

Women's Development Cell (WDC)

2022 - 2023

National Seminar on “Speaking (of) Widows”

On 10 April 2023, the Centre for Gender Equity Studies and WDC, Janki Devi Memorial College, organised a national seminar titled “Speaking (of) Widows”. The Seminar was based on a year-long research project conducted by the Centre in association with The Guild of Service, New Delhi, an NGO in consultative status with ECOSOC, United Nations.

The session began with a welcome and introductory speech by the Vice-President of WDC, Arshpreet Kaur. Muskaan Jain, President of WDC, introduced the guests of the seminar which was followed by the felicitation of the guests. The guests for the Seminar were Prof. Malashri Lal, Ms. Meera Khanna and Ms. Nivedita Das. Prof. Malashri Lal retired as a Professor from the Dept. Of English, DU. Prof. Lal has held various prestigious academic and administrative positions including that of the Dean at Delhi University and Director of the Women’s Studies Centre at DU, that she helped set up. She has also served as a member of the English Advisory Board at the Sahitya Akademi. She has published around fifteen books and has a long association with gender studies and culture. She has been a senior consultant to the Ministry of Culture, a UGC nominee on committees and a member of international book award juries. Ms. Meera Khanna is a writer and gender rights activist. She is the President of The Guild of Service and the Co-Founder of Everywoman Treaty for Ending Violence against Women and Girls. She is also the core committee member and Director of SANWED (South Asian Network for Widows empowered in development). She is the Director of the Global Alliance: Last Woman First. She is advisor to the War Widows Association and a Trustee at Navdanya. Ms. Nivedita Das is a social activist and works as family therapist, social gerontologist & PTSD counsellor. She is a certified POSH & POCSO trainer.

Dr. Namita Sethi introduced the objective of the session, she also thanked the guests for their attendance in the seminar and delineated the lessons learnt from the research project. The seminar included presentations from both the students and the teacher members who were part of

the research project. Through their presentations, the members of the research project discussed their observations and findings from the field trips to Vrindavan. The guests gave their valuable feedback, suggestions and recommendations to all the presenters so that they can enhance their work. The resultant discussion was highly beneficial for the researchers and the audience and provided new insights for the students to pursue within their work. The session came to a close with a Vote of Thanks given by Dr. Namita Sethi where she thanked the guests for their invaluable input.

JANKI DEVI MEMORIAL COLLEGE
UNIVERSITY OF DELHI

CENTRE FOR GENDER-
EQUITY STUDIES

INVITES YOU TO A NATIONAL SEMINAR ON

Speaking (of) widows

BASED ON THE PROJECT IN ASSOCIATION WITH

The Guild of Service

10 APRIL 2023
10:30 A.M. ONWARDS
COMMITTEE ROOM

for queries, contact:
✉ wdc@jdm.du.ac.in
📷 [wdc_jdmc](https://www.instagram.com/wdc_jdmc)

Prof. V. Rajyalakshmi
Dr. Namita Sethi
Ms. Vrinda Kapur
Ms. Neelu Verma
Ms. Ruchi Kalita
Mr. Tarun Sharma
(Teacher coordinators)

Muskaan Jain
Arshpreet Kaur
(Student co-ordinators)

Prof. Swati Pal
(Principal)

Poster of the National Seminar on “Speaking (of) Widows” held on 10 April 2023



Glimpses of the National Seminar on “Speaking (of) Widows” held on 10 April 2023



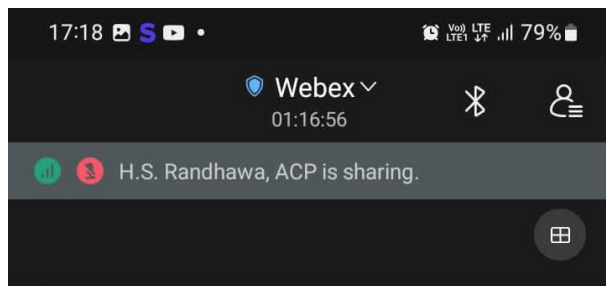
Glimpses of the National Seminar on “Speaking (of) Widows” held on 10 April 2023



Glimpses of the National Seminar on “Speaking (of) Widows” held on 10 April 2023

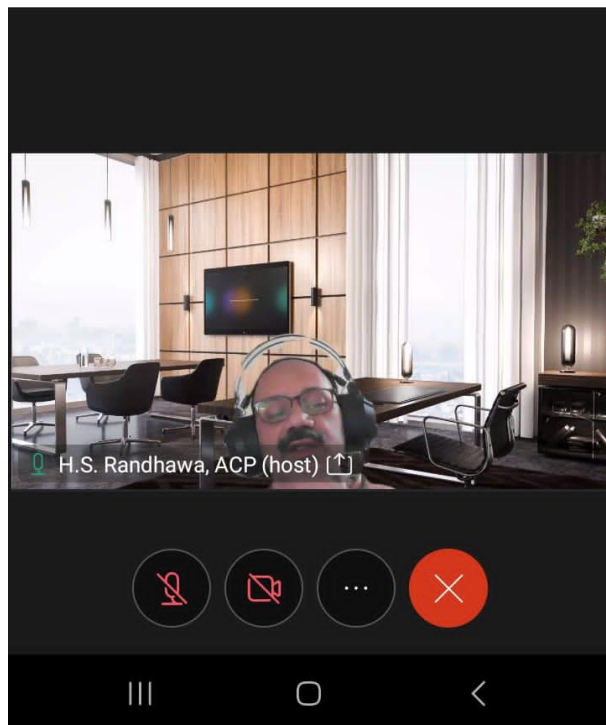
Session on Cyber Crime Awareness

The Women’s Development Cell of Janki Devi Memorial College, under the aegis of the Center for Gender Equity Studies, in association with the Cyber Crime Unit, IFSO, Delhi Police, organised a Cyber Crime Awareness Session on 8 March 2023, 5 PM, via Webex. ACP H S Randhawa addressed the audience and discussed the importance of awareness regarding Cyber Security and Crimes. He discussed various forms of cyber crimes such as cyber bullying and online harassment so as to impress upon the audience the need to report such crimes immediately. He also discussed facilities such as the Cyber Crime Prevention against Women and Children Portal (CCPWC) which can be used to report cyber crimes in times of need. The session was enlightening and helped to create further awareness amongst the audience regarding this significant topic.

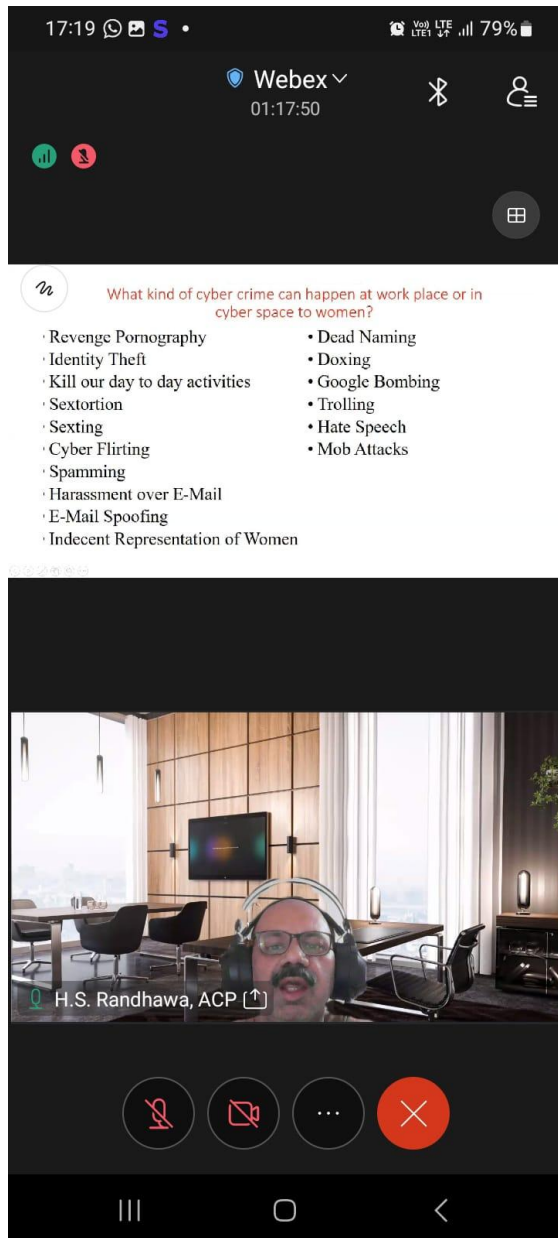


- Digital Abuse
- Phishing / Hacking
- Cyber bullying
- Cyber stalking
- Cyber harassment
- Cyber Pornography
- **Cyber Trafficking**
- Blackmailing
- Chat room crimes – No man's love, sexting
- Cyber Defamation

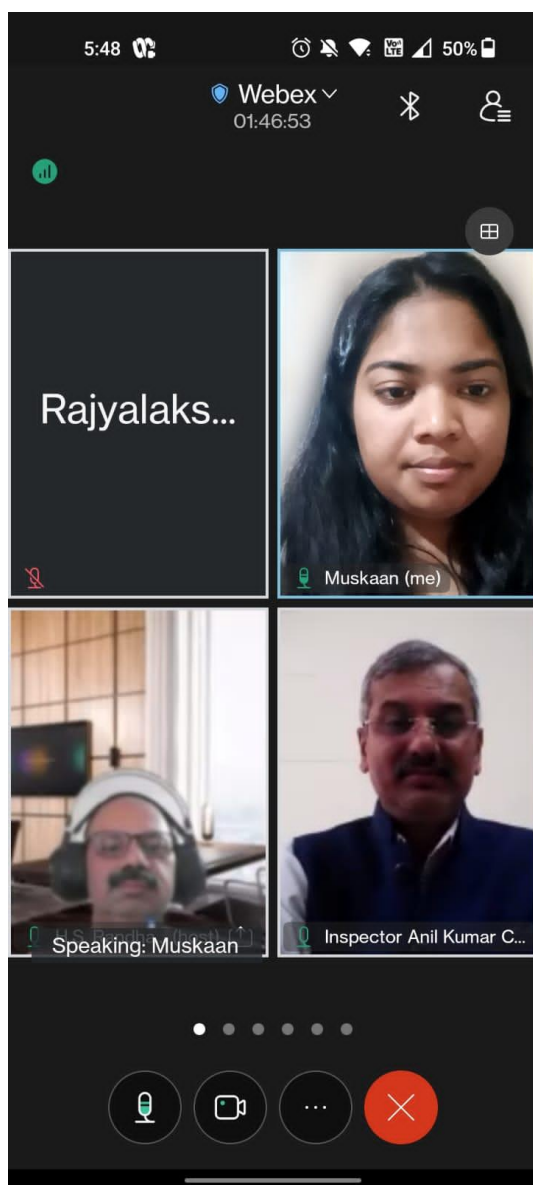
**Common types of crimes
through cyber space and
social media against
women**



Glimpses from the Session on Cyber Crime Awareness held on 8 March 2023



Glimpses from the Session on Cyber Crime Awareness held on 8 March 2023



Glimpses from the Session on Cyber Crime Awareness held on 8 March 2023


International Webinar on “Women’s Voices” to commemorate International Women’s Day


The Women’s Development Cell of Janki Devi Memorial College, under the aegis of the Center for Gender Equity Studies, organised an international webinar “Women’s Voices” on 6 March 2023 at 6 PM via Zoom on the occasion of International Women’s Day. The panel for the webinar consisted of Dr. Anita Nahal, Prof. Malashri Lal and Prof. Swati Pal who were in conversation with Dr. Namita Sethi. The conversation revolved around various aspects related to


gender equity in contemporary times. The panel discussed topics such as digital literacy with respect to women, feminism, the challenges faced by women, the need to commemorate Women's Day, female leadership within a patriarchal society, to name a few. The panelists discussed these topics by drawing anecdotes from their own experiences. The discussion came to a close with the panelists reading their poetry. The session ended with comments, observations and questions from the audience which led to another spirited discussion.

JANKI DEVI MEMORIAL COLLEGE
UNIVERSITY OF DELHI

To Celebrate International Women's Day
**IQAC- CENTRE FOR GENDER-
EQUITY STUDIES**
presents an International Webinar on
WOMEN'S VOICES
PANEL DISCUSSION WITH


PROF. MALASHRI LAL


DR. ANITA NAHAL


PROF. SWATI PAL

Moderator: Dr. Namita Sethi

For India:-
Event Time: 6:00P.M.
Login Time: 5:30 P.M.

6th March 2023
Zoom Meetings

For America:-
Event Time: 7:30 A.M.
Login Time: 7:00 A.M.

Meeting ID: 817 8957 3160
Passcode: 123456

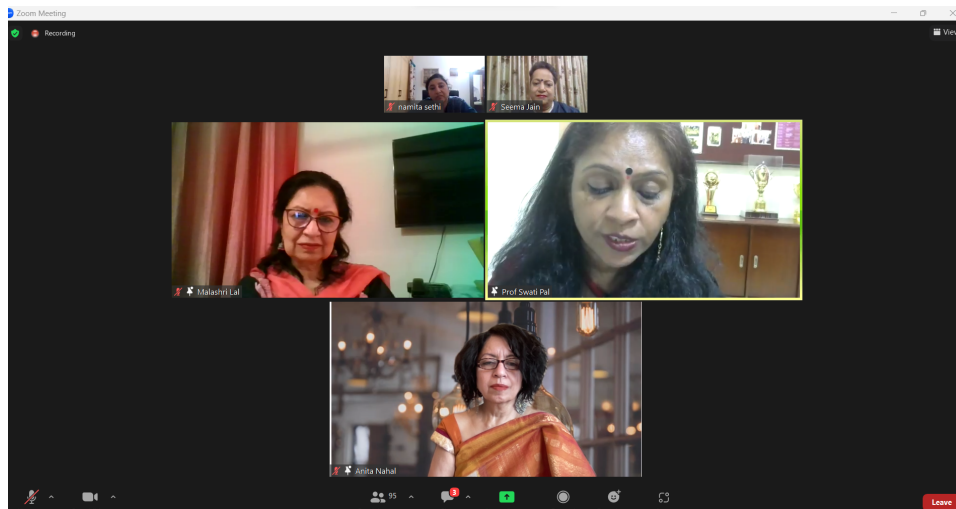
for queries, contact:
@wdc@jdm.du.ac.in
@wdc_jdmc

Muskaan Jain
Arshpreet Kaur
(Student co-ordinators)

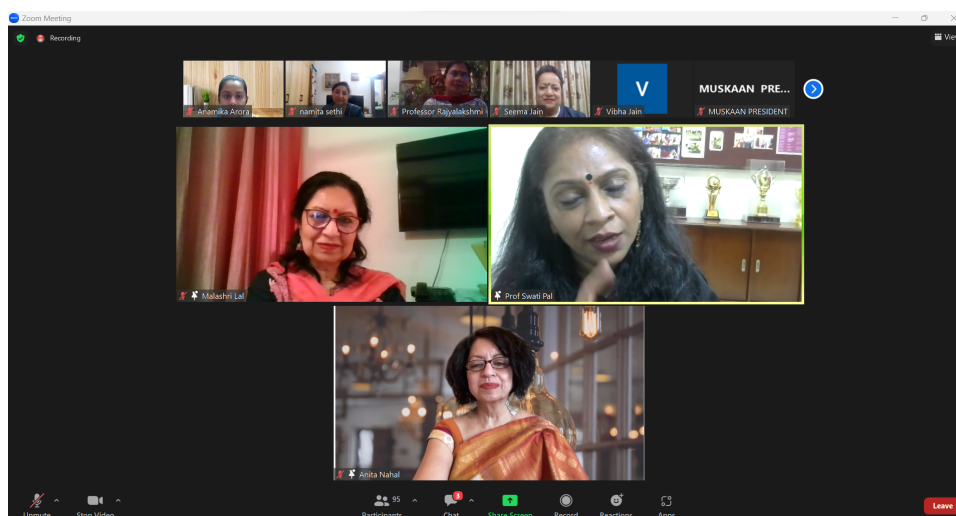
Prof. V. Rajyalakshmi
Dr. Namita Sethi
Ms. Vrinda Kapur
Ms. Neelu Verma
Ms. Ruchi Kalita
Mr. Tarun Sharma
(Teacher coordinators)

Prof. Swati Pal
(Principal)

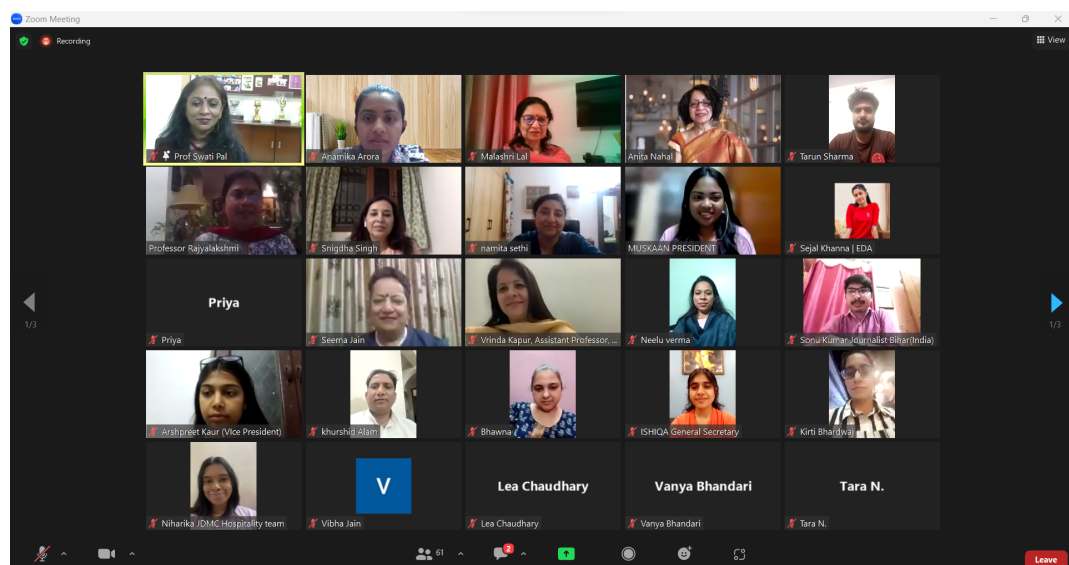
Poster of International Webinar “Women’s Voices” held on 6 March 2023 to Commemorate International Women’s Day



Glimpses from the International Webinar “Women’s Voices” held on 6 March 2023 to Commemorate International Women’s Day



Glimpses from the International Webinar “Women’s Voices” held on 6 March 2023 to Commemorate International Women’s Day



Glimpses from the International Webinar “Women’s Voices” held on 6 March 2023 to Commemorate International Women’s Day

Gender Sensitisation Session

The Women's Development Cell of Janki Devi Memorial College under the aegis of the IQAC Centre for Gender Equity Studies organised a “Gender Sensitisation Session” on 20 February 2023. The session began with a welcome and introductory speech by the President, Muskaan Jain, followed by the felicitation of the speakers by the Convenor of WDC and the Director of the Centre for Gender Equity Studies, Prof. Rajyalakshmi. Prof. Swati Pal, Principal, Janki Devi Memorial College, welcomed the speaker and discussed the need of gender sensitisation to build better understanding between all gender identities and to create a cohesive environment.

The first speaker of the session was Ms. Geetha Nambisan. Ms. Nambisan has over 33 years of Management experience in public, private and NGO sectors, and has served as the Director of Jagori Women's Training Documentation and Communication Centre. She started the session by discussing the basics of gender sensitisation; she explained the concept of gender sensitisation and its need in today's world. She discussed what kind of behaviour promotes gender inequality, and asked everybody to introspect their actions. Ms. Nambisan then gave an informative PowerPoint presentation to the audience that defined terms related to the gender spectrum. Gender expression, gender identity, gender norms, and difference between gender and sex, all of

which are sometimes misinterpreted, were all thoroughly described. She also talked about her own journey and childhood experiences. She critiqued the Patriarchal system that internalises discrimination against women and stressed the need for interrogation of these societal systems. The speaker's address was followed by an interactive question and answer session where the speaker answered the doubts of the audience.

The second speaker of the session was Ms. Rekha Aggarwal. She is an advocate with over 36 years of experience in various fields of criminal laws, civil laws, medical negligence matters, family law, consumer cases etc. She is a member of the Delhi High Court Bar Association. In her address, she highlighted that the Constitution provides equal status to women and a 'positive discrimination' in favour of women. She gave a brief description about various offences against women which are punishable and various provisions to safeguard women against violence and discrimination. She also discussed issues affecting women such as domestic violence, rape, honor killing, sexual abuse and acid attack. Ms. Aggarwal then discussed the various legal rights and fundamental rights for women in our Constitution. She highlighted the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 which protects women from domestic violence, the POSH Act which provides a legal framework to protect employees from any sexual harassment in the workplace and the POCSO Act which protects children from offences of sexual assault, sexual harassment and pornography. She also educated the audience on the latest acts and amendments around important rights. Ms. Aggarwal's speech was followed by a question and answer session.

The session came to a close with a vote of thanks given by Prof. Rajyalakshmi Convenor of WDC and the Director of the Centre for Gender Equity Studies where she thanked the speakers and the audience for their presence and making the session a success.



Poster of Gender Sensitisation Session held on 20 February 2023



Ms. Geetha Nambisan addressing the audience during the Gender Sensitisation Session held on 20 February 2023



Ms. Rekha Aggarwal addressing the audience during the Gender Sensitisation Session held on 20 February 2023



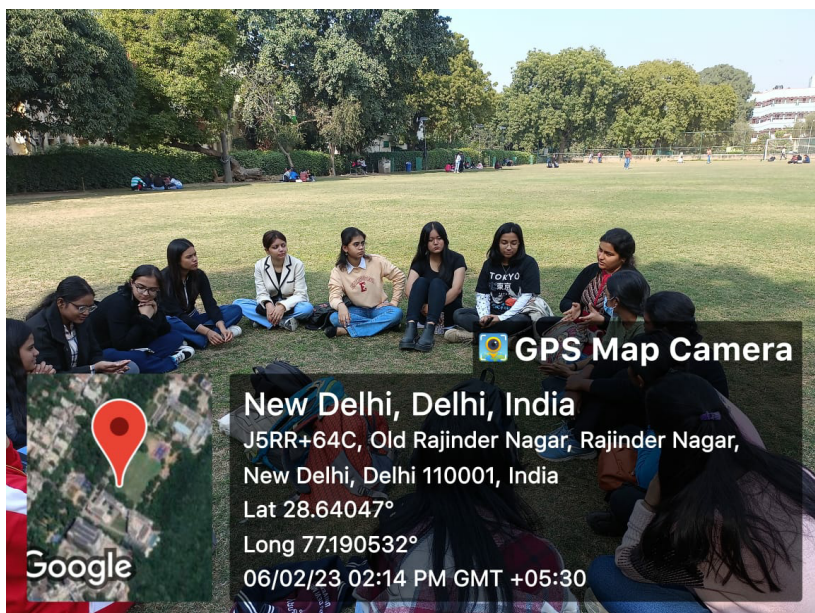
The audience during the Gender Sensitisation Session held on 20 February 2023

Group Discussion on “Politics through Our Lens”

The Women’s Development Cell of Janki Devi Memorial College, under the aegis of the Center for Gender Equity Studies, organized a Group Discussion on the topic “Politics through Our Lens” on 6 February 2023 at 2 PM. The student members discussed various issues related to politics, particularly the role and position of women in politics. The discussion revolved around the reservation for women and female leadership in politics to name a few topics. This session was highly beneficial for students as it opened up discussion about a very important topic.



Poster of Group Discussion on “Politics through our Lens” held on 6 February 2023



Glimpses of Group Discussion on “Politics through our Lens” held on 6 February 2023



Glimpses of Group Discussion on “Politics through our Lens” held on 6 February 2023

Group Discussion on “Toxic Feminism”

The Women’s Development Cell of Janki Devi Memorial College, under the aegis of the Center for Gender Equity Studies, organized a Group Discussion on the topic “Toxic Feminism” on 9 January 2023. The discussion focused on the various definitions and forms of feminism with a particular focus on the notion of toxic feminism. The student members relayed their own

The poster features a dense, colorful collage of pop culture elements as its background. At the top left, there's a small illustration of a hand holding a heart. To its right is the logo of Janki Devi Memorial College, University of Delhi. The main title "Women's Development Cell" is prominently displayed in a large, bold, black font. Below it, the invitation text "INVITES THE STUDENTS' OF JDMC FOR A Students' Discussion Forum" is written in a smaller, black font. The topic "TOXIC FEMINISM" is highlighted in a large, bold, red font. The date, time, and venue are listed below in a black font. At the bottom, the names of the organizers, Muskaan Jain and Arshpreet Kaur, are given along with their contact information. On the right side, the name of the principal, Prof. Swati Pal, is mentioned. The entire poster is framed by a border of various pop culture references, including album covers, logos, and illustrations.

Glimpses of Group Discussion on “Toxic Feminism” held on 9 January 2023



Glimpses of Group Discussion on “Toxic Feminism” held on 9 January 2023

Dental and Eye Checkup Camp conducted by The Caring Touch and WDC

The Women’s Development Cell of Janki Devi Memorial College, under the aegis of the Center for Gender Equity Studies, organized a free Dental and Eye checkup camp and consultation conducted by The Caring Touch, a super speciality Dental and Eye Care clinic. The camp was organized in the Committee Room of the college from 9:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on 28 November 2022 which was attended by almost 100 people including members of the teaching and non-teaching staff and the students. The students and the teaching and non-teaching staff members had their computerized eye check up as well as a dental check up via the equipment brought by the clinic. The doctors also provided students with prescriptions in order to get their problems checked further. The camp was a great success and all participants highly benefited from the camp.



Poster for the Dental and Eye Checkup Camp conducted by The Caring Touch and WDC



A Glimpse from the Dental and Eye Checkup Camp conducted by The Caring Touch and WDC



Principal, Prof. Swati Pal, getting an eye check up during the Dental and Eye Checkup Camp conducted by The Caring Touch and WDC



Students with their check up reports during the Dental and Eye Checkup Camp conducted by The Caring Touch and WDC

Research Trip to Vrindavan

As part of the research project undertaken this year, the Women's Development Cell and the Centre for Gender Equity Studies of Janki Devi Memorial College, in association with Guild for Service, an NGO based in Vrindavan, organised a research trip to Vrindavan. Three teachers along with 32 students participated in the research trip, conducted from 13 November 2022 to 16 November 2022, which was focused on the widows of Vrindavan. The students visited Ma Dhaam, a shelter home for elderly widows in Vrindavan, where they interacted with widows to get a comprehensive perspective on the issues faced by them. The students also interacted with Dr. Meera Khanna, a Trustee in the Guild for Service, writer and a gender rights activist, which gave them further insights into the condition of widows. The students were divided into groups and they visited different places and interacted with various people over the course of the trip so as to be able to create a nuanced understanding of the state of widows within society and the need for their empowerment. The interactions were followed by illuminating discussions between the students and teachers about the difficulties that widows face within society.



Students and Teachers at the Research Trip to Vrindavan conducted from 13 - 16 November 2022



Students interacting with various people during the Research Trip to Vrindavan conducted from 13 - 16 November 2022



Students' interaction with Dr. Meera Khanna, Trustee, Guild for Service, during the Research Trip to Vrindavan conducted from 13 - 16 November 2022

National Seminar on “Empowering Widows”

The Centre for Gender Equity Studies and the Women’s Development Cell of Janki Devi Memorial College held a National Seminar on “Empowering Widows” on 14 October 2022. The Seminar began with an introduction to the topic. This Seminar was one of the activities in the larger research project being conducted by the Centre on the various issues and problems that widows face within society. The audience was given a brief introduction to the other activities that had been conducted by the Centre within the project as preparation for the Seminar. Prof. Sandhya Garg, the Vice-Principal of the College gave the welcome address and gave her views on the predicament of widows within the family and society.



JANKI DEVI MEMORIAL COLLEGE
(UNIVERSITY OF DELHI)



**IQAC- CENTRE FOR GENDER EQUITY
STUDIES**

INVITES YOU TO A SEMINAR ON

"EMPOWERING WIDOWS"



SPEAKERS FOR THE SEMINAR:-

Dr. Mohini Giri

Ms. Meera Khanna

Prof. Malashri Lal

Ms. Koral Dasgupta

Dr. Aruna Chakravarti



OCTOBER 14, 2022



10:30 A.M. ONWARDS



SEMINAR ROOM

Prof. Vasiraju Rajyalakshmi
Dr. Namita Sethi
Ms. Vrinda Kapur
Ms. Neelu verma
Ms. Ruchi Kalita
Mr. Tarun Sharma
(CONVENORS)

Saumya Vig (President)
Ananya Narang (Vice-President)
Meadha Tiwari (General-Secretary)
Arushi Chauhan (Treasurer)
(STUDENTS' UNION)

Prof. Swati Pal
(PRINCIPAL)

Poster for the National Seminar on "Empowering Widows" held on 14 October 2022

SESSION 1: "WIDOW: NOT A VICTIM BUT A SURVIVOR"



Dr. Mohini Giri

(Chairperson, The Guild of Service, Social Worker, Activist, Former Chair, National Commission for Women, Recipient of Padma Bhushan)

Documentary Screening of 'The Last Woman' and a Sound Bite

Ms. Meera Khanna
(Social Activist, Writer, Poet, President, The Guild of Service)

Setting the Context



Prof. Malashri Lal

(Academic, Author, Activist, Secretary General, SANWED Secretariat)

SANWED: The Widow in the Indian Sub-Continent

SESSION 2: "WIDOWS IN LITERATURE & MYTHOLOGY"



Ms. Koral Dasgupta

(Author, Entrepreneur, Professor, Painter)

'Widows in Mythology'



Dr. Aruna Chakravarti

(Ex Principal JDMC, Academic, Creative Writer, Sahitya Academy Award Winning Translator & Novelist)

Introductory talk to be delivered by Dr. Chakravarti, followed by a reading performance by Ms. Aavery Chaurey and musical accompaniment to be provided by Mr. Asim Das.

Poster for the National Seminar on “Empowering Widows” held on 14 October 2022

The first session of the Seminar was titled “Widow: Not a Victim but a Survivor” and the speakers for this session were Dr. Mohini Giri, Ms. Meera Khanna and Prof. Malashri Lal. The Session commenced with a screening of “The Last Woman”, a documentary made by The Guild

for Service. The screening was followed by a recorded message by Dr. Mohini Giri, Chairperson, The Guild for Service, where she spoke about the ostracisation that widows face and the reform that is required to improve the condition of widows. The next speaker was Ms. Meera Khanna, President, The Guild for Service. Ms. Khanna also spoke about the problems faced by widows and discussed how the experience of widowhood is a gendered experience wherein a widower has different experiences than a widow due to the difference in gender. She highlighted the oppression of widows in society and also emphasised how the situation has been complicated even further by the pandemic. The final speaker of the first session was Prof. Malashri Lal, General Secretary, SANWED Secretariat, and she presented the report that was submitted to the UN, with data collected from SANWED partners from various countries, namely Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Prof. Lal demonstrated the condition of widows and the various challenges they face in these countries.



The Screening of “The Last Woman” during the National Seminar on “Empowering Widows” held on 14 October 2022



Dr. Mohini Giri addressing the Audience via a Video Message during the National Seminar on “Empowering Widows” held on 14 October 2022



Speakers, Ms. Meera Khanna, Prof. Malashri Lal and Ms. Koral Dasgupta during the National Seminar on “Empowering Widows” held on 14 October 2022

The second session of the Seminar was titled “Widows in Literature and Mythology” and the first speaker for this session was Ms. Koral Dasgupta, an eminent author and painter. Ms. Dasgupta discussed the representation of widows in Indian mythology and focussed her discussion on three women from Indian mythology, Tara, Mandodari and Kunti. This was followed by a discussion and dramatic reading of Dr. Aruna Chakravarti’s novel *The Inheritors*. Dr. Chakravarti, author, translator, former Principal of JDMC, began by introducing her novel and explaining some culturally specific terms used in her novel. This was followed by a mesmerising dramatic reading of an excerpt from the novel, which focused on the predicament of a young widow, Radharani, by Ms. Avereer Chaurey and the musical accompaniment was provided by Mr. Asim Das.



Mr. Asim Das, Ms. Avereer Chaurey and Dr. Aruna Chakravarti during the National Seminar on “Empowering Widows” held on 14 October 2022

The session came to close with a vote of thanks given by Dr. Namita Sethi, Co-Director of the Centre for Gender Equity Studies where she thanked the speakers and the audience for their presence and making the Seminar a success.

Lecture on “Rhetorics of Dissent on Widowhood Question in Colonial India: Reformist and Feminist Perspectives”

The IQAC Centre for Gender Equity Studies, Janki Devi Memorial College, under the series “Empowering Widows”, organised a lecture on “Rhetorics of Dissent on Widowhood Question in Colonial India” in collaboration with the History Department, Heritage History Association on 20 September 2022. The lecture was given by Dr. Jyoti Atwal, Associate Professor, Jawaharlal Nehru University and was held in hybrid-mode in the Committee Room of the college and was also streamed live on Zoom, Facebook and YouTube.

Prof. Swati Pal, Principal, Janki Devi Memorial College, welcomed the speaker and discussed the need to sensitize the youth to this issue, which is a hitherto unexplored topic within society. She also introduced the Centre for Gender Equity Studies’ project where they will be examining the conditions of widows at ashrams in Vrindavan. Prof. Pal shared a very personal experience of her mother’s widowhood and also spoke about widowers; how it might be difficult for them to express their feelings within a society where men are expected to not show their emotions. The floor was then handed over to Dr. Manisha Sharma, Teacher-in-Charge of Heritage History Association, who gave a brief introduction of Dr. Jyoti Atwal’s professional background and her published works.

Dr. Atwal started the lecture with a discussion on the significance of Pandita Ramabai Saraswati’s *The High Caste Hindu Woman*. Pandita Ramabai lost her parents, brother and husband within a span of 4 years (1876-1880) and founded Arya Mahila Samaj to promote women's education and prevent child marriage. Throughout *The High Caste Hindu Woman*, Ramabai presents a sharp critique of caste and gender divisions in Hindu society. She also discussed the theories of Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar in his book, *Marriage of Hindu Widows*,

saying that he can be both praised and criticised for his views. Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar challenged the Brahminical authorities and proved that widow remarriage is sanctioned by Vedic scriptures, but his work can be criticised on the fact that it had no provision for untouchable women.

Dr. Atwal proceeded to give a detailed account of the plight of widows during colonialism, the banning of sati, the history of the Hindu Widows Remarriage Act, the debates that were held at the time to discuss the status of widows in society and the reaction of conservatives to the laws introduced by the British government. Fifty-one petitions were presented in relation to the Hindu Widows Remarriage Bill, out of which twenty-three petitions signed by 5,191 people were in favour of the principle of the proposed measure and twenty-eight petitions signed by 51,746 people were against it. She also compared the Sati Abolition Act and Widow Remarriage Act, saying the two were different because from the day the Sati Abolition Act was passed, every Hindu, regardless of his own feelings, was compelled to follow it. The Widow Remarriage Act was not a compulsory law, it was merely a permissive law which could have effect only when those who benefit from it decided to avail it for themselves. Dr. Atwal also discussed the limitations of the act, including the debarring of the remarried widow from holding any share in her dead husband's property.

She brought into light a very interesting case of Shankarlal, a man who decided to lead the life of an 'ideal widow' for three years after his wife died and fought for women's right to remarry. He did not sleep on a bed and ate only once a day. He invited scholars and got invitations to various debates on widow remarriage.

She talked about the issue of "Living Sati"; how a widow is not supposed to live like a normal being, has to practice sexual abstinence and has to seclude herself from life and all its pleasures. This can be seen in popular cinema where they are only seen in a temple, or are either blind and shown to be constantly suffering. Younger widows, in particular, are subject to constant suspicion. Dr. Atwal gave examples from certain representations of widows in films to substantiate her point.

Dr. Tara Sheemar, Associate Professor, Department of History, Janki Devi Memorial College, thanked Dr. Atwal, and gave her own insights on the topic. She pointed out how “chastity” is a very big question when it comes to a widow and how it emerges from the notion of a “pativrata-patni”. The lecture ended with a question and answer session with the speaker, in which questions were asked by both students and teachers present. Dr. Atwal welcomed the views of the audience, making the session very interactive and enjoyable.

JANKI DEVI MEMORIAL COLLEGE
UNIVERSITY OF DELHI

IQAC CENTRE FOR GENDER EQUITY STUDIES
UNDER THE SERIES OF " EMPOWERING WIDOWS "
In collaboration with
HISTORY DEPARTMENT

HERITAGE HISTORY ASSOCIATION
Presents a lecture (in hybrid mode) on

**Rhetorics of Dissent on Widowhood
Question in Colonial India: Some
Reformist and Feminist Perspectives**

SPEAKER

DR. JYOTI ATWAL
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR,
CENTRE FOR HISTORICAL STUDIES,
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY
NEW DELHI

20th September
10:00 am
**Committee Room &
zoom platform**

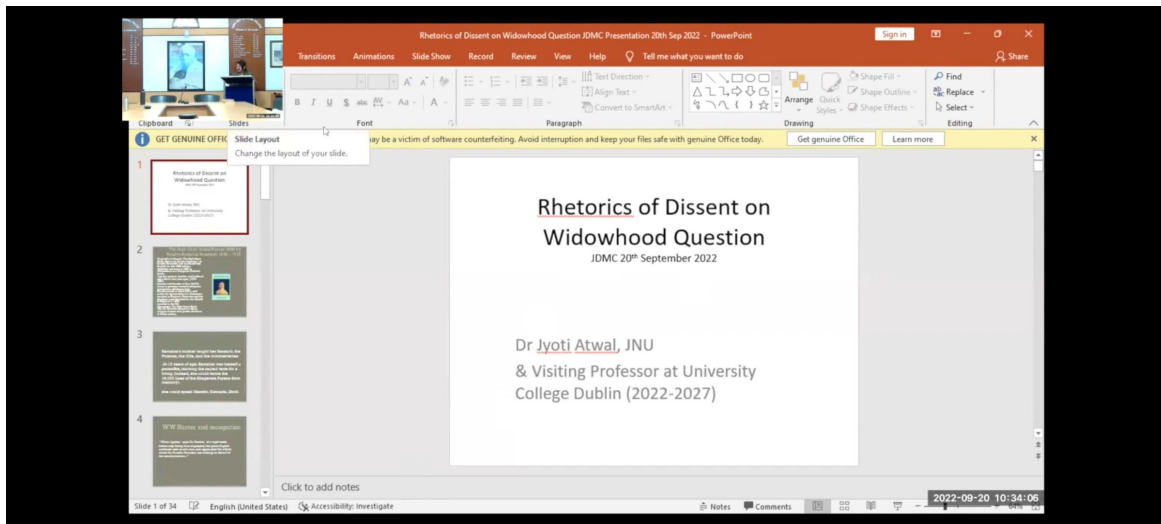
Event will be live streamed on Facebook and YouTube

DR. TARA SHEEMAR **DR. MANISHA SHARMA** **PROF. SWATI PAL**
Association in-charge Teacher in-charge Principal

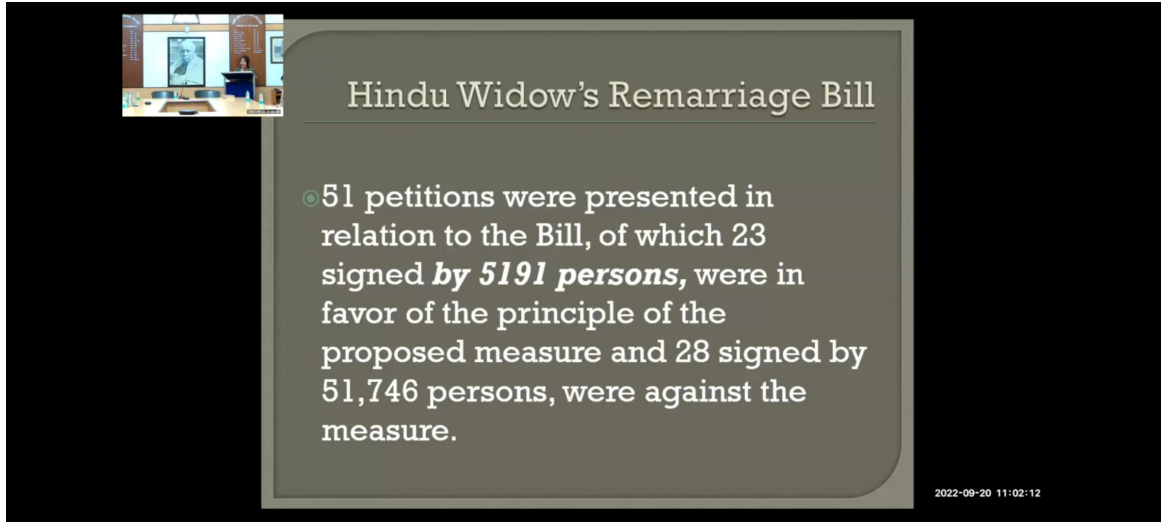
Poster of the Lecture on “Rhetorics of Dissent on Widowhood Question in Colonial India” held on 20 September 2022



Dr. Jyoti Atwal addressing the audience during the Lecture on “Rhetorics of Dissent on Widowhood Question in Colonial India” held on 20 September 2022



A Glimpse from the online stream of the Lecture on “Rhetorics of Dissent on Widowhood Question in Colonial India” held on 20 September 2022



A Glimpse from the online stream of the Lecture on “Rhetorics of Dissent on Widowhood Question in Colonial India” held on 20 September 2022

Seminar on “Widows of Vrindavan”

On 20 September 2022, the Women’s Development Cell and the IQAC Centre for Gender Equity Studies of the college, in collaboration with the Department of Sanskrit organised a seminar with Dr. Deepali Bhanot, former Associate Professor, JDMC, on the topic “Widows of Vrindavan”. The discussion focused on widowhood in the Indian context which constitutes social exclusion and marginalisation of the woman who has lost her husband. The widow, who is already in a precarious position due to adverse socio-economic and cultural ramifications of being a woman within Indian society, is pushed further to the margins. Her only recourse to means of dignified survival is to conform to the norms of Hindu widowhood that entail curtailment of freedom associated with dress code, diet, social relationships and sexual conduct.

Dr. Bhanot shed light on the presence of widows in Vrindavan, Uttar Pradesh. Several of these women end up in the town of Vrindavan, which is called the city of widows due to their ever increasing presence. With no means of livelihood and shelter, widows seek refuge in the ashrams of Vrindavan. She also highlighted the issues of harassment, abuse, cheating and violence that the widows experience before coming to Vrindavan. The fact that Vrindavan is home to a large number of destitute women emerges from established and rapidly changing socio-cultural and

economic norms. Widows, old age women and single women are a large section of society that is neglected and denied access to their rights. The widows coming to Vrindavan envision a life of dignity and security, free from the hardships of poverty, violence, forced labour and negligence.

The decision to come to Vrindavan is taken by widows due to adverse economic and familial circumstances. Dr. Bhanot discussed how the rules of celibate widowhood are given in religious texts of Hinduism such as the *Manusmriti*. The oppressive practices associated with widowhood govern a widow's diet, modes of dressing and sexual and behavioral conduct. Dr. Bhanot highlighted that there is an astonishing lack of public concern for the suffering of widows. For widows, Vrindavan is a nurturing and providing land, where they aim to take their last breath and hopefully be free from suffering of the human form.

The discussion was a real eye opener for the students and gave them various insights into the condition of widows and their status and position in society. The session also gave the students many aspects to explore and think about related to the topic. The seminar was attended by a large number of students and was followed by a lively interaction post the talk.



**JANKI DEVI MEMORIAL COLLEGE
UNIVERSITY OF DELHI**

IQAC CENTRE FOR GENDER EQUITY STUDIES

Under the series of "EMPOWERING WIDOWS"

in collaboration with

DEPARTMENT OF SANSKRIT

presents a seminar on

WIDOWS OF VRINDAVAN



Dr. Deepali Bhanot

Associate Professor (Retd.)
Janki Devi Memorial College



20 Sept 2022



12 Noon



Committee Room

Contact Information : tanuja@jdm.du.ac.in

Prof. Rajyalakshmi (Director)
Dr. Namita Sethi (Co-Director)
Centre For Gender Equity Studies

Dr. Tanuja Rawal (TIC)
Ms. Jyoti (Association Incharge)
Department of Sanskrit

PROF. SWATI PAL
PRINCIPAL

Poster of the Seminar on "Widows of Vrindavan" held on 20 September 2022



Dr. Deepali Bhanot addressing the audience during the Seminar on “Widows of Vrindavan” held on 20 September 2022



Dr. Deepali Bhanot addressing the audience during the Seminar on “Widows of Vrindavan” held on 20 September 2022



A Glimpse of the audience during the Seminar on “Widows of Vrindavan” held on 20 September 2022

Seminar on “Child Early and Forced Marriage: Latest Trends and Learnings”

The Women Development Cell of Janki Devi Memorial College under the aegis of the IQAC Centre for Gender Equity Studies organized a seminar on “Child Marriage” on 19 September 2022 in the Committee Room from 2:00 P.M. onwards. The seminar was attended by 30 students. The speaker for the seminar was Ms. Shipra Jha. Ms. Jha is an advocate for Women's and Children's rights. She works as a gender and development expert with UNICEF in the Delhi

regional office. The session was coordinated with “Girls not Brides”, a global partnership to end child marriage.

The session began with a welcome and introductory speech by the President, Muskaan Jain followed by the felicitation of the speaker by the Convenor of WDC and the Director of the Centre for Gender Equity Studies, Dr. Rajyalakshmi.

Ms. Jha then started the session by introducing the topic of Child Marriage. She defined Child Marriage as marrying of the individual when he or she isn't capable of bearing his or her own responsibilities. Then she gave a presentation where she provided the statistics and the data given by UNICEF. It also included the 5.3 SDG goals, i.e. reducing child marriages by 2023. An estimation says that there are 12 million child marriages every year. In India, 1 out of 8 women are married before the age of 18. A major reason for child marriage mentioned by the speaker was the migration that takes place in the states like Tripura, West Bengal and Bihar. The families marry their sons before they go out for work so someone can take care of them while the son is out. Bihar has the highest rate of child marriages, 7 of its districts are amongst the top 10 areas of child marriage.

The speaker also mentioned the impact of Covid-19 on child marriages. Child marriages grew during the pandemic as the schools shut down and also girls were not allowed to go to school. This led to a greater impact on women and families like economic crisis, early and unwanted pregnancies etc.

The students engaged with the speaker and asked poignant questions such as how can the divide between the cultural gaps and the new norms of the society be addressed, to which the speaker answered by saying that every woman must be educated and must be financially independent in order to challenge the societal norms.

The session was highly beneficial and informative for the students as they became aware of various issues such as how the lack of secondary schooling for girls and the lack of initiatives by the government regarding women empowerment has majorly contributed to child marriage. The

importance of creating further discussion around these issues was highlighted. Another major aspect that was discussed was the significance of sex education in schools; many schools do not make the necessary sex education available to students and where it is made available, the students are taught separately rather than in a collaborative space. The session came to a close with a vote of thanks given by the President of WDC.



Janki Devi Memorial College
University Of Delhi
IQAC CENTRE FOR GENDER EQUITY STUDIES
Presents
A Seminar On
CHILD MARRIAGE

 **Speaker - Ms. Shipra Jha**
Women's and Children's Rights Advocate

 19 September 2022, Monday  2 P.M.  Committee Room

Contact Information : wdc@jdm.du.ac.in

| | | | |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------|
| Dr. Rajyalakshmi (Director) | Ms. Vrinda Kapur (Secretary) | Muskaan Jain (President) | Prof. Swati Pal |
| Dr. Namita Sethi (Co-Director) | Ms. Neelu Verma (Treasurer) | Arshpreet Kaur (Vice President) | Principal |

Poster of the seminar on “Child Marriages” held on 19 September 2022



Ms. Shipra Jha addressing the audience during the seminar on “Child Marriages” held on 19 September 2022



Glimpses from the seminar on “Child Marriages” held on 19 September 2022



Glimpses from the seminar on “Child Marriages” held on 19 September 2022

Movie Screening Series on “Projection of Widows in Indian Cinema”

The Women Development Cell of Janki Devi Memorial College, under the aegis of the IQAC Centre for Gender Equity Studies, held a series of movie screenings on “Projection of Widows in Indian Cinema” from 10 September 2022 to 17 September 2022. These screenings were part of a larger project undertaken by the Centre to address the various issues faced by widows within Indian society and hence, the screenings were an integral part of introducing these issues to students through the representation of widows in cinema.



JANKI DEVI MEMORIAL COLLEGE
WOMEN DEVELOPMENT CELL
under the aegis of
IQAC CENTRE FOR GENDER EQUITY STUDIES
 Present movie screening
 On
Projection of Widows in Indian Cinemas

| | |
|--|---|
|  | WATER 10 Sept, Saturday 1.30 pm, in Committee Room |
|  | PREM ROG 14 Sept, Wednesday 2.30 pm, in Committee Room |
|  | KATI PATANG 17 Sept, Saturday 1.30 pm, in Committee Room |

**Movie screening will be Followed by
 Discussion and Brain Storming Session**

| | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Dr. Rajyalakshmi (Director) | Muskaan Jain (President) | Prof. Swati Pal (PRINCIPAL) |
| Dr. Namita Sethi (Co-Director) | Arshpreet Kaur (Vice-President) | |
| Ms. Vrinda Kapur (Secretary) | | |
| Ms. Neelu Verma (Treasurer) | | |

Poster for the series of movie screenings on “Projection of Widows in Indian Cinema” held from 10 - 17 September 2022

The series began on 10 September 2022 with the screening of *Water* (2005), directed by Deepa Mehta. Before the screening, the students were introduced to the objective of the screenings; they were also asked to write their reviews and thoughts on the film while they were watching it. The screening was followed by a discussion and brainstorming session where the students discussed the themes of child marriage, ostracisation of widows from society and widow remarriage as portrayed within the movie. The session was highly informative for students as they were made aware of the harsh reality of the various issues faced by widows.



Glimpses from the screening of *Water* held on 10 September 2022



Glimpses from the screening of *Water* held on 10 September 2022

The second movie to be screened within the series was *Prem Rog* (1982), directed by Raj Kapoor. The screening was held on 14 September 2022 and was attended by 40 students. After the screening, the floor was opened for the students' feedback and a discussion was held on the various issues that were represented in the movie. The discussion was moderated by Muskaan Jain, President, WDC. The students discussed the various oppressive practices, traditions, rituals and customs imposed on widows as represented in the film. The discussion was very beneficial as it gave students a platform to express their views about all the repressive practices pertaining to widows that exist in society.



Glimpses from the screening of *Prem Rog* held on 14 September 2022



Glimpses from the screening of *Prem Rog* held on 14 September 2022

The final screening in the series was the screening of the film *Kati Patang* (1971), directed by Shakti Samanta. The screening was held on 17 September 2022 and was attended by 35 students. As per the earlier method, the screening was followed by a discussion session where students accessed and analysed the depiction of issues faced by widows within Indian society. The students discussed the issues represented in the movie such as the denial of abortion to women, the ill-treatment that widows have to face within the family and society and how widow remarriage is treated as a taboo within society. The screening was highly insightful and helped the students to further understand the issues that widows face within India.



Glimpses from the screening of *Kati Patang* held on 17 September 2022



Glimpses from the screening of *Kati Patang* held on 17 September 2022

The series of screenings was highly beneficial for the students as through the representation of a serious issue such as widowhood in a mode of popular culture such as cinema, they were able to understand the various facets of the difficulties faced by widows within Indian society. The screenings allowed them to start the conversation about widowhood and gave them an opportunity to introspect about the issue and also think of various avenues through which the situation of widows can be improved.

Students' Discussion Forum on "Self-Love: Is Self-Love Selfish?"

The Women Development Cell of Janki Devi Memorial College, under the aegis of the IQAC Centre for Gender Equity Studies, held a students' discussion forum on the topic "Self-Love: Is Self-Love Selfish" on 8 September 2022 at 2:30 pm in the Committee Room. The discussion was attended by 35 students. The session mainly sought to gather and share insights from the student participants on the central question- "Is self-love selfish?" This session aimed at giving the students a platform to find and express their voices in a safe space.

The discussion started with an introspective activity where the students pondered on what self-love means to them and what their personal practice of it looks like. The discussion further threw light on body image issues, eating disorders, self-hatred, and also healthy practices like body positivity, confronting one's emotions and fears, and the need for building a judgment-free society. Students also discussed what self-love looks like for marginalized identities in the midst of rejection, oppression, discrimination, and their personal resistance against it all. Sexual, physical, emotional, and mental boundaries and their importance was emphasized by sharing personal experiences related to the same. Finally, the session concluded with a collective call of action for laying down the foundation of an inclusive and non judgemental society, along with incorporating personal safety and self-care practices.



Poster for the Students' Discussion Forum on "Self-Love: Is Self-Love Selfish" held on 8 September 2022



Glimpses from the Students' Discussion Forum on "Self-Love: Is Self-Love Selfish" held on 8 September 2022



Glimpses from the Students' Discussion Forum on "Self-Love: Is Self-Love Selfish" held on 8 September 2022