

## **REPORT ON WEBINAR FOR TEACHERS AND STUDENTS**

### **“NOW MEN NEED TO CHALLENGE PATRIARCHY”**

**13<sup>th</sup> MAY 2020**

The Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) of Sri Guru Nanak Dev Khalsa College had the happy privilege to organise a webinar on the topic “**Now Men Need to Challenge Patriarchy**”, open to students and teachers, on 13<sup>th</sup> May 2020.

The renowned feminist, Kamla Bhasin was invited as the speaker. Ms. Bhasin needs no introduction, as she is known for her work on gender sensitization, human development and education. She carries the weight of her description on the internet as an “Indian developmental feminist activist” with remarkable ease and nonchalance. She has written many songs, poems and stories on the themes she feels strongly about.

Dr. Gita Lakhanpal, senior faculty and member of the IQAC of Sri Guru Nanak Dev Khalsa College welcomed the speaker. Ms. Bhasin chose to speak in Hindustani, and that set the warm and informal nature of the entire session.

Ms. Bhasin introduced the participants to the ideas of patriarchy, sex, gender and indoctrination. She elaborated on the differences between natural and man-made concepts. This led to her definition of patriarchy as a social system that assumes that the male is superior. Patriarchy, she explained, gives men more control over three things—resources, decision-making and ideology. Due to the complicated way in which such ideas are propagated in society, ironically, it becomes women themselves, who become responsible for practicing patriarchy in their homes. Ms. Bhasin gave the audience a simple solution—if patriarchy is created by humans, and we don’t find it appealing any more, we should simply change it.

She elaborated on the difference between sex and gender. She encouraged us to recognize the superior nature of a woman’s body—it is stronger, more resilient and able to produce offspring. Gender, a man-made construct, is what labels the woman as the weaker sex.

The main thrust of her talk was to encourage men to come out against patriarchy. She spoke of how men too, are labelled within patriarchy, as people who cannot/should not cry, not feel pain or express their feelings openly. She then urged the men to speak up against the restrictive nature of patriarchy. She guided the participants towards a society where gender differences do not hinder the growth of the individual.

The speaker’s talk led to a lively discussion and it was wonderful to see how her thoughts had ignited the minds of the students, who came forth with insightful questions.

The programme concluded with the vote of thanks, which was delivered by Dr. Deepak Sharma, who is the Coordinator, IQAC, Sri Guru Nanak Dev Khalsa College.