



Panel Discussion on, " Fostering a safe and Inclusive Learning Environment	
<b>Date: 12-10-2023</b>	<b>Venue: Seminar Hall, RVIM, Bangalore.</b>
<b>Time: 3.30 pm</b>	<b>Resource Persons:</b> <b>Vasantha Vaikuntha, Sucheta Dikshit,</b> <b>Deepa Rafeeqe, Raja Lakshmi</b>
<b>No. of Participants: 73</b>	<b>Event Coordinators: Dr. Rashmi Shetty,</b> <b>Prof. Uma Sharma, Dr. Tamizharasi</b>
<p>RVIM organized an insightful panel discussion titled "<i>Fostering a Safe and Inclusive Learning Environment for Women and Students.</i>" This event aimed to address critical issues of safety, inclusivity, and empowerment in educational settings, with a particular focus on creating equitable opportunities and support systems for women and students from diverse backgrounds.</p> <p><b>Objectives</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. To identify barriers to safety and inclusion in academic environments.</li><li>2. To propose actionable strategies for promoting equality and inclusivity.</li><li>3. To raise awareness of the importance of gender-sensitive policies and support systems.</li></ol> <p><b>Key Highlights of the Discussion</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. <b>Opening Remarks</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ The event commenced with a welcome note and Introduction by Dr. Rashmi Shetty emphasizing the institute's commitment to fostering a supportive and inclusive learning culture.</li></ul></li><li>2. <b>Panel Members</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ <b>Raja Lakshmi, Founder, VShakti:</b> Expert in gender studies, discussed the importance of gender-sensitive pedagogy.</li><li>○ <b>Deepa Rafeeqe, Corporate Legal Trainer:</b> A legal advisor, elaborated on laws and policies ensuring student and women safety in educational institutions.</li><li>○ <b>Vasantha Vaikunth, Founder lifeandliving.org:</b> Social activist, shared real-life stories of challenges faced by women in academia and proposed solutions.</li><li>○ <b>Dr. Tamizharasi, Professor, RVIM:</b> An academician, highlighted the role of mentorship and networking in empowering women students.</li><li>○ <b>Sucheta Dixit, POSH Trainer:</b> Shared insights on creating awareness of harassment issues through training programs and stressed the importance of building trust in grievance redressal mechanisms. Highlighted how proactive measures can ensure safe spaces for students.</li><li>○ <b>Aradhana Hegde, Student, RVIM:</b> Brought attention to the real challenges faced by women students, such as fear of reporting issues and lack of representation in decision-making bodies. Suggested mentorship programs and regular open forums as solutions.</li></ul></li></ol>	



- **Tharun Madhav, Student, RVIM:** Advocated for the inclusion of male students in conversations about safety and equality. Emphasized the role of education in breaking stereotypes and promoting allyship among peers.

### 3. Themes Discussed

- **Creating a Safe Campus Environment:** Discussions revolved around implementing effective grievance redressal mechanisms, robust anti-harassment policies, and promoting awareness campaigns.
- **Promoting Inclusivity:** Panelists emphasized the need for inclusive curricula, gender-neutral language, and representation of diverse voices in academic settings.
- **Empowering Women Through Education:** The panel stressed the importance of scholarships, mentorship programs, and leadership opportunities tailored for women.
- **Role of Technology:** Addressed how digital tools can bridge gaps and create safer learning environments through anonymous reporting systems and online resources.

### 4. Student Engagement

- Students actively participated by posing thought-provoking questions and sharing their own experiences, enriching the dialogue.

### Outcomes and Recommendations

- **Policy Enhancements:** Suggestions were made to strengthen institutional policies on safety and inclusion.
- **Workshops and Training:** Calls for regular sensitization programs for faculty, staff, and students.
- **Support Systems:** Establishing peer support groups and counseling centers for women and marginalized students.
- **Accountability:** Developing mechanisms to monitor the implementation of inclusive practices and ensuring accountability.

### Conclusion

The panel discussion successfully highlighted the need for collective efforts in fostering a safe and inclusive learning environment. The event served as a platform to initiate meaningful dialogue, inspire actionable change, and reinforce the institute's dedication to equality and empowerment.

Moving forward, the institute plans to organize follow-up sessions and workshops to translate the recommendations into tangible initiatives, ensuring a brighter and safer future for all students.



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