

## **Importance of scientific curiosity underlined at National Science Day celebrations at SCTIMST**

National Science Day 2020 was celebrated at the 'Natakashala' hall of the Biomedical Technology (BMT) Wing, Sree Chitra Thirunal Institute of Medical Science and Technology (SCTIMST), an Institute of National Importance under the Department of Science and Technology, Govt. of India, Poojappura campus, Trivandrum.

About 85 students and three faculty members from NSS College for Women, Neeramankara, Thiruvananthapuram attended the program. The theme of this year's National Science Day celebration was 'Women in Science.'

In his welcome address, Dr. Santhosh Kumar B., Registrar, SCTIMST, stressed on the importance of scientific curiosity while doing science. In his motivating speech, he encouraged students to pursue Ph.D. programs and seek answers to interesting scientific questions.

Dr. Ruby John Anto, Scientist G, Rajiv Gandhi Centre for Biotechnology, Poojapura, Trivandrum was, the Chief Guest and delivered the Science day message. She spoke about the challenges she faced as a woman while pursuing a career in Science. She stressed the need for strong family support and courage and passion for doing science. She presented anti-cancer compounds derived from natural resources such as plants, and their effectiveness in treating cancer in animal models.

Felicitations were given by Dr. Harikrishna Varma, Head BMT Wing, and Dr. ShankaraSarma, Dean, SCTIMST. Dr. Varma recalled the discovery of the superconductivity of the Lanthanum Barium Copper oxide complex that won the Nobel Prize for Physics in 1987. Dr. Sarma highlighted the low percentage (~15%) of women in key decision-making legislative assemblies or Parliament in India. The percentage of women active in Scientific Research and Development is also low (~15%), and he stressed the need to bridge this gap for parity in social development.

Dr. Roy Joseph, Scientist G, and Associate Dean (Ph.D. program) offered the vote of thanks for the inspirational speech by Dr. Ruby John Anto and hoped that more women should pursue a career in science.

Dr. Manoj Komath, Scientist G and Head of the Department of Biomaterial Science and Technology, BMT Wing, delivered a talk that took the audience through the history of the Royal family of Travancore and the foundation of SCTIMST. He told inspirational stories and challenges involved in the development of SCTIMST flagship products, namely, artificial human heart valve and blood storage bags. He briefed on the Technical Research Committee (TRC) Projects and gave a glimpse of the future programs of the Institute.

Science day quiz program was conducted by Dr. Renjith S, Scientist B, Central Analytical Facility, BMT Wing. It was an enlightening session remembering the contributions of pioneering women scientists and Nobel laureates. Winners of the Quiz competition were gifted with chocolates.

A Science Magic show was also performed by Dr. Gijo Raj, Scientist C, Division of Polymeric Medical Devices, BMT Wing. He demonstrated the working of several scientific principles using improvised single-use plastics. He explained the Bernoulli's principle, the principle of flight, magnetism, Newtons Laws of motion, the center of gravity, persistence of vision, periscope, kaleidoscope, propagation of sound waves, all in a fun way to students.

