

MANUU Organises International Women's Day 2026 Symposium on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

The Department of Women Studies, Maulana Azad National Urdu University (MANUU), Hyderabad, organised a one-day symposium to commemorate International Women's Day 2026, in alignment with this year's global theme, "Rights, Justice and Action for All Women and Girls." The symposium served as an academic platform for meaningful deliberations on gender equality, women's empowerment, and the collective responsibility of society in creating a more just and inclusive social order.

A significant highlight of the event was the felicitation of distinguished women who have made exemplary contributions in their respective fields. The University honoured Prof. Ashraf Rafee, Ms. Sultana Nazir Hasan, Ms. Khalida Parveen, Ms. Uma Sudhir, Ms. Rubina, and Ms. Arshiya Hasan with appreciation awards in recognition of their outstanding achievements and services to society. Prof. Amina Tahseen, Department of Women Studies, introduced the awardees and highlighted their remarkable contributions.

The symposium featured eminent academicians and social thinkers as keynote speakers. Prof. Amina Kishwar emphasised that women's empowerment cannot be achieved merely through attractive slogans or symbolic celebrations. She asserted that genuine empowerment requires sustained efforts at the grassroots level and constructive partnership between women and men to build an equitable and progressive society.

Delivering his address, Prof. P. H. Mohammed, Dean, School of Arts and Social Sciences, highlighted the historical struggles, resilience, and achievements of women across diverse spheres of life. He underscored the importance of recognising women's contributions in shaping society and promoting inclusive development.

Presiding over the programme, the Vice-Chancellor of MANUU, Prof. Syed Ainul Hasan, stressed that the pursuit of gender equality demands a transformation not only in policies but also in the intellectual, ideological, and cultural foundations of society. He observed that sustainable social change can only be realised when prevailing mindsets and value systems are reformed. Referring to the theme of the symposium, he remarked that true "action" begins with self-awareness and self-realisation, asserting that understanding one's own identity is the first step towards meaningful social transformation.

Earlier, Dr. Shabana Kesar, Head of the Department of Women Studies, delivered the welcome address and outlined the objectives of the symposium, highlighting the department's continued commitment to promoting gender justice, academic research, and social awareness.

As part of the International Women's Day celebrations, the Department had earlier organised multilingual debate competitions in Urdu, English, and Hindi, encouraging students to engage critically with contemporary gender issues. In addition, consistent with the University's commitment to women's empowerment and community engagement, the Department of Women's Studies and the Centre for Women's Studies had organised a Women's Handicrafts Fair on the university campus during the previous month to promote the entrepreneurial skills of women artisans.

During the valedictory session, prizes were distributed to the winners of the debate competition, poster-making competition, and the Women's Handicrafts Fair. The programme concluded with a vote of thanks delivered by Dr. Tabrez Hussain, Faculty, Department of Women Studies, who also efficiently conducted the proceedings of the symposium.