



College Days ♦ 2015

College Days



Convocation at the Senate Hall, University of Madras, 1938

Joyous girls in caps and gowns heading for their Convocation at the University of Madras. Looking up is V. Sethu who had done her BA from Queen Mary's College in Economics, History, English and Tamil. She was a gold medallist.

Courtesy: Sumi Krishna, Bangalore



Lily Kutty Anthraper (later Tharakan) and friends, 1937

Taken at Women's College hostel, Trivandrum (now Swati Tirunal Academy), with four room mates where 'it was the policy of the college to mix students caste and community-wise' (Lily Kutty) and so she (right) is seated next to Janaki, an Ezhava, while behind (left) is Subhadra Thangachi, a Nair, and next to her is Gomati Ammal, a Brahmin.

Courtesy: Lily Kutty Tharakan, Kochi

Cover Image:

Students of Vasanta College, Benares (Varanasi), at the Ashoka Pillar, Sarnath, 1947

Courtesy: Kiran Tiwari and Smita Tiwari Jassal, New Delhi

CURATORS:

Malavika Karlekar and Sharada Nayak

DESIGN

Sundaresh and Malavika Karlekar

College Days

In 1879, Bethune School developed into the first women's college in India, affiliated to the University of Calcutta. When, in 1883, Kadambini Basu and Chandramukhi Basu graduated from Bethune College, they were to become the first women graduates of the country. A few years later, Kadambini together with Anandibai Joshi from Poona (Pune), became the earliest women doctors of the British Empire. They were however, the exceptions, as though the need for higher education was increasingly being expressed by social reformers, a certain type of education that stressed so-called womanly skills was the ideal. An overwhelming prejudice inherited from western proponents believed in differential cerebral aptitudes and that girls were not to be over-loaded with science and mathematics. They were ideally suited to domesticity and housewifery, and college curricula should stress these rather than more challenging mental domains. Medicine was an early favourite, its popularity in part encouraged by the reluctance of women to patronize male practitioners.

Initially, missionary enterprise encouraged girls' education, Isabella Thoburn College (1886), Lucknow and Kinnaird College (1913), Lahore being among the earliest institutions to be started. While Queen Mary's College, Madras was established in 1914 by the British Government, a year later, a group of missionary societies from the US and Canada founded Women's Christian College. Then there were pioneers in women's education, who, as participants in the independence movement founded institutions that today are among the leading women's colleges in the country. Annie Besant was one of the founders of Indraprastha College, while Sarojini Naidu, Rajkumari Amrit Kaur and others were associated with the All-India Women's Conference which established Lady Irwin College in 1932. By the early decades of the 20th century, apart from these well-known institutions there were many other initiatives for girls' higher education. Our calendar visually records some of these endeavours.

Curators' note:

The calendar for 2015 is marked by collaboration between CWDS and its extended family. Sharada Nayak, a senior member with years of experience in working with women's

higher education, and with a cornucopia of amazing family photographs, was most enthusiastic about a calendar on the topic. Her excitement was matched by Malavika's apprehension about being able to source enough images. In part, both emotions were justified – it took many conversations, emails and phone calls to members of CWDS' general body as well as to other friends and contacts to get anywhere. Here we should point out that the curators were a little more than choosy: we had decided to move away from stereotypical cap- and- gown studio photographs. Our aim was to try and re-create the atmosphere of early college life. However, we were soon to find that this was easier said than done as most offerings were of individual young women standing proudly with their degrees in hand.

We persisted in our commitment to abandon the quotidian and though there are absences - no girls on the sports field or at the podium - there are some unusual photographs of a group in a science laboratory, of a drama troupe and of community action. There are images of life in traditional western-oriented institutions as well as in indigenous initiatives such as Visva-Bharati and SNDT Women's University. And finally, there are proud young women with the symbols of an independent India – the Ashoka pillar and the tricolour held aloft.

Malavika Karlekar and Sharada Nayak

Gaura Pant (extreme right) and others leaving for a college trip, Visva-Bharati, 1938

Courtesy: Mrinal Pande and Ira Pande, New Delhi





Kamala Rathnam Saththianadhan,
c. 1900s

At the age of 21, Kamala married Samuel Saththianathan, a widower, who had graduated from the University of Cambridge and was teaching Philosophy at the University of Madras. Kamala was the first woman graduate of south India and when she passed her M.A a year after her son was born, she was dubbed a 'double Ma'! In 1901, Kamala started the Indian Ladies Magazine which ran till the 1930s. Apart from dealing with women's issues and the social reform movement, it also published Sarojini Naidu's earliest poems. She wrote a number of novels including a thriller called Detective Janaki.

When her husband died leaving Kamala with a six-month-old child, she learnt to support herself, becoming private tutor to the Rani of Pithapuram in Andhra Pradesh.

*Courtesy: the late Kamalini Sengupta Kumar,
New Delhi*

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 <i>New Year's Day</i>	2	3
4 Milad-Un-Nabi (Id-E-Milad) (Birthday of Prophet Mohammed)	○ 5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	☾ 13	14 <i>Makar Sankranti</i>	15 <i>Pongal</i>	16	17
18	19	● 20	21	22	23	24 <i>Basant Panchami/ Sri Panchami</i>
25	26 Republic Day	☾ 27	28	29	30	31

December

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February

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January 2015



Dwarkabai Kamlakar at Madras Medical College, the only woman student in a class of thirteen, 1907

Following her matriculation from Huzurpaga School in Poona (Pune), and her marriage shortly thereafter, Dwarkabai went on to join Madras Medical College for a Licentiate in Medicine and Surgery. The institution was the first medical college in India to admit women. Dwarkabai then went on a scholarship to Dublin for further studies in gynaecology and surgery. On her return, Dwarkabai joined the Women's Medical Service that took her on postings to various parts of India. She had the courage to walk out from an unsatisfactory marriage, and brought up three children on her own.

Courtesy: Photograph – Aalochana, Awati-Aalochana Collection, Pune; Text: Simrita Gopal Singh, Pune

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3 <i>Guru Ravidas's Birthday</i>	○ 4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	● 12	13	14 <i>Swami Dayananda Saraswati Jayanti</i>
15	16	17	18	● 19 <i>Shivaji Jayanti</i>	20	21
22	23	24	● 25	26	27	28

January

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March

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February 2015



Dramatics at Queen Mary's College, Madras, 1926

A pioneer of women's education in the south, Queen Mary's College was founded in 1914 and is among the first three women's colleges in the country. It began with 33 students but soon grew in popularity and has a host of distinguished alumnae who have played prominent roles in public life. The photograph shows the all-woman cast for the Annual Day drama at the college,

Courtesy: Sharada Nayak, New Delhi

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	○ 5 <i>Holika Dahan</i>	6 Holi	7
8	9	10	11	12	● 13	14
15	16	17	18	19	● 20	21 <i>Chaitra Suktadi/ Gudi Padava/ Ugadi/ Cheti Chand</i>
22	23	24	25	26	● 27	28 Ram Navami
29	30	31				

February

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April

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March 2015



Snatika (convocation) ceremony at Kanya Mahavidyalaya, Jullunder (Jalandhar), 1928

Founded in Jullunder (Punjab) in 1890-1 by Lala Devraj, an Arya Samaji, with the active support of his mother, Kahan Devi, KMV was among the first progressive institutions for girls begun by a dedicated core of social reformers throughout the country. One of its aims was to provide appropriate instructional material for its students in both Hindi and Sanskrit; when it developed into a college, training women teachers became important.

This photograph is of the *snatika* or convocation of 1928; the formal robe is an interesting adaptation of the western-style gown and hood.

Courtesy: Photograph – Tara Meenakshi Sekhri, New Delhi

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	○ 4
				Mahavir Jayanti	Good Friday	
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Easter Sunday						
☾ 12	13	14	15	16	17	18
		Vaisakhi/ Vishu/ Mesadi	Vaisakhadi (Bengal)/ Bahag Bihu (Assam)			
● 19	20	21	22	23	24	25
☾ 26	27	28	29	30		

March

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May

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April 2015



Teachers and students of Bethune College, Calcutta, 1936

With the enrolment of Kadambini Basu. in 1879, the college started functioning. In February 1888, Bethune College received affiliation to the University of Calcutta, and Chandramukhi Basu who was an MA with Honours in English, became, its first Principal. Kadambini and Chadramukhi were the college's first students. Over the years, Bethune College has had a whole host of brilliant alumnae - artists, dancers, teachers, scientists politicians and revolutionaries.

This image is a typical example of the group photograph, an integral feature in the history of institutions. Here students stand and are seated on the ground around their teachers - some of whom are men.

Courtesy: Photograph – Gargi Chakravartty, New Delhi

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
31					1	2
3	○ 4	5	6	7	8	9
<i>Hazarat Ali's Birthday</i>	Buddha Purnima					<i>Guru Rabindranath's Birthday</i>
10	● 11	12	13	14	15	16
17	● 18	19	20	21	22	23
24	● 25	26	27	28	29	30

May 2015

April

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June

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Indraprastha College, Delhi, science lab, 1929

Indraprastha College is the first women's college in Delhi. Established in 1924, it grew out of Indraprastha School founded in 1904 by a group of Delhi theosophists inspired by Annie Besant. The college was formally inaugurated in its present building, known as 'Alipore House' on 7th February, 1939. The building has been declared a heritage building the college was affiliated to the University of Delhi in 1938. In this photograph students, some of them their heads covered with saree pallavs, are conducting a chemistry experiment, supervised by male instructors. It is a carefully composed image, taken by a professional photographer, perhaps for a special event.

Courtesy: Photograph – Principal, Indraprastha College for Women, Delhi

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 ○	2	3	4	5	6
7	8 ●	9	10	11	12	13
14	15 ●	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23 ●	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

June 2015

May

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July

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Gaura Pant (Shivani) with Nandalal Bose, Kala Bhavana, Visva-Bharati, 1938

Gaura is seen here with Principal Nandalal Bose, one of the pioneers of modern Indian art and a key figure of in the movement to create a context sensitive modernism, free from western tropes and imagery. In this photograph, Bose appears to be correcting a sketch done by his student. Gaura was at Visva-Bharati from 1935 to 1943. She later went on to become one of the best-known writers of fiction and essays in Hindi. Gaura, affectionately called Amar Boi (My Book), and Gora by Rabindranath Tagore, started writing in 1955. Her oeuvre was romantic fiction set mostly in her native Kumaon, of the years just before and after Partition, as well as memoirs, essays and travel writing.

Courtesy: Mrinal Pande and Ira Pande, New Delhi

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
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19	20	21	22	23 ●	24	25
26	27	28	29	30 ○	31	

Jamat-Ul-Vida

Idu'l Fitr
Rath Yatra

July 2015

June

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August

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Convocation at Shreemati Nathibai Damodar Thackersey Women's University (SNDTWU), 1939

As the earliest women's university in the country, SNDTWU acquired a formidable reputation enabling the Vice Chancellor, Lady Thackersey to invite leading figures of the freedom movement to its convocation ceremony in 1939.

From L-R, front row: Mahatma Gandhi, Sir Vitthaldas Thackersey, Dr. Hansa Mehta, Lady Thackersey, Subhash Chandra Bose, Sarojini Naidu in the front circle at SNDT Convocation

Second row, 3rd from left, Dr. C. V. Raman

Last row, 6th from the left, Shri Vishveshwaraiya

Courtesy: Photograph – SNDTWU Main Library Archives; Text: Vibhuti Patel, Mumbai

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
○ 30	31					1
2	3	4	5	6	☾ 7	8
9	10	11	12	13	● 14	15 Independence Day
16	17 Parsi New Year's Day	18	19	20	21	22
☾ 23	24	25	26	27	28 Onam	29 Raksha Bandhan

August 2015

July

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September

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Members of Ladies' Voluntary Corps, Shillong, c. early 1940s

Modelled on the Girl Guides movement, the Ladies Voluntary Corps consisted of young women from high school and college as well as some from the local population. It provided young women the opportunity to participate in community action in times of war. After 1942, Shillong, the capital of Assam, had many camps for soldiers wounded in the Japanese-Allied forces encounter on the Burma front. These are young women volunteers from Lady Keane College, Lady Keane School and probably a few teachers.

Courtesy: Jayati Gupta, Kolkata

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5 ☾ Janmashtami
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
● 13	14	15	16	17 <i>Vinayaka Chaturthi/ Ganesh Chaturthi</i>	18	19
20 ☾	21	22	23	24	25	26
27 ○	28	29	30		Idu'l Zuha (Bakrid)	

September 2015

August

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October

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Three generations of women graduates, 1940

Vidyagauri Nilkanth was the first Gujarati woman graduate of Bombay University. She graduated from the co-educational Gujarat College, Ahmedabad. She was married at the age of 13 and by the time she passed her BA, she had 4 children. She could continue her education after marriage because both her husband's and her mother's family were founders of the reformist Prarthana Samaj in Gujarat. Vidyagauri's five daughters were graduates and two of them went abroad for higher studies.

The photograph shows Vidyagauri with her daughter Sarojini, also a graduate of Gujarat College, and Sarojini's daughter' Vatsala.

Courtesy: Aparna Basu, NOIDA

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2 Mahatma Gandhi's Birthday	3
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11	12	●	13	14	15	16 17
18	19	20	☾	21	22	23 24
25	26	○	27	28	29	30 31
		<i>Dussehra (Maha Saptami)</i>	<i>Dussehra (Maha Ashtami)</i>	<i>Dussehra (Maha Navmi)</i>		<i>Muharram</i>
		<i>Maharishi Valmiki's Birthday</i>				<i>Karaka Chaturthi (Karva Chouth)</i>

September

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November

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October 2015



Winners of the *chatti* race, Lady Irwin College, 1948

Lady Irwin College was founded in 1932 by a group of women in the forefront of the independence movement including Sarojini Naidu, Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, and Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay who were all a part of the All-India Women's Conference.

The college began by offering domestic science courses, until it was affiliated to the University of Delhi in 1950 when B.Sc. Home science degree was introduced. Today B.Sc.Honours, B. Ed and postgraduate degrees in dietetics and Nutrition are also offered.

Courtesy: Sharada Nayak, New Delhi

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29	30					

*Deepavali (South India)
Naraka Chaturdasi*

Diwali (Deepavali)

Govardhan Pooja

Bhai Duj

*Pratihar Sashthi /
Surya Sashthi (Chhat Puja)*

*Guru Teg Bahadur's
Martyrdom Day*

**Guru Nanak's
Birthday**

October

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December

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November 2015



Students of Queen Mary's College carry the national tricolour on Independence Day, 1948

Courtesy: Sharada Nayak, New Delhi

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	
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13	14	15	16	17	☾	18	19
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27	28	29	30	31			

Milad-Un-Nabi or
Id-E-Milad
(Birthday of Prophet
Mohammad)
Christmas Eve

Christmas Day

November

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January

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December 2015



Centre for Women's Development Studies

25 Bhai Vir Singh Marg (Gole Market), New Delhi-110001

Phone + 91 11 23345530/ 23365541/ 23366930/ 23347996

Fax + 91 11 23346044

E.mail ijgs@cwds.ac.in / cwdsorg@eth.net / cwds@cwds.ac.in

Website <http://www.cwds.ac.in>