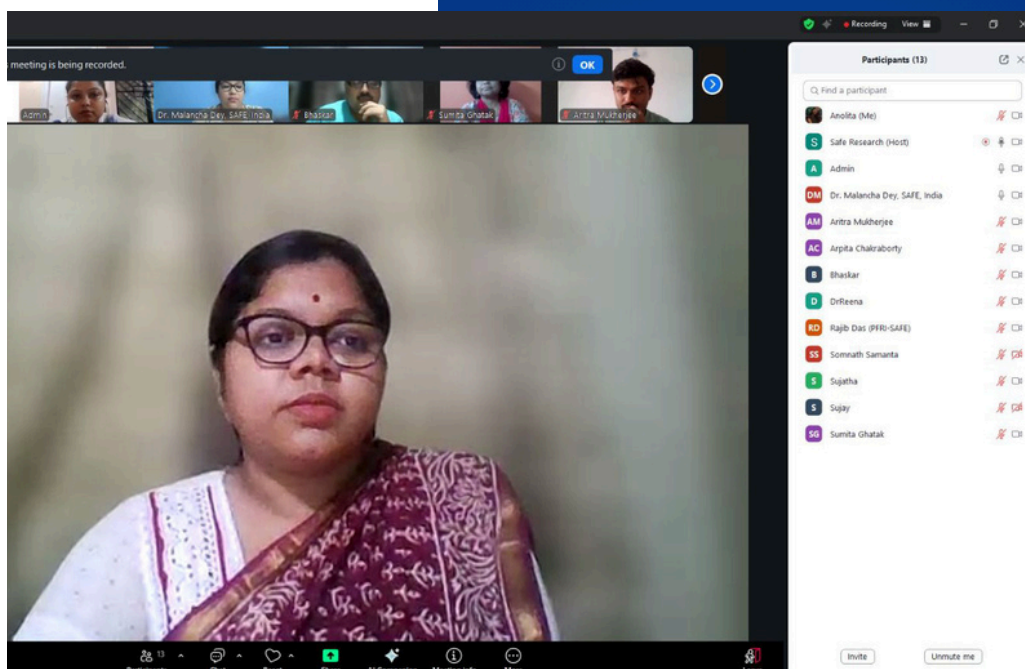


EPISTEME



PFRI's Engagements on International Women's Day 2026

On 8 March 2026, the Progyan Foundation for Research and Innovation (PFRI) engaged in a day of meaningful dialogue and knowledge exchange in Kolkata, reflecting its commitment to advancing inclusive and knowledge-driven societal progress.

Earlier in the day, PFRI participated in the Change Framing Dialogue 2026 held at The Stadel, under the theme "What Makes Society an Engine of Progress." The dialogue emphasized the importance of inclusive, science-informed public engagement and interdisciplinary thinking in addressing contemporary challenges. A key highlight was the discussion on the book *Indian Railways Journey with Coal 1855–2023: Changing Policies and Outcomes* by Ashim Kumar Maitra, featuring distinguished panellists including Salil Jha and moderator Santanu Sanyal. The session fostered insightful discussions on policy transitions, sustainability, and the importance of informed dialogue in shaping progressive societal change.

In the second half of the day, PFRI organized a special webinar to mark International Women's Day 2026. The webinar brought together experts from science, policy, and conservation to explore the transformative role of knowledge-sharing, mentorship, and collaboration in advancing gender equality.

The session featured inspiring insights from Dr. Sonali Ghosh, who spoke on 'The Resilience Mandate: Empowering Women as the Primary Leaders in Global Climate Adaptation and Crisis Management.' Sumita Ghatak also shared her perspectives on resilience, leadership, and women's role in environmental governance. The discussions highlighted that gender inequality continues to influence access to resources, opportunities, and decision-making across sectors, while emphasizing the need for stronger institutional support, gender-responsive policies, and knowledge platforms to empower women.

PFRI will also be bringing out a special edition of Progyan Communiqué (ISSN-registered), compiling key insights, findings, and recommendations from the day's discussions to share with the wider scholarly and professional community.

Sports Day at Sobuj Pathsala: **A Celebration of Hope in the Indian Sundarban**

In the fragile and remote landscape of the Sundarbans, where life is shaped by tides, cyclones, and coastal uncertainties, access to education and holistic childhood development remains limited. Amid these challenges, Sobuj Pathsala continues to serve as a beacon of hope for children excluded from mainstream education systems.

The Annual Sports Day, held at Tipligheri village under Lahiripur Gram Panchayat in Gosaba block of South 24 Parganas, transformed a modest village ground into a vibrant space of joy, participation, and community spirit. The event brought together 33 children enrolled in the learning centre and 21 women beneficiaries from the local community.

Many of the participating children come from remote coastal settlements where education is disrupted by geographical isolation, poverty, and recurring climate challenges such as cyclones, floods, and salinity intrusion. Sobuj Pathsala addresses this gap by providing inclusive learning opportunities, helping children rediscover curiosity, confidence, and the dignity of education. Its vision remains simple yet transformative: to turn the "unprivileged" into the "specially privileged" through education and opportunity.

These engagements collectively reflect PFRI's continued commitment to strengthening dialogue, fostering knowledge exchange, and promoting inclusive leadership in science, society, and sustainability.





The Sports Day featured activities such as 50-metre sprints, spoon-and-marble races, frog races, and biscuit races, reflecting both joy and resilience. Women participants also actively engaged in games like musical chairs and blindfolded pot-breaking, highlighting growing community involvement.

As the day concluded with smiles and recognition for participants, it reaffirmed a powerful message: even in the most remote corners of the Sundarban, hope flourishes when opportunity reaches the last mile.

Sustainable Livelihoods & Climate Action

Participation in Tribal Farmers Conclave

PFRI also participated in the Tribal Farmers Conclave held at the ICAR–Central Soil Salinity Research Institute Regional Research Station in Canning. The conclave brought together farmers, researchers, development practitioners, and government representatives to deliberate on climate-resilient agriculture and sustainable livelihoods in the coastal Sundarban.

Discussions highlighted the increasing impacts of salinity intrusion, climate variability, and extreme weather events on coastal farming systems, emphasizing the urgent need for adaptive practices and collaborative solutions.

During the session, Dr. Malancha Dey shared innovative approaches such as float farming, supported by United Nations Development Programme, which enables cultivation on floating beds during flooding or waterlogging, an effective nature-based solution for vulnerable ecosystems like the Sundarban. She also emphasized the role of localized weather monitoring and digital advisory platforms in strengthening farmers' decision-making, including mobile-based advisory systems integrating weather forecasts, crop guidance, and market information.

Adding further perspective, Dr. Aritra Mukherjee shared experiences from Bihar, where integrated approaches such as agroforestry, natural farming, and float farming are enhancing resilience, improving farmer incomes, and strengthening value addition and market access.

The conclave reinforced the importance of integrating climate-resilient practices, technological innovations, and stronger market linkages to support sustainable livelihoods in climate-vulnerable coastal regions.