

## **7<sup>th</sup> Women Science Congress: Day 1 Report (18<sup>th</sup> March 2018)**

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The 7<sup>th</sup> Women Science Congress was inaugurated as part of the 105<sup>th</sup> Indian Science Congress, 2018, at the Centenary Hall of Manipur University, Imphal. The inaugural function was graced by Shri Keshari Nath Tripathi, Hon'ble Governor of West Bengal as the chief guest. The Manipur University Vice Chancellor, Prof. Adya Prasad Pandey attended the function as the key note speaker. The function was presided by Ashok Saxena, Former General President of ISCA. Prof. Vijay Laxmi Saxena, former General Secretary, ISCA and Namita Gupta, Scientist, Department of Science and Technology as the guest of honours. Prof. P.P. Mathur, General Secretary (Scientific Activities), ISCA opened the function with his welcome address.

“Women if given the opportunity and support may excel in any field. In this light the 7<sup>th</sup> Women Science Congress should be able to pave ways for our women folks”, exerts Shri Keshari Nath Tripathi Hon'ble Governor of West Bengal in his inaugural speech. He mentioned in his speech that women need to be brought into the limelight as they have been underrepresented in the field of science and technology. He also noted the tremendous roles of Manipuri women who are contributing in maintaining the peace and harmony of the state and also playing a major role in contributing to the economic and commercial activities. The function was concluded by Prof. Gangadhar, General Secretary (Membership Affairs), ISCA delivering his vote of thanks.

The 7<sup>th</sup> Women Science Congress opened with two sessions categorized into two themes: Women and Science - Reaching the Unreached and Women and Health Issues respectively. Eminent women science professionals took part on the first day of the women science congress by presenting their research papers on the two given themes.

The first session was chaired by Prof. Manjusa Majumdar, Dept of Pure Mathematics, University of Calcutta.

**Prof. Sadhna Singh, Principal, D.G. PG College, Kanpur: Reaching the Unreached Through Science and Technology** – The principle argument of her presentation focused on the need to shift the male centric scientific developments on women's body and urged to create a suitable women friendly technology derived from the voice of women. She focused on the fact that most research on reproduction focuses only on women's biological system ignoring the fact that men has anything to do with reproduction. As she highlighted in her research that most women are unaware of the side-effects of using different kinds of contraceptives such as copper-T, IUD, etc and in most cases those women who are using these contraceptives are not even given the right to choose whether they want it or not. She concluded her presentation by asserting that the focus of researchers on women has to move from women's reproduction

system to the various other health issues concerning the health of women. And also she mentioned that the development of science and technology has failed to reach the tribal women population in the remotest corner of our country.

**Dr. Vidya Patni, HOD, Botany, Maharaja College, University of Rajasthan: Women in Science – The Indian Perspective** – The presentation by Dr. Vidya Patni highlighted the women personalities who were pioneers in the field of Science and Technology in the World and also in India. She observed how science has been a part of women's life since the beginning of civilization by incorporating science unknowingly in their everyday chores in the house. However, in spite of their early venture in science, her study showed how in professional science streams, the ratio of women are far lacking as compared to men. She pointed out that despite the growing no. of women enrolling themselves in colleges and as research scholars, but very few holds faculty positions in science research institutes. She further added that there are in total 431 recognized universities in our country but there are only 13 women vice chancellors. These numbers reflect how women's capabilities are not recognized fully. Her research also highlighted the various schemes and fellowships initiated by the Govt. for the welfare of women folk in our country.

**Prof. Asha Gupta, Dept. of Life Sciences, Manipur University: Climate Change, Health Impacts and Women** - "Climate change is the biggest health threat in the 21<sup>st</sup> century", claimed Prof. Asha Gupta in her presentation. She emphasized that the impacts of climate change will be detrimental to the lives of women folks mostly as women are expected to take full responsibilities of caring for the families during extreme events of climate change, such as, fetching water at far flung areas during water scarcity will not only affect their health but they are also vulnerable to sexual assaults. In her research she mentioned about the initiatives taken up by the concerned authorities, however they lack gender sensitive policies. Therefore it is crucial to ensure that discussion on climate change includes women gender perspectives and create a collective participation to counter climate change.

**Dr. Archana Verma, Principle Scientist, Dairy Cattle Breeding Division, National Dairy Research Institute, Karnal: Maternal Socio-Biological Factors during Pregnancy and Multiple Congenital Anomalies/ Mental Retardation Syndrome in Children** - Her research highlights on the consequences of certain social or cultural factors that favors a male child over a female child being one of the main factors for mental retardation syndrome or multiple congenital anomalies in children. Her presentation focused on the chromosomal abnormalities which form a major part of genetic disease burden in India. Though the PNDP Act 1994, prevents the pre-sex determination, many communities in India still adheres to traditional methods and practices procured from local apothecaries or quacks, which adversely affects the health of the mother and the child; mental abnormalities and retardation symptoms in the case of the child.

So she emphasized on the need for a pregnant woman to take utmost care, particularly by avoiding the use of unauthorized or un-prescribed drugs or medicines and also be made aware of the socio-biological factors that will adversely affect the unborn child. She concluded that there is an urgent need for a nationwide campaign and awareness programs to change the stereotypical mindset that creates a gender biased society.

**Dr. Hemlata J. Wankhede, Director, Govt. Institute of Science PG & Research, Aurangabad: Preventing Diseases through Healthy Environment** – Dr. Wankhede highlights the various diseases such as Malaria, Dengue, Diarrhea, Filariasis etc caused by unhealthy and unhygienic living conditions specially in India. Her paper also focuses on the vector borne diseases and the strategies to control them. She mentioned the need to create advanced preventive strategies in order to create healthy public health system. In conclusion she urged to the concerned authorities to provide training, research and laboratory and field based surveillance in countries where diseases are likely to emerge. She also added that is it the prime duty of each member of the community to participate in controlling such diseases.

**Dr. Anukriti Verma, Department of Community Medicine, Christian Medical College, Ludhiana: Prevalence of Risk factors of Coronary Artery disease and Grade of Cardio-respiratory fitness among students of Health Sciences in Urban Ludhiana** - Dr. Anukriti Verma conducted a research on health sciences students living in urban Ludhiana to interrogate the factors leading to deaths caused by coronary artery diseases which are becoming quiet rampant in the current society. She conducted the research using the Harvard Step Test in order to record the heartbeat of each of her subjects. She studied the daily activities of these students in terms of their physical activities, food habits, sleeping habits, indulgence etc. Her findings pointed out that these students were at the higher risk of CAD mostly due to their unhealthy lifestyle (watching too much of television, lack of physical activities, heavy workloads causing stress etc). Other factors found out by her research were hypertensions, family history of diabetes and heart disease. She concluded her study by urging everyone to maintain and encourage a healthy lifestyle as Indians are more prone to CAD.