

October 9, 2024

Press Release

JMI organizes Seminar on 'Invisible Women Home-Based Workers'

The Department of Social Work, Jamia Millia Islamia (JMI) organized a one-day seminar on the theme 'Behind Closed Doors: The invisible women home-based workers' on 7th October, 2024 at the FTK-CIT in the University campus. The inaugural session was graced by the presence of Hon'ble Offg. Vice Chancellor, Prof Mohammad Shakeel and Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences, Prof. Mohd. Muslim Khan. The seminar began with a welcome address by Dr. Lalhmingmawii Gangte, Assistant Professor, Department of Social Work where both the organizing and the sponsoring institution were introduced. This was followed by a brief introduction on the subject by Prof. Neelam Sukhramani, Head of the Department who outlined the background and the objectives of the seminar. The Hon'ble Vice Chancellor spoke about the precarity of work conditions of home-based workers and the urgent need to address issues related to their physical and mental well-being. He further emphasized seminar as a medium of academic engagement can aid in seeking practical solutions to a social problem. The Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences, Prof. Mohd. Muslim Khan stressed on the importance of education and called upon the Department of Social Work to conduct an exhaustive survey in the adjoining areas around Jamia Millia Islamia that could aid in making people-friendly legislation through proper advocacy. Prof. Sukhramani, Head of the Department, extended her heartfelt gratitude to the National Commission for Women (NCW) for facilitating the organization of the seminar that can serve as an opportunity to provide visibility to an invisible group. Non ratification of ILO Convention 177 was also brought up.

This was followed by an intellectually stimulating keynote address by Prof. Indrani Mazumdar, Retd. Fellow, Centre for Women's Development Studies on the theme of the seminar as she spoke of her seminal research on the topic and discussed at length the various state and non-state interventions till date whilst bringing to the forefront the 'woman's question' in the backdrop of the *Towards Equality* report. She began her address by asking the audience of their day-to-day observances of women engaged in home-based chores like *agarbatti* making, *beedi* rolling etc. She further emphasized on the point of there being a lack of meaningful work and employment opportunities and how this adds on to the problem of low wages and exploitation worldwide in the face of capitalism, racism and imperialistic tendencies. She ended her address by beseeching upon the need for a separate legislation for home-based workers and asking the audience to "go beyond the superficial".

The first technical session for the day, with the theme 'Challenges and Vulnerabilities of Home-Based Workers' was delivered by Dr. Rajib Nandi, Vice President-Knowledge

Management and Capacity Development, Sambodhi Research and Communications Pvt. Ltd, New Delhi and chaired by Prof. Virendra Balaji Shahare, Department of Social Work, Jamia Millia Islamia. The session particularly focused on Dr Rajib's work in five South Asian countries across a range of indicators like institutional support and access to social security, memberships in organizations like trade unions, primary consumption expenditure patterns, access to formal agreements etc. The chair also recommended to look at the problem through the 'intersectionality' approach thus including perspectives from caste, class, religion and gender structures. The audience raised an array of questions around "consumer responsibility" whilst buying such products made by home-based workers, replication of success stories as models, agency of the women involved and location and distance of and from what is defined as 'home'.

The second session of the day, with the theme 'Health and well-being of home-based workers' was delivered by Dr. Sreerupa, Research Fellow and Program Lead, Institute of Social Studies Trust (ISST), New Delhi and chaired by Prof. Ushvinder Kaur Popli, Department of Social Work, Jamia Millia Islamia. The session specifically focused on Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) hazards faced by home-based workers across a range of different set-ups with detailed solutions and actionable strategies. The 'gendered' nature of the problem was particularly discussed. The session ended with the audience interacting actively with the speaker around specific issues of physical health and food consumption patterns of the workers, availability of health services, 'bargaining power' of the womenfolk involved in the face of they being a non-homogenous group.

The third session discussed the 'Policy and Legal Framework for home-based workers' with Dr. Ellina Samantroy Jena, fellow, V.V Giri National Labour Institute, Noida and chaired by Prof. Vani Narula, Department of Social Work, Jamia Millia Islamia. The session delineated the entire policy-legal framework whilst discussing the on-ground challenges faced by home-based women workers and the much needed interface between the government and non-governmental organizations. Dr. Samantroy presented to the audience a case study of the *beedi* workers; statistics and figures from the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS), time survey conducted by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation and the labour force participation rate of women and the interpretation of the figures discussed. The speaker also discussed at length the Social Security Code 2020, the Unorganised Workers Social Security Act, 2008 and the e-shram portal. The need for handholding through NGOs for the purpose of registration of the workers was emphasized upon by the speaker.

The fourth and last session of the day with the theme and intent to chalk out a 'Way Forward', was delivered by Ms. Ratna M Sudarshan, Former Director, Institute of Social Studies Trust (ISST), New Delhi and chaired by Prof. Ravindra Ramesh Patil, Department of Social Work, Jamia Millia Islamia. Ms. Sudarshan spoke at length on what exactly determines such constrained choices made by women in the backdrop of a patriarchal societal structure. The need for qualitative data around the issue at hand was also pressed upon from a research perspective. Examples of organizing of home-based

workers for a better bargaining power, was discussed through case studies and best practices.

The participants expressed that the seminar had made them acquainted with an issue that has otherwise not crossed their attention and given them several dimensions to analyse it. The members of the seminar organizing team, Prof. Neelam Sukhramani, Dr. Lalhmingmawii Gangte and Dr. Rubina Nusrat conveyed their gratitude to Hon'ble Vice Chancellor, Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences, National Commission for Women, the resource persons, the chairpersons, the participants, organizing committee, Jamia administration, students and scholars all alike. The organization of the seminar was also actively supported by Dr. Md. Tarique Enam, Dr. Minhaj Akram, Dr. Risha Baruah and Mr. Asrarul Haque Jeelani and several student volunteers of the Department of Social Work, JMI.

Public Relations Office
Jamia Millia Islamia



Prof. Mohammad Shakeel
Offg. Vice Chancellor, JMI, New Delhi



Special Guest
Prof. Mohd. Muslim Khan
Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences, JMI, New Delhi

SPEAKERS AND THEMES



Keynote Address
Prof. Indrani Mazumdar
Centre for Women's Studies



Challenges
Dr. B. S. Sahasrabudhe
Sahakar





Prof. Indrani Mazumdar
Centre for Women's Development Studies (CWDS), New
Delhi

Prof. Mohammad Shakeel
Offg. Vice-Chancellor
Jamia Millia Islamia



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Organised by
Department of Social Work
Jamia Millia Islamia,
New Delhi

Sponsored by
National Commission for Women
New Delhi

Date: October 7, 2023
T, Jamia Millia



Special Guest
Prof. Mohd. Muslim Khan
Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences, JMI, New Delhi



SPEAKERS AND THEMES

Keynote Address
Prof. Indrani Mazumdar (Retired Fellow)
Centre for Women's Development Studies, New Delhi



Challenges and Vulnerabilities of Home-Based Workers
Dr. Rajib Nandi (Vice President)
Sambodhi Research and Communications Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi



Policy and Legal Framework for Home-Based Workers
Dr. Ellina Samantroy Jena (Fellow)
V.V. Giri National Labour Institute, Noida



Health and Well-being of Women Home-Based Workers
Dr. Sreerupa (Research Fellow and Program Lead)
Institute of Social Studies Trust, New Delhi



Way Forward
Ms. Ratna M. Sudarshan (Former Director)
Institute of Social Studies Trust, New Delhi

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Chief Guest
Prof. Mohammad Shakeel
 Offg. Vice Chancellor, JMI, New Delhi



Special Guest
Prof. Mohd. Mushtaq
 Dean, Faculty of Management Studies, JMI, New Delhi

SPEAKERS AND TITLES



Keynote Address
Prof. Indrani Misra (Retired Fellow)
 Centre for Women and Gender Studies, New Delhi



Challenges Faced by Unorganized Workers
Dr. Ramesh Sam



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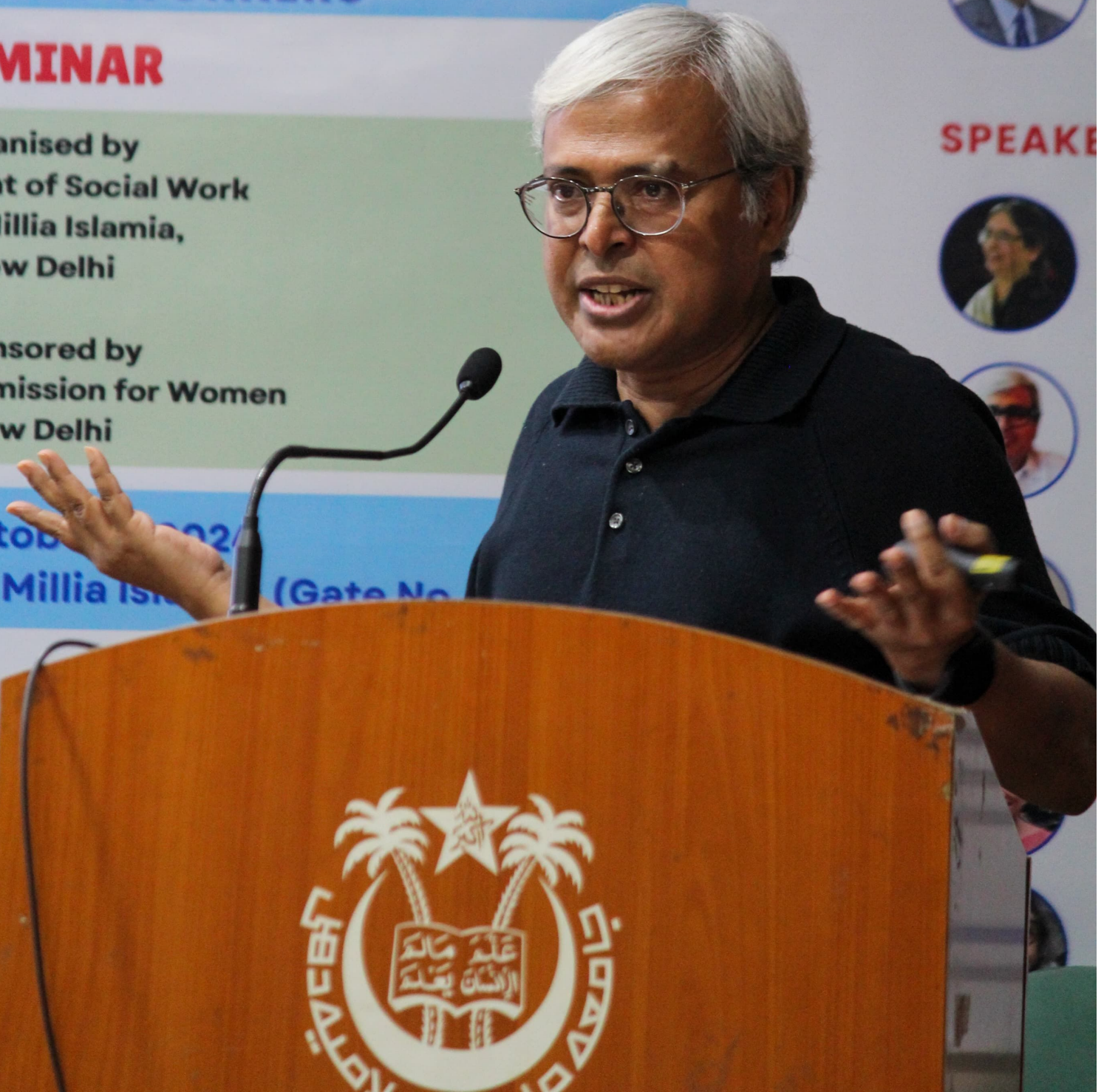
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SPEAKE



Guest

Mohammad Shakeel

Vice Chancellor, JMI, New Delhi

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Mohd. Muslim Khan

Faculty of Social Sciences, JMI, New Delhi

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