

**REPORT OF ACTIVITIES**  
**(From April, 2020 – March, 2021)**



**CENTRE FOR WOMEN'S STUDIES**



**Enlightenment to perfection**

**UNIVERSITY OF NORTH BENGAL**

**Accredited by NAAC with Grade A**

**RAJA RAMMOHUNPUR**

**P O – NORTH BENGAL UNIVERSITY**

**DIST-DARJEELING, WEST BENGAL.**

**PIN -734013**

## **REPORT OF ACTIVITIES**

( From April 2020-March,2021)

**CENTRE FOR WOMEN'S STUDIES**

**UNIVERSITY OF NORTH BENGAL**

### **1.0. BACKGROUND OF THE CENTRE FOR WOMEN'S STUDIES, UNIVERSITY OF NORTH BENGAL**

- 1. Name of the University** : University of North Bengal
- 2. State** : West Bengal.
- 3. Address** : Centre for Women's Studies,  
University of North Bengal  
Raja Rammohunpur,  
P.O- North Bengal University,  
Dist. Darjeeling, PIN-734013.
- 4. Date of Establishment** : July, 2000.
- 5. Date of Assignment of Present Phase** :The Centre has been upgraded by the UGC to **Phase- II** as per the letter F.No.7-68/2007 (WS) dated **21<sup>st</sup> March, 2012**.
- 6. Name of the Director** : Professor Zinia Mitra, from **2<sup>nd</sup> November,2020** (Honorary )  
&  
**Date from when in position**

### **2.0 PROFILE OF THE CENTRE**

#### **2.1. OBJECTIVES:-**

Briefly, the purpose behind the establishment of the Centre for Women's Studies at the University of North Bengal was two-fold, namely

- a. To articulate the situations of women in general and their developmental needs through academic research, teaching programmes with an ultimate policy focus;
- b. To fulfill critical gender needs and to build self-awareness and self-confidence among women in the region, through grass root empowerment activities that would encourage their articulate participation in the institutions of governance.

#### **2.2 FULFILLMENT:-**

Since its establishment in 2000, programmes undertaken at CWS have sought to reach out to women of all sections from the North Bengal districts and Sikkim, in order to fulfill these

objectives. The core activities undertaken by CWS in framing a regional research programme in Women's Studies are an integral part of the CWS Action Plan. CWS also provides critical community support services, and networks with Government institutions, women's organizations and NGOs in order to generate Community Action for the fulfillment of regional women's needs.

Keeping the basic objectives in view, the Centre for Women's Studies has endeavored to coordinate multidisciplinary activities that can synergies the expertise into a definite core for Women's Studies pertaining to the North Bengal region. The Centre has also undertaken programmes to extend research and training skills of individual scholars and departments, within and without the University system. Projects and programmes undertaken by the Centre have sought to formulate developmental policies for the betterment and empowerment of the women of this region. To realize and attain the above, the Centre has established an interface of technical, academic and administrative skills throughout the region. Various departments at the University have already established programmes in Women's Studies with a significant research component in addition to their teaching content. The Centre has endeavored to consolidate and strengthen these studies and capabilities under its umbrella.

However, since 2009 during XIth Plan, the Centre has started **Refresher Course on Women's Studies** for University and College teachers, in collaboration with UGC Human Resource Development Centre of the University.

Till date the Centre has successfully completed twelve (12) Refresher Courses. University / College teachers from all over the country have participated in the course.

Further, to generate academic interest amongst the young generation towards Women's Studies and make them aware to gender issues the Centre has started short term **Certificate Courses** on various women's issues along with its regular activities like Research works, Publications, Seminar, Workshop, Sensitization and Awareness programmes on gender issues at various level including the grass root women. The project work initiated at the Centre aids the formulation of gender sensitive development policies and programmes for the upliftment and empowerment of women in the region.

However, as per the decision taken at the Advisory Committee Meeting under the Chairmanship of Hon'ble Vice Chancellor, University of North Bengal, it has been decided that the Centre will start **Short Term Course on Women's Studies for College / University Teachers** from this year. Accordingly it has been implemented from the year 2018-19.

### **3.0 DETAILS OF THE ACTIVITIES:-**

#### **A. TEACHING COURSES**

Keeping in mind the criteria laid down by UGC as per XII<sup>th</sup> Plan guideline where UGC encourage the teaching courses to build strong academic base institutionally for Women's Studies, the Centre has started **Refresher Courses on Women's Studies** and **Short term**

**Certificate Courses on Women's Issues, Research Methodology for Gender Studies, Geoinformatics & Computer application during XII<sup>th</sup> Plan Period.**

In order to disseminate the knowledge as well as to create academic interest on **Women's Studies**, the Centre have taken few new initiative, by means of organizing various kinds of collaborative programme with different institute including government departments

### **REFRESHER COURSE**

The Centre for Women's Studies, University of North Bengal, in collaboration with the UGC Academic Staff College, organized a Refresher Course in **Women's Studies (ID)**, from **January 12 - 25, 2021**. Teachers from various University departments and Colleges from every corner of the country attended the course. Due to the growing responses towards the field of Women's Studies, like previous years this year also it receives more than 200 applications from all over the country.

However, as per norms 50 no of teachers of different colleges and universities from all over India were selected for the Course. They were from various disciplines like Economics, Political Science, History, Sanskrit, English, Law, Sociology, Geography, Bengali etc.

Teachers from the University of North Bengal, Jadavpur University, University of Calcutta etc having the expertise in this field acted as resource persons and delivered lectures on various issues related to the theme.

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### **UGC HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT CENTRE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH BENGAL**

#### **SCHEDULE FOR REFRESHER COURSE IN WOMEN'S STUDIES (ID) (Tentative)**

**January 12 - 25, 2021**

#### **FIRST WEEK**

<b>DATE</b>	<b>TIME</b>	<b>TOPIC</b>	<b>RESOURCE PERSON</b>

12.01.2021 Tuesday	12:00 NOON – 1:30 PM	<p>Welcome Address: <i>Dr. Anjan Chakrabarti, Director, UGC-HRDC, NBU.</i></p> <p>Guest of Honour (s):</p> <p><i>Prof. Dr. Subires Bhattacharyya, Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor, The University of North Bengal,</i></p> <p><i>Dr. Dilip Kr. Sarkar, Registrar, The University of North Bengal,</i></p> <p><i>Prof.(Dr) Bikash Ch.. Paul, Dean, Faculty Council for PG studies in Science, NBU</i></p> <p><i>Prof. Dr. Sanchari Roy Mukherjee, Dean, Faculty Council for PG studies in Arts, Commerce &amp; Law, NBU</i></p> <p><b>Keynote Address by Chief Guest Prof. Urmi Basu, Founder, New Light Foundation, Kolkata</b></p> <p>Vote of thanks:</p> <p><i>Prof. Dr. Debika Saha &amp; Dr. Zinia Mitra (Jt. Coordinators)</i></p> <p><i>Dr. Sanjib Bhattacharya, Associate Professor-Deputy Director, HRDC, NBU (Internal Coordinator)</i></p>	
	<b>Lunch Break: 1:30 PM – 2.:15 PM</b>		
	2:15 PM – 3.:45 PM	<b>Special Lecture</b>	<b>Prof. Urmi Basu</b>  <b>Founder, New Light Foundation, Kolkata</b>
	3:45 PM – 5:15 PM	<b>Interactive Session</b>	<b>Jt. Coordinators</b>
13.01.2021 Wednesday	10:30 AM – 12:00 NOON	<b>Feminism &amp; Women Studies : A brief Overview</b>	<b>Dr. Zinia Mitra</b>  <b>Director</b>  <b>Centre for Women's Studies, NBU</b>
	12:00 NOON – 1:30 PM	<b>Technology and Women</b>	<b>Prof. Ranjita Chakraborty</b>  <b>Dept. of Political Science, NBU</b>
	<b>Lunch Break: 1:30 PM – 2.:15 PM</b>		
	2:15 PM – 3:45 PM	<b>Eco-feminism : Debates and Dimensions</b>	<b>Dr L K Padhi</b>  <b>Dept. of Philosophy, NBU</b>

	3:45 PM – 5:15 PM	<b>Gender Studies and Research</b>	<b>Prof. Dibya U. Joshi</b> <b>Professor, Kumaun University &amp;</b> <b>Director, UGC-HRDC</b>
<b>14.01.2021</b> <b>Thursday</b>	10:30 AM – 12:00 NOON	<b>Men’s Studies: Conceptual and Theoretical Moorings</b>	<b>Prof. Anup Shekhar Chakraborty</b> <b>Netaji Institute of Asian Studies</b>
	12:00 NOON – 1:30 PM	<b>Becoming Boys, Becoming Men: The Manufacture of Men and Masculinities</b>	<b>Prof. Anup Shekhar Chakraborty</b> <b>Netaji Institute of Asian Studies</b>
	<b>Lunch Break: 1:30 PM – 2.:15 PM</b>		
	2:15 PM – 3:45 PM	<b>Programmes and Policies of Women in India with Special Reference to West Bengal</b>	<b>Sunita Seshadri</b> <b>Director, NIPCCD, Mohali, Punjab.</b>
	3:45 PM – 5:15 PM	<b>Empowering Girls against Violence: Methods and Techniques of Counselling</b>	<b>Sunita Seshadri</b> <b>Director, NIPCCD, Mohali, Punjab</b>
<b>15.01.2021</b> <b>Friday</b>	10:30 AM – 12:00 NOON	<b>Global Political Empowerment of Women</b>	<b>Prof. Maitreyee Chaudhury</b> <b>Centre for Himalayan Studies, NBU</b>
	12:00 NOON – 1:30 PM	<b>Eco-Feminism and Emerging Environmetalism</b>	<b>Prof. Gangotri Chakraborty</b> <b>Dept. of Law, NBU</b>
	<b>Lunch Break: 1:30 PM – 2.:15 PM</b>		
	2:15 PM – 3:45 PM	<b>Women and Leadership : Strategies of gender inclusion in institutions of higher education : Enabling the movement of women academics upward and forward.</b>	<b>Prof. Karuna Chanana, Former Professor, JNU, New Delhi</b>
	3:45 PM – 5:15 PM	<b>Sensitizing our campus to gender concern</b>	<b>Prof Ranjita Chakraborty</b> <b>Dept. of Political Science, NBU</b>
<b>16.01.2021</b> <b>Saturday</b>	10:30 AM – 12:00 NOON	<b>Structural and Post-Structuralist Interpretations of Feminism".</b>	<b>Prof Sanjoy Roy</b> <b>Dept. of Sociology, NBU</b>
	12:00 NOON – 1:30 PM	<b>Gender and sustainable development &amp; Gender Equality</b>	<b>Prof Gopa Samanta</b> <b>Dept. of Geography</b> <b>University of Burdwan</b>

	<b>Lunch Break: 1:30 PM – 2.:15 PM</b>		
	<b>2:15 PM – 3:45 PM</b>	<b>Feminist Methodology : Theory and Practices</b>	<b>Dr. Nandita Dhawan</b> <b>Director , School of Women’s Studies,</b> <b>Jadavpur University</b>
	<b>3:45 PM – 5:15 PM</b>	<b>Feminist Methodology : Theory and Practices</b>	<b>Dr. Nandita Dhawan</b> <b>Director , School of Women’s Studies,</b> <b>Jadavpur University</b>
<b><i>SUNDAY / HOLIDAY</i></b>			
<b>17.01.2021</b>			
<b>SUNDAY</b>			
	<b>10:30 AM – 12:00 NOON</b>	<b>Muslim Women for Reform</b>	<b>Prof. Soumitra De</b> <b>Dept. of Political Science,</b> <b>NBU</b>
	<b>12:00 NOON – 1:30 PM</b>	<b>Women in Indian Epics</b>	<b>Prof Lata Dubey</b> <b>Dept. of English,</b> <b>BHU</b>
<b>18.01.2021</b>	<b>Lunch Break: 1:30 PM – 2.:15 PM</b>		
<b>Monday</b>	<b>2:15 PM – 3:45 PM</b>	<b>Development Discourse, Gender and Marriage : A Critical Analysis</b>	<b>Prof. Anjan Chakraborty</b> <b>Prof.-Director,</b> <b>UGC-HRDC</b> <b>NBU</b>
	<b>3:45 PM – 5:15 PM</b>	<b>Representation of Women in Cartoons in Colonial India</b>	<b>Dr Dahlia Bhattacharya</b> <b>Dept of History,</b> <b>NBU</b>

**UGC HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT CENTRE  
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH BENGAL  
SCHEDULE FOR REFRESHER COURSE IN WOMEN'S STUDIES (ID) (Tentative)  
January 12 - 25, 2021  
SECOND WEEK**

DATE	TIME	TOPIC	RESOURCE PERSON/ ADJUDICATOR
<b>19.01.2021 Tuesday</b>	<b>10:30 AM – 12:00 NOON</b>	<b>SEMINAR PRESENTATION  (Group A)</b>	<b>Prof Manjula Bera Dept of Bengali, NBU &amp; Dr Manisha Jha Dept. of Hindi,NBU</b>
	<b>12:00 NOON – 1:30 PM</b>	<b>SEMINAR PRESENTATION  (Group –B)</b>	<b>Prof Manjula Bera Dept of Bengali, NBU &amp; Dr Manisha Jha Dept. of Hindi,NBU</b>
	<b>Lunch Break: 1:30 PM – 2.:15 PM</b>		
	<b>2:15 PM – 3:45 PM</b>	<b>SEMINAR PRESENTATION  (Group-C)</b>	<b>Dr. Utpal Mandal Dept. of Bengali,NBU &amp; Dr Zinia Mitra Director,CWS NBU</b>



	<b>3:45 PM – 5:15 PM</b>	<b>SEMINAR PRESENTATION (Group-D)</b>	<b>Dr. Utpal Mandal Dept. of Bengali,NBU  &amp; &amp; Dr Binayak Roy Dept. of English,NBU</b>
<b>20.01.2021 Wednesday</b>	<b>10:30 AM – 12:00 NOON</b>	<b>SEMINAR PRESENTATION (Group-E)</b>	<b>Prof. K L Das Dept. of Philosophy NBU &amp; Prof Soumitra De Dept. of Political Science NBU</b>
	<b>12:00 NOON – 1:30 PM</b>	<b>SEMINAR PRESENTATION (Group-F)</b>	<b>Prof. K L Das Dept. of Philosophy NBU &amp; Prof Soumitra De Dept. of Political Science NBU</b>
	<b>Lunch Break: 1:30 PM – 2.:15 PM</b>		
	<b>2:15 PM – 3:45 PM</b>	<b>Crimes against Women: A Focus on some Legal Measures</b>	<b>Prof Sanchari Roy Mukherjee Dept of Economics, NBU</b>

	3:45 PM – 5:15 PM	SEMINAR PRESENTATION (Group-H)	Dr. Indira Lepcha Dept. of Geography, NBU & Dr. Beethika Moni Dutta, Centre for Women's Studies, NBU.
21.01.2021 Thursday	10:30 AM – 12:00 NOON	SEMINAR PRESENTATION (Group-I)	Dr. Dahlia Bhattacharya Dept. of History, NBU & Dr L K Padhi Dept. of Philosophy, NBU
	12:00 NOON – 1:30 PM	SEMINAR PRESENTATION (Group-J)	Dr. Dahlia Bhattacharya Dept. of History, NBU & Dr L K Padhi Dept. of Philosophy, NBU
	Lunch Break: 1:30 PM – 2.:15 PM		
	2:15 PM – 3:45 PM	Empowering Girls against Violence: Methods and Techniques of Counselling	Sunita Seshadri Director, NIPCCD, Mohali, Punjab
	3:45 PM – 5:15 PM	Role of Women in Globalised World	Prof. Debika Saha Dept. of Philosophy, NBU
22.01.2021 Friday	10:30 AM – 12:00 NOON	EXAMINATION	
	12:00 NOON – 1:30 PM	Stress Management	Prof. Debabrata Mitra Dept. of Commerce NBU

<b>Lunch Break: 1:30 PM – 2.:15 PM</b>			
	<b>2:15 PM – 3:45 PM</b>	<b>SEMINAR PRESENTATION  (Group-G)</b>	<b>Dr. Indira Lepcha</b> <b>Dept. of Geography, NBU</b> <b>&amp;</b> <b>Prof. Sanchari Roy Mukherjee, Dept. of Economics, NBU</b>
	<b>3:45 PM – 5:15 PM</b>		<b>Interactive session</b>
<b>23.01.2021</b>  <b><i>BIRTHDAY OF NETAJI / HOLIDAY</i></b>  <b>Saturday</b>			
<b>24.01.2021</b>  <b><i>SUNDAY / HOLIDAY</i></b>  <b>SUNDAY</b>			
<b>25.01.2021</b>  <b>Monday</b>	<b>11:00 AM – 12:00 NOON</b>	<b>Special Lecture by Chief Guest</b>	<b>Prof Paromita Chakraborty</b> <b>Dept. of English</b> <b>Jadavpur University</b>

**VALEDICTORY SESSION**

Valedictory Address: Dr. Anjan Chakrabarti, Director, UGC-HRDC, NBU.

Guest of Honour (s):

Prof. Dr. Subires Bhattacharyya, Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor, The University of North Bengal,

Dr. Dilip Kr. Sarkar, Registrar, The University of North Bengal,

Prof.(Dr) Bikash Ch.. Paul, Dean, Faculty Council for PG studies in Science, NBU

Prof. Dr. Sanchari Roy Mukherjee, Dean, Faculty Council for PG studies in Arts, Commerce &  
Law, NBU

**Keynote Address by Chief Guest: Prof Paromita Chakraborty**

**Dept. of English, Jadavpur University**

Address by few participants.

Vote of thanks: *Dr. Sanjib Bhattacharya, Associate Professor-Deputy Director, HRDC, NBU*  
*(Internal Coordinator)*

*Prof. Dr. Debika Saha & Dr. Zinia Mitra (Jt. Coordinators)*

**12:00  
NOON –  
1:30 PM**

## **B. Activities During COVID-19 Pandemic**

### **ICSSR-ERC sponsored National Webinar-on Adjusting to the New Normal: Women's Perspectives**

#### **Introduction:**

The Centre for Women's Studies, University of North Bengal, in collaboration with the Hiralal Majumdar Memorial College for Women (HMMCW), Kolkata, West Bengal, organised a National Webinar on the theme "Adjusting to the New Normal: Women's Perspectives", on 21-22 July 2020. The Webinar was sponsored by the esteemed Indian Council of Social Science Research – Eastern Regional Centre (ICSSR-ERC).

*The objective of the programme is to address the issues facing by different section of the society due to COVID-19 Pandemic and adjusting with the new normal situation.*


## ADJUSTING TO THE NEW NORMAL WOMEN'S PERSPECTIVES

**ORGANIZED BY:**  
Centre for Women's Studies, North Bengal University, West Bengal


**IN COLLABORATION WITH:**  
Hiralal Majumdar Memorial College for Women, Kolkata, West Bengal

2-DAY  
NATIONAL  
WEBINAR  
21<sup>ST</sup> - 22<sup>ND</sup> JULY  
2020

**-KEYNOTE SPEAKERS-**




**DR. SOMA GHOSH**  
Former Chair, Zakir Husain Centre for Educational Studies, School of Social Sciences Jawahar Nehru University, New Delhi




**DR. BEETHIKA MONI DATTA**  
Retired Professor, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai


**-RESOURCE PERSONS-**




**DR. DEBIKA SAHA**  
Prof. of Economics, North Bengal University, Distt. Faculty Council of PG Studies/UGC, Convener and Law and Finance Director, Capitalist Women's Studies, North Bengal University, Darjeeling, West Bengal




**DR. ANINDYA GHOSH**  
Associate Professor, Department of English, Mahadevpranda Mahavidyalaya Manasroopore Barrackpore Affiliated to West Bengal State University, Barisal




**DR. ANINDYA GHOSH**  
Director, Centre for Women's Studies, North Bengal University, Darjeeling, West Bengal




**DR. ANINDYA GHOSH**  
Assistant Professor & Head, Postgraduate Department of Zoology, Vidyasani College, Thakurpukur, Kolkata




**DR. ANINDYA GHOSH**  
Principal, Hiralal Majumdar Memorial College for Women, (Affiliated under West Bengal State University), Dakshineswar, Kolkata




**DR. ANINDYA GHOSH**  
Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, Barrackpore Rajarajun Sanshodhan College



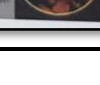
**DR. ANINDYA GHOSH**  
Associate Professor (Unit-I) Department of Botany, Former Director, Centre for Women's Studies, P.D. Women's College, Midnapore



**DR. ANINDYA GHOSH**  
Associate Professor, Post Graduate Department of Bengali, Anand College, Kolkata



**DR. ANINDYA GHOSH**  
Associate Professor & Head, Department of Zoology, Government Girls' General Degree College, Kolkata



**DR. ANINDYA GHOSH**  
Associate Professor, Department of Zoology, Vidyasani University, Midnapore, West Bengal

## ADJUSTING TO THE NEW NORMAL WOMEN'S PERSPECTIVES

**THEME OF THE WEBINAR-**

Life in the times of pandemic has been of fear and uncertainty. Although the virus infects people indiscriminately, it has been found to have different effects on different groups, communities, ethnicities but the stark divide have emerged with regard to gender. Thus, viewing the pandemic through a gender lens is essential in order to address the differential impact of the pandemic on the genders. COVID 19 will have a long term impact on the family, society, communities, and on the gender relations. Lack of gender responsive pandemic control policies will put women at the risk of being neglected yet again. The webinar will focus on women's response to the pandemic and how they are adjusting to the 'new normal' in their everyday lives.

**KEY POINTS...**

- Registration free
- Platform : Google meet
- Meeting link will be sent to the registered participants through e-mail
- Maximum number of participants 250 (on first come first served basis)
- Participants will be given e-certificates after submission of feedback forms
- Link of Feedback forms shall be given in chat box at the end of programme

**REGISTRATION LINK-**  
<https://forms.gle/ymbkFxXqeZe9A3t>

**FURTHER COMMUNICATION:**  
<mailto:webinarcbwms@gmail.c>

**TIMING**  
**4-6 PM**

### Day 1: 21<sup>st</sup> July 2020

The Webinar commenced at **4.00pm** with a welcome note by Dr. Beethika Moni Datta, Assistant Professor, Centre for Women's Studies, North Bengal University who also conducted the Webinar on the 1<sup>st</sup> day. She handed over to Prof. Debika Saha, Director, Centre for Women's Studies, North Bengal University, who in her address welcomed the dignitaries and the esteemed speakers. She also addressed the theme of the Webinar and mentioned that the pandemic has forced women to compromise on both psychological and physical state. On one hand, women in the normal situation are constrained by various social norms that restrict their mobility and now during the pandemic, mobility of privileged women like us are also restricted, creating psychological issues.

Following the Director's welcome address, Dr. Soma Ghosh, Principal, Hiralal Majumdar Memorial College for Women, Kolkata, welcomed the dignitaries, respected Keynote speakers,

the other Resource Persons and participants to the Webinar. Dr. Ghosh also spoke about the College where she is the Principal and also its involvement in organising webinars at regular intervals during the pandemic. This feature of the esteemed institution received recognition from other Higher studies institutions in Kolkata and within the state of West Bengal.

Prof. Sanchari Roy Mukherjee, Dean, Faculty Council of PG Studies in Arts, Commerce and Law, and former Director, Centre for Women's Studies, North Bengal University, welcomed the dignitaries, the esteemed speakers and the participants on behalf of the University. She also expressed her gratitude to ICSSR-ERC for sponsoring this event.

Prof. Mukherjee further introduced the theme noting the following that the topic itself speaks volumes. Her speech is as follows:

“First, the new normal that we all are having to deal with, amidst the pandemic and secondly to view the impact of the pandemic in our daily lives, and finally, to assess this impact from women's perspectives.

The theme for this 2 day long webinar is an outcome of informal exchange of thoughts and ideas, during lockdown and post lockdown, with fellow women professionals in various disciplines of academics. Working women professionals are used to balancing the personal and professional life, more often as a matter of routine and habit. And, this balancing act has been a focus of gender and feminist research for long. But things have changed since the time the pandemic brought the world to a standstill. And humanity had to evolve to handle the contingency through the concept of “new normal”. The new normal actually threw up newer challenges and what has been a habit or routine, was found to be woefully inadequate. The women had to evolve much more than their male counterparts in the face of fear and uncertainty.

Now, while the virus was infecting people indiscriminately, it was found to have a differential impact on different groups, communities, ethnicities and a stark divide have emerged with regard to gender. Besides the impact on health, the pandemic is expected to have a severe impact on long term social, cultural and economic impact which the webinar intends to address.

Having said this, the theme further tries to locate women in situations where the society is getting into the moral value of respecting only “bare life”. To protect this bare life, we are willing to compromise on the normal conditions of life, our social relationships, our work, even

friendships, and affections. In these tumultuous times, humanity and human sensitivity are being compromised under the spell of fear, fear ranging from material to personal domains. How will women deal with this new normal? These aspects will be dealt with by our prime speakers.

Let us now see what are the aspects in our working lives, that have been affected by the pandemic - under lockdown and post lockdown. The pressure of housework was so compelling, especially for women, that at some point these nurturing and care giving minds were beginning to snap. Women were now entrusted with homeschooling, household chores, taking care of elderly, etc., and each one of us realized that every matter was now taking up the space that the woman needed and the work was eating up the 'me' time. And this was creating an identity crisis. In the next phase, came the by now familiar concept of 'work from home'. Both the genders, who were fortunate enough to have retained their jobs, were desperately running short of time. This is a critical issue for women who actually are finding it difficult to differentiate between 'work from home' and 'work for home'. However, a possible positive outcome is the sharing of work space by both the spouses and therefore, I am hopeful that such situations would improve gender equality and gender relations. However, there is also the underlying apprehension that The social and economic implications of the pandemic may often be disastrous. With precipitation of economic recession both in India and globally, it will just be a matter of time when the statistics will display the disproportionate number of women workers who have been displaced from their jobs with negligible or no income earning opportunities in sight. The downsizing of business houses, will cause the axe to fall first on women, since we still carry the social baggage that women are less productive than men and men are still the breadwinners. Thus, our society is more tolerant towards women getting laid off from work than men getting unemployed. Are we really willing to accept this new normal? That regress one debilitating social norm on another.

These women will not find anything to widen their choices, and it is going to have debilitating impact on their position in our society. While we are struggling to grapple with the pandemic and the economic slowdown, women will experience weakening of their economic security which in turn will subject them to a violence of a different kind. Erosion of income generation activities for women will have a long term impact on women's economic agency. And the fact remains that it is extremely difficult for women to make a comeback in the competitive job market. Whatever opportunities will be made available, it will be the men who will once again get



leverage out of it. History will just repeat itself. Hence, the new normal that we are trying to acclimatise with, will not be easy to deal with for women.

Unfortunately, women's engagements in productive, reproductive and community activities, mostly remain invisible in terms of market. With the pandemic and economic slowdown, unequal access to land, credit and infrastructure, women's "ability to make choices", will be severely underscored and thus it will be all the more difficult for women to adjust to the new normal.

Finally, a women's perspective or viewing the pandemic crisis through a gender lens is essential in order to ameliorate the social and economic distress that both men and women are subject to – supporting livelihoods and families in distress. COVID 19 will have a long term impact on both the genders, on the economy, on the society, communities, livelihoods and on gender relations. Deepening of poverty will further subjugate women to hardship and lowered status in society. Women's movements thus need to be invigorated to prevent this from occurring. However, on an optimistic note, while many of us are struggling to adjust to the new normal, women's ability to adapt and mould themselves in crisis situations will surely prevent them from succumbing to the unprecedented and extraordinary circumstances that we are forced to endure. With this introductory note on the theme, I declare the Webinar open to fruitful deliberations on the theme. Prof. Mukherjee hoped that the Webinar translated into more actionables in handling the new normal from women's perspectives."

After the introductory address on the theme which provided the various dimensions on adjusting to the New Normal by women, Dr. Beethika Moni Datta , introduced the Keynote speaker of the first day of the Webinar, Prof. Karuna Chanana, former Chair and Professor, Zakir Husain Centre for Educational Studies, School of Social Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. Her keynote was on 'Family Values and Culture in India during the time of the Pandemic'. A summary of her speech is provided below:

Professor Chanana began by thanking Professor Mukherjee, Dr. Datta and Dr. Saha for their invitation to this webinar and proceeded to say the following:

"It was indeed a privilege for me to be invited to share my views on the Family values and culture in times of global pandemic in India.

India is a diverse, plural and multicultural society. Therefore, I would like to underscore that It is difficult to generalize about family values and culture. Yet, it is possible to talk of family which is common to all Indians, cutting across different dimensions. For example, traditional family based on collective identity has played an important role in the lives of Indians. It has been joint or extended among the upper and middle strata and is an important social institution in the lives of Indians. However, nuclear family has become more common in modern times as members move to urban areas and metros in search of livelihoods. This development had begun to erode the importance of collective versus the individual identity. While disrupting the family lives of many the lockdown during the pandemic also reinforced the traditional collective identity of a large number of Indians. It allowed more time for social interaction, emotional and social bonding with the family, quite a few of which became joint and extended or multigenerational during the pandemic and associated lockdown. The latter heightened the impact of the pandemic. So it is more relevant sometimes to talk of the lockdown during the pandemic rather than just the pandemic.

Media has highlighted the positive and negative impact of the global pandemic and work from home as the new normal. I would add schooling and formal education at home also as another new normal. I will start with the negative and move on to the positive impact. What is to be noted is that the pandemic has resulted in the merging, overlapping, and interface of the physical space within the home with the social and work spaces which were distinctly separate most of the time during the day and the year. It is a critical change. I would be focusing mainly on the middle class with which I am more familiar.

### **Critical Parameters:**

While talking about the family, three critical parameters have to be taken into consideration. First, availability of physical space in the home-e.g., if there are extra rooms or ample physical space for work at home or school at home and it does not impinge on family members' marked spaces in the pre pandemic phase. In the middle class homes very few families have sufficient or extra space to keep aside for work and for children's online classes. The result is likely to cause friction in relationships due to constant proximity. Housewives have lost their physical and social space when all the members are at home and are demanding time and space for their tasks. I will take it up later.

Moreover, lack of physical space resulted in being cooped up in small spaces and has adversely affected marital relationships which also I will discuss later. Second critical parameter is whether the wife is working or not and whether the working couples have children. Third, absence or presence of household help on whom most middle class families are dependent whether part time or full time makes a difference. Those who have sufficient space and full time live-in domestic help, their life styles may not be impacted as much as those of the rest. But the former are a minority.

Add to the three above dimensions, two more, that of age and whether one is alone or with someone, or with family, needs to be addressed. Age matters i.e., whether one is young, middle aged or old e.g., the elderly being alone or even as couples have a rough time especially when it is lockdown and no domestic help or home delivery is available. Those who are alone are likely to suffer the loneliness of individual isolation. I can cite my own example when I was locked down in Delhi for two and a half months. Added to Covid concern were the frequent earthquakes of mild intensity with epicentre in Delhi - a rare phenomenon. There were 12 shocks in 2 months of lockdown. So you can imagine the feeling of being utterly alone and helpless especially when innumerable negative Whatsapp messages were flooding one's mobile.

Think of the working couples with office at home and their small children who also have school at home and require parental supervision. And if they do not have live-in domestic help they face a stressful situation. On the other hand, work from home allows parents the flexibility of spending quality time with the children. Additionally, since children are attending online classes they can support them in their assignments. So there are positives and negatives of the impact of the pandemic on the family.

Then there are the housewives who had the physical space of the home to themselves when the children and husbands were gone away to school and work. They had created social spaces for themselves in the neighborhood through what are known as kitty parties, card games and religious gatherings. They have lost all of them. I will discuss their significance in the lives of these women through the Case study of Mrs. Kher, formerly my immediate neighbor. The Khers were a joint family with three generations living together. With rising income they purchased a farm house not far from where they lived. They also needed more space in the house as the grandchildren were growing up. When the farmhouse was ready all of them shifted there. But the

elder Khers came back because Mrs. Kher had all her friends here and missed her kitty parties, card games and religious gatherings. This went on till Mr. Kher expired suddenly. Thereafter, her son took her to the farmhouse but even now the flat next to mine is used for her meetings. She comes and entertains her friends because she knows that so many of them will not come to the farmhouse. Needless to say that, during the lockdown these have stopped.

### **Disrupted families and lives:**

Lives of so many families have been disrupted. One of the negative effects on the family of the pandemic is the fear of and stigma attached to Covid 19 due to half baked information. This led to violence against the medical and para medical staff who returned home to their families after taking care of the Covid patients or Covid related activities. Instead of praising them and supporting them, the neighbourhood residents shunned them in order to protect their own families. Not only the medical and para medical staff, the common citizens suffered the most. There are innumerable stories of persons who suffered from Covid 19 and their neighbours, friends and relatives shunning them. Recently, I read about a family which lived in their own house in Bengaluru on the ground floor. They had rented the first and second floors. All of them, a couple and their two children, suffered from Covid and were hospitalized. When they returned after recovery, their tenants had vacated the flats and the neighbours did not want any interaction with them. They were glad that lockdown happened. Otherwise they could not predict the behaviour of the neighbours. This is not an isolated case. It is happening in neighbourhood after neighbourhood.

The worst are the families whose member/members died of Covid and they are not allowed to cremate or bury the dead. This is due to the fear that the cremation or burial grounds will be infected. But government rules and apathy also leads to very horrific times for the family. Every day I read news of such havoc caused to the families not just by the Covid but the apathy of the hospitals, of the government and its ever changing rules and the general ignorance about the disease. It is causing upheaval among the families across the board. Sometimes, even family members are no better. Recently, a wife returned from Chandigarh after three months of lockdown to her home, her husband and 7 year old son in Bangalore. The husband asked her to spend 14 days of quarantine elsewhere before she entered the house. Her entreaties fell on deaf ears. Finally, an NGO had to intervene and counsel the husband who agreed to home quarantine.

It raises some questions: why did the husband not work it out before his wife came, was their relationship problematic or was he really ignorant?

The immediate impact of the lockdown, not the pandemic, was the loss of jobs overnight and also shelter. Even the educated professionals were not spared in the services sector. And if the person who lost the job was the only earner then it created havoc because of lack of resources. Even those who have not lost jobs are anticipating that this may happen. The insurance companies see a change in risk perceptions of those who are seeking insurance coverage these days. Middle class is taking insurance cover for health costs of Covid and also for future job loss. Until last year they were saving for their children's education and marriage. Also they are not interested in purchasing property for fear of not being able to pay loan instalments in case of job loss. Cars are also off the priority list. A survey conducted by Kanter on behalf of Max Life insurance concludes that concerns are short term and not long term. They are not thinking of retirement when income insecurity is staring them in the face. They prefer term life insurance which will cover the loss of the breadwinner. (Times News Network) TOI, 17 July, p.17, Bengaluru edition)

Another adverse effect is that domestic violence has increased. It has been noted by the NGOs and brought to the attention of relevant authorities to take action on this front. Marriages are also under stress as reported by the marriage counsellors. So is mental stress and depression on the increase as per the reports of the social counsellors and psychiatrists. The most depressing news was the exodus of the countless migrant workers from cities and towns to villages who started walking, regardless of the distance, in the absence of public transport, buses or trains.

The exodus of migrants has been highlighted and their plight continues to receive a lot of press coverage. But one point that struck the sociologist in me was that they were going home to their families and expected to survive and be welcomed in spite of stretched economic resources. All those who were interviewed by the media said that they would rather be with family for emotional support and security, and were ready to contribute through labour to the meagre resources of the family. This highlighted the connect with the family even by the marginalized.

### **Revival of family spirit and values:**

On the positive side, there were accounts of working professionals going at great lengths to get their elderly parents to their home during the lockdown. They took special permission to go by

road to do so. E.g. someone drove 1400 kms one way from Mumbai to Delhi and bring back the parents. Or when the partial lockdown started several working sons and daughters went to their parents to spend some time with them. There were many stories of young working people getting locked down with their parents on short visits. They shared their experience and said that they have spent quality time after a long hiatus, with their parents, and bonded with them. In the process they honed their culinary skills about traditional cooking. It also brought to the fore the values like care for the elderly parents. Those who were locked down with parents were happy to be with them and enriched their family life through togetherness. It has made people think of the importance of being together and to slow down. It is compelling people to reflect, rethink and re-evaluate their relationships. Some found it magical to relive the past moments in the present. Playing indoor games, telling stories and engaging in multifarious activities with children, who could not go out to play with friends made living together joyful.

It also increased the self confidence of those who had to depend entirely on the capacities and skills of family members, without any domestic help, leading to healthy division of labour, cooperation and self reliance across the generations. From women's perspective it is significant that the men who did not share household tasks with the wives or mothers pre pandemic, began to do so when they were locked down and domestic help was not coming for work.

At the other end of the spectrum, work from home enabled young parents to bond with their children as never before. They were playing music, having art and dance sessions and playing indoor games with them. They realized the need to spend more time with their children. Online classes have brought the classroom into the home and dependence on technology. Parental support became critical. Art, music, and yoga classes meant for one's family and children were expanded online to include the neighbours and their children. This forged a collective identity among neighbours, beyond those who were related by blood or affinity, which has been the base of Indian family. Others have experimented with various cooking dishes to the delight of the family members and have expanded to cook for the neighbours within the residential compound in which they live.

I will end by giving an example of family values taking precedence in a new form in the contemporary times in the urban apartment complexes and residential neighbourhoods or gated communities as they are being referred to in the print media. From the initial reaction of fear,

boycott, forcing the Covid-19 patients, suspected or otherwise, to stay out of the complex, there is a turnaround. It is still happening now, but quite a few associations of residents have changed their stance while securing the complexes in which they live. There are two notable aspects: First, enforcement of official rules and regulations to keep the infection out and ensuring compliance by residents; Second, now that it is common knowledge that most of the patients do not need hospitalization and are better at home, the associations and its members are reaching out to the Covid patients and support them in staying within their residence along with informing the local authorities who monitor the cases and sanitize the area. They offer all help and support and their good wishes. Recently, the Federation of RWAs has offered to the government their clubhouses, community centres, etc. for converting them into Covid care centres so that the local residents do not have to go, unless necessary, to the hospitals. Coincidentally, the TOI of 18 July reported that it has been agreed by the government and RWAs have been asked to volunteer while the details are being worked out.

This is happening in the urban villages and slum resettlements also. I can say that about Delhi, where Covid 19 is rampant yet there are islands of safety. I think this is a very good example of the emergence of collective identity cutting across region, religion, language etc., since the residents belong to diverse regions and communities. The RWAs exemplify that the extended family is no longer just of those who are related to you but are your neighbours thereby reinforcing the collective Indian identity in a new form of community.

### **The future: A Poser**

Some of the companies have given up office space to save on rent while their employees are working from home. Companies are asking their employees if they would need or want office space before giving it up. Will work from home become the norm? How long will it be? What impact will it have on the family especially on the women, working or non working?

Another impact of work from home that we have to think of is its impact on women's work. Hiring agencies anticipate that more women will get jobs if work from home becomes the norm. I think from a women's perspective it may be good news for those professionals whose children are sufficiently grown up but the existing time framework may have to be changed for those with very young children. The situation is very complicated right now to be able to predict which way the job front and its interface with home front with women at the centre will take place.

Prof. Chanana set the ball rolling with her kin observations on familial relationships and their fall outs during the pandemic. This provided a window for all to identify such observations in their own lives and make possible amends to them. Prof. Chanana's speech was briefly summarised by Prof. Sanchari Roy Mukherjee, who also made a few observations regarding family space and how the contraction of space for women has been affecting their daily lives under the lockdown. After this, the interactive session took place where Prof. Chanana addressed the questions placed before her.

After the Keynote address, the technical sessions commenced with the first Resource Person, Dr. Rama Kar, Associate Professor of Zoology (retd.), PD Women's College, Jalpaiguri. She chose to speak on "Effect of New Normal in our day to day living". Her speech is summarised below:

History is replete with changed modalities of living a life after any pandemic; be it Spanish flu, Malaria, Pox, HIV, Ebola etc. Despite loss of individual lives, mankind as a whole, have found ways to carry on with life. One might jocosely say that such

living. People have learnt the efficacy of health and Hygiene, caring for household members, pandemics are Nature's own method of purging and purification.

The current pandemic has forced us to change our day to day thriftiness, understand nature better, becoming self dependent, discovering hidden abilities of blooming themselves artistically, learning digitally, and be present through social media.

But it has brought forth some antipathy too, towards our own fellow being. The domestic violence, intolerance to other people is on the rise. It has also made adolescent and elderly gloomy. Crores of people have been treated as lesser mortals who practically are the edifice of our superstructure in terms of say, massive buildings, industrial complexes, Artisan activities and so on. These people are faceless, nameless and are just some numbers in media and government machineries.

It seems that humanity is at stake, post pandemic. But then, Nature again is blooming and we are part of Nature. Mankind is on move for a better future.

Dr. Kar touched a chord in the heart by her soulful introspection of the pre-Covid times and the positive features in the present pandemic situation. Her's was a very optimistic speech which ensured a positive start to the Webinar. Dr. Beethika Mani Datta introduced the next Resource



Person of the Webinar, Dr. Madhumita Sen, Head and Associate Professor of Sociology, General Degree College for Women, Kolkata. Dr. Sen spoke on “Gender Role Convergence”. The summary of her speech is provided below:

The worldwide outbreak of COVID 19 has impacted and changed our lives suddenly and caught us unprepared. As it did not allow us much time, it took months to realise and to digest and to believe the ‘cruel’ fact that, life has to be redefined and restructured.

This brief talk focuses on how gender roles are being affected by the pandemic. Gender stereotypes, in normal times, is so deeply ingrained in our social fabric that it escapes any conscious attention unless there is an exception that makes it visible or splashes it into the news.

Gender stereotype, an ascription, is a generalised view or preconception about attributes or the roles that are or ought to be possessed / performed by women and men. It existed both in foraging societies and in more socio-economically complex ones.

Women performing in the domestic world and tended to be employed in people oriented service occupations, while men are occupied with physically intensive and competitive sectors. COVID 19 has tilted the job balance. The culture of remote working seems to be dominating the occupational world with all interference of the age long tradition of division of labour at the domestic spaces. It seems that there has been a true convergence of gender roles with sharing of household duties and chores. Men playing the enabler role in the home are on the uptick in general. However the ownership perception has not undergone a change and domestic violence is on the rise.

In families where the man has been laid off or on furlough, there has also been some relaxation for the women but we see overall productivity having gone down for her. Stark differences surface depending on the location as well. It does not seem likely that the slight hints of role reversal in small pockets will be going to continue.

Dr. Sen, in her lucid speech, provided a thorough exploration of the gender role convergence in households where both the man and the spouse are working. The third Resource Person of the technical session on the first day of the Webinar was Dr. Sravasti Chattopadhyay, Associate Professor, Department of English, Mahadevananda Mahavidyalaya, Monirampore, Barrackpore,

District North 24 Parganas, West Bengal. She spoke at length on her personal experiences and observations on “Living in a Gated Community during the Pandemic: Women’s Perspective”.

The presentation incorporates both personal experiences and shared ones where two issues have been discussed in detail. The first is the condition of the women of the households of the gated community in relation to their domestic helps, primarily women, who live outside the premises. The second one is an examination of the impact of Whatsapp posts within primarily women groups living in the gated community.

In the first case, the difficulties of both the homemaker and the working women are discussed, and how the underprivileged domestic helps actually work as the support system of the so called privileged women living in the apartments. The situation of the women domestic helps and their dilemma is also analyzed, particularly those who are migrant workers and cannot receive the benefit of the public distribution system. The presentation attempts to look into ways in which women can enter into symbiotic relationships with their domestic helps and also attempt to include men and children into the household chores by degendering work and by allowing mistakes to be a part of the learning process.

In the second case, complications that crop up when women are cooped up in apartments and take to Whatsapp posts to vent themselves are explored with a pinch of humour, though not any less sympathetic for that. A false sense of well being, a certain kind of one upmanship and its associated stress are apparent in such group posts of sharing and commenting. What come out through this scrutiny are two. First, one needs to be extra cautious while writing a conversation, because the tone with which it is written may not be the tone in which it is read. This is an area of particular concern because it is not necessary that people living in large gated communities exchanging conversation virtually are truly known to one another, and the pandemic rules disallow a face to face conversation. Secondly, it suggests that women need to develop a sense of humour to be able to acknowledge their fears and weaknesses and treat them on a lighter note. Every family or personal activity need not end up as a success story for public display.

Dr. Chattopadhyaya’s speech provided a glimpse of life itself within the walls of a gated community. Her vibrant speech and lucid style of exploring the issues was very appealing and caught the interest of all. Her observations on the lives of women in the community were sharp and out of the box but very easy to associate with. Her presentation was followed by the

presentation by the final Resource Person of the day, Dr. Malabika Bhattacharjee, Head and Assistant Professor, Postgraduate Department of Zoology, Vivekananda College, Thakurpukur, Kolkata. Dr. Bhattacharjee spoke on “**Disappearing Classrooms**”. She said that given the unprecedented nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, school and college students are being 'home-schooled' from March 24 and subsequently, online classes have replaced traditional/on-campus classes. The Indian Educational scenario is thus undergoing a paradigm shift. Online classes are no more a luxury, it has become a necessity. In this backdrop of changing times a small survey has been done with the purpose of assessing the mentors and learners perspectives in this post-COVID new normal situation. For the purpose a detailed questionnaire format in the Google Form was prepared and the link was shared to as many target responders possible. The target responders included undergraduate and post-graduate students, research scholars and post-graduate fellows as well as Faculty of College, University and Scientific Institutes. All together there were 271 responders to the online Google Form that was widely circulated through emails and through WhatsApp. Majority reflected that the internet seemed to be the major problem of online classes while flexibility in the online classroom was the major advantage. In spite of the pandemic, on-campus classes seemed to be the major choice. Thus in the present scenario, Blended Learning seemed to be the best suited methodology.

That was one aspect of the study, but the other aspect is, how has this New Normal affecting the Women Academicians as a whole. The present day women are known to handle both the household work and her professional responsibility. These are two distinct separate domains and space. So the moment they merge, it tends to overlap and the female academician loses her individual space and her me-time. Staying at home she is handling both her household and professional responsibility which does not now have any time frame. She is constantly juggling work and family which almost makes her work 24 hours a day. Work load has increased manifold which at times is exhausting, both physically and mentally. From the Academic View Point, Female Academicians are usually more sensitive to emotional needs of the students thus providing extensive psychological and physiological mentoring. Thus they are now acting as **extended-mother's** counselling them and that goes on almost throughout the day as the students are in constant touch via various networking platforms. This constant mentoring becomes very essential to keep the energy of the students upbeat and to keep them away from the sense of isolation they might be facing.

So this new normal has blurred the personal and professional space of the Women Academicians; has blurred the personal and professional time-frame thereby placing them in the role of counsellors, extended mother's and agony aunts for their students apart from delivering knowledge. And I would proudly say that Women can take up any challenge and in plenty of colleges I am seeing such extended Mother's standing thick and thin by their students and family, thus steering them smoothly through this unprecedented phenomenon called COVID.

After a very skilful and lucid exploration of an important issue under present circumstances, by Dr. Bhattacharya, a brief interactive session ensued where questions from participants were placed before the speakers followed by a discussion. The day ended with vote of thanks being delivered by Dr. Beethika Moni Datta and Prof. Sanchari Roy Mukherjee, on behalf of University of North Bengal.

### **Day 2: 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2020**

The 2<sup>nd</sup> day of the Webinar on ‘Adjusting to the New Normal: Women’s Perspectives’ was held on 22<sup>nd</sup> of July 2020. This day, HMMC College, Kolkata, took the lead and conducted and moderated the Webinar deliberations. Following the Welcome address by Dr. Soma Ghosh, Principal, HMMC College, Kolkata, the Keynote Speaker, Prof. Lata Narayan, former Professor at the department of Lifelong Learning, TISS, Mumbai, was introduced to all. Prof. Narayan greeted one and all and mentioned about the importance of this Webinar and motivated the organizers and Resource Persons with her encouraging words. Prof. Narayan spoke at length from her own experiences on the present situation from a woman’s perspective. She very skillfully alluded to the feminist perspective in her speech which actually gave a new dimension to the theme and enriched the Webinar. The title of her speech was “Expressions of Gender and Identity in the Current Context” Her address is summarized below:

Professor Narayan spoke about the pandemic within the domain of patriarchy, through the experiences of school teachers teaching children in slum communities. She related this in four themes - Family, Community, Work and Policy. In the family, the foundations of the household roles - bread winner, care giver and the various relationships have been shaken. The woman often bears the brunt of this new formation. Household labour, physical and emotional

caregiving continues to be her responsibility with the added responsibility of learning new skills under great pressure for teaching.

All the teachers reported that the man still wields the power at home, and usually there is no support from other family members. Women continued to bear the brunt of a range of violence from subtle to harsh physical domestic violence. This leads to resentment, not being appreciated, and low depression. It was interesting to note that the markets opened first with the sale of liquor, which is major cause of domestic violence.

Working from home during the lockdown is viewed with skepticism by organisations, and the assumption is that teachers will not teach effectively from home. The management often does not understand the pressures when the boundaries between home and work get diffused.

There is urgent need for gendered policies during such unprecedented times. There is also a strong need to encourage initiatives to build community based on inclusiveness and compassion.

After the very illuminating speech, during the interactive session, Dr. Sonali Mukherjee, Assistant Professor of Economics, HMMC College, summarized Prof. Narayan's speech. Prof. Sanchari Roy Mukherjee made certain observations based on Prof. Narayan's speech where she mentioned the aftermath of the lockdown as having a debilitating impact on the mental health of women in the family. The lack of 'personal' space and without any 'me' time, the women were feeling the pressure of familial responsibilities. Further working women were finding it difficult to maintain distinct spaces and time frame for 'work from home' and 'work for home'.

Prof. Narayan also participated in the interactive session and answered to the queries of the participants. The next Resource Person in Technical Session II on the second day of the Webinar was Dr. Soma Ghosh, Principal, HMMC College, Kolkata. Her presentation was on "Unlocking the Mode of Governance in Higher Education", the summary of which is provided below:

**Prelude:**

Pandemic has opened up new domains of thoughts in all spheres of life, including education. In the era of pandemic, there has been a reform in governance of higher education in respect to curricula and funding, as well as its administrative aspects. Higher education institutions are gradually becoming more responsive to the needs of the community, along with its primary role as knowledge transmitter. A new leadership style offers a new promise for a new era of global

market. In recent era, the context in which higher education institutions have to work is mainly determined by two major phenomena: 'Globalisation' and 'Economic crises.

With this backdrop, academic leaders are further challenged in this pandemic situation. Higher Education institutes throughout the globe have shut down their campuses for safety of their students and staff. But learning and knowledge transmission cannot be stopped and therefore higher education institutes are being compelled to make a shift towards digital learning and virtual administrative operations. This is a real time challenge for the institutions, both in terms of competition in global academic market and related financial scarcity. This has put additional stress and burden on the academic leaders in management of education, who are already strained due to the pandemic.

Technology can facilitate the process and virtual situations are available, but fund is a question for many institutions and hence they trail behind both in respect to competition in global market and to deliver quality service to the stakeholders. Further, e-learning and virtual administrative processes are keeping all very busy with worksheets, video lectures, assignments, administrative work loads, making things more difficult for women academic leaders, preoccupied with heavy domestic work pressure. Crisis of sustainability and difficulties in their ability to draw a demarcation line between personal and professional are in true sense creating a traumatic situation for the women academic managers.

Having gained experience as a head of the institution, Dr. Ghosh could enrich us with her experiential speech on Governance during the pandemic. Following the interesting speech by Dr. Soma Ghosh, the next Resource Person, Dr. Molly Ghosh, Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, Barrackpore Rastraguru Surendranath College, was invited to make her presentation. Dr. Molly Ghosh made her presentation on a very important issue, i.e., on "Tech-mediated Violence and the New World: Facing the Challenges". The moot points of her talk are provided below:

Technology-mediated gendered violence has acquired a new dimension in the 21<sup>st</sup> century encompassing myriad forms like stalking, voyeurism, defaming, surveillance, trolling, revenge, cyber-porn, etc. The present scenario of Covid-19 outbreak, pandemic and the resultant lockdown brought with them crucial changes in our lifestyle. Of this change, a major one is the increase in use of cyber space. We started living in the virtual world for formal as well as

informal spaces. This increase in use of cyber space also led to an increase in cyber crimes. As every incident has a gendered perspective, cyber crime too is not an exception. Increased use of virtual space made women more vulnerable to a technology-mediated form of violence. This violence is going to be a part of the new world and dealing with it will be crucial for the new normal to be gender just. In this context, the objective of the presentation is to identify the challenges that India will be facing to cope with this aspect of violence against women.

Cyber crimes in general are covered under Indian Penal Code (IPC), Information Technology Act (IT Act) 2000 and Special and Local Laws (SLL) but when it comes to cyber crimes against women we find a gap between the legal provisions and these crimes. Lacunae of the IPC and SLL to deal with cyber crimes against women make the situation more complex opening up newer avenues of gender inequality. Most of the IPCs related to crimes against women are not compatible with cyber crimes. The Criminal Law Amendment Act 2013 brought changes to include some forms of cyber crime but majority of cyber crimes are dealt under Section 66 A, 66 B and Section 67 of the IT Act and the evidences under Indian Evidence Act . These acts have several drawbacks so far as crimes against women are concerned. The number of cases in which trial is completed and the number of convictions are also abysmally low. The actions taken by law enforcement agencies are also conditioned by the lacunae in existing laws .Without proper legal structure, it becomes impossible for law enforcement agencies to deal with this form of violence. Moreover, tech-mediated violence against women is psycho-social in nature while laws are structured to focus more upon crimes that are physical in nature. This gap also needs to be addressed.

Dr. Ghosh, on making a very illuminating presentation, could introduce us to technicalities of cyber crime while highlighting the IPC processes by which these crimes could be arrested. This knowledge is essential in today's virtual world. The presentation could be linked to Dr. Malabika Bhattacharya's presentation on the first day where she mentioned the vulnerability of women having to operate in the cyber space.

The anchor then invited the third Resource Person, Dr. Chandramalli Sengupta, Associate Professor, Post Graduate Department of Bengali, Asutosh College, Kolkata. Dr. Sengupta, in a very lucid manner, spoke on another vital issue pertaining to "Managing Medical Issues: A New Normal Experience". She spoke from personal experience about treating elderly people with

maladies other than Covid, and the experiences that they had to encounter. A synopsis of her speech is given below:

Covid related prolonged lockdown puts many families in extreme difficulty especially, if members are very old with age related medical problems putting them in risk group and if caregivers are single women with no support system. Moreover if residences are in localities having Covid hospitals, then all movements would be restricted due to barricades in localities. Such situations are bound to create problems of procuring regular medicines, cancellation of medical checkups, lack of help in case any medical emergency happens.

This discussion thus attempted to identify and explain these practical problems and then suggest easy ways to handle such difficulties which will include acceptance of new normal situation with positive mindsets and developing new mechanisms of creating human network as support system to combat problems effectively as a woman.

Dr. Sengupta's experiential speech was extremely topical and one could associate with the trauma experienced in their own lives. The final Resource Person of the Webinar was Dr. Priyanka Halder Mallick, Associate Professor, Department of Zoology, Vidyasagar University, Paschim Midnapore, West Bengal. Her presentation on the topic "MANTRA for Adjusting effectively", was extremely apt and topical at present times. Surely, all the issues discussed earlier in the Webinar by the eminent Keynote speakers and the Resource Persons, manifests in psychological stress related maladies for which no precise Mantra is there to treat each person who is having to cope with the new normal. Dr. Mallick, very ably, presented her views and proposed several ways out. A gist of her presentation is given below:

The new realities associated with COVID-19 pandemic are taking time for adapting to lifestyle changes. Apart from the direct physical suffering, billions of people face secondary epidemic of burnouts & stress, this issue is less addressed. The reasons for stress, as a reaction in situations of uncertainty, abound in lockdown - the fear of viral infection, worry about our loved ones, sudden restriction, the prospect of financial hardship and so on; and managing them are challenging, which can be particularly difficult for people with mental health conditions. Van Hoof quoted the situation as "Arguably the largest psychological experiment ever conducted". Even Google's home page advertised 'Be kind to your mind' recently. Hence it is essential to look after our own mental health.



The talk provided useful tips and advices that maybe helpful for coping with stress during Covid-19, viz. dealing with screen time, judicious use of social media; helping each other, avoiding discrimination, making time for enjoyable things, etc. Three powerful tools: unhooking, grounding and acting on your values. Mantras for Overcoming Stress: Accept Reality, Avoid Negativity and Act Responsibly. The 4 Quotients of Personal Growth or Thinking- physical (PQ), mental (IQ), emotional (EQ) and spiritual (SQ) can lead to a holistic view of living - well and balanced. More resilient & adjustable dispositions can recreate parallel vocations in emergencies - constituent part of the NEW NORMAL.

The interactive session following the motivational speech by Dr. Mallick, was brief, owing to paucity of time. Prof. Sanchari Roy Mukherjee, in her Valedictory address, pulled the curtains down on the Webinar, but after weaving the issues into a tapestry, i.e., providing a women's perspective to the New Normal. Several actionable outcomes could be identified from the discussions which would be useful for all women to counter the debilitating impact of the pandemic in the personal and professional spheres. She also delivered the final Vote of Thanks after the Vote of Thanks was delivered by HMMCW College.

Prof. Mukherjee expressed her heartfelt thanks to the Hon'ble Vice Chancellor of University of North Bengal for encouraging the team to organise the Webinar. She also thanked the Registrar, Dr. Dilip Sarker for facilitating the process to organise the Webinar. Prof. Mukherjee expressed her heartfelt gratitude towards Prof. Saibal Kar, Director, ICSSR-ERC, for extending their support towards this endeavour. She also expressed her heartfelt gratitude to Prof. Debika Saha, Director, CWS, North Bengal University and especially Dr. Soma Ghosh, Principal, HMMCW College, Kolkata, and her team for providing the technical support without which it would not have been possible to conduct the Webinar. Prof. Mukherjee was indeed grateful to the Keynote speakers, Prof. Karuna Chanana and Prof. Lata Narayan, to have taken their time out from their busy schedule to participate and cooperate with the Webinar team and by delivering such illuminating lectures. Their presence has surely enriched the Webinar in all aspects. Prof. Mukherjee expressed her heartfelt gratitude and thanked all the Resource Persons for their contribution to make the Webinar a grand success and for their constant support and motivation towards this end. Last but not the least, she expressed her gratitude for the entire support team from North Bengal University and HMMCW College, Kolkata, namely, Dr. Beethika Moni Datta, Assistant Professor, Centre for Women's Studies, North Bengal University, and Dr. Sonali

Mukherjee, Associate Professor in Economics, Dr. Pritha Kundu, Assistant Professor in English, Dr. Chandrabali Datta, Assistant Professor in Sociology, Smt. Aatryee Bhattacharya of History, Smt. Puja Das of Computer Science, and Webinar Organising Committee Convenor, Sri Padipta Mukherjee.

C. *International Webinar on Gender and Development: Some Emerging issues* (In recent pandemic situation) on **21 July, 2020** organised by Women's Studies Cell, COP, Coochbehar College in collaboration with centre for Women's Studies, University of North Bengal, West Bengal.

**C. International Webinar on Gender and Development: Some Emerging Issues  
in the Recent Pandemic Situation**

<b>Date</b>	21st July 2020
<b>Organized by</b>	Women's Studies Cell, COP, Coochbehar College In collaboration with: Centre for Women's Studies, University of North Bengal, West Bengal

**GUESTS & DIGNITARIES**

**CHIEF PATRON**  
PROF. DEBKUMAR MUKHOPADHYAY  
VICE CHANCELLOR,  
COOCH BEHAR COLLEGE

**GUEST OF HONOUR**  
DR. ABIDUL KADER SAFALE  
RESEARCHER

**CHAIRMAN**  
DR. PANKAJ KUMAR DEBNATH  
PROFESSOR, COOCH BEHAR COLLEGE

**RESOURCE PERSONS**

**MD. REZAUL KARIM**  
ASST. PROFESSOR &  
COORDINATOR IN SOCIAL WORK  
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH BENGAL,  
SHANAKA, BARHAT, WEST BENGAL

**PROF. RAKESH CHANDRA**  
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, DEPARTMENT OF  
SOCIOLOGY, UNIVERSITY OF NORTH BENGAL,  
SHANAKA, BARHAT, WEST BENGAL

**PROF. DEBIKA SAHA**  
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR & CHIEF OF THE  
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE,  
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH BENGAL, SHANAKA,  
BARHAT, WEST BENGAL

**DR. SOMDATTI BHATTACHARYA**  
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR & HEAD OF THE  
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE,  
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH BENGAL, SHANAKA,  
BARHAT, WEST BENGAL

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ASSISTANT PROFESSOR & CHIEF OF THE  
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**DR. TAPAN KUMAR DAS**  
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DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE,  
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH BENGAL, SHANAKA,  
BARHAT, WEST BENGAL

**INTERNATIONAL WEBINAR**  
on  
**GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT:  
SOME EMERGING ISSUES  
(IN RECENT PANDEMIC  
SITUATION)**

**21 JULY 2020  
11:00 AM (IST)**

**Organized By:**  
WOMEN'S STUDIES CELL, COP  
COOCHBEHAR COLLEGE,  
WEST BENGAL

**In collaboration with:**  
CENTRE FOR WOMEN'S STUDIES  
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH BENGAL,  
WEST BENGAL

**Contact**  
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**REFERENCE TO UGC LETTER NO:  
F. NO 11-4-2020(UG)**  
DATED: 26TH JUNE, 2020

**Paper Submission**  
Send a soft copy of abstract and full paper to webinars.bc.2020@gmail.com

**Important tentative dates**  
Abstract Submission:- Within 20th July, 2020  
Last date of registration:- Within 20th July, 2020, till 11:59 PM

**Main Theme**  
**GENDER DEVELOPMENT: SOME EMERGING  
ISSUES (IN RECENT PANDEMIC SITUATION)**

**Sub Theme**

1. Issues of Gender and Development in Indian Context.
2. Sex and Gender / The Development of Masculinity and Femininity
3. Effects of Gender Bias in Our Society.
4. Issues of Empowerment of Women in India .
5. Gender Discrimination in Indian Family.
6. Health Issues of Women in Pandemic Situation.
7. Justice and Equality Among Sexes - as a Major Value.
8. Gender Justice, Development and Rights.
9. Roles of Women in Decision Making - Indian Sub-continent and Western World.
10. Gender Myths and Feminist Politics - The Struggle for Interpretive Power in Gender and Development.
11. Psychological Outcomes and Gender Related Development.
12. Issues of Gender in Politics, Economy and Mass Media.
13. Any other related issues.

**For Registration**  
REGISTRATION FEE: INR 100.00

**Youtube Live Video**

**Scan Here**  
For Registration

**ONLINE VIDEO CONFERENCE PLATFORM**  
GOOGLE MEET LINK WILL BE SHARED ON THE DAY BEFORE  
21ST JULY 2020 IN THE WHATSAPP GROUP PLEASE JOIN THE  
WEBINAR 15 MIN BEFORE COMMENCEMENT OF THE MEETING.

**PAYMENT DETAILS**  
BANK DETAILS FOR NEFT/ONLINE TRANSFERS:  
TO BE PAID ONLINE IN THE FOLLOWING BANK DETAILS:  
NAME OF BANK: ALLAHABAD BANK  
ACCOUNT HOLDER NAME: RESEARCH GRANT  
ACCOUNT NO: 2626799856  
IFSC CODE: ALLA0211721  
BRANCH: B.S. ROAD, COOCHBEHAR

**CERTIFICATE WILL BE PROVIDED TO THE ALL PARTICIPANTS**

## Introduction:

The International Webinar on “Gender and Development: Some Emerging Issues in the Recent Pandemic Situation” was held on 21st July 2020. The event, organized by the Women’s Studies Cell of Coochbehar College in collaboration with the Centre for Women’s Studies, University of North Bengal, served as a platform to discuss the gendered impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and potential strategies for inclusive development.

## Inaugural Session:

*The webinar commenced with an inaugural session, graced by distinguished dignitaries:*

**Chief Patron:** Prof. Debkumar Mukhopadhyay, Hon’ble Vice Chancellor, Cooch Behar Panchanan Barma University (CBPBU), who delivered the keynote address highlighting the urgency of addressing gender disparities during crises.

**Guest of Honour:** Dr. Abdul Kader Safeli, Registrar, CBPBU, emphasized the pivotal role of academic institutions in promoting gender equity.

**Chairman:** Dr. Pankaj Kumar Debnath, Principal, Coochbehar College, welcomed the participants and spoke on the necessity of gender-focused policies during pandemics.

### **Panel Discussions**

The webinar featured insightful and thought-provoking panel discussions led by eminent resource persons, who delved into the multifaceted impacts of the pandemic on gender and development. Each speaker brought a unique perspective, enriching the discourse with research-backed observations and practical recommendations:

**Md. Razeul Karim, Assistant Professor, Department of Social Work, Jagannath University, Dhaka, Bangladesh**

Highlighting the socio-economic challenges exacerbated by the pandemic, Md. Razeul Karim shed light on the alarming rise in domestic violence, the burden of unpaid care work, and the disproportionate job losses affecting women across South Asia. He emphasized the role of social workers and community-based organizations in addressing these challenges and called for regional cooperation in mitigating the socio-economic disparities faced by women in crisis situations.

**Prof. Rakesh Chandra, Head, Department of Philosophy, University of Lucknow; Director, Institute for Women's Studies**

Prof. Chandra offered an in-depth analysis of the intersectionality of gender, poverty, and health. He explored how the pandemic has deepened structural inequalities and highlighted the ethical imperative of inclusive policymaking. Drawing on philosophical frameworks, he advocated for gender-responsive strategies that prioritize equity and access to essential resources for marginalized groups.

**Prof. Debika Saha, Department of Philosophy and Centre for Women's Studies (Director)**

Addressing the digital divide, Prof. Saha discussed its profound impact on education and professional opportunities for women during the pandemic. She underlined the critical role of educational institutions in promoting digital literacy and equitable access to online learning platforms. Prof. Saha also stressed the importance of integrating gender-sensitive approaches into institutional policies to bridge existing gaps.

**Dr. Somdatta Bhattacharya, Associate Professor and Head, Department of Philosophy, CBPBU**

Dr. Bhattacharya provided a nuanced perspective on the cultural and psychological toll of the pandemic on women. She discussed the rising mental health challenges faced by women due to isolation, increased caregiving responsibilities, and economic insecurity. Her presentation emphasized the need for community support systems, mental health resources, and awareness campaigns to address these issues effectively.

**Interactive Session:**

The interactive session was a vibrant and engaging segment of the webinar. Participants, including students, researchers, and academicians, actively contributed to the discussion by posing thought-provoking questions to the panelists. Key areas of discussion included:

- The implementation of gender-sensitive health policies to ensure equitable access to healthcare.
- The role of grassroots organizations in advocating for women's rights during crises.
- The significance of intersectional approaches in addressing the compounded vulnerabilities faced by women belonging to marginalized communities.
- Strategies for overcoming the digital divide and empowering women through technology and education.

- The panelists provided insightful responses, encouraging further dialogue on collaborative approaches to tackling pandemic-induced inequalities.

### **Key Takeaways:**

- The pandemic has amplified existing gender inequalities, necessitating immediate and long-term interventions.
- Regional and global cooperation is essential to address socio-economic challenges faced by women during crises.
- Institutions and policymakers must adopt an intersectional lens to understand and resolve the compounded challenges of gender, poverty, and access.
- Mental health support, digital equity, and community-based initiatives are critical components of an inclusive recovery plan.
- This enriching session underscored the importance of interdisciplinary discussions in fostering meaningful change and inspired participants to take proactive steps in their respective fields.

The webinar witnessed active participation from students, scholars, and academicians. During the interactive session, participants raised pertinent questions on gender-sensitive health policies, grassroots activism, and the importance of intersectional approaches in tackling pandemic-induced inequalities.

### **Vote of Thanks:**

The event concluded with a formal vote of thanks by Dr. Beethikamoni Dutta, Assistant Professor, Department of Women's Studies, University of North Bengal. She expressed gratitude to the esteemed guests, resource persons, participants, and organizers for making the webinar a grand success.

### **Conclusion:**

The webinar provided a comprehensive understanding of the emerging issues in gender and development during the pandemic. It emphasized the need for collaborative efforts to address gender inequalities, promoting a more inclusive and resilient society. The event received widespread appreciation for its thought-provoking discussions and impactful insights.

## **A Two-day Webinar: Scholars' Meet**

**ORGANIZED BY -**

**SCHOOL OF WOMEN'S STUDIES, JADAVPUR UNIVERSITY**

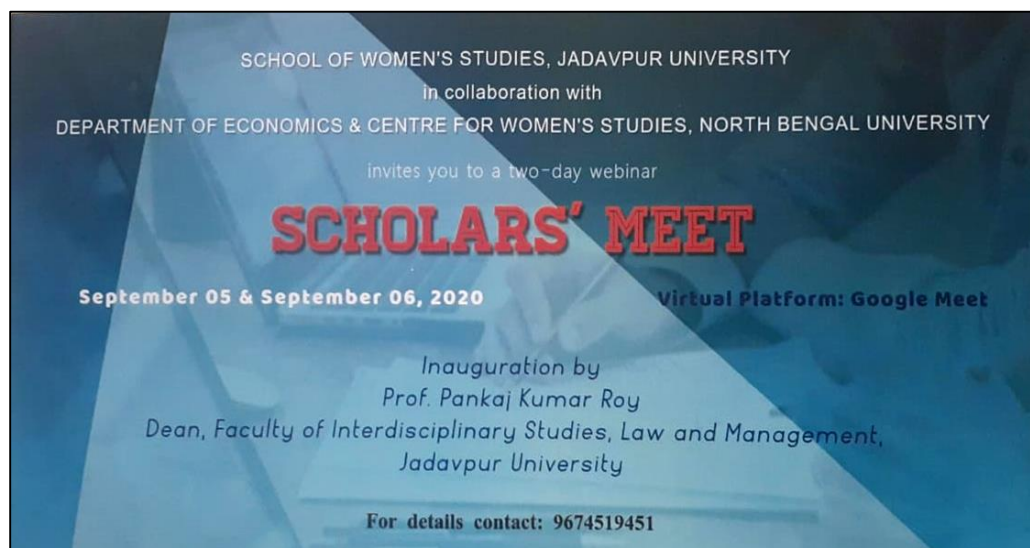
**IN COLLABORATION WITH**

**DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS, UNIVERSITY OF NORTH BENGAL**

**AND**

**CENTRE FOR WOMEN'S STUDIES, UNIVERSITY OF NORTH BENGAL**

**DATE- 05-06 SEPTEMBER, 2020**



### **Introduction:**

The Scholars' Meet, a two-day webinar held on the 5th and 6th of September 2020, was a significant academic event jointly organized by the School of Women's Studies, Jadavpur University, in collaboration with the Department of Economics and the Centre for Women's

Studies, University of North Bengal. The webinar aimed to create a platform for scholars, researchers, and academicians to engage in meaningful dialogue and interdisciplinary discussions on issues related to gender, economics, and social dynamics.

The collaboration between these two reputed institutions underscored the importance of academic partnerships in addressing complex issues of gender and economic inequities. The event provided an opportunity for thought leaders and emerging scholars to share their perspectives, findings, and innovative approaches to challenges in women's studies and allied disciplines.

The inaugural session on Day I, September 5, 2020, commenced at 11:00 AM with the keynote address delivered by Professor Pankaj Kumar Roy, Dean of the Faculty of Interdisciplinary Studies, Law, and Management (FISLM), Jadavpur University. His insights set a vibrant and thought-provoking tone for the discussions that followed over the two days of the webinar.

## **PROGRAMME SCHEDULE**

### ***DAY I***

***SEPTEMBER 05, 2020***

***11AM: INAUGURAL SESSION***

***PROFESSOR PANKAJ KUMAR ROY, DEAN, FISLM, JADAVPUR UNIVERSITY***

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***SESSION 1: 11:30 AM –1 PM***

***CHAIR: PROFESSOR DEBIKA SAHA, DIRECTOR, CENTRE FOR WOMEN'S STUDIES, NORTH BENGAL UNIVERSITY***

- ***A Study On The Status Of Primary Education Among Muslim Minority Community In Assam With Special Reference To Dhubri District***, Jeherul Islam, North Bengal University



- ***Unheard Voices of Marginalised Women: An analysis of the condition of the women in Moushuni Island***, Rubina Khatun, Jadavpur University
- **□□□□□□ : □□□□ □□□□□□□□ □□ □□ □□□□□□**, Golapsha Khatun, Jadavpur University

SESSION 2: 1 PM – 2:30 PM

CHAIR: PROFESSOR SWATI GHOSH, DEPT OF ECONOMICS & DIRECTOR, CENTRE FOR WOMEN'S STUDIES, RABINDRA BHARATI UNIVERSITY

- ***Socio-Economic Factors Affecting Utilization of Maternal Healthcare Services Among/By Women In The Darjeeling Hills: An Empirical Study of Kurseong Town***, Samikchha Pradhan, North Bengal University
- ***Christian Missionaries and Female Education in Colonial Calcutta: A Discourse of Different Attitudes of the Hindus and the Muslims***, Runa Shyamal, Jadavpur University.
- ***Black Widows of Chechnya: The Plurality of Motivations and the Problem of Depoliticizing***, Ritarekha Dutta, Jadavpur University

SESSION 3: 2:30 PM– 4 PM

CHAIR: PROFESSOR AISHIKA CHAKRABORTY, SCHOOL OF WOMEN'S STUDIES, JADAVPUR UNIVERSITY

- ***The Black Female Form: Situating Issues of Hypersexualisation, New-Age Respectability Politics and Self-Proclaimed “Bad Bitches” and “Hoes” at the intersections of race, class and gender***, Aindrila Choudhury, Jadavpur University
- ***Secret Pregnancies on the Early Modern English Stage***, Chayonika Saha, Jadavpur University
- ***Discrimination of Girls in Physical Education in Co-Education School***, Piyali Mondal, Jadavpur University.

**DAY II**

**SEPTEMBER 06, 2020**

SESSION 1: 12 NOON – 1:30 PM

CHAIR: DR GOVINDA CHOUDHURY, DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS, NORTH BENGAL UNIVERSITY

- ***The role of Self Help Groups in empowering rural women socio-economically: A case study of SHGs in Kalimpong District of West Bengal***, Ashiya Thapa, North Bengal University
- ***Political Participation of Gorkha Women in Darjeeling District***, Akansha Khaiba, Jadavpur University
- ***□□□□ □□□□□ □□□□□□□□ □ □□□□□□□□□□ □□□□□□***, Avijit Halder, Jadavpur University

SESSION 2: 1:30 PM – 3 PM

CHAIR: DR GOVINDA CHOWDHURY, DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS, NORTH BENGAL UNIVERSITY

- ***The comparative analysis of feminist self with respect to the neoliberal dispositifs***, Priyasmita Dasgupta, Jadavpur University
- ***Socio-Economic and Cultural Transformation of Women of Diamond Harbour Block after Setting up of Educational Institutions***, Saifulla Sardar, Jadavpur University
- ***A Study on Micro, Small and Medium Scale Enterprises in Assam with Special Reference to Micro manufacturing Sector of Barpeta District***, Bijoy Kumar Dey, North Bengal University

SESSION 3: 3 PM – 4PM

CHAIR: PROFESSOR DEBIKA SAHA, DIRECTOR, CENTRE FOR WOMEN'S STUDIES, NORTH BENGAL UNIVERSITY

- *Performance of Gender through Language, creating Gender bias and recreating Patriarchy*, Samragnee Banerjee, Jadavpur University
- *Where are the women in 'folk'?: A study of kantha as a gendered object*, Debarati Sarkar, Jadavpur University

### **Keynote Address:**

Professor Pankaj Kumar Roy, an esteemed academician and Dean of FISLM, Jadavpur University, delivered the keynote address during the inaugural session of the Scholars' Meet. In his address, Professor Roy emphasized the critical need for interdisciplinary research and collaboration in addressing issues of gender inequality and economic disparity.

He highlighted the evolving role of women's studies as a dynamic field that intersects with economics, sociology, and political science, among other disciplines. By drawing attention to the economic impact of gender-based discrimination, he stressed the importance of policy-oriented research that translates academic findings into actionable solutions.

Professor Roy also spoke about the challenges faced by women in academia, workplaces, and other societal structures, particularly in the wake of the global pandemic. He urged scholars and participants to examine the nuanced ways in which economic policies and societal norms impact gender equity. His address was a call to action for researchers to adopt inclusive and innovative methodologies that empower marginalized voices and communities.

Concluding his address, Professor Roy expressed optimism about the outcomes of the Scholars' Meet. He encouraged participants to engage in meaningful discussions, share their research, and collaborate to foster a more equitable and inclusive society.

### **Session 1: 11:30 AM – 1:00 PM**

Chair: Professor Debika Saha, Director, Centre for Women's Studies, University of North Bengal

The first session of the Scholars' Meet commenced with a stimulating array of presentations, each addressing significant socio-economic issues affecting women and marginalized communities. Professor Debika Saha, the Chair of the session, set the tone for the discussions with her emphasis on the intersectionality of gender, socio-economic factors, and cultural contexts.

A Study on the Status of Primary Education Among Muslim Minority Community in Assam with Special Reference to Dhubri District

Presented by Jeherul Islam, North Bengal University

Jeherul Islam's presentation provided an insightful analysis of the state of primary education among the Muslim minority community in Dhubri District, Assam. The study highlighted the disparities in educational access, particularly for girls, and examined the socio-cultural barriers that contribute to this marginalization. Islam discussed the various governmental initiatives and suggested measures to enhance the reach and quality of primary education for Muslim girls in rural Assam.

Unheard Voices of Marginalised Women: An Analysis of the Condition of the Women in Moushuni Island

Presented by Rubina Khatun, Jadavpur University

Rubina Khatun's presentation focused on the plight of women in Moushuni Island, one of the many islands affected by ecological and economic challenges. She analyzed the socio-political conditions that silence the voices of these women, particularly their struggles with limited access to education, healthcare, and livelihood opportunities. Khatun called for a more inclusive approach to policy-making that recognizes and addresses the specific needs of women living in isolated regions like Moushuni Island.

(Widowhood: Another Form of Women's Oppression)

Presented by Golapsha Khatun, Jadavpur University

Golapsha Khatun's paper shed light on the oppression faced by widows in Bengali society. Through a historical and cultural lens, Khatun explored how widowhood is perceived as a source

of stigma, social exclusion, and economic hardship for women. She discussed the societal expectations placed on widows and the resulting psychological and social challenges, urging for a rethinking of social norms surrounding widowhood in contemporary society.

## **Session 2: 1:00 PM – 2:30 PM**

Chair: Professor Swati Ghosh, Department of Economics & Director, Centre for Women's Studies, Rabindra Bharati University

The second session focused on socio-economic factors and their impact on women's access to health, education, and societal acceptance. Professor Swati Ghosh led the session, emphasizing the importance of understanding the nuanced socio-economic conditions that shape women's lives.

Socio-Economic Factors Affecting Utilization of Maternal Healthcare Services Among/By Women in the Darjeeling Hills: An Empirical Study of Kurseong Town

Presented by Samikchha Pradhan, North Bengal University

Samikchha Pradhan's study explored the socio-economic factors that influence women's utilization of maternal healthcare services in Kurseong, a town in the Darjeeling Hills. Pradhan identified key barriers such as socio-economic status, cultural beliefs, and access to healthcare facilities that impede pregnant women from seeking proper medical care. The study also recommended targeted interventions to improve maternal health outcomes in these areas.

Christian Missionaries and Female Education in Colonial Calcutta: A Discourse of Different Attitudes of the Hindus and the Muslims

Presented by Runa Shyamal, Jadavpur University

Runa Shyamal presented a historical study of the role Christian missionaries played in the advancement of female education during the colonial period in Calcutta. Her research explored how both Hindu and Muslim communities had differing responses to missionary-driven educational efforts, highlighting the social and religious tensions around women's education

during the colonial era. Shyamal discussed the lasting impact of these educational movements on women's empowerment.

### Black Widows of Chechnya: The Plurality of Motivations and the Problem of Depoliticizing

Presented by Ritarekha Dutta, Jadavpur University

Ritarekha Dutta's paper examined the complex and multifaceted motivations of Chechen women, often referred to as "Black Widows," who engage in suicide bombing and other forms of violence. Dutta analyzed how these women's actions are often depoliticized in mainstream discourse, focusing on the intersection of gender, violence, and political resistance. Her presentation called for a deeper understanding of these women's agency within the broader context of political oppression and conflict.

### **Session 3: 2:30 PM – 4:00 PM**

Chair: Professor Aishika Chakraborty, School of Women's Studies, Jadavpur University

The third session delved into critical issues surrounding the intersection of race, class, gender, and societal expectations, with a particular focus on representation and discrimination. Professor Aishika Chakraborty, the Chair, guided the session with her emphasis on the global and local dimensions of gender studies.

The Black Female Form: Situating Issues of Hypersexualization, New-Age Respectability Politics, and Self-Proclaimed "Bad Bitches" and "Hoes" at the Intersections of Race, Class, and Gender

Presented by Aindrila Choudhury, Jadavpur University

Aindrila Choudhury's presentation explored the hypersexualization of Black women in contemporary culture, analyzing how the terms "bad bitches" and "hoes" are reappropriated within the context of race, class, and gender. Choudhury discussed how these terms, once used to marginalize and oppress, are being reclaimed by Black women as expressions of empowerment.

She examined the tensions between respectability politics and the desire for personal and cultural autonomy.

#### Secret Pregnancies on the Early Modern English Stage

Presented by Chayonika Saha, Jadavpur University

Chayonika Saha's paper focused on the portrayal of secret pregnancies in early modern English theatre, exploring how these narratives reflect societal attitudes toward female sexuality and agency. Saha analyzed key works of the period and discussed how secret pregnancies were used as a plot device to address issues of morality, gender roles, and social expectations of women.

#### Discrimination of Girls in Physical Education in Co-Education Schools

Presented by Piyali Mondal, Jadavpur University

Piyali Mondal's presentation addressed the discrimination faced by girls in physical education classes in co-education schools. She highlighted how gender stereotypes and societal expectations limit the opportunities available to girls in sports and physical activities. Mondal advocated for reforms in physical education curriculum.

### **Day II of the Workshop on Gender Studies: Theory and Empirics**

Date: September 6, 2020

Venue: Department of Economics, University of North Bengal

The second day of the workshop on "Gender Studies: Theory and Empirics" featured a rich array of presentations by researchers from various academic institutions. The discussions revolved around topics that ranged from the socio-economic empowerment of women to feminist theory and cultural studies, offering participants diverse insights into the intersections of gender, society, and economy.

### **Session 1: 12 Noon – 1:30 PM**

Chair: Dr. Govinda Choudhury, Department of Economics, North Bengal University

This session highlighted the socio-political and economic dimensions of gender in different contexts.

The Role of Self-Help Groups in Empowering Rural Women Socio-Economically: A Case Study of SHGs in Kalimpong District of West Bengal

Presenter: Ashiya Thapa, North Bengal University

The study explored how Self-Help Groups (SHGs) contribute to the socio-economic upliftment of rural women in Kalimpong. The discussion focused on financial inclusion, skill development, and the ripple effects of SHG activities on household and community dynamics.

Political Participation of Gorkha Women in Darjeeling District

Presenter: Akansha Khaiba, Jadavpur University

This presentation examined the role of Gorkha women in the political landscape of Darjeeling. It emphasized the challenges of representation, intersectional identities, and cultural nuances affecting women's participation in governance.

### **Dalit Women's Autobiographies and the Multivoicedness of Marginality**

Presenter: Avijit Halder, Jadavpur University

Avijit Halder presented an analysis of Dalit women's autobiographies, unpacking the layers of marginality and intersectionality within caste and gender dynamics. The paper highlighted how personal narratives reveal collective struggles and resilience.

### **Session 2: 1:30 PM – 3 PM**

Chair: Dr. Govinda Choudhury, Department of Economics, North Bengal University

This session delved into feminist theory, neoliberalism, and socio-economic transformations.

The Comparative Analysis of Feminist Self with Respect to the Neoliberal Dispositifs

Presenter: Priyasmita Dasgupta, Jadavpur University




The presentation analyzed the concept of feminist identity within the frameworks of neoliberal ideologies. It critiqued how neoliberal dispositifs commodify feminist movements and challenge the authenticity of the feminist self.

Socio-Economic and Cultural Transformation of Women of Diamond Harbour Block after Setting up of Educational Institutions


Presenter: Saifulla Sardar, Jadavpur University

The study explores how the establishment of educational institutions in Diamond Harbour Block has influenced women's roles, enhancing their socio-economic participation and cultural empowerment.


**. ONE DAY WEBINAR**  
**ON**  
**WOMEN AND MENTAL HEALTH: ISSUES AND CHALLENGES ON**  
**ORGANIZED BY -**  
**CENTRE FOR WOMEN'S STUDIES, UNIVERSITY OF NORTH BENGAL**  
**DATE: 24<sup>TH</sup> MARCH, 2021.**




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**Centre for Women's Studies**  
University of North Bengal  
organizes  
Webinar on  
*Women and Mental Health*  
Issues and Challenges




**Honourable Speakers**



**Dr Uttam Majumdar**  
Assistant Professor  
Dept. of Psychiatry  
North Bengal Medical College & Hospital  
Siliguri, Darjeeling

**Topic**  
Women's Mental Health  
How it differs



**K. Sunita Seshadri**  
Deputy Director  
National Institute of Public Cooperation  
and Child Development  
Regional Centre-Mohali, Punjab

**Topic**  
Importance of Mental Health  
during Pandemic

**Date : 24th March, 2021**      **Platform : Google Meet**  
**Time : 12.30 pm**                      <https://meet.google.com/jub-txns-ehf>

## Women and Mental Health: Issues and Challenges

### Introduction:

On 24th March 2021, the Centre for Women's Studies, University of North Bengal, organized a thought-provoking webinar titled "Women and Mental Health: Issues and Challenges" to address the critical issues surrounding women's mental health, particularly in the context of the ongoing pandemic. This timely event aimed to shed light on the unique mental health challenges faced by women during this period of crisis. The webinar brought together a diverse panel of eminent speakers from various fields, who discussed the impact of the pandemic on women's mental well-being, including the increased stress from balancing work, family responsibilities, and societal pressures. Additionally, the session provided insights into coping mechanisms, support

systems, and the role of society in fostering mental health awareness among women. By the end of the session, the participants gained a deeper understanding of the importance of mental health for women and the urgent need for comprehensive strategies to address these challenges.

### **Welcome Address:**

The session commenced with an introductory note by Dr. Beethika Moni Dutta, Assistant Professor, Centre for Women's Studies. Prof. Zinia Mitra, Director of the Centre for Women's Studies has delivered a warm and engaging welcome speech. Dr. Mitra opened her address by acknowledging the growing significance of mental health discussions, especially in light of the mental health crises exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. She emphasized the importance of focusing on women's mental health, as they often face additional stressors such as caregiving duties, domestic responsibilities, and social expectations, all of which can negatively impact their emotional and psychological well-being. She also highlighted the importance of breaking the stigma surrounding mental health, encouraging open dialogues, and promoting awareness at all levels. Dr. Mitra concluded by stressing the need for more proactive measures, including mental health education, community-based support systems, and government policies aimed at providing better mental health care for women.

### **Session 1: Women's Mental Health: How It Differs**

The first session of the webinar was delivered by Dr. Uttam Majumdar, a distinguished Psychiatrist at North Bengal Medical College & Hospital, Darjeeling. Dr. Majumdar began his session by addressing the unique and often complex mental health challenges that women face. He highlighted how women's mental health is influenced by a combination of social, economic, and cultural factors, which frequently place them at a higher risk for mental health issues.

Dr. Majumdar delved into the impact of gender-based violence, which affects millions of women globally, leading to trauma, anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). He discussed how societal expectations of women, such as the pressure to conform to traditional gender roles, contribute to feelings of inadequacy, stress, and a sense of powerlessness. Additionally, he spoke about the caregiving responsibilities that women often bear, not only within their families but also in their communities, which can lead to burnout and mental fatigue, particularly when adequate support systems are not in place.

One of the key points Dr. Majumdar emphasized was the pervasive neglect of women's mental health needs in traditional healthcare systems. He noted that mental health services are often not designed with women in mind, which results in the underdiagnosis and undertreatment of conditions such as depression, anxiety, and eating disorders that disproportionately affect women. Dr. Majumdar called for a shift towards gender-sensitive approaches in mental health care, advocating for greater recognition of the unique mental health needs of women. He proposed that mental health professionals should receive training to understand and address the gender-specific factors that contribute to mental health challenges in women.

The session concluded with Dr. Majumdar urging the audience to advocate for more inclusive and accessible mental health services, as well as to foster a supportive environment that encourages open discussions about mental health issues. He emphasized that only through comprehensive, gender-sensitive care can the mental well-being of women be effectively addressed.

## **Session 2: Importance of Mental Health During Pandemic**

The second session was delivered by Ms. K. Sunita Seshadri, Deputy Director at the National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development, Regional Centre-Mohali, Punjab. Ms. Seshadri began her presentation by highlighting the profound impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on mental health, particularly among women. She explained how the crisis exacerbated existing mental health challenges, revealing the vulnerabilities many women face due to the added pressures of the pandemic.

Ms. Seshadri detailed how the pandemic led to increased isolation, as lockdowns and social distancing measures limited women's ability to connect with others, both socially and professionally. For many, the home became a confined space where they were tasked with an increased burden of household responsibilities, including childcare, eldercare, and managing daily household tasks—often without adequate support or respite. This situation was compounded by economic insecurity, as job losses, financial instability, and the closure of businesses heightened anxiety and stress.

Furthermore, Ms. Seshadri emphasized that many women, particularly those in rural areas or from marginalized communities, lacked access to mental health resources. The lack of physical

access to healthcare facilities, combined with societal stigma surrounding mental health, made it harder for women to seek help. Ms. Seshadri pointed out that, as a result, mental health conditions such as depression, anxiety, and stress-related disorders saw a significant rise during the pandemic.

In her session, Ms. Seshadri also provided a range of coping strategies to help individuals manage their mental health during stressful times. She stressed the importance of self-care practices, including maintaining a routine, engaging in physical activity, practicing mindfulness and meditation, and ensuring adequate sleep. She also highlighted the significance of staying connected with family, friends, and support networks, even if through virtual means, as these connections provide a sense of belonging and emotional support.

Ms. Seshadri strongly encouraged the participants to seek professional help when needed, acknowledging that many people may feel hesitant or ashamed to do so. She discussed the various avenues for seeking mental health support, such as online counseling services, helplines, and community-based mental health initiatives.

To conclude her session, Ms. Seshadri emphasized the need for mental health education and awareness, noting that as the pandemic continued, society must recognize the importance of mental well-being as an integral part of overall health. She advocated for policy changes and increased investment in mental health services, especially for women, to ensure that they receive the support they need to cope with the ongoing crisis and beyond.

#### **Vote of Thanks:**

The session concluded with a heartfelt vote of thanks delivered by Mr. Subhrajyoti Kundu, Assistant Professor in the Department of Mass Communication, University of North Bengal. Mr. Kundu expressed his sincere gratitude to all the speakers for their invaluable contributions to the webinar, recognizing the depth and significance of their insights on women's mental health. He commended Dr. Uttam Majumdar and Ms. K. Sunita Seshadri for shedding light on the complex and often overlooked issues surrounding women's mental health, particularly during the pandemic. Mr. Kundu also thanked the participants for their engagement and thought-provoking questions, which helped enrich the discussion.

In his remarks, Mr. Kundu highlighted the importance of continued discourse on mental health, especially in the context of gender. He emphasized that mental health should no longer be a taboo topic, and society must work toward creating environments that are supportive, inclusive, and open to discussing mental well-being. Mr. Kundu concluded by acknowledging the collective efforts of the organizing committee and the Centre for Women's Studies for successfully hosting the event and providing a platform for such an essential dialogue.

### **Conclusion:**

The webinar provided a comprehensive understanding of the mental health challenges faced by women, offering a detailed examination of how these issues were exacerbated during the pandemic. The discussions highlighted the unique pressures women face—ranging from increased caregiving responsibilities to economic insecurity—and how these factors significantly affect their mental well-being. The session also emphasized the urgent need for gender-sensitive approaches in mental health care, which are essential for addressing the specific needs of women and ensuring that they receive appropriate support.

Furthermore, the webinar facilitated a crucial conversation about the importance of providing adequate mental health resources, particularly during times of crisis. It underscored the need for accessible mental health services, societal awareness, and policy changes to better support women, especially those from marginalized communities who face additional barriers to care. The speakers' insights and the discussions during the session reinforced the idea that mental health is a vital aspect of overall health and well-being.

In conclusion, the event not only raised awareness about the mental health challenges faced by women but also reinforced the importance of addressing these concerns to ensure women's empowerment and societal inclusion. The webinar served as a reminder that mental health is an integral component of a woman's overall health and that only through collective efforts and informed approaches can we create a more supportive and inclusive society for all.

# International Women's Day

*Theme #ChooseToChallenge*

Organized by

Centre for Women's Studies

University of North Bengal, Darjeeling West Bengal

Date: 8<sup>th</sup> March, 2021

**Centre for Women's Studies**  
University of North Bengal  
observes  
*International Women's Day*

Honourable Speakers

**Prof. Sanchari Roy Mukherjee**  
Vice Chancellor  
Dakshin Dinajpur University

**Ms. Alakananda Roy**  
Classical Dancer &  
Social Worker

**8th March 2021**

**12:30 pm onwards**

**via Google Meet**

**Theme**  
**#ChooseToChallenge**

## Introduction:

On 8th March 2021, the Department of Women's Studies at the University of North Bengal organized a special lecture session in observance of International Women's Day 2021. This event was held to commemorate the global movement advocating for gender equality and women's rights. Embracing the global theme #ChooseToChallenge, the session underscored the importance of actively challenging gender bias, inequality, and stereotypes in every aspect of life. The theme called on individuals to reflect on their own biases and take a stand against the injustices faced by women globally. The event was designed to raise awareness and initiate meaningful conversations about how society can work collectively to foster an inclusive and equitable world, where gender equality is not just an aspiration but a reality. Through this event,

the Department of Women's Studies sought to create a platform for open dialogue, learning, and empowerment.

### **Inaugural Session:**

The inaugural session commenced with a warm welcome speech delivered by Dr. Zinia Mitra, Director of the Centre for Women's Studies, University of North Bengal. Dr. Mitra opened by emphasizing the significance of International Women's Day, a day dedicated to celebrating women's achievements, raising awareness about gender disparities, and advocating for change. She reflected on the global theme #ChooseToChallenge and highlighted how it resonates in both local and global contexts. Dr. Mitra spoke about the ongoing struggle for gender equality and the necessity for each individual to actively participate in dismantling the structures that perpetuate inequality and discrimination against women. Her speech set the tone for the session, inspiring the audience to critically examine their own roles in addressing gender biases in their personal and professional lives.

Following Dr. Mitra's address, Prof. Subires Bhattacharyya, the then Vice-Chancellor of the University of North Bengal, took the stage to deliver the inaugural address. Prof. Bhattacharyya focused on the transformative power of education in challenging deeply ingrained societal prejudices against women. He stressed that education is the most powerful tool to dismantle stereotypes, foster awareness, and empower both women and men to work together towards achieving gender equality. Drawing attention to the importance of gender-sensitive education and curricula, Prof. Bhattacharyya encouraged the academic community to continue fostering environments that promote inclusivity, respect, and equality for all genders. He concluded his speech by reaffirming the university's commitment to supporting women's rights and promoting gender equality through both educational initiatives and community engagement.

### **Key Highlights:**

The Guests of Honour invited to grace the occasion were:



Prof. Subires Bhattacharyya, Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor, University of North Bengal.

Prof. Pranab Ghosh, Registrar (Offg), University of North Bengal.

Prof. Rathin Bandyopadhyay, Dean, Faculty Council for Postgraduate Studies in Arts, Commerce & Law, University of North Bengal.

Prof. Subhas Chandra Roy, Dean, Faculty Council for Postgraduate Studies in Science, University of North Bengal.

On International Women's Day, Prof. Subires Bhattacharyya, then Vice-Chancellor of the University of North Bengal, emphasized the importance of empowering women through education. He highlighted the university's initiatives to promote gender equality and support women's advancement in academia. Prof. Bhattacharyya underscored the institution's commitment to creating an inclusive environment that fosters equal opportunities for all students and staff.

The invited panelists, Prof. Sanchari Roy Mukherjee, Hon'ble Vice Chancellor of Dakshin Dinajpur University, and Smt. Alkananda Roy, Classical Dancer and Social Activist from Kolkata, delivered insightful discussions on the challenges and opportunities surrounding women's empowerment in contemporary society.

Prof. Sanchari Roy Mukherjee shared her perspective on the critical role of education and academic institutions in promoting gender equality. She emphasized the importance of higher education in breaking the traditional barriers that women face in both professional and personal spheres. Prof. Mukherjee discussed how universities can serve as platforms to challenge gender biases and empower women through inclusive policies, mentorship, and creating supportive environments for female students and faculty. She also spoke about the need to integrate gender-sensitive curricula and research into university programs, which can raise awareness and prepare future leaders to advocate for women's rights.

Smt. Alkananda Roy, in her powerful address, brought attention to the persistent social and cultural barriers that women encounter in everyday life. Smt Alakananda Roy spoke about the

challenges women face in professional, social and domestic spheres. She encouraged attendees to take personal and collective responsibility to challenge these inequalities, reinforcing the theme #ChooseToChallenge.

As a classical dancer and activist, she spoke passionately about the role of arts and culture in challenging stereotypes and raising awareness about gender inequalities. Smt. Roy highlighted the importance of self-expression through art forms as a tool for women to voice their struggles, assert their identities, and break free from traditional roles imposed upon them. She also discussed the importance of collective action in advocating for women's rights and social justice, urging individuals to take responsibility in challenging gender-based violence, discrimination, and biases in their communities.

Together, the panelists emphasized the theme #ChooseToChallenge, stressing that it is essential for everyone, particularly women, to challenge societal norms, take a stand for their rights, and contribute to building an equitable society. Their discussions inspired attendees to engage in conversations about gender equality, take actions that challenge entrenched stereotypes, and empower women in all aspects of life.

### **Conclusion:**

The event concluded with a heartfelt vote of thanks delivered by Dr. Beethika Moni Dutta, Assistant Professor, Centre for Women's Studies, by expressing sincere gratitude to the distinguished speakers, participants, and attendees for making the event a success. The vote of thanks acknowledged the collective effort that went into organizing the session and the invaluable contributions from all involved. She also expressed appreciation for the engaging discussions, thoughtful reflections, and active participation that helped make the event so impactful.

Attendees were encouraged to pledge their commitment to challenging inequality in all its forms and fostering a more inclusive and equitable world. This call to action emphasized the importance of both individual responsibility and collective action in effecting meaningful change. The session underscored that combating gender-based discrimination requires sustained

efforts from all members of society, whether through personal behavior, professional choices, or advocacy for systemic change.

The International Women's Day celebration at the University of North Bengal effectively raised awareness about the ongoing struggles for gender equality, sparked thought-provoking and meaningful dialogue, and inspired participants to become active advocates for change. The event emphasized that creating an inclusive society is not just about recognizing the rights of women but actively working to remove barriers and biases that limit their potential. By addressing these issues, the session laid the groundwork for a broader, ongoing conversation about gender equality, which must continue beyond this event.

The #ChooseToChallenge theme resonated deeply with the attendees, motivating them to take a stand against discrimination in their communities and workplaces. It encouraged individuals to reflect on their own biases, challenge the status quo, and work toward fostering a culture of inclusion, respect, and equality for all genders. The commitment to challenge inequality became a central focus of the gathering, with participants leaving the event empowered to contribute to a more just and equitable world.

The Centre for Women's Studies remains steadfast in its mission to empower women and advance gender equality. The event reflected the Centre's ongoing dedication to providing platforms for critical discussions and promoting gender-sensitive initiatives. Through such impactful programs, the Centre aims to continue making a positive difference in the lives of women, advocating for policies and practices that support gender equality, and engaging the broader community in efforts to build a more inclusive society for all.

#### **4.0 PUBLICATIONS:-**

##### **5.1 JOURNAL**

Journal of Women's Studies Vol-X, 2019(ISSN -2320-3625 ).

##### **5.2 BOOK**

Reconfiguring the Indian Women: Conceiving theories, theorizing identities.

## **5.0 RESOURCES**

### **5.1 MANPOWER**

As of 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2019, the following members constitute the existing manpower at the Centre for Women's Studies:

- i) Honorary Director: Professor Zinia Mitra.(from 02.11.20-continue)
- ii) Assistant Professor: Dr. Beethika Moni Dutta.
- iii) Peon: Shri Asit Singha .(on contract)

### **5.2 MATERIAL**

The Centre occupies 700 sq. ft space in 3 bays in the Humanities building.

The Centre has acquired a LCD projector and laptops to facilitate presentation at seminar and workshops.

For effective documentation, the centre has acquired camera which has been useful in the various activities of women in North Bengal including the project work undertaken by the Centre in different time.

### **6.3 DOCUMENTATION**

I. Books:- The CWS library presently houses 1379 books on Women's Studies covering different fields of Gender Studies were procured from the UGC fund. Library also has charts and posters on Women related issues and paper cuttings are also preserved for scholars and students who visit the library for viewing and disseminating information.

Study materials for UGC NET Examination for Women's Studies compiled from different books and internet for the students are kept in the CWS library and many students have been benefited.

Prof. Zinia Mitra  
Director

