

Women's involvement in politics most visible at the local level: Thamizhachi



Fresh perspectives: Chennai South MP Thamizhachi Thangapandian at the launch of a book at Stella Maris College in Chennai on Monday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

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The trend of gradual increase in women's involvement in politics has been most visible at the local level, said Chennai South MP Thamizhachi Thangapandian.

Speaking at a session on 'The Empowerment of Young Women for Political Participation' in Stella Maris College in association with the University of Maribor, Slovenia, Ms. Thangapandian said measures such as India's 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments and reservation for women had led to a remarkable transformation in rural and urban political landscapes. "Women's leadership has proven time and again to bring fresh perspectives, address long-standing social inequalities, and champion inclusive growth. As we look toward a future where more women will occupy positions of power, it is clear that their voices are not only vital to shaping a just and equitable society but are the very bedrock of a thriving democracy," she said.

"In local governance, women's leadership has been increasingly visible, particularly in urban administration. The election of

R. Priya as the Mayor of the Greater Chennai Corporation more than three years ago has been a particularly significant milestone. In her time as Mayor, Ms. Priya has demonstrated remarkable success in addressing urban governance issues, with a focus on improving basic amenities, waste management, and the overall quality of life in the city. Under her leadership, the city has seen improvements in sanitation, infrastructure development, and environmental sustainability. Mayor Priya's emphasis on transparency and citizen engagement has earned her widespread praise, and her success has made her a role model for aspiring female politicians in the State. Ms. Priya's tenure is emblematic of how women in leadership positions can bring fresh perspectives and innovative solutions to long-standing governance challenges," said Ms. Thangapandian.

"Despite these advancements, significant challenges remain for women in Indian politics. While women have made significant strides in local governance, their representation at the national level has historically been low. The broader landscape of women's political partici-

pation in South Asia, when examined more closely, reveals the persistence of structural barriers. A common theme in much of South Asia, including countries like India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh, has been the deep-rooted societal and cultural constraints on women's agency. These constraints are not simply political but interwoven with social norms that often confine women to traditional roles. It is within this cultural milieu that women have had to carve out space for political participation," she said.

Stella Maris College Principal Rev. Sr. Stella Mary FMM said the session was the first in a series of a year-long project, titled empowerment of young women for political participation, involving the Director, Centre for Women's Studies, Dolly Thomas, and the Head of the Department of History, Susan Paul. Stella Maris Secretary Rev. Sr. Anita Gonsalvez spoke.

Other faculty members who have assisted in the various aspects of the project and collaborated with the session are assistant professors Gayathri, Shan Eugene, Cinthia Jude, Ivan Nancy, Senkathir Selvi and Devipriya.