

SPECIAL LECTURE on 17.01.2024
Organised by the Department of Education, WBSU,
On
GENDER MAINSTREAMING PATTERNS:
LOCATING THE CHALLENGES AND POSSIBILITIES

By Prof. Ratna Ghosh

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On the 17th of January 2024, the Department of Education at West Bengal State University (WBSU), in collaboration with the Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC), WBSU, organised a special lecture on "Gender Mainstreaming Patterns: Locating the Challenges and Possibilities." Dr. Shnaoli Chakraborty Acharya, Assistant Professor of the Department of Education at WBSU and the convenor of the program, initiated the event with a brief welcoming speech, expressing gratitude to the distinguished speaker, Prof. Ratna Ghosh, and acknowledging the chief patron, Honorable Vice Chancellor Prof. Rajkumar Kothari, Director of IQAC Prof. Mukut Chakraborty, and other esteemed dignitaries.

The program commenced with the felicitation of the esteemed speaker, Prof. Ratna Ghosh, the Head of the Department of Education, Prof. Abhijit Kr. Pal, Prof Mukut Chakraborty, University Librarian Dr Sushanta Banerjee, by the department's scholars and students. Prof. Ratna Ghosh began her lecture at 2 pm, captivating the audience with insights into the paradoxical scenario where women, despite holding top positions, remain among the most underprivileged globally.

During her lecture, she provided a comprehensive overview of 'Gender Mainstreaming,' emphasising its social construction rather than a biological concept. She discussed the perspectives of 'gender equality' and highlighted using the term 'mainstream' to address the long-standing sidelining of gender inequality. The challenges posed by intersectionality in gender mainstreaming were explored, with Prof. Ghosh asserting that gender equality is not solely a women's problem but a global societal concern.

The lecture delved into international and national legislation, constitutional provisions regarding gender issues, and the Global Gender Gap Index 2023. Prof. Ghosh revealed that South Asia scored the second lowest in gender parity at 63.4%, with India ranking 127th out of 146 countries. She emphasised the necessity of gender mainstreaming in India, discussing both quantitative and qualitative indicators of literacy and education for women.

Highlighting the alarming sex ratio statistics and Amartya Sen's concerns about missing women in India, Prof. Ghosh explored the paradoxical role of education. Despite women having higher educational degrees, traditional inequalities and violence against women persist due to unquestioning acceptance of received beliefs. The significance of curriculum, teacher education, and school culture in shaping societal norms was underscored, emphasising addressing the neglected affective domain in the curriculum.

Prof. Ghosh concluded that education can be a powerful tool to counter gender inequality, but the type of education is crucial. She advocated for a holistic, humanistic approach to education that fosters respect for human rights, diversity, and social justice.

The lecture received a positive response from the highly attentive students, who thoroughly enjoyed the insightful session. At the end of the program, Dr. Ajit Mondal, Assistant Professor of Education at WBSU, shared his observations. The event concluded successfully with a vote of thanks from the convener, Dr. Shnaoli Chakraborty Acharya.