

Date: 3rd May, 2020**Press Note****National Webinar on ‘Current Socio-Economic Challenges and Opportunities (COVID-19)’ organized by GUHAR**

The webinar titled “**Current Socio-Economic Challenges and Opportunities (COVID 19)**” was organized on 3rd May 2020 by GUHAR, an NGO that works in the field of education and livelihood. It was attended by young researchers, scholars, professors and students from across the country. There were more than one hundred and fifty participants along with 6 Resource persons. The topic was well received by the audience attending the webinar. The webinar proceedings are as written below.

The webinar began with introductory opening remarks by convener Mr. Deepak Kumar. He emphasized upon various concerns related to current pandemic and insisted on the need for a global effort to tackle this pandemic. He said today's webinar will make an attempt to consider the social and economic impacts caused by this global epidemic.

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 discussed the various dimensions of COVID 19 and how this pandemic has unleashed a cycle of fear and anxiety among citizens around the globe. He went on to describe this pandemic as some kind of war, not political, but a silent and indirect war between pathogens and humans.

The session was chaired by Dr. Pankaj Kumar Mishra, Associate Professor, St. Stephen's College who spoke eloquently on the socio-economic challenges of COVID 19. He said that this is the first time human beings are dealing with this kind of pandemic but what is unique about this is its alarming rate of spreading in our interconnected global world. We are not jealous of our relatives just because they are doing well but we are afraid of them because they may have corona virus. We are maintaining distances from our neighbours. Highlighting the need of economy, he said the no one can survive without money.

The first speaker Dr. Anand Pratap Singh, Head, Department of Psychology and Mental Health, Gautam Buddha University, Uttar Pradesh during his address, spoke about the various psychological impacts on an individual caused by COVID 19. He said that we are moving away from ‘frequently socialising pattern’ to ‘occasional socialising pattern’. Need-based interactions have been on a rise. The society will witness the loss of ‘trust’ and faith in our fellow human beings. There will always be an element of threat in the mind of an individual towards the other person in the society. For this reason, society would move towards ‘Digital socialisation’.

The next speaker Dr. Vikram Singh, Head, Department of Social Work, Guru Ghasidas University, Bilaspur, Chhattisgarh dwelled upon the societal implications of COVID 19. He focused on the impact on COVID 19 on various social groups of the society. Like he said the cases of domestic violence has increased during the lockdown period. The whole treatment meted out to the migrant workers was well observed by the speaker. He argued about the inequitable distribution of income in our society and need for ‘faith-based groups’ to develop trust among human beings in the society.

The next speaker Dr. Amna Mirza, Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, Shyama Prasad Mukherji College of women, University of Delhi, Delhi spoke on the Post-COVID world order. She brilliantly focussed upon the pre-eminence of threats caused by hunger, poverty etc. than the traditional military threat. She said this pandemic has given us an opportunity to come together and cooperate at the global level to make this world a better place to live. She raised the debate on Globalisation as well. She argued that we could witness the reform of Globalisation and re-asserted the role of state in the future course of time. The whole governance structures will witness a change at the global level. Time has come to debate about the contribution and role of P-5 members of Security Council and make the necessary changes in the times to come.

The next speaker Dr. Jagbir Singh Kadyan, Assistant Professor, Department of Commerce, Swami Shreddhanand College, University of Delhi, Delhi spoke on the economic aspects of COVID 19. He during his address, considered this pandemic as an opportunity for the countries to revisit their economic policies. This pandemic might lead emerging countries like China and India to take the driver seat and lead the world with their economic agenda.

The next speaker Dr. Sandeep Kaushik, Assistant Professor, Department of Environmental Science, Indra Gandhi National Tribal University, Amarkantak, M.P. presented his views with regard to the relation between the health of the environment and COVID 19. He argued that nature has recovered itself due to the lockdown. He substantiated this with multiple examples like cleaner water of Ganga, visible mountain range from Saharanpur, decrease in pollution levels etc. He emphasised upon the fact that we humans need to realise the need to balance environment and development in order to build a better future. He suggested change in the habits of human beings, protecting the environment by all means, particularly through community participation. This was followed by a Q&A 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 on 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 organisers Mr. Deepak Kumar, Mr. Rohit Bharti, Mr. Divyanshu, Mr. Lovekesh, Mr. Vibhor and others without whom the webinar could not be termed a success.



Deepak Kumar
Convener