

**PRO-Media Coordinator's Office
Jamia Millia Islamia**

August 31, 2020

Press Release

JMI organises webinar on 'Impact Of COVID -19 On Marginalised Children And The Way Forward'

Department of Social Work & Centre for Early Childhood Development and Research, Jamia Millia Islamia(JMI) jointly organised a National Webinar on 'Impact Of COVID -19 On Marginalised Children And The Way Forward' on 28th August,2020.

The Webinar was organised keeping in view that The COVID 19 pandemic is a universal crisis and more so for children specially those who belong to socio economically backward and marginalized communities. Everyday homeless and migrant children and children living on the streets face unspeakable human rights violation and threat to their safety and wellbeing. This has multiplied manifold during the pandemic.

The webinar was coordinated and conducted by Prof Archana Dassi, Head of the Department of Social Work.

The Vice Chancellor, JMI, Prof. Najma Akhtar was the Chief Guest. In her inaugural address she talked about how children being the most vulnerable section of our society are at a constant risk of falling out of the safety net. The nationwide lockdown that followed after the covid 19 pandemic resulted in mass migration of daily wage workers and migrant laborers leading to loss of income. Further, she talked about the emergence of online education due to shutting of schools post lockdown for which nobody was prepared beforehand. This further deprived the marginalized children of education since online learning required gadgets like smart phones etc. which was only a distant dream for them. Apart from this, the problems of domestic violence, child labor and child marriage aggravated further during the lockdown making the already vulnerable marginalized children more neglected. Also, the children with special needs have faced lot of difficulties during the lockdown such as keeping the pace of study in online mode.

Prof. Akhtar stressed on the importance of child centred organizations and government to step in for marginalized children as India has the highest population of children which in itself is a cause of worry.

There were four expert speakers (Child Rights Professionals) who were invited for the webinar. The first speaker, Ms. Rita Panicker (Founder and Director, Butterflies, India) presented a situational analysis of the street and vulnerable children during COVID 19 pandemic. She impressed upon the need to have a systems approach towards the issue and advocated for the continuum of care for children. She also emphasized the importance of case work as a method to handle issues related to such vulnerable children.

Mr. Aftab Mohammad (Chief Protection Specialist at UNICEF) presented with the help of case studies the vulnerability of migrant children. In his poignant presentation, Mr Aftab pointed out that some of the issues like child marriage and trafficking are not law and order problems but are problems where behavioural change communication is required. He urged schools of social work to come up with models of social protection as well as for safe internet use. He also highlighted the important role of professional social workers in dealing with the vulnerabilities being faced by children in this pandemic.

The third speaker for the day was Dr. Kiran Modi (Founder and Managing Trustee, Udayan Care). Her talk mainly focused on children living in CCIs (Child Care Institutions) who are deprived of parental care and so institutional care remains the only care option for them. She stressed on the importance of structured psycho social counseling for children in CCIs as they go through adverse and traumatic experiences in their early childhood. This is further aggravated in pandemic times. Also, the CCIs are deprived of adequate hygiene standards and lack of availability of quality health care services. She talked about Udayan Care's response to the Covid 19 crisis. The first and immediate response being Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) in Hindi and English issued by various bodies and to guide care providers at CCIs. Further, she shared some recommendations for mitigating risks and focused on the importance of rapid assessments of the long term impact of the pandemic and developing preventive measures.

The last speaker was Mr. Prabhat Kumar (National Thematic Manager – Child Protection, Save the Children). His talk focused on the vulnerability and marginalization of families living in slum area. He highlighted how some of the guidelines and policies that come up in disasters are discriminating. For example, the social distancing, home quarantine, and hygiene is the key thing on focus in the current pandemic but for the homeless population or people living in slum areas this is not possible. Also, the psycho social counseling services never reach such marginalized families.

In the end, Prof. Zubair Meenai (Honorary Director, Centre for Early Childhood Development and Research, JMI), the discussant, summarized the presentations and the key learnings. Some of the key learnings that he highlighted include that the problems of marginalized children are compounded in the pandemic. He pointed out that in such time, there was no luxury of theory or model and all institutions had to do the thinking on their feet. He pointed out that the long term impacts of school closure etc, have yet to be comprehended. For schools of social work, it was important to build evidence on the impact, design child centred services, build resilience, push for inclusion of child centred interventions in disaster management plans and building social solidarity to overcome discrimination, scapegoating and prejudice during times of emergencies.


The webinar was attended by people representing the civil society organization, academic institutions, researchers and students all across the country.


The webinar was streamed live on the Youtube channel of JMI and Facebook page of National Resource Centre for Alternative Care, CECDR, JMI.


The webinar ended with a vote of thanks to the VC for her guidance and support, the speakers , all the dignitaries and all the participants. The Webinar was a big success and was widely appreciated by all for addressing such a significant issue during this pandemic.


Ahmad Azeem


PRO-Media Coordinator





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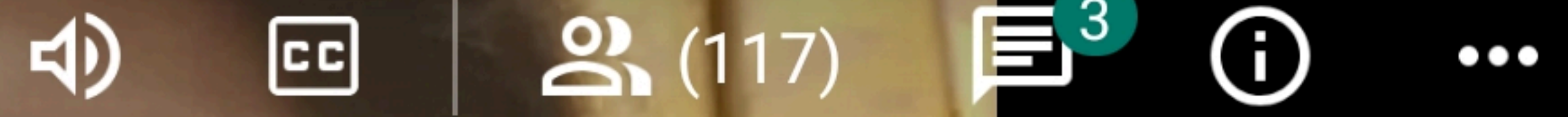
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**Department of Social Work
&
Centre For Early Childhood Development and Research
Jamia Millia Islamia
(A Central University)**



(NAAC ACCREDITED 'A' GRADE, 10TH RANK IN NIRF)

**NATIONAL WEBINAR
ON**

**IMPACT OF COVID 19 PANDEMIC ON MARGINALIZED CHILDREN
AND THE WAY FORWARD**

Under the Patronage of



**Prof. Najma Akhtar
Vice-Chancellor
Jamia Millia Islamia
New Delhi**

SPEAKERS



**Dr. Rita Panicker
Founder & Director
Butterflies, India**



**Aftab Mohammad
Child Protection
Specialist
UNICEF**



**Dr. Kiran Modi
Founder & Managing
Trustee
Udayan Care**



**Prabhat Kumar
National Thematic
Manager- Child
Protection
Save the Children**

FRIDAY, AUGUST 28, 2020

11:00AM TO 1:00 PM

GOOGLE MEET

**RSVP: Prof Archana Dassi | Prof Zubair Meenai
Email: stomar@jmi.ac.in**