

Confidence, perseverance, persistence and knowledge are the pillars of success – Sunita Williams, NASA Astronaut

New Delhi, February 25, 2016. It is possible to achieve anything if a person is qualified and determined with the will to make the right decisions. A person should aspire to try out new things and explore new opportunities. Confidence, perseverance, persistence and knowledge play a key role in achieving the most challenging feats, said **Capt. Sunita Williams, NASA Astronaut** at an interactive session on women empowerment on the theme '*Women's Empowerment through STEM (Science, technology, engineering and mathematics) Education*' organized by **FICCI Ladies Organisation (FLO)**.

Having witnessed the spectacular view of 16 sunrises and 16 sunsets in a day while on her mission to space, Capt. Williams was of the view that nothing is impossible. Considering herself as a girl next door, she said that opportunities are aplenty and the need was to grab and explore them. She added that it was important to be a good student as it opens doors of opportunities.

Sharing her views on education, Capt. Williams said that young girls should be encouraged to pursue STEM as it provides hosts of opportunities across the board. Studying STEM today offers a plethora of areas to learn, explore and understand. She added that when she had joined the US Naval Academy there were only 10% women in the school but over the years the number has increased significantly and now women occupy 20% seats at the academy. NASA was also looking out for young engineers and was keen on having young and feisty females in its midst.

Speaking about her experiences in a male dominated field, Capt. Williams said that she often found herself in a minority but it never deterred her or interfered with her goals. She knew her tasks well and was competent to take on any challenges. Capt. Williams added that every woman brings to the table team work and willingly takes care of the team as it's her innate nature.

While narrating many memorable incidents from her numerous space explorations, Capt. Williams said that these experiences have taught her to be spiritual and realize that it would be in the interest of the humanity to preserve earth. She added that there was a need for all to be a little more friendly and understanding towards others.

Ms. Archana Garodia Gupta, President, FLO, said that FLO was creating entrepreneurial motivation amongst women by providing them with training, skill development with employer tie ups, and encouraging women to take up more non-traditional jobs. She added that the interactive session with Capt. Williams would encourage women to take up STEM education.

The vote of thanks was delivered by **Ms. Vinita Bimbhet, President Elect, FLO**.

FICCI MEDIA DIVISION