International Women's Day

27th March 2011

Event report - Trivandrum

Event organized by:

in cooperation with Paycheck India Project @ IIM- A, ITUC, UNI, and WageIndicator Foundation

Websites

http://www.paycheck.in  http://dfl.wageindicator.org

http://www.unitespro.org
Invitation:

Hello,

International Women's Day was celebrated on March 8. In conjunction with this, you are invited to a workshop sponsored and organized by the Decisions For Life Project to be held at the Maurya Hotel, Trivandrum, on March 27, 2011 from 10:30 am to 3:30 pm.

The overall objective of the Decisions For Life Project is to raise awareness amongst young female workers about their employment opportunities, career possibilities, family building and work-family balance.

The lifetime decisions that women make, determine not only their individual future, but also that of society. Hence, the choices they make are key to the demographic and workforce development of the nation.

The theme of this event would be broadly based on:

• Work-Life balance
• Women as leaders
• Career planning

The presentation would be followed by lunch, with an interactive session after that.

Kindly confirm your participation by emailing paul@unitespro.org.

Agenda:

• Welcome to Chief guest, speakers and participants.
• Self-introductory of participants
• Talk by Ms.Remani Nair – President, District Panchayat – Trivandrum
• Talk by Advocate Ledgar Bava
• Session by Advocate Jiby Mathew on “Stress management & Work-Life balance”
• Session by Ms.Neethu Mathew on Decisions for Life project
• Video screening by Prithviraj Lekkad on IWD and Invest in women.
• Event Conclusion

Ad on Trivandrum Technopark website:

http://www.technoparktoday.com/decisions-for-life-seminar-on-march-27th/
International Womens’ day was celebrated on 27th March 2011 at Trivandrum.
Around 45 women participants mostly from IT, BPO and banking took part in this event.

The event started with a welcome by Ms. Neethu Mathew, DFL Volunteer, followed by introduction of the chief guest, Ms. Remani P Nair – President, Trivandrum District Panchayat, guest and speaker Advocate Ledgar Bava and Prithviraj Lekkad, UNITES President and DFL project. All participants introduced themselves in the self introductory round.

The chief guest Ms. Remani P Nair addressed the young gathering and delivered a very interesting and motivational speech. Participants were spell bound by the content of the speech.

Excerpts from her speech:

The Indian constitution has its peculiar distinctiveness – everybody talks about loopholes. They say, however big the problem, there are loopholes to cover it. It is around these loopholes that we find in our state and in our country where all the dramas take place – whatever the case may be, everyone knows they have a chance to escape.

There was this young girl I know of, who once told her friend – I have a few things to tell you. Seeing them in conversation, her mother-in-law warned her saying “what have you got so much to talk about?” One day this girl told her friend who was on the other side of the wall, “I will show you the bruises on my back from the window – please inform this to my family.” Her friend informed her family and they promptly took her back home. They were shocked to see the condition of her back – if was full of bruises and scratches – on top of this she was also pregnant. I was informed.

The girl was reluctant to speak in front of her mother and told me that she wanted to speak to me privately. We went in to a room and after listening to her I asked her, is your husband a mad man? Is he mentally insane? She said, no he is normal person. She told me suicide was the best option she had after all the mental torture she had undergone.
What can be done about it? This is something you have to think about once I leave this place. We should become more powerful. I have a lot of experiences – I talk about “power” and I go away. When you encounter a problem, you often find that you are all alone – don’t you? This state of finding yourself all alone – its not about who you are – the general feeling is, why do we have to interfere and help someone when we can just leave the place. Why?

Among our women fraternity, there happens to be no empathy at all – no unity. If we did have some obligation towards society, we would have stood our ground and supported that unfortunate woman in trouble. We would have raised our voice – or at least asked a question. She recollected that there was this young girl she knows, who once told her friend – I have a few things to tell you. Seeing them in conversation, her mother-in-law warned her saying “what have you got so much to talk about?” One day this girl told her friend who was on the other side of the wall, “I will show you the bruises on my back from the window – please inform this to my family.” Her friend informed her family and they promptly took her back home. They were shocked to see the condition of her back – if was full of bruises and scratches – on top of this she was also pregnant.
When speaking about the Kerala “Health Model,” everyone is capable and interested in giving long speeches and holding banners, etc. The credit here goes to no one, but women/mothers.

The responsibility for bringing up the present generation lies with women – mothers. Today a poor woman is much more aware than a doctor on how to raise a child – about the necessary procedures/medications during pregnancy, the care the child needs, the medications to be given. Whatever the financial burdens or mental state the mother is in, she has a very clear vision of how to nurture her child. The credit for the splendid success of the Kerala Health Model goes entirely to women.

Going on to primary education in the rural areas. My District Panchayat is responsible for 73 schools, where we have started what we call the “Mother PTA.” We have instructed that more importance be given to Mother PTA. Unlike the usual PTA, the benefit gained through Mother PTA is significantly more. The mother on her way to the market will often drop in at school to enquire with the teacher about her child – is my child punctual? How are things going? The teacher is happy that the mother is concerned and following up on the progress of her child. The child is happy too. The mother does not know too much – but what she does know is to follow up on the progress of her child. Also, if the child is unable to attend school for a day to two, the mother informs the teacher. This has in the longer run brought about a big change in society.

We find that women strive so hard to bring up the present generation. The question is, has she in return got justice from society?
She concluded her intervention by pledging her total support for the Decisions for Life campaign and promised any help using her authority for the cause of young women.

In the next session Advocate Ledgar Bava addressed the participants and gave them in-depth insights related to women issues and how law can support women in distress.

He stressed upon the fact that women should come out of their shell and air their grievances. This would help themselves and also many many other similar women across the nation. A sense of togetherness should prevail upon the young women, so that they are well equipped and ready to face many effects of globalisation on women.

He also encouraged more and more young women to participate in Decisions for life campaign and make it a massive movement in years to come.

He congratulated Decisions for Life team for their excellent campaign work across India and pledged his complete support for this campaign.
After tea break Advocate Jiby Mathew conducted a very interesting session on Stress managements and work life balance. She gave a meticulous talk on what are a woman’s responsibility and how to portray real feminism and not what’s shown in the media.

She gave examples on what feminism should be and not to be mislead by media or pseudo-feminists. She added that man is definitely a need for women and its natural. Man has his responsibilities and women hers. “Ignoring men or shying away from basic responsibilities is not feminism, but indulging in a proper dialogue and solving differences, sharing responsibilities and carrying out a women’s duty is real feminism”, she said.

Excerpts from her talk:

Work-life balance. Analyze what is happening. Be aware of who you are. Compromise. Men are literate and contribute to the family.


Women today do half the job that their mothers did. The benefits of keeping your spouse happy. Patience.
Balancing.

Being a productive professional.

Never carry things back home, or from home to your work place.

Take time to prioritize things. Organize things.

Manage stress with yoga and meditation.


Finally, take care of yourself. Pamper yourself. Stress is inevitable, but struggling is optional. Women have the right to look beautiful and they should use some of their time to groom themselves and look attractive both physically and mentally.

She gave her full support to this campaign and requested all the young women to be real feminists and follow simple guidelines given by her in their lives. This would definitely bring in a positive change among young women and bring in a “real” social change. Participants showed their women power by giving a loud applause to Jiby.
Advocate Jiby's session was followed by Ms. Neethu Mathew's presentation on Decisions for Life project and disseminated its aims and objectives. She was able to convey the real message of Decisions for Life campaign – “Be informed and Be empowered”. She invited all the participants to be active and help spread the message of Decisions for Life to more and more women around them.

Ms. Neethu Mathew giving a presentation on Decisions for Life campaign

She stressed upon the young women to inculcate the practical and proven techniques of work-life balance and stress management into their lives and enjoy the unmatched benefits it gives. This would help them to come together and create a new society based on real equal values.

She encouraged all the young women to bring more women in to this campaign and make it huge one.

In the final session of this event Prithviraj Lekkad showed “Invest in women” and IWD videos by ITUC and UNI. Participants liked these videos since they were easy to understand with apt message in them.

The event ended with a thank you note by Prithviraj Lekkad to all the volunteers, participants, speakers and chief guests for having attended and contributed their thoughts and time. He requested everyone to add more people to this unique campaign and build a stable foundation for themselves and the future generation too.