

**Women Founders Collective joins Jabala Action Research Organization for  
a state level meeting:  
*Seeking Jobs, Managing Risks: The Rights of Girls to Mobility*  
March 16, 2019**



This state level meeting was organized by Jabala Action Research Organization, supported By: Novo Foundation and in partnership with: Sanskrit College and University and Women Founders Collective.

This event brought together girls from tea gardens of Alipurduar Districts and other districts of West Bengal, State Authorities of West Bengal, media persons, members of West Bengal State Child Rights Commission, and representatives of a number of NGOs.

Many of the programs designed for adolescent girls assume that keeping girls in school will lead to employment and empowerment. However, it has proved very difficult for young women in rural areas to receive a good education, access training programs, and to find good jobs. The solutions offered – usually couched in terms of skills needed for employment -- do not take into consideration the lives of the girls who seek employment, their aspirations, and the dangers they face in traveling outside their localities to seek jobs. One of the main objectives of this forum was to listen to adolescent girls. What do they want and what is their view of the obstacles they will face in seeking employment?

Following presentations Baitali Ganguly, Jabala; Geraldine Forbes, Women Founders Collective; Paula Banerjee, Sanskrit College and University; Banibrato Basu, Vigilance Commission; and Maria Fernandez and Sudeshna Roy, West Bengal Commission for Protection of Child Rights, girls talked about their experiences seeking education and jobs and the hurdles they faced.

In their presentations, the girls spoke about inadequate schools and teachers, parents who did not support their studies, lack of money for tutoring while in school and for job training, sexual harassment, social and family pressure to get married young, and difficulties in migrating from rural areas to the cities for jobs. The young women spoke passionately about their lives and the difficulties they faced inside their homes, in their communities, and when they had to migrate to cities.