

Workshop on “Gender Awareness and Gender sensitization” at the Central University of Orissa



A workshop on “Gender Awareness and Gender Sensitization” was organized by the Central University of Orissa, Koraput on 04 August 2017 under the auspices of the Internal Complaints Committee (ICC) of the University. Prof Sanjukta Dasgupta distinguished academic and former Dean, Faculty of Arts, University of Calcutta with an excellent track record in the field of gender studies, delivered a special lecture on **‘Women’s Identity in Changing Times’**. The Hon’ble Vice-Chancellor Prof. Sachidananda Mohanty inaugurated the workshop and delivered the inaugural address. Chairperson of ICC, CUO, Dr. Minati Sahoo welcomed the gathering and underlined the importance of the event.

Prof. Sachidananda Mohanty in his inaugural speech prepared the ground for the special lecture by tracing the debate between Nature and Nurture. The role of society and education in the training of the mind of men and women is being increasingly realized in modern times. In other words, he said, nurture has a great role to play. Citing the Athenian and the Spartan way of life he added: ‘the rise of diabolic doctrines like Nazism and Fascism in the 20th Century advocated the false ideology, without any scientific basis, that man is born to rule and woman to serve, a view that has been conclusively rejected. The liberation of women is necessary for the liberation of men and that progressive women and enlightened men have always joined hands for the common cause of creating a society without discrimination’. He stressed the need for the emancipation of woman through education and economic independence. Reading out two



passages of his latest path breaking book *The Lost World of Sarala Devi*, OUP,2016, he underlined the plight of women and lack of space for figures like Sarala Devi, Rama Devi, Kuntala Kumari Devi in the public domain.



Prof. Sanjukta Dasgupta in her speech on **Women's Identity in Changing Times** critiqued the Patriarchal system that internalizes discrimination against women. She stressed the need for interrogation. She exposed "the hypocrisy of defeminization and the politics of female subjugation by commenting critically on various false social practices and spoke on the

challenges women faced in education and voting rights in the past. Citing texts like Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House*, Tagore's *The Wife's Letter* and Ashapurna Devi's *Prothom Protishruti* Prof. Dasgupta commented on woman's changing self perception from a 'desirable object to a desiring subject'. She also brought in the challenges of a woman's life at home and stressed the need of instruction for home. She rejected the stereotyping of women and turning them into laughing stock in social platforms. She urged woman's economic independence and impressed upon the audience to uphold the importance of financial dependence. "Economic independence of women would lead to both economic and emotional inter-dependence", she added. She ended her speech with an optimistic note on the current advancement of gender equality and gender justice in the 21st century by reciting from her recently published collection *Lakshmi Unbound*.



The event ended with a vibrant question-answer session participated by teachers, research scholars and students of CUO, followed by the Presidential remarks of the Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor. Dr. Sagarika Mishra, Lecturer in sociology and ICC member, proposed the vote of thanks. Students and faculty members of the University were present in large numbers on this occasion.

Dr. Phagunath Bhoi ,
Public Relations Officer