

Embassy of India Muscat

Embassy of India celebrates International Women's Day 2017



Embassy of India in Muscat celebrated the International Women's Day 2017 on 8 March, 2017. The Celebration was attended by over 300 Omani and Indian women. The Embassy's auditorium was full to its capacity. Her Highness Basma Al Sayeed was the Guest of Honour. Speaking on the occasion, she spoke about her recent visit to India and shared her perception of the status of Indian women as observed by her during her visit. She underlined the need for change in mind-set of both men and women to ensure equal rights and opportunities for women. She also honoured ten prominent Indian women achievers from within Indian community in Oman by presenting shawls to them as per Indian tradition.

2. For the first time, befitting the occasion, it was Mrs. Sushma Pandey, wife of India's Ambassador to Oman, and not Ambassador himself, who welcomed the invitees on behalf of the Embassy. In her welcome address, she highlighted the importance of International Women's Day and tremendous strides made in ensuring equal rights and opportunities for women throughout the world, including India. She underlined the challenges which we still confront in ending discrimination and bias against women, including entrenched social, religious and cultural traditions and prejudices. She highlighted immense contributions and achievements of the Indian women in India as well as in Oman.

3. Ms. Sushmita Gupta, a noted painter, author and orator made a presentation of status of women in India and the world through narrating stories and presenting inspiring examples of women who have left their marks in various fields in spite of the odds they faced as women. As part of the celebration, a documentary, entitled Indian Women: An

Indomitable Spirit, was screened, which presented success stories of five women in fields of engineering, science and technology, business, art and local governance.

4. The Constitution of India guarantees fundamental rights to both men and women. There has been tremendous changes in the status of women in India since independence. The Government of India is committed to promoting social and economic empowerment of women through its welfare policies and programmes, mainstreaming gender concerns, creating awareness about women's rights and providing institutional and legislative support. In order to fulfill this vision, the Government of India has recently launched a number of initiatives, including the **Beti Bachao Beti Padhao** (Save the Daughter, Teach the Daughter) Mission, and the **Sukanya Samridhi Scheme** (Girl Child Prosperity Scheme), which aims at encouraging people to save for education and marriage of girl child. Further, every year Government of India confers prestigious **Nari Shakti Puraskars** (Women Power Prizes) on eminent women and institutions in recognition of their service towards the cause of women empowerment.

5. A historic step in empowerment of women in India and enhancing participation of rural women in political process was the 73rd Amendment of the Constitution of India, under which one third of all seats in Panchayati Raj institutions (local self-government institutions) are reserved for women. Development of rural India will not be achieved without full participation of rural women in decision-making process and various developmental programmes, as the most important stake-holders. The political empowerment of rural women achieved through their participation in local self-governance has also impacted on their status and role in other spheres of social life and economic activities in rural India.
