

Invited Lecture and Seminar organized by Department of English to commemorate the glorious occasion of 50 Years of Academic Excellence (1969-2019)

As part of the academic activities of the Department of English to commemorate the glorious occasion of 50 years of Academic Excellence two lectures were organized during the month of December. Professor Himadri Lahiri, (Retired Professor and Former Head of the Department of English and Cultural Studies, The University of Burdwan who is currently in charge of the Department of English, NSOU Durgapur Unit) delivered an invited talk on “Interpretation of Maladies in Jhumpa Lahiri's Select Short Stories” on December 3rd, 2019. Professor Lahiri talked about transnationalism, migration and diaspora in his usual lucid and comprehensive manner. He explored the various nuances of diaspora and hybridized identity. The students participated in avid interactions and multiple perceptive emerged from the discussion that followed.

A One-Day State Level Seminar was organized on “Disease, Dis-ease and Changing Social Perceptions”. The seminar was graced by two eminent Speakers-- Professor Nandini Bhattacharya (Professor, Department of English and Cultural Studies, The University of Burdwan) and Professor Sajalkumar Bhattacharya (Professor and Head, Kazi Nazrul University, Asansol). They talked about the multiple aspects of health and disease in modern lives.

In the context of human lives, the notion of disease is generally used to refer to any condition that causes pain, dysfunction, distress, social problems, or suffering to the person afflicted, or similar problems for those in contact with the person. In this broader sense, it sometimes includes injuries, disabilities, disorders, syndromes, infections, deaths, deviant behaviour etc. Through their intensively enriched talks they explored how diseases can

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affect people not only physically, but also mentally, as contracting and living with a disease can alter the affected person's perspective on life. Conventional health promoters wanted to eliminate or alleviate pain, disease and certain social obstacles in order to enable people to live safer and more fulfilled lives. Health in clinical perspective is conceived as more or less an objective state. The talks analysed the various facets of the term 'disease'. Professor Nandini Bhattacharya talked about the bio-politics related to death and how explained disease and death are significant in various ways. She drew references from Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway* and Kafka's *The Metamorphosis* and talked about the cultural aspect of disease. She talked about cultural receptions of mental agony, madness, fertility issues, menopausal problems and how the concept of disease has undergone substantial transformation with time. She mentioned about the pertinence of the human body and the state craft looks at the diseased body and argued how people are consciously striving towards fitness and health these days. Dr Sajal Bhattacharya drew analogies from contemporary life to show how people's response to illness has changed with development of science and medicine. Both the speakers mentioned about how the term disease in a globalized context refers to not only physical ailment but anything that creates a sense of dis-ease and discomfort in a body. They also mentioned how the perception of madness, AIDS, homosexuality etc which were formerly regarded as social, political and cultural aberrations have been gradually reformed with time. The seminar was attended by several eminent professors. Research scholars and students from nearby colleges like Michael Madhusudan College, Durgapur Women's College, NIT Durgapur and others also attended the seminar.

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What emerged from the interactions, exchanges and discussions that followed the talks was that 'Health' has now become more than a commodity and the present-day approach towards health is more 'holistic' than earlier. It is also pertinent to mention in this context that health is also dependent on man's social and cultural surrounding and it invariably includes the 'mental' well-being of the person. The relation between a doctor and a patient and the patient's feeling of well-being or suffering has undergone significant changes with time and the patient-doctor negotiation is longer a simple role of a medical person with the exclusive rights of diagnosing, and the practice of treating illness on the assumption that health or absence of health/disease is connected merely with one's body too has been considerably reviewed. The speakers made it evidently clear that health is no longer viewed as something belonging to one's body only. Social and cultural perceptions of illness also play a major role in the experience of suffering of the ill person.

Dr. Nilanjana Chatterjee and Dr. Anindita Chatterjee were joint conveners for the events. Both the seminars were thoroughly enriching experiences altogether. They shall remain significant events in the history of the glorious journey of the college.



INAUGURATION

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Student Interacting with Professor Himadri Lahiri, (Retired Professor and Former Head of the Department of English and Cultural Studies



Professor Himadri Lahiri, (Retired Professor and Former Head of the Department of English and Cultural Studies, the University of Burdwan)

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Professor Nandini Bhattacharya (Professor, Department of English and Cultural Studies, The University of Burdwan)



Professor Sajalkumar Bhattacharya (Professor and Head, Kazi Nazrul University, Asansol)