

'STEM has no gender': Docu sparks dialogue on women in tech

Sagnik Maitra | NT
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Women shouldn't just be mentored, but also sponsored," said Sapna Ramaiah, Development Head for SAP Business One and SAP Business by Design, during a post-screening discussion that struck a chord with the audience at a recent event in Bengaluru.

The impactful 55-minute film, *Flow (Tok)*, was screened at Bangalore International Centre on Thursday evening, uniting students, diplomats, artists and STEM (Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) profession-

als for a crucial dialogue on women's roles in technical disciplines.

Co-directed by Ana Čigon, Saša Spačal, and Ida Hiršenfelter, the film chronicles the experiences of eight Slovenian women in STEM—ranging from pilots and programmers to AI researchers and sound engineers—offering a rare glimpse into the obstacles they encounter and the resilience they embody.

"Professions aren't gendered," said Economic Counsellor Tea Pirih. "A person's value in any field should come from their work, not their gender."

The event, hosted in collaboration with the Embassy of Slovenia in New Delhi and the EU Gender Cham-

pion initiative, featured a panel discussion moderated by Tea Pirih, Economic Counsellor, Slovenian Embassy in India.

Panelists included co-director Ida Hiršenfelter, SAP STEM leader Sapna Ramaiah and Slovenian Ambassador to India Mateja Vodeb Ghosh.

Although the film was originally released in 2016, its themes remain strikingly pertinent today. Through candid and introspective interviews, the women featured share their experiences with subtle biases, lack of mentorship, and societal conditioning that persistently deter women

from entering technical professions. The film presents a range of professionals, including airline pilot Alja Berčič Ivanuš, AI specialist Dr Dunja Mladenčić, inter-media artist Maja Smrekar, and coder-turned-project manager Dr Mateja Verlič. Their narratives reveal a shared experience. Despite

achieving professional milestones, they continue to encounter systemic challenges rooted in entrenched gender norms.

Ambassador Mateja Vodeb Ghosh emphasised that while strides have been made, new challenges are emerging. "In many societies, bias has shifted from being overt to covert, subtle yet very real. We must address not only the external barriers but also the internalised ones," Ghosh said.

"Women should be equally represented not only in social sciences but also in natural sciences like medicine, computer science...they do not need to justify they belong, they already do," she added.



Mateja Vodeb Ghosh
Slovenian Ambassador to India



Tea Pirih,
Economic Counsellor



Sapna Ramaiah,
Stem Professional

