

One day Webinar on Impact of COVID19 on Gender Equality

One day Webinar on **‘Impact of COVID19 on Gender Equality’** was jointly organized by Internal Complaints Committee (ICC), Sikkim University and University Grants Commission (UGC) on the 30th Of June 2020. The distinguished speakers for the webinar were Dr (Prof) Shweta Prasad, Department of Sociology, Banaras Hindu University (BHU) and Dr (Prof) Sanchari Roy Mukherjee, Department of Economics, North Bengal University (NBU).

The Webinar commenced with a welcome address delivered by Dr Swati Akshay Sachdeva, Presiding officer (ICC) Sikkim University, highlighting the purpose behind organizing the Webinar she mentioned how the COVID 19 crisis affects men and women in different ways and this has thrown gender based differences into sharper relief. Given that COVID -19 is not gender blind, the response to it should not be either.

The first speaker was Prof Sanchari Roy Mukherjee, sharing her views on the topic **‘Challenges to Women’s work prospects amidst COVID 19’**, argued that even before the pandemic women already faced a century long wait to reach parity with men, a daunting prospect which now is at a bigger risk as economic disparities are further being unleashed. Women already bear a disproportionate burden and the burden has become heavier with closing of schools and increase in the house hold work. Women are also at the frontlines of the fight against the virus, making up 70% of the global health care workers and as much as 95% of long term care workers. Women employed in leisure and hospitality industries have been badly as there are layoffs and pay cuts. She mentioned that regional framework, multilateral organization and international financial institutions need to recognize that women play a critical role in resolving the crisis and that measures to address the pandemic and its economic fallout should include a gender perspective.

The second speaker was Prof Shweta Prasad, delivering her talk on **‘Concerns for Gender Equality, COVID-19’**, highlighted how during the current crisis, gender based differences have become sharper. The International Labour Organization has warned that COVID-19 could wipe out progress made on gender equality at work, unequal distribution of unpaid work has increased during the pandemic .The violence against women has increased by 20% across the globe. She mentioned that the impact of the pandemic will remain longer in societies than anticipated. Therefore, policies framed during COVID need to be women centric.

The Webinar was attended by students, research scholars and faculty members from different Universities. On the basis of the feedback form received 672 persons participated in the Webinar. The Webinar also saw attendance from Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Iraq. The participants appreciated the topic of the Webinar and also found the arguments and discussion of the speakers very relevant. They mentioned that another Webinar should be organized in which the participants should also be given a chance to share their views

on the subject.