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'Women's empowerment is need of the hour'

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CHENNAI, March 9 - To emancipate herself and to enjoy equality a woman needs to have certain basic powers. A woman should be empowered to be herself, recognise her own worth and have proper self-esteem, said Governor of Tamil Nadu Fathima Beevi, on Saturday.

Delivering the presidential address at the golden jubilee college day of the Stella Maris College, the Governor lamented that according to the UN's estimate women who formed one-half of the world's population, put in two-thirds of the world's work hours, but received only one-tenth of the total income and owned less than one-hundredth of the world's property.

Discrimination against women and denial of their rights was a global phenomenon. In western society if women were regarded as sexual objects, in the developing countries, they became silent, unrecognised contributors to the family, community and society, she said.

The 407 million Indian women consisting 48 per cent of the population lead a life lacking in dignity, opportunities and options, the Governor said, and added that in this context education was an essential input of the empowering process.

Lauding the pioneering contributions of the college in the field of women's education, Fathima Beevi said in the present-day rapidly developing and changing

world, isolation was impossible and education and economic development went hand in hand. The Governor distributed awards and prizes to outstanding students during the year.

In her golden jubilee report, Principal Sr Annamma Philip detailed the growth of the college since its inception on Aug 15, 1947 and said during the golden jubilee year, 50 scholarships for the economically weaker sections would be instituted and a four-storey building added on at the campus.

Provincial Superior of the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary Sr Mary Rose felicitated and read out a message from Superior General Sr Christianne. Vice-principal Meena N Swamy spoke.