

## **Report of One Day National Seminar on “Gender Mainstreaming: The Road Ahead”**

A one - day national seminar titled “Gender Mainstreaming: The Road Ahead” was organised by the Internal Quality Assurance Cell, Loreto College on 1 April, 2023. The seminar was sponsored by the Indian Council of Social Science Research. Justice Indira Banerjee, a former judge of the Supreme Court of India, delivered the keynote address where she signposted the various forms of gender discrimination that exist in our society and cited instances, particularly from the Indian judiciary, in support of her argument. In view of the Indian constitution which gives equal rights to all citizens irrespective of gender as well as the guidelines of the 1985 Nairobi Conference on Women and 1995 Beijing Conference on Women, it is ironic that sufficient progress has not yet been made in ensuring equal rights and opportunities to women.

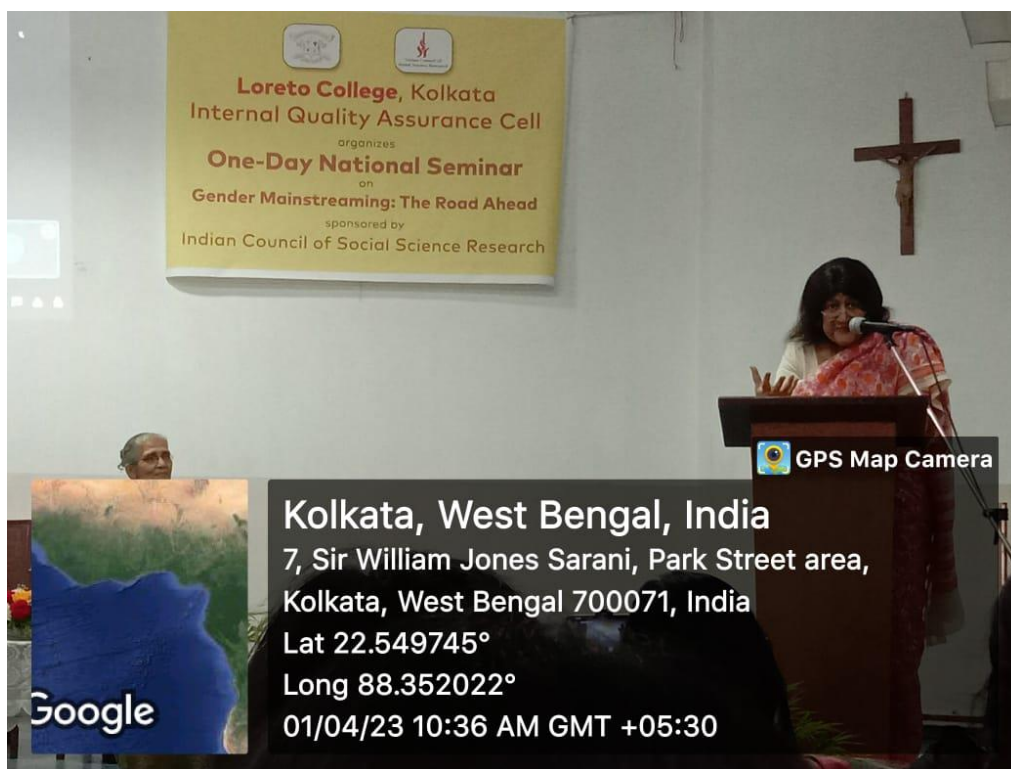
Professor Rumki Basu, Head, Centre for Public Policy and Governance, New Delhi, delivered a special lecture. In her presentation, she referred to the findings of Global Gender Gap Index over the recent years and established how gender disparities are sustained globally - be it through restricted access to essential reproductive health facilities or reduced wages for the women workforce. She also critically engaged with the intersectionalities of gender, race, ethnicity and economic classes to bring out how gender based disparity is a hydra headed problem. She offered suggestions that include systemic policy changes, appropriate legislations, legal reforms and gender sensitisation for a better society.

Professor Basu's talk was followed by a panel discussion chaired by Dr. Arijita Dutta (Professor, Department of Economics, University of Calcutta). The panellists, Dr Ananya Chatterjee Chakraborti (Advisor, West Bengal Commission for Protection of Child Rights), Dr. Maria Fernandes (Member, West Bengal Commission for Women) and Dr. Rosalin Patasani Mishra (Founder, Parichay Foundation) shared their insights on some of the basic problems of our society that feed into gender disparity and even gender based violence. The panellists asserted that patriarchal hegemony is reinforced through media, religion, and ‘traditional’ family values. Dr. Arijita Dutta emphasised how issues like menstrual health or contraceptives are still stigmatised in our society. Women are disempowered because they have inadequate knowledge

of their own rights and choices. The panel discussion was followed by an interactive session with the audience.

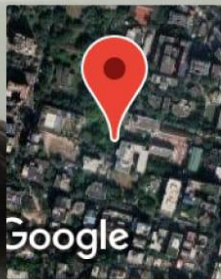
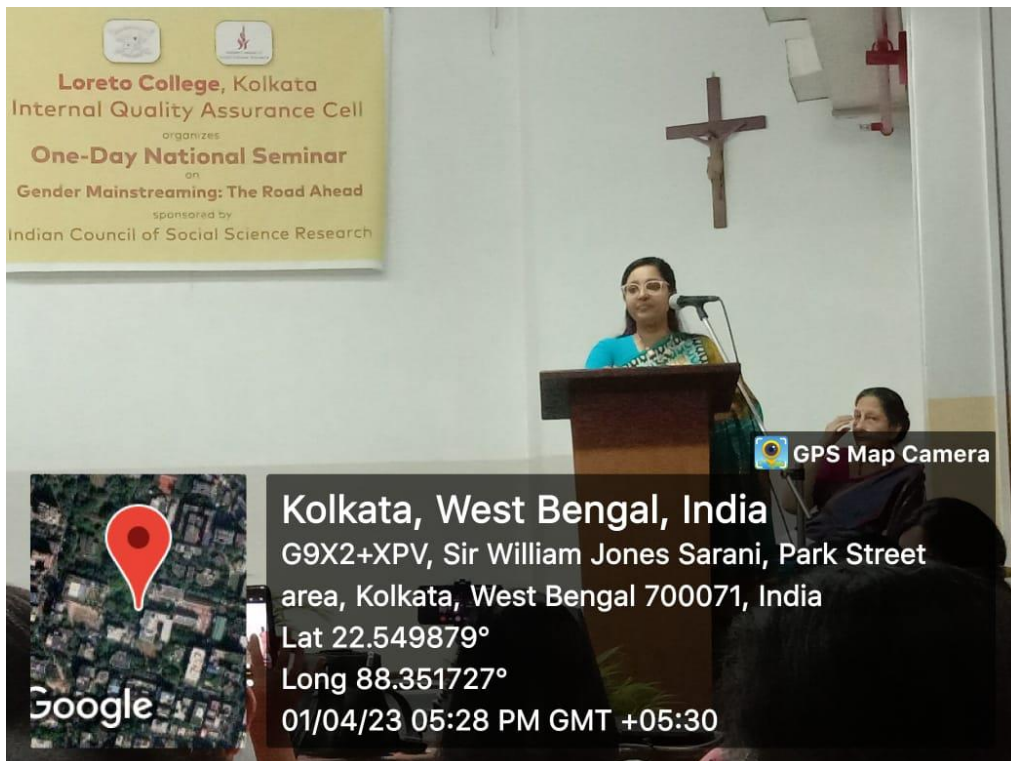
In the last segment, presentations were made by scholars from various colleges and universities across the country. The session, chaired by Dr. Ranjana Banerjee (former faculty, Department of Education, Loreto College), addressed issues such as work/ life balance for female working population, inclusivity in education particularly with respect to the LGBTQIA+ community, systemic violence and occupational stereotyping in the police forces, the construction of New Woman of the 19th Century Bengal, current government schemes and policies for women, female representation in STEM and unpaid care work by women.

The seminar opened up critical avenues for further discussion and mapped the way for a future society where men and women can participate at all levels of policy making and implementation.





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