

Woman Achievers- CitizenCredit Cooperative Bank Celebrates Woman's Day

In honour of International Women's Day, CitizenCredit Cooperative Bank hosted a program for all its women employees and members at KCA Hall, Bandra. 'Women Achievers', the theme of the program, neatly captured the various successes of the guests of honour of the evening: Mrs Priya Dutt, Ms Jemima Rodrigues, Mrs Merlin D'sa, Mrs Tanuja Gomes and CitizenCredit's very own Mrs Geeta Andrades and Mrs Priscilla Buthello.

The guests were welcomed into the hall and the program began with an overview of how far women have advanced today. Everyone joined in a prayer led by Ms Suman Fernandes. Each of the guests of honour were felicitated with a bouquet of flowers and a token of appreciation. The talks were interspersed with spot prizes for the audience and highlighted just how much these women had achieved in their chosen fields.

Mrs Priya Dutt, the multi-talented Chief Guest, began by stressing on the importance of equality in today's world. She spoke about how women are born with a set of conditions forced on them by society, and don't realize that they can do anything they set their minds to. Emphasizing that every woman had the confidence and courage to break through these conditions, Mrs Dutt encouraged everyone present to believe in themselves and strive for what they wanted. She congratulated all the women seated, stressing that every woman is an achiever in her own right.

The next guest of honour, Jemima Rodrigues, at just 17, is the youngest member of the Indian women's cricket team. Jemima's inspiring anecdote about following her father's advice to not give up, but work harder, showcased the inner strength and resilience that led to her success. While talking about her mother's role in her life, Jemima imparted an important reminder to her audience; that even the smallest of actions that no one seems to notice make a huge difference, that every woman is invaluable.

Mrs Geeta Andrades, the Managing Director and CEO of CitizenCredit Cooperative Bank, began her address with the many examples of Indian women who have broken boundaries in their chosen fields. She thanked all the women who were an influence in her life, describing the evening's program as a celebration to honour and respect all the members of the bank. Mrs Andrades proudly spoke of CitizenCredit's employees, of whom 70% are women, while 80% of the bank's branches are headed by women branch managers. Mrs Andrades also felicitated those employees who had gone above and beyond to serve CitizenCredit's members.

The next guest, Mrs Merlin D'sa, a multitasker who manages being a Principal, Municipal Corporator and plays an active role in Church activities, highlighted the qualities of spirituality, leadership, strength and perseverance through stories of her experiences. Mrs D'sa's gripping account of the obstacles she faced brought out her courage and humility and, above all, her willingness to serve God.

Mrs Tanuja Gomes, entrepreneur and Co-Founder of Furtados School of Music, began her address by bringing attention to a skill all women are familiar with- multitasking. Comparing managing a house to running a business, Mrs Gomes emphasized that managing money was an area where women could be much more

than what they currently are. She encouraged her audience to build their own support systems and rewrite the popular story where the princess needs a prince to rescue her, stressing that every princess could rescue herself.

The final speaker of the evening, Mrs Priscilla Buthello, the only other woman on CitizenCredit's Board of Directors, focused on the fact that every woman present was an achiever, a superwoman. Emphasizing that no woman is 'just' a housewife, Mrs Buthello underlined her belief that every woman has at least one good quality with which she could change the world.

The program concluded with a rousing game of housie and the vote of thanks by Ms Leonarda Fernandes, who reminded her audience that Woman's Day is not just about achievement, but also empowerment, that women needed to support each other and move forward, together.