



Date: May 30th, 2020

Webinar Report

GUHAR organised the third series of the national webinar titled “**Current Socio-Economic Challenges and Opportunities**” (COVID 19) on 30th May 2020. It saw participation by young researchers, scholars, professors and students from across the country. There were more than one hundred and thirty participants along with six Resource persons. The topic was well received by the attendees. The webinar proceedings are as mentioned below.

The webinar began with introductory opening remarks by convenor Mr. Deepak Kumar. He emphasised upon various concerns related to current pandemic and how a global effort is needed to tackle this pandemic. Only through a cooperative effort, we could prevent the negative effects of this pandemic.

The welcome address was delivered by Dr. Rahul Chimurkar, Assistant Professor, Lakshmi Bai College, University of Delhi. With much zeal and zest he addressed the flamboyant audience and instilled in them more vigour and vitality. He outlined the fact that the whole world is grappling with the global threat in the form of COVID 19 but the pandemic has an uneven impact on different sections of the society. Individual's life has become more individuated, zone of threat has become more democratised. In terms of political impact, we could see a new post covid global order. In short, this pandemic provides us a golden opportunity to create a different type of 'normal or new normal' which can re-establish the dominance of the state and reaffirm the fulfilment of social and economic rights.

The whole session was chaired by Dr. Pankaj Kumar Mishra, Associate Professor in the Department of Sanskrit at St. Stephen's College, University of Delhi. He spoke eloquently on the various challenges posed during COVID 19. We are doing away with western ways of life and adopting our own ways like greeting each other with Namaskar rather than shaking hands. The impact of pandemic has been uneven on both poor and rich. Migrants have lost their source of livelihood and rich people are not finding any means to spend their money. He also mentioned about the fact that how words like quarantine, self-distancing etc are now become a part of the dictionaries. He also appreciated the efforts of the government who is doing its best to extend all help possible to various sections of the society.

The first speaker Shri Guru Prakash, Assistant Professor, Faculty of Law, Patna University, Patna, Bihar. He spoke on the role of youths and their role during the current pandemic. He appreciated the efforts of GUHAR for inviting young speakers across different disciplines to share their views on the current pandemic. He talked about an initiative started by youths of Bihar by the name Magadhmitra. These group of youth have been actively supporting the

migrant workers in every way possible. He stressed on the fact that day youths are coming forward and participating in taking the country forward without any prejudices or biasedness. He also emphasised upon using the word 'physical distancing' instead of 'social distancing' because the word social distancing seems to create divides in the society in the way it was there in the form of caste system in the past. There is a dire need to build 'Social solidarity' in the country. Even the Prime Minister used the word physical Distancing in his address to the nation last month. He also reflected upon role of India at the international level and how this pandemic provides us an opportunity become International institutional builder. The great advantage in terms of having a demographic dividend, market, democracy will all contribute in making a India a major player in post covid world.

The next speaker Ms. Vedeika Shekhar, Associate, Health & Nutrition Division, Niti Aayog, Government of India. She dwelled upon the gendered implications of COVID 19. Experience from historic disease outbreaks and economic crises suggest that women are likely to be impacted disproportionately. It is estimated that 136 million non-agricultural jobs are at an immediate risk. This can have serious consequences for 90 per cent of total women workers who are engaged in the informal sector or have temporary jobs in the absence of social protection measures like health insurance, paid sick and maternity leave, pensions and unemployment benefits, etc. In a country where a massive part of unpaid care work falls mostly on women — they spend 297 minutes per day on it as against 31 minutes by men — the lockdown will disproportionately increase their household responsibilities, which may consequently have an adverse effect on their mental health. She also proposed gender-sensitive, systemic and structural changes that could protect vulnerable women and build gender-equal systems

The next speaker Dr. Dinesh Chahal, Assistant Professor, Department of Education, Central University of Haryana, Haryana spoke on the social impact of COVID 19. Two major issues emerged during the pandemic are life and livelihood. He said time has come to get way with materialistic way of life and move towards a sustainable ways of living a life. He urged to move from 'greed culture' to 'need culture'. Ina addition to food, clothing and shelter, now we need to add three more things to it i.e Sanitation, Medicine and Education. He also explore the role of family and community in the current times and emphasised upon strengthening these structures in our society. He said government provides 'Information', Civil society organisations like GUHAR provide 'Inspiration' and we was citizens must use these and implement them in our daily lives.

The next speaker Ms. Shrabana Barua, Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, Hindu College, University of Delhi, Delhi, spoke on the Geopolitical Readjustments in Asia post-COVID19. She said India could potentially lead the change in a post-Covid world with its vast array of engineers, demographic dividend and investment opportunities. Covid-19 is likely to accelerate the competition and confrontation between the US and China, and simultaneously reduce the global authority of both by eroding their absolute power and legitimacy. India and other middle powers are likely to enjoy greater bargaining capabilities with both US and China. Smaller powers are likely to fall in line with any side that provides them the required capital. India needs another engine of growth in such a world. Large-scale manufacturing offers one such opportunity. China

beat India in this game in the pre Covid-19 world. But in a new world where China is distrusted, India can be part of more economic webs and build its own strength.

The last speaker, Dr. Ajay Kumar Singh ,Assistant Professor, Central University of Jammu, Jammu ,spoke on the indigenous solutions to current socio economic problems. Hr advocated Swadeshi model of development. Social trust needs to be increased in our society by promoting the values of mutual trust, tolerance, respecting diversities etc. The government must reduce its dependence on the foreign countries and give impetus to domestically manufactured goods. He said the government must increase in spending on MSMEs and develop indigenous industries to resolve the uses of livelihood and migration. He also advocated Decentralised way of development which will ensure the participation of common man in the development process. He also emphasised upon the need to realise the constitutional principle of ‘one person, one value’ and urged very to uphold one’s duties as well. This was followed by question and answers session where participants asked a lot of questions and speakers responded to each one of them.

Vote of thanks was given by Dr. Ravinder Kumar, who provided a fitting closure to the webinar. Extending his gratitude to the various esteemed speakers who made the webinar a truly enriching experience for one and all present, Dr. Kumar gratefully recognized the contributions made by each and every speaker to the issues on COVID 19 and its many tangents. Furthermore, acknowledging the many hours of tireless work and efforts put into making this webinar a success, he extended his heartfelt gratitude to the oragnsiers Mr. Deepak Kumar, Dr. Rahul Chimurkar, Mr. Kaustubh Mani, Mr. Nitanshu, Mr. Pradeep and others, without whom the webinar could not be termed a success.



Deepak Kumar
Convener
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