



**Women Harassment Prevention Cell
& School of Vocational Studies**

NETAJI SUBHAS OPEN UNIVERSITY

1, Woodburn Park, Kolkata - 700020

Phone : (033) 2283-5157

One Day DEC Sponsored Workshop

on

***Gender Sensitisation and Women Empowerment :
Issues and Challenges***

at

**AKADEMI SABHAGHAR,
PASCHIMBANGA BANGLA AKADEMI
(Nandan Complex)**

on

27 February, 2013

PROGRAMME

- Registration : 10.00 am – 10.30 am
- Inaugural Session : 10.30 am – 11.45 am
 - Welcome Address :
Dr. Debesh Roy, Registrar, NSOU
 - Introducing the Theme :
Professor Kajal De, Professor of Mathematics and Chairperson, WHPC
 - Keynote Address :
Smt. Sunanda Mukherjee, Chairperson, West Bengal Commission for Women
 - Address of Guest of Honour :
Smt. Ratnabali Banerjee, Joint Secretary, UGC, Eastern Regional Office, Kolkata
 - Presidential Address :
Professor Subhasankar Sarkar, Vice Chancellor, NSOU
 - Vote of Thanks :
Smt. Anamika Das, Assistant Professor of LIS & Joint Secretary, Seminar Committee
- Tea Break : 11.45 am - 12.00 noon
- Technical Session-I : 12.00 noon - 1.30 pm
- Lunch : 1.30 pm - 2.00 pm
- Technical Session-II : 2.00 pm - 3.30 pm



**Women Harassment Prevention Cell
&
School of Vocational Studies
NETAJI SUBHAS OPEN UNIVERSITY**

1, Woodburn Park, Kolkata - 700020

*cordially invites you to the Workshop
on*

**GENDER SENSITISATION AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT :
ISSUES AND CHALLENGES**

To be held at 10.30 am on 27th February 2013

at

Akademi Sabhagar, Paschimanga Bangla Akademi

*Smt Sunanda Mukherjee, Chairperson,
West Bengal Commission for Women has
kindly consented to deliver the keynote address.*

*Smt Ratnabali Banerjee, Joint Secretary, UGC
Eastern Regional Office, Kolkata
will be present as the Guest of Honour*

*Professor Subhasankar Sarkar, Vice Chancellor, NSOU
will preside over the inaugural session.*

Your presence is earnestly solicited

Dr Kajal De
*Professor of Mathematics &
Chairperson, WHPC*

Dr Chandan Basu
*Assistant Professor of History
& Organizing Secretary, Seminar Committee*



**Women Harassment Prevention Cell and
School of Vocational Studies**

NETAJI SUBHAS OPEN UNIVERSITY

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DEC Sponsored Workshop

on

**“Gender Sensitisation and Women
Empowerment : Issues and Challenges”**

February 27, 2013

Venue:

**Akademi Sabhagar,
Paschimanga Bangla Akademi**

(Nandan Complex)

About the University

Netaji Subhas Open University (NSOU) was founded in 1997 as a State Open University by an Act of the Government of West Bengal. With a subsequent amendment the University was empowered to spread wings beyond the State as well. Over the period since its inception, NSOU has emerged as a major leader in the ODL mode, not just in Eastern India but across the country too. We have forged many significant linkages and collaborations at national as well as international levels. The University has received global accolades in the form of the 'Excellence in Distance Education Award', conferred by the Commonwealth of Learning (COL), Canada at PCF4 in 2006. NSOU has introduced and has been successfully executing a plethora of innovative and pioneering courses together with conventional courses, both streams being equally popular among the student community.

The Headquarter of the University is housed in a Heritage Building, the corridors of which reverberate with hallowed memories of such great nationalist leaders and thinkers like Mahatma Gandhi, Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose and Sarat Chandra Bose. Apart from this, there are campuses at Golpark, Salt Lake and a Green Campus at Kalyani too, which is being developed upto its potential. At present, the University has 132 study centres all over West Bengal with over 1.5 lakh learners.

About the Workshop

THE rise of the notion of the gender question and women empowerment has brought radical rethinking in the broader perspectives of knowledge formation on the one hand and modern administrative mechanism on the other. This was, in fact, one of the major ideas, which crossed the limit of the academia in the post-Second World War period. Crossing the boundary of the social sciences, it created necessary preconditions through movements and activities in the administrative structure and societal mechanism for the introduction of new set of laws, rules and regulations to ensure the status, dignity and respect of the women employees in a safe

and qualitatively better working environment. The forceful arrival of the gender question further uprooted the lineages of denial of women's right in a male-dominated world to a significant extent. It not only questioned the privileges and dominant status of the male members of the society, the gender outlook was also able to speak of a different social-cultural milieu in public and private space. Though the development of an equal social space for both men and women was not satisfactory and even, but it raised serious issues in the hierarchical public and private order and posed fresh challenges before the social. The aim of the today's workshop is to (i) contextualize the broader question of gender in the historical perspective, (ii) to identify *the possible issues* of gender question and (iii) to explore the challenges of women empowerment before the society.

As the aim of the workshop is to address the issues and challenges of the question of women empowerment, it is felt that we need to have a conceptual explanatory category for a better articulation of the very nature of the workshop itself, even from the epistemological viewpoint. We firmly believe that the nature of any workshop should be interactive, and no descriptive overtone could ensure the interactivity. Therefore, we suggest here to integrate the idea of 'gender sensitization' as a conceptual explanatory category as a fundamental axis of deliberation and argument of the today's workshop. It implies that today's interactivity will centre on the notion of gender sensitization. It is hereby proposed that one cannot understand the challenges before women empowerment unless and until she/he explains the praxis of transformation from an unequal social order to a more equal one. The notion of gender sensitization will explain the praxis of transformation crossing even the limits of womanhood. We also firmly express that this workshop will address the notion of gender sensitization as a concept of power. It is our hope that at the end of the day, we will open up new channel(s) to identify such alternative power relations of gender sensitization and women empowerment.

Today's workshop is a joint collaborative programme of **Women Harassment Prevention Cell**

(WHPC) and School of Vocational Studies of the Netaji Subhas Open University (NSOU). The University as a centre of higher education has been extending its educational programmes to those sections of the masses that cannot be easily incorporated in the mainstreams of higher education in West Bengal since its foundation. The WHPC is formed to ensure the safe and secure working environment for the women employees and to protect them from any kind of mistreatment in NSOU. The School of Vocational Studies is established to offer non-conventional and vocational courses at an extremely affordable cost to the society in general and marginal and weaker sections in particular. The philosophy of the University is to empower the learners through quality education following open and distance mode. Today we are here to practise this philosophy of empowerment through discussion, interaction and debates.

Programme

Registration : 10.00 A.M.—10.30 A.M.

Inaugural Session : 10.30 A.M.—11.45 A.M.

Welcome Address :

Dr Debesh Ray, Registrar, NSOU

Introducing the Theme :

Prof Kajal De, Professor of Mathematics & Chairperson, WHPC

Address by Guest of Honour:

Smt Ratnabali Banerjee, Joint Secretary, UGC, Eastern Regional Office, Kolkata

Keynote Address:

Smt Sunanda Mukherjee, Chairperson, West Bengal Commission for Women

Presidential Address:

Prof Subhasankar Sarkar, Vice Chancellor, NSOU.

Vote of Thanks:

Smt Anamika Das, Asst. Prof. of LIS & Jt. Secretary, Seminar Committee

Tea Break : 11.45 A.M.—12.00 Noon

Technical Session I : 12.00 Noon—1.30 P.M.

Lunch : 1.30 P.M.—2.00 P.M.

Technical Session II : 2.00 P.M.—3.30 P.M.

REPORT ON THE ONE-DAY DEC SPONSORED WORKSHOP ON 'GENDER SENSITIZATION AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT: ISSUES AND CHALLENGES'

The Women Harassment Prevention Cell (WHPC) and the School of Vocational Studies (SVS) jointly organized One-Day Workshop on 'Gender Sensitization and Women Empowerment: Issues and Challenges' on February 27, 2013 in the Auditorium of Paschimbanga Bangla Akademi, Kolkata. The objective of the Workshop was to create a broad space of interaction, debate and discussion on the issue of gender sensitization and women empowerment. The organizers adopted gender sensitization as an explanatory category in the theoretical level and women empowerment as an empirical identity in the practical level. The entry point of the interaction of the Workshop was identification of issues related to gender sensitization and preparation for challenges before the women empowerment. Keeping this theoretical abstraction in mind, the WHPC Team in Netaji Subhas Open University (NSOU) carefully designed the frame of the Workshop. The WHPC Team was also keen to make the Workshop interactive in nature to the most optimal extent. In order to make the Workshop a successful one – from the perspective of theoretical precision and also from the idea of minimizing gap between the speakers and the participants – the Workshop was divided into two technical sessions apart from the Inaugural Session. The speakers of the Workshop were selected from the wider arena stretching from social science to psychology and government official to law-practitioner to address the issue(s) in a multi-linear mode.

The Inaugural Session: Professor Bikas Ghosh, Director, School of Science delivered the Welcome Address. He welcomed the Keynote Speaker, the Guest of Honour, all the speakers and the participants on behalf of the University. Professor Kajal De, Chairperson, WHPC, NSOU introduced the theme of the Workshop highlighting briefly the development of the notion of women empowerment, gender sensitization and gender equality in the country. She also threw light on the articulation of initiative within the NSOU to form a Cell to protect the right of the women employees in the workplace and to offer an equitable working condition. Smt Sunanda Mukherjee, Chairperson, West Bengal Commission for Women delivered the keynote address. In her speech, she precisely knitted the texture of the day-long discussion of the Workshop. She highlighted the specific types of difficulties faced

by the women in a given society and put emphasis on the need of gender sensitization as a necessary first step for the achievement of women empowerment. Smt. Mukherjee also pointed out the role of West Bengal Commission for Women in addressing the multifarious problems faced by the women in the society. She also urged the NSOU to play greater and crucial role in spreading education through distant and open (ODL) mode to make the society conscious about this vital issue. **Smt Ratnabali Banerjee**, Joint Secretary, UGC Eastern Regional Office, Kolkata attended the Workshop as Guest of Honour. Smt. Banerjee elaborated the critical role of UGC and the other institutes of higher learning in eradicating the notion of gender inequality from the society. She reminded the participants that without a full-fledged interaction between the educational institutions and the society, the idea of women empowerment cannot be materialized. Professor Banerjee also emphasized on the thought of Swami Vivekananda in eradicating the gender inequality from the society. She further pointed out that the institute like NSOU could play an extremely significant role in generating consciousness in the society regarding women empowerment as ODL mode does not have any formal limit, which is the basic hindrance of the conventional educational system. The Inaugural Session was chaired by **Professor Debnarayan Modak**, Director, School of Humanities and Social Sciences, NSOU. In his presidential address, Professor Modak aptly summarized the speeches of Keynote Speaker and the Guest of Honour. He also put emphasis on the development of bridge between theory and practice of the question of women empowerment.

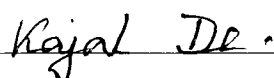
Technical Session (I and II): In the Technical Session – I, there were two speakers – **Professor Mahua Sarkar**, Department of History, Jadavpur University and **Professor Pushpa Mishra**, Former Principal, Bethune College. Professor Mahua Sarkar gave the historical context of the development of women question and gender equality in India. She pointed out the role of the Bengal Renaissance, the Indian nationalism and Gandhian movement in creating space for the women. This process, according to her assessment, led to the establishment of greater gender equality in the Indian society. Professor Pushpa Mishra as a psycho-analyst elaborated before the audience various case studies of gender discrimination in the contemporary society. She argued that without proper guidance and counseling (if necessary) it would not be possible to establish a just society. This task should

be carried out by both the government and the non-government organizations. The Technical Session – I was chaired by **Smt Sunanda Mukherjee (Professor Debnarayan Modak** replaced Smt. Mukherjee when she had to leave for other preoccupations).

In the Technical Session – II, **Sri Sanjay Das**, Assistant Secretary, Department of Higher Education, Government of West Bengal discussed the governmental initiative to establish the equal rights of the women employees in the workplace and the complexities of the problem of gender inequality. He also presented case study before the participants to reveal the nature of such complexities. Sri Das was followed by **Smt. Chandrei Alam**, senior Advocate in the Kolkata High Court. Smt. Alam taking clue from Sri Das's experience drew the attention to the proper understanding of the legal framework of the country. She pointed out the strength of the existing laws and the requirement of framing new laws to handle the problem of women harassment and gender inequality. Like the other speakers, she also stressed on the spread of education and awareness among the masses in this regard. The Technical Session – II was chaired by **Professor Pushpa Mishra**.

The participants actively participated in the Workshop. All the sessions were followed by questions and answers. There was a true involvement of the participants in the Workshop. It made the Workshop successful even in literal sense. The numbers of participants were more than hundred and interestingly there was almost fifty-fifty ratio of male and female participants. The event was planned to perfection and was ably executed by the Organizing Committee. Moreover the participants demanded such programmes to be organized more frequently to the WHPC. In future, the WHPC, NSOU will take more such initiatives to fulfil its mission.

Date: 14.03.2013



Professor Kajal De,
Chairperson,
WHPC, NSOU