



# *Disability Sensitization Session*

*Report of the Online Session held on 18.03.23*

*Organized by the Department of Sociology in collaboration with Internal Quality Assurance Cell, Government General Degree College, Mangalkote, to raise awareness about disability among the stakeholders of the college, on the occasion of International Day for Persons with Disabilities (3<sup>rd</sup> December) and World Disabled Day (15<sup>th</sup> March)*

*Report compiled by  
Department of Sociology  
GGDC, Mangalkote*



## REPORT:

**1. Name of the Program:** Webinar on Disability Sensitization/Disability Sensitization Session in Online Mode

**2. Theme/Topic:** Observation of *International Day with Persons with Disabilities* (3<sup>rd</sup> December) and *World Disabled Day* (15<sup>th</sup> March) through Disability Sensitization Session in Online Mode

**3. Date:** 18.03.2023 (Saturday)

**4. Time/Schedule:** 6 pm – 7.30 pm

**5. Venue/Platform:** Google Meet (Link: <https://meet.google.com/fko-fbqc-zns>)

**6. Organizers of the Program:** Department of Sociology, in association with IQAC, GGDC, Mangalkote.

### **7. Organizing Committee:**

**Patron:** Dr. Pradipta Kumar Basu, Officer-In-Charge, GGDC, Mangalkote

**Advisor:** Dr. Debraj Biswal, Convener, IQAC, GGDC, Mangalkote

**Convener:** Mr. Pinaki Roy, Head, Department of Sociology, GGDC, Mangalkote

**Members:** Ms. Sanchari De, Assistant Professor in Sociology, GGDC, Mangalkote

Dr. Suchismita Das, Assistant Professor in Sociology, GGDC, Mangalkote

Ms. Moumita Mazumder, Assistant Professor in Sociology, GGDC, Mangalkote

Mr. Debaditya Dutta, Assistant Professor in Sociology, GGDC, Mangalkote

**8. Objective of the Program:** To observe *International Day for Persons with Disabilities* (3<sup>rd</sup> December) and *World Disabled Day* (15<sup>th</sup> March) in the form of a Sensitization Session in the Online Mode:

a. to raise or increase awareness of disability and persons with disability among our students and faculty members, and other stakeholders of the college, and

b. to make the college a more inclusive space for persons with disability, not only through disabled-friendly built-environment, but also through cultivation of sensitivity, empathy and awareness about disability

**9. Name of the Invited Speaker/Resource Person:** Mr. Sayantan Ghosh

**10. Designation of the Invited Speaker/Resource Person:** Assistant Professor in Sociology at Hiralal Mazumdar Memorial College for Women, Dakshineswar, Kolkata

**11. Topic/Title of Lecture/Deliberation:** *I see and I don't: Living with Disability*

**12. Summary of Lecture/Deliberation by the Invited Speaker/Resource Person:**

The speaker through various stories from Indian mythologies and Greek history explicated the discourses on the disability of one having a long historical genesis. Through stories from Ramayana, Mahabharata and Sparta, the speaker explained how persons with disability

were always conceived as a hindrance and incapable of carrying out societal tasks. These narratives also reflect the larger outlook of the nation or the system of governance towards persons with disability as being ignored and out-casted. The speaker then went on to the play of Oedipus and explained how the eyes or the visual sense were giving primary importance towards intimacy or love. Aristotle too created this hierarchy where the visual was supreme, followed by auditory, olfactory, taste, and touch. Rather, the speaker harped on the fact that every individual was different and knowledge acquirement could be done through various means. For example, computer classes can be learnt entirely by the keyboard or the mouse, giving primacy to one result in a selective unidirectional method of education that may be not conducive to others. The speaker then moved on to a narrative of a school student who was abused and mentally tortured in the class which blocked his nerves connecting the brain and the eyes, ultimately resulting in his visual impairment. He gave the example of his own daily life as how a person with a disability requires larger sensitivity from the people around and especially from their caregiver. These included how to hold the plate while eating, dressing up, comprehending distance or space while meeting people or having a conversation and counting currency. These basic everyday activities could get troublesome if the caregiver is not sensitive towards these issues as she/he holds a position of power over them. The speaker lamented the way he was excluded from friendships, and college life beyond the classroom as classmates thought he could be a liability towards them. This also reflects the general response of the nation towards persons with disability as they didn't form a sufficient number for vote bank politics. The speaker then moved on to explain the three approaches to understanding disability- medical, social and divine. Under medical discourse, the body was viewed through a fixed medical gaze with disability being abnormal. The divine justification explained disability through acts of previous birth, sins and karma. The social model conceptualises disability as a form of structure that excludes the disabled from society. The speaker emphasised the point that persons with disability should be responsible for discussions and policy framing about them. In a lot of cases, they are invisible and not even recorded in the census. Finally, he concluded by reciting his own poem about growing up as a person with a visual disability.

### **13. Details of the Interactive Session:**

Q: Do other marginalised groups such as *Dalits* or Subalterns relate to the marginalisation faced by persons with disability?

A: Yes and No. Marginalised groups have a common experience and history of being excluded by society. But this doesn't necessarily transcend to subjectivities to understand other marginalised groups. Therefore, persons with disability and each individual conceive of their disability differently and cannot be clubbed together under a single solution for all.

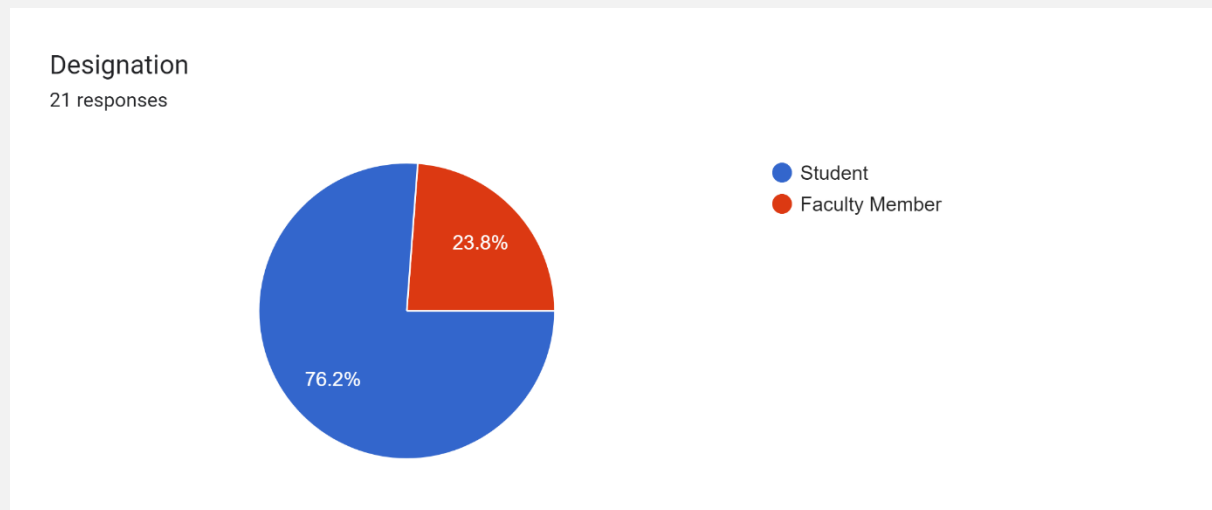
Q: Can community participation fill the gap as national policies hardly have any ground-level impact?

A: Community and the state both have a role in the upliftment of persons with disability. Yes, the community role is important but this needs to be supported through government initiatives, such as providing brails in schools and colleges, creating ramps and lifts,

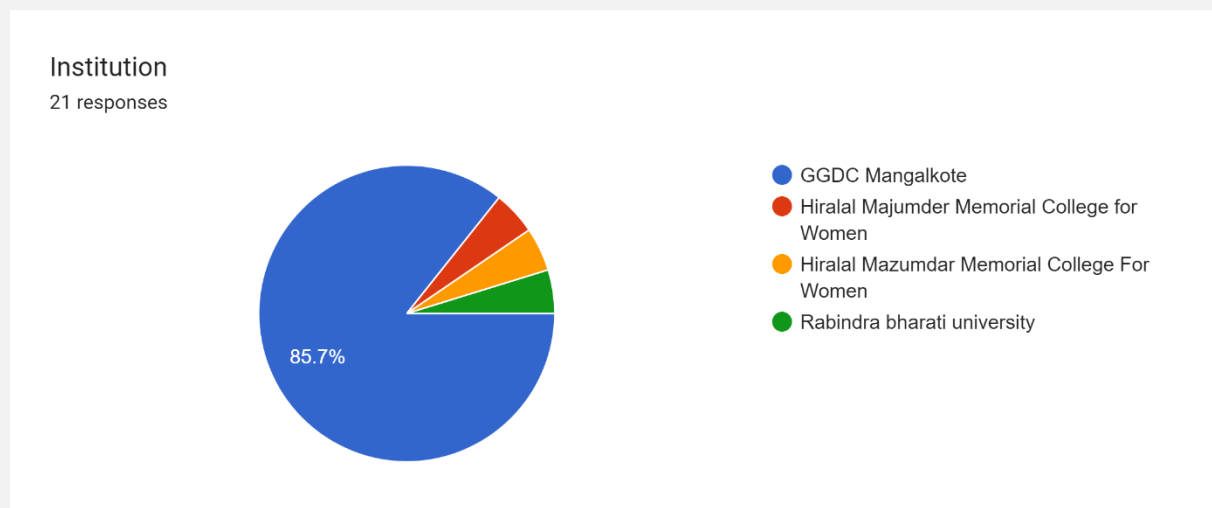
providing writers, developing adequate technologies for special classes and employing special teachers who are trained to teach persons with disability.

#### 14. Participant Composition and Feedback Analysis:

Although a good number of people participated in the sensitization session, feedback was received from twenty one audience members. The following report presents the participant composition and analyses the feedback for this webinar. A majority of the audience were students while a number of faculty members also participated from various colleges.



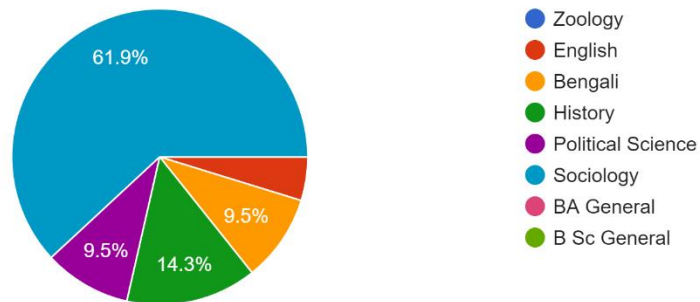
Most of the audience were from GGDC Mangalkote with a few members from Hiralal Mazumdar Memorial College for Women, Dakshineswar, and Rabindra Bharati University, Kolkata.



Most of the participants were from the Sociology department, however, there were also a number of participants from Political Science, History, English, and Bengali.

### Department

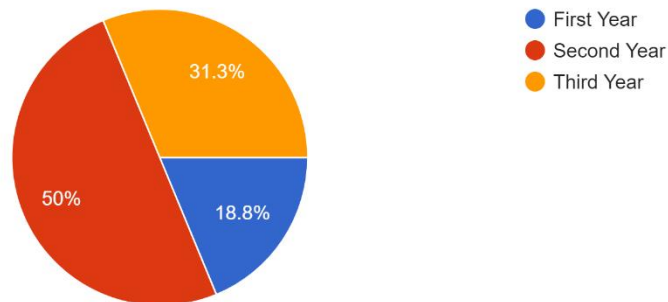
21 responses



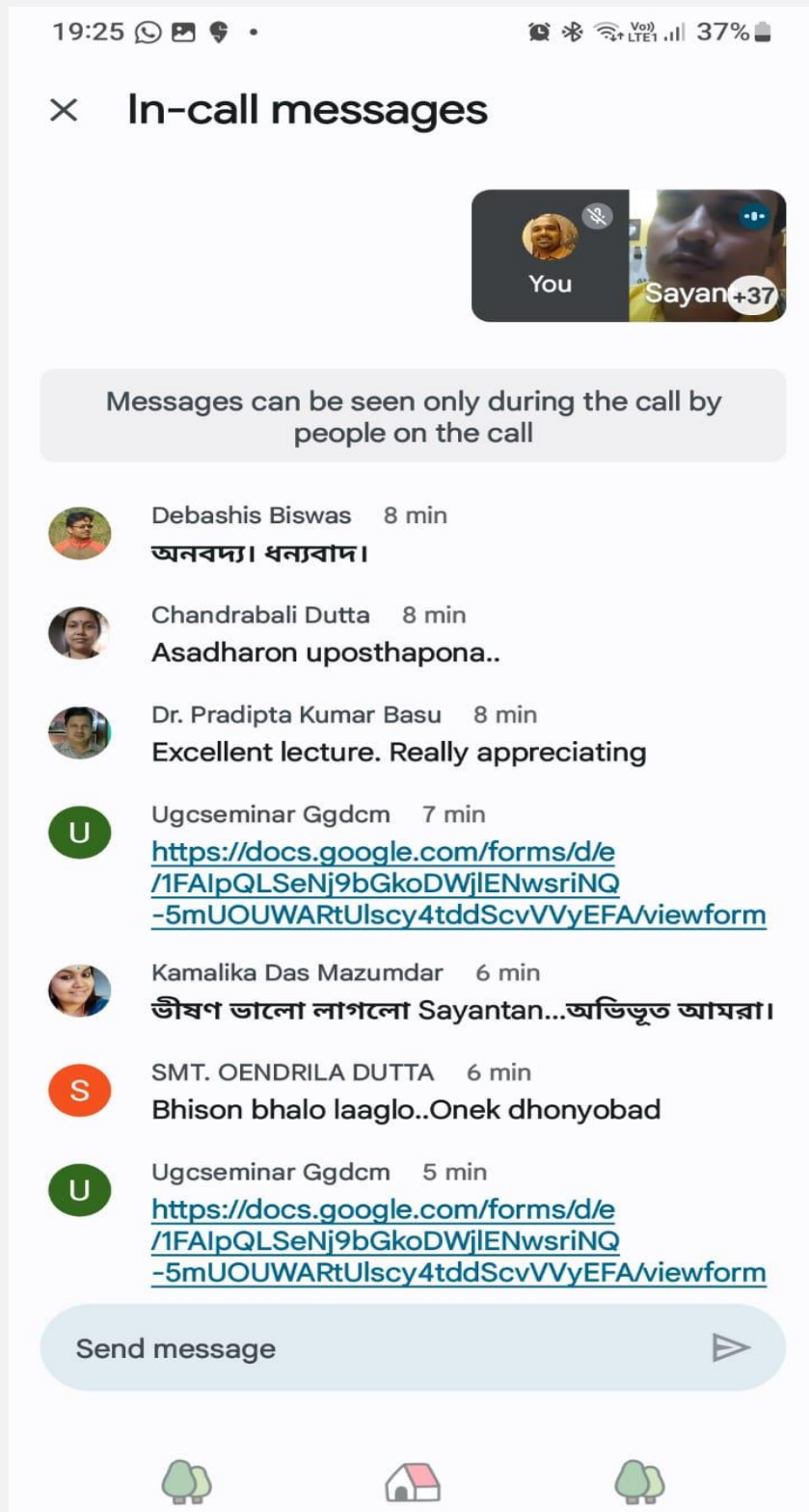
Most of the students were from 2<sup>nd</sup> year, the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> year students also participated in significant numbers.

### Current Year (For Students Only)

16 responses



The webinar was widely appreciated as several members of the audience participated in the discussions with the speaker. The following messages from the webinar allow us to understand how much the lecture was appreciated by the audience.



Several members of the audience also commented during the discussion session on how the lecture not only effectively brought out the struggles of the reality of disabled living, but also the problems of tokenism and how they can be addressed. The audience also appreciated how the lecture began with disabilities in mythological characters, to disabilities as they are seen today, drawing from a continuing stream of experiences across time and space.

The responses of the audience reflected how deeply they were enriched by the lecture and how it left an impression in their minds, allowing them to see the world through a more empathetic lens. The lecture was thus truly impactful and developed a sense of greater awareness and sensitivity about disabilities and the experiences connected to them. This sense of empathy will allow the audience members to conduct their own lives with a constant sense of awareness of the needs and struggles of those around them.

**15. Conclusion drawn by the Invited Speaker/Resource Person:**

The speaker harped on the lack of facilities and negligence by the state towards persons with disability. This has resulted in various forms of exclusion faced by persons with disability in both public and private affairs of their daily life.

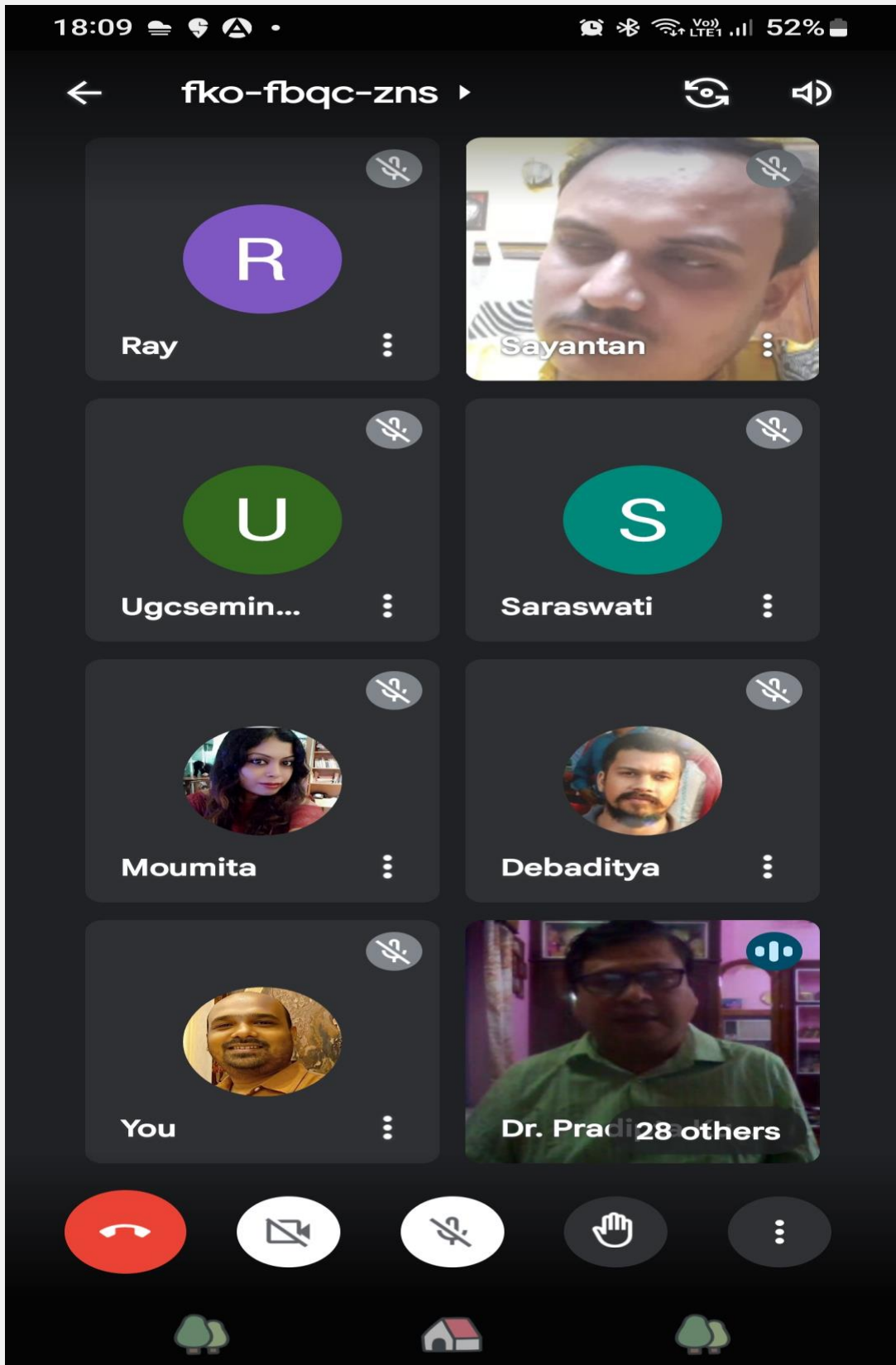
**16: General Conclusion: Outcome of the Sensitization Session:**

Issues of disability have been a part of human society since its very inception. From the days of yore to the present times, people with physical or cognitive disabilities have worked alongside able-bodied individuals, contributing in significant ways to the trajectory of events that have impacted the future. While there is a tendency to overlook disabilities in our everyday life, the reality of disabled people themselves is inextricably linked with the efforts to overcome the difficulties of everyday experiences.

This webinar on Disability Sensitization, held on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2023 (Saturday), on Google Meet, aimed to develop a greater sensitization to the lived realities of disabled individuals and thereby develop empathetic understanding of their experiences. The webinar was a sincere attempt to generate awareness among our students, faculty members and other stakeholders of the college, regarding the ongoing struggle of disabled individuals and make the college a more inclusive space for persons with disability. The speaker for the webinar, Mr. Sayantan Ghosh, Assistant Professor in Sociology, Hiralal Mazumdar Memorial College for Women, Dakshineswar, played a pivotal role in this sensitization process through his highly thought-provoking honorary lecture.

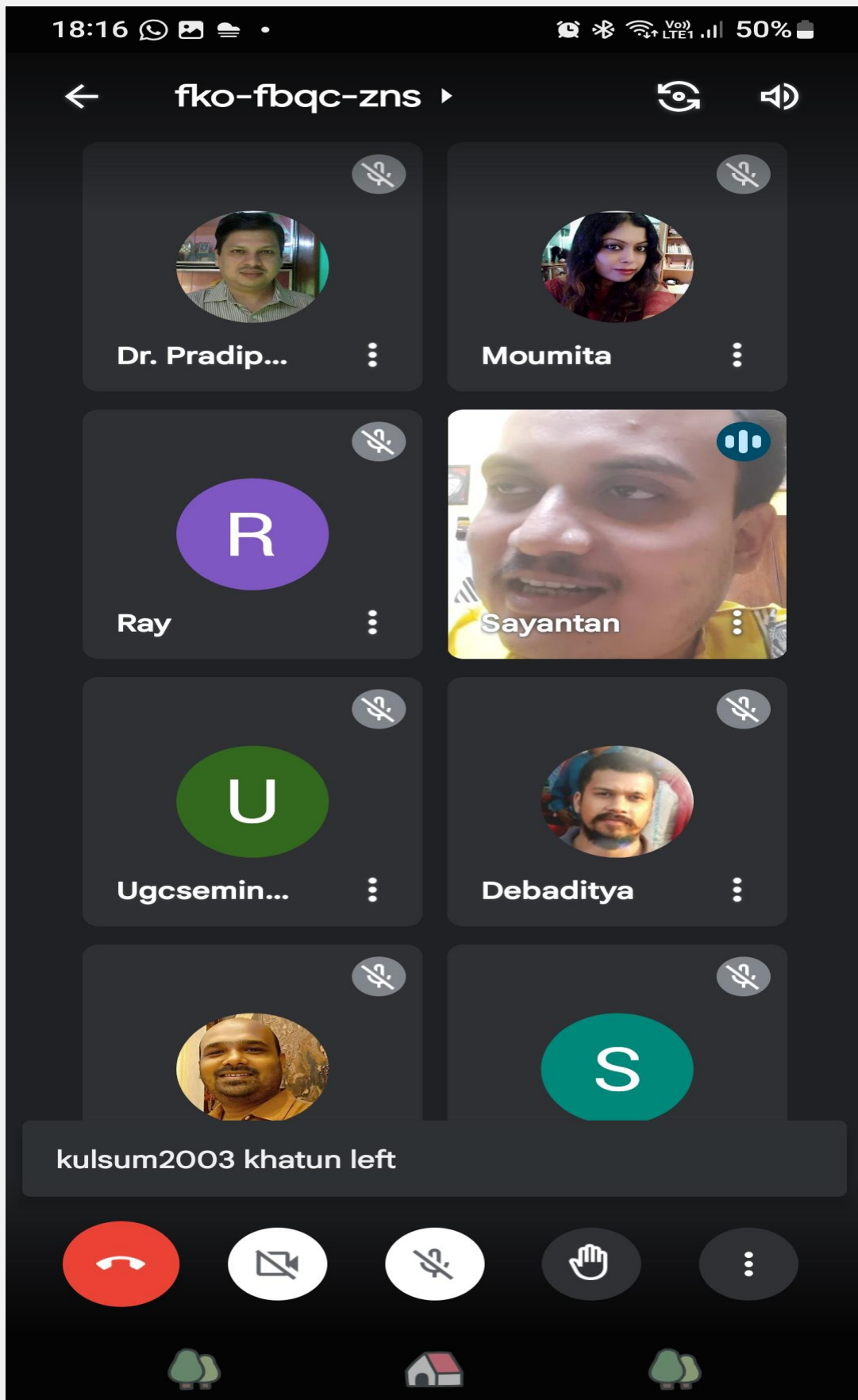


Assistant Professor and Head  
Department of Sociology  
and  
Convener  
Disability Sensitization Session



Dr. Pradipta Kumar Basu, Officer-In-Charge, GGDC, Mangalkote, delivering the inaugural address





Mr. Sayantan Ghosh, Assistant Professor in Sociology, Hiralal Mazumdar Memorial College for Women, Dakshineswar, delivering the much-appreciated, thought-provoking lecture on disability

*Department of Sociology*  
*Government General Degree College, Mangalkote*

*In association with 72AC, GGDC, Mangalkote, presents a*

*Disability Sensitization Session*

*On the occasion of*

*International Day of Persons with Disabilities (3<sup>rd</sup> December)*  
*& World Disabled Day (15<sup>th</sup> March) on 18.03.23 at 6:00 pm*



## ***Concept Note:***

*While the academia thinks of gender sensitization as significant in nurturing subjectivities conscious about gender discrimination and rightly so, disability sensitization is overlooked. Not only formal curriculum in Humanities and Social Sciences in most universities in West Bengal and India undermines conceptual and empirical engagement with disability, people with disabilities and their everyday struggles are marginal to institutional and organizational narratives. Under such circumstances, disability sensitization could open up new avenues in seriously (re)considering what counts as disability, and the emerging critiques of paternalist forces that end up glorifying disability at the cost of engaging with the material struggles of people with disabilities. Through such sensitization, we hope to begin a critical dialogue about ability vis-à-vis disability among the stakeholders of the college and beyond, and render it a more inclusive space for people with disabilities, who may come to inhabit the material and ideational space of this institution either as students or as employees.*

## ***About the Speaker and Title of the Session:***

*Mr. Sayantan Ghosh did his schooling from Patha Bhavan School, Kolkata and pursued Bachelors and Masters in Sociology from Asutosh College and Jadavpur University respectively. The topic of his M.phil dissertation was 'Smell in Everyday Life: An Interpretation of Middle Classes.' Presently, he is Assistant Professor in Sociology, Hiralal Mazumdar Memorial College for Women, Dakshineshwar. His areas of interest include Sociology of Smell, Disability Studies, Tagore and Marxian Studies. He is also the Co-PI of an ICSSR-funded research project titled 'Mapping Inclusion: Exploring Awareness about Disability related Education Policies and their Implementation in Educational Institutions in Kolkata.'*

*His deliberation in the sensitization session on 18.03.23 (Saturday) at 6:00 p.m. is titled "I see and I don't: Living with Disability" and will revolve around the complex interface of the structural and the subjective in the context of visual disability.*

### ***Organizing Committee:***

*Patron: Dr. Pradipta Kumar Basu, Officer-In-Charge, GGD C, Mangalkote*

*Advisor: Dr. Debraj Biswal, Convener, IZAC, GGD C, Mangalkote*

*Convener: Mr. Pinaki Roy, Head, Department of Sociology, GGD C, Mangalkote*

#### ***Members:***

*Ms. Samchhari De, Assistant Professor in Sociology, GGD C, Mangalkote*

*Dr. Suchismita Das, Assistant Professor in Sociology, GGD C, Mangalkote*

*Ms. Moumita Mazumder, Assistant Professor in Sociology, GGD C, Mangalkote*

*Mr. Debaditya Dutta, Assistant Professor in Sociology, GGD C, Mangalkote*

### ***Programme Schedule:***

*6:00 to 6:05 pm – Welcome Address – Ms. Moumita Mazumder*

*6:05 to 6:10 pm – Inaugural Address – Dr. Pradipta Kumar Basu, OIC, GGD CM*

*6:10 to 6:15 pm – Address – Dr. Debraj Biswal, Coordinator, IZAC*

*6:15 to 6:20 pm – Introduction: Webinar Theme & Speaker – Mr. Pinaki Roy*

*6:20 to 7:00 pm – Disability Sensitization Lecture – Mr. Sayantan Ghosh*

*7:00 to 7:15 pm – Interactive Session with the Speaker – Mr. Pinaki Roy*

*7:15 to 7:20 pm – Vote of Thanks – Ms. Moumita Mazumder*

### ***Google Meet Link for the Session:***

**<https://meet.google.com/fko-fbqc-zns>**

*The meet gateway will open at 5:50 pm.*

***All are cordially invited.***