

**INTERNATIONAL WEBINAR ON
“COVID-19 AND LOCKDOWN— A CHALLENGE TO
CORONA FIGHTERS AND CORONA SURVIVORS FROM
SOCIAL STANDPOINT”**

**DEPARTMENTS OF PHILOSOPHY,
PSYCHOLOGY, PSYCHOLOGICAL COUNSELLING CELL,
SOCIOLOGY, WOMEN’S STUDY**

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Key-Note Address

Heartiest thanks to Principal Madam ,my colleagues and all who belong to the family called “Basanti Devi College” for providing me this opportunity to deliver the key-note address of today’s webinar.At the very outset, let me convey my good wishes and warm welcome to the Honourable speakers and all present here to attend.

Let us imagine that this year is not 2020 and someone says that everything is paused for almost four months all over the world and nobody knows when everything will become normal—we would say to the person,”Have you gone mad?” This is just impossible but unfortunately the fact is that this is really 2020 and we have no way to say the quote-unquote ‘impossible’. The outbreak of Novel Corona Virus has stopped the normal flow of life not only locally but globally too. It has caused severe problems in the functioning of all countries in the world. Health, medicine, education, business, economy, and all the aspects of human life are badly affected. A situation the world has rarely witnessed is the crisis of human-to-human transmission of the virus.On January 30,2020, the World Health Organisation declared the Corona Virus outbreak a Global Public Health Emergency. More than ten crore people have been affected globally and “men”—the most civilized creature of this planet are helplessly watching the death-toll everyday .India’s overall caseload rose to ten lakh according to the latest statistics .The number of people who have recovered is increasing but the number of active cases too has risen.

Scientists are trying their best to find out vaccine.People are advised to wear mask,stay at home and to maintain social distance so that the transmission chain can be broken.Just like other countries,India went through a period of complete lockdown all over the country.

Till now, we all are fighting and we do not know how long this struggle will continue. We are fighting against this virus for our survival. But there are some frontline fighters who fight for others. They do not stay at home so that others can stay at home safely. They also have families with elderly persons or babies but their priority is their social and professional responsibility. We offer our heartfelt thanks and tribute to these frontline Covid fighters or warriors through this webinar. Among the frontline fighters, first come the doctors, nurses, ward-boys, pathologists, pharmacists and their ilk. As stricter norms came to be implemented with lockdown, the policemen came to the fore and also the persons who are associated with administrative services. During the period of lockdown, the providers of essential service made their presence felt —milk, vegetable, grocery, newspaper, water, electricity, telecommunication and banking among others.

Gradually the list of corona fighters also expanded. There was a fair bit of mixing and cross fertilization of roles. Thus the Policemen started supplying rations and medicines, the postman started delivering cash and essential commodities, railway coaches turned into isolation wards and the media started awareness campaign. Even ordinary people, the local club, Puja- committee members volunteered to distribute essential food and commodities to needy people who are suffering economically due to lockdown and ‘No- Work’.

Actually, this is the picture throughout the world. Our fear for the virus has taught us to work in a collaborative manner freeing ourselves from the boundaries of caste, creed and religion.

We are fighting against corona virus with the hope that ‘We shall overcome someday’. But we have also to fight against ignorance, inhumanity, cruelty, selfishness and ego which is really unfortunate. These corona warriors are sometimes treated very badly and they receive inhuman behavior from persons for whom they are fighting. For example, doctors, the police, or social workers have been assaulted or attacked while trying to enforce lockdown or going into close contact with Covid patients. When the whole world is lauding the efforts of doctors, some paranoid residents are refusing to give houses on rent to people in medical profession, fearing the spread of corona virus.

The corona warriors have also to face a big challenge from the social standpoint. Among the speakers, we have a doctor, Dr. Rishav Mukherjee and a media personnel, Smt. Swati Bhattacharya who will deliver their speeches on the second day of our program and will share their experiences and the role of society in this pandemic situation.

Basanti Devi College is a Girls’ college and so we feel that something should be discussed about the problems which girls and women are undergoing throughout this period. Domestic violence against women is already widespread in India. Now, at the time of the pandemic, the United Nations Organization recognizes domestic violence against women as a “shadow- pandemic”. The Covid-19 pandemic has triggered a huge spike in domestic violence against women in China, Australia, France, the U.K, Spain, and Bangladesh. Our speakers Smt. Sanchita Ghosh and Smt. Swati Bhattacharya will say about the women who are playing an indispensable role on the frontline in

the war against Covid-19 as health –workers, sanitation staff, caregivers, scientists, and as long-suffering homemakers—in our country or outside the country.

This pandemic situation is indeed stressful for people. Fear and worry about our own health and the health of our loved ones,our financial situation or job, feeling of isolation and loneliness due to social distancing and a feeling of insecurity have a deep impact upon us. We have Dr. Ranjan Ghosh with us who will speak on the topic “How to manage the psychological impact of Covid-19 and Lockdown “.

And the last but not the least, the challenges that the corona survivors are facing from a social standpoint are worthy to be discussed. The patient and his or her family members must face a tremendous challenge because the patients are to be hospitalized without visits from family and friends, whose emotional support they miss a lot. His family members, being quarantined and stressed, go through a horrible experience of anxiety and insecurity. At present,many patients are asymptomatic and recovery rate is high. Still, the social standpoint of a Covid patient is something unique. If a covid patient dies,the virus may still be in the deadbody and so people become afraid to touch the deadbody. There have been several cases where the family members had great trouble in cremation of a patient died of corona.

Prof. Mazarul Hannan will deliver his valuable speech regarding our thoughts to meet the post-Covid -19 crisis. We believe that one day the world will be free from this curse and we shall overcome this crisis. In this pandemic situation, we cannot come together but our ideas can. So, we are going to have a wonderful session where the speakers will share their views with us. Bad time comes but nothing is permanent .Every cloud has a silver lining. Even in the darkness of the night sky, there are bright stars. We must fight together against this virus and surely, we hope that we shall win—we shall overcome.