

# Right to education could be a tool for gender justice awareness: Expert

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CHENNAI: While the three core elements of the Universal Declaration of human rights involve rights to education, rights in education and rights through education, this is not as easily accessible as it should be to all sections of the society, especially to intersexual children, expressed Claudia, HOD, Social Work, COBURG University of Applied Science, Germany.

She was speaking on the topic of gender justice at the national conference on social work response to contemporary social issues organised by Loyola College on Monday.

Intersexual children are those born with features of both sexes. But unlike transgenders who opt to undergo surgeries to identify with themselves, intersexual children are operated upon soon after they are born with no say in the matter.

"About one in every 500 children is supposedly born intersexual and most of them are given the female identity post-surgery. The child should be allowed to grow up and decide on which gender to pick when it grows into an adult rather than force it on him/her. These are the kind of rights that people need to be aware of and fighting for," she said.

Stating that human right education could be used as a tool for empowerment and awareness in the aspect of gender justice, she said education is never neutral and can be misused to influence minds rights.

Hence Rights through education was crucial involving the head, heart and hand combination - knowledge, consciousness and

action/competence.

Besides gender justice, other issues of welfare state, honour killing and environmental ethics were discussed in the two-day conference. Writer and anti-nuclear activist Udhayakumar who also spoke during the conference urged governments to focus on utilisation of nature through sustainable mining rather than allowing exploitation of nature through mega projects under private parties.

He also said that there is no consensus among political parties in Tamil Nadu to stand united against projects like nuclear ones as they are busy competing against each other.

"Many of these mega projects are in the interest of the elite and come along with promises of job creation for thousands. But, how many jobs are being lost or villages being wiped out in the process should also be considered," he said.

He advised students to delve into ecologism rather than environmentalism as it was crucial to change perceptions to bring about any change in preserving the environment.