

DATE: 30 MARCH 2021

VIRTUAL PANEL DISCUSSION WITH WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS FROM GOA

With the objective of encouraging budding women entrepreneurs to develop a leadership attitude and guide them towards harnessing their true potential, World Trade Center Goa organised a Virtual Panel Discussion with Goan Women Entrepreneurs. Breaking the myth that women can only undertake household chores, Ms. Pallavi Salgaocar, Chairperson GCCI, Women's Wing, CA and Entrepreneur, suggested that for a long time, women have been perceived as homemakers, and have had little formal participation in the workforce. This norm is changing as women are well-balancing mother hood with their work life, although entrepreneurship is a challenging role and the journey is tough. The dynamic nature of the pandemic makes the future uncertain and calls for sustainability in business. We need to, therefore, relook at our challenges and plan appropriately. Sharing tips on mitigating the adverse impact of the crisis, Ms. Salgaocar emphasized that women entrepreneurs should start tracking their revenue expenses monthly, check the financial viability of their business every quarter, be patient towards garnering new investments, maintain healthy relationships with vendors and clients, and well manage employees. She explained that today businesses should adopt the policy of "Adapt or Perish", and one should seek opportunities globally. Trade facilitation bodies such as the World Trade Center can help women in networking globally, and scale up their businesses. However, in order to grab upcoming opportunities, women should know where to invest their time, seek help if needed, not be afraid of failures, be committed, believe in themselves, know their clients, upskill themselves, learn from their mistakes, innovate, learn to handle adversities and endeavour towards uplifting each other. Ms. Sheryl Afonso, Clinical Nutritionist (Norbert's Fitness Studio) and Department Head (M.Sc. Food Technology Carmel College) opined that the best way to predict anybody's future is by creating it. One needs to be constantly in search of opportunities, and should diversify his/her business at the right time. The shift should not come owing to lack of work satisfaction, but with the objective of encashing the opportunity. Ms. Afonso said, the male dominated society will question women's financial acumen and judgement; however, entrepreneurship for women is a rewarding experience, and women should not only get involved in running their businesses, but should also look for ways of expanding it. Ms. Revati Sanzgiri, Founder, Proprietor, Reva's, said that women venturing into any kind of business are usually sceptical about who will buy their products. She explained that despite the COVID-19 crisis, she has been receiving a huge response for her traditional toys, and is providing employment to artisans, thereby supporting their families. She is also providing indirect employment to delivery boys during this pandemic. "In order to succeed, women should have a vision backed by support from family and friends" concluded Ms. Sanzgiri. Ms. Hemlata Bhatkhande, Managing Partner, Wonder eat Food Products LLP, expressed her passion of providing healthy food such as millets to people, as these have very good nutritional value. She highlighted that there are very few values added food products available in the market. She, therefore, makes ready-to-eat millet products with the objective of improving people's dietary patterns and keeping them strong and fit. The programme also featured a Panel Discussion where Goan women entrepreneurs shared their success stories and advised the participants to not get unnerved by competition, create their own niche, love what they do, and continue their efforts even if they have to devote their time partially towards other revenue-generating activities. They encouraged women to use social media, flyers, hoardings, websites, customer-feedback and 'word of mouth' strategies to market their business. In his welcome address, Mr. Cyril Desouza, Assistant Director - Trade Promotion, World Trade Center Goa, briefed that COVID-19 has changed people's outlook towards accepting challenges and has opened up newer forms of opportunities for them. World Trade Center Goa is helping women entrepreneurs sail through this crisis by organizing programmes that help them

grow from local to global. The programme was attended by women entrepreneurs, leaders, students and women officers.

The Webinar was held on March 30, 2021