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WOMEN & TECHNOLOGY

Back to the Future and Return to the Source



 INTERNATIONAL
WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

3 - 5 FEBRUARY 2012

CONFERENCE THEME

The quest for knowledge has given birth to technology and we use technology to further this quest. Be it of material or spiritual dimensions, technology, through the ages, has been an unparalleled aid. We live in a world where technology is prevalent and relevant in virtually every area of our lives. As women, our lives have been redefined by the incredible technological developments taking place in our times. Whether we are pioneers or the end users; whether from the developed world or the developing world, our communications, social interactions and lifestyles have all been impacted.

In this Conference entitled “Women & Technology”, we seek to explore and discuss:

- The impact of technology on society at large and in the lives of women in specific.
- The fascinating connect between Spirituality and Technology.
- To bring awareness in tech-savvy women about attending to the source by relaxing and recharging her energies through spiritual practices like yoga and meditation.
- Means to empower women in developing parts of the world through technology and to facilitate technological education.
- Creation of an information bridge between women from different parts of society.

In the words of H.H. Sri Sri Ravi Shankar; “Spirituality is the Technology of the Consciousness.” The Source of all technology and creativity is the human mind.

This Conference is dedicated to Saraswati, the Goddess of Knowledge, Wisdom and the Arts and to the Goddesses of Wisdom and Learning in all cultures across the world.

Saraswati is the Goddess of Knowledge, Wisdom and the Arts in India. In Sanskrit, ‘Sara’ means the Essence and ‘Swa’ means the Self. Goddess Saraswati is the Ocean of understanding and consciousness that vibrates with different kinds of learning.



CHAIRPERSON'S NOTE



Dear One,

With great pleasure, I invite you to join us in the 5th International Women's Conference entitled "Women and Technology". We continue our wonderful journey of learning, sharing and growing through our conferences with participation of women from all over the world, representing all facets of life. Usually, we associate the qualities of sharing, caring, sensitivity, sensibility and connectedness with women.

Today technology has opened up a new field of possibilities for us adding to our strength, determination, assertiveness and sometimes aggression. Often, we are stressed and exhausted due to extended working hours and overexposure. This Conference is an opportunity for us to relax, re-charge and rejuvenate ourselves as we deliberate on the effect of technology on our lifestyles, family and society and explore ways to empower women, promote responsible leadership, enhance creativity and innovation and connect within and around us.

As creators and users of technology, women have been greatly empowered. However, we should not forget the mind that created this technology. We are used to charging our phones, laptops etc, what can we do to re-charge ourselves? For the human mind to be more effective, it needs to be charged through meditation. Through this Conference, we hope to bring a paradigm shift in our understanding of technology through a glimpse of the subtler technologies for mind management.

A technologically sound woman has a mind that is not lost to machines, but uses them effectively on her path towards her goal. A spiritually sound woman has a say over her mind in all matters. She is fully centered and established, and brings joy and peace on her path towards her goal.

Spirituality is not a dogmatic rule. It is dynamic action, continuously accommodating and adapting to changes in circumstances and environment. It makes you '*parinaami*' – ever accepting of change; this capability to adapt is essential in a technological environment where the need to upgrade and update oneself is imperative.

While staying ahead, as women, we need to make sure we stay together. In any family, it is the woman, or mother, who glues the differences between people of diverse mind-sets and keeps them together. A mother knows intuitively what her child needs even before the child starts speaking. She is a master of the language of the heart.

We must remember that technology can never replace the mother's touch. This invaluable gift of connectedness that is so natural to a woman must be nurtured. The Internet can connect you to people thousands of miles away but it should not be at the cost of creating islands within a family. The sign of intelligence is in finding a balance and understanding priorities. This is where spirituality helps. Along with connecting to the Internet we must connect to the inner net.

Humans have infused life into machines. Beyond this artificial intelligence there is a Supreme intelligence to which we are connected through spirituality. In ancient times, they recognized this intelligence, and created advanced technologies powered by this understanding. For example, astrology allowed one to predict with accuracy the possible future course of a person or action.

Astronomy was also advanced and saw many practical applications including navigation of ships based on the stars, the creation of an almanac for thousands of years to come, an understanding of the creation of the universe and so on. Some of this knowledge has been lost over time and a scientific reappraisal of our history can catalyze our progress along with reminding us that the power cord is the connection to the source of this knowledge within us.

When we know that we are the source, that we are ever connected to the supreme intelligence, we can move ahead with a sense of belongingness and responsibility for the transformation we bring about with the technologies that are available to us. The same finger that can unleash a nuclear bomb can also spread peace. We are here to globalize wisdom and bring peace to every corner of this planet as women empowered by both subtle and manifest technologies.

*With Love and Warm Regards,
Bhanumathi Narasimhan*

DAY 1

FEBRUARY 3 2012

Theme: Women as Creators of Technology

6.30AM- 8.00AM ■ **Art of Living Part 1 Course/ Sri Sri Yoga**

10.00AM – 11.30AM ■ **Inaugural Plenary Session**

11.30AM- 12.30PM ■ **Session 1:**

Women as Leaders of Technology

Her numbers are increasing in the field of technology and so is her impact. A technologically sound woman has a quest for Knowledge, value for life, a sense of creativity, a sense of responsibility and a desire to achieve much more for society. Here, we meet some incredible women whose work has impacted the way we think and interact.

Session Objectives:

- To deliberate on responsible leadership in the field of technology.
- To understand the challenges of being a woman in a technological environment.
- To share success stories.
- To create an inspirational network, both online and offline.

12.30PM - 1.00 PM ■ **Guided Meditation**

DAY 1

FEBRUARY 3 2012

2.30PM – 4.00 PM ■ **Session 2:**

**Innovation & Creativity in Technology
(Discussion + Workshop)**

A creative person is not content with just one creation. There is a constant quest to improve, innovate and upgrade. In the field of technology we are continuously faced with a newer, improved version for anything that we use.

As creators of technology, how do we tap the source of creativity and sustain the capacity to innovate?

As users of technology, it should take you to a place where you are in love with your own nature and astonished to see the creativity of the mind.
'Vismayo Yoga Bhumika'.

The journey to explore the undiscovered dimensions of the Mind and Self starts with a sense of wonder. This session takes us on a creative journey through discussions and a workshop on creativity.

4.00PM – 4.10 PM ■ **Log Out & Cool off**

DAY 2

FEBRUARY 4 2012

Theme: Women as Users of Technology

6.30AM- 8.00AM

■ **Art of Living Part 1 Course/ Sri Sri Yoga**

10.00AM – 11.15AM

■ **Session 3:**

Technology: Are you a Slave or a Leader?

The purpose of technology is to bring comfort, ease and progress to society. Yet, we often get lost in the very technology that we have created. Technology is just a means to achieve this and not the end in itself. In this session, we discuss the positive and negative impact of technology in our lives and ask ourselves some insightful questions.

How have our relationships and interactions changed?

How can one infuse human values and a sense of belongingness in a life inundated by technology?

Have we achieved greater connections at the expense of losing the human and personal touch?

What is the Middle Path in use of technology?

How do we deal with Internet Addiction?

Here, we explore these and other aspects of the impact of technology in the lives of women from varied backgrounds.

DAY 2

FEBRUARY 4 2012

11.15AM – 12.30PM

■ **Session 4:**

Women & Social Media

Panel Discussion

The scalable, accessible and pervasive social media have turned around the way we communicate with each other and transformed the perceptions of the world that we live in.

One can get caught in the World Wide Web or one can travel through it to connect and become more empowered. Technology brings connectivity and Spirituality brings the feeling of connectedness.

Metcalf's Law that characterizes social media says that interconnecting two networks is said to greatly exceed the power of the two separate, individual networks.

We have seen the social media transforming individual relationships, business, social trends and even impacting governments as in the case of the Jasmine Revolution in the Middle East.

In this session, we seek to learn and discuss how the social media can be used in a responsible manner to create a harmonious field online that makes our interactions more productive.

12.30PM - 1.00 PM

■ **Guided Meditation**

2.30PM- 3.00PM

■ Session 5:

Technology: Complementing the Human Touch

It is the prerogative of women to protect Mother Earth and the future generations. Technology is a support system to society. However, we need to take care of the economic and social fabric of the place. We still have vast untapped human resources that cannot be ignored especially in developing countries.

Can technology replace the human touch?

In this session, we gain insights from experts on the import of technology in Healthcare, Environment and Education with a special focus on empowering women through technology in the developing world.

3.00PM – 3.20PM

■ **Technology and the Environment**

How can technology support Mother Earth and be put to the best use to take care of the environment?

How does one encourage the use of eco-friendly technologies?

How does one manage e-waste and technological waste?

3.20PM - 3.50PM

■ **Technology & Health Care – A Holistic Approach to Medical Care**

Has the intuitive capacity in medical care experts reduced because of too much dependence on technological tools?

Technology has worked for the betterment in Public Health Systems. however in the developing countries what has been the human cost?

3.50 PM – 4.00PM

■ **Technology & Education**

What is the Impact of Technology on Learning?

4.20 PM- 5.50PM

■ **Empowering Women Through Technology**

What are the means to empower women in developing parts of the world through technology?

What can be done to facilitate technological education?

DAY 3

FEBRUARY 5 2012

Theme: Spirituality & Technology

6.30AM- 8.00AM

■ **Art of Living Part 1 Course/ Sri Sri Yoga**

10.00AM – 11.30AM

■ **Session 6:**

21st Century Technology & Ancient Civilizations & Wisdom

Progress can only take place when we adapt to changes. This can only happen through a scientific reappraisal of our heritage. One of the greatest benefits of modern technology is that it has helped us to connect so easily and beautifully to our past. We can compare and learn from the past positively and learn what not to repeat.

Here we explore the links between the ancient cultures of the world and the technology of our times. Modern mathematics, metallurgy, architecture owe a great debt to the past.

11.30AM - 12.30PM

■ **Session 7:**

Redefining Technology

In general understanding, technology is associated with machines. Yet, the term has evolved into having larger connotations. It is also associated with the knowledge, wisdom, skills and processes related to a certain subject such as Medical Technology, Biotechnology.

In this session we bring in some undiscovered technologies:

- ‘*Vaastu*’- (The Technology of Managing Spaces)
- ‘*Yantra*’ - (Instruments of Spiritual Technology)
- ‘*Astrology*’ – (The Technology of Time Management)

DAY 3

FEBRUARY 5 2012

12.30PM-1.00PM

■ **Guided Meditation**

2.30PM - 3.40PM

■ **Session 8:**

The Spiritual Connection

A woman's circle of influence is large and she brings a passion for life, sharing, caring and dedication. Our wealth is not just the technology in our lives, but our health, our relationships and the human values with which we live.

The complete technology is in the mind. This wonderful mind needs to be managed through spirituality and understanding how important it is to attend to the source. Intelligence is managing one's own mind along with managing other things and understanding priorities.

In this session, we discuss:

- The importance of mind management.
- Wisdom from scriptures relevant to the Age of Technology.
- The Relevance of Spirituality in the life of a technologically sound woman.

3.40PM - 4.40PM

■ **Valedictory Session & Road Map**



REFLECTIONS / OUTCOMES



THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

Shakti: The Strength of A Woman was organized in June 2005.

SOME OUTCOMES FROM THE CONFERENCE INCLUDE:

Building Homes, Securing Families

100 homes provided for homeless rural women. Keys were handed out to the women during the conference.

Faith in Action Against Sex Selection

India's Missing Daughters, November 2005.

This conference was a result of a dialogue initiated between the UNFPA and the Art of Living Foundation. The organisers sought to address the alarming imbalance in India's sex ratio and spoke out against female foeticide. Over 36 religious and spiritual leaders, representatives from government, civil society and the media participated. Faith leaders play a significant role in India's social fabric and this conference strengthened their resolve to tackle this serious problem.

Peanut Butter Project, Murewa, Africa.

Inspired by the conference, Art of Living workshops were offered to the women of Chitate in Murewa, Africa. More than 797 women benefitted from the program and this led to the start of a peanut butter project to provide gainful employment for local women. 82 women were trained in using the peanut butter making machine presented by the Art of Living volunteers of Zimbabwe.



THE SECOND INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

Celebrating Women: organised in June 2007.

SOME OUTCOMES FROM THE CONFERENCE INCLUDE:

All-India National NGO Summit took place in January 2008 with an aim to provide a platform for NGOs to interact on generating solutions and forming partnerships on the key environmental issues of the country.

Child Support for Zimbabwean families affected by HIV/AIDS. Delegates from Perth, Australia implemented a project providing support to the children of families affected by HIV/AIDS in Zimbabwe, immediately after the conference.

Education for 500 girl children:

Financial support for the education of girl children was generated through the conference.

Transforming Lives of Women Prisoners:

Rehabilitation of women prisoners all over the world will continue as IAWL's (International Alliance of Women Leaders) ongoing project around the world.



THE THIRD INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

The Light of Leadership was organised in Feb 2009.

SOME OUTCOMES FROM THE CONFERENCE INCLUDE:

723 delegates from over 70 countries

Supporting Higher Education for girl children:

Anushree, daughter of a roadside tea vendor dreamed of a medical education but did not have enough finances. Her graduation as an Ayurvedic Doctor was sponsored by the conference.

Miss. Sowmya is about to become an ayurvedic doctor. All her medical education has been sponsored.

Miss Gautami has been sponsored for her pre university education.

Prison Rehabilitation and Homes for Homeless:

Ongoing projects for building of prison rehabilitation and homes for the homeless continue to transform and uplift the lives of underprivileged women around the world.



THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

Waves of Beauty hosted by the Ministry of Culture & Tourism of the Republic of Indonesia held at Bali, Indonesia, in March 2010.

A signature campaign to urge the government of the United States of America to pass bill to stop violence against women

Support for environmental care, beginning with the plantation of 1000 trees at the conference.

Continuing commitment towards girl child education. Around 4373 underprivileged girl children have been educated since the first Conference in 2005.

PARTICIPANTS CAN LOOK FORWARD TO:

Thought - Provoking Sessions: The biennial conference brings together the world's most fascinating women thinkers and doers.

Networking: The conference provides a platform for women leaders to meet, share their views and ideas and form networks through which they may support each other.

Action-Oriented Outcomes: As an outcome of the deliberations, the participants are encouraged to initiate and create concrete action-plans for community service and women empowerment projects globally.

Sri Sri Yoga: Wisdom and techniques of yoga taught in a pure and simple manner, bringing one back to oneself.

The Art of Living Part 1 Course: Eliminate stress and experience peace through simple breathing techniques.

PROJECT:

COMPUTER TRAINING FOR RURAL WOMEN

We have launched training centres as pilot projects in five Indian states inspiring others to start similar initiatives around the world.

Aim: Empowering Women in Indian villages with modern technology.

Reach: The states of Jharkhand, Chattisghar, Gujarat, Himachal pradesh and Maharashtra. 25 women from each state.

Strategy: Selected women are undergoing free training in basic computer skills and data entry while some shall be trained in graphic designing.

Outcome: Help poor rural women become self reliant.



INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

3 - 5 FEBRUARY 2012

2005



2007



2009



2010