

**The Institute of Cost Accountants of India & Centre for Social Research
Programme On**

Celebrating Womanhood:

**'Enlightenment through Education and Empowerment through
Entrepreneurship'**

10th March 2016 (10.00 AM – 1.00 PM), New Delhi

Panel: *Dr. Ranjana Kumari (Director, CSR), CMA Manas Thakur (Vice President, ICAI), CMA Kaushik Banerjee, CMA S K Gupta (Head – Group Internal Audit and Company Secretary, Spentex Industries Limited), CMA B B Goyal (Former Addl. Chief Adviser (Cost), M/o Finance, Government of India), Ms. S M Swathi (Executive Director, BhartiyaMahila Bank), and Dr. Kiran Bedi (Social Activist & Former IPS)*

Welcome Note and Panel Address: Ms. Prajakta Nilkanth (CSR)

The welcome note introduced the partner organizations jointly holding the day's event – Centre for Social Research and Institute of Cost Accountants of India, and introducing the main objectives of the event – advocacy and dialogue on women's issues in the corporate, banking and financial sectors. The introduction of the panel indicated the central theme of the seminar, as every panelist brought a specific aspect of their expertise to the table – policy level dialogue, research and development based insight, legal and financial perspectives, as well as the policing and community based civil society engagement.

The address note was followed by lighting of the lamp, to mark the official start to the day's panel discussion.

Introduction of Centre for Social Research: Ms. Juthika Banerjee (CSR)

Introduction of The Institute of Cost Accountants of India: Ms. UshaNegi, Presiding Officer (ICC)

Panel 1

CMA Manas Thakur –Role of Education in Women Empowerment through Entrepreneurship with specific reference to CMAs - ICAI

Mr. Thakur's presentation marked the importance of the 150th International Women's Day – and stressed on the fact that only a hundred and fifty years ago, women were fighting for their suffrage rights, their economic rights and to be counted as equals with everybody else. That fight, is an ongoing one, as we still witness horrendous crimes against women being carried out in the name of culture, tradition and religion. He suggests the correlation between different social aspects that help empower an individual – education > literacy > empowerment. He provided a range of

statistical and policy related data from the most affected parts of the nation, to stress further on the importance and incidence of education of women in our country, and he also noted that India lags behind Myanmar and Sri Lanka in female literacy rates. He also questioned the infrastructural gaps in women's education system, where he pointed out that presently there are 11 women's universities in India, while to fight the gap in the system there must be 2 women's universities in every state. The astounding gaps in the approach to women's education in India, is the reason behind the deteriorating conditions. Thakur also highlighted the requirement for developmental changes – increasing the outreach of self-help groups (SHGs), skill development training, and entrepreneurship programs for women – all methods to tackle the problem of women's issues with infrastructural management.

Dr. Ranjana Kumari- EconomicViolence: Visible or Invisible (CSR)

Dr. Kumari began with an address on the partnership between CSR and ICAI, and their common goal of women's empowerment. She stressed on the core issues faced by women today in our country – the problem of education, economic independence, patriarchal violence against women, and the resulting injustices. She also brought our attention to the fact that most women's work is unpaid, and hence there is a serious gap in the economic autonomy of men and women, especially since women's work is considered her duty not her choice or as a service payable with financial remuneration. She emphasized on the importance of community involvement in the path to eradicate domestic violence and gender violence on a general level. Dr. Kumari also stressed on the inadequate participation of women in the economic sector – she showed with statistical evidence how women professionals were flooding the mid-range corporate positions, while the low-level and high-level positions are still dominated by male professionals. She focused on the parity struggle that is currently being fought by female professionals all over the national level sectors of work, through a consistence wage-gap ratio, a tendency to commit legal oversight of development strategies directed at women – where the mandatory board-membership of women was countered by appointing nominal heads to positions, but without any executive power, which belied the purpose of the mandate originally passed to ensure women's involvement at the top corporate levels.

Dr. Kumari highlighted the problems faced by women in rural sectors, as well – the agricultural sector, where women are equally invested in the production process. The Direct Benefits Transfer (DBT) program sought to counter the existing delay of government policies benefitting rural sectors getting stagnated in the bureaucratic process, has inadequate services for the women farmers. The educational revolution failed to encompass almost the majority of the rural female population, resulting in massive gaps in female education in rural India – which only furthered the patriarchal cause of suppressing women into the domestic sphere only. Thus, economic self-sufficiency is the ultimate goal for all partners in the empowerment process.

Ms. S M Swathi - Women Entrepreneurship - Role of Banking Sector

Ms. Swathi began her presentation with a few burning questions – who is a woman in India, where is she held in society, and where does she need to be – based on a woman's position in her social, cultural and economic spheres. She also takes up the issue of women's literacy in India, and stressed on the importance of economic self-sufficiency. In 2013, the GoI introduced the BharatiyaMahila Bank to facilitate women's needs of financial security and strength, and economically empower women in their endeavour. She also focused on the needs of the financial

industry, and the scope of women's participation and engagement. She supported her statements with statistical reports and economic data, and claimed that we need substantial policy changes to accommodate the other half of the economic workforce that women constitute in this country. She also highlighted the Financial Literacy Program taken up by various banks to empower women through skill development and training to enter the financial sector as able and skilled workers. Ms. Swathi then presented the data and information on the different government and corporate development programs that currently aim at incorporating unskilled women into the sector through training, and she encouraged more diverse partnerships between financial institutes and civil society organizations to undertake methodical approaches to countering the existing prejudice against women, and the institutional reentry of the female workforce into the economy.

CMA Kaushik Banerjee - Legal framework with relation to Women at Workplace

Mr. Banerjee presented a brief introduction to the legal aspects of women in the corporate and financial sector, and highlighted the existing gaps in the programs, and a generic approach to women's participation in the workforce – through the various legal aids provided for women to fight wage-gap, sexual harassment at workplace, and countering prejudice.

TEA BREAK

Panel 2

CMA B B Goyal - Gender Issues and Corporate Social Responsibility-Role played by CMAs

Mr. Goyal brought our attention to the shift of focus on women's empowerment, and stressed on the importance of changing mindsets. He claimed that women's instinctual contribution to the economy is of utmost importance to the development of the national economy. He too pointed at education as the key factor in the process of reconstituting women into the national economic workforce. He claimed, that as a chapter of the responsible civil society, it should be our goal to educate every woman and girl in India. He held the idea of equal pay for equal work very high and demanded that wage-gap must be eradicated. He also highlighted the role of media in bringing about a change in the attitudes of the society at large.

Mr. Goyal also brought forward the contributions of the National Skill Development Agency, where NSDA provides specialized training for skill development, both in rural and urban sectors, to incorporate unskilled workforce into the sectors that have substantial gap in skilled worker supply. He also highlighted the role of corporate social responsibility in bringing about a large-scale social change through their philanthropic work being targeted at developing primarily on the women's issues.

CMA S.K Gupta - Women in Board Rooms

Mr. Gupta presented a very educational set of facts, based on his experience in the financial sector, working alongside women, and as an analyst who has been observing changing trends in the industry. His presentation highlighted various aspects of the legal and corporate aspects of women board members, and the practicalities of having women as board members in the corporate/financial sector. He projected the gaps in the system, and the expected outcomes of these

remaining gaps; he also provided information on facts relating to the corporate laws of representation, the problems of bypassing legalities and the problem of attitudes of the patriarchal system.

Dr. Kiran Bedi-Prevention of Crimes against Women

Dr. Bedi began, in her usual fervor of humour and seriousness put together, about the condition of women's rights in our country, she drew from her experience in the Police Department to highlight the practical problems facing women on an everyday basis. She put forth the problem of representation of women, in the rural sector, as well as in the urban sector – where women are overshadowed by the achievements of their male peers. Also, whatever little image that exists in the social whole of women as leaders, entrepreneurs, activists, law and policy makers, it is skewed due to our overemphasis on the role of a woman as the domestic entity, and as the mother. Accepting women as equals in the work-space is still a problem for many Indian men, in fact most Indian men according to various statistical representations.

The problem of crimes, thus, lies in the social and cultural attitudes toward women: and Dr. Bedi provided her “Law of 6 Ps” – where she identified six aspects of the problem – people, prevention of crime, community policing, politicians held answerable to the problems of the subject, prosecution of the perpetrator and the crime through magisterial power, and lastly the press and its role in bringing about a change in the systematic exclusion of women from the central aspects of social life.

*After the final address, Dr. Manasi Mishra (CSR) presented an update report of the **Beti Bachao Beti Padhao** program implementation in various high-risk states of India.*

Special Address: Ms. Rekha Dubey(CSR Counsellor from the Crisis Management Centres)

Vote of Thanks: Ms. Nisha Dewan, Joint Secretary (ICAI)

Lunch