



NETAJI SUBHAS OPEN UNIVERSITY

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Report On ‘Celebrating Womanhood’ as a commemoration of International Women’s Day 2020

Organized by: Internal Complaints Committee (ICC), Netaji Subhas Open University (NSOU)

Date & Time: 11th March 2020; 2:00-5:30 PM

Venue: Seminar Room, NSOU HQ, 1st Floor, DD-26, Sector-1, Salt Lake, Kolkata-64

Participants: Coordinators from various Study Centers across Kolkata and its peripheral areas; all faculties, officers and other staff members of the University.

ICC, NSOU presented “Unveiling Radharani: Emerging power of women in Baul-sphere” under the auspices of Celebrating “International Women’s Day-2020”. On behalf of the Internal Complaints Committee, NSOU, Dr. Papiya Upadhyay, Asst Prof of Education, School of Education, NSOU and Member, ICC **cordially greeted the august gathering.**

The distinguished invitees were Prof. Subha Sankar Sarkar, the Hon’ble Vice Chancellor, NSOU, distinguished speaker, Dr. Sutapa Sengupta, Associate Prof, Dept of History, University of Kalyani; Smt. Rahima Khatun, Secretary, Nari-o-Sishu Kalyan Kendra, Bauria, Howrah & member, ICC, NSOU; Sri. Mohan Kr Chattopadhyay, Registrar, NSOU, Sri. Sachindra Ch Kar, Finance Officer, NSOU, Coordinators from different LSCs, Directors, Officers, faculty members, other staff members of NSOU and various guests from Higher Education Institutions across the state. Also present were Smt. Ananya Mitra, Dy Registrar (Admin) & Presiding Officer, ICC, NSOU, Sri. Prasenjit Bhattacharya, Dy Director, Durgapur RC & Convenor, ICC, NSOU and all other members of ICC.

The ambience was set to celebrate womanhood with the spirit of treating everyone the same and as a part of an Across-the-board gathering in a truly inclusive atmosphere. The blend of life is balanced with equal forces, a tilt in either direction threatens its homeostasis and hence existence. The programme started with the **Welcome Address** by Dr. Barnana Guha Thakurata Banerjee, Associate Professor of Political Science, School of Social Sciences, NSOU & Member, ICC. She extended a hearty welcome to all the guests, invitees and participants.

Her address initiated with the historical relevance of ICC in workplace. She touched upon the refurbished points of actions as slated in the Bishakha Guidelines and cited the significance of such committees in Higher Educational Institutions. Her deliberation further marked the formation of ICC at NSOU and its roles especially the academic additional responsibilities related to the role as assigned. In pursuance of UGC (Prevention, prohibition and redressal of sexual harassment of Women employees and students in higher educational institutions) Regulations 2015, the committee is re-named as Internal Complaints Committee (ICC) as to deal with the complaints relating to sexual harassment at workplace. It was candidly put into record the relevance of such committee in the contemporary times. She concluded that gender sensitization issues may be dealt with conducting such programmes frequently and prudently with the stakeholders.

The guests and the eminent Speaker were **felicited** by Dr. Manosanta Biswas, Asst Prof, School of Social Sciences, NSOU & Member, ICC; Sri. Manik Chandra Das, Asst Registrar (Exams), NSOU & Member, ICC and Sri. Prasenjit Bhattacharya, Dy Director, Durgapur RC & Convenor, ICC respectively.

This was followed by the **Formal Opening of ICC Web Page Link** on the University's official website by Prof. Subha Sankar Sarkar, Hon'ble Vice Chancellor, NSOU. The navigation links and relevant sub-links (like complaint form, MoMs, photos etc) were revealed and made visible for easy access to all.

The next segment of the celebration was '**Relevance of International Women's Day**. It was addressed by Smt. Rohima Khatun, Secretary, Nari-O-Sishu Kalyan Kendra, Bauria, Howrah & Member, ICC, NSOU. She diligently shared her experience on women upheavals and empowerment with respect to all. She stressed on Feminity – a symbol and guardian of homeostasis that elicits not to rule but to balance. She also reiterated this reflects not to dominate but to restore poise in the nature. Her words assimilated to celebrate equality – which is neither superiority nor subjugation.

The programme cruised its way through **deliberation on “Unveiling Radharani: Emerging Power of Women in Baul-Sphere”** by the Eminent Speaker, Dr. Sutapa Sengupta, Associate Professor of History, Department of History, University of Kalyani. The speaker started with the concept of Radha Cult that insists upon identifying the whole living world (Irrespective of male and female) with the Prakriti or the eternal femininity and suggests that the Supreme Soul or the Moner Manush of a Baul is the only Purush. Only through the path of love a worshipper (Prakriti) can be united with him. This spirit and thought paved the way for an equitable society.

She eloquently unraveled how a Baul should adopt all feminine qualities and emotions before entering to the path of Premsadhana. As a woman is the manifestation of Prakriti, the Baul theology always gives greater importance to a woman and describes her as the spiritual guide of the worshipper. Although the Baul theology recognizes the superiority of women in the Baul pursuit in reality the Baul world is dominated by the male ascetics. In the rite of Dehasadhana or Vamachara a female body is used passively like a vehicle. She reflected upon renowned Baulanis and their life struggles and processes.

A very few among the Baulanis have been able to secure unquestionable respect in the Baul world. Three exclusive and independent women in the Baul sphere of Bengal are Maki Kazumi, Mimlu Sen and Parvathy Baul. Coming out of their own cocoons they entered in the world of the Bauls with an eternal spiritual quest and soon with their devotion, dedication and leadership quality they have exerted their control over the entire community and managed to secure their due respect. Her mesmerizing deliberation was supported by Baul songs that added true essence to the thoughts. She concluded that how Baul songs mediated the words of wisdom to enlighten society at large. The influence of Baulanis and their empowering stories left the audience with wisdom, hope and merry to continue celebrating womenhood.

It was followed by a vibrant '**Interactive session**'. The participants came up with contextual queries which were justifiably addressed by the speaker.

The programme clinched with proposing '**Votes of Thanks** by Smt. Ananya Mitra, Deputy Registrar (Admin), NSOU & Presiding Officer, ICC. She explicably announced the closing **to keep up with the informal yet all-inclusive spirit of the program. The gathering dispersed for tea and refreshment.**
