



GOOD SHEPHERD CONVENT, SALEM

Voice for the Marginalized

International Women's Day Report

2026



GOOD SHEPHERD CONVENT
Nochipatti, Ayothiyapattinam,
Salem - 636 103

“The Good Shepherd Mission stands for compassion, justice, and dignity, walking alongside the marginalized to transform lives with hope.”

I ♥ Good Shepherd



About the Event

International Women's Day was observed and celebrated with great enthusiasm and active participation on 8th March 2026 at the campus of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd, Notchipatty, in Salem. The event was organised by the Sisters of the Good Shepherd together with their Partners-in-Mission, bringing together more than 250 women from nearby villages, staff members, and community representatives to reflect on the dignity, rights, and empowerment of women. Keeping in mind the theme of International Women's Day 2026, "Rights. Justice. Action. For ALL Women and Girls," the celebration focused on promoting awareness about the rights, dignity, and empowerment of women. The speakers highlighted the need to move beyond promises toward concrete actions that ensure equality, safety, and justice for every woman and girl. Special emphasis was given to including marginalised women and girls so that true empowerment reaches every section of society.

25 Years



Welcoming the Guests

The program began with the arrival and reception of the distinguished guests. The Chief Guest for the occasion was K. Ananthan, Senior Civil Judge of the Commercial Court, Salem. The program was also honoured by the presence of Nallathambi, Government School Tamil Teacher from Sukkampatty, who served as the judge for the debate session. The celebration formally commenced with a welcome address by Mrs. Sivaranjini, who warmly greeted the gathering and expressed her joy at seeing women, youth, and community members come together to celebrate the spirit of womanhood. She highlighted the vital role women play in families and society and thanked the Sisters of the Good Shepherd and their Partners-in-Mission for organising a meaningful program that creates awareness about women's dignity, rights, and opportunities.



Chief Guest Address

The Chief Guest, K. Ananthan, Senior Civil Judge of the Commercial Court, Salem, delivered an inspiring keynote address emphasizing the protection and dignity of women throughout their life cycle. He explained that in India, the legal system safeguards women from the womb to old age. Even before birth, the law protects the life of the girl child by prohibiting sex-selective abortion and female foeticide, ensuring that every girl child has the right to be born and to live with dignity. He reminded the gathering that these legal protections reflect the values of justice, equality, and respect enshrined in the Constitution of India.

Continuing his address, he explained that once a girl reaches the age of five, the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act 2009 ensures her right to free and compulsory education. He further noted that several laws protect girls and women from abuse, violence, trafficking, and exploitation. The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act 2006 safeguards girls from early marriage, allowing them to pursue education and personal growth. As women enter adulthood, they are guaranteed equal property and inheritance rights under the Hindu Succession Act 1956, ensuring financial security and independence. Women also have the right to marry with their free consent, the right to seek divorce if a marriage becomes unjust or harmful, and the right to protection from abuse and violence. He concluded by emphasising that in later life, laws also ensure that elderly women can live with dignity, care, and security, reminding the audience that legal protections must be supported by respect and responsibility within families and communities.

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International Women's Day

Theme: "Rights. Justice. Action. For All Women and Girls"



Women and Education

Ms.V. M. Musfika Rahima Thansim, a student from Aleema (Hadhiya) from an Arabic Women's College, delivered an insightful and motivating talk emphasising the vital importance of education for women. She reflected on how, in earlier times, many women faced discrimination, ill-treatment, and denial of their basic rights within society. Due to the lack of education and social awareness, women were often confined to limited roles and were unable to raise their voices against injustice.

She further explained that with the spread of education and increasing social awareness, positive changes are gradually transforming the lives of women. Today, many women are gaining confidence, becoming more independent, and courageously speaking out against injustice and inequality. She encouraged women to recognize education as a powerful tool for empowerment, dignity, and personal growth, urging them to pursue learning and awareness so that they can actively contribute to building a just, equal, and progressive society.

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International Women's Day

“Rights. Justice. Action. For All.”

The Unrecognised Work of Women

In his remarks, Mr. Nallathambi, a renowned School Teacher in Ayothiyapattinam Block, highlighted the importance of women's education and drew attention to the continuous and often unrecognised work performed by women within families and society. He explained that women play multiple roles as caregivers, homemakers, educators of children, and contributors to the economic and social well-being of the household. Despite their tireless efforts and sacrifices, much of this work remains invisible and unacknowledged.

To illustrate his point, he referred to insights from classical Thirukkural, where the dignity and contribution of women in family life are highly valued. Tamil literature recognizes the woman as the pillar of the household, whose wisdom, commitment, and virtue sustain the harmony and progress of the family. Through this reflection, he encouraged the audience to recognise, respect, and appreciate the invaluable contributions of women and to ensure that their efforts receive the dignity and recognition they truly deserve.



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Theme : "Rig Justice. Act



Inspiring Women Forward

Mr. Sivanesan Seerangan, CEO of SIJA Chem Industries, Salem, extended his heartfelt greetings and appreciation to all women on the occasion of International Women's Day 2026. In his inspiring address, he acknowledged the strength, resilience, and invaluable contributions of women in society and encouraged them to continue striving for greater heights in life.

He motivated women to build confidence, explore entrepreneurship, and actively participate in business and economic activities so that they may achieve financial independence. Emphasising the importance of self-reliance, he urged women to believe in their abilities, seize opportunities, and grow as strong leaders who contribute to the progress of their families and society.



Orientation on Women & Child Rights

Participants for the International Women's Day celebration from Ayothiyapattinam Block were mobilized and brought to the venue by buses in several batches. As the participants arrived group after group, the staff of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd, Good Shepherd Convent, Notchipatty, took the opportunity to organise orientation sessions on the rights of women and children.

During these sessions, the staff explained various laws and legal protections available in India for safeguarding the rights and dignity of women and children. Specially prepared billboards and visual materials on the theme of women's and children's rights were used to make the sessions more interactive and easier to understand. Through these illustrations, the participants were introduced to the different legal mechanisms and support systems that exist to protect them from discrimination, violence, and injustice, thereby strengthening their awareness and confidence to claim their rights.



Debate on the Contribution of Women and Men

The celebration also included a thought-provoking debate on the theme: “Who contributes more to the empowerment of women – Men or Women?” The participants presented different viewpoints and highlighted the shared roles and responsibilities of both men and women in building a just and equal society. The debate created a lively atmosphere of discussion, encouraging participants to reflect on how mutual understanding and support within families and communities can strengthen the empowerment of women.

The debate was judged by Nallathambi, who appreciated the participants for their confidence, thoughtful arguments, and clarity of ideas. In his concluding remarks, he emphasised that both men and women play essential roles in the empowerment process, and that a family becomes strong and harmonious only when there is cooperation, respect, and shared responsibility between them. He concluded by stating that the progress of women and the well-being of the family and society depend on the mutual participation and partnership of both women and men.



Street Play on Women's Empowerment

The staff of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd presented a powerful street play highlighting the rights, dignity, and opportunities necessary for women's empowerment. The play conveyed the message that women are in no way inferior and that, when provided with equal opportunities in education, employment, and social participation, they are capable of achieving remarkable progress.

Through meaningful dialogue and expressive performance, the play emphasized that the development and empowerment of women are not acts of charity but fundamental rights. It strongly echoed the spirit of the International Women's Day theme, calling on society to ensure justice, equality, and opportunities for every woman so that they may grow, lead, and contribute fully to the progress of families and communities.

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International Women's Day

Theme : "Respect. Justice. Action. For All Women"



Dancing Women's Achievements

The cultural dimension of the celebration added joy and energy to the event. Women from the nearby villages presented vibrant traditional dances, celebrating the strength and unity of women. The staff members also performed a street play highlighting the important role of women in the empowerment of families and communities. The play effectively conveyed the message that women's participation and leadership are essential for social progress. Another engaging session focused on discussions about the roles and responsibilities of women and men in promoting gender equality, encouraging participants to reflect on shared responsibilities in family and community life.



Oath-Taking Session

In keeping with the spirit of International Women's Day 2026, the participants took part in a solemn oath-taking session. During this session, they pledged to stand for the rights, dignity, and justice of all women and girl children in their daily lives and communities. They also affirmed that they would respect and protect the freedom and dignity of women, and would raise their voices whenever injustice, discrimination, or violence against women and girls occurs. Through this collective pledge, the participants expressed their commitment to contribute towards building a society where women and girls can live with equality, safety, and respect.

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International Women's Day

Justice. Act. For Women and Girls



Vote of Thanks

The program concluded with a vote of thanks by Mrs. Priyanka of the Inclusive Community Development Services (ICDS Project), an initiative of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd in Salem. She expressed her sincere gratitude to the Chief Guest, Mr. K. Ananthan, for his enlightening address on women's legal rights and protection, and to Nallathambi for guiding and judging the debate session and sharing valuable insights on the role of women in family and society. She also thanked V. M. Musfika Rahima Thansim for her inspiring message on the importance of women's education and empowerment.

Mrs. Priyanka further appreciated the Sisters of the Good Shepherd, their Partners-in-Mission, staff members, and the more than 250 women participants from nearby villages whose active involvement through discussions, debate, cultural programs, and street play made the celebration meaningful. In her concluding remarks, she recalled the spirit of Mary Euphrasia Pelletier, emphasizing compassion, dignity, and empowerment, and encouraged everyone to continue working together to promote justice, equality, and dignity for every woman and girl.

The celebration also fostered a strong sense of community through a communitarian lunch, where all participants gathered together in a spirit of fellowship, equality, and mutual respect.



“Respect women, respect humanity.”

“Inspired by the Good Shepherd mission, women become voices of hope and transformation.”