

Young women challenged to participate in dialogue forums



FNU staff pose for a picture after the International Women's Day Seminar at FNU Nasinu Campus.

A senior academic at the Fiji National University (FNU), Assistant Professor Dr Zakia Ali-Chand has urged young women to be more proactive participants in social and professional dialogue forums.

The College of Humanities and Education (CHE) Associate Dean Research, Dr Ali-Chand made these comments during a panel discussion hosted by the University to mark International Women's Day celebrations at Nasinu Campus today.

Dr Ali-Chand suggested that being 'social and cultural conscious' could be a reason for young women to hold themselves back from being directly involved in various forums.

"This is one of the major challenges of the society today where ladies tend to think that somebody is there to participate instead of them," said Dr Ali-Chand.

"Due to social factors we have become used to the fact that men will lead, they are the maintainers and we are just followers."

The Associate Dean challenged women to break away from this cycle and make their mark in society and the employment sector.

"Young women you need to be seen, don't be complacent, you have the potential to do wonders. Do not ask yourselves who will do this for us, instead be ready to tell yourself that I can and I will do this."

"Such attitude and participation will empower and mold you for positions at managerial levels. It will instill confidence in you to take up any leadership positions. It will basically prepare you for the future."

Six panelists from different Colleges of FNU shared their challenges and how they overcame those to be where they are in their careers today.

A panelist, Head of School – Health Sciences, Maria Waloki encouraged women to be confident about their choices, adding the growth of an individual depended on the choices made by an individual.

"We must understand that everything begins with our own mindset and attitude. If we as an individual are determined to achieve our goals, then no obstacle will seem bigger than the goal itself," said the Head of School.

The senior academic encouraged women to seize every opportunity of professional development and strive for the stars.

More than 50 participants comprising of university students and staff attended the 2-hour panel discussion.