



## ACTIVITIES FOR THE SESSION 2021-2022

### INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE GIRL CHILD- EMPOWERMENT

October 11, 2021, International Day of the Girl Child, is a reminder to all of us, how our progressive world still needs to take huge leaps, in terms of women empowerment. This year, marked a new beginning for many Indian women, as UPSC recently allowed women to take the exam. While the bigger picture is brighter now, it is not to be forgotten that many women remain victims of the oppressive social systems in some way or the other. Being students of Girls College, and young female cadets, the International Day of the Girl Child is a day that hits home. All of us are young women with a hope to support other women, so that they can rise above the norms. One of the ways to achieve the same is through activism.

This year, the NCC Unit of St. Bede's College under 7HP (I) Coy NCC, Shimla as well as the cadets from 1HP Naval Unit NCC, Bilaspur, collaborated with the Women Cell at St. Bede's College to organize a series of competitions to support the cause of International Day of the Girl Child. The theme was *Empowerment*. A poster-making competition, poetry writing as well as a cultural representation competitions were organized on the theme 'Empowerment', wherein many students showed enthusiastic participation.

In the Poster-Making competition, Aditi Sankhyan stood first, followed by Aakshi Dharma and Abhiramy Biju who stood second, and third respectively. For the Poetry Writing competition, Arushi Awasthi bagged the first position, while Tavishi Chauhan stood second, and Mahima Sharma came third. In the cultural activity, Suhani Singh came first followed by Srishti Mehta, who stood second, and Aditi Sankhyan came third.

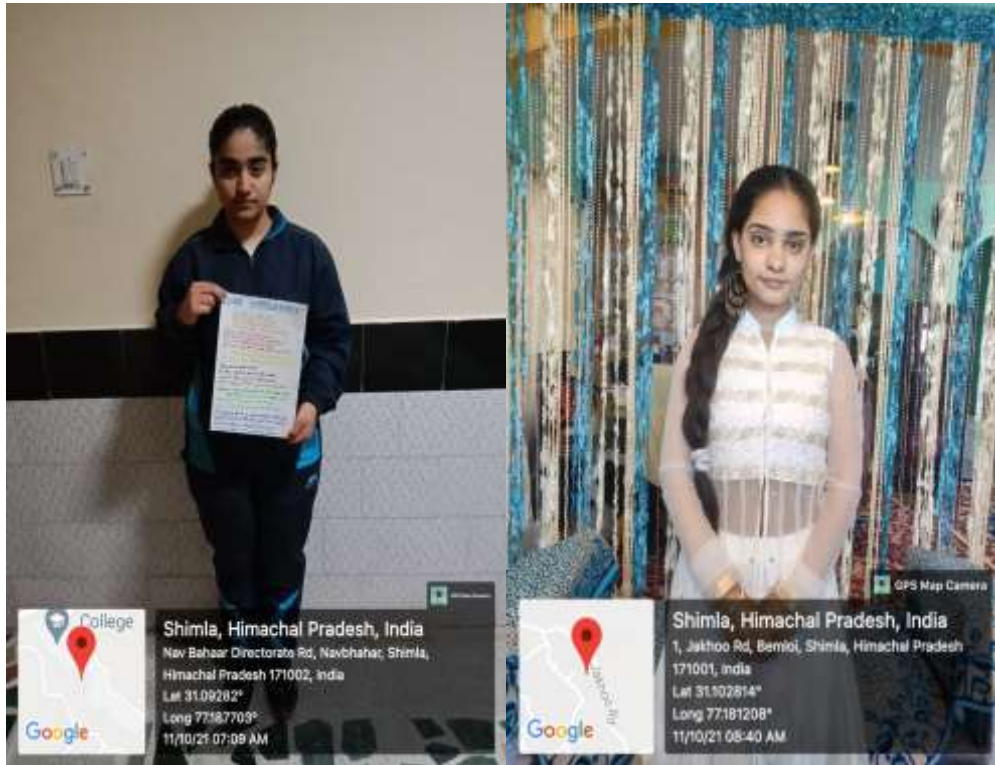
### Entries for the Poster Making Competition





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**Entries for Poetry Writing and Cultural Competition**



All of these activities rightly portrayed the meaning of being a woman in this world, and served as a measure to raise awareness regarding women empowerment. The International Day of the Girl Child, served as a reminder to all of us to work for greater causes, than ourselves until equality is achieved.





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## PANEL DISCUSSION WOMEN: THE PILLARS OF LIFE

The Women Cell of St. Bede's College, Shimla, organized an informative and engaging Panel Discussion on the topic *Women: The Pillars of Life* on November 23, 2021. Three eminent speakers were invited to enlighten the students on topics related to “Empowerment of Women, Laws Related to Rights of Women, and Feminism”. Dr. Daisy Thakur, Chairperson of H.P. State Commission for women, Mr. Navlesh Verma, a renowned advocate of High Court, Shimla and Dr. Priyanka Vaidya, Associate Professor, H.P.U were the guest speakers.



The event started with lighting the lamp by the Principal, Sister (Prof) Molly Abraham and the guest speakers followed by their felicitation. Dr. Vandana Thakur, delivered the key note expressing her views on feminism.



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Dr. Daisy Thakur, alumni of the college, felt honoured to be back at her alma mater, and was nostalgic. She explained, the working of the Commission in Shimla and other parts of the state. She emphasized on the importance of education, and how it is necessary to bring about a change. Sensitization on gender roles, feminism should begin at home, and at the kindergarten level in schools. She continued her speech saying financial independence is very important for women and they should have a say in matters related to their lives. She concluded by saying that, "We should build a society where there is no difference between men and women". During the panel discussion, a teacher of the college asked her, is there a possibility of inclusion of women studies at school level to which she replied positively.





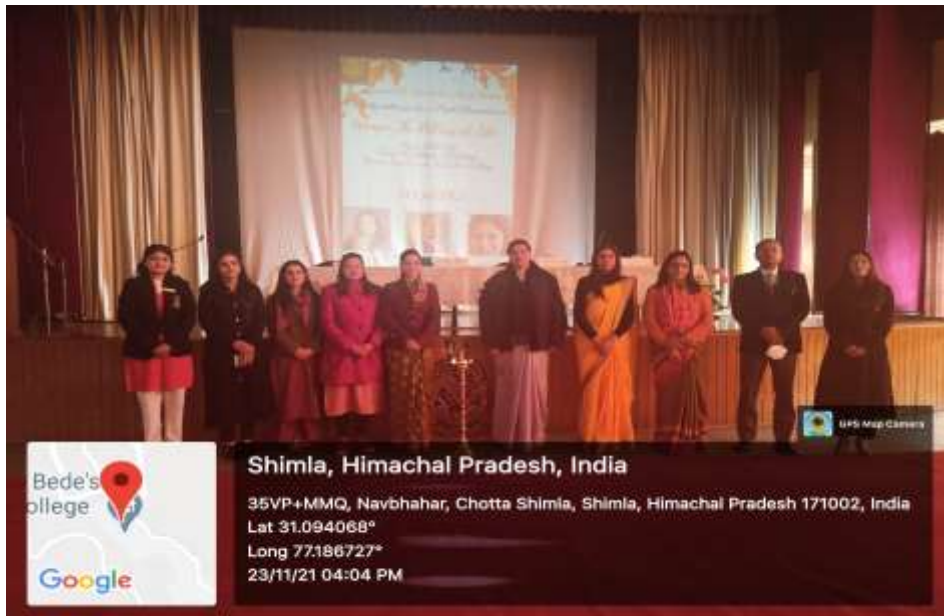
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Mr. Navlesh Verma was the second speaker in the panel. His speech centred on laws and rights of women. According to him, it is the duty of the state as well the central government to make laws which protect women. But in certain cases, the women who file complaints are sometimes pressurized by their families and friends to withdraw the cases. This is a sad reality of India, but the speaker has hope that by spreading awareness about their rights, the women will step forward, and demand justice. He feels that women laws are not enforced properly, because of the society's backward thinking, and that the society does not freely accept the concept of modern independent women. Lastly, he interacted with the girls, and answered their questions related to cybercrimes.



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The last speaker for the day was Dr. Priyanka Vaidya, who enlightened the girls about feminism in India. She talked about 'The Myth of Femininity', and how society expects women to act in a certain way. She highlighted how the main problems faced by women are different in all sections of the society in different parts of the world. She also narrated tales from ancient India to show examples of feminism. While addressing a query, Dr. Priyanka, shed light on why feminism has a negative connotation, how it is not about degrading men, but stands for equality, and that men can be feminists too.







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## **SHEROES**

The Women Cell of St. Bede's College, Shimla, organized Sheroes, an online event for the college students on December 20, 2021, comprising of various competitions - Painting, Poetry, and Essay Writing. The judges for the competitions were Dr Vandana Thakur, and Ms Snigdha Bhatt, from the Department of English, St. Bede's College, Shimla. The following topics were given to the students for different competitions.

1. Painting Competition- *Empowering Woman, Empowering Humanity*
2. Poetry Competition- *Break the Bias*
3. Essay Writing Competition- *Woman in Leadership Achieving an Equal Future.*





# **Woman in Leadership** **Achieving an Equal Future**

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***“No country can ever  
truly flourish if it stifles the  
potential of its women and  
deprives itself of the  
contributions of half of its  
citizens”***

***- Michelle Obama***





## Break the Bias!

The real stories are often untold, as the pages of history unfold. The lies, and heartbroken scenes, the pain and awful screams!

There are a hundred there are thousands, lying under the rug of meeting ends. They say I am weak and say this is how I should be. As long as I live, I should do as they please.

The second sex is my position nobody helps me fight this falsified conviction. Yes! I compromise, I leave everything aside. I am a woman, who is abused if I do not abide.

I refuse to live in disdain, with the spirit of motherhood, I will raise my head, with my willpower stronger than Snakewood. Because 'We live under the same sky' women are still underway, Oh why?

I cry for fairness, men, and women at par. Feminism is not biasness, not giving each other scar. Every gender is august, this critical thinking should prevail. Though broad-spectrum and humanity are still ill avail.

I talk to myself and say, "Oh Dear you are gracious and bold, hail to every human, kindness is your virtue." But then they take softness for weakness, be strong, remember no one has the right to hurt you.

I'll still break my silence and correct their sins, I am a creation of that holy kind, I'll keep walking until I win. 'Because we live under the same sky, gender equality should magnify.'

let us be the sun to every humankind, and not let the thoughts of inequality make us blind. After all, we are Humans, gentle and fine. Let's make the world a wonderful story where we call forth each other to shine.

By Shivangi Premi

The winners for the competitions were:

Painting Competition: 1<sup>st</sup> position: Ayushi Verma (BA English Hons- III)

Poetry Competition: 1<sup>st</sup> position: Shivangi Premi (BA Pass Course- II)

Essay Writing: 1<sup>st</sup> position: Palak Sharma (BA Pass Course- I)



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**MANZIL – DOORDARSHAN TALK**

February 11, is celebrated every year as the International Day of Women and Girls in Science. This day, recognizes the important role which women play in the field of science, and technology. Although women have made a progress by increasing their participation in higher education, they remain to be under-represented in the field of science, and technology. By making women involved in this field, the UN targets to achieve the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals of Gender Equality and Science.



To celebrate this occasion, on February 11, 2022, a team of three: two teachers and a student of St. Bede's College visited the Himachal Doordarshan Studio to host, a talk show titled *MANZIL - Employment Opportunities for Women in the Field of Science*. The host of the show was Dr. Vandana Thakur, Assistant Professor, from the department of English, and the guest speakers were, Dr. Sapna Sharma, Associate Professor, Department of Physics, and Ms. Archana Malik, student of BSc. Honours Biotechnology.





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<https://youtu.be/IO2tyK1w6Kw>

The conversation started with talks about Women's Day and the contribution of women, who are excelling in various fields and careers. They applauded and praised many Indian women achievers, naming a few of them. Dr. Sapna talked about the varied career paths one can take after pursuing Science in class 12. Some of the fields mentioned were bio-informatics, biophysics, pharmacy, basic science among various others. Further discussed topics included: appearance in scholarship exams, and entrance tests of various reputed institutions all over India. Dr. Sapna informed about fellowships for Post Graduation, and Ph D.

Archana, shared her fields of interest and talked about her experience as a student, who was interested in science from a very young age.



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Dr Sapna Sharma and Dr Vandana Thakur, discussed the achievements of various female scientists. Dr. Sapna, recommended a book titled *Leela's Daughters*, which talks about 100 Indian female scientists. They also mentioned various schemes provided by the government for females wishing to pursue a career in Science. The event ended with a message to all the girls interested in STEM, “the path might be difficult for us, but it is not impossible. All we need to do is to stay motivated”.





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## NATIONAL PARLIAMENT FOR WOMEN

HP State Commission for Women in association with National Commission for Women, organized a National Parliament for Women at Government Senior Secondary School, Portmore, Shimla on March 3, 2022, celebrating the upcoming *International Women's Day* on March 8. This event was a part of a nationwide celebration in the first 10 days of March, under the *75th Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav*. Accomplished women from the fields of politics, journalism, academics, judiciary, police, and administration became the bearers of a fruitful evening.



Ms Indu Bala Goswami, Hon'ble Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha) from Himachal Pradesh was the chief guest. Other important guests included, Mrs. Satya Kaundal, Mayor, Shimla, Mr. Shailender Chauhan, Deputy Mayor, Ms. Payal Vaidya, Ms. Vandana Yogi, Ms. Shashi Bala, Mr. Narendra Sood, Principal, Govt. Model Senior Secondary School, Portmore, and various counsellors. The guests were felicitated with Himachali caps and shawls. Ms. Indu, also launched the booklet of HP State Commission for Women. Dr. Daisy Thakur, Hon'ble Chairperson of HP State Commission for Women gave the welcome address, and introduced the need for a collective effort of society in the practical implementation of laws related to women. She expressed the importance of spreading awareness to bring about a change in the outlook of the masses, and necessitated a gender-sensitive society for a way forward.



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The first speaker of the event was Dr. Mamta Mokta, Chairperson of the Department of Public Administration, HPU who spoke about the *Changing role of Women in Present Economic and Business Scenarios* and *Evolving Dimensions of Gender Issues*. She celebrated, the power of women stating that they have asserted their place in a male-dominated world, however, she believed that despite the progress, inequality still prevails. In her opinion, the capabilities of women must be a resource to the country. She also emphasized the need for education as education brings confidence, and confidence brings empowerment.







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The second speaker, Ms. Archana Phull, a Senior Journalist, talked about the importance of education for a girl child, and her inclusive growth in society. She discussed, patriarchy whilst stating the reasons she believes are the root cause for the Indian patriarchal mindset (no education and early marriage of a girl child). She narrated the stories of women; she had come across who made choices to learn, and then to educate the less fortunate. She introduced to the audience the scant resources of education in remote parts of Himachal, female feticide, dowry, and domestic violence. She said, “Women’s Day reminds us to empower and support women, but it also reminds us not to pull anybody back”.



Ms Sakshi Verma (IPS) was the third speaker of the event. She discussed about Cyber Crime, and said, it is not bound by any geographical boundaries emphasizing the raised possibilities of becoming a victim. Social media is one of the fastest-growing networks, connecting people throughout the globe, nurturing the ‘Cyber World’ where one can easily fall prey to cybercrime (Cyber stalking, Picture morphing, Defamation, Bullying, and Trolling). Ms Sakshi communicates it to all women that if they are victimized they are not at fault, they have (everybody has) “the right to be social”, and so they must come forward, and lodge a complaint.

Ms Rupali Thakur, IAS, Chief Executive Officer of Himurja, Shimla, was the next speaker. She quoted the *Bhagavad Gita* अन्याय सहना अन्याय करने से ज्यादा बड़ा पाप है to describe the general women mentality who are subject abuse (especially by their close relations). She gloomily highlighted the world stats which graphs an increase in the number of domestic violence cases, during the pandemic.



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An advocate for the abused and wronged in the High Court of Himachal Pradesh, Ms Vandana Misra, dug up the etymology of the word woman - 'wife of man', underlining the societal notions since ages. Through her speech, she put into the frame the concept of sexual harassment (verbal or physical), and domestic violence (blood relations, marriage, adoption etc), and what one must do against the cozener. She highlighted, the duties of the employer along with the rights of the victimized.

The honorable chief guest, Ms Indu Goswami, addressed the gathering with references from mythology, and history asserting the influence, and power of women simultaneously time lining the events that lead to a patriarchal mindset. She narrated her own experiences, decisions, and how her choices shaped her life. She advised girls to be educated, and skilled, so that they can be independent, and can live life on their terms.

In the end, the stage opened for discussion and interaction with the audience where the panel answered the questions, asked by students concluding the event.



The National Parliament for Women evaluated to be a huge success as it was an updated birds-eye view on the problems, progressions, possibilities, insecurities, and position of women which awakened the auditorium to the road that must be travelled.





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### INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

March 8, celebrated as International Women's Day is a global day celebrating the social, economic, cultural, and political achievements of women. To commemorate this special occasion, the Women Cell of St. Bede's College, Shimla, organized an event in accordance with the theme for this year, as provided by UN Women: *Gender Equality Today for a Sustainable Tomorrow*, on March 8, 2022. The theme of IWD 2022, attempts to recognize the “contribution of women and girls around the world, who are leading the charge on climate change adaptation, mitigation, and response, to build a more sustainable future for all”.



Three eminent speakers had been invited to make the students aware on various topics that revolve in and around women: Dr. Monika Bhutunguru, S. P. Shimla, Dr. Puja Negi Rajta, Associate Professor, Department of Medical Physiology, IGMC, Shimla and Ms Vandana Misra, Advocate, High Court Shimla.

The event started with the welcome note by Nishtha Thakur, Vice President of Women Cell, and was followed by the lighting the lamp by our Principal, Sister (Prof) Molly Abraham, and the guest speakers. The guests were then felicitated by the principal. Angel Shan, a student of BA III year, compered the entire event.



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Dr. Monika Bhatungaru was the first speaker of the event, and began by asking the students a riddle. She talked about the need of "equality" in the society, which will lead to empowerment itself without women having to seek special rights. She raised the question of why a woman's identity needs to be defined by the relations she has to the males in her life. She made the gathering aware about 'Crime against Women' such as feticide, disguised child labor, kidnapping, domestic violence, and sexual assault. She also described the importance of the role of society in eliminating social menace, with the help of law and the police. She talked about the rights that women have been provided with in reference to police action. Another aspect of crime she mentioned was online transmission of sexual content, and financial crime. She ended her address by providing various helpline numbers that can be used in time of need.





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The event proceeded with the presentation of a poetry by Mr. Amitabh Bachchan from the movie *Pink* followed by a video compilation of the thoughts of some of the students of the college on gender equality. Ms Anuja Sharma, HOD, Department of English, recited a poem written by her sister titled *Sandook*.



The second speaker of the event was Dr. Puja Negi Rajta who introduced the audience to her idea about womanhood saying that she 'visualizes women as born achievers'. She defined



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good health, talked about anemia, and mental health disorders. She explained the causes, symptoms, and cures of anemia. She discussed some mental health problems like depression, PTSD, anxiety and others.

Rohita Gharu, a student of BA III year, recited a beautiful, and meaningful self-composed poem titled 'An Inconvenient Woman'.

The last speaker for the day was Advocate Vandana Misra, who explained, the origin of the International Women's Day. She pointed out the differences between the terms 'sex' and 'gender', and also did a fun activity in which the audience had to answer with the first thought that comes to mind after reading her questions. Through this, she wanted to reveal how some thoughts are engraved in the minds of people by the society, and how, some roles have been assigned to a particular sex. Her topic of discussion was *Gender Sensitization* and *Gender Bias*. She talked about how the two sexes can work together harmoniously and how Gender equality can be attained by breaking stereotypes attached to all three genders. She gave examples of successful women, who have achieved milestones in different fields, and continue to do so. She also made the gathering aware about some historic judgments made by the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India like the NDA judgment, the Sabrimala Shrine Entry, the Decriminalization of Adultery, the Nullification of Triple Talak, and POCSO. She ended by asking the students to not stick to the gender roles assigned by the society, and limit their talent and potential by working within the societal norms.







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A dance performance was prepared by some of the students depicting the growth, and achievements of women even after being subjugated by the society in the worst ways possible.



The event ended with the vote of thanks by Devyanshi Sharma, Secretary, Women Cell followed by a group photograph of the guests, the teachers, and students.