

## Completion Report

### Webinar on ‘Gender equality today for a sustainable tomorrow’ held on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2022

The Internal Committee (IC) of IIPS organized a webinar on ‘Gender equality today for a sustainable tomorrow’ on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2022, as a plenary session in the IIPS International Seminar. The webinar was organized through WebEx Video Conferencing Application. The session started with **Prof. Usha Ram**, Chairperson, IC welcoming all the participants. Prof Ram introduced the chairperson of the session (Prof. Kamla Gupta), the discussant (Dr. Sanceeta Ghosh), the eminent speakers (Dr. Suneeta Dhar, Dr. Sonali Khan, Prof. Govind Kelkar and Prof. Vibhuti Patel), and the rapporteur (Dr. Manas R. Pradhan) of the session. Prof. Ram invited **Prof. Gupta**, to chair the session and formally start the session. Prof. Gupta welcomed the speaker and the participants. In her inaugural speech, Prof. Gupta emphasized the need for continued debate and efforts for a gender equitable society.

The first speaker, **Dr. Suneet Dhar** spoke on 'Breaking the Bias: Imagining a Gender Equal World'. She started with recitation of poems by Dr. Kamla Bhasin (famous feminist scholar) about the need and importance of gender equality. She highlighted the contribution of SHGs members on revival of health and economic development at the community level, post-covid time under the national rural livelihood mission. She stressed on the contribution of SHG members but also highlighted the vulnerability of women including deprived land rights, violence against women etc. She stressed on the point of daughter preference rather than son preference. She concluded with poem wrote by Amand Gormen an Amerian poet about free thinking and equality.

The second speaker, **Dr. Sonali Khan**, spoke on ‘gender neutral society’. She talked about beneficial role gender sensitization of boys at younger age. She told that there is a huge gap in perception and practice of gender norms in the society. She talked about the differential role of parents so far as spending time with children is concerned especially during COVID. She felt that there is a gap in desirable and actual behavior both among men and women, which need to be addressed. She suggested that time is to -think about the role of parenting, gender sensitization at younger age, and narrowing the gap between desirable and actual behavior so far as gender equality is concerned.

**Prof. Govind Kelkar**, the third speaker spoke on ‘Women's access to economic justice: social structures and patriarchal systems’. Three specific issues raised by her were (1) Access to economic resources/lack of ownership (2) Lack of right to decision making, (3) limits on women’s mobility. She stressed on the point of redistribution of resources, consideration of household works as productive work. She also stressed on the -Nexus between economic inequality and gender equality.

The fourth speaker, **Prof. Vibhuti Patel**, presented an update on various SDG goals in India through empirical data.

**Discussant's (Dr. Sanceeta Ghosh) note:**

The panel discuss mainly focused on the issues of gender stereotype and structural inequalities that leads to injustice and unequal society, key barrier to achieve the SDGs in near future. The discussion started with Suneeta Dhar's important topic on 'Break the Bias which focused on retrospective review of women's rights movement in India. In her words, India's struggle on gender justice which draws attention towards Kamla ji's work and poetry on collectivization women's rights movement gained importance in context of reclaiming spaces. To bring an equal space, she also focused on creating world, without caste, religious and gender discrimination as well as bringing the prism of inclusiveness of women, transwomen, LGBTQI for transformative change.

Next speaker, Sonali Kan focused on another important aspect of masculinity and positive parenting that encourages parents to start the socialization process of gender fluid society at the very beginning. According to her, 'we need to bring boys into the discussion at very young stage' so that they learn breaking the bias. She quoted from evidenced based research conducted by Sesame Street on identifying factors of challenging of masculinity and socialization process. She emphasizes on the fact that, it is important for parents to teach children on recognizing gender non-binaries and respect the person without judging.

Govind Kelkar, our 3<sup>rd</sup> speaker shared the importance of gender justice and economic justice to reach the sustainability goals. She raised the question on identifying women's position in the horizontal as well as vertical structural horizon of economic strata and pointed out on the fact about reason of denying economic justice to them. In her words, unfreedom of women, lack of mobility, and rights to public spaces and right to dignity as well as violence free life are crucial to feminist lenses of analysis of gender equal society. Her suggestion was to have holistic frame for evidence based advocacy with use of gender responsive and inclusive data.

Dr. Vibhuti connected the important point of SDGs and current situation of all the indicators which shows the road is still long and we need time to reach to our destination of achieving gender equality in SDGs. She expressed her concern like, 'as we are marching towards SDGs, we are actually standstill on the indicators. Hence, it is more important to focus on structural inequality and intersectional cross-regional solidarity to achieve and fulfil the unequal spaces.

The chairperson closed the session by thanking all the speakers and the participants. Please find below some of the pictures from the session.









