

WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP CONCLAVE 2023

MARCH 10, 2023, Bengaluru

THEME

Empowering Women Leaders towards Resurgence and Business Opportunities to meet Sustainable Development Goals

IOD Foundation & the Institute of Directors, India (IOD), in association with the Women's Indian Chamber of Commerce & Industry (WICCI) & The Club G100, organised the **Women's Leadership Conclave 2023** on the Theme, '**Empowering Women Leaders towards Resurgence & Business Opportunities to meet Sustainable Development Goals**'. The venue of the conference was Hotel Lalit Ashok, Bengaluru. Leading voices from the business and academic communities attended the event. It addressed the role of women in business and society while also focusing on celebrating the **International Year of Millets 2023**.

INAUGURAL SESSION

The Conclave was inaugurated with the traditional lighting of the lamp by select guests. The '**Welcome Address**' was delivered by

Brigadier Rajeev Kapoor (Retd.), Regional Directors, Institute of Directors, Bengaluru Region. He extended a warm welcome to all dignitaries, speakers, panellists, and valuable partners participating in the event. He explained the purpose of the conference, and mentioned that the Millets Export Promotion Programme against the backdrop of the proposal of India that was supported by 72 countries which lead to the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) declaring 2023 as the International Year of Millets (IYoM) thereby creating value generation and promotion of sustainable products in food choices. He further highlighted that women's economic empowerment is a prerequisite for development which will facilitate building bridges and connections to build their businesses, farms and enterprises successfully thereby improving their working conditions economically.



Justice M. N. Venkatachaliah
former Chief Justice of India;
Chairperson, Institute of Directors



Ms. Maharaja Kumari Kamakshi Devi Wadiyar from the Mysore Royal family at the '**Lighting of the Lamp**' ceremony; also seen **Dr. Khadar Valli** (left)



Dr. Harbeen Arora Rai, Founder, The Club G100 & Women's Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (WICCI) delivering the '**Inaugural Address**'



Dr. Jayaprakash Narayan
Managing Trustee
World Ayurveda Foundation
delivering the 'Special Address'



Dr. Khadar Valli
Independent Scientist &
Padma Shri Recipient, known as the
'Millet Man of India' delivering the
'Keynote Address'



Dr. Khadar Valli, Padma Shri Recipient, also known as the
'Millet Man of India' felicitated by **Mr. Arun Balakrishnan**
also seen **Dr. Jayaprakash Narayan** (centre)

This was followed by the '**Chief Guest Address**' delivered by:

Justice M. N. Venkatachaliah

former Chief Justice of India &
Chairperson, Institute of Directors, India

Justice Venkatachaliah, in his virtual address, welcomed the guests and congratulated Padma Shri recipient, **Dr. Khadar Valli** for his support and contribution to the millet revolution. He said that 2023 had been proclaimed the International Year of Millets (IYM 2023) by the United Nations General Assembly. India is the world's biggest millet producer, and more needs to be done to promote millets in India. Also, there is a need for the food industry to improve the taste of its ready-to-eat millet products so that they can be used in child nutrition programmes.

This was followed by the '**Inaugural Address**' delivered by:

Ms. Harbeen Arora Rai

Founder, The Club G100 &
Women's Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (WICCI)

Ms. Rai spoke about women's empowerment. She emphasised the importance of collaboration for promoting gender equality and women empowerment. She also said that millets have been a staple food of the Indian diet for centuries and are now being rediscovered as a nutritious and sustainable food source. She discussed the significance of millets, which she said is an affordable and nutritious option. She said that using millets as an integral part of the Indian diet can help in eliminating hunger and also transform agri-food systems. She expressed her views on the importance of '*Bioayurveda*' as well.

This was followed by the '**Special Address**' delivered by:

1. Ms. Maharaja Kumari Kamakshi Devi Wadiyar from the Mysore Royal family

2. Dr. Jayaprakash Narayan

Managing Trustee
World Ayurveda Foundation

Ms. Wadiyar spoke about the importance of mothers in promoting nutritious food and said that a mother is the first teacher to her children. With regards to millets, she said that India is the 'bed of millets' in the world. She outlined the historical and traditional connection of millets with the Indian diet.

Dr. Narayan spoke about the numerous ayurvedic benefits of millets. He highlighted that millet is a food having superior nutritional values and is rich in calcium, iron, and fibres that help in fortifying essential nutrients for good health & tackle malnutrition. He opined that producing millets can also be very lucrative and there is a strong potential to acquire millet-based products falling under the category of Ready to Eat (RTE)/ Ready to Serve (RTS).

This was followed by the '**Keynote Address**' delivered by:

Dr. Khadar Valli

Independent Scientist & Padma Shri Recipient
known as the 'Millet Man of India'

Dr. Valli spoke about his work on reviving traditional millet consumption, cooking and cultivation practices. He described a few varieties of millets and said there are around 6000 varieties worldwide. Millet grass is '*Svayambhu*', i.e. self-born. It can grow independently and is fully sustainable, with almost 300 types that humans can eat. He added that food has been corporatised after the white and green revolution, and we have lost our diversified food habits. He also mentioned the benefits of consuming millets and how it helps to create excellent and

balanced health. He added that it is necessary to transform the kitchen into millet-based foods. He suggested that value chain management of millets products such as sweets, cookies, flake, flour, noodles, etc. can be incorporated in the Mid-Day Meal/Anganwadi/Self Help Group (SHGs) at the districts and village levels. He added that millet may become 'smart food for smart people'. Dr. Valli was presented with a "Certificate of Appreciation" for his role in promoting the use of millets from the World Book of Records – London.

PANEL DISCUSSION – I

Women Leadership - Activating a Collective Vision: Inspiring & Engaging Women in Business

The theme of the Panel Discussion was introduced by **Mr. R. G. Rajan**, Zonal Director of the Institute of Directors, former Chairman and Managing Director of RCF Limited & former Chairman of SCOPE.

The 'Opening Address' was delivered by:

Mr. C. Vasudevappa

former Vice Chancellor

National Institute of Food Technology Entrepreneurship and Management (NIFTEM)

Mr. Vasudevappa spoke about India's agricultural revolution and how it increased life expectancy and fulfilled nutritional requirements. With regards to women, he said that women in business have greater management skills. He said that gender diversity is a cross cutting theme and plays an instrumental role in fulfilling Sustainable Development Goals.

The Panel comprised **Mr. G. K. Suresh**, former Vice President of New Product Development, ITC Limited, **Mr. Baranidharan Pacha**, CCO, Chef's Imprint, **Ms. Jyothi V. K.**, General Counsel & Vice President, Aditya Birla Fashion & Retail Limited and, **Mr. Sundharesan Jayamoorthi**, Governance, Compliance and Sustainability Advisor, as the Moderator.

The distinguished panellists shared insightful opinions about legal and compliance risks in business, the importance of mental and physical health and knowing the right way to market products to expand the business. **Mr. Suresh** spoke about scaling up businesses and how women must participate, in all domains including the sales and marketing domains. **Mr. Pacha** said that women always work with inclusivity and are very intuitive, which puts them ahead of men. Women usually adopt innovative approaches. **Ms. Jyothi** focused on legal risks and said that it is not just compliance but the knowledge of laws relevant to your business. Intellectual property management is essential to keep track of your business. **Mr. Jayamoorthi** spoke about inspiring women in the business world and how women add value to any business with their high emotional intelligence and superior communication skills.

PANEL DISCUSSION – II

Opportunity & Challenges in Harnessing the Potentials of the Millet Industry

The theme of the Panel Discussion was introduced by **Mr. R. G. Rajan**, Zonal Director of the Institute of Directors, former Chairman of RCF Limited & former Chairman of SCOPE.



Mr. Chindi Vasudevappa
former Vice Chancellor, National Institute of Food Technology Entrepreneurship and Management (NIFTEM) delivering the 'Opening Address' of Panel Discussion – I



Distinguished Guests of Panel – I
(L to R) **Mr. Baranidharan Pacha**, **Ms. Jyothi V. K.**, **Mr. Sundharesan Jayamoorthi**, **Dr. Chindi Vasudevappa**, and **Mr. G. K. Suresh**



Prof. Raghunath S.
Chairman
Academy of International Business (AIB) –
South Asia Chapter delivering the
'Opening Address' of Panel Discussion – II



Ms. Shikha Sharma (extreme left), Director, Kanti Sweets Private Limited India
Country Chair – Food Innovation, The Club G100
along with **Kanti Group Senior Management Executives**



Distinguished Guests of Panel – II
(L to R) **Ms. Deepa Madhusudan Patil**, **Ms. Jayanthi Ramanan**, **Dr. Rajashree Krishnaswamy**, **Ms. Selvalakshmi K. M.** and **Ms. Ruchika Bhuwarka**

The 'Opening Address' was delivered by:

Prof. Raghunath S.

Chairman

Academy of International Business (AIB) – South Asia Chapter

Prof. Raghunath while discussing millets and their market, spoke about supply and demand and said that we need to make more culinary delights and innovate with the taste. He added that millets would change the game of grains in the world.

The panel comprised **Ms. Jayanthi Ramanan**, Mentor, Sewa International Cleveland Chapter, **Ms. Selvalakshmi K. M.**, Founder, Farmz to Familiez, **Ms. Deepa Madhusudan Patil**, Farmer, Dhruvdaanya Millet Farming, **Ms. Ruchika Bhuwarka**, Health and Nutrition Enthusiast, Founder of MilletAmma, and **Dr. Rajashree Krishnaswamy**, Founder & Chief Executive Officer, Catalyze Centre for Learning, as the Moderator.

All the esteemed speakers articulated wonderfully the challenges faced in their journeys while acknowledging the current success of their businesses. **Ms. Ramanan** shared her journey of using and growing millets. She said it is one of the

most accessible and sustainable growing grains. She added that the millet market is only 7%, and there is a need to promote millets as a nutritional food. **Ms. Selvalakshmi** said that women entrepreneurs are making business revolutions today. She added that the millet market has enormous potential. **Ms. Patil** spoke about her journey as a farmer, leaving her corporate job to look after her family's farmland & founding 'Dhruvadhanya', an agro farm in 2019. **Ms. Bhuwarka** said that millets are a superfood with high fibre and alkaline properties. The challenge lies in creating awareness about millet's benefits and innovating healthy recipes. **Dr. Krishnaswamy** spoke about the opportunities and challenges faced while harnessing the potential of millets.

The panel discussion was curated by **Ms. Lakshmy Shankar**, Chief Executive Officer & Founder, Kaizen Consult.

The 'Closing Address' was delivered by **Ms. Priya Vishwanathan**, General Manager, Ama Stays & Trails, The Indian Hotels Company Limited (IHCL). She thanked all distinguished guests and speakers for their valuable time.

IOD Foundation & the Institute of Directors, Bengaluru Region, thanked its Event Sponsor, **Kanti Sweets**.

Women's Indian Chamber of Commerce & Industry (WICCI) and **The Club G100** were also thanked for their support towards hosting the event on inspiring women leaders and celebrating the International Year of Millets 2023.

This report is compiled by:

Institute of Directors, India
Bengaluru Region



Distinguished Guests of the Event



Ms. Priya Vishwanathan
General Manager, Ama Stays & Trails
The Indian Hotels Company Limited (IHCL)
delivering the '**Closing Address**'

IN ASSOCIATION

