



## Report on “Sensitization Programme on the Provision of the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019 and Rules 2020” held on 15<sup>th</sup> March at University Headquarters

A “Sensitization Programme on the Provision of the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019 and Rules 2020” was held at NSOU on 15<sup>th</sup> March’2023. The programme was organized by the Department of Social Work, School of Professional Studies, Netaji Subhas Open University (NSOU) in collaboration with Jayaprakash Institute of Social Change and supported by National Institute of Social Defence (NISD), GoI. The students, not only from the Department of Social Work, but even from other departments (TOTAL -65 participants) attended the programme.

In the inaugural session, Prof.Anirban Ghosh, Director SPS (i/c) NSOU officially welcomed everyone and shared that there is a need for legal provisions for the transgender community of our society. Professor Ashokendu Sengupta, Former Chairperson, West Bengal Commission for Protection of Child Rights (WBCPCR) also shared how the Transgender Act came into action and gave a brief history of the Act.



Shri Joydev Mazumder, executive director, Jayaprakash Institute of Social Change explained that the society has always discriminated against the transgender from the others and this discrimination has led to deprivation of health, social security, education, safety and all the other rights. He also discussed how Garima Greh is taking initiative and assisted a huge number of people to change their gender in Government Identification Cards. 3834 number of people has received their identity card with Transgender identity. The state of West Bengal was the first state where a Transgender person stood as a political leader in 2019 Lok Sabha Election. Regardless of all these progressions it is still hard to see transgender persons in the workplace, and they refrain from disclosing their identity. As a society we still don’t

understand the difference between “sex” and “gender”. He concluded the session by saying that the intension should always be to spread a general awareness in the working field. And exclude discrimination from classroom to common room.

Dr. Manobi Bandyopadhyay was invited to speak next, she is the first PhD holder and a professor in India who accepted her identity as a transgender person. Dr Bandyopadhyay served as an associate professor in Bengali at Vivekananda Satobarshiki Mahavidyalaya. After completing her PhD in 2006, she took charge as Principal of Krishnagar Women's College on 7 June 2015 after a decade of struggling against patriarchy and convoluted notions regarding the third gender. She shared her experience of discrimination and trauma she went through as a transgender person in her aspect of life. She was on the notion that the struggle first starts with one's own self and slowly it continues within the family, educational institutions and as a whole society. She explained that the students must be aware of these issues and everyone should start talking about this very serious concept.



The technical sessions started, soon after the inaugural session.

**The first speaker was Mrs Kasturi Sinha Ghosh, the Asst Professor, Department of Social Work, NSOU, addressing the topic "Gender-responsive approaches to the social mainstreaming of Transgender Persons."** She explained this topic from the social work perspective as it helps us to understand it in a better way. Society teaches one how to act in society. Hence the norms and criteria created by society specifically for females and males are described as gender. Transgender people are also human beings then why society does not assign any specified role to them? It is because society tries to keep them aside. We called them by different names such as intergender, transvestite, transgender, etc. They are marginalized and excluded from developmental aspects. From a social worker's point of view, the system approach and self-based approach are the two important approaches that we can think of, because social work is no more about problem-solving affairs and it should have right based approach wherein what the problem of people is not necessary to know but what is their strength and capacity that are needed to know. We have already talked a lot about transgender people's problems and now we need to find out their strengths and worked on them.

***Bappaditya Mukherjee, the Founder and Executive Director of Prantakatha, who was the next speaker addressed the topic, "Salient features of provisions of the Transgender Person (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019 and Rules 2020".*** He thanked the Jayaprakash Institute of Social Change for this great initiative and further said that in West Bengal, the Jayaprakash Institute of Social Change is the only educational institute that keeps doing awareness of the Transgender protection issues in the educational sector right now. Mr Bappaditya said that

the Transgender Protection Act was introduced on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2020 and one month ago this act was also implemented in West Bengal, Rajya Sabah in a modified form. So, both Central and state governments have this ACT. He discussed about the salient features of the act.



*The last speaker of the programme was, Ms Yashabanti Sreemany, a member of WBCPCR, a psychologist, and a former member of the Child Welfare Committee highlighted on the “Psychosocial implication of social reintegration of the transgender person”.* She said that the transgender people have been fighting for self-identity in society and due to this reason they have higher rates of mental health complications as their rights do not get addressed. Most of the transgender people who seek counselling have suicidal thoughts and they often fail to express themselves freely. Transgender people suffer high stigmatization, discrimination, and victimization, contributing to negative self-image and increased rates of other mental health disorders.

At the end of the session, the participants actively involved in an open discussion. Finally Dr. Barnali Roy Choudhuri, Asst, Professor, Library & Information Science, SPS, NSOU concluded the seminar with a vote of thanks to all the participants and resource persons.

---Report prepared by Smt. Kasturi Sinha Ghosh