

MAHARAJA BIJLI PASI GOVT. P.G. COLLEGE, AASHIYANA, LUCKNOW

A BRIEF REPORT OF THE TWO-DAY INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP WITH DR

MANJULA O'CONNOR

9TH AND 10TH JANUARY, 2020

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A two-day **International Workshop: Hope** was organized on 9th and 10th of January, 2020 at Maharaja Bijli Pasi Govt. P.G. College, Aashiyana, Lucknow, in collaboration with the Australasian Center for Human Rights and Health, Australia. The workshop titled “**Empowering Young Women: Early Intervention and Prevention of Family Violence**” aimed to focus on “mutual cultural respect”, “empowering young women”, “strengthening families” and “enhancing gender equality”. The two-day event commenced with an Inaugural Ceremony to introduce the purpose of the workshop, the proposed agenda and the targeted objectives. Dr Manjula O’Connor, Executive Director, ACHRH, Melbourne, as the Keynote Speaker, addressed a gathering of professors, principals of different colleges, students, members of media and other dignitaries and spoke about the global problem of family violence and dowry-related abuse in extended family system found in Australia and India. Mrs. Anju Gupta, Additional Director General Police Mahila Sammaan Prakoshtha, 1090 Women Powerline, Lucknow was the Chief Guest. She advocated the need for young women to realize the different kinds of violence and to raise voice against them. Professor Nishi Pandey, Director, HRDC, Lucknow University presided the Inaugural Session and praised the initiative as an important step towards educating youth in making them more gender sensitive. Professor Manju Dikshit, Principal MBP Govt. P.G. College, Lucknow, in her address spoke about the relevance of the workshop for students and teachers to achieve the target of gender equality. The Inaugural ceremony was conducted by Dr Sanobar Haider (Assistant Professor, Department of History) and Dr Sarita Singh (Assistant Professor, Department of English).

This was basically a student oriented workshop. The workshop introduced questions like defining family violence, types and causes of family violence, and the ways to reduce family violence. For the success of the workshop, it was pertinent to select students who could interact, participate through dialogues and exchange ideas. It was interesting to find that the students were more than cooperative, eager to learn and put forth their point of view. Coming from semi-rural areas the students were delighted to have an opportunity of meeting an expert trainer and social worker from overseas, Dr Manjula O'Connor. This workshop was an entirely new experience for them and the enthusiastic students tried to imbibe the essence of it by watching the UNITED WE STAND 3 segment videos "An Ideal Family", "Arranged Marriage", "Young Couple" and joining in question and answer sessions.

Some students who belonged to Hindi medium school background also did not fail to partake in discussions as they were able to follow the videos and present their thoughts in the language they were comfortable in, that is, Hindi. And that was not a problem at all as Dr O'Connor was highly indulgent and being bi-lingual could comprehend their ideas with equal expertise.

As the coordinator of the workshop, I gauge the success of the workshop by the fact that we were able to connect relatively raw, naive and unbiased students into this training due to their own interest and deep inclination in wanting to learn. They were introduced to basic gender concepts like "patriarchy", "subordination of women", "gender roles", and "male domination" and the way it is manifested in families and societies.

The second day of the workshop concluded with the distribution of certificates of participation to all participants. The valedictory culminated with the words of appreciation by Prof. Manju Dikshit amidst enormous applause. Dr. O'Connor proved to be a huge inspiration. The workshop was one of its kinds in the history of MBP Govt. P.G. College, Aashiyana, Lucknow, in spreading awareness and making this world more gender sensitive and humane.