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Economic independence is important, not marriage: NCW chief

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NOT MARRIAGE, economic independence is important for women, said Rekha Sharma, chairperson of the National Commission for Women (NCW) in Ahmedabad on Monday.

She was delivering the inaugural address at the Women in Entrepreneurship conclave ahead of the International Women's Day organised by the Development Institute of India (EDI) Ahmedabad.

Addressing women entrepreneurs, students, and academicians as well as experts from different sectors, Sharma said, "Women are generally followers... society frames rules for them, we need not follow those

rules imposed by the society on women... You should be a risk taker... You are taking a loan, tomorrow when you get married, will your husband repay that loan? Do not marry that man who does not agree with you. Marriage is not important. Important is that you have to be economically independent."

Adding that women should come forward and break stereotypes that hinder growth, she said, "Dream big, whether a boyfriend or leadership position, shiddat se chaho (wish with passion). When you dream repeatedly, it becomes a reality... You need to break rules... some rules are to be broken. If you do not, you will tow the same line."

"If you earn, so many problems will not arise, even domes-



Rekha Sharma felicitates a woman entrepreneur. Express

tic violence does not happen. Your husband will think ten times before raising hand on you that you will leave him. He will

think that she is independent, she is earning... she can take care of herself and her family... So you need to become independent but there are not many jobs so you should become an entrepreneur. Through this you also give jobs to others," said Sharma.

Adding that men would not support women who take their place, Sharma added, "You have to be very aggressive in selling your project and idea... the society calls an aggressive woman as tej and a similar man competitive. Let it be."

The conclave was inaugurated by Sharma in the presence of Pankaj Mittal, secretary general, Association of Indian Universities, Mona Khandhar, principal Secretary, finance department, Romit Sen, vice-president, corporate sustainability,

HSBC India, and Dr Rachana Gemawat, chairperson, FICCI FLO with Dr Sunil Shukla, Director General, EDII.

Speaking at the event, Pankaj Mittal said, "Women do step out with big dreams but as they progress towards the top, their participation and representation decreases... Women should refrain from creating an invisible glass ceiling of contentment and should continue to rise."

Stating that Gujarat has a significant presence of MSMEs in which women play a major role, Mona Khandhar said, "Women-led startups are coming up in various promising domains and I see a future where women will establish their strong identities in the sphere of entrepreneurship."