

Shri Dharmendra Pradhan inaugurates one-day Workshop for Women Leaders

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Union Minister for Education, Shri Dharmendra Pradhan, inaugurated one-day Workshop for Women Leaders: Shaping Academic Excellence for VIKSIT Bharat @ 2047, organised by UGC, today in New Delhi. Union Minister of State for Education and Development of the North Eastern Region, Dr. Sukanta Majumdar, was also present at the event. Secretary, Ministry of Education, Shri Sanjay Kumar; Chairman, UGC, Prof. M. Jagadesh Kumar; Director General, Aeronautical Systems, DRDO, Dr. Rajalakshmi Menon; Vice Chairman, UGC, Prof. Deepak Kumar Srivastava; Director, IIT Delhi, Prof. Rangan Banerjee; and eminent dignitaries from across the country were also present at the event.



Shri Dharmendra Pradhan, while addressing the audience, highlighted how the workshop, aligning with the vision of NEP 2020, emphasises the empowerment of women at every level of education. He also mentioned that the workshop aims to showcase how women are elevating educational standards in higher education and also equip and inspire them for leadership roles.

Shri Pradhan also mentioned that Nari Shakti is a symbol of strength, resilience, and hope, and treating women with respect is an inherent value of Indian civilisation. Expressing his gratitude to Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, he said how the government in the last 10 years, has led from the front to bring a transformative shift from women's development to women-led development.

The Minister also noted that the emerging new world order will be driven by knowledge and women are breaking glass ceilings, challenging gender roles and their participation is increasing in all spheres, including in STEM. It is important to establish a level playing field for women in all spheres, he added. He also said that he was confident that the deliberations, dialogues, and experience sharing in the workshop would provide a roadmap for that.

Shri Pradhan emphasised that an Indian model of women empowerment has to be created to ensure that women belong to all decision-making structures and life choices. As we move towards realising the goal of Viksit Bharat, Nari Shakti will assume more decision-making roles, he said.

The Minister said that equality and empowerment of women alone can empower our society and nation.

Dr. Sukanta Majumdar, in his address, emphasised the importance of women leadership in education to achieve the goal of Viksit Bharat. Paying reverence to ancient knowledge leaders such as Maitreyi and Gargi, as well as present-day scientists like Dr. Soumya Swaminathan, he mentioned how women leaders are playing a pivotal role in shaping academic excellence and contributing to nation-building. Referring to the impressive women Gross Enrolment Ratio, he noted that it is poised to increase further in the future. He also mentioned the significance of initiatives such as PM-USHA, which focuses on gender inclusivity in policies, along with WISE-KIRAN and DIKSHA (Digital Infrastructure for Knowledge Sharing) and how the government has empowered women to excel in academia and research. Comparing society to a bird, he stressed the need to strengthen both its wings—men and women—for the all-round development of the country and to achieve the goal of Viksit Bharat.

Shri Sanjay Kumar, in his address, emphasized the importance of diversity for cultivating leadership and highlighted the need for more diversity in leadership through the inclusion of women across the country, in all walks of life, and primarily in the sciences. Noting the highest participation of women in STEM education in India, he mentioned that this achievement must be backed by policy to ensure its sustainability. Reiterating Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's vision for a Viksit Bharat, he expressed confidence that India will become a developed nation led by Indian women.

Eminent personalities will engage with participants throughout the day, sharing insights and leading discussions on critical topics, including: Smt. Lakshmi Iyer, Joint General Manager at Larsen & Toubro (Importance of industry-academia partnerships and their role in fostering leadership in higher education); Smt. Vandana Bhatnagar, Member of the Board of Governors at IIM Jammu (Leadership experiences and contributions to institutional growth and development); Smt. Geeta Singh Rathore, Director General, National Sample Survey, Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation (Data-driven leadership in education and its impact on shaping policies); Dr. Sonal Mansingh, Padma Vibhushan Awardee and Member of Parliament, Rajya Sabha (2018-2024); Dr. Rajalakshmi Menon, Director General, Aeronautical Systems, DRDO, (Fostering Women-Led Research for a Developed India); Prof. Neelima Gupta, Vice Chancellor, Dr. Harisingh Gaur University, (Future of Women in Higher Education Leadership for Viksit Bharat @ 2047); Prof. Preeti Aghalayam, Director-in-charge, IIT Madras, Zanzibar Campus, (Women Leadership in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics - STEM); Shri Sanjiv Mehta, Advisor and Head of Programme Development at IBM Innovation Centre for Education, (Strategies for Balancing Leadership Responsibilities with a Healthy Work-Life Balance); and Dr. Shamika Ravi, Member, Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister, (Creating Mentoring and Networking Platforms for Women in Leadership Roles).

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