Indians never had a mental block seeing women in apex roles: Kavitha

Our Bureau

Hyderabad: The Indian School of Business partnered with the British Deputy High Commission, Hyderabad to organise 2018 edition of the Young Thinkers’ Conference (YTC), here on Friday. YTC is the British High Commission’s flagship foreign and security policy conference. The theme of 2018 Hyderabad edition of YTC was ‘Women in Leadership – Benefits & Barriers’.

Kavitha Kalvakuntla, Member of Parliament, delivered the keynote address at the inaugural session. She talked about three important issues that women often face, which seek greater attention. Firstly, the geographical places and the workplaces must be made women-friendly; secondly, there is a need for gender-budgeting at the national level. It is initiated by the Government of Telangana in few important departments relating to health and education; thirdly, access to finance to women.

Talking about women leadership, the Nizamabadi MP emphasised that India as a nation never had a mental block to have women in top leadership. However, there is a long way to go to achieve women’s excellence, and this needs support from men and emancipation of women through education.

Kavitha urged the organisers of the conference to form a pressure group to get the bill of 35 per cent reservation for women, passed in the Parliament. “Such a disruptive intervention is required to achieve the required women empowerment”, she said.

Andrew Fleming, British Deputy High Commissioner, Hyderabad talked about the importance of entrepreneurial women and the need to support it. The UK government is envisaging 1.1 million women entrepreneurs, which will add 95 billion pounds, by 2025. However, referring to WEF reports, which showed a widening of the gender gap in education, health, economic and political empowerment, he emphasised the need for addressing the inequality that persists in spite of the clear advantage of having women in economic and political roles. “155 countries have at least one law, which discriminates women; women in 18 countries cannot get a job without permission from their husbands; 1 billion women workers still lack protection. Access to capital with appropriate skills and network are important to empower women”, he said.

Professor Milind Sohoni, Deputy Dean, Indian School of Business, in his welcome address talked about the need to increase diversity that will help in building businesses and the nation. He mentioned that ISB is ranked at No.26 in the world as far as women participation is concerned and it is something the School emphasises at various platforms. “We must have a larger agenda for women participation”, he said.

2018 YTC had five themes for discussion: Changing Stereotypes; STEAMing Ahead – breaking the glass ceiling; Her Story: Women who are changing India; Two to Tango – Mentor and Mentee Dialogues; and MeToo – Now What?

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Some of the prominent speakers at the sessions included: Swa Lakra, IPS, IGP (Women Safety), & In-Charge SH Tips & Bhanasa Centers, Government of Telangana; Mahesh Bhagwat, IPS, Rachalonda Police Commissioner, Government of Telangana; Dr R S Praveen Kumar, IPS, Secretary, Telangana Raisen & Education on Society, Government of Telangana; Ashwarya Boddapally, Lieutenant Commander, Indian Navy (Team member of INS ‘Tarini’); Jashimul Koperabuduru, Indian Mountaineer; Temsultal Imsong, Social Acivist and Malavath Poorna, Mountaineer; among many others.