

Annual Interfaith Iftar Dinner



In collaboration with Sarva Dharma Samvaad (SDS) and Interfaith Foundation, Indialogue Foundation organised Annual Interfaith Iftar Dinner 2017 at India International Centre, New Delhi on June 22, 2017.

As the name itself suggests, it is an event organised every year during the holy month of Ramadan. It's a tradition that was started in 2009 and has continued every successive year since then. The idea is not only to bring people from different faith traditions together but also to give them a platform to engage in meaningful dialogue on some of the pressing issues of our time.

This year we decided to discuss an issue which is featuring in uncountable number of newspaper articles and television talk shows not only in India but around the world.

In the 21st century, as the world touches new heights of success in technological developments and scientific knowledge, religious beliefs and practices have come under intense scrutiny. Among many other things, religions have often been blamed for subjugation of and discrimination and violence against women.

Yet there is a fair number of scholars/clerics in almost every major religious community who argue that religions do not discriminate against women – rather, if interpreted properly, they have the potential of empowering them. Therefore, we picked “Role of Religions in Empowering Women” as the theme of this year’s event.

Prominent faith leaders from seven religious communities, namely Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Christian, Jewish, Jain and Baha’i as well as renowned women rights activists and young research scholars addressed an august gathering of over 125 people. Some of the notable speakers at the event were Ranjana Kumari, Director, Centre for Social Research; Paramjit Singh Chandhok, Chairman, Gurudwara Bangla Sahib; Swami Prakarshananda, Acharya, Chinmaya Mission (Delhi); and Qamar Agha, senior journalist and commentator.

A video message by Turkish Islamic scholar Fethullah Gulen in which he shares his views on women’s rights was also played at the event.

Separately, in the spirit of unity and brotherhood that events like this symbolises, a message from the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue to Muslims for the month of Ramadan and Id al-Fitr was read out by Father Victor Edwin who is a lecturer at Vidyajyoti College of Theology, New Delhi. Manu Singh (chairman SDS) delivered the vote of thanks.

The beautiful evening concluded with all the speakers and participants mingling with each other casually over the sumptuous dinner.

The success of this event left us with enormous motivation to continue this tradition of bringing people together and contributing in the national and international debate on issues of vital importance.