

The visit to the schools in Padova was very interesting. My host school P. Scalerle made sure that I felt at home and did not find it difficult that I knew no Italian. The observations which follow are from the interactions I had with the students of this school and others. I found the students interested, alert and very involved when I spoke to them. Though many of them found my English hard to follow they were attentive. In telling them about India and the position of her women, I found myself needing to think and reflect. The students were as well informed as they could be, i.e. they knew what the media reported, I felt that I would like to give them a feel of the diversity and strength of the women in India. I do have questions about what progress means. While I did not want to gloss over the real difficulties that women face, I also felt that they should understand a culture which gives more importance to the needs of the community than to those of an individual. This is not necessarily wrong or backward, just different. They were very honest in giving their opinions and I was surprised to find how many students felt that their local culture needed preserving and that they should help. This was in response to my question about whether they thought of themselves as Europeans or Italians. The forum on the final day was good. I found the presentation of the students passionate. Their organisation of the forum was impressive.

The visit to the city hall and meeting the members was also very interesting since our government (even the local one) is not so accessible. That the city is thinking about education and society was heartening. I had a lovely time and my students here were interested in whatever I shared. I left with a lot of questions and ideas-which is a good thing. My only regret was that I could not interact with students and teachers from Senegal much-we were doing different circuits.

My students' views on the position of women follow. They found it hard since they have not felt much discrimination yet.
women can't travel as freely as men do
the boundaries are different for boys and girls in a family.
while Hinduism wants couples to perform ceremonies, in churches, women have no authority.
the money is usually under the control of the man
women don't get the same pay as men
many women themselves accept that men are superior.
wife beating is accepted in the villages.