultural codes and norms of behavior is applied and reinforced with rewards and punishments, the notions of ‘bad’ and ‘good’ as yardsticks for social judgments. Socialization teaches women and men to conform to rigid norms of behavior rigidly defined roles, rigid codes for relationships which will ultimately lead to rigid notions of self. These are also known as the Four Walls of the Gender Box. She also mentioned about what lies beneath the Gender Box, it is created by the patriarchal social system.



Patriarchy privileges men and subordinates’ women, Patriarchal hierarchies are reflected in formal and informal social structures and institutions (family, clan, community, market, state, etc.). Patriarchal value systems sustain women’s subordination by making it seem “natural”, creating institutions that replicate gender hierarchies. Families are gendered, men are usually seen as Breadwinners while women are usually seen as Caregivers. Work is gendered, men usually do paid work outside the home while women do the unpaid work inside the home and domestic work is seen as “women work”. It is considered demeaning for men to household work.

Political systems are also gendered, men predominate in formal systems while women stick to inform / local systems spaces which is gendered too. Men predominate in public spaces while women occupy private spaces. The resource person cited examples and case studies from Villages in around Shillong which clearly shows that all these inequalities between men and women can even occur in a matrilineal society like ours.

Ms. Joy Syiem rightly said that Gender Difference is not the problem per se but the problem is gender inequality. Gender difference creates gender inequality for example, because men are the owners of property, women cannot get credit from banks even if they meet all other criteria because marriage is seen a women’s destiny, unmarried women are seen as deviants.



Gender inequality is a problem because it violates basic principles of equality and social justice, it puts women at risk of exploitation, oppression and deprivation. It prevents women from participating in and benefitting from development interventions and above all it prevents society from benefitting from the contributions of women.

Ms Joy Syiem ended on a positive note by saying that there has been signs of changes for example, more and more women are working in non – profit traditional professions, increased involvement of men in parenting, movements of men against violence and growth in women’s organizations, women have become more aware of their rights and are speaking up and voicing their concerns towards gender equality which has become politically correct.

In conclusion Ms. Joy Syiem believes that if we want our society to change and become more sensitive towards Gender then the agents of socialization needs to change which comprises of family, community, education systems / institutions, religion, media and workplace.

The programme concluded with a very interactive question-and-answer round between the students and the resource person Ms. Joy Grace Syiem followed by a Thankyou speech from Dr. Rituparna Rajendra of the Women Cell.

All in all, the programme was a great success which is evident from the number of participants, the interaction towards the end also and the feedback received at the end of the programme which was positive.