

Voices of Life Lecture Series

Lecture #3

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Observation of

Single Working Women's Day

Date: August 4, 2025

Online Platform: Zoom

Organised by: Indian Association of Life Skills Education (IALSE)

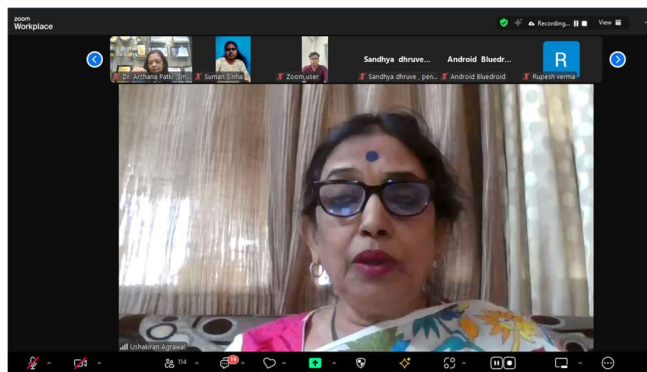
In collaboration with: Smt. Maniben M.P. Shah Women's College of Arts & Commerce (Autonomous), Mumbai; Chandulal Chandrakar Govt. Arts and Commerce College, Dhamdha, Dist-Durg (CG) and Govt. Naveen College, Pendrawan, Dist-Durg (CG)

EVENT REPORT

The Voices of Life Lecture Series is an initiative by the Indian Association of Life Skills Education (IALSE), focusing on equipping individuals with essential life skills and promoting holistic wellbeing. The term 'Voice of Life' embodies a beacon of hope, education and empowerment, aiming to amplify voices of resilience, purpose, and positive change. By undertaking this initiative, IALSE seeks to empower individuals to resist harmful temptations, make positive choices and create a culture of positivity and resilience.

On the occasion of Single Working Women's Day, the third lecture in the Voices of Life Lecture Series was organised. This day is significant as it highlights the struggles and strengths of women who live and work independently. The lecture focused on the topic of single working women, showcasing their leadership in society.

The session was anchored with finesse and aplomb by Prof. (Dr.) Ushakiran Agarwal, Principal, Chandulal Chandrakar Govt. Arts and Commerce College, Dhamdha, Dist-Durg (CG) and Govt. Naveen College, Pendrawan, Dist-Durg (CG) whose thoughtful moderation added warmth and clarity to the proceedings.



The session began with a warm welcome address by Dr. Archana Patki, Principal of Smt. MMP Shah Women's College (Autonomous). She spoke about the importance of recognizing single working women and how this day helps bring attention to their challenges and achievements. She introduced the dignitaries for the day.



Dr. Radhakrishnan Nair, President of IALSE, delivered the presidential address. He emphasized the significance of the day and the need to recognize the resilience of single working women. He shared insights on the estimated population of over 100 million single working women in India and highlighted how life skills such as critical thinking, emotional regulation, and problem-

solving can empower them to overcome societal challenges. He complimented the organising team for their efforts in organising the lecture series.

The keynote speaker, Dr. Sujata Khandekar, Founding Director of Community of Resource Organisations (CORO), Mumbai, started her talk by explaining what it means to be a single working woman. She said that this term includes women who are unmarried, divorced, widowed, separated, or even those who are married but living alone due to different reasons. She shared that many women live alone because of work, family situations, or personal choices. She highlighted the social stigma and prejudices that single women often encounter, noting how society tends to view them as incomplete or morally suspect. Everyday challenges - such as finding housing or participating in social functions - reflect deeper biases that restrict women's autonomy and dignity.

Emphasizing that single working women form a significant and diverse segment of society, Dr. Khandekar shared inspiring examples of women from CORO who, through training and collective support, transformed from hesitant participants into confident community leaders. These women, she said, actively engage in decision-making and lead social change within their communities.



She spoke about intersectionality, reminding the audience that many single working women belong to marginalized groups and thus face layered challenges. Yet, they continue to demonstrate remarkable resilience and leadership. Introducing the ideas of “power within” and “power with,” she explained that true empowerment comes from self-belief and solidarity. She underscored the importance of legal awareness, referencing protective laws such as the Domestic Violence Act and the legislation against workplace sexual harassment. However, she pointed out that knowing one's rights is only the first step - using them effectively is what leads to real change. Dr. Khandekar

concluded by affirming that single working women are strong, capable, and vital contributors to society. She called for a collective shift in social attitudes - to view these women not as vulnerable, but as role models of strength, independence, and leadership.

Following the lecture, Dr. Archana Patki opened the interactive session on by asking how single working women who are not part of any formal organization can be supported. In response, Dr. Sujata Khandekar emphasized the importance of creating safe, informal spaces where women can share their experiences freely. She highlighted that listening to their stories, respecting their choices, and spreading awareness about rights and laws are vital steps in empowering them to seek help when needed.

Another participant raised the question of how society's perception of single women can be changed. Dr. Khandekar observed that true change begins at the individual level - by challenging stereotypes and refraining from judging women based on their marital status. She underlined that single women are complete individuals, strong and capable, and that continued education and open conversations like this lecture play an essential role in transforming social mindsets.

Responding to a question on building leadership among women who have never spoken in public before, Dr. Khandekar noted that leadership is not limited to public speaking; it often begins with small, everyday acts such as standing up for oneself or helping others in the community. Training and support from organizations like CORO fosters confidence and helps women gradually grow into larger leadership roles with the right training and support.

The session ended with a vote of thanks by Dr. Archana Patki. She thanked Dr Nair for his Presidential address & for his guidance & support at all times. She said it was a privilege to work under his leadership & gain from his experience & expertise. She then expressed gratitude to Dr. Sujata Khandekar for her inspiring talk and for enlightening the audience on a topic of such great relevance. Dr. Patki thanked Dr. Gauri Hardikar & Ms. Rama Bhide for their organisational support and the audience for their participation. She said that the lecture helped everyone learn more about single working women and their role in society. She also appreciated the efforts of the three organizing colleges and IALSE for creating a space for such important discussions.



This lecture was a reminder that leadership comes in many forms and that single working women are strong, capable, and deserve respect and support.

Report prepared by:

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