



# NABA BALLYGUNGE MAHAVIDYALAYA

(Formerly CHARUCHANDRA EVENING COLLEGE)

27E, Bosepukur Road, Kolkata - 700042

Email: nbmv2005@yahoo.co.in, Website: nbmahavidyalaya.in

Title of the seminar: *Meyeder Kaaj Meyeder Maryaada (Women's Work and Dignity)* (on the occasion of 50<sup>th</sup> International Women's Day)

Date: 19<sup>th</sup> March 2025

Organizers: Women Empowerment Cell and Internal Complaint Committee

Speakers: Tahamina Mandal Sangberia Pratihar Welfare Society

Swapna Tripathy, Paschimanga Grihaparicharika Samity

Swati Bhattacharjee, Journalist and Researcher, Anandabazar Patrika

Urba Chaudhuri, Literacy Movement Activist and Researcher

No. of participants: 23

Link to the seminar on Institution's YouTube channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLwNfg8GbUVhXRGU6-ghhxaRwR9VYY0Ctv>



Flyer of the seminar on  
*Meyeder Kaaj Meyeder  
Maryaada (Women's Work  
and Dignity)* on 19<sup>th</sup> March  
2025

As introduction, Dr Bithika Sahana, Convener, Women Empowerment Cell, briefed the audience about the possibilities of learning from the seminar. She mentioned that there are many narratives on International Women's Day, right from Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak being awarded with the Holberg Prize to being ceaseless efforts of women to be a perfect mistress, a good mother, a caring wife and a loving daughter to the Bollywood item songs where women are projected as sexual objects or icons of voluptuousness and movies like Laapataa Ladies, Mrs or the Great Indian Kitchen or discount on beauty products or at salons. The compere expected that today's seminar would usher the audience to a narrative out of all these narratives that would help women to move ahead, and establish a progressive thought and society.

  
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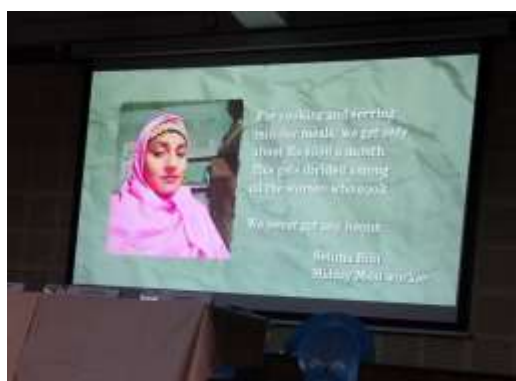
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After the four eminent speakers were introduced, the seminar began with lighting the ceremonial lamp. Initially, a video clipping was shown in which woman from various sectors like women farmers, women midday meal workers, Asha Karmi, bidi workers and from other organised, and unorganised small sectors expressed their grievances about the lack of equal wages and equal opportunities with their male counterparts. The inequality and injustices meted out against them that they expressed their grievances about was perhaps an indicator to the fact that equality is still a far cry. This video clipping, consisting of first-hand experiences expressed by female workers threw light on the real life scenario, about which the four speakers gave their first-hand opinions as well as statistical analysis.



A snapshot of the video-clipping on first hand experience of facing gender discrimination by a midday meal worker

After a brief introductory address by the principal of the college Dr Ayantika Ghosh, the seminar moved on directly to the talks delivered by the four speakers back-to-back. Smt Tahamina Mandal initiated the seminar, expressing She had been a woman labourer throughout her life and therefore, she feels honoured and privileged to get a platform here in the International Working Class Women's Day celebration to express her views. She expressed that it is unfortunate that 90% of women workers do not get justly and adequately paid or their due honour and dignity. From a doctor internee in a hospital in Kolkata to a girl returning from work at a highway in Delhi to rural outskirts, no woman is safe. With her strong level revolutionary spirit, she voiced out her demand that it is equitable pay for equal work, which unfortunately is not guaranteed.



Smt Tahamina Mandal, Sangberia Pratikar Welfare Society, presenting her fiery speech on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2025

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She expressed her grievances against the unthinkable low wages of the labourers and bidi-workers despite the various schemes of the government with a mission to empower the labourers. Sadly, like Tahamina Mandal, 90% of women labourers working in the unorganised sectors are not getting due recognition and acknowledgement. The sad reality as Smt Mandal opined is that the demand of labourers is less than supply and therefore, when a laborer demands for legit wages, she is immediately dismissed. Resultantly, there is an exodus of women labourers to other countries which can offer jobs to them with honourable wages, although their families suffer and miss them. This fiery speech therefore, presented a discourse coming up from real field, that work and dignity of female labourers and bidi-workers is a misnomer. She ended her speech on a positive note stating that it is high time for all labourers to unite and claim for equal pay against equal work.

Smt Swapna Tripathi through her mellifluous song called all housemaids to unite and fight for their legit demands, of getting Rs 75 per hour as wage and four off days per week. She expressed her sadness over the continuous complaints from the passengers in the trains about the unruly boisterousness of the housemaids in the trains. The sad part is this housemaids do not get a comfortable cocoon in the houses they work for opening up. Some work like picking vegetables from the fields are extremely tiresome and bad breaking. Yet the landowners keep track of the time and cut off the wages if the women workers do not give their best.



Smt Swapna Tripathy, Paschimbanga  
Grihaparicharika Samity, presenting her first  
hand experiences of the predicament of  
housemaids, in semonaron Women's Work  
and Dignity 19th March 2025

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Ms Urba Chaudhuri's discourse was on the disparities she explored in her mission of dissemination of literacy. She manifested the statistical data that in case of gender discrimination among 146 countries, India ranks at 124, among completion of primary education, India ranks 89 among 146 countries, in admission to secondary education, India ranks 105, in case of labour force, it is 120 while the only sector which has considerable improvement of women's position in case of gender discrimination is politics which is 65 among 146. But the sad part is this does not confer women's percentage in the position of decision-making because participation in the rallies, brigades and assemblies do not determine woman's role in decision-making, which is 17.2% in the Parliament. Her speech was on the immediate need of organizations to spread literacy so that all women become aware of their rights. Ms Chaudhuri's speech established the discourse of women's nonchalance against no provision of paying them against their daily domestic chores and their lack of awareness of their unpaid domestic labour. The reason that most women give, in Ms Chaudhuri's narrative is that women believe that unpaid domestic labour validates their ownership over home and family and they will lose the last remnants of their entitlement to their home on demand for wages/remuneration. She reminded that in the upcoming heatwave, women at fields must mandatorily demand for offtime in the scorching heat of afternoons. The gross income of the women workers is unfortunately zero. If they are exempted from the employed section, the employment rate of India will devastatingly decrease.



Ms Urba Chaudhuri's insightful talk and detailed analysis of statistical presentation of gender discrimination at various sectors

Ms Swati Bhattacharyya express her concern about the sexual harassment that women face everywhere while, it is the least discussed among all harassments. While explaining feminization of the workforce as increasing participation of women in the labor force, often accompanied by a rise in women's employment in traditionally male-dominated fields, she said in private sectors like data entry, women are hired in lieu of unimaginably low salary. This trend is observed across many countries, both developed and developing, and impacts various sectors and industries.

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It can challenge traditional gender roles and norms, potentially leading to greater gender equality. She mentioned the notorious Bhanwari Devi gangrape case and the subsequent necessitation of establishing cells at workplaces for women's protection against sexual harassment. Her speech gave way to three narratives: gender discrimination and women's dignity, establishment of law and women's protection and politics. She cited the Abhaya case and the lack of protection of the doctors, that their demand for justice was not met. She concluded her speech saying that revolution is a pursuit, a long process. The means may be different but the end must be same. And in pursuing that end we must be together, fight together.



Ms Swati Bhattacharya presenting her talk on the dire need for women's dignity and home and beyond as the calling for International Women's Day



Group photo at the end of the seminar, with Principal, speakers, staff and students

## Outcomes of the seminar:

The audience were able to:

- ✓ Be sensitized about gender discrimination and disparity in wages
- ✓ Get to listen to first hand experiences from speakers who daily deal with gender issues
- ✓ Know the statistical data of gender discrimination at various sectors in India

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