



Women Must Learn To Take Calculated Risks To Become Successful Entrepreneurs, Says Rekha Sharma, Chairperson, NCW



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To mark the International Women’s Day, the Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India (EDII) organised a ‘Women in Leadership Conclave’ at its campus on 6th March 2023. The conclave was inaugurated by Smt Rekha Sharma, Chairperson, National Commission for Women (NCW) as the chief guest in the presence of Guest of Honour Dr. Pankaj Mittal, Secretary General, Association of Indian Universities, Special Guests, Ms. Mona Khandar, Principal Secretary, Finance Dept (Economic Affairs) , Govt. of Gujarat, Mr. Romit Sen, Vice President, Corporate Sustainability, HSBC India, & Dr. Rachana Gemawat, Chairperson, FICCI FLO, and Dr Sunil Shukla, Director General, EDII.

Addressing women entrepreneurs, students, and academicians as well as experts from different sectors, Smt Rekha Sharma in her inaugural speech said, “There has been a growing awareness about raising the social and economic status of women in society with an increased focus on

education, training, and handholding. This is a great development as women continue to remain underrepresented on almost every platform that requires them to wield power and decision-making authority. We want more and more women to come to the fore and break stereotypes and barriers that hinder growth. We all want to witness an inclusive and equitable society. We need to make space for women who have for long been subjugated to stereotypes and highly typical roles and, we can achieve this by encouraging women to take calculated risks, become economically independent, focus on business networking, and avoid crumbling under peer pressure.”

Dr. Shukla in his opening remarks said, “The economy can experience balanced growth only when women are encouraged to nurture their creativity and spirit of innovation. It is great to see how New India is providing winning platforms to women through innovative schemes and networking opportunities. Through its various programmes and projects focused on entrepreneurship & skill development, EDII has sought to enhance the incidence of women-owned enterprises. According to the largest survey on entrepreneurship, the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor Survey for 2021 -2022, among female adults, Total Early Stage Entrepreneurship Activities have increased significantly as 12.3% of the total female population are engaged in entrepreneurship as compared to 16.3% of the male. The male-female difference still exists and needs to be worked on to improve female representation in the overall of Total Early Stage Entrepreneurship Activities country. I am happy that several efforts are being put in place to encourage women to step to the forefront.”

Guest of Honour, Dr. Pankaj Mittal, Secretary General, Association of Indian Universities, said, “Women do step out with big dreams but as they progress towards the top, their participation and representation decreases glaringly. Women should refrain from creating an invisible glass ceiling of contentment and continue to rise. Society also needs to stop stereotyping women and give them a more warm welcome for bigger, unconventional roles. Women need to hold hands of other women and encourage each other on the way.”

In his address, Mr. Romit Sen, Sr. Vice President, of Corporate Sustainability, HSBC India said, “Skill development has really played a big role in bringing women to the forefront. Along with women, society as a whole also needs to be sensitized so that there is an encouraging systemic change. HSBC’s HMI project has focused on skilling women and empowering them by ensuring sustainable livelihood options for them. Today these trained women beneficiaries are financially independent and are in a much better place to think creatively and implement winning business strategies for growth.

Ms. Mona Khandar, Principal Secretary, Finance Dept (Economic Affairs) , Govt. of Gujarat, “Gujarat has a significant presence of MSMEs and women play a major role in this. There are some immensely progressive government schemes and subsidies to encourage women to become

entrepreneurs. Women-led startups are coming up now in various promising domains, and I see a future where women will establish their strong identities in the sphere of entrepreneurship.”

Dr. Rachana Gemavat, Chairperson, FICCI FLO Ahmedabad said, “We as a society need to support women in breaking barriers and handhold them in donning the role of enablers. This will lead to significant growth for the economy. A conducive support system that instills confidence in women and encourages them to rise above the fear of failure will work wonders on helping women rise and shine.”

The inauguration was followed by a panel discussion with esteemed panelists focused on understanding the gaps in the ecosystem for women empowerment and entrepreneurship, and deliberating on the ways of plugging gaps.

As part of the conclave, an exhibition by EDII-trained women entrepreneurs was also organised. Women entrepreneurs under EDII’s Centre for Empowerment of Differently-Abled (CEDA), Handmade in India (HMI) project, Hastkala Setu Yojana, and Centre for Advancing and Launching Enterprises (CrAdLE) displayed their craft and products at the exhibition.