



A Brief Report on National Webinar to Celebrate ‘International Women’s Day 2021: Women Empowerment and Achievement in Leadership’

Organized by

**INTERNAL COMPLAINTS COMMITTEE (ICC)
NETAJI SUBHAS OPEN UNIVERSITY (NSOU)**

Event Details: 25th March 2021, 12-2:30PM

Web Platform: Zoom Meeting

Participants: Around **64** attendees logged in for the virtual celebration.

Getting Started:

On behalf of the Internal Complaints Committee (ICC), Netaji Subhas Open University, Dr. Papiya Upadhyay, Assistant Professor, School of Education and Member, ICC, NSOU and Moderator of the event extended greetings to distinguished speakers, officers, Directors, faculty members, staff members of NSOU and all learned participants. She also wished all a very Happy Women's day to commemorate International Women's Day 2021.

International Women's Day is powered by the collective efforts of all combined action and shared ownership for driving gender parity is what makes International Women's day impactful.

International Women's Day 2021 is being celebrated across the globe on March 8th like every year. The day is very special, for the UN has set aside the date as an exclusive day for women to acknowledge their existence and celebrate womanhood. A day when a women's step towards breaking the glass ceiling to prove herself at par with the other sex is recognised. Even though women struggle on a daily basis, a special day is earmarked which is celebrated as International Women's Day to honour all that women have achieved.

The webinar progressed through the following array of sessions:

Inaugural session: 12:15—12:30 PM

Welcome Address:

Dr. Barnana Guha Thakurta Banerjee, Associate Professor of Political Science, School of Social Sciences, NSOU & Member, ICC showered a deep welcome to one and all connected virtually in the event. Dr. Guha Thakurta Banerjee reiterated the existence and significance of ICC in workplace and its responsibilities at NSOU. ICC at NSOU has taken further to organize deliberations, seminars, workshops and other extended sessions to generate awareness and sensitise over gender issues and culminate to ensure gender equality within its campuses and everywhere. Today's event is one such humble initiative by ICC to celebrate women. She cordially welcomed the distinguished guests. Also heartily welcomed Hon'ble Vice Chancellor, NSOU for his relentless support and cooperation in every endeavor at NSOU. Her warm welcome spanned to one and all present who graced the occasion. Dr. Guha Thakurta Banerjee reminded that every day is a women's day and we do not wish to confine and acknowledge their contributions only on a particular day and a month yet we dedicate this particular day as a mark of appreciation for their hard work and sincerity in making life meaningful for all.

Introducing the Theme:

Smt. Ananya Mitra, Dy Registrar (Admin) & Presiding Officer, ICC introduced the objective of the event and set the stage for the theme of the National Webinar to commemorate International Women's Day 2021. She greeted the august gathering and assured for an enlightening experience through the upcoming deliberations from the illuminated speakers.

Plenary Sessions (12: 30-1: 40 PM):

The first Speaker-**Dr. Krishna Roy**, Principal, Bethune College, Kolkata

Title of the deliberation: Women Empowerment in Academic World: A Brief Look in Indian Context.

Prof Roy's stride started quoting François Marie Charles Fourier, a French Philosopher and proponent of the term Feminism in 1837, "no real social progress was possible until women

were emancipated, both in their private lives and in the workplace”, and the present day scenario highly accepts that women’s education has a direct relationship with her empowerment.

She continued with a clear depiction of women empowerment from the pages of history to the contemporary times through vivid presentation of slides. She hinted at some primitive yet relevant information on free access to Education for women. Thus in recent years, India has seen a remarkable growth in Women enrolment in Academic Institutions. Education sector is the preferred career choice for majority of women. But they are underrepresented as Academic Leader. This gender gap in academic leadership is global problem and India is no exception. Prof. Roy emphasized some theoretical reasons behind under representation in academic leadership for women, through various researches going in this area. She established that in the Indian context, the “Gender Role-Theory” plays an important role. Therefore, academic leadership training is needed for women academician to reach the ladder of administration. The principal areas which need sharp focus are: development of personal leadership & management skill., modernizing the student experience, internalization of curriculum and pedagogy., financial management and planning, and Crisis Management.

Prof Roy thus concluded that the entire aim of the nation must be to take women out of their nests, must make them more equipped in every sense to open up their wings in their career and emerge as successful future academic leaders of the nation.

The next speaker was **Smt. Aditi Ghosh**, Disaster Risk Management Expert and a Former Deputy Humanitarian Director at IPPF Humanitarian Hub in Bangkok.

Tile of the deliberation: Women Empowerment and Leadership

Smt Ghosh initiated her talk with an interesting and interacting stance, with all attendees through ‘Menti Poll’ to get into the field of Gender Equality Framework. The poll placed a couple of colloquial questions regarding women equity, equality, empowerment etc. The responses were immediately represented in bar and scattered word diagram. Her prominence and conviction towards this field cruised through the systematic and well planned discussion on The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women is an international framework

on rights of women (CEDAW), Gender disparity and marginalization. She believes these conditions are aggravated by class, caste, disability, religion, etc. Hence it is important to understand this intersectionality.

As an expert in the field of Disaster Risk Management for long time she portrayed the prevailing state of Gender, especially women in Disaster Risk Management in India and across the globe. Smt Ghosh also cited few examples to ensure mainstreaming and 'Gender and Inclusion' is key to effective Disaster Risk Management work.

She firmly put into record that Gender responsive work starts at the organisational level (walking the talk)- having a gender policy, a gender balanced team and also having gender expertise in the team to ensure gender and intersectional perspective are considered in organisational policy, programme design, budgeting, implementation and monitoring/review.

Not only number of women in the workspace, it is important to have women in leadership position. Smt. Ghosh concluded her session by handing over the baton to all the young minds who are the futures of our country- to bring the sea change in Building agency- Changing Relations and Transforming Structures - to make gender equality a reality!

She further signed off by quoting – Anne Sweeney (former President of Walt Disney), it does not matter if you are a woman or man. “Define success on your own terms, achieve it by your own rules, and build a life you’re proud to live.”

Interactive session: 1:45-2.15 PM:

The two thoughtful deliberations were followed by a vibrant Interactive session“. The participants came up with contextual queries which were justifiably addressed by the speakers. Some of the participants shared their experiences in their sphere of work and field

Summing up:

Dr. Papiya Upadhyay moderated the entire webinar sessions and the summary of the deliberations were articulated. This year International Women's Day theme that has been chosen for IWD 2021 is 'Choose to Challenge'. This means that we stay accountable for our actions and we also have control over our thoughts. So this Women's Day theme for International Women's Day 2021, Choose to Challenge simply means to make choice to change, challenge to emerge

successfully. To create an inclusive world and remove gender bias and inequality, every woman must first make a beginning somewhere. So, let's #ChoosetoChallenge. Once a woman chooses to challenge what is being told to her to accept, half the battle is won.

Vote of Thanks:

The programme clinched with proposing Votes of Thanks by Dr. Manosanta Biswas, Assistant Professor of History, School of Social Sciences, NSOU & Member, ICC. He explicably thanked one and all for their presence and support in drawing out the success of the Webinar.

The post webinar announcements were made. Feedback link was given in the chat box to all the participants for due fill in and submission. Certificate dispatch was assured to be emailed to all the participants within fifteen days from the completion of the event.

Closing: 2:20 PM:

Smt. Ananya Mitra, Dy Registrar (Admin) & Presiding Officer, ICC formally closed the event with best wishes and hopes of meeting for such extended academic gathering in the days to come.
