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Leadership is ingrained in every woman: Int'l Women's Day meet at SDMIMD, Mysuru

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Mysuru: On March 8, 2021, SDMIMD organized a virtual panel discussion on "Women in Leadership". Dr Neetu Ganapathy, the moderator for the session, welcomed the gathering and emphasized how the pandemic had highlighted the central role that women play in society and the disproportionate burden that they bear. The Director, Dr N R Parasuraman, mentioned the efforts taken at SDMIMD to encourage girl students which includes making a conscious attempt to admit more girl students each year in addition to providing them with scholarships.

The panel comprised of four women leaders from diverse backgrounds: Dr B. R. Mamatha IAS, Joint Director General, ATI, Dr Arti Behl, Consultant Psychiatrist, Apollo BGS Hospitals, Savitha Mallappa, Director, rProcess Outsourcing Services Pvt. Ltd. and Dr Mousumi Sengupta, Professor, SDMIMD. The panel discussed various issues such as the panellist's leadership journey, the role their family played, the difference in leadership styles between men and women, the role emotional intelligence plays in decision making and the barriers to women in leadership.

During the discussion, Dr Mamatha stressed that leadership is a trait that is ingrained in every woman. She shared her experience of how women have been at the forefront of the COVID-19 response and recovery efforts. Dr Arti described how women are more expressive when compared to men and this can be their strength. Savitha indicated that a significant barrier to women in leadership is women having to leave the workforce for family-related reasons and their inability to return to work thereafter. Dr Mousumi explained the sticky floor concept and how it can impact women's progress.

The discussion was followed by a few questions to the panellists from the audience comprising mainly of students from SDMIMD. At the end of the session, all the panellists agreed that capability and not gender should be the deciding factor when choosing a person for a leadership role. They stated that gender equality is extremely important for a society to grow. They emphasized the need for an ecosystem to help women balance the multiple roles they play in life. Dr Neetu Ganapathy concluded the session by thanking the panellists and saying that both men and women should work shoulder to shoulder and collaborate to make the workplace a more equitable one.