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INDIAN EXPRESS

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Safety workshop for women

By Express News Service - CHENNAI | Published: 29th July 2013 07:42 AM Last Updated: 29th July 2013 07:44 AM



Deputy Commissioner Lakshmi explained to the students how women were in the forefront centuries ago and how they were later confined to their homes. | EPS

“One cannot change the gender of a child after birth. Hence they should be taught gender equality.” These words from the Deputy Commissioner of Mylapore range Lakshmi set the tone for a workshop on women’s safety organised jointly by the Rotaract Club of the Women’s Christian College (WCC) and Survival Instincts, provider of safety programs.

A large number of students of the Women’s Christian College took part in the workshop held on their college premises on Saturday.

The Deputy Commissioner explained to the students how women were in the forefront centuries ago and how they were later confined to their homes. “Today, women come out and perform. But in every stage of their life, they face trouble —right from foeticide, infanticide and child abuse to dowry harassment,” she said. She advised students that they could avoid certain situations that would land them in trouble, by taking precautions like avoiding strangers on social networking sites, going out late in the night and sharing personal details at public places.

Earlier M Jayachandran, Judge, Madras High Court, pointed out that more than 50 per cent of the rape cases involved a person trusted or someone within the victim's family. He also quoted a UN report on women's population, contribution and recognition, and said that it was regrettable that women were not recognised for the work they did. This situation should change, he added.

Sharing his experience on how his organisation 'Survival Instincts' started, Anoop Madhavan, its founder, recalled that he always wanted his little daughter to be involved in sports like boxing, fencing and gymnastics like him. "I tell her 'You can do it'. But I realised that she is growing up hearing 'You can't do it'. That's when I decided I should do something," he said.

Later, during the workshop, the students were taught basic self-defence moves to protect themselves. "This is not any martial art. We teach the basic prevention techniques—deterrents, pre-emptive, disengage, counter attack and neutralise," Anoop Madhavan explained.

The workshop, organised by the Rotaract Club of WCC under their project Stree Suraksha 2013, is focusing on 'Prevention of Rape and Discrimination' this year. The project is reaching out to 1,800 school and college students with Survival Instincts, through the workshop. An awareness rally was also organised on the Marina Beach on Sunday and the funds raised through the campaign will be distributed to a survivor of a gender-based crime.