

‘FLO Women Empowerment (WE) in Education’ initiative launched in New Delhi ***Kiran Bedi advocates promotion of early leadership in children***

NEW DELHI, April 24, 2015:- As there is a great need and opportunity to increase the employment of women as support staff in schools in India, **FICCI Ladies Organisation (FLO)** today launched an ambitious **‘FLO Women Empowerment (WE) in Education’** initiative in the presence of **Dr. Kiran Bedi, IPS.**

In the wake of recent unfortunate incidents with school going girls in various parts of the country, the initiative aims to have more women in schools in non-teaching jobs to help address the issue of safety of children. Also, for women coming into employment for the first time, schools would provide an excellent and secure environment to work in. The initiative is being spearheaded by FLO members running educational institutions to bring about this change and was being carried out by FLO pan-India in all its locations.

FLO is bringing together key stakeholders on the same platform and pledge their commitment to the initiative of encouraging women staff in schools. On a proactive and practical level, FLO has identified skill partners for some of the potential jobs in schools. Also, FLO was fortunate to have the owners of eminent schools as its key members who would participate in this initiative.

To make the initiative a pan-India movement, **Dr. Bedi** suggested that there is need to promote early leadership in young girls and boys so that they are able to decide early to enter a non-traditional job. She added that instead of lectures, inspirational books should be used to inspire children. Citing the example of her illustrated story book Kiran Bedi: 'Making of a Top Cop' for youth of 14-18 age group, she said that books on inspirational heroes and inspiring men and women must be shared with children to make them understand equality of gender.

In her presentation, **Ms. Archana Garodia Gupta, President, FLO,** said that research showed that in the private school network very few women were employed as non-teaching staff. Hence there was a great need and opportunity of women in jobs such as security guards, office attendants in administration, bus drivers and bus helpers, canteen staff & management. She added that FLO has invited the government, school owners, security agencies, bus and catering companies working with schools nationwide to pledge to participate actively in this initiative along with skill trainers for these jobs.

At the event, schools and other stakeholders took a pledge that for jobs opening up for the positions of security guards, administrative staff, bus drivers or bus conductors or even other jobs, they would give preference to women in employment. If the staff was being employed on contractual basis, they would urge their contractors to assign women for these positions.

Apart from two vehicle women drivers, **Ms. Vinita Bimbhet,** Senior Vice President, FLO; **Ms. Vasvi Bharatram,** Vice President, FLO; **Mr. Anoop Rawat,** Vice President Training, G4 Security; **Mr. Mahesh Rajoria,** Maruti Suzuki and **Dr. Shobha Vijender,** Municipal Councillor, NDMC, also shared their perspectives on the occasion.