



**WOMEN'S STUDIES CENTRE
THIAGARAJAR COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS)**

(Re-Accredited by NAAC with 'A' Grade)
139-140, Kamarajar Salai, Madurai-625 009



Newsletter

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IMPRINTS





Chairperson
Dr. Uma Kannan
Secretary, Thiagarajar College

Greetings!

The Women's Studies Centre of Thiagarajar College, Madurai is dedicated to improving the lives of disadvantaged women.

As a part of our social responsibilities, we strive to give back to society through our various programmes and activities. At the same time Thiagarajar College aims to sensitize students to issues pertaining to women.

Women often work a 'double shift', taking care of their homes as well as providing for their families. They are by no means the weaker sex. With this in mind, Thiagarajar College, through its Women's Studies Centre aims to empower marginalized women and address their challenges.

We feel a great responsibility as an educational institution, to uplift less fortunate women because we believe education is the only tool that can better their lives.



Principal
Dr. A. Thamarichelvan

Women's Studies Centre is one of the nine schemes for women offered by the University Grants Commission (UGC), New Delhi, and was introduced during VII plan. Currently, during the XI plan there are nearly 150 centres spread throughout the length and breadth of India. The Women's Studies Centre of Thiagarajar College focuses mainly on educating women in the areas of health, nutrition, importance of education and sending children to school, skill based training as a tool to gain financial security and

independence, self-worth, sexual harassment and violence against women. The centre voices and addresses the concerns and challenges faced by women and guide them in decision-making and leading a self-sustaining and dignified life.



Director
Dr. M. Eyini
Associate Professor of Botany

Women's studies all around the world has been an instrument for social and academic development of women. The UGC, New Delhi through its initiative and support by way of policy guidelines, grants and support structures has helped in the establishment and strengthening of Women's studies in several Indian universities and colleges.

The Women's Studies Centre (WSC) Thiagarajar College was inaugurated on 17.10.2010 as an Initiative of Dr .Uma Kannan, Secretary of the college, who is involved in the upliftment of under privileged women by empowering them through motivational of programmes, training and workshops. The Centre has focused its activities on the empowerment of the girl students and women of the immediate society in the fields of entrepreneurship, health and environment. The scope of the centre is based on gender sensitization with an attempt to understand the role of women in all fields of human activity.

The centre aims to bring visibility to women's issues through teaching, interdisciplinary research, training, documentation and field action projects. The activities of the centre since October 2010 till March 2012 are reported in this first issue of the newsletter.

Inauguration of the Centre

The establishment of Women's Studies Centre in Thiagarajar College, Madurai was approved with the financial grant by the UGC, New Delhi during the XI plan. The centre was formally inaugurated on 17.10.2010 by Thiru Karumuttu T. Kannan, President, Thiagarajar College, Madurai. In his address he spoke on the poor representation by women in the administration of local bodies and stressed the need for women empowerment through education and counselling. The Staff members viewed a power point presentation on women achievers and women leaders. Chairperson of the centre, Dr. Uma Kannan highlighted the scope of the centre and its service to women students of the college and women in the nearby localities through various academics and outreach programmes.

Meetings

Advisory Committee meeting

The first meeting of the Advisory Committee of the centre was held on 12.03.2011. The UGC representatives H. K. Chauhan, Joint Director, Women's Studies Division, New Delhi, Prof. Suseela Kaushik, Member, Standing Committee, UGC, New Delhi. The External expert members, Dr. R. Sugantha, Lady Doak College, Madurai. Dr. N. Manimegalai, Director, Centre for Women Studies, Bharathidasan University, Thiruchirapalli, Dr. R. Saraswathi, Director, Women's Studies Centre, Madurai Kamarajar University and the Internal members attended the meeting and offered suggestions and mid path corrections for the successful growth of the centre.

Board of Studies meeting

The meeting of the Board of studies for framing of syllabi for the two short term certificate courses offered by the Women's Studies Centre was held on 23.04.2011. The external expert member,

Dr. Vasantha Esther Rani, Head, Department of Home Science and Nutrition, Fatima College, Madurai, the faculty members of the departments of Commerce, Physical Education and the faculty members in the Standing Committee of the centre framed the syllabi for the two certificate courses viz Herbal and Natural Cosmetics, Women's Health and fitness to be offered in the odd and even semesters respectively every year for the Women's students of the College.

Short term Academic Courses

The Centre has introduced two certificate courses viz.,

1. Herbal and Natural Cosmetics
2. Women's Health and fitness for the girl students of the college from the academic year 2011 – 2012.



Mrs. Visalakshi Kannan interacting with the students during the inauguration of Certificate Course on Herbal and Natural Cosmetics on 28th July, 2011

The inaugural function for the Certificate Course on Herbal and Natural Cosmetics was held on 28th July 2011. Dr. Uma Kannan, the Chairman of the Women's Studies Centre in her Presidential Address talked on the importance of learning skills required for self-employment and the need for acquiring skills for becoming an entrepreneur. Mrs. Visalakshi Kannan, Founder and CEO, Raman Technologies Inc. Washington

D.C., USA held an interactive session with the students on motivational skills, positive thinking and other tools necessary for becoming a successful entrepreneur. Dr. Aruna Devaraj, Associate Professor (Rtd.) and Herbal Scientist, Jayaraj Annapackiam College for Women, Theni gave a guest lecture on "Herbal Health Care". She familiarized the students on the different herbs used in skin, hair and health care by using real specimens during the presentation.

Post Graduate Academic Project on Women's Studies

The centre supports PG student projects on issues related to Women's Studies by providing studentship for the preparation of dissertations. Projects on feminism in literary writing, feministic writers, Women empowerment and socio-political status of women in Tamil Nadu were selected.

Training Programmes

Computer training programme



Dr. Uma Kannan, Chairman, Women' Studies Centre visiting the computer training programme on 15.11.10 .

The centre organized a week –long, free Computer training programme on Word Processing, Excel and Internet accessing, between 15th and 22nd November 2010, for girl students dropped out of school. The twenty five participants were taught the methods of using MS-Word, Office and Excel programme using computers. They were trained in using internet and in creating their

personal E-mail ID. Mrs. A. M. Hema, Associate Professor of Computer Science proposed the vote of thanks in the valedictory function.

Soft skills Based Training



Mrs.V. Maragathavalli giving a guest lecture on 9th March 2011

The centre organized a "Soft skills based training for rural women students" on 9th March 2011. Mrs. V. Maragathavalli, Gram Panchayat President, Vilachery, Madurai gave a guest lecture on "Gram Panchayat Administration- A Woman's Perspective". The training session - I was conducted by Mrs. Uma Subramanian, Aptitude test trainer, Madurai. She demonstrated various quantitative methods to solve aptitude related questions.



Ms. A. Maheshwari training the rural girl students in reasoning skills on 10th March 2011.

On the next day, Ms. A. Maheshwari, Lecturer in Business Administration, trained the rural women students in solving problems based on verbal, non-verbal reasoning. Dr.Pandiaraja, Associate Professor, Mathematics, explained the

principles behind logical reasoning and the methods of acquiring reasoning skills.

Mushroom Entrepreneur Training



Prof. Lakshmanan delivering the inaugural address on 23rd February 2012.

To become successful, an entrepreneur should learn the following three mantras: to act before others, to think differently and to learn to face challenges. These mantras were revealed to the students aspiring to become entrepreneurs, by Prof. R. Jayaraman, Member Secretary, Centre for Entrepreneurship Development, Madurai during the valedictory function of the training programme in Spawn and Mushroom production for Entrepreneurs organized by the centre. Earlier during the inaugural function, Prof. M. Lakshmanan, former Vice Chancellor, MKU, Madurai explained the need for becoming an entrepreneur in the highly populous India. He highlighted the multiple options available for a mushroom entrepreneur such as preparing and selling mushroom spawn, spore prints, spore syringes and value added products of mushrooms. Mrs. Vishalakshi Kannan, CEO, Raman Technologies Inc, Washington, USA held an interactive session with the student audience and she extolled the virtues to be developed by the aspiring entrepreneurs. She stressed the need for

bringing inside one's comfort zone, the things which are outside it, in order to be successful. The students learned about the avenues available for entrepreneurs and the nuances of mushroom growing and marketing from Mr. M. S. Sampath, Panel Chairman, Maditssia, Madurai and Mr. Natrayan, a mushroom grower. Dr. S. Kanagasabai (Students Affairs) proposed the vote of thanks.

Awareness Programmes

Science awareness programme



Mr. Francis Xavier giving a guest lecture on 11th February 2011.

A Programme on Creation of Science Awareness among Self Help Group women of Madurai district in association with Tamil Nadu State Council for Science and Technology (TNSCST), Chennai was organised by the centre on 11th February 2011 with 61 economically underprivileged women belonging to Vilangudi, Madurai. The participants had an interactive session with Mr. Francis Xavier, a noted environmental activist based at Madurai. He asked them to take a pledge to reduce the usage of carry bags made of thin polythene. They were shown visuals showing the impact of climate change on the environment like frequent floods, heating up of the atmosphere and subsequent crop failure resulting in famine and mass destruction.



Mr.V. Sankaranarayanan and Mrs. Kavitha demonstrating the preparation of paper bags and paper cups.

In the second session, Mr. V. Sankaranarayanan of Centre for Microenterprises, Gandhigram Trust, Gandhigram spoke on the eco friendly products which could be produced using cheap raw materials. Mrs. Kavitha, the group leader of a SHG working under the guidance of the Gandhigram centre demonstrated the production of paper cups and making of paper bags using waste news papers. Mrs. Eswari, the group leader of the Vilangudi SHG group demonstrated the separation of fibres from manju agave leaves and the making of simple brushes and dusters using the fibre. Dr. N.K.Ashadevi, Associate Professor of Zoology felicitated the participants.

“Our minds are like parachutes they only function when they are open” – Thomas Robert Dewar.

“If you don’t like something change it;
If you can’t change it, change the way you think about it” – Mary Engelbreit.

Cancer Awareness and Prevention



Dr. Krishnamar Raihnam giving a special lecture on cancer awareness on 3rd February 2012.

A programme on “Cancer Awareness and Prevention” was conducted on 03.02.2012 at Thiagarajar College, Madurai. Mrs. Visalakshi Kannan, Founder and CEO, Raman Technologies Inc. Washington D.C., USA introduced the chief guest Dr. Krishnakumar Rathnam, the Consultant Oncologist, Madurai to the audience. In a lively and lucid style, he explained the causes of various types of cancer, the methodology of treatment and on the preventive measures for the different types of cancer. He cautioned the women audience on the probability of getting breast cancer and cervical cancer. He stressed the need for undergoing periodical health check-ups and mammograms and look for the symptoms of these two types of cancer. The lecture was followed by an interactive session with the students raising questions related to their level of cancer awareness. The talk was well received by the students and the awareness programme was a success with more than 400 students participating in it. Dr. S. Kanagasabai, Dean (Students Affairs) proposed the vote of thanks.

Field action programme

Anaemia awareness camp



Haemoglobin content measurement for the participants of anaemia awareness programme on 30th January 2011.

Under the aegis of the centre, a camp for creating awareness on anaemia and its impact on the health of adolescent girls was organized on 30th January 2011 to benefit the adolescent girls of Vandiyur and Thevar nagar Child Development Centres, Madurai (West) block. Dr. P. Angayarkanni, Associate Professor, Govt. Madurai Medical College, Madurai delivered a lecture on anaemia to the adolescent girls explaining the symptoms, effect, treatment and diet for anaemia. Blood haemoglobin content was measured for the 110 adolescent girl participants.

The results on the haemoglobin content of the adolescent girls were analysed and a report was prepared on the health and nutrition status of the adolescent girls of Vandiyur Panchayat Union. Based on the results, suitable and sustainable remedial measures were taken.

“Strength lies in differences, not in Similarities”.

– Steven Covey

Outreach Programmes

Life Skills and Career Opportunities for Differently Abled Students



Dr. Uma Kannan delivering the Inaugural Address during Life skills training programme for the differently abled students on 27th September 2011.

The Centre conducted an One day Workshop on Life-Skills and Career opportunities for the differently-abled Students of various colleges in Madurai, on 27.09.2011. Dr. Uma Kannan, the Chairperson of the Centre listed the six types of skills namely Participation, Punctuality, Practice, Preparedness, Projection and Positive thinking that should be developed by the differently-abled students. Mr. M. Kanagaraj, the District Officer for the welfare of the differently-abled, elaborated on the various schemes of the government for them. The differently - abled students interacted with the resource persons raising several questions concerning different issues of the differently-abled, like the rules governing the usage of bus, the boundaries of the transport divisions covering Madurai and nearby places, the eligibility criteria for attending IAS coaching. They claimed that the lack of the

provision of wheelchairs or ramps in several public places make the differently-abled people more immobile. Mr. Nammazhwar, a Clinical Psychologist, emphasized that the differently-abled have all potential skills, and they should think about life positively. Mrs. Maida Thomas, Head, Department of French, Fatima College, emphasized that self confidence and a positive bent of mind will help them to succeed in life. Mrs. Manoranjitham, the District Coordinator for the IAS coaching for the differently-abled, Madurai Collectorate said despite difficulties the differently-abled can definitely achieve with consistent hard work and patience. In the post-lunch session, an interactive motivational programme was conducted by Mr. Bojaraj and Mr. Karthik, professional motivational trainers. Mrs. K. Jayalakshmi, Associate Professor Department of English, proposed a vote of thanks.

Radio programme

One episode of the radio programme on “*Vinney Viyakkum Penney*” (Science and Technology and Women Empowerment) under the *Vigyan Prasar – Prasar Bharathy – AIR – TNSF* project was produced by the Director of the centre Dr. M. Eyini, the project assistants, Ms. K. Narmatha, Ms. T. Kavitha and three Under Graduate girl students. The programme was broadcast by Madurai radio station on 13. 08.11.

Linkages

Google group AnKKeTa DEWSCAN

As a follow up action of the meeting of the Directors of UGC Women’s studies Centres at Hyderabad, the Director Dr. M. Eyini has formed an online Google Group AnKKeTa DEWSCAN –

(Andhra, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Deccan Women’s Studies Centres’ Academic Network) to help in collective inter Institutional operations. Currently twenty centres have become members of the group. This web portal is being managed by the Centre.

Excerpts from UGC, New Delhi website

(www.ugc.ac.in)

Decisions by Commission - July, 2011

The Commission has decided that any candidate with a Masters Degree in Humanities and Social Sciences and Legal Studies may be allowed to appear for NET conducted by UGC in the subject of Women’s Studies.

Decisions by Commission - August, 2011

The Commission further decided that the UGC should ensure that there is no break in funding of the Women’s Studies Centres at the end of any Plan Period so that the activities of the Centres do not come to a standstill due to paucity of funds. UGC should take up the matter with all the State Governments to take over the staff liability of the Centres so that continuity of the staff is ensured.

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Book Post