

'An empowered woman can be a role model for many'

MEHA SHARMA
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Women need to empower themselves as an empowered woman can be a role model for many. They should be a real partner in decision making, opined the panelists during a panel discussion on 'Women empowerment' on the first day of NEERI's 6-day event 'One Week, One Lab' which began on Saturday.

The panelists included DCP Archit Chandak, Prof at LAD College Ruta Dharmadhikari, social worker Pushpa Waghmare, Fetri village sarpanch Prem Dhone, director of Stagecraft Vikash Khurana, educator and social worker Lata Singh and student Rutuja Lonkar. The topic of discussion was 'What is women empowerment and how do you perceive it?'

Speaking on the topic Nagpur DCP Archit Chandak said, "Empowerment is not something to be given, women empower themselves. They should be aware of their choices and what they can do. I have seen the number of IPS candidates increase. We

Six-day 'One Week, One Lab' event begins at NEERI



DCP Archit Chandak, Ruta Dharmadhikari, Pushpa Waghmare, Prem Dhone, Vikash Khurana, Lata Singh, Rutuja Lonkar during a panel discussion at NEERI on Saturday.

need to strive for equal participation and encourage women to join IPS, IAS, and other fields."

Prof Ruta Dharmadhikari said, "We have not achieved the level of empowerment needed for women. Empowerment means women taking power within themselves and using it, rather than expecting someone else to empower them. We are making progress towards gender equality and equity at a fast pace."

"While we are biologically different, humanistically we are the same. Nobody should be stopped from pursuing their dreams," Prof Dharmadhikari said.

Rutuja Lonhe said, "For me, empowerment is waking up in the morning with con-

fidence to speak in front of others. It is knowing that my parents will support me, regardless of whether I have a good or bad day."

Pushpa Waghmare said, "Empowerment is when a woman feels another woman's pain and works towards alleviating that pain. Women face challenges such as childbirth, exploitation, and curable diseases. We need to create awareness among families about healthcare and educate them about women's needs. By educating one woman, we empower her to educate many more."

Prem Dhone said, "In rural areas, women are often restricted from leaving their homes and working. I have set up sewing machines for women in my village and

started karate classes for girls in school, among other initiatives. I have received an award from the Prime Minister for my efforts in empowering women in my community."

"Performing arts have always been at the forefront of addressing issues of the women along with socio-economic issues. During the Shakespearean era, women were not allowed to work in the theatres. William Shakespeare was a strong proponent of women's equality, though. In fact, some of the iconic characters in his works were women such as Lady Macbeth and Juliet. Apart from cultural freedom, financial dependence is crucial for women," Vikash Khurana said.