

## INDEPENDENCE DAY 2024 – “*MAATRI BHOOMI: RIGHTS OF WOMEN AND THE REPUBLIC*”

On August 15, 2024, Loreto College, Kolkata celebrated Independence Day with a special programme titled “*Maatri Bhoomi: Rights of Women and the Republic.*” This event was a collaborative effort by the Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC), the Department of History, the Department of Political Science, and the National Service Scheme (NSS) Unit. The programme aimed to celebrate the spirit of the nation while critically reflecting on the legislative progress made in securing women’s rights since India’s independence.

The event commenced with the hoisting of the national flag, followed by the gathering of students and faculty in the college auditorium. A prayer dance set a solemn tone, after which Dr. Debasree Sinha, Assistant Professor, Department of Geography delivered the Independence Day address, emphasising India’s environmental imperatives. The AICUF Society then led a prayer service, which also paid homage to the Assumption of the Virgin Mary.

The central theme of this year’s celebration was explored through a series of thought-provoking performances and presentations. The programme opened with the symbolic entrance of Bharat Mata, portraying how her image has evolved over time. The contributions of women leaders in drafting the Constitution of India were highlighted, followed by a dance performance set to the patriotic anthem “Vande Mataram.”

The exploration of women’s rights continued with a detailed discussion on the features of the Hindu Code Bill, dramatised through a skit that included an enactment of Jawaharlal Nehru advocating for the Bill in Parliament. The Dowry Prohibition Act was then addressed, with a poignant scene depicting the tragic consequences of dowry-related abuse.

Further segments included a dance performance introducing the Maternity Benefit Act, a presentation on the 73rd and 74th Amendment Acts with an accompanying skit, and a portrayal of the Domestic Violence (Prohibition) Act, which vividly depicted the issue of violence against women in both urban and rural settings. The programme also touched upon the Sexual Harassment at the Workplace Act and the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, concluding with an overview of the Women Reservation Act.

A special video montage towards the end of the presentation paid tribute to women achievers and the everyday efforts of hardworking women citizens, highlighting their contributions to society and the nation. As the programme drew to a close, Sr. Dr. A. Nirmala, Acting Teacher in Charge, congratulated the performers on their outstanding efforts. Her address highlighted the importance of the issues discussed and commended the excellence of the performances.