

## **PG DEPARTMENT OF MICROBIOLOGY- SILVER JUBILEE CELEBRATION** **(ALUMNI MEET)**

The Postgraduate Department of Microbiology, St. Joseph's University, Bengaluru, celebrated its silver jubilee on 6 May 2023 with an alumni meet at the St Joseph's University Auditorium. It was attended by its founding members, alumni/ae, faculty members and current staff and students.

The celebration started with the lighting of the lamp and an invocation song. The welcome address was given by the Head of the Department, Dr W Jothy who gave the attendees a heartwarming welcome. This was followed by the PG Coordinator Dr Popy Dutta, who spoke about the inception of the Department and its journey of 25 years. Dr Beatrice Sequeira, Dean, School of Life Sciences, congratulated the PG Department and addressed the gathering.

Rev. Fr Dr Victor Lobo SJ, the Vice-Chancellor, St Joseph's University, also graced the event with his presence. He in his characteristic cheerful and humorous demeanor spoke about how the world has realised the importance of Microbiology after the COVID-19 pandemic. He also spoke about how the Postgraduate programme of the Department has become one of the most sought-after programmes in the city. He emphasised on the importance of quality research that could help in the upliftment of several disadvantaged groups around the world. Rev. Fr Swebert D'Silva SJ in his presidential address also emphasised the importance of Microbiology and congratulated the Department on reaching this milestone.

The highlight of the event was the felicitation of the founder members of the Department, Dr Betty Daniel, Dr Rajamani S and Dr Jacob Paul V J. Their efforts and struggles for the establishment of the Department were recognised and applauded. Dr Betty Daniel also spoke about her time here at St Joseph's and how they worked towards the development of the Department. She also recognised the contribution of the visionary principals Fr Eugene Lobo SJ, Late Rev. Fr Joseph Nelapathy SJ and all the principals thereafter, who provided them with all the support and infrastructure for the upliftment of the Department.

This was followed by the release of the souvenir compiled by Dr Vanita NM and the editorial team. The souvenir documented the history and best wishes of management, faculty and alumni commemorating the 25 years.

The event also witnessed talks by five alumni speakers from various walks of life reminiscing about their time here at Joseph's. They spoke about their experiences at the Department, how it had prepared them for their careers, and how they had applied their knowledge in their respective fields.

Dr Ullas Pedmale, Associate Professor, Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, New York was the first speaker. He sent a video message in his absence in which he spoke of the contour of his challenging yet rewarding journey to one of the top institutions for research in Life Science. He laid special emphasis on perseverance and how the values of college encouraged this quality. He also spoke highly of the founding members of the PG Department of Microbiology, especially Dr Betty Daniel, whose PhD journey at NCBS inspired him in his career. He also gave credit to the student bodies of the department of Microbiology, Microcosm and Microbiological society, where he bolstered his leadership and team management skills. In summary, Dr Pedmale linked progress in personal and professional life to the scientific interest and value education emphasised by the Department of Microbiology and St Joseph's College as a whole.

The second speaker was Mr Amith Lionel Ananda from Cardolite Speciality Chemicals India, Pvt. Ltd, Mangalore. Mr Ananda spoke of his career growth in the industry from a quality assurance and quality control perspective. He

spoke to students about the necessity of a prepared mind, by citing the example of his career, where he had to work as a chemist and then microbiologist. He reminded students of the importance of networking and linked it to net worth.

The third speaker was Ms Namrata Lobo, founder of Sweet Hive, Mumbai. She encouraged students to take up entrepreneurship and urged especially female students to not give up on the pursuit of a career regardless of the social pressures. She spoke with emphasis on the special edge she has in the food industry because of her degree in Microbiology and Food science, especially with respect to changing diet trends and needs of various clients. She spoke about the importance of having a circle of likeminded people, of networking, of mentorship and explained the need for these through intelligible graphics.

Mr Joiston Pereira, Trade Advisor, Healthcare and Life Sciences, British High Commission in India was the next speaker. He spoke of his unique career choice and the journey that led him there. He highlighted the need for a mind prepared for opportunity and the necessity of tapping into the Josephite network. He gave a lot of credit to alumni and professors while encouraging students to seek help from the Josephite network.

The final speaker for the day was Dr Srilakshmi, postdoctoral fellow at the Ottawa Hospital Research Institute, Canada who also sent a video message in her absentia. She laid emphasis on the structure of both UG and PG Microbiology programmes. She laid out in detail all the aspects of her journey in St Joseph's, which led to encouraged character formation, her scientific spirit of enquiry, her communication and management skills. She highlighted the usefulness of practical coursework and participation in the student association.

This was followed by a cultural programme consisting of a medley by Ms Sanjana Satheesh, and an Indian classical-influenced dance by the duo of Ms Anusha Ajith Kumar and Ms Malika Mukherjee of 2<sup>nd</sup> MSc Microbiology.

Ms Shalmali Kamat, Department of Microbiology, delivered the Vote of Thanks, concluding the formal events of the alumni meet. All attendees were gifted a souvenir bag and the event ended with a sumptuous lunch.

For the Images of the PG Department of Microbiology - silver jubilee celebration (Alumni meet), kindly refer to the Photo Gallery: <https://www.sju.edu.in/gallery/15>