

Institute of Nutrition) and **Dr. Prema Ramachandran** (Director, Nutrition Foundation of India); educationists **Prof. Karuna Chanana** (Retired Professor, Jawaharlal Nehru University) and **Prof. Ishita Mukhopadhyay** (Director of Women's Studies Research Centre, Calcutta University); economist **Prof. Binod Khadria** (Professor, Jawaharlal Nehru University) and scientists **Prof. Krishna Misra** (Past General Secretary, National Academy of Sciences, India-NAS), **Dr. M. Vijayalakshmi** (Associate Director, Indira Gandhi Centre for Atomic Research). Other dignitaries were **Prof. Gouri Srivastava** (Director of Women's Studies, National Council for Education, Research and Training), **Prof. Chandrika Basu-Majumdar** (Director, Women's Studies Centre, Tripura University), **Dr. Jyoti Sharma** (Principal Scientist, Department of Science & Technology), **Mr. Anoop Satpathy** (Fellow, V. V. Giri National Labour Institute), **Mrs. Madhvi** (Additional CEO, Tamil Nadu Corporation for Development of Women), **Ms. Sonia George** (General Secretary, Self Employed Women's Association-SEWA Kerala).

The book also includes selected micro-research papers contributing to multi-disciplinary approach to transform the 'life-cycle of women' by addressing girl's basic needs of nutrition and education to women's pertinent need of skills training, drudgery removal, and employment. The book traces debates on gender equality and equity from inter-disciplinary and multi-disciplinary points of view. It highlights **a) how women can transform her family health through awareness of nutrition; b) how women can help themselves, their daughters and other women through knowledge and skills, science and technology; and c) how women can address their economic needs and security and rise up from job-seekers to job-givers.** Thus, as national symposium proceedings the book is an important initiative to the holistic understanding and realistic resolution of multi-faceted problems that were collectively explored as being encountered daily by girls and women in Indian society. Importantly the book reinforces that national growth-development would be impossible to achieve without ensuring women's equality and equity in society.

The book is the culmination of the first ever national level assembly of prominent gender specialists across disciplines, sharing scholastic and empirical perspectives on the interrelated themes of the symposium. The national symposium also marked the launch of '**National Gender Caucus**' a platform for gender scholars and practitioners to share common interests and act as a think tank and pressure group to improve status of girls and women in India. The book invites readers to join the National Gender Caucus to facilitate networking across scholars, leaders, professionals, industrialists, entrepreneurs, policy makers, media persons, activists, and individuals - to recommend and impact women empowerment in India.

Ms. Sayani Das, Assistant Professor also published an article titled "**Can Women's Studies Reduce Drop-out? Survey Responses from Tertiary-level Female Students**" in the book.

Research Projects

• 'Women-friendly' Mobile Application

"SAMPADA: e-Project Turning Challenge to Opportunity for Women Entrepreneurs"

Sampada e-project proposes to create "wealth for women". It will create women-friendly ICT innovation and application for rural women residing in Coimbatore District of Tamil Nadu. It will specifically cater to 'women entrepreneurs' who sell their products as part of self-help group (SHG) women or sell their services as self-employed women. It will further make an impact assessment of Sampada e-project to assess whether it can transform technological challenge of 'common women' to their economic empowerment. Development and use of women-friendly mobile app (SAMPADA) as a 'one stop' for women entrepreneurs for hand-holding to marketing to sales to savings - will be the primary goal and outcome of this project.

The Pilot Project is aimed to be 'women-friendly'. The efficiency of the app will be tested on the identified SHG Members with marketable products and services in and around Coimbatore District. The Pilot Project is supported and sponsored by **Tamil Nadu Corporation for Development of Women (TNCDW), Mahalir Thittam Coimbatore and District Rural Development Agency (DRDA), Coimbatore.**

- A Research Proposal entitled "**A Study on compliance to provisions of the sexual harassment of women at workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 with focus on private organized sectors of Coimbatore District**" and has been sent to National Commission for Women, New Delhi. This title is a Priority Area identified by NCW for conducting Research Studies in the year 2015-2016.

Editorial Board

Dr. P.R. Krishna Kumar, Chancellor

Dr. Premavathy Vijayan, Vice Chancellor (i/c)

Dr. Minnie Mathew, Director

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Newsletter

Volume 15 ♦ No. 1 & 2 ♦ December 2015

From the Director's Desk

Violence against women



Violence against women is violation of human rights and discrimination that results in, physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm. These are violent acts that are exclusively committed against women. Forms of violence include rape; domestic violence; sexual harassment; female infanticide; prenatal sex selection; harmful customary or traditional practices such as honor killings, dowry violence, female genital mutilation, forced marriage etc. Let us understand the nature and prevalence of

these acts of violence and what we can do about it.

Rape is a form of sexual assault. Women are disproportionately the victims of rape, at the hands of men. Victims of rape can be severely traumatized and can suffer from posttraumatic stress disorder. Rape causes physical injury, sexually transmitted infection or unwanted pregnancy. Rape is the fourth most common crime against women in India. According to the National Crime Records Bureau, 24,923 rape cases were reported across India in 2012. Of these, majority were committed by someone known to the victim. These rampant cases have prompted the Government of India to reform its penal code for crimes of rape and sexual assault.

Domestic violence includes forms of violence suffered by women from a biological relative. According to the National Family and Health Survey of 2005, total lifetime prevalence of domestic violence was 33.5% and 8.5% for sexual violence among women aged 15-49. Although a 2014 Lancet study reported that the violence rate in India is among the lowest in the world, the numbers are large affecting over 27.5 million women in their lifetime.

Sexual harassment: Harassment of a woman in a workplace, or other professional or social situation, including unwanted sexual advances or obscene remarks is called Sexual Harassment. The government said that 526 cases of sexual harassment of women at workplace were reported during 2014.

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Female infanticide is the intentional killing of infant girls. In addition to elimination of baby girls soon after birth, neglect and discrimination leading to death and sex-selective abortion also result in death of female children every year. Poverty, dowry system, births to unmarried women, deformed infants are some of the causes of female infanticide in India. Although, a criminal offence, it is an under-reported crime. Girl child numbers in India have shown a sharper decline than the male children in the decade beginning 2001, leading to a skewed child sex ratio.

Prenatal sex selection is the attempt to control the sex of the child to achieve a desired sex. There is a preference to have a son over a daughter in India as seen by the skewed sex ratio of children. This leads to increased migration, bride trafficking and abduction, increased polyandry and forced marriages in the shorter term. The Government of India passed the Pre-natal Diagnostic Techniques Act (PNDT) in 1994. This law was further amended into the Pre-Conception and Pre-natal Diagnostic Techniques (Regulation and Prevention of Misuse) (PCPNDT) Act in 2004 to deter and punish prenatal sex screening and sex selective abortion.

Honor killing is the homicide of a member of a family by other members, due to the belief that the victim has brought shame or dishonor upon the family, or has violated the principles of a community or a religion. The Indian Penal Code and Certain Other Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2010 proposes to introduce a fifth clause to Section 300 of the IPC which defines "murder" under four categories. The proposed additional definition will make khap-dictated honour killings, a distinct offence and will make all those who participate in the decision, liable to be tried for charge of murder and will be liable for death sentence.

Dowry violence is a serious problem that affects the lives of women and girls. Dowry includes gifts, money, goods or property given from the bride's family to the groom or in-laws before, during or anytime after the marriage. India has the highest number of dowry related deaths in the world according to Indian National Crime Record Bureau. In 2012, 8,233 dowry death cases were reported across India. The government is planning to amend the law which is the mother of bail/DV/divorce industry in India - the notorious IPC 498a, popularly known as dowry harassment law.

Female genital mutilation is a practice, of partially or totally removing the external genitalia of girls and young women for non-medical reasons. Depending on the degree of mutilation, FGM can cause severe pain and shock, uterus, vaginal and pelvic infections, complications in pregnancy and childbirth, sexual dysfunction, difficulties in menstruation and psychological damages among others. In addition, there are considerable psycho-sexual, psychological and social consequences of FGM.

Help end violence against women!

- **Call the police** if you see incidence of violence against women. Inform local legislators and political leaders.
- **Help friends and family members** who may be in an abusive relationship.
- **Teach children** to treat others as they would like to be treated. Teach them about healthy relationships.
- **Speak out** against all forms of violence by writing and speaking against violence against women.
- **Educate yourself and volunteer to educate others.** Become a mentor. Get involved in programs that teach young people to solve problems without violence.
- **Understand anti-violence policies and programs of the government.** Find out policies that deal with sexual harassment. Advocate for tougher laws.

Development of E-Governance on Women's Studies

Electronic governance or e-governance is the application of information and communication technology (ICT) for delivering government services, exchange of information communication transactions, integration of various stand-alone systems and services between government-to-customer (G2C), government-to-business (G2B), government-to-government (G2G) as well as back office processes and interactions within the entire government framework.

The University Grants Commission has introduced e-governance so that reliable management information systems (MIS) can be put in place to monitor the functioning of higher education institutions. The UGC, through a service-oriented approach, process re-engineering and use of information and communications technology, wants to transform the quality of its services.

The key objectives of the project are to enhance office efficiency, reduce paper work, achieve transparency, speed up processing of proposals for funding, recognition, etc, prevent fraud and misappropriation of funds and effectively manage schemes, grants, budget and finances.

UGC has introduced E-Governance for the scheme "Development of Women Studies in Indian Universities and Colleges". The Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women has already registered itself and is actively participating in this E-governance initiative of the UGC.

Young Women Social Entrepreneurship Training Programme (Phase II)

Women Studies Centre, Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women coordinated



A total number of 50 young women participated and benefited. The Inaugural Address was delivered by **Dr. Minnie Mathew**, Director, Women's Studies Centre. **Dr. M. Amirthaveni**, Professor & HOD, Department of Food Science and Nutrition greeted the participants.

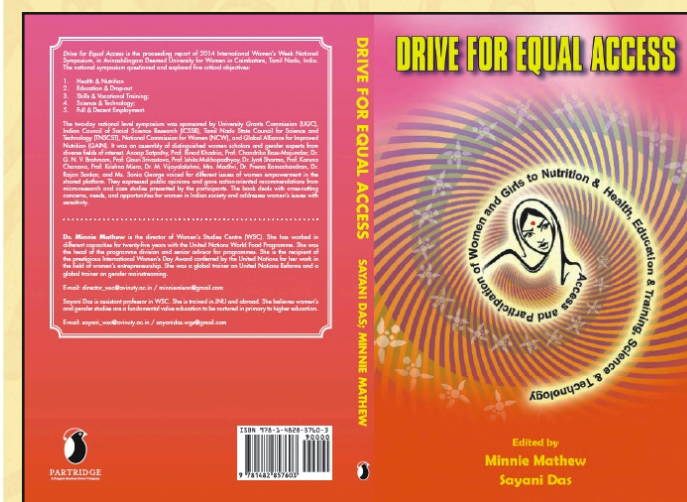
The thematic session started with the opening speaker, **Mrs. Kayalvizhi**, Assistant Director, SISI, Coimbatore. She talked about "Rules and Regulations, Marketing and Certification in Small Enterprises". **Mr. Nagaraj Shanmugam**, Training Facilitator and Business Consultant, Alchemy Learning Center, Coimbatore spoke about "Sustainability of novel food enterprises". **Dr. S. Thilakavathy**, Assistant Professor (SS), Dept. of Food Science & Nutrition, talked about "Know your millets better". **Dr. Saraswathy Easwaran**, Director, Ramasamy Chinnammal Trust, Coimbatore gave a talk and also provided hands on training on "Formulation of instant mixes and RTE mixes using minor millets" and "Recipes using minor millets". **Dr. M. Ramanathan**, Professor and Head Ic, Dept. of Food Processing & Engineering, School of Food Science & Technology, Karunya University, Coimbatore gave a talk on "Role of small and medium machinery in food processing". **Dr. M. Shakila Banu**, Head, Dept. of Food Processing and Preservation Technology talked about Innovations in food packaging, shelf life and food safety. The programme concluded with the Valedictory Address by **Dr. N. Vasugi Raja**, Dean, Faculty of Home Science.



Upcoming Events

Edited Book

Dr. Minnie Mathew & Ms. Sayani Das (eds.) (2015); '**Drive for Equal Access: Access & Participation of Women & Girls to Health & Nutrition, Education & Training, Science & Technology, Full & Decent Employment**'; Partridge International (Penguin & Random House Company). ISBN: Softcover 978-1-4828-5760-3 & eBook 978-1-4828-5759-7.



'**Drive for Equal Access**' is the proceeding report of 2014 International Women's Week National Symposium held in Avinashilingam University for Women in Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India.

The two-day national level symposium was sponsored by **University Grants Commission (UGC)**, **Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR)**, **Tamil Nadu State Council for Science and Technology (TNSCST)**, **National Commission for Women (NCW)** and **Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN)**.

The book is greatly enriched by the contributions of the nationally eminent resource persons - physician **Dr. Rajan Sankar**, Country Manager India & Senior Advisor South Asia of Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN), nutritionists **Dr. G.N.V. Brahman** (Retired Director, National

harassment to/by teaching faculty, non-teaching staff and students. A locally produced short film on child sexual abuse ('Podhum Vanmurai') was premiered.

The Chief Guest of the programme was **(Padmashri) Geeta Chandran**, Founder-President of Natya-Vriksha. Internationally acclaimed Bharatanatyam dancer, Geeta Chandran has been creatively shaping expressions on 'gender issues' through the classical, neo-classical and contemporary dance forms and touching the hearts of Indian people through her public performances. She advised students to follow their hearts, explore opportunities, redefine learning and give back to the society.

Mr. C.K. Kumaravel, Managing Director of Naturals Beauty Salons India Pvt. Ltd., Chennai delivered a special address highlighting the challenges faced by women entrepreneurs in India and suggested probable solutions. He said that women must believe that even a single woman can make difference in society. He illustrated the point by sharing his own experience of how a husband-wife team can show the way to gender equality from inside home to the outside society.

Women Achievers of this year were awarded under 4 categories women's protection, child rights, disability support, and women entrepreneurship. **Women Achievers** were felicitated for making a difference to the society. Four special women of Coimbatore were honoured as the Women Achievers of 2015. The distinguished women were **Mrs. K. Rani**, Sub Inspector of All Women Police Station of Gandhipuram (for her extensive work to protect women from sexual harassment, domestic violence and human trafficking); **Mrs. S. Uma Devi**, Project Coordinator of ChildLine India Foundation Coimbatore (for her dedicated effort to rescue, care and protect children in distress); **Mrs. Elizabeth Suresh**, Principal & Founder of Rashmika Centre for Learning & Counselling (for her unconditional support to socially integrate children with learning disorders); and **Mrs. Thulasi Sethu**, Managing Director of Rivera Pumps India Pvt. Ltd. (for being the first generation women entrepreneur and applying technological solution to water and energy problem).



World Mental Health Day

World Mental Health Day was observed by Women's Studies Centre on **10th October, 2015**. **Ms. U.Gowri**, Assistant Professor coordinated this programme. Mental Health Day is observed to raise awareness on the role of Mental Health Professionals to ensure that people with mental health



challenges live with dignity and enjoy human rights. The theme for this year's World Mental Health Day was "Dignity in Mental Health". **Dr. Venkateswaran**, Psychiatrist, Natchiyar Mind Care, Coimbatore was the Chief Guest for the function. He oriented the Social Work and Rural Development & Sociology students on Classification of Mental Disorders according to DSM IV & ICD 10, stigma attached to mental health, rights of mentally ill, the role of family in intervention and treatment, the importance of informed consent to treatment and the role of social workers in decision making processes and public information campaigns.

It was a highly informative and interactive session, where the students clarified their doubts and misconceptions regarding mental illness.



Workshop on Technological Advancements in the Promotion of Ethnic and Novel Foods Using Minor Millets

Women's Studies Centre in Collaboration with Department of Food Science & Nutrition organized a **2-day workshop on Technological Advancements in the Promotion of Ethnic and Novel Foods Using Minor Millets** on **29th and 30th October 2015** at the Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women, Coimbatore.



the "Young Women Social Entrepreneurship Development Programme" phase II, a cascade training programme of four training workshops along with the Department of Lifelong Learning Extension. The Programme was inaugurated on **3rd June 2015** by **Thiru. Tha. Murugan**, Project Director and Additional Collector, District Rural Development Agency (DRDA), Coimbatore. The inauguration was conducted at Periyanaickenpalayam, Coimbatore. **Dr. Minnie Mathew**, Director, **Dr. K. Vasantha**, Head, Dept. of Lifelong Learning & Extension and the local panchayat leader spoke on the occasion with a focus to nurture creativity, innovation, employability and social entrepreneurial spirit in young women. The workshop trained 200 social entrepreneurs.



Sub themes of the training programme

- The series of training workshops trained the participants on sub themes including need identification, launch pad, net working and fund raising, management challenges of social enterprise, innovative business models for social enterprises, developing and implementing market plans, sustainability etc.

International Symposium on "Women Empowerment through Technical and Vocational Education" on 3.9.2015

The participants were overseas teachers and administrators from Ghana, Srilanka and Seychelles. The aim of



this symposium was to provide an exposure to an Indian University which is doing considerable work on empowerment, technical and vocational training and the Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for women was the designated University.

The programme started with the Welcome Address by **Dr. Minnie Mathew**, Director, Women's Studies Centre. The Inaugural Address was delivered by **Dr. (Mrs.) Premavathy Vijayan**, Vice Chancellor (i/c), Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women. **Dr. S. Renuka Devi**, Professor & HOD (i/c), Department of Education, Programme Coordinator, National Institute of Technical Teachers Training and Research (NITTTR), Chennai felicitated the group. The vote of thanks was delivered by **Dr. T. Geetha**, Professor & HOD, Department of Special Education.

The thematic sessions started by the opening speaker **Mr. V. Balasubramanian**, Director JSS, Avinashilingam Jan Shikshan Sansthan, Coimbatore. He talked about "The Role of Avinashilingam Jan Shikshan Sansthan in improving occupational skills through vocational training programmes".

Ms. Reshma Srijay, Entrepreneur gave a talk on "The Role of Technical Training in Entrepreneurship". She herself being an Engineering professional talked about how a person having sound knowledge technically can be a successful entrepreneur. She mentioned examples of entrepreneurs like Snap Deal, Ola Cabs, Quikr etc.





Co-curricular Course on Women's Studies

A Co-curricular course on Women's Studies is being offered for the II year undergraduate students. Students from different disciplines of the University have enrolled themselves for this programme. Total of **246** students have enrolled for the academic year (2015 - 2016).

Participation of Staff Members in Academic Meetings

● Conference



33rd Annual National Conference of Indian Society of Professional Social Work on "Emerging Trends in Social Work Education in India" was organized from 28th to 30th January, 2015 at Bharathiar University. **Ms. U. Gowri**, Assistant Professor, Women's Studies Centre co-chaired a scientific session on "Social Work Education and Practice" and presented papers on Emotional Intelligence, Conflict Management Styles and Organizational Job Performance of Bank Employees on 29th January, 2015 and 'Awareness Level of Women Construction Workers on Social Security Measures' on 30th January, 2015.



UGC sponsored National Conference on "Exploring Gender Issues in Multi-Dimensional Approaches- Inter Disciplinary Relevance" was organized by Women's Studies Centre, Holy Cross College, Thiruchirappalli on 6th February 2015. **Dr. G. Sheefna**, Research Associate participated and presented a paper on "Politics of Language in Tamil Marriages with Reference to Rituals". The paper was published in the book with ISBN 978-93-81521-57-1.

● Workshop

"Workshop on Developing Courseware for e-PG Pathshala in Home Science" Sponsored by National Mission on Education through ICT (NME-ICT), MHRD at Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women, Coimbatore, on 2.2.2015 to 9.2.2015 and 6.4.2015 to 13.4.2015. **Ms. Sayani Das** and **Ms. U. Gowri** attended the workshop as subject coordinator and content writer of Women's Studies.

● Faculty Development Programme

UGC - Sponsored Faculty Development Programme (FDP) on "Gender Sensitivity for College and University Faculties"



was organized by the Department of Women's Studies, Bharathiar University, Coimbatore on 15th April, 2015. They invited faculty members from various colleges and universities and shared the problems faced by them in classroom and campus environment related to gender bias and sexual harassment. The interactive sessions also focused on how gender discriminatory practices can affect family life and professional career of faculty members and students. The discussion extended by participants shared various methods and experiences to create a 'gender sensitive' environment in classroom and campus, family and society. **Ms. Sayani Das**, Assistant Professor, Women's Studies Centre participated in the programme and offered recommendations.

● National Consultation on Wheat Flour Fortification in India

Dr. Minnie Mathew, Director, Women's Studies participated in the National Consultation on Wheat Flour Fortification which was led by MoHFW and supported by WHO, UNICEF and UNWFP was held at New Delhi from 11th & 12th August, 2015. The consultation was held with the objective of reviewing global and national scientific and programmatic evidence on feasibility and impact of wheat flour fortification in addressing micronutrient deficiencies and discuss the operational framework and recommendations for future.

● Meeting organized by the World Bank

The Government of Tamil Nadu proposes to launch "Tamil Nadu Rural Transformation Project (TNRTP)" with the assistance of World Bank, on completion of Tamil Nadu Pudhu Vaazhvu Project by September 2016. In this regard a World Bank team convened a meeting with stakeholders and departments on 4.11.2015 at Hotel Rathna Residency, Coimbatore. **Director, Women's Studies** participated in the meeting and provided inputs.

● Consultation organized by the Ministry of Women and Child Development

The Ministry is proposing specific women studies and studies in child development, nutrition and child protection and

survival. It is also envisaging evaluation and social audit of its schemes and institutions-namely **Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Scheme, Family Counseling Centres, Women Homes etc.** Therefore a consultation was organized under the Chairmanship of Secretary WCD at the Vigyan Bhavan on 27th November, 2015. All Additional Secretaries and Joint Secretaries of the Department participated in the consultation. **Director, Women's Studies** participated in the meeting and shared areas of expertise of our University. This was the first meeting of its kind and will be followed up with tie-ups with them.

Development of E-Content on Women's Studies

Women's Studies Centre is part of the e-content development project approved under the discipline of Home Science. This was granted by e-PG Pathshala: an MHRD Project under the **National Mission on Education through ICT (NME-ICT)**. **Dr. Minnie Mathew**, Director, Women's Studies is the subject reviewer for the project. So far **4** modules have been developed and recorded.

- Gender Difference, Stereotype and Bias
- Indicators and Status of Women Globally
- Women's Nutrition and Health
- Rights and Laws for Women

Advisory Committee Meeting

The Annual Advisory Committee Meeting for Women's Studies Centre was held on 4.2.2015 from 10.00 am to 12.30 p.m. The Vice Chancellor, **Dr. Sheela Ramachandran** chaired the meeting. The members present were **Dr. A. Venmathi**, Registrar (i/c), **Dr. Minnie Mathew** (Member Secretary), **Dr. N. Manimekalai**, Director, WSC, Thiruchirappalli, **Dr. K. Vasantha**, Head, Department of Lifelong Learning, **Prof. D.B. Krishnakumari**, Centre for Women's Studies & HOD, Sri Padmavati Mahila Visvavidyalayam and **Mr. S. Nagarajan**, Finance Officer. Since WSC fulfils all requirements under Phase II, the Advisory Committee recommended that it should move the proposal for transition to Phase III.

International Women's Day 2015

Uniquely & Innovatively

Avinashilingam University for Women, Coimbatore celebrated International Women's Day on 6th and 7th March 2015.

This year's International Women's Day was commemorated by organizing competitions for students like mime, poetry, elocution, collage and rangoli on the topic of 'Women Empowerment'. Students were rewarded for taking part in the month long competitions to uphold this year's theme: "Equality for Women is Progress for All". The competitions reflected high enthusiasm and imagination among the students.

6th March 2015

Avinashilingam University for Women in collaboration with the Tamil Nadu Corporation for Development of Women (TNCDW) or Mahalir Thittam under the District Mission Management Unit of Coimbatore organized **College Bazaar** on 6th and 7th March to showcase creations and innovations through



the sales of products by women from 25 Self Help Groups in and around Coimbatore. The College Bazaar was inaugurated by **Thiru. Tha. Murugan**, Additional Director & Project Director of District Rural Development Agency (DRDA), Coimbatore.

7th March 2015



International Women's Day was a special event for the Avinashilingam University for Women, which is one of the very few 'all-women universities' in India. Since the year 2000, the University has been

celebrating it very distinctively.

The Women's Studies Centre of the University uniquely celebrated International Women's Day of 2015 by releasing the mandatory and timely '**Sexual Harassment Policy**'. The policy was released by the Honourable Vice Chancellor **Dr. Sheela Ramachandran**. Sexual Harassment Policy of the University would ensure 'zero tolerance' towards sexual

