

CENTRAL UNIVERSITY OF ODISHA, KORAPUT
OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC RELATIONS
PRESS RELEASE, DATE: 07.12.2023

CUO organises International Conference on “Women in the 21st Century: Environment and Sustainable Development”

The three-day International Conference on “Women in the 21st Century: Environment and Sustainable Development” was inaugurated at the Central University of Odisha on 7 December 2023 at its Sunabeda Campus. The Conference has been organized by the Department of Sociology, Central University of Odisha Koraput, in collaboration with the World Centre for Women’s Studies (WCWS), from 7th to 9th December 2023. The Vice Chancellor of the Central University of Odisha, Prof. Chakradhar Tripathi, wished the International Conference a grand success. *Padmashree Awardee* Prof. Aditya Prasad Dash, Eminent Scientist of international repute and former Vice-Chancellor of Central University of Tamilnadu, attended as the Chief Guest and inaugurated the Conference.

The dignitaries present on the dais were Prof. Narasingh Charan Panda, Registrar I/c, CUO; Dr. Barbara Wejnert, President, World-CWS, University at Buffalo, New York, USA; Prof. Bishnu Charan Barik, former Vice Chancellor, Sambalpur University; Prof. Jashbir Singh, University of Jammu and Vice President WCWS; Dr. Kapila Khemundu, Associate Professor and HoD, Dept. of Sociology and Convenor of the Conference.

Speaking on the occasion, Prof. N.C. Panda highlighted the importance of women in India since the Vedic period. During that period, women were enjoying superior power, and now we have to think of women's empowerment. He said the Jagannath Cult of Odisha also keeps women at high standards. Prof. Barik briefed about the historical background of the World Centre for Women Studies and focused on the key areas of its work.

Prof. Aditya Prasad Das praised the initiation of Swachha Bharat Abhiyan and the participation of women in its successful journey. Earth is dominated by biomass, which largely comes from plants. If we kill the plants, it will lead to ecological imbalance and may lead to disaster, he said. Prof. Barbara Wejnert praised Indian culture and appreciated the status of women in Indian society. Nowadays, it is a passion for empowering gender, and gender issues are important for discussion, she said.

Prof. Jashbir Singh highlighted the significance of the women in the society. He stressed the need for the inclusion of men in women's study centers so that both can contribute to society's development. At the international level, Indian women are projected as the second category, which he denounced at the conference. The motto of the WCWS is based on the Gandhian principle of collaborative networks to empower women, she said. Sustainable development is required for a sustainable future, she added. Dr. Kapila Khemundu gave the welcome address and spoke about the purpose of the Conference and CUO’s participation. Dr. Aditya Keshari Mishra, Faculty member of Sociology, offered the Vote of Thanks, and faculty member Ms. Nupur Patnaik coordinated the Programme.

The International Conference was also attended by eminent persons of the University and outside, including Dr. Anupama Vohra, Executive Member of WCWS from the University of Jammu; Prof. V.C. Jha, Consultant, Administration and Academics of CUO; Prof. S.K. Palita, Dean, School of Biodiversity and Conservation of Natural Resources, CUO, and other dignitaries, faculty members, research scholars, students, and staff of the University. During the session, a special exhibition on traditional millet foods coordinated by Dr. Debabrata Panda, Faculty member of CUO, was organized at the University, which the dignitaries inaugurated. Around 120 papers covering the various themes and sub-themes will be presented at the conference. Around 70 participants from India and abroad will present papers in person, while the rest of the participants will join the conference online. The conference sub-themes are Women, Nurture the Nature across the Globe, Gender and Environment in Literature, Film and Theatre, Women and Environmental Movements- Policy Perspectives, Women and Sustainable Development.

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