



Report on Women's Day Celebration at Indian Statistical Institute 2022



As part of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav (initiative of the Government of India to celebrate and commemorate 75 years of progressive India and the glorious history of its people, culture and achievements) Indian Statistical Institute, Kolkata organized a series of programmes.

International Women's day is being celebrated every year to commemorate the cultural, political, and socioeconomic achievements of women; to celebrate womanhood while paying tribute to the indomitable spirit of women. This year, keeping the same tradition going, International Women's Day was organized by the Indian Statistical Institute at Platinum Jubilee Auditorium of the Institute with the series of planned events in commemoration of India@75-Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav held on 08.03.2022 which was hosted in hybrid mode. This event witnessed active participation of students, research scholars, academicians from Kolkata and all the outlying centers as this was hosted both in online and offline modes.

The theme for the International Women's Day (8 March) this year was "Gender equality today for a sustainable tomorrow" which explored the ways in which women are leading the charge on climate change adaptation, mitigation, and response around the world, contributing powerful leaders and change-makers to build a more sustainable future for all. The issues of climate change and sustainability have had and will continue to have, severe and lasting impacts on our environment, and economic and social development. Those who are amongst the most vulnerable and marginalized, experience the deepest impacts. Women are increasingly being recognized as more vulnerable to climate change impacts than men, as they constitute the majority of the world's poor and are more dependent on the natural resources which climate change threatens the most. So for example, consequences of natural disasters like drought, floods, and storms on women and girls, include but are not limited to increased maternal mortality rates, increased child marriage rates, higher burden of water and fuel collection etc.



At the same time, women and girls are effective and powerful leaders and change-makers for climate adaptation and mitigation. They are involved in sustainability initiatives around the world, and their participation and leadership results in more effective climate action.

Wangari Maathai, also known as “Mama trees” - who’s the first African American Environmentalist and Woman activist to win the Nobel Peace Prize, said:

“Today we are faced with a challenge that calls for a shift in our thinking, so that humanity stops threatening its life-support system. We are called to assist the Earth to heal her wounds and in the process heal our own - indeed to embrace the whole of creation in all its diversity, beauty and wonder. Recognizing that sustainable development, democracy and peace are indivisible is an idea whose time has come”.

And this year IWD 2022 campaign theme was #BreakTheBias, which focuses on a gender equal world, a world free of bias, stereotypes, and discrimination. A world that is diverse, equitable, and inclusive, a world where difference is valued and celebrated so that together women’s equality can be forged.

The program covered a variety of events including invited talk by eminent journalist Dr. Swati Bhattacharjee, Senior Assistant Editor of Anandabazar Patrika who also writes on health, education, agriculture, and other areas related to gender justice and poverty alleviation, followed by a Panel discussion on the topic “Break the Gender Bias Today”. This was followed by the prize distribution for the Poster and Essay competition that was run for twenty days and the theme for the competition was “Gender equality today for a sustainable tomorrow”. Programme ended with a cultural programme organised by the faculty, students and staff of ISI with a theme “Behold her, single in the field-An Ode to the Eternal Symbiosis Between Women and Nature”. Apart from this there was a display of photographs with the theme “Today’s Women”.

In the opening remarks by the Director of the Institute Professor Sanghamitra Bandyopadhyay shared her views about the importance of celebrating the day. She mentioned that globally most of the women in the world still do not have the rights to choose their own fate. She said that technology might be a great leveller in this direction. She said if certain flexibilities like allowing women to work remotely in flexible timing etc. along with the social security may be given, this might enable more women to come forward in larger numbers. She also mentioned that the statistics shows that the scenario is changing with time and more women have come forward in this direction. Indian statistical Institute is also taking up policies in this regard. Women should



be given due respect, space to grow the way they want to grow and choose their roles on their own - together these can bring a societal change.

Invited speaker Dr. Swati Bhattacharjee, journalist as well as researcher and Senior Assistant



Editor, Anandabazar Patrika, and Visiting Faculty, School of Development, Azim Premji University, spoke on the topic “Gender Equality Today for a Sustainable Tomorrow” which is the theme of IWD 2022. She began with how the connection between gender equality today and a sustainable world

tomorrow can perhaps be traced to the idea of care. To sustain a relationship -- with other humans, animals, plants and the earth -- is to care for them. Patriarchy, casteism, racism and all other forms of hegemony disrupt this pattern of care by giving precedence to wishes of some over the needs of others. This gives rise to disharmony, deprivation and devastation. Women’s attempts at practising sustainable agriculture is an example. A case study of a Farmer Producer Company of women farmers in Nayagram, Jhargram, shows that though women produce indigenous varieties of rice using eco-friendly ingredients and sustainable farming methods, deep-rooted social and systemic inequalities (non-ownership of agricultural land, limited access to loans, restricted access to markets) threaten the success and sustainability of their efforts. She stressed on having a policy for organic farming and having institutional support for agriculture which is linked with extending support for women who are not only just equally involved in agriculture but are involved far more. So equal opportunity, equal access to loans and other resources, equal access to training, equal access to markets of all those who will not just help a sustainable agriculture but also bring greater equality for women.

This was followed by a panel discussion on the topic “Break the Gender Bias Today” which was

moderated by Dr. Swati Bhattacharjee. The panelists were Prof. Debasis Bandyopadhyay who is currently a senior academic at the University of Auckland; Dr. Kanchan Gaba, Social Entrepreneur whose contribution ranges from providing services to the disabled to empowering women from marginalized section by formation of self-help groups, and who lost her eye sight at a very tender age; and Ms. Taniya Sanyal who is the first woman firefighter to be appointed by the Airport Authority of India (AAI).



Ms. Taniya spoke of how she always wanted to do something different and challenging with her life. She recounted the story of her life which itself was an embodiment of how one could achieve the seemingly impossible. She also spoke glowingly of the support that she has received from her family throughout and also that she does not face any discrimination in her workplace.

Dr. Kanchan Gaba said that women suffer from a negative self-image, doubting their own abilities, and feeling guilt if they pursue a career instead of focusing on home. They need to find their strength.stressed on developing various sectors of work, other than the ones conventionally associated with women's vocations like beautician courses etc. and that they also need to take a fresh look at the conventional definition of success. She pointed out the importance of women not harbouring feelings of guilt, victimization and low self esteem and underlined that one should always be worthy for whatever one actually is.

Prof. Debasis Bandyopadhyay reminded the audience about the prevailing mindset and value system which was indirectly responsible for the low participation of women in all walks of life even after the great increase in women's education. He emphasized the need for equality of opportunity for both men and women for society to progress. He argued that education system should highlight the achievements of talented and hardworking women, rather than promoting the stereotypes of docile women engaged in domestic life.

Before the program ended with the cultural program titled "Behold her single in the field: An ode to the eternal symbiosis between women and nature", Prof. Banasri Basu, addressed the audience highlighting the achievements of the women of the Institute. She mentioned about Professor Neena Gupta of Theoretical Statistics & Mathematics Unit, Kolkata who won the Nari Shakti Puraskar conferred by the President of India on March 8th, 2022 on the occasion of International Women's Day. And Professor Sanghamitra Bandyopadhyay, Director of the Institute, who was selected for conferment of Padma Shri award by the Government of India in Science and Engineering in 2022.





Organizing team members were Prof. Sangamithra Bandopadhyay (Patron), Prof. Bansari Basu, Dr. Malay Bhattacharyya, Dr. Swagatam Das, Dr. Sarbani Palit, Dr. Soumyanetra Munshi, Dr. Kishor Chandra Satpathy, Dr. Debarati Mukherjee, Dr. Sumana Ghosh and Mrs. Monali Mitra Paladhi.

