

A report of the Panel Discussion on Gender-based Violence as held on 08/03/2022

The Department of Sociology, Jamia Millia Islamia, organised an online Panel Discussion on Gender-Based Violence by Dr. Beulah Shekhar and Dr. Smita Premchander to commemorate the International Women's Day, 2022. The members of the Organising Committee for the event were: Dr. Manisha Tripathy Pandey (Head, Department of Sociology, Jamia Millia Islamia and Chair for the Panel Discussion), Dr. Savyasaachi (Department of Sociology, Jamia Millia Islamia and Moderator for the Panel Discussion), Dr. Sumbul Farah (Convenor) and Niharika Parashar (Student Coordinator.)

Dr. Beulah Shekhar who works on public affairs and social issues extensively, is the the Chair Professor of Criminology in Loknayak Jayprakash Narayan (LNJN) and National Institute of Criminology and Forensic Science (NISFS). She was the first to introduce a standalone Victimology course in India.

Dr. Smita Premchander, a development consultant of international repute, is the founder of an NGO, Sampark. She is a Visiting Faculty at IIM, Ahmedabad and she chairs the International Advisory Committee of the UNU-EHS in Bonn. A board member of the Munich Climate Insurance Initiative; she focuses on social inclusion, social protection, and sustainable development.

Dr. Manisha Tripathy Pandey delivered the welcome address. She introduced the esteemed panel of speakers and greeted the faculty members, students and scholars. She addressed the topic for deliberation and advocated the importance of gender sensitivity and inclusivity.

The panel discussion began with Dr. Shekhar defining gender-based violence as the denial of holistic access to justice and rights. She provided a nuanced understanding of the convergence of motivated offender, suitable target and the absence of a capable guardian that serves as an impetus for gender-based violence. She asserted the need for deconstructing, debunking and unlearning wrongful beliefs, attitudes and socialisation at large to address gender-based violence. The pressing need for a multidisciplinary approach incorporating widespread sensitisation, vigilance, target hardening, overcoming impunity to demotivate offenders by ensuring punishment and creating awareness about laws to ensure the enforcement of legislations was put forth so as to ensure gender equality for a sustainable tomorrow.

Dr. Smita Premchander began her talk by tracing the genealogy of how Women's Day evolved. One of thirteen women in India, she stated, are likely to witness violence; the numbers may go up to as high as one in four women. She emphasises that violence is not perpetrated in terms of gender binaries alone. However, for an overall development of the

society, she asserts, gender equality plays an integral part. She elucidated on the different sites for perpetration of violence and also puts forth the roles of norms and attitudes in furthering the same. She subsequently advocated the need for prevention of gender-based violence; immediate response from various institutions to bring an end to impunity; and efficient rehabilitation of victims. To bring about transformative change, she highlighted the need for one to look at three domains: access to services, voice influence and agency, and norms. Bringing the current pandemic into play, she also stated how closing the global gender gap has increased by a generation from 99.5 years to 135.6 years.

This was followed by an interactive question-answer session and an extensive discussion. The event was brought to an end with a vote of thanks by Dr. Savyasaachi and a nazm ('Aurat' by Fatima Hasan) recited by Dr. Azra Abidi. The panel discussion was enthusiastically attended by 72 participants (roughly identified as 32 males and 40 females.)

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