



NETAJI SUBHAS OPEN UNIVERSITY

DD-26, Salt Lake City, Kolkata-700064

Website: [www.wbnsou.ac.in](http://www.wbnsou.ac.in)

Accredited 'A' Grade by NAAC

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NIRF Ranking, 2024: All India 2<sup>nd</sup> in Open Universities Category

## Report

### Women's Day Celebration, 2025 with focus on the 10th Anniversary of the 'Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao' campaign

**Organized by:** Internal Complaints Committee (ICC), Netaji Subhas Open University

**Collaborating Organizations:** Nari o Sishu Kalyan Kendra, Bauria, Howrah and Seva Kendra, Kolkata

**Programme on February 18, 2025:** Nari o Sishu Kalyan Kendra and Seva Kendra

**Programme on February 27, 2025:** Netaji Subhas Open University, Subhas Chandra Sabhaghar, NSOU Headquarters, DD-26, Sector 1, Salt Lake, Kolkata-64

**Total participants in programmes on February 18 and February 27, 2025 = 230**

#### **Objectives of the programme:**

The "Beti Bachao Beti Padhao" (BBBP) campaign, launched by the Government of India, aims to address the declining child sex ratio and promote the education of girls. It was launched on 22 January, 2015 and is celebrating its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary. In this connects the Internal complaints Committee, ICC resolved to celebrate Women's Day with focus on this scheme in collaboration with two community-based organisations who have worked on BBBP and other female welfare-oriented themes. The objectives of ICC, NSOU in organising the programme was as follows:

**Raise Awareness:** Educate participants about gender discrimination and the importance of the "Beti Bachao Beti Padhao" initiative.

**Promote Gender Equality:** Encourage a mindset of equality and respect towards girls and women.

**Empower Girls:** Provide information on rights and opportunities available to girls in education, health, and career development.

**Community Engagement:** Mobilize community members to actively support the welfare and education of girls.

**Actionable Solutions:** Develop a concrete action plan to address challenges faced by girls in accessing education and healthcare.

The first two phases of the programme were held by Nari o Sishu Kalyan Kendra and Seva Kendra. The ICC members attended both the programmes.

➤ **Programme by Seva Kendra and ICC, NSOU:**

On 18 February, Seva Kendra organised street plays at Motijheel located under Ward no 56 of Kolkata Municipal Corporation and Khanaberia located under Wards no 58 of Kolkata Municipal Corporation commemorating the tenth year of “Beti Bachao Beti Padhao” Campaign. The programme was held in the two slums from 11 am to 5 pm and there were approximately 120 participants. Through this initiative, attempts were made towards generating awareness and developing progressive mindsets among members of disadvantaged communities for prevention and responding to incidences of gender based social maladies like female feticide, child marriage, domestic violence, gender-based discrimination and exclusion of girl child from avenues of development.



These street plays were facilitated by staff members of Seva Kendra Calcutta and were screened at public spaces with substantial footfall. In the context of this initiative active participation was ensured on the part of community level stakeholders like senior level functionaries of CSOs and CBOs like youth clubs, ICDS functionaries, frontline health workers and opinion leaders besides members of the local communities mainly consisting of children including adolescent girls, youth and women. The script for this play was formulated by Mr. Subhabrata Acharya, Field Coordinator at Seva Kendra Calcutta. This play was focuses around the story of a girl child who was a victim of child marriage as she was married to a young boy at a very early age. Like any other child bride in contemporary traditional Indian society, the girl in her marital role had to be at the receiving side of the gender-based violence, abuse and exploitation being triggered by patriarchal mindset.

Despite getting support from her husband, the girl had to face tremendous hardships at the hands of her in-laws and relatives in terms of deprivation from basic necessities of life, neglect and alienation from participating in the decision-making process at her family. She was also not allowed to have any say in the decision-making process that directly affect her including decisions relating to pregnancy and acceptance of a newborn based on gender lines. Despite repeated attempts, she along with her husband was not able to convince her family to have institutional delivery. Owing to her early age, risk and complications associated with teenage pregnancy and non-institutional delivery, the main character of this play succumbed to such risk factors and passed away while giving birth to a girl child. The next phase of this play was an illustration with regard to the kind of struggle of being encountered by the child at her family and societal level. Since



her birth, the child had to face rejection with her family. However, with strong self-determination and support from her father, the child finally succeeded in not only developing a respectable career as being a teacher of a government aided Higher Secondary School but also establishing an identity of her own regardless of gender affinity. As a part of this play, dissemination of critical information relating to important gender based social problems like female feticide and selective sex selection, child marriage, human trafficking, gender based social exclusion and violence was ensured with a focus on its nature, magnitude, casual factors and impact.

As a part of this campaign, two shows have already been organized at two



locations namely Motijheel and Khanaberia. At Motijheel active participation was ensured on the part of more than 50 individuals mainly consisting of community level stakeholders and members of the local population including adolescent girls and women. On the other hand, more than 70 individuals mainly consisting of functionaries from the local youth



clubs, frontline health workers, school teachers, members of community level structures like Community Action Groups, Women's Groups, Opinion leaders and female members of the local ragpicker community were present during the performance of the street play at Khanaberia. In fact, during the event at Khanaberia, active participation was also ensured on the part of Prof. Ritu Mathur Mitra, Presiding Officer, ICC, NSOU.



In her speech, Prof. Mathur Mitra presented a brief illustration about various dimensions of gender-based violence in India with an emphasis on its nature, magnitude, casual factors and impact.

Towards the concluding part of her speech, Prof Mathur Mitra gave a brief elaboration about important initiatives that has been initiated by the government in terms of policy framework, schemes and campaigns that focus on prevention as well as redressal of incidences relating to gender-based violence and discrimination.

At the organizational level, Seva Kendra Calcutta have planned for continuing this campaign as a perennial initiative. As par this plan, the organization will organize at least one such street plays every month in most of habitations being covered under its programmatic intervention.



➤ **Programme by Nari o Sishu Kalyan Kendra, Bauria, Howrah and ICC, NSOU:**

The ICC NSOU celebrated a programme at Nari o Sishu Kalyan Kendra, Bauria, Howrah on 18/02/2025 for celebrating Women's Day, 2025 with focus on the 10th Anniversary of 'Beti bachao, beti padhao' campaign. Mrs Rahima Khatun, Secretary of Nari o Sishu Kalyan Kendra extended a warm welcome to, Dr Kasturi Sinha Ghosh and Mrs Suchismita Chatterjee, the Members of ICC, NSOU. The programme begun from 2:00 PM, and a total of 50 participants, from within the community, mostly women and adolescent girls attended the programme.

Mrs Rahima Khatun, in her inaugural speech invited the participants, and said explained the objective of the programme to the participants. Mrs Rahima Khatun inspired the girls and women to be aware of their basic rights and be sensitive to each other's feelings. She encouraged the participants to share their ideas.



Dr Kasturi Sinha Ghosh, Member ICC NSOU, discussed about the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao campaign and talked about how girls in our society are often deprived of their basic child rights. Education is one such rights which must be ensured for each and every child of our community irrespective of their caste, creed or gender. We have to plan strategies to see that we are creating a societal structure where no one of is marginalized. Mrs Suchismita Chatterjee expressed that she was overwhelmed to see the participants and was hopeful that the programmes shall be a great success.





The young girls performed dance, dramas and recited poems all depicting ideas that girls have right to lead a life with respect and dignity. They should never be discriminated against boys. There was an interactive session in which all participated quite enthusiastically and following points were raised-

- ✓ Women are Human Beings and have right to lead a dignified life
- ✓ They must have their basic Human Rights of Education, employment, recreation and also participate in politics.
- ✓ They must not feel shy to talk about their problems and must participate in all developmental activities.

The programme was concluded at 4:30 Pm with a vote of thanks by the Honb'le President of Nari o Shishu Kalyan Kendra.



➤ **Programme by ICC, NSOU at NSOU Headquarters:**

The Internal Complaints Committee (ICC) of Netaji Subhas Open University (NSOU) successfully organized a grand event celebrating Women's Day 2025, marking the 10th anniversary of the 'Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao' campaign. Debanjan Ghoshal and Rudra Kanta Biswas, members ICC were in charge of Registration from 11.30 am. The event, held at Subhas Chandra Sabhaghar, NSOU Headquarters, witnessed an enthusiastic gathering of dignitaries, representatives from collaborating organizations, faculty members, and students. There were 60 participants. The programme aimed to highlight the significance of women's empowerment and the role of educational and social initiatives in fostering gender equity.



**Inaugural Session**

Compere-The programme was ably compered by Dr. Srabanti Choudhuri, Member, ICC, NSOU.

The Inaugural session commenced at 12:00 PM with a warm welcome by the organizing committee members of the ICC. The inaugural session set the tone for the day's proceedings, emphasizing the importance of gender sensitization and the transformative role of education in empowering women.

**Welcome Address**

Professor Ritu Mathur Mitra, the Presiding Officer of the Internal Complaints Committee (ICC), delivered a compelling and insightful welcome address, setting

the tone for the Women's Day celebration at Netaji Subhas Open University (NSOU). She began by reaffirming the ICC's steadfast commitment to fostering a safe, inclusive, and gender-sensitive academic environment—one where students and faculty alike feel secure and empowered to pursue their aspirations without fear of discrimination or harassment. She emphasized that the ICC, as a guardian of institutional gender equity, has been instrumental in creating awareness, implementing preventive measures, and ensuring that grievances related to gender-based challenges are addressed with sensitivity and diligence.

Professor Mathur Mitra took a moment to express her deep appreciation for the collaborating organizations—Nari o Shishu Kalyan Kendra (NOSKK) and Seva Kendra—whose tireless efforts in advancing women's rights and gender justice have significantly contributed to the collective vision of a more equitable society. She acknowledged that partnerships between academia and civil society organizations play a crucial role in driving meaningful change, as they help extend the reach of gender discourse beyond university walls and into the lived realities of marginalized women. The presence of these organizations at the event, she noted, was a testament to the shared commitment towards women's empowerment and social justice.

In her address, Professor Mathur Mitra also reflected on her field visits, which have been an integral part of her work as an advocate for gender justice. Regularly engaging with grassroots organizations and communities, she has made it a priority to step beyond the institutional framework and immerse herself in the socio-cultural contexts where real change is needed. She recalled her recent visits to Seva Kendra, which came up in the lecture as a remarkable instance of how extension programmes bridge academic theory with practical interventions. These visits, undertaken as part of NSOU's outreach initiatives, allowed her to witness firsthand the resilience of women striving for independence, dignity, and equality.

She shared her reflections on the inspirational work being done at Seva Kendra, where women from underprivileged backgrounds are given the tools and resources to become self-reliant. She spoke passionately about the significance of economic independence for women, emphasizing that true empowerment is not merely about policy formulations or academic discussions but about tangible changes in the lives of real individuals. Seva Kendra's initiatives—ranging from skill development workshops to micro-financing support—demonstrate that when women are given the opportunity to lead, entire communities benefit from their progress. Professor Mathur Mitra commended the organization's commitment to fostering a self-reliant society rooted in social harmony, justice, and respect for human dignity.

Her address was imbued with a strong call to action: the need for continuous engagement, not just through institutional policies but also through participatory involvement in grassroots movements. She encouraged students,



faculty, and community members to view gender justice as a collective responsibility—one that requires active involvement, open dialogue, and unwavering dedication. With an optimistic outlook, she expressed confidence that through sustained collaborations between academic institutions and civil society organizations, the vision of a gender-equal world can be realized.

In conclusion, Professor Mathur Mitra reiterated her faith in the transformative power of education, outreach, and advocacy in reshaping gender narratives. She urged all present to take inspiration from the stories of resilience and empowerment shared during the event and to commit themselves to being allies in the movement for women's rights. With her powerful and empathetic words, she set the stage for the day's discussions, reinforcing the idea that women's empowerment is not just an institutional goal but a societal imperative that demands persistent and collective effort.

### **Introduction of the Theme**

Dr. Barnali Roy Choudhury, Convenor of ICC, introduced the theme of the programme—'Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao.' She elaborated on the campaign's journey over the past decade, underscoring its impact on increasing girls' education and challenging gender-based discrimination. She emphasized that continued collaboration between educational institutions and civil society organizations is crucial in sustaining this momentum.

Dr. Barnali Roy Choudhury, Convenor of ICC while introducing the theme of the programme—'Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao.', she provided a detailed account of the campaign's inception, its objectives, and the multifaceted efforts taken at national and grassroots levels to ensure its success. Highlighting statistical improvements in female literacy rates and school enrolment over the past decade, she underscored the campaign's role in shifting societal attitudes towards girls' education and empowerment. She also addressed persistent challenges, including socio-economic barriers, gender biases, and infrastructural gaps that continue to hinder progress. Furthermore, she called for a more integrated approach, stressing the importance of sustained collaboration between educational institutions, government bodies, and civil society organizations to foster a long-lasting impact. She concluded by advocating for enhanced policy interventions, community-driven initiatives, and a stronger support system for girls, ensuring that the momentum generated by the campaign does not wane but continues to drive meaningful change.

### **Registrar's Address**

Smt. Ananya Mitra, Registrar of NSOU, addressed the gathering, reinforcing the university's commitment to gender equality. She discussed NSOU's various initiatives aimed at empowering female students and ensuring their active participation in academia and leadership roles. She addressed the gathering,

reinforcing the university's unwavering commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment in higher education. She highlighted the numerous initiatives undertaken by NSOU to support female students, including scholarships, mentorship programs, and capacity-building workshops designed to enhance their academic and professional growth. She elaborated on the university's policies that promote an inclusive and safe learning environment, ensuring that female students can pursue their education without fear of discrimination or harassment. Additionally, she spoke about NSOU's active encouragement of women in leadership roles, both within the student body and faculty, emphasizing the importance of fostering a culture of equity and opportunity. She also underscored the role of digital education in bridging the gender gap, enabling women, particularly from marginalized backgrounds, to access quality education and skill development programs. Concluding her address, she urged for continued institutional and societal support to create a truly gender-sensitive academic space where women can thrive as leaders and change-makers.

### **Vote of Thanks- Inaugural session**

The inaugural programme concluded with a vote of thanks delivered by Dr. Kasturi Sinha Ghosh, who expressed deep appreciation to all dignitaries, collaborating organizations, faculty members, and participants. She acknowledged the contributions of NOSKK and Seva Kendra in furthering the cause of women's empowerment and reiterated NSOU's commitment to fostering an inclusive and equitable educational environment.



### **Session I**

Following the inaugural session, the event progressed into insightful discussions led by representatives from Nari o Sishu Kalyan Kendra (NOSKK) and Seva Kendra.

## 1. Presentation by Nari o Sishu Kalyan Kendra

Ms. Nargis Parvin, representing NOSKK, delivered a thought-provoking speech on the organization's mission to create a self-reliant and just society. She articulated NOSKK's vision of a society free from patriarchal oppression, where individuals can participate in a decentralized political and economic framework. She outlined their various initiatives, including forming self-help groups, enhancing knowledge and skills, and promoting gender equality in education, health, and economic spheres.

NOSKK operates across five districts of West Bengal—Howrah, Murshidabad, Uttar Dinajpur, Dakshin Dinajpur, and the Sundarbans. Their rights-based approach to livelihood promotion and community engagement has significantly contributed to the empowerment of marginalized women.

## 2. Insights from Seva Kendra

Mr. Sukhendu Bank, representing Seva Kendra, provided an overview of the organization's contributions towards social development since its inception in 1973. He emphasized Seva Kendra's commitment to building a harmonious and self-reliant society based on cultural ethos, spiritual values, and social justice. Their participatory approach towards gender equity and sustainable development has led to impactful community interventions across eight districts of West Bengal.

Mr. Sukhendu Bank delivered an insightful speech on women's empowerment, emphasizing the importance of skill-based learning to foster self-reliance among women from underprivileged communities. He highlighted various vocational training programs initiated by Seva Kendra, including hands-on training in producing jaggery, confectioneries, cakes, and other small-scale food products. These initiatives, he stressed, not only equip women with entrepreneurial skills but also provide them with a sustainable means of livelihood, enabling them to contribute economically to their families and communities.





Furthermore, he shed light on the pressing issue of young girls eloping due to socio-economic vulnerabilities and how such situations often lead to their entrapment in human trafficking networks. Drawing from his extensive experience as a member of Child-line, he narrated real-life cases where timely intervention saved young girls from exploitative conditions. He elaborated on the need for strong institutional support systems, community awareness campaigns, and policy enforcement to combat trafficking effectively. His address was not only deeply informative but also emotionally compelling, urging all stakeholders to collaborate in creating a safer and more empowering environment for women and young girls.

The event successfully brought together academia, civil society, and stakeholders in a meaningful discourse on gender equity and women's empowerment, leaving an indelible impact on all attendees. The Women's Day Celebration 2025 at NSOU was not only a commemoration of achievements but also a reaffirmation of collective efforts towards a more inclusive future.

### **Session II- Empowering 'Betis'**

This session began by a video show organised by the members of Seva Kendra. The video was a heartwarming recording of the street plays held in the slum areas to promote the Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao campaign. Sri Sukhendu Bank emphasised the significance of street plays as a successful tool for creating awareness about women's rights.

This was followed by a performance by the community girls of Nari o Shishu Kalyan Kendra, highlighting the plight of a girl deprived of education and by their families and the final realisation of the parents that they should have educated their girl so that she could overcome the hardships of life, look after her family in a better way by becoming financially independent.



ICC members led by Dr. Kasturi Sinha Roy organised a fun-filled talent hunt session for the visiting community guests and NSOU learners. Both girls and boys participated in the session geared at creating awareness for empowering girls

through hands on activities which included a Quiz Competition and a Poster competition on the theme 'Beti Bachao Beti Padhao'. The learners participated enthusiastically.



The winners were selected by external faculty. Prizes were awarded to the winners and all participants were given gifts by ICC members. The programme ended at on a happy note with all participants posing happily for photographs.







**Vote of Thanks** was proposed by Suchismita Banerjee, Member, ICC, NSOU.

### **Programme Outcomes: Future Commitment to Gender Inclusivity and Empowerment**

Recognizing the profound impact of these engagements, the ICC resolves to continue its efforts in organizing many more such initiatives in the future. With an evolving vision, ICC aims to expand the scale and scope of its programs by integrating new themes that address contemporary challenges faced by women, particularly in education, employment, digital inclusion, and social justice. The committee is committed to adopting a multi-dimensional approach that blends policy advocacy, grassroots activism, and academic engagement to drive systemic change.

Moving forward, ICC pledges to curate events that provide practical and actionable insights for empowering women and marginalized communities. It intends to introduce capacity-building workshops, leadership training, and mentorship initiatives to equip women with the necessary skills to navigate various socio-economic barriers. Special focus will be placed on digital literacy and financial independence programs, ensuring that women, particularly from rural and underserved areas, have equal access to opportunities.

Through sustained collaboration with organizations like Nari o Shishu Kalyan Kendra and Seva Kendra, the ICC aims to forge stronger networks that amplify the impact of its initiatives. The committee will also actively engage with policymakers, educators, and community leaders to foster a more inclusive and



equitable society. The success of this event is merely a stepping stone in the ICC's long-term commitment to social transformation, and with a firm resolve, it will continue to be a beacon of progress in the years to come. It pledges to curate events that address contemporary gender issues, promote inclusivity, and provide actionable insights for empowering women and marginalized communities. Through continued collaboration with organizations like Nari o Shishu Kalyan Kendra and Seva Kendra, the ICC remains steadfast in its mission to foster an equitable and just society. The success of this event marks just another milestone in their enduring journey towards social transformation, with a firm resolve to keep the momentum going in the years to come.

***Report prepared by***

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