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# BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

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# ISSUES OF GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT: PERSPECTIVES AND CONFLICTS

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## Gender, Disaster Reduction and Sustainable Development- Evidences from Tsunami Affected Areas

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During the Past decade natural hazards, such as earth quakes, land slides, droughts, floods, storms and tropical cyclones, Wildfires and volcanic eruptions resulted in significant losses in human life and livelihoods, the destruction of economic and social infrastructure as well as environmental damage.

Gender main streaming in disaster reduction refers to fostering awareness about gender equity and equality to help reduce the impact of disasters, and to incorporate Gender analysis in disaster management, risk reduction and Sustainable development to decrease vulnerability. If we are to shift the focus from relief to disaster reduction, scaling up Women's participation is key to Sustainable disaster reduction, by building on existing resilience demonstrated amply by women and poor communities. The new approach will recognize and provide policy support to Women as key actors in disaster risk reduction instead of perceiving them as victims. This approach will address Gender concerns, provide space for Women as decision makers, to minimize wastage and maximize the returns on investments in infrastructure and development.

In this context this paper analyses Gender mainstreaming in disaster reduction of Tsunami affected areas of Kanyakumari District, Tamil Nadu with the data collected through the survey on Women as decision maker, information receiver, infrastructure developer and participant and creator of Awareness programmes of Tsunami affected areas.

## Gender - Aware Policy and Planning: Empowerment of Women

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It is evident that various programmes, schemes for development of women has been planned by various State Governments from the first five year plan (1951 to 56) to fifth plan (1975 to 80). They considered the women as integral part of the family. Those plans were directed towards the family welfare. Feminists termed them as 'gender neutral policies'.

From 6th five year plan (1980-85) there is a shift in the approach from 'welfare' to 'development' of women till 8th five year plan (1992-97). The development programmes were initiated during those four plan periods can fit into the second approach considered as 'gender specific policies'.
The ninth plan (1997-2002) made two significant changes in the conceptual strategy of planning for women. Firstly 'Empowerment of women' became one of the nine primary objectives of the ninth plan. Secondly the plan attempted 'Convergence of existing services' available in both women-specific and women related sectors.

In this context the paper tries to highlight programmes and schemes introduced by the five year plans in the back ground of gender aware frame work and to analyse the conditions and programmes meant for directing women towards empowerment and to establish gender friendly environment in the society.

### Deprived in Affluence: An Exploration into the Aspirations of Women towards Ownership of Land in a Village in Punjab

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Agricultural land symbolizes life. It is one of the most important resources for sustenance.

The study attempts to understand women's aspirations to own agricultural land, in the socio-economic and legal context in a village in Punjab which is a 'developed state' in India. It was Punjab's prosperity and the affluence of the land owning Jat families that I wanted to understand and look beyond, through a gender-lens. The context in the paper includes the social and political background of the State, the district- Fatehgarh Sahib and the village- Barwali Khurd.

The methodology practiced for the research is a feminist methodology. It is a qualitative research and is based on focus group discussions and in-depth interviews. The paper presentation will share the findings of this research as well as the analysis that was drawn from the findings.

Primarily, I have attempted to understand women's aspirations to land rights in the context of the available (or unavailable) legal rights to land, the social barriers to women's inheritance of land, as well as the changing nature of agriculture, itself, in the region. Further, as per the Hindu customs, dowry, the origin of which lies in '*streedhan*', is supposed to be daughter's share to father's property. And dowry, in turn, is given as the reason, why families don't want female children. This complex inter-relationship between inheritance to land, dowry and female foeticide, is also researched from the perspective of the women in the village, where I situated study.

### Role of Women in the Panchayat System in West Bengal

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In this paper, the role of women in the Panchayat system of West Bengal and the difficulties faced by elected women representatives is explored with a special focus on the relationship between elected women representatives and the party.

The first section of the paper will sketch in brief the context of the study. It is well known that the Left Front led by the Communist Party of India (Marxist) has been in government for thirty years in this state. There have been a number of discussions about the nature of government, especially local government, in this regard. There can be no doubt that the West Bengal government has had a better than average track record in promoting decentralization and strengthening the panchayati system. It is in this context that the role of elected women representatives in Bengal must be studied. The question that I wish to raise is the relationship between the party and the women candidates (successful or otherwise). What is the position of the women party members within the party hierarchy? How do the specifics of left/communist politics inflect the participation of women in the party, especially at the lower levels where the compulsion of reservation has come into effect for several years now? In this regard, I would also wish to compare and contrast the situation vis a vis other parties, left or non-left. How do the different parties in West Bengal see the position of their women members? Can these women work freely or are they under their party's control? To what extent do they feel dominated and marginalized by the male party members and leadership? Is there any gender discrimination within Government or party? Such a comparative and detailed study promises to bring forth the relation between representative and actual power and its ramifications for women's empowerment.

### Women's Perspective of R & R Policy – A Case Study from Orissa

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The complexities of displacement and its impact on women and other marginalized groups is slowly entering into the mainstream debate on displacement as well as theories of rehabilitation including policies prescriptions. Recently

the Government of India has declared the National Resettlement & Rehabilitation (R & R) Policy. However there is a huge gap between the theory/policy and ground realities.

The state of Orissa today is the hot spot for huge Foreign Direct Investment and the government has not lost any effort in attracting the companies/ investors. However it is well known that industrial projects displaces people and it is estimated that in Orissa, till about the year 2000, 20 lakh people have been directly affected by development projects in varying degrees out of which about 5 lakh have been physically displaced losing their home and hearth from their original habitat. The Government of Orissa has developed a comprehensive Resettlement & Rehabilitation Policy, 2006 which covers the Development Projects such as Industrial Projects; Mining Projects; Irrigation Projects, National Parks and Sanctuaries; Urban Projects and Linear Projects like roads and railways, power lines; and any other Projects. This paper looks into the R & R Policy of some of the ongoing industrial projects in Orissa against the backdrop of the Orissa R & R Policy 2006 from a gender perspective, based on field studies conducted in the districts of Jagatsinghpur and Jajpur of Orissa where large industrial houses such as POSCO and TATA have been allotted land. The voices of women who are already displaced and also to be displaced will be the basis of analysis to present their needs. The prevalent paradigm of development and its approach for compensation on displacement due to development projects will be countered by presenting an alternative, reflecting women's perspective of development.

## The Gendered Impacts of Shifts in the Agricultural Labour Market on Women's Changing Identity in the Midland Village of Thathamangalam in Kerala

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This paper is about the gendered impacts of shifts in the agricultural labour market on women's changing identities within the household in the midland village of Thathamangalam in Kerala. The paper seeks to examine the paradoxes of agricultural transformation during the post-reform period of economic liberalisation since 1990 on women's shifting identities. It draws on in-depth focus group discussions with both male and female household members. The paper reveals that women have generally born the burnt of agricultural transformation and consequent changes to farm roles have also been paralleled by changes to women's identities and gender power relations at the household scale. In particular, the paper identifies how Indian national policies of economic liberalisation, together with Kerala state policies, have filtered down to the household levels and produced shifts in identities from caste to class based alliances, through the processes of 'Sanskritisation'. This has resulted in the construction of new forms of gendered identities for women, centred around the home and a revaloration of domesticity. Notions of femininity are thus clearly in a state of transition in Kerala. However, these changes in identities have been noted to vary for women of different age groups. Old and middle-aged women, despite having overcome the barriers of the feudalistic system, have experienced a reversal in gender equalities whilst young women are withdrawing into domesticity and have limited economic empowerment, despite gaining considerable social empowerment. This reveals a paradoxical situation of (some) women becoming socially empowered with this simultaneously occurring alongside their inability to bargain on the farm and within the household. By focussing on the household scale and by examining women's changing gendered identities consequent to their changing gender roles on farms, this paper seeks to fill a crucial gaps in the literature about how changes as a result of economic liberalisation have filtered down to the household level in Kerala and affected women's agency and empowerment.

## Girl child as Domestic Worker: An Anthropological Study

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Issues on child labour focus on the various area where children work as labourers. Domestic work is one of the worst forms of child labour because it usually involves long hours, working at night, harassment by the employer etc. The present paper is an attempt to throw light on the problems of the girls who work as domestic workers and to analyze their life against the backdrop of their work. The area of study is Lucknow city .It was observed that apart from duress , taking up this work was influenced by choice too as it gives them a sense of achievement and pride. This is particularly the case where the girls are the main bread earners of their families. It was found that education is a high priority in

the minds of many girl but their male siblings got preference over them. The girls working as domestic workers complained about the working conditions and particularly long hours of work. The attitude of the employer and his/her families was found to be negative towards the domestic worker. They have to face the dangers from unsanitary conditions, chemicals etc. Some mentioned that they got poor and inadequate food, poor sleeping conditions,  were punished and even beaten when they made mistakes. Some girls reported that their employers tried to sexually harass them. As domestic workers the tasks done by the girls are washing utensils, sweeping and mopping, laundry etc. An important fact that came forth from this study is that the male family members of these girls were found to be lazy and did not contribute to the earnings of the family. However being the 'men' of the family they wield the iron rod of control. The girls reported that they are beaten nearly everyday by their father or brother. The paper also focuses attention upon the aspirations and desires of the girl workers and how they try to make their life more enjoyable amidst poverty and pain. Yet another aspect of the paper is that which deals with how these girls having understood the tricks of the trade have learnt to call the shots. The paper is based on data collected through empirical research.

## Gender Development and Regional Disparities in India

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Women's right to equality and non-discrimination are defined as justifiable fundamental rights. The Indian constitution is one of the most progressive in the world, and guarantees equal rights for men and women.   The Constitution is firmly grounded in the principles of liberty, fraternity, equality and justice.  It emphasizes the importance of the greater freedom for all and contains a number of provisions for the empowerment of women.  Measurement of the level of socio-economic development of a nation is a complex task. However, the socio-economic environment affects overall economic development and business activities. Existence of different types of inequalities such as gender disparities affects the process of development adversely. The UNDP uses two major indicators (HDI and GDI) to measure the achievements of a country's population and gender disparities. These are primarily national level indicators and do not reflect regional differences. This paper attempted to estimate gender inequalities in the states and territories in India using GDI following the UNDP procedure modified for regional application. The study found existence of gender inequalities in all regions in India. In India, women marginally outperformed men. In general, women outperformed men in education and health areas. But achievement of women in income earning abilities was less than men in all states in India.

## The Women's Revolt of Consciousness: Tradition against Individual Reality

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The visible and invisible source of human power, human capital and human identity and human strength is none other than the woman. This is the reality of woman as an individual and of woman who is the part and parcel of tradition of the world. She is essentially the symbol of solidarity, integrity and humanity as well as beauty.

With the advancement in the living standard due to science, technology, capitalism and industrialism her world of ethnicity and identity has undergone metamorphosis. The tradition of gender role and responsibilities has corrupted the tradition and has clashed with her individual reality. It has malignantly caused stress and tension among the women folk due to the duality of her role in the family, work-place as well as in her self because now her perspective of individual reality is depended upon her being as social and economic force for the nation rather than merely as the essential being of the traditional society. This is the cause of her revolt of consciousness and paradoxically it is the social cohesion and cultural anarchy of women's role in the society.

Although her individual consciousness is aware of well-defined limits of family, society, and community and work-place yet her confrontation to overcome her alienation and identity crisis as regards her progress in a technologically advanced society with a high standard of living and leisure or in tribal/rural society has been in a transition phase, which is against the tradition. It is now in the process of psychological mobility instead of mere social mobility.

In such transitional phase of society in India, women are under stress and need to redefine their identity values individually and collectively. This dilemma and crisis need to be located within themselves first of all socially, then it need to be realized sentimentally and declare to self and others 'who they are'.

## Religion, Gender, and Development

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This paper seeks to look at the available conceptualizations of religion, gender and development to discover ways in which religion interplays with gender and social change. It would address the question: Is there a relationship between religion and social exclusion/inclusion of women in the process of development. Religion is a dominant force in private and public life in most developing countries. Most religious practices endorse and facilitate the control of men over women in various ways. Male members are (chiefly in the name of protectionism) in a position to determine and articulate the religious beliefs, customs, and interests. The 'religious values' often clash with the norms of gender equality. Through a perusal of available scholarship, the paper explores how religion influences all areas of women's lives including her individual choices and aspirations, and what this means for development policy and practice.

## Impact of National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) -A Study in Telengana

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The focus of this paper is the Second Phase of the National Rural Health Mission for reducing Maternal and Infant Mortality Rates.

The present study is confined to examine the impact of this project on rural poor women of Raghunathapally Village of Warangal district of Telengana Region as Raghunathapally has been identified as a pilot Mandal to implement all the government programmes in Warangal district. It is based on secondary source of data collected from Anganwadi Records and the data available at the relevant primary Health Centre.

Though the aim of the programme is to encourage deliveries in Government hospitals the data in the selected village clearly indicate that it is on the decline continuously from 1997 onwards, it became nil in 2006. Thus, all the deliveries are taking place in private hospitals. Further, no bus passes are given. Out of 25 pregnant women in the targeted group in the Scheduled village, only 18 were given financial benefits under JSY in 2006. Moreover, the amount is not yet released to implement JSY in 2007. Thus, the assistance provided is irregular and not reaching the beneficiaries when they are in need. In regard to the distribution of New Born Baby kits, the information clearly indicates that the concerned officials are not distributing kits on
the pretext that the infants are on normal weight. Thus, a wide gap can be noticed between the policy and implementation.

## Development and Gender

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Development today has become synonymous with the process of globalization itself. Without disputing the apparent benefits of this inevitable process, it is important to put into context the role it has played with regard to gender issues. Is there a place for women in this kind of a development we? Has it intensified the need for important gender oriented issues to be become a part of national and international policies? Has it safeguarded their rights and position in society?

While more women now have access to education, jobs and new technology this has not resulted in a transfer of power in terms of decision making and sum total benefit. In societies where women are mostly confined to the households and deprived of schooling, globalisation's gift of internet and technologies has little value because they are not accompanied by a change of mindset in a patriarchal society that treats women as a property and a burden to be rid of. While women now have increased access to the media, they have largely been unable to influence the

content and portrayal or challenge the stereotypes all pervasive in them because most of these women who are now working or participating in the media do not have actually have decision making powers or management level positions. A generic excuse is to point at the economics of demand and supply, but the problem stems from under representation of women and the dire need to inculcate sensitivity towards gender related issues.

There must be a reversal of the trend of belittling gender - where the role of women as producers and consumers is marginalized, they are objectified as commodities and their labour power and potential is restricted by several Any kind of development needs to have a human face and it cannot take place in isolation whilst ignoring gender disparities and inequalities.

## Refiguring Gender: A Study of Health Programmes in Orissa

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Gender issues have become the main focus of many development policies in the recent times. State can be perceived as a potential key social actor involved in the construction of citizenship and redress the inequalities in gender relations. The state's approach to bring changes in gender relations is dependent on, the extent to which the state is autonomous of kin based structures in society. It is also dependent on how much the state negotiates with the community to break the patriarchal power relations within social structure of family and community. The state's intervention of social structure becomes urgent because the relationships between women and men in the structure of family and community are key sites of gender inequality. Therefore any strategy to promote gender equality must consider the 'domestic' or 'private' context as the main focus of intervention. By making this argument as a point of departure, the paper tries to examine the health policies in India, (particularly in Orissa) pertaining to women which in turn asserts itself to be gender sensitive. Based on a study with the frontline health workers in Orissa, the paper tries to analyze the interventions of the state at the local level. It also investigates the perceptions of state agents as mediators between the state and community. By analyzing this, the paper brings to the fore that there is a tendency of coupling women with caretaking and motherhood roles, where the state's perspective on gender and community's approach to women collide.

## Feminist Theory and Practice of re-vision- Empowerment through the Sacred Immanent Mother-Goddesses of Matriarchal Times

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Can we create a global feminist theory, which is not totalizing and essentialist in character? Can we link local and global, urban and rural for re-creating a peaceful and egalitarian society? Can there be a theory, which builds on global sisterhood?

Many feminist theories use patriarchal labels in their analysis. It is the opinion of many feminist thinkers that if they use those labels like caste, class, etc. they have power over them. However, there are also critics who argue that the use of many hybrid labels in feminist theory creates a maze of dualisms. Feminist theory stays often in analysis showing the myriad ways in which women are victims of patriarchal suppression. However, there are mostly no suggestions how to break free from patriarchal norms and restrictions. In my opinion, it is a task to interconnect theory and practice.

In our feminist theory and practice of re-vision – empowerment through the sacred immanent Mother-Goddesses of matriarchal times, we argue that it is most important to stop to see patriarchal society as having been always existed, as universal. Before the onset of patriarchy, there was a long history of matriarchal societies all over the world (matriarchy is not the contrary of patriarchy – it refers to peaceful, egalitarian societies) believing in sacred immanent Mother-Goddesses. Women celebrated them through singing, dancing, performing spontaneous rituals. This most ancient veneration of Earth and Wild Nature Goddesses and women's rituals for them still exists in Tamil Nadu, South India. We shall first refer to women's empowerment through the Village-Folk Goddess veneration in Tamil Nadu and then suggest how women all over the world can gain power and strength to break free from patriarchal role models and norms through veneration of the sacred immanent Mother-Goddesses – linking local and global.

## Power and Self-actualization in the Iranian Housewives Volunteer Activities

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Based on the increasing social action of Iranian housewives in volunteer activities especially in non-profit organizations, this article explores the effects of these special kinds of activities on gender roles and power both in the family and creating new social self-image.

The women's groups and networks play a significant role in the exchange of social and economic resources among households and in the mediation of dispute between men and women in the family.

These activity forms are an important source of informal power for women, enabling them not only to cope effectively with male authority in the family but also to bring them self-confidence and self-actualization which leads to the better self-image and new social identity. Yet, despite of the fact that their power is remarkable, these women support a patriarchal social structure because it preserved their parental authority.

## Women Workers in SEZ: Empowerment or Marginalization

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This paper is based on a primary survey done by the author in the *Falta Special Economic Zone* under Block in of West Bengal.  Since the largest proportion of unskilled workers in the Zone comprise of women, drawing in substantially from the displaced community (on whose land the zone was constructed), it is particularly important for building a feminist insight into this particular process of 'development'.

The paper outlines first of all, the gap between the kind of compensation package promised and actually realized. It argues that the very nature of displacement and compensation destroys traditional livelihoods, leads to mass unemployment for male members and shifts the major burden of economic survival of the household on women. The inclusion of women in the modern sector and their status as primary *breadwinners* was based on a system of contractual labour, which neither guaranteed regular work nor payment.  It followed a completely ad hoc and *undocumented* mechanism of hiring, firing and payments.

Interestingly, at the intra household level, this nature of employment (unlike that of organized regular employment) denied women recognition as primary workers treating their employment as *stopgap or subsidiary* till the male member could acquire more regular work. Apart from all the standard features of *double burden, health hazards, feminization of poverty* etc, the nature of production relations also expose women to various kinds of sexual harassment at the workplace. However, the issue of intra household inequality is much more *problematised* since it also empowers women with some control over monetary resources and its disbursement.

While the exploitative nature of a contractual system is not specific only to a Special Economic Zone, instead characterizing the overall informal sector in a globalized economy, the Zone legitimizes these structures at a policy level and prevents any form of organization and thereby resistance.  The author contends that this kind of *development* hardly generates conditions of compensatory employment and well being. Sometimes they bypass women altogether and sometimes include them in ways which only exploit and reinforce their vulnerability and marginalisation.

## Women Landless Labourers in Singur:  A Case Study of Gendered Impact of Displacement

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This paper is inspired by the ongoing movement against land acquisition waged by farmers and landless laborers at *Singur*, Hooghly district in West Bengal. The movement has thrown up various issues of immense academic interest especially on the question of development via displacement.  For a feminist scholar, particularly, it is interesting to look at not only the gendered nature of the proposed development but also the gendered impact of the process by which such development is achieved.

The paper proposes to examine the patterns of ownership, wage labour and unpaid labour among landless labourers with an analysis of the impact of current Government policy of SEZ on them. It has been observed by many scholars

and activists that women comprise a large section of the paid and unpaid workforce but are completely marginalized or excluded in any scheme of compensation and alternatives when any form of displacement occurs. Equally important is the question of the gendered impact of such displacement (from land and livelihood) on questions of work patterns, nutrition and consumption (food security), asset creation and indebtedness. As has been discussed in a range of feminist literature, a squeeze on the available resources of a family affects women the most, reducing them to a state of the *poorest of the poor*.

This paper would enquire into all these activities, paid and unpaid, and indicators of human development which often remain on the margins of dominant academic practice as well as Government policy amongst landless labourers. My focus would be to contrast how the displacement is affecting both men and women and look into whether this impact of the displacement has been equal. My argument is that the impact of displacement in inherently gendered and affects women much more adversely. It is particularly important at this juncture to raise these issues so as to incorporate them in the overall discourse on development, displacement and consequent compensation and alternatives.

## Invisible Women in Development: A Study of Kerala, India

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The Paper attempts to explore the claim of higher social status of women in the Indian state of Kerala than their counterparts elsewhere in the country. The first step in this direction is to assess whether the contribution of Kerala women in the process of development has been adequately recognized. It is true that women in Kerala significantly have better opportunities for education and work in paid employment in government / private sector. But the Census figures reveal that the female work participation rate for Kerala is much lower than the National average.

Another observation that is pertinent in this regard is the abysmally low participation of women in the political governance except in local self governments where there exist thirty three percent reservations for women. The second National Family Health Survey (NFHS-2), employing certain non conventional measures found that Kerala trailed behind Gujarat in all the measures of autonomy-*household decision making, freedom of movement and access to money*. Increased unemployment among women and rising Domestic violence has driven women to great mental stresses. Statistics with the State Crime Record Bureau reveal that the occurrence of violence against women has increased at an alarming rate since 1990. No serious effort has been initiated to build up a gender sensitive socio-economic environment in the state to challenge the patrifocal society maintaining feudal male centric attitudes and values.

With increased access to education, women in Kerala are becoming more conscious of their own identity and potentials. But as the society where they live refuses to change from the traditional male chauvinistic mode, they are denied of opportunities for expressing themselves. That is why the role of women is invisible in the process of development in Kerala.

## Union Budget 2007-2008 - Peeping through Gender Lens

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Present paper attempts to analyze the budget 2007-08 from gender lens. The Gender lens has viewed budget 2007-08 and understood the hike of budget allocation from 2006-07 to 2007-08 budget for various sectors:

1. Sectoral Lens-the education sector has received 38 percent. Where as it was only 31 percent in the 2006-07(RE) budget. Health sector also get the hike from 18 to 24 percent. Gender livelihood also hiked from12 to 13 percent in the present budget. Gender housing, gender protection and gender awareness generation and others has remained same as its previous budget allocation.

2. Human Rights Lens- the present budget allocations has given utmost priority for ESC rights (Economic, Social and Political rights) by allocating 99 percent and CPR rights have got a minuscule chunk of 1 percent of the budget.

3. Discrimination Lens-most marginalized and discriminated (including Dalit women, tribal women, destitute women, women, women who are differently-abled, women rescued from trafficking, women in short stay homes etc.,) this budget has decreased its allocation to 7 percent in the 2007-08 budget. For other women were allocated 93 percent was allocated.

Thus, the only significant measure taken for women in budget 2007-08 is the inclusion of few more Ministries and Departments in the gender budgeting and exercise of the government, and a consequent increase in the size of the gender budget. With regard to most sectors, budget 2007-08 maintains status quo for women.

## Women, Livestock and Rural Livelihoods: Critical Issues in the context of Globalisation

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A critical aspect of sustainable agriculture, safe food production and food sovereignty in India lies in restoring our livestock wealth and its re-integration with agriculture and placing the ownership and control back with the farming and livestock rearing communities as opposed to corporations.

It is here that livestock development policies, programs and plans over these past 50 years have been an utter failure, and although on paper acknowledging the role of women, in practice actually being completely gender-blind. Each year across India, hundreds of women farmers in the name of livestock development are forced into practices which they can scarcely sustain. Dairy cattle production using exotics, large scale units of small ruminants which they can ill afford, contract farming of poultry, fodder units of irrigated fodder are being offered as the only programmes. Simultaneously, there has been a complete withdrawal of the state from its responsibilities towards livestock health and an increased push towards the privatization of services thereby denying the poor and the marginalized access to even basic veterinary care. It is against this back ground that this paper while examining the critical gaps in policy and practice over the years with specific reference to gender, livestock and livelihood and the current crises in agriculture, also offers and discusses concrete alternate strategies for livestock development, that have been tried by small groups across the country and are absolutely essential at this juncture.

## Sharing Unequal Burden: Rural Women in Non-Farm Sector in Backward Agriculture

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Using primary field data collected from six villages in Orissa in eastern India this paper focuses on some aspects of gender bias in work sharing, wages, employment and social livings in the rural areas in different development typologies in a backward agricultural economy.

Findings of this paper suggest that irrespective of level of development and endowment at individual, household and regional level rural women are more hard pressed and share more burden than their male counterparts. Though men have usually been responsible for decision-making and planning of farming activities, but in the absence of productive local employment they increasingly look for jobs in urban areas and leave women to take new roles and responsibilities on the farm. Under this context, women's traditional roles (e.g. collecting water, fodder and fuel, growing food, etc.) are crucial. This paper argues that resource-poor women in dry and backward agriculture tend to engage in low productive unsecured petty activities due to their poor capability (social, economic, education and training) and low or no access to resources (e.g. land, water, seeds, credit) and opportunity. A high rate of women work participation, particularly in rural non-farm activities, does not necessarily improve their social living, economic status and capabilities unless the productivity or wage rates of such activities improved substantially.

The paper argues for gender-responsive policy actions for promoting area specific and group specific activities, education, skill formation, technology and wider access to resources and markets for women which, will strengthen their capability to participate in more productive activities and contribute to the society with less stress and less work burden.

## Gender Critique of Women Empowerment Programmes in India with Special Reference to 73rd Amendment in India

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In India, different steps have been taken for women's empowerment. The 73rd and 74th Amendment of the Indian constitution is a revolutionary step, which allocated one third of seats in all local government bodies to women, the

73<sup>rd</sup> amendment applying to panchayat Raj institutions (rural village councils) and in the 74<sup>th</sup> amendment to municipal councils.

The first part of this paper will examine, how far has the reservation policy enhanced their participation in the local governments after 15 years of implementation? Are women really getting empowered through 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> amendments? Is such reservation for their empowerment, which will enable them to fight for their rights, and in obtaining certain positions in the society? Since the debate related to reserving seats for women at national level and women's participation in panchayatiraj institutions is going on, the second part of this paper will look at the limits to empowerment, such as its durability over a period of time, constraints of power thrust from outside. If empowerment is something that can be transferred from one segment to another segment of a given society and it is to be acquired and, once acquired, it needs to be exercised and sustained, and then what will happen to women once their tenure of leadership is over? How political power does acts as a means in levering change in the other social and economic spheres of life? And what are the structural constraints behind their effective participation in PRIs. Where the policy is lacking in bringing women's effective participation in PRIs?

## Feminism in the Global Age: Fib or Lib

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The paper attempts to understand the status of women and its ideology in the global age. It also tries to apprehend the status which they enjoy under the influence of mass communication and seismic web of social change. Despite the implication of reservation policies still their status remains same with the imperceptible change and challenges.

Globalization as process of transformation brought about many changes but the intensive influence of its notion has influenced society largely. The globalization process is genuine for several reasons. First, a whole new landscape of globalization is coming into being, such as super markets, opening of MacDonald, Nirulas at the tune of American life style. Second, it also gives rise to consumption-based middle class in India. Third, globalization is a subtle way of introducing culture into the mainstream social sciences, dominated as they were by approaches based on political economy. Forth, globalization and especially advertisement, entertainment, media, consumption style, ideologies and belief provided a field for interpretative intellectualism in humanities, who via the medium of cultural studies are moving into women studies too.

Even the globalization process has allured women to objectify more conspicuously in the ever-expanding trend of brand consciousness. It sounds practically difficult to talk about freedom for the women in general especially in the case of India. We tend to speak of freedom in this age but the inclination of it is always undermined. In the light of this paradox, the paper articulates its meaning and deserves its importance.

## Paradigm Shift as Regards the Location of Women in the Context of Development in India: Rhetoric & Reality

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The women's movement in India has a long history and has played a key role in influencing both the state and wider civil society. From the "Welfare Approach", to the "WID Approach", government policies have gradually shifted to "Gender Equality" and "Women's Empowerment" in the 1990s.

The UN Millennium Project Taskforce (of MDG) on Gender Equality has adopted an operational framework that assesses gender equality and women's empowerment along three dimensions: human capabilities as measured through education, health and nutrition; access to resources and opportunities referring to economic assets and political participation; and security in terms of vulnerability to violence. But many ascertained that Millennium Declaration is only rhetoric.

*Gender Mainstreaming* and *Women's Economic/Political Rights* remain central to development lingo in the current context. Measures like *Gender Development Index* (GDI) and *Gender Related Empowerment Measures* (GEM) adopted to indicate the level of women's development could neither capture the real achievements nor the barriers against rural women. This paper makes an attempt to sketch the dynamics of this transition over the decades and to appraise it in the current development milieu.

### Empowered Woman-A Boon to the Nation

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Empowerment usually is the result of a series of processes whereby the powerless or less powerful members of a society gain greater access and control over material and intellectual resources so as to change the ideologies of discrimination and subordination which justify this unequal distribution.

Woman empowerment, therefore, is the process by which women gain greater control over physical resources [like land, water, forest] human resources [like people, their bodies, their labour and skills] intellectual resources [like knowledge, information, ideas], and financial resources [like money access to credit]. The empowerment of woman and improvement of their status are important for achievement of sustainable development.

Some pre-requisites of empowerment are - Female education; Measures towards gender justice; Eradication of poverty; Improving political status of woman.

From the census figures it is observes that sex ratio has been unfavourable to women in India.

An integrated and collaborative action programme of different socio-economic and political spheres is essential to achieve gender parity. This paper is going to give a clear picture about the policies and programmes for woman empowerment with a case study about the socio economic conditions of woman labourers in small scale industries.

### Changing Lives and Perceptions Mediated through Globalization: Subjective Measurement of Empowerment of Middle Class Working Women in Burdwan, West Bengal

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Women's empowerment, entailing a process of change in their ability to make strategic life choices and other less consequential choices as well in a context where this ability was previously denied to them, has been recognized as the central issue in determining the status of women in recent years. There is now although a significant number of attempts to develop a comprehensive understanding of empowerment, there are still major difficulties in evaluating it and delineating its components. However, there is consensus to some extent amongst the social scientists on the major components of empowerment. Resources, agency, and achievements (in various forms and by various names, e.g., control, awareness, voice, power, entitlement) have been considered as the three major interrelated components of empowerment.

Globalization, despite of its worrying consequences on economy and labour market, has led to a number of processes that are significant in redefining the local economies and work cultures.

The process has significant impact on the middle sections of the society and economy and especially on women, providing socio-cultural and economic resources for them, which increase their agency and power in the household. This study examines the extent to which globalization serves to empower the middle class women. The newly emerged urban middle class, with their new lifestyle and consumerism, which are the consequences of globalization, encourage women to seek new livelihoods for themselves and it leads to improvement in women's position in the families. By using qualitative survey technique, useful in gender study, we examine very subjectively to what extent some middle class women in medium sized urban centres like Burdwan of West Bengal have been able to achieve some power and reconstruct the power relation in their households. The arguments about the empowerment potential of women's access to resources through informal works are tested by examining different economic, socio-cultural, familial or interpersonal, political, and psychological parameters.

### Cognitive Blackout in Development Thinking: A Case of Dalit Women in India

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Dalit Women- whose identity is multifaceted and channelized through multiple identities based on class, caste and gender- is almost invisible in the Development thinking in India.

It happens so because Indian state considers women only as mothers assuming them to be 'free agents'; outside the boundaries of caste and class. The contradiction between the states's explicitly stated commitment to the annihilation of caste and up gradation of women and the increasing violence against women and the lower castes is legitimized through the maintenance of caste and gender as separate issues on the political agenda, precisely because of the important links between the two.

This development thinking seems to have a close interface with social sciences which also suffer from the same kind of cognitive blackout. In this context, this article is an attempt to give an overview of development process in post-independence India and cognitive blackout in development thinking as a challenge.

### Women's Health- ICDS Intervention (An Analytical Study)

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The ICDS (Integrated Child Development Programmes) that mitigate malnutrition in children and mothers by concentrating on socio-economic and health factors. It improves the nutritionalised and health status of pregnant and breast feeding women and children under six years of age. It provides supplements for children, pre school programs, nutrition and education programmes. ICDS improves links within the health system.

In addition to the child health, ICDS has intervened for women's health since 1991 with the adolescent girls (AG&)aged 11-18 years. It also initiated two other schemes for women according to family income.

Present paper is an attempt to understand various schemes initiated by ICDS for women and child health improvement.

### Women: The Victim of Development in The Post-Global Society

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The Process of globalisation has affected women in two perspectives: one that treats women as household managers and consumers and second, that treats women as producers. Due to privatisation and increasing tariff of electricity the farmers in Orissa did not opt for Rabi Crops in summer thereby Lift Irrigation Points are left unused. Prices of paddy and rice became all time low in comparison to 90's. The male members left for other parts of the country to work in brick factory, textile industry and other factories. Women remained in village as the manager of children with all burdens at the mercy of local landlords/money lenders/contractors/traders. If some women went with husband their misery in the urban slum is doubled.

Shrimp culture has also affected the lives of women economically, socially and ecologically. Women and children suffer the most after being forced to stand up to 16 hours a day in saline water to collect the shrimp fry.

In Orissa the plight of women has been precarious due to failure of the government in rehabilitating the people of Hirakud, Rengali, Indravati, Rourkela, Gopalpur and the recent Kalinga Nagar of Jajpur.

With the economic liberalization and rise of advertisements the need to fulfil the growing demand of items (consumer goods) has led to increase in dowry and torture on women. The entire burden of the present structural adjustment are borne by women who do more work than men. The impact of globalisation has also adversely hit the women - dominated unorganized sector with the arrival of cheaper foreign goods.

We need a large scale movement in India to emancipate our women from degeneration by strengthening our internal economy which will indirectly make them self-reliant.

### Women's Studies/Feminism in Transforming Knowledge Production, Educational Structures and Policies across Diverse Institutions and Contexts in South Asia

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The very fact that the Adivasi women of Orissa turn  turmeric traders today  in  21st century shows that women  are shedding off  their traditional  mundane role and carving a niche for themselves in the 21st century .  Put a pointer on

the map today and you would find one from all the corners they could belong from a small sleepy town, or from a city which is full with the hustle & bustle or ask the millennial generation today whether they would like to be mam's boy or papa's boy , mama's boy would be the fastest response received. Todays women epitomize that they are perfect multi taskers, she is a super mom with eight hands and Jack of all trades, who aspires today to begun a journey of her own through entrepreneurship though a challenging one. She has transformed not only herself but the economy in general by her aspiration to mark her identity in this corporate boom be it Kiran Mazumdar Shaw of Biocon, Indira Nooyi of Pepsi, Jyoit Naik of Lijjat Papad, Shenaz Hussain herbal queen , Parveen Warsi (NRI) Samosa queen.

The enriching journey would continue in the coming days which would add more flavours of growth, economic boost, transformation , structural changes which would be sensitive to their needs in turn which would lead to the overall development of a nation.

## Gender, Sexuality and Health Global Audience

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As a young Muslim nation with a complex anthropology, Pakistan continues to struggle with a common sense of identity. This struggle also touches our personal lives particularly amongst young people with severe identity and gender stereotyping issues, poverty and low levels of literacy. This confusion is propounded and manifests clearly in sexual behaviors and practices. Community based sexual health /HIV/AIDS prevention programs in Pakistan must incorporate self-reflection, self-concepts and identity issues to ensure ownership and sustainability of their programs. Working on self-encourages/ facilitates strong self-concepts, which translates to assertive behavior, negotiation skills and a sense of rights.

In Pakistani socio cultural framework is supremely gender and often-sexual relationships are framed by gender roles, power relationships, poverty, class, caste, tradition and custom, hierarchies of one sort of another. Here for many the term "man" is a male gender identity not a sexual identity. The phrase males who have sex with males, or men who have sex with men is not about identities and desires it is about recognizing that there are many frameworks within which men/males have sex with males, many different self-identities, many different context of behavior. The public arena is male dominated and male-to-male friendship is expressed in the public domain.

To bring ownership among individual/communities to work on HIV/AIDS prevention could only be achieved by incorporating self-concepts and identity issues. We must explore and understand male-to-male desires, as to involve men, if we are truly to develop effective and sustainable HIV/AIDS prevention strategies.

## For Whom is This Development? Unraveling the Truth about Development and Women in Goa, India

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Goa, a small state on the west coast of India is often lauded for its high ranking in a nationwide comparison of the 'usual' development indices such as high per capita income, (which was 58,677 in Goa as compared to the all India average of 20,989 in the year 2003-2004), high literacy rate, (in which Goa ranks fourth in the country with a percentage 82.01% against the country average of 64.84% according to the 2001 census), a low infant mortality rate (of 16 per thousand births in Goa against the national average of 72 according to the Office of the Registrar General of India statistics of 2005 ) and good health care coverage. Goa is further set apart from other states in the country for its unique civil laws, often referred to as the 'Family Laws of Goa' or the 'Portuguese Civil Code' or even and mistakably so, the 'Uniform Civil Code'.

But all is not hunky dory in Goa, if one looks at the same state with a more judicious lens. While the average per capita income may be high, one cannot turn a blind eye to the alarming growth in the percentage of urban poverty from 7.52% in 2001 to 21.3% in 2003, bringing Goa very close to the national average of 25.7%. Then, although we see a high literacy rate in the state including women's literacy of 75.37%, we cannot ignore the low participation rate in paid work, particularly women's participation, which is as low as 22.4%. The most disturbing of all is the fast declining sex ratio which has from 1066 per 1000 males in 1960 fallen to 961 in 2001. In fact Goa ranks 22nd in the country in its sex ratio in urban areas which is 919 females to 1000 males being surpasses in this by even states like Bihar, Orissa, Jharkhand, Karnaktaka and Andhra Pradesh.

This paper bursts the bubble of glory in which Goa has basking in. It is an attempt to highlight the androcentric nature of Goa's development through a critique of the three largest industries in Goa namely tourism, construction and mining.

The paper is based on a few micro studies that have been conducted in Goa as well as data which generated from government sources.

## Women and Tsunami: Insights from Recovery

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The December, 2007 marks the passage of three years since the 2004 tsunami devastated Asian coastlines, leaving thousands dead and many more without work or shelter. Research has shown that women tended to bear the heaviest burden of social and economic recovery, yet were in many cases excluded or marginalized in organizational relief processes.

AIDMI recently undertook four multi-week site visits to review gender equality issues in the operations of international humanitarian agencies and local community organizations working in coastal South India. These visits gave rise to the following insights:

while most relief agencies place importance on gender issues, measurable impact of gender-based initiatives is often lacking; gender discussions in the field are evolving in their portrayals of women, yet must progress much further to recognize and utilize the full potential of women in the relief process.

Local and international organizations engaged in recovery have learned much from observing each other's organizational efforts to reach out to women and promote gender equity. Women are adapting to new economic structures in order to participate in the social processes surrounding recovery, and NGOs should make note of their innovations.

When asked to identify the most crucial element in mainstreaming gender issues in tsunami recovery, a leader of a women's empowerment group supported by SNEHA, a fisherwomen's trade union, said, "sound thinking".

## Women's Political Participation in Bangladesh: Role of Institutions

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It has been widely emphasized that institutions play an important role in furthering women's issue. In countries like Bangladesh where women remain subordinate in every sphere, various institutions are important. If institution does not offer women any opportunities to participate in decision making process, women themselves will not be able to take part in it contesting with their male counterparts. Realizing the essence of institution in ensuring women's political participation, the government of Bangladesh initiated several reforms in order to bring changes in institutional design so that women can take part in it. One of the landslide efforts of the government of Bangladesh was the enactment of the Local Government (Union Parishad) Second Amendment Act, 1997 through which the government brought changes in to the institutional design of the local government. Three seats were made reserved for women who were elected by the direct election. The main concern of the paper will be to highlight the state of women's political participation in Bangladesh and explore the role of institution in facilitating women's participation in the local government. The study will be based on the combination of primary as well as secondary data. Primary data has already been collected from 117 women members from Rajshahi District of Bangladesh.

## Sir Syed Ahmad Khan and Muslim Female Education: A Study in Contradictions

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The focus of this study is to analyse the causes of the persistent low literacy level among Muslim women in India by moving back into the past to understand where exactly these causes are rooted. For this, I have singled out one man whose ideas and views on the issue had a great impact and were of immense importance in the lives of Muslim men and women in nineteenth century India. He is Sir Syed Ahmad Khan.

To Syed Ahmad Khan and to the majority of his addressees, Muslims meant only 'male' Muslims and the community was restricted only to the 'male' community. He was against the government sponsored system of education for Muslim girls and opposed modern education and schools for Muslim women. He strongly advised Muslim women to adhere to the traditional system of education that alone would help them in their moral and material well-being. Once educated, Muslim men, he felt, would, in turn educate their female relatives.

Sir Syed's attitude regarding modern education for Muslim women reflects a contradictory bias. While exhorting young Muslim men to acquire western education, obviously considering it to be a virtue, he restrains Muslim women from straying from traditionalism, asking them to stay at home and learn from the past.. It seems strange that Syed Ahmad Khan known to be a modernist and a social reformer could hold such conservative views regarding female education. This dichotomy on the interpretation of gender roles still persists in varying degrees among Indian Muslims. Some have broken the shackles of tradition and moved ahead. Others find it comfortable to remain within the safe confines of tradition, thus giving rise to severe gender discrimination of Muslim.

## Gender and Public Policy in India: Focusing on Social Reproduction in a Globalised Market

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This presentation will look at the manner in which women have been represented in the development agenda of Indian State and the implications on the subjectivities and identities of women. The focus of my presentation will be on the centrality of unpaid labour of women in terms of their 'caring' role in the household, the main site where the quests for gender equality and justice are fought, won and/or lost in the first instance. It is the arena where the power relations that are germane to the dynamics of gender in the broader society are fashioned, given ideological legitimation, institutionalised, contested, revised and transformed. The centrality of women's unpaid domestic labour to the production and reproduction of the household and ultimately the production and reproduction of economy at the local, regional and national levels constitute a permanent element in the structuring of the economy of care. While both the state and the market forces have created incentives for women to enter the public production process, one does not find similar efforts to encourage men to take over caring responsibilities. The paper will empirically trace the manner in which the whole issue of social reproduction has been addressed by the Indian State in the post independence economic debates and policies, both macro policies as well as policies designed specifically for women. Bringing our observations to the present, the paper will analyse as to how women, especially poor, have been configured/located in the articulations between a global economic discourse and state institutions and agencies.

## Panchayat, Women Self Help Groups and Empowerment of Women: Establishing an Umbilical Cord: A Case Study of Goa

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The 73rd Amendment is a milestone in the way of women assuming leadership and decision-making positions as it has made such a role mandatory and universal for the whole of India. The Swarnajayanti Gram Swarojgar Yojana, which emphasizes on WSHGs (Women Self Help Groups) symbolizing economic self reliance, self-assertion, collective mobilization, and leadership identification can serve as an important instrument for economic empowerment of women. With the diminishing role of the state in the Welfare programmes, and (mis)conceptions of development, the role of WSHGs at the village level becomes all the more important. Thus Panchayats and WSHGs can serve as model institutions at the grassroot level for women empowerment.

Though as per the 73rd amendment, Panchayat elections were held in 1997 in Goa which saw women coming to power at the grassroot , they were new entrants in the area. However subsequent elections saw women coming to power with dedication. At the same time there were SHGs emerging in Goa. Today there are a large number of WSHGs operating in the state, some of which are initiated by women panchas, while there are also instances where women from WSHGs are motivated to contest panchayat elections.

- Has WSHGs served as springboards for its members to contest at the Panchayat level?
- Has it created an access to women at grassroots politics?
- Are the WSHGs as a whole successful in serving as pressure group at Gram Sabhas ?
- Are Women Panchas and WSHG members together able to influence initiation, formulation and implementation of policies and programmes which will benefit women?
- Have More women participation changed the focus of rural administration towards important facets of life like health, nutrition, children's welfare, family care, drinking water etc ?
- Have the village representatives, especially women representatives initiated the process of nurturing WSHGs in their village?  And in such cases is the creature a 'dummy' of the creator that is the WSHGs thus created function as per the desires of the women representatives?

## Watershed Development Program for Better Farm-women Livelihoods

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Watershed management is an integrated technological approach within the natural boundaries of a drainage area for optimum development of land, water and plant resources to meet the basic minimum need of the people in a sustained manner.  It is the harmonious development of land and water resources.

This paper is an attempt to justify the fact that the watershed Development can help farm women to sustain in the agriculture sector.  To preserve the farm way of life for generations the government should take initiative measures and the watershed development program may be planned in accordance with the need arises from the different areas. The paper will focus mainly on
- The existing watershed program and the current, socio-economic status of farm women of Tirunelveli Revenue Division and
- will frame new avenues for further watershed Development towards better livelihood for farm women of the area.

## Performance of Self Help Groups in North-East India

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Social development is something more than merely economic and environmental development. It should mean growth and development in all aspects, which ensures equality, status, security, complete physical, mental and social well being of the target group. The social status of women is a reliable indicator of the social development of a society.

In this context the concept of "Self Help Group" [SHG] has caught up with the momentum of women's development. The SHG model with bank lending to groups of (often) poor women without collateral has become an accepted part of rural finance. It is considered as the most powerful means to strengthen the socio-economic development of women through integrated approach. In the North-East Region (NER) the program has started around 1997-98 and has grown from strength to strength over the years. The programme at the grass root level is executed through a network of commercial banks, regional rural banks, district central cooperative banks and primary credit societies. The paper focuses on the performance of the program in different states of NER and across the major financial institutions.

## The Identity of 'Gender' in 'Development' - A Feminist Critique of Development' as Guided by the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals

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The last few decades have seen many revisions in the deliberations surrounding the subject of gender and development. However, since the year 2000, when the United Nations declared the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as one of its highest priorities, 189 governments and thousands of donor agencies across the world set their own development agendas in tune with these Goals.

The biggest apprehension about the MDGs is that they are a betrayal of the philosophy of women's movements and the shared principles that emerged out of global women's conferences that preceded the MDGs.  Feminist

theoreticians also regret the depoliticized nature of 'gender' in the discourse of 'gender and development' and its deductive disfigurement at the hands of development experts and bureaucrats. Issues and concerns that had been comprehensively addressed – violence, reproductive rights, women's rights as human rights, women's unpaid labour, to name a few – at the earlier mentioned conferences do not find any articulation in the third goal, much less in the other MDGs. Besides, they also seem to disregard the inequities within the global economic systems (increasingly controlled by the Bretton Woods institutions) that exacerbate existing inequalities.

Since the third goal is here to stay and direct the course of 'gender and development' and 'development' for the next decade, this paper critically examines – from a feminist viewpoint – the dilemmas, gaps (policy-wise, institutional and in resources), challenges and opportunities they present. It hopes to reflect the gulf between the deconstructionist, post-modernist approach of feminism ('It is no longer possible to call development progress') and the modernist slant of development tenets. On the other hand, the paper shall also examine whether feminist theory has been lost in translation into the vocabulary and practice of development.

Such analysis, I hope, shall help explore a discursive territory where feminism's cogent theoretical inputs could interact with development agendas and make best use of massive global development exercises such as the MDGs.

## Glass Bangles Industry and Women's Labour

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As we know after globalization,liberalization and privatization, the condition of women workers has deteriorated. The number of women employees may have increased in informal sector but working conditions and life of those women became much worse. In glass bangles industry, we see all these things not only in terms of globalization but from the inception of this industry in Firozabad.

The bangle is not a simple product but has a significant spiritual meaning for Indian women. It has a major cultural and social impact. Glass bangles are the symbol of *suhag* "long life of their husband".

In this paper I have tried to present the hidden face of this industry. We should know that to prepare a single ring of bangles 150 labourers have to work. So lakhs of people are employees in this field. Some work in casual sector in the factories and others are working in informal sector. Second thing, how is globalization using the suhag concepts like bangles, mangalsutram, rituals, festivals and emotions of Indian public and spreading right wing capitalism all over the country? It is creating a world where problems of exploitation or discrimination are being hidden by a beautiful pardah.

In my paper I will present the following to make clear the real condition of bangles industry, women workers and the use of cultural objects by capitalism and their impact - 1) A brief history of glass bangles industry; 2) Political economy of this industry; 3) About women worker – casual, informal, migrant women and girl child labour; 4)The working condition of women workers - place, sanitation, health problems, no recognition as a worker, violence, unionisation etc.; 5) Relation between spiritual symbol and material symbol.

## Gender Disparity in Higher Education in India

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Higher education plays a significant role in the promotion of upward / vertical social and occupational mobility, personality development and intellectual development. The modern economy of the 2l century, certainly the knowledge economy, requires highly educated people for accelerating the process of economic development. In the process of global changes and development India as achieved success in various fields namely agriculture, industrialization, modernization, urbanization, trade and commerce, science and technology, production and so on. With the result of these phenomenal changes education is expanding at every corner in India.

Many governments have made important steps in improving the status of women's education. No country can thrive in which women's voices are silenced, the rights are violated, and their potential is left unrealized. That fact will grow even more prominent as the world's markets and opportunities continue to interconnect.

But this educational expansion or change has not taken place for every one and all sections of society. Keeping in view, the growing importance of higher education as an instrument of equality and vertical mobility especially in the

era of knowledge, this paper to bring out the access of women in higher education; to delineate the inter state disparities and list out the socio economic benefits of women education are discussed in the full paper.

## Monetization of Women's Unpaid Work and Time Use Survey in Gairsain Block of Garhwal Himalayas

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In developing countries women's work remain unrecognized and unpaid despite the fact that they work for longer hours. In hill society women's status is perceived to be better compared to women in northern plains. Enquiring further from this qualitative study we found that women enjoy greater degree of freedom in Garhwal Himalayas but this is imperative as they work for longer hours than men. The objective of the paper is to monetize women's unpaid work and to throw light on gender division of labour. Time Use Survey is used as a methodology and we see that in most of the cases women are breadwinner, earning 1.8 times more than their male counterparts, with no leisure hours. Entire collection activities viz. fodder and fuel wood, household work, care activities are carried out by women. Policies must address this specific problem of fodder and cooking energy by involving participation from grass root.

## HIV Prevention and Development Programmes for Female Sex Works: Lessons Learned

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The focus of this paper is on successful HIV-prevention programme for the female sex workers in India. In order to curb the fast of spread of STIs/HIV through them to others, to promote safe sex practices, increase their awareness on STIs/HIV, to bring perceptible change in their behavioral pattern, and increase the health seeking behaviour patterns, a HIV-prevention progrmme was started in the year 2000. Further, in order to bring them into mainstream, development programmes were also started for the sex workers.

This progrmme was started by Women's Initiatives (WINS), a non-governmental organization located in Tirupati, Andhra Pradesh in the year 2000. Under this programme about no 2000 sex workers are covered in 6 districts. This programme is cared-out with the help of trained social workers, peer educators and doctors.

The programme interventions helped to bring down the STIs/HIV prevalence to a greater extent among female sex workers. Today, eight out of ten among them are using condom as a safer sex practices. Their children are sent to schools. Some or the sex workers are coming out of sex trade and starting business. Many more achievements of the programme from 2006-2007 are given in the full length paper.

The programme interventions are worth replicating in all states of India where sex workers are potent source for streading STIs/HIV among their clients.

## Outcomes of Education for the Health and Fertility Decision-making of the Poor in India: Preliminary Results from Alwar and Dewas

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Whether, and if so, why a woman's schooling affects her decision-making power—with specific reference to her own and her children's health, and her ability to influence her fertility—are issues that have concerned demographers and social scientists since the early 1980s. Our particular interest is in the pathways or mechanisms through which schooling has the effects that have been so widely observed. We draw on semi-structured interviews carried out with a total of 61 young married women with at least one child under the age of six, in urban and rural areas in Alwar, Rajasthan, and Dewas, Madhya Pradesh.

In this paper we report on observed differences between those with at least six years of schooling and those with little or no formal schooling. The interviews addressed the questions of women's perceptions of the decision makers in different phases of their lives, from the timing of marriage and selection of marriage partner to later decisions about child bearing and child rearing. We distinguish between the contributions of the content of the schooling, the cognitive

skills provided by the schooling, the experience of going to school and being away from the home – and the kinds of homes from which educated girls come or into which educated girls are married.

Recent research in India has also suggested that much of the contemporary transformation in demographic outcomes is provided by changing behaviour of women with relatively little schooling, and the interviews allow us to glimpse this aspect as well. Unlike many earlier studies, we also attempt to treat education as a community resource, and to consider the contribution of social networks of women with more or less schooling to decision-making. All the women in our sample come from India's most disadvantaged social groups—Scheduled or Other Backward Castes— as well as living in disadvantaged communities. Fieldwork was carried out between January and April 2007.

## Tribal Women in Power Structure

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Women's relationship to the field of political power is a much debated issue which sometimes attributed it to lack of interest or to low level of political competence of women themselves. This view seriously ignores the structural conditions of Indian society which lead to so called lack of interest and limited ability of understanding leadership requirements. Within the framework of democratic policy of India, our laws, development policies and programmes have aimed at women's advancement in politics during different phases of time. 73rd and 74th amendments to the constitution of India are the most remarkable among them as they attempt to make India the first among the developing countries to provide for 33% reservation of seats in the grass root level democratic institutions of democracy, i.e. Panchayats. Even tribal women who are unable to understand the language of the mainland ,mostly illiterate and most marginalised section of society in terms of development have come to the decision making level through this significant move. This has entrusted them with high degree of responsibility and self confidence.

Orissa, a state located in Eastern India, occupies a prominent position in the ethnographic map of India for having a large variety of tribal communities. There are 63 tribes in Orissa which at 27% has one of the highest tribal populations in any Indian state. Among all tribal districts of Orissa, Koraput district has recorded the lowest tribal female literacy rate which is just 1.93%, though the female tribal population in the district is higher than the male tribal population, (Census of India, 2001).

My paper attempts to focus on the struggling stories of tribal women in Koraput district of Orissa, in the game of power after this empowerment, who were otherwise highly respected in their social and cultural systems. My study attempts to explore different and hitherto unidentified barriers on the way of their real exercise of power and some suggestions to develop their qualitative participation towards community development.

## Feminisation of Hunger in Kalahandi

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Kalahandi has become synonymous with the terms like starvation, hunger, drought and poverty. For the tribal women of Kalahandi life is a growing battle for survival. Today ghastly stories of baby selling and root-eating tribals of Kalahandi which hit the head lines of newspapers do not horrify the readers as they used to a few decades ago. Therefore, the state's response needs to be examined in the context of understanding hunger and systemic deprivations in Kalahandi. This paper attempts to build critical insights by raising certain vital issues related to the policies of the state to eradicate hunger and poverty in the district. The paper is broadly divided into three sections. The first section focuses on the structural-political perspective to understand poverty and hunger and its persistence. The second section examines what difference the KBK (Kalahandi-Bolangir-Koraput) strategy has made in terms of ensuring basic needs. The concluding section brings out an alternative perspective on existing development paradigm.

The beginning of 21st century has seen the growing paradox of intensity of poverty and scarcity amidst plenty, which makes it inflexible to explain persistent hunger. While 'development with a human face' has been coined as a major goal of the state policies, and the parameters to measure poverty has been revised in existing debates, the character of political economy which produced and reinforced conditions of poverty and destitution does not figure as a crucial variable in various approaches to understand poverty and hunger. The challenge is to analyse the

feminization of hunger from a structural political perspective, which differentiates from various conventional approaches by linking theoretical dimensions with the empirical studies.

## Level of Gender Development in India: Special Reference to Dalit Women

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The main thrust of the Paper is on human development situation of the Scheduled Castes and Schedule Tribes. We follow the UNDP approach, which contains two central aspects, namely the 'evaluative aspect' and the 'agency aspect'. The evaluative aspect is concerned with development achievements in human lives and with understanding of in what way improvements are being realized. The agency aspect deals with what state is doing to achieve such development objective, particularly through public policies. This paper on Gender Equality and Status of Dalit Women will examine the evaluative aspects only.

Thus, this Paper will examine first the gender inequality (levels) in achievements in terms of the composite index GDI by SCs, STs and no SC/ST – by state wise. The disparity in levels across social groups by states will be the second objective of this Paper. It also aims to analyze the changes in levels and disparity of GDI during 1980s, 1990s and 2000.

The Gender Development Index (GDI) measures achievement in the same basic capabilities that Human Development Index (HDI) does, but takes note of inequality in achievement between women and men in certain aspects. Using modified UNDP methodology this Paper is giving a single combined index for measuring both inequality and empowerment (Gender Development Index) instead of two indices. Variables included in the estimation process of the Gender Development Index for this paper is a mix of variable used in the GDI and GEM estimation of UNDP. The reason behind this is the unavailability of data set across social groups. For the estimation of the GDI variables include (1) Parliamentary Representation, (2) Work Participation Rate (CDS), (3) Literacy Rate.

## Grassroot Realities of Women Panchayat Representatives: A Study in Malwa Region of Madhya Pradesh

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Keeping in view the reservation provisions of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1993, the study tries to understand the ground realities of woman Panchayat Raj representatives vis-à-vis their constitutional empowerment. The study was carried out in three districts of Malwa region of Madhya Pradesh, viz., Jhabua, Ujjain and Indore where two different Acts are in operation to govern the PR system. Jhabua is the Scheduled Tribes majority district, Ujjain is Scheduled Caste majority district and Indore is General district. Jhabua, being the ST populated district, is governed by PESA - Panchayat Raj Extension to Scheduled Areas - 1996 whereas Ujjain and Indore follow the provisions of Constitutional Amendment Act 1993. These districts also have social, economic, political, cultural, educational and infrastructural distinctions.

The Act brought women in the fray politics by way of reservation at the grassroots level of governance in the hope that they would act as catalytic agents for peace, honesty, commitment and other civil qualities to ensure community participation with grace. As community participation on a larger scale is the essence of democracy and development this was expected to ensure social justice and equity a precondition for equality and dignity of human personality. However, the findings of the study do not confirm these expectations. Women folk so far marginalized from the socio-economic and political fields cannot be expected to enjoy real power only by enactment of an Act. Even today women face plenty of problems due to gender discrimination in all walks of life. As a constitutional beginning is made to ensure their political participation at the grassroots, forward steps could be taken in due course. It is meaningful in bringing women to the threshold of politics. Women education, their capability building programmes and above all a liberal social view towards them could ensure their actual participation in political process and help them reap the benefits of development.

## Governance and Women's Empowerment

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In their struggle for empowerment, Indian women have long regarded the state as their ally and made demands on it for help through legal and budgetary measures. The state in its turn has often voiced its policy of engendering all aspects of state policies and has directed all branches of state machinery to follow that directive. Yet, examination of the situation on ground shows that state schemes for women are dominated by measures that promote the state's own interests, often at the cost of the women.

A closer examination of the policies and plans of the state indicate the following: Policy makers are largely unaware of the dynamics of the role played by women in survival strategies of households. Their efforts to remove women's persistent disadvantages are hampered by departmental boundaries. Most important, concepts and terms like gender and empowerment are poorly defined for purposes both of assessing needs and designing appropriate policies.

This paper argues that several factors are responsible for this failure; standard economic models and theories followed by designers of such policies are not capable of describing the current situation in India of workers and particularly of women workers. As a result, policy makers do not have accurate information to form appropriate policies. Also, policy makers realize that, in its current form, the family and particularly women in their subordinate position, serve some crucial functions of the Indian state. The latter therefore is reluctant to disturb the power structure of the family.

In recent period, there is a growing hiatus between situations of women that not only relates to their place of residence but also to their class. The new economy has opened up some opportunities for urban, especially educated women and a few families from those backgrounds have responded quickly by loosening gender-based constraints on their women. However, shifts in the economy have brought new uncertainties and challenges for traditional livelihoods of a large majority of Indian households, and especially on women in the families.

The Indian state has publicly accepted a policy of empowering women and has from time to time adopted new policy measures supposedly meant for that. A deeper probe shows that schemes are designed with poor understanding of gender roles and implications of economic empowerment from women's perspective.

## Women's Empowerment through Reproductive Rights

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Derived from "power" the term empowerment literally means making someone powerful, who is powerless. Empowerment is a concept that has become popular in recent times to describe and enabling process for socially marginalized persons and groups to gain advantage and opportunities other wise non-available to them.

Do Black South African women and indigenous women in the French colony of New Caledonia share any common experience? Both are targeted for intensive fertility control campaigns designed to shrink ethnic groups spurned by governments. Historically, states and political movements all over the world have attempted to manipulate women's lives, sexuality and fertility for political purposes, whether in the guise of population control or more recently fundamentalist revivals. For example in 1984 in Egypt, women lost the right to stay in the matrimonial house after divorce or reputation – a right they had struggled for over a decade to gain. In 1989, Algerian men were delegated the right to vote on behalf of their women relatives. And all over North-America, Christian Fundamentalists have aggressively intimidated doctors and law-makers in an effort to deny women access to legal abortion.

Women have responded to these and other resurgences of gender violence by building and internationally recognized legal framework for the universal defense of women's autonomy, badly integrity and personhood. The framework identifies how human rights instruments may be interpreted to condemn abuses of women's rights. It also proposes modifications in existing legal tools and social policies. With explicit provisions protecting women's right to bodily integrity, the framework is a key instrument for guaranteeing that population programmes respect women.

## Housework: An Unpaid Occupation

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Being of universal nature in time and space, the work done by the housewives within the household may be considered to be an all time single largest occupation. Yet, despite strong pressures by feminists for considering housework as a gainful activity, the housewives are not regarded as 'working women', till date. The housework remains an invisible activity mainly because it is unpaid and housewives are not part of the paid labour force.

The present paper raises certain questions regarding housework i.e. who does the housework? How much time is spent on housework? How and why the division of housework is related to gender? What steps can be taken to make this invisible activity visible? An attempt is being hereby made to seek their answers.

## Small Enterprises: Process And Challenges For Women's Empowerment (A Study of Credit Policies of The Government of Karnataka)

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Providing economic incentives to women to undertake gainful employment through income generating activities was long recognized as a basic step in empowering women. These incentives were expected to enable women to successfully counter societal and socio-economic hurdles that promoted inequality and discrimination.

Several changes have occurred in recent years in the realm of designing of these programmes. Decentralization of planning and governance is a major breakthrough.
It has returned a large segment of elected representatives as women and from all the sections of the society.

This paper attempts to look at the challenges that women face in accessing government policies and programmes despite their emphasis on women's empowerment and development goals. Basing on studies carried out in the realm of small enterprises for women by government initiative the paper reflects upon both the interventionist measure and the inability of women beneficiaries in putting the programmes to optimum use.

Adopting participatory methodologies the study had elicited quality information on many such handicaps which are developed as cases for replication and avoidance.

## Working Women And Its Impact On Society, Culture And Family - A Study On Working Women Of Lucknow

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Identity crisis developed an environment of equality for women in modern world. In traditional society women were categorized as domestic managers for thousands of years. But it has been very painful for a woman to bear the surname of her husband throughout her life within four walls., so she fought against this social web and made a mark for herself and development of the country .Though today women are free in present economic world but they face a lot of problems as they are in transitory stage neither very modern nor very traditional.

Today family fabric comprising of husband, wife and children have undergone a sea change Now a new kind of change has arisen which has posed not only personal but familial, social., and cultural problems for women. Today she is sandwiched between work and family. She faces double burden of child rearing and official work along with fulfilling social and cultural demands. All these factors are ultimately destroying sanctity of marriage and preparing a ground of domestic violence.

Whether a woman is satisfied with her modern working woman image? Whether she finds any progress in her social status? Whether family is being neglected because of her work. What are the effects on her family and society and how it is affecting cultural scenario.

All these questions were examined in depth in my research work on working women of Lucknow. It is an exploratory cum descriptive type of work.300 married couples having children were interviewed randomly. This research work was conducted between 5th June to 25th June 2007.

Finding of work shows that a rapid socio-cultural change has come in the status of women. They are enjoying their freedom but it has also led to double work burden, family tensions, ill effects on the psychology of children and day to day quarrels in the family.

## Social Structural Mediations between Gender and Health:A Study in Orissa

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The dimension of 'gender' is supposed to have occupied central place in the development discourse in recent times. State has been perceived as a potential key social actor involved in the construction of citizenship, and addressing concerns of unequal gender relations. The state's approach to bring change in gender relations is primarily dependent on, the extent to which the state is autonomous of kin based structures in society. It is also dependent on how much the state negotiates with the community to break the patriarchal power relations within social structure of family and community. The state's intervention of social structure becomes urgent because the relationships between women and men in the structure of family and community are key sites of gender inequality. Therefore any strategy to promote gender equality must consider the 'domestic' or 'private' context as the main focus of intervention. By making this argument as a point of departure, this paper tries to examine the health sector in India, particularly by way of scrutinizing the Indian state's gender sensitive claims. Based on a study with the frontline health workers in Orissa, the paper tries to analyze the interventions of the state in its social context. It also investigates the perceptions of agents of state as mediators between the state and community. Study findings indicate that there is a tendency of merger of women's roles and identities with that of caretakers and motherhood roles. The state's approach towards health sector seem to be largely in tune with the dominant cultural values and patriarchal ideology.

## Gender and Livelihood Vulnerability: An Analysis of Selected Demographic Variables in Urban Slum in Dhaka

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Livelihood insecurity is a crucial dimension of poverty among the urban poor. Poverty as a multidimensional concept has strong connotations with the experience of livelihood insecurity and the demographic variables e.g. age, marital status and gender. Here gender has used instead of sex to explore not only the sex specific issues but also gender related issues among the urban poor. Poverty research has mostly dwelt with economic or nutrition related variables. Non-economic perspectives get less attention among the researchers, academicians.

Here I would like to explore the livelihood insecurity through selected demographic variables from the people's perceptions of Beguntila slum in Mirpur, Dhaka.

Objective of the study is to examine relationship between selected demographic variables (age, marital status and gender) and insecurity of livelihood (lack of income, threats and women vulnerability). This paper stems from my field experience in two different slums in Dhaka. Here focuses have been given on one slum named Beguntila, located in Mirpur, Dhaka. Fieldwork has been carried out in Beguntila slum from June 2003 to the end of January 2004. Qualitative method has been followed.

The study showed that inefficient and corrupt administration and coercion of mastaans is one of the main causes of livelihoods insecurity of the urban poor in Dhaka. This livelihood vulnerability has a crucial effect on the life of the urban poor and women in particular which perpetuates their poverty situation.

# Gender Budgeting from the Grassroot Level

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Gender Budgeting is a process of laying strong emphasis on engendering public expenditure and policy. Gender budgets attempt to break down a disaggregate the governments mainstream budget according to the impact on women and men. The pioneering work was done in Australia and South Africa especially on gender sensitive budget.

In India the strategic frame work to gender budgeting envisages earmarking a special minimum quantum of funds/benefits for women in all women related sectors, supplemented by targeted inventions for women in various sectors like health, education, employment training, micro-credit etc.  At the national level specific focus on gender based resource allocation is seen from Eighth Plan onwards

Devaki Jain postulated that "a summation of the budgets prepared local level, pyramided upwards to determine a national budget, is the only method that can really shift the development paradigm (revenue and expenditure) such that gender equality and the needs of the poor, especially poor women, are accommodated". The budget can be a powerful tool in transforming State, district, municipal and village economies to meet the needs of the people. The main thrust of gender budgeting is to involve the women to participate in the budget – making exercise from grassroot level.

In this connection an attempt is made in this paper to discuss the following issues on gender budgeting at grassroot level:

How the women in the local governance link the economic governance to political governance for gender friendly budgets?
How to built fiscal balances from bottom to upward level; national balance sheet for gender equality?

What capacities are required to women to translate the humane fiscal management at grass root level?

# SUB THEME - 2

# FEMINISM AND KNOWLEDGES OF VIOLENCE

Coordinators: Suneetha A., Vasudha Nagaraj and Bindu K.C.
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### Sanma Told Me: Biographical Narratives of Gendered Violence

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I met Rukma Bai in the year 2001 when I first visited her village to carry out my ethnographic research on Kolams, the community to which she belongs. Kolams are officially recognised as a 'primitive' tribe located in southeastern Maharashtra and northern Andhra Pradesh.

Rukma Bai enabled me to befriend her community people. Within a few months, I became her 'son' and she would prefer to be addressed (by me) as Sanma (a Kolami kin term for mother's younger sister). During my anthropological journey, however, I realised that Sanma was not only interested in assisting me in cooking and bestowing care and concern like a mother, but also wanted to tell me the welcoming and unwelcoming episodes of her own life. She would not only enlighten me on Kolami 'life world,' but often share her experiences of agonies and ecstasies whenever the time and space permitted.

Sanma's narratives reveal at once the greater freedom available to Kolam women in the domain of kinship, but they also tell the 'brutality' of gendered violence naturalised and normalised through cultural discourse. Due to her delayed menarche, Sanma was subjected to the (ab)normal communitarian gaze and she felt compelled to try to commit suicide. In a culture where the fecundity of the feminine body is ritualized, Sanma's body constituted as a 'disordered' and anomalous body, and was disqualified to be counted as 'proper' feminine body. In her village, Sanma's intimate relation with some non-Kolam men is interpreted as being (sexually) 'available.' This has resulted in attempts of sexual violence by some privileged men of her village. Being a woman with a 'different' biography, it has been difficult for her to augment community support. In such situations, the act of sexual violence would appear to the community as a natural fall out her being 'different' and being 'available. Sanma's biographical narratives reveal some of the logics of what Kannabiran may term as the violence of normal times that is neither condemned nor even recognised.

### Mapping the Space of Marital Choice in a Hindu Family

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The paper intends to examine the right of the urban educated middle/upper class Hindu woman to exercise her agency to take decisions regarding her marriage. The focus will be on gender negotiations within a Hindu patriarchal family when she chooses a mate deemed socially 'undesirable' or 'inappropriate' by them.

This presentation would focus on the above concerns, by using as a backdrop, media reports on a recent widely reported incident concerning the rights violation of a married couple in Kolkata. Priyanka Todi, a young girl of 23, from a Hindu upper class background eloped to marry Rizwanur Rehman, a Muslim boy from a lower middle class background, on August 18, 2007, without her parents' approval. A series of manoeuvres by her family led to the death of her husband in a month's time.

Apart from the media representations of the case in the newspapers and magazines with a focus on reports, articles, editorials and letters to the editor, the discourse generated around the issue on television news and talk shows will also be analysed to ask the following questions: how power and dominance operate within personal relationships in families through coercion and conflict when family honour, reputation and prestige is at stake; how norms act as determinants of or constraints to bargaining power of women in the households.

## Violence Against Women and the Search of Selfhood *in Shashi Deshpande's Novels*

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Along with reinforcing the female dilemma, Deshpande, as an Indian novelist, has reincarnated the new Indian women. Her novels are women-centered and women-oriented. The inner consciousness of the female protagonists is the underlying feature of her novels. Paradoxically, her female protagonists do not rebel strongly and do not accept all the subjugations timidly. They stand in the 'middle of the road' as the writer herself says. She has thematized the middle-class woman's predicament by foregrounding the tensions between the inherited traditions and a newly emerging present.

My paper explores the relationship between gender and urban space within the context of communal and ethnic strife in urban areas. It extends feminist responses to the crises, as well as takes issues with these theories' assumptions regarding feminist subjectivities. The paper includes and concludes with a reading of literary texts (novels) of Shashi Deshpande. The two novels which the paper deals with are The Dark Holds No Terrors and That Long Silence, as the instances of a thoughtful artistic response to the ruptures within women's private and political identities precipitated by postcolonial urbanism.

Deshpande's articulation of direct, structural and cultural violence offers a unified framework within which all violence can be viewed. Violence produces and defines gender identities and in turn, is produced and defined by them. I also intend to focus upon the role of language played in these two novels. Gendered language defines the possibility and impossibility of pursuing different visions of the social world. Violence and peace can be constituted through language. Deshpande thus lends her effort to a major aspect of the feminist project, which is to transform a predominantly androcentric symbolic order.

## Gender and Meaning in the Public Space Such as Places of Learning and Work Today

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In our times, the public space has become a new venue for women in search of agency and self-determination. How is this new space constructed today? What are the forces that determine it? How is gender negotiated in it? Since more and more women are vying for public roles one automatically assumes that it must be a freer and wider space. If there are indeed new meanings for woman what are they and how are they constructed?

In this presentation, the focus will be on some typical events that occur naturally in this new public space where men and women come together, which until recently was the sole preserve of men, such as the educational space and the work place. These typical events occur around codes of dress and conduct. These events will be read as cultural texts that are deliberately deployed by the men to construct only certain meanings for women in a naturalized way. Indeed, certain meanings of gender, sexuality and sexual relations are reinscribed in the public space today which in turn violently sex-determine the notion of the public space, the roles of men and woman and structure it.

For women today, everyday events overwrite the female body and make it pregnant with constraining gender meanings. They reaffirm a disabling sexuality and sexual relations. The new public space carries forward many of the traditional myths about the sexuality of men as active and volatile and about the primarily sexual meaning of all relations between men and women. By doing this, it imposes constraining norms on dress and behaviour for women and limits the roles they may play within it. Furthermore, it reinforces phallocratic gender relations in which men demand that women play supportive and accommodative function.

## Minority Women Negotiating Citizenship

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The paper will draw on fieldwork from a research project titled Minority Women Negotiating Citizenship. This research is being conducted in Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Vadodara, the Panchmahals, Sabarkanta and Hyderabad supported by the International Development Research Centre, Canada.

Women as victims, women as agents of peace and women's roles in defending/ rebuilding communities have been studied and written about in conflict literature. What is often missed out in the study and analysis of conflict and its impact, is the agency of poor women in seeking accountability, justice and very often mere survival. More precisely, the complexity of women's agency, defined by multiple marginalizations, has not been sufficiently researched. Our research aims to address this gap, with a particular focus on Muslim women's experiences in the context of communal violence.

Our effort in the paper will be to address the agency of Muslim women negotiating citizenship, marginalization and exclusion in their everyday fight to survive conflict and post-conflict situations vis à vis the state, civil society, community and family.

The lead research team will make the presentation; research partners from Mumbai, Gujarat and Hyderabad will contribute from the floor.

## Feminist Counselling as Action

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When a woman finds herself in a situation of violence, what should she do? Accept it (and the people who are perpetrating it), resist it or move away from the situation? Her dilemma is further accentuated when the violence is perpetrated by a known person (friend, family or intimate partner). What are her choices?

When we cast a critical eye on our work with women seeking help, we have faced — and continue to face — a number of challenges:  a) A woman decides to "go back" into the abusive relationship she was resisting. While respecting her decision, how can JAGORI help her re-negotiate her relationship with the "perpetrator"?  b)  A woman wants to register a case against another woman (usually a daughter-in-law or mother-in-law). How can we help her understand the patriarchal forces that are playing out in this situation and the role of the woman as a result of it?  c)  A woman registers an "unwarranted" case against a man as the "perpetrator". How do we support the woman, while understanding (and helping her understand) the man's role?

## Sexual Harassment: Understanding Politics of Gender and Identities

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The Vishaka judgment, recognizing and addressing sexual harassment as a Human Rights violation was a landmark event that sought to shift sexual violations of women from a morality discourse to a discourse of rights.

Based on our experience of working in various committees and handling sexual harassment cases, the paper would like to enquire into issues around how identities of caste, class and gender gets constituted in workplaces. The paper problematizes simple constructions, even by feminists, of victimized "woman" vs. "abuser or accused."  This paper seeks to delve into how the intersectionality of caste, class and gender identities play out themselves and how power, agency and victimhood of women are not fixed but constituted in ever changing, dynamic contexts. The paper would like to look into the way talking about sexuality of men and women only through such complaints committees in workplaces without understanding the political nature of multiple marginalizations that people experience in workplaces and at society at large, impacts on the way justice for women is viewed and prescribed in workplaces.

The selves of women are not only defined by their gender, in a multi-stranded society like India.  Community and caste shape and determine one's idea of selfhood and power associated with it. Therefore, the feminist project of justice for women has to contend with politics of identities that define power and agency to people at various locations of hierarchy in our society. The paper is an attempt to grapple with this the way gender operates within this complex web of power, from our location of being feminist activists intervening on issues of sexual harassment within an institutional set up.  The paper seeks to enquire into framing gender, sexuality and violence and the intersections of class, community and caste in institutional response to violence against women.

### Revolutionary Violence and Feminist Critique: Some Reflections

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The paper focuses on women as agents of violence in the context of the progressive, radical left (as opposed to the predominant Indian feminist scholarship on the appropriation of women by right-wing violence). While pointing to the ambivalent forms of empowerment that the left politics offers women, feminists have seemingly shied away from a critical analysis of the category of violence as situated within the revolutionary left discourse. On the contrary, much of feminist literature demonstrates a fairly unproblematic relationship to militancy (male or female) in the name of anti-colonial, anti-state or class struggle.

While the left itself has become a somewhat dated concern for Indian feminism, a more global, diffuse debate on gender and violent conflict has begun to reassess the leftist mobilisation of women in the context of mounting militarism in South Asia. The polarized terms of this debate – between a quest for victimology or agency – bespeaks an older/ deeper identification with 'revolutionary violence', understood as a politically progressive 'good' violence as opposed to the 'bad' violence of the state or the extreme right. It bespeaks, I argue in this paper, a troubling stance towards violence and militancy that has immediate implications for a feminist ethics of peace.

### Institutional Efforts to Combat Domestic Violence: Study of a Women's Cell in Orissa

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This paper is an attempt to understand the ways in which the Indian State responds to and constructs the issue of domestic violence through collaboration with civil society organizations. Women's groups have for a long time attempted to infuse gender sensitivity into State machineries in various ways for a better handling of women's cases. For this purpose they have conducted gender sensitization campaigns, workshops and conferences with police, lawyers and judges. Another such attempt is the establishment of women's cell within the premises of the police stations. These women's cells run by Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in collaboration with and within the structure of police system aims at helping the police deal with cases of domestic violence in a gender sensitive manner.

This paper attempts at an understanding of the functioning of one such women's cell at Bhubaneswar, Orissa. It looks at the terms on which the Orissa police collaborate with this NGO (Task Force for Women) and the impact of this initiative upon women's quest for justice. Further, it tries to examine whether the feminist ideology of the women's group gets subsumed within or influences the patriarchal culture of legal institutions. Methods such as observation of cases at women's cell, content analysis of the monthly booklet published by the cell and interviews of women's cell personnel is used to collect data for the study. Issues raised for discussion are: how do women's cell personnel interpret and implement existing laws on domestic violence and in the process construct and reinforce concepts such as 'women,' 'marriage,' 'family,' 'masculinity' and 'femininity'; how is the capacity of the women's cell to fulfil many of their original objectives is necessarily limited by their problematic position within the police bureaucracy. It ends with a pragmatic conclusion: that in the current social scenario, where general police stations are dominated by a masculinist culture, these women's cells do provide a more gender friendly environment; therefore, women complainants might find this space more accessible and compassionate than a police station where they fear further harassment.

### Witness to Violence: Documentary Campaigns in the Women's Movement

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In this paper, I attempt is to analyse the representation of violence in documentary cinema by women filmmakers. While one charge documentary cinema faces is that as a form it freezes or flattens out the subject and thus takes away the complexity from a situation; the other supportive stance worries more about its purpose and looks at it as "an evidence" and subsequently as a tool of consciousness, a mode of giving an information/a message, a call for action. Without losing sight of either concern – of form or of purpose – women documentary film makers have made a range of films on violence which raise interesting questions about the subject of feminist documentary and have approached concepts like experience, agency, voice, autobio/ethnograpy, victimhood etc in many interesting ways. I propose to look at the forms of violence as they appear in some documentary films and examine these in relation to the above concepts.

## Shades of Violence: Women in the Migrant Camps of Jammu City

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When a community encounters a threat, its fears are often expressed through discourses on the honour and dignity of the women of the community. While the violent movement of subsequent militarization in Kashmir has affected both men and women, it has impacted women in a specific manner. The forced migration of the Kashmiri Pandit families from their homeland has resulted in the change of their structure and function. Nearly three hundred thousand people were forced to migrate from their homeland in the Kashmir valley in the beginning of the 1990s as a result of the conflicting situation of the state fuelled by the militant and insurgent activities supported from across the borders. Directly as widows, half-widows (whose husbands are missing), destitutes, victims of rape, victims of Human Rights violation, victims of abduction and torture, they bear the maximum burden of violence and as internally displaced women they are struggling to keep their home and families together.

This paper attempts to highlight the different shades of violence faced by the Kashmiri Pandit migrant women living in the camps of Jammu city after 1990 exodus. The data from the camps show that there are different forms of violence that have emerged out of the various consequences of the forced migration. The decade-long violence has led to indelible scars on the psyche of the women in the camps. They face a loss of traditional support systems and also a loss of their private spaces. Along with this, divorce rates have increased. The concept of development and empowerment has taken a backward stride and problems which range from inhuman treatment, unhygienic living conditions, financial crisis and emotional setbacks to other basic survival issues like food, clothing and proper shelter. The present paper is a modest attempt at raising some of the issues that are losing their significance, visibility and strength and also the new issues, which are emerging out of the present life of these women living in the migrant camps.

## Sociology of Battered Women

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This paper undertakes to examine the hitherto neglected but nevertheless important area of research, the Sociology of battered women. As there are very few researches in Sociological literature in this area, particularly from the Indian perspective, a study in this direction in Kanpur city was carried out. The present study is based on the data collected from women belonging to both the lower classes and the middle classes. The research design is partial exploratory and partial experimental. It is exploratory, as a number of hypotheses have emerged from the study for further verification and future research. It is highly experimental as it is a comparative study among middle and lower class women. An interview schedule was prepared containing 100 questions based on the husband's family, educational background, occupation, marriage relations, custom of marriage, whether dowry had been demanded at the time of marriage, whether dowry was given at the time of solemnisation of marriage, family planning, sexual relations between the husband and the wife, balancing of relations, incidences of quarrelling and tensions between husband and wife and as to when and how it started, the role of in-laws in jeopardising the cordial relations, etc.

The analysis reveals the diverse factors which lead to wife battering such as age, religion, caste, educational background, rural or urban background, childbearing, sex, dowry, male child, economical status, dominance of in-laws, etc. The study explores that despite the various empowerment and emancipation strategies adopted by the different sectors of society for women, the ghastly reality still persists that what so ever be the religion, caste, background of the women, they are being tortured and battered even today. The basic causes behind this being the prevalence of male domination & patriarchal systems, gender discrimination, social dependency and unequal power relations. This social evil can be eliminated only after women gain political and economic power.

## HIV/AIDS and Women

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Today HIV/AIDS is India not just a health issue. It is being understood that the trauma of AIDS requires a response that takes into account both the medical aspect of the illness as well as the human, cultural, ethical and religious dimensions of life in the post-diagnosis period. And only that can offer complete solidarity to its victims and raise the hope that the epidemic can be controlled and turned back. It is said that almost half the adults living with HIV and

AIDS to-day are women. Over the past two years, the number of women and girls infected with HIV has increased in every region of the world. This paper focuses on the state of Tamilnadu which is one of the hardest hit by the disease. Though the statistic of HIV women patients in India and Tamil Nadu is not easily available, it is clear that a woman's vulnerability to the virus cannot be attributed to biological differences alone. One should pay attention to the deeply entrenched socio-economic, religio-cultural and political inequalities that compound her risk. Similarly, while the stigma of HIV makes it difficult for all those infected to seek treatment, women are said to be even more reluctant to admit their HIV status. Hence we need to pay special attention to this section of humanity.

## Genocidal Conspiracy: Gujarat 2002

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The savage massacre in Gujarat 2002 and its unconscionable conspiracies of silence and complicity marked the monumental collapse of a society. Sexual assault and rape was used in the Gujarat violence as an instrument of systematic 'subjugation and humiliation of the (Muslim) community'. It is often stated that a woman who is raped undergoes a double crisis- the rape and the subsequent trial. While the first seriously wounds her dignity, destroys her sense of security and may often ruin her physically, the second is no less potent for mischief, in so much as it not only forces her to relive the traumatic experience, often in the glare of publicity, in a totally alien atmosphere, with the whole apparatus and paraphernalia of the criminal justice system focused upon her. It is a humiliating event in a woman's life, which leads to fear for existence and a sense of powerlessness. The victim's tribulations continue with the patriarchal criminal justice system. The legal focus on corroboration, consent and character of the victim and a standard of proof of guilt beyond reasonable doubt alienates the general public from the legal system.
This paper focuses on the sexual violence against the Muslim women and girls in the Gujarat genocide of 2002 and how the insensitive legal machinery systematically denies justice to the victims.

## Sexual Harassment: An Obstacle For Women's Development

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The workplace, like many other spaces, is a place of violence against women where sexual harassment at workplace is rampant and widespread.

Freedom from sexual harassment is a condition of work that an employee is entitled to expect. Women's Rights at workplace are Human Rights. After the land mark judgment of the Visakha vs. Rajasthan case, the UGC recommended all the colleges & Universities to constitute a permanent cell during 1999 and emphasized on their active involvement on this issue. But many institutions have not taken any action on this important issue even after realizing that this has come through the direction of the Supreme Court of India.

With this background a study was conducted to understand the intervention made by the educational institutions in Tirupati town of Chittoor Dist, Andhra Pradesh in combating sexual harassment. The paper deals with the policies/procedures adopted by the Educational institutions in this town. At the end, suggestions will also be offered to combat sexual harassment at work place.

## Family Counselling Centre at Meerut: A Case Study

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The present study aims to evaluate the role of Government family counseling Centre under the family court of Meerut in dealing with cases of family disputes, in improving family relations and mitigating the sufferings of victims of family atrocities.

The data drawn from 100 couples is based on day to day proceedings and reports of the counsellors which are in turn based on interpersonal conversations with the members of both parties, information gathered through relatives, neighbours and from other concerned people or institutions including the police, schools, colleges, office etc. The nature of problems, reasons, complaints dealt with by the counselling centre is as follows: 44% deal with physical

beatings on various pretexts; 11% deal with marriages with high status difference between the bride and the bridegroom; extramarital relations and bigamy constitute 14% while economic problems constitute 31%.

The outcomes of Counselling are as follows: in 25% cases a mutual compromise was arrived at and the relationship improved; in 35% cases were divorced on mutual agreement; 20% respondents couldn't improve relationship due to 'Ego' problem on either side; 20% respondents could receive the recovery amount fixed and thus got financial relief.  The above findings will be discussed.

## Women in Punishment Systems: An Aspect of Feminist Criminology
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This paper is based on the study of criminology with a feminist perspective. This paper will confirm that criminology is still a discipline dominated by men and that its subject matter is also male dominated.

In the Indian context, women's experiences in the area of criminality and penalty have been systematically excluded from priorities for analysis, thereby limiting both crucial information and vibrant debates on the subject. In the modern liberal state, unlike the ancient method, imprisonment is the principle punitive measure. Data reveals that relatively very few women commit crime. Even fewer go to jail.

This paper is based on the fieldwork in Wardha sub-jail where the researcher met a woman inmate who was also a patient of uterine cancer.   It would examine the moral world the woman inmate seems to inhabit which makes her prefer to die due to lack of proper treatment rather than informing her parents about her being a prisoner in jail. It was also noticed that almost all women prisoners were ashamed of being in jail but they were not feeling guilty about the crime committed by them. That attitude of prisoners raises a big question about their location in criminology and also the role of modern liberal state and its relationship to women.

## Intersecting Issues of Son Preference, Sex Selection, Women's Autonomy and Women's Right to Abortion
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Abortion has always been one way for women to take control over their lives. Their ability to exert this agency takes place in social contexts marked by several social actors.

India decriminalized abortion through the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act (MTP Act) in 1972, but its poor implementation limits women's access to safe abortion.

Evidence from the national level abortion assessment project provides compelling data for advocacy on access to safe abortion and highlights the following issues: The concentration of abortion facilities within the unregulated private sector, primarily in urban and developed states, constrains access to abortion care for poor and marginalized women.

The main reasons for women resorting to abortion are their lack of control over their bodies, sexuality and reproduction. The declining sex ratio due to the use of diagnostic and abortion services is another factor affecting women's reproductive rights. The declining sex ratio results from a combination of two factors: gender discrimination in the form of son preference and the unregulated, commercialisation of the health sector.

Rather than curtailing women's access to safe abortion, efforts to arrest declining sex ratios need to address the difficult circumstances that these particular women find themselves in. Efforts to arrest declining sex ratios must seek to make women and families in sex selection circumstances allies, rather than criminals responsible for missing girls. It is within this current scenario that the following panel presentation attempts to underline the linkages between: 1) Improving access to safe abortion; 2) Addressing son preference; 3) Affirming women's reproductive rights and right to self-determination.

# Women as Subjects in Public Health Research

Lakshmikutty, JNU, New Delhi, lakshmikutty@gmail.com

The State of the World's Children is an annual UNICEF document that focuses on the lives, needs and rights of children around the globe. Focusing attention on a different theme every year, the 2007 report is titled Women and Children: The Double Dividend of Gender Equality. The rationale behind this is envisaged as a double dividend: "advancing the rights of both women and children.

Reading this report as an exercise in knowledge production for policy-making. This review essay looks closer at the process of knowledge building around the two main axes outlined in the report - that of gender inequality and discrimination and violence against women. I argue that the way these concepts are used here is deeply problematic for two main reasons. One, given that they are couched in the language of universal human rights modeled singularly on Western democratic forms of individual-communal transactions, these concepts necessitate a denial and erasure of the contexts, complexities and contradictions of the varied geopolitical regions explored in this report (which may foster different modes of social, economic and political transactions amongst individuals-communities). Arising from this is the second reason – these two concepts then are unable to capture the range and depth of issues of vulnerability, discrimination and violence that impinge on the lives of women, children and men of these regions.

I will attempt a brief discussion on the question of methodology in public health research – what methods are being used to gather meaningful data on priority areas. What is the rationale with which priority areas are selected, conceptualized, and operationalised. Does an understanding of some of the histories and politics of methodology challenge the practice of public health research today? Reading this as a challenge being posed from the regional to the universal, what insight does this offer to the practice of feminist politics today?

# SUB THEME - 3

# RETHINKING FEMINIST METHODOLOGIES IN CONTEMPORARY RESEARCH

Coordinators: S. Anandhi, Madras Institute of Development Studies, Chennai
Meera Velayudhan, Centre for Environment and Social Concerns, Ahmedabad

## Studying Gender and Space in a Town in India: Some Issues in Feminist Methodology

Janaki Abraham, JawaharLal  Nehru University

This paper is based on a preliminary study of gendered spaces in a town in Rajasthan and may be read as a proposal for a fuller study of the town. Through this discussion I seek to discuss some issues in feminist scholarship and methodology.

The focus of this research is to understand how gender and space are produces through everyday practices. I do this by looking at different kinds of spaces – the space of the market, of political meetings, of the street, places of worship etc. Informed by the idea of differences among women based on class, religion, and caste for example, this study focuses on diverse neighbourhoods differentiated along these lines. Further, it seeks to understand the everyday power relations between women, both with in a house, and neighbourhood and across neighbourhoods.

While focusing on three aspects of urban life that do not apriori mark out spaces as 'public' and 'private' - the organisation of spaces in the town, space and practices of veiling such as *gungat* and *purdah*, and work and space, the paper engages with feminist critiques of public/ private or public/ domestic dichotomy.  In addition, the paper calls for the study of neighbourhoods, arguing that the culture of a neighbourhood is critical to an understanding of how gender is produced in everyday life.

## Feminist Research Methods in Producing Gender Related Knowledge on Resource Management

M.A. Shantha Jayakumara, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka

Over the years gathering information, taking households as the basic unit of data collection, has lead to ignore considerable amount of gender sensitive information for social analysis.

Generally questionnaire method has been used in social science research. Though it generated considerable amount of information, due to three reasons, it appeared to be of limited importance or incomplete in feminist research. Firstly, questionnaires were administered to the lowest unit, the household, in a society where husband is the head of the social unit.  Secondly, structured questionnaires were not flexible in accommodating women's responses even if women had a chance to answer. Thirdly, data seemed incomplete due to the lack of gender sensitivity of the questionnaire administrators. During last 10 years, some improvements have been made.  Purposive involvement of the husband and the wife separately in answering the questions or use of semi -structured or unstructured questionnaires along with some other methods, such as, recording the interviews and narrations have been adopted.

With regard to data collection on natural resource management systems, participatory methods are being used depending on the local context. As social development in Sri Lanka is relatively high when compared with many developing countries women actively participate in field research. The data are generated by developing agricultural calendars, time budgets, resource maps, community maps and resource listing through collective efforts of both women and men. At present it is evident that such methods are adopted largely to collect information and have even gone up to implementation of the projects quite successfully.   The success and sustainability of such projects could stand as pointers defending the validity of data and the knowledge generated by the feminist researchers.

## Issues Related to Feminist Methodology in Ethnography

Karin Kapadia, Bangalore

My paper will raise some of the 'tricky' issues or delicate areas where I feel that feminism needs to grapple with some very difficult and uncomfortable problems. These are:

Accounting for difference: It is remarkable that even today so little understanding exists of the absolutely fundamental importance of caste, class and religion to women's identities. If their importance is understood, in all its complexity, then this is turn raises difficult questions about whether - and how - 'feminist agendas' can be formulated. There has been an important and progressive discussion about 'Dalit standpoint theory' by Sharmila Rege and others. This has been important to the development of feminist theory. However, if many 'Dalits' do not see themselves as 'Dalits' then how do we go about theorizing this? The debate about 'Western' versus 'Indian' ethnography makes some highly dubious assumptions. If its protagonists insist on the importance of the 'women's movement' in the ethnography of ANY study of 'Indian reality' we need to ask WHOSE 'Indian reality' and WHOSE 'women's movement' are being posited by them?

More broadly these questions lead us to a very fundamental issue - the deficiency of theory itself in dealing with difference and subalternity. MSS Pandian and others have rightly argued that 'objectivist' models of social science cannot theorize the experiences of Dalits and other subalterns. We therefore need to interrogate the social sciences themselves and the mainstream feminist paradigms that unquestioningly accept these social science models. This is not an option but an absolute necessity because it is entirely unacceptable to have social science theories which have no space for Dalit, Muslim or tribal experiences.

## State and Community Interaction in Addressing Domestic Violence

Manjeet Bhatia, University of Delhi,

This Paper would use some of the research undertaken in India and Coventry, U.K on *Strategies to operationalise legislation on Domestic Violence against Women in India and the United Kingdom*. Research is based on the interviews with key persons of voluntary organizations, police, lawyers and courts. In India research was done at Jaipur and Banglore.

In the UK there are now multi agency DV forums. These involve bringing together all the agencies associated with DV – the police, the health service in particular midwives and health visitors (because they enter homes), education services (children at school), social services (social workers), probation and housing services and the voluntary sector (women's organisations and others). The aim is to identify people at risk, to manage and hopefully reduce it. (However research shows that the results are patchy). The police are proactive and the voluntary sector very involved.

The *Mahila Surakhsa avm Salaha Kendra (MSSK)* working in the State of Rajasthan provides the much-needed conduit between community and the system of justice-in particular with police. In the process, police, judiciary, local community get connected. This interaction opens the possibilities of changes in value system.

NGOs in Karnataka are using community approaches. These local units of NGOs are proactive in taking up women's issues and building community pressure on the erring husbands. Women's Voice regularly conducts workshops on legal literacy and works out the methodology in participation with the women. The paper argues that MSSK model is more effective model and has the potential to develop state and community partnership. Under the new law-PWDV Act, such partnerships throw up certain new feminist methodologies to address the issue of domestic violence.

## Feminist Research and Methodological Contentions

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Transcending the limitations of the way of dividing studies as either empirical or theoretical, this paper tries to see the methodological issues that are adopted in any kind of non-empirical-theoretical research. The main feature of this paper is to analyze the methodologies assumed generally for any research, being a critique of the mainstream methodology. Feminist research can only be an action research. No matter if it is an empirical or non-empirical study,

it intends the change of society for the welfare of women. The feminist stand point methodology could be a precondition for a feminist research. It is argued that so- called essentialism is a precondition of any kind of normative political theory or indeed to any theory that intends to mobilize populations in order to effect social transformation. For example socialist theorists talk about the working class as a group without necessarily identifying the multiple divergences in working class, and even rationalist theorists essentialize when they talk about the individual as rational human being.

Feminist theorists come out of the dilemma of essentialism and difference since they themselves have to fight against the dominated or marginalized positions in the society. Then they have to make self-reflexive and inter-subjective methodologies and at the same time in such a process they have to adopt the essentialized identities as it serves an important strategic tool in their struggle against oppressions. This paper would elaborate upon various methodological concerns that the feminists could adopt for the basic conceptual research programs.

## Shifting Conceptions of Work and Performance: Contributions from the Margins

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This paper draws from two research studies conducted by several feminist groups in Mumbai following the ban imposed by the Maharashtra government on women dancing in bars in the state in 2005. The studies themselves unearthed the hitherto unknown lives of women bar dancers, their social backgrounds and working conditions. It also threw into relief several conceptual categories that have been contested feminist issues. Women's own articulation of work and the labouring body; performance and the male gaze; sexual harassment at workplace and women's trade unions in the entertainment sector were some of the concepts that evoked intense debate among those who undertook the research. Significantly while being the subject of debate, the study has highlighted the shifts that feminists have made in their understanding of how women, in this instance from poorer backgrounds, charted and defined their work and lives.

In contemporary social and economic circumstances, women are seeking livelihoods within extremely constricted options, determining for themselves where and how they will work. At such junctures when the state and sections of society seek to control and arbitrate women's lives, feminists have to confront not just patriarchy, but a morality that only benefits the powerful. The bar dancers worked in tandem with feminist researchers to question existing categories of knowledge to understand their lives. The studies in effect affirm a renewed acknowledgment of generating knowledge from the margins.

## Care Work and Time Use Surveys: Methodological Issues

Neetha. N, CWDS, New Delhi

Making visible the contribution of women to the economy has been one of the central issues that feminist economists have been concerned with. Unpaid work, both within the boundary of production as well as outside (social reproduction) where women are disproportionately concentrated has always fallen out of the monetized mainstream economics. While the former has made some progress in terms of its visibility and acceptability after many years, the latter has come to assume importance recently and continues to be dismissed as 'non-economic' within the mainstream economic thinking.

This non-economic component broadly comprises of household work such as preparation of meals, cleaning and shopping, care of children, sick and the elderly, and volunteer of community services provided by individuals. The exclusion of this 'non productive' work from the production boundary in mainstream discourse have been often rationalized on the grounds of the difficulty in measuring or valuing such services.

One attempt to address this issue has been the use of time use surveys. Time use surveys which were originally designed to make visible women's unpaid productive work are now used increasingly in understanding and measuring unpaid care work and thus the contribution of unpaid economy to the GDP. However, these surveys are often designed within a very limited and simplistic understanding of care work, care givers and the relationship that governs such work. The measurement aspect seems to dominate these surveys which convey a very wrong understanding of the issue and its complexities. The only large scale time use survey data that is used in understanding unpaid care in the

country is the 1998-99 stand alone survey undertaken by CSO, covering 6 states. The paper attempts to look at this survey critically - its scope, design/methodology and raises issues which are significant in understanding care work and thereby women's contribution in specific social contexts.

## Exploring Issues of Adolescent Girls from a Feminist Standpoint

Pallavi Gupta, Andhra Pradesh

Gender is not critically discussed and debated subject in Indian school curriculum. Far from it, the language and the context that are created in the content of school education are highly sexist and only help in reinforcing negative gender stereotypes.

The gendering of career choices, the organizing of Socially Useful Productive Work (SUPW), the gender stereotyping in sports provide illustrations from different components of the high school curriculum and these in no small measure contribute to strengthening the commonly held notions that women are inferior to men. While part of the problem stems from a rigid stereotyping that traps them into acceptable modes of behaviour and choices, a more serious set of problems has to do with consciousness of the body and issues of sexuality. On the other side, managements of junior colleges are reluctant to open discussion spaces up.

Using feminist standpoint research as a point of departure, this paper will reflect on the possibilities for building a consciousness of women's rights in adolescent girls and the problems thereof. In addressing this issue, this paper will draw on a series of twenty workshops with adolescent girls in junior colleges in Hyderabad city conducted between August and December 2007. The workshops used a combination of methods to generate a dialogue on issues of gender and women's rights with adolescent girls from different socio-economic backgrounds. My paper will present the challenges on the need for mediated student dialogues; the relevance of such dialogues to feminist research; what are the possibilities presented by this dialogic exchange in trying to convince the colleges and further, in working through dialogue to free adolescent girls of their inhibitions and discuss issues like gender and sexuality freely and act on them differently. Finally, does this method have the potential of nurturing feminist collective action and advocacy among adolescents.

## Generating a Feminist Knowledge: Law and the Feminist Method

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Any research from a feminist perspective is about the emphasis of listening to women's experiences. Feminist method is distinctive to the extent that it is shaped by feminist theory, politics and ethics and grounded in women's experience. Feminist approaches to methodology entail choices between different strategies for specifying connections between ideas, experience and reality. The application of feminist perspective to law has been characterized by a focus not just on law as a reform mechanism, but also as a body of knowledge which can be explored, dissected and subjected to close political scrutiny. One approach to study is how women are disadvantaged by rules formally complying with the rule of law. Another approach considers the extent to which the legal concepts are gendered not just in their application but also in their meaning and scope. Feminist method primarily makes the use of qualitative techniques. It is argued that this qualitative research has the potential to influence policy research by considering the differential narratives among women on matters that affect them. The objective is the generation of new knowledge which have the capacity both to liberate women and subvert the hegemonic power of men. This feminist epistemology aims at destabilizing, if not displacing the dominant understanding of social and legal phenomenon.

By looking into some of the Law Commission Reports in India and also the Malimath Committee Report in India this paper would analyze whether feminist perspective have been used at the level of policy framing. A policy is very much like a decision or a set of decisions, and we make, implement or carry out a policy. A policy can be a set of instructions from policy makers to policy implementers that spell out both goals and means for achieving those goals. The Law Commission Reports that will be looked at are the 172nd Report on Review of Rape Law and 91st Report on Dowry Deaths and Law Reform, 1983, and The (Malimath) Committee on Reforms of Criminal Justice System, 2003 will be taken into consideration.

## Caste and Gender: Paintings as Visual Methodology

Sandali Thakur, University of Pune

Women of Mithila have, since time immemorial, done paintings on the walls and floors of homes on auspicious occasions like marriage and various other life-cycle rituals and festivals and, in some cases, even for the sheer pleasure of decoration. After the frequent droughts which severely affected the agriculture-based economy of the region in the late 1960s, the All India Handicrafts Board intervened with the aim of providing alternative livelihood for the people. This welfare measure resulted in the transformation of these paintings from the walls and floors to the paper and its subsequent commercialization.

These paintings are done mostly by women of primarily brahmana, kayastha and some dalit communities, each having its own distinctive style and imagery. Though men are more into marketing, some have also started painting, with significant implications for the iconography of the paintings. The demands of the market and constant encouragement from art connoisseurs from across the world have made tremendous impact on this art form. For dalit communities, the appropriation of myths and legends from their own cultural universe after being reprimanded for painting the 'upper' caste motifs (primarily the high Hindu gods), have challenged and to a great extent subverted the aesthetic paradigms of this art form.

One of the most significant contributions of feminist scholars in the area of methodology has been the foregrounding of the questions around the researcher's identity and power that is intrinsic to any dialogic exchange between the researched and the researcher. How then do we engage with paintings and lives of painters? How is the canvas to be conceptualised as a complex space for contestations between communities; assertion of subaltern identities; articulation of 'personal' narratives and also an artefact of 'tradition' for the buyer? How do the various markers of identity of the researcher and those of the researched impinge upon the process of research? How do the painters perceive me as a researcher? And most importantly, what are the moves and shifts in the local power relations that I as a researcher create in the research milieu, wittingly or unwittingly?

## Essential Feminist Contribution to Social Science Research Methodology

Supriya Pathak, Mahatma Gandhi Antarrashtriya Hindi University, Maharashtra

Social science research methodology is commonly known as scientific research methodology. The accepted wisdom behind this is that value neutrality is both a hallmark and goal of scientific knowledge.

But some of the methods of research were privileged over others. For example even in primary social research methodology, observation and case study like methods have been given more priority then oral narratives type alternative methods. The reason behind this is that in the production of knowledge, the structure, process and resultants of these types of alternative methods have not been attributed the same validity as conventional methods.

Feminist intervention in various disciplines has involved critical engagement with conventional research methods and approaches. They have raised the question that only adding women in research as a researcher, participant, and research subject is not sufficient. It is critical rather, to incorporate their voice. This paper will investigate these ideas with special reference to the following issues:

1. What is the philosophy of knowledge production?
2. How the social research methodology is gender biased in its own methodologies?
3. Why and how the alternatives methods in feminist research methodologies have been not attributed same place as other conventional methods?

## Female Empowerment as a Measurable Concept: A Critical Examination of Empirical Studies from India

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Female empowerment is a powerful and pervading concept. Arguably, no other concept has been invoked, either explicitly or by implication, in the academic discourse on gender and development in South Asia so as to trace the

roots of the dismal well-being of women. By extension, no other concept has been propounded so profoundly as a potential policy prescription to address the gender inequality in the region.

What is female empowerment? No widely acceptable definition is yet in place. Instead, what we find is a conflation of competing, often conflicting, perceptions and propositions informed and influenced by and hence suitable for specific socio-cultural milieu. Yet, what we do also find is the proliferation of studies attempting to measure female empowerment empirically. These studies, predominantly quantitative in nature employing statistical techniques, not only endeavoured to assess the extent of and enhancement in, but also to identify the most potential correlates of, female empowerment.

The objective of the paper is thus twofold. It will trace the trajectory—the evolution, progress and shifts—on the concept of female empowerment in South Asia. It will then critically examine the empirical studies in India so as to reflect on both the deviation from and the gap between the concept and measurement.

## Feminist Research Methodology: The Personal versus the Scientific

Usha V.T, Pondicherry University

Feminist approaches from the late 1960s onwards have emphasised the need for the personal to be the political if women's voices were to be heard. Feminist research has therefore given weightage to the recording and analysis of women's lives and women's voices.

Thus the emphasis on scientism and objectivity in research methodology as seen in other forms of research would take a different direction in feminist research. Feminist researchers have of necessity to reevaluate notions of reason, scientific method, or authority in the process of arriving at the not so evident data. In order to subvert patriarchal devices such as silencing, marginalisation and devaluation, feminist studies have resorted to newer and more innovative methods of documentation that allow for the personal voice to be heard in research methodology.

In my paper, I intend to look at various methods of feminist research and look at the problems of implementation and choice of methodology. How does a researcher choose the appropriate method for data collection and analysis? How authentic is the personal? How can the personal be authenticated? What are the methods appropriate for feminist research? How can feminist thinking evolve a concrete form and authentic data bank through research? What tools would the researcher equip her self or himself with?

The inherent contradictions in feminist thinking and the divergent points of view have led to a variety of directions in research, yet there seems to be multiple possibilities for convergence.

## Cross-cultural Feminist Methodology and Reproductive Technology

Victoria Loblay, Macquarie University, NSW Australia

Contemporary feminist perspectives on reproductive technology are grounded in the truism that technologies are appropriated differently depending on the cultural context within which they are used. The Indian women's movement has been particularly adept at articulating this feminist critique of technology, based on the ways in which contraceptive technology, ultrasound technology and more recently, assisted reproductive technology, have been detrimental to women in the Indian context.

In contemporary feminist-anthropological projects on reproductive technology that attempt to cross socio-cultural borders, I have come to feel that what is needed is something more than an acknowledgement that technology is adapted differently in different places. Through a reflexive un/re-learning of my own feminist assumptions I am seeking to formulate a cross-cultural methodology through which we can better understand the new ways reproductive technology is being experienced. This task of rethinking my implicit (Western) feminist assumptions through the explicit process of learning feminist perspectives that have grown out of the Indian experience of reproductive technologies has been far from straightforward. For it is not only 'feminism' that one has to reconsider; it is the entire concept of reasoning, one's very patterns of habitual logic: choice, rationalism, and faith in biomedical authority are called into question.

In my current research on prenatal diagnostic technology, I am attempting to reverse some of the flows of anthropological-feminist discourses between India and Australia. I am using Indian feminist theories to throw new

light on gender relations in my own cultural context of urban Australia. In the Indian context, I am attempting to incorporate feminist critiques of anthropology by reversing the gaze away from the 'Third World woman' to frame my analysis in terms of the encounter between women and reproductive technology. In other words, I am trying to pursue a methodology in which the ethnographic 'other' is the new reproductive technology itself. This means that my data will attempt to capture the interface between technology and people, how they grapple with understanding technologies that fundamentally alter not only reproduction, but also processes of life and death. This analysis does not exclude 'women' but aims to facilitate a broader context within which to understand the issues that face women in reproductive health contexts.

## Moving Beyond the Impasse: Towards Recovering Outcaste Histories

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Discourse on women emerging from above and below has been exclusionist. What is lost in this disjunction is the essence, the interconnectedness, and dilemma of Indian feminity in discourse on women. My research on sacred prostitution has almost been looked upon as an obsession. Since more than a decade I continue to explore the experience of sacred prostitutes intermittently moving between the archives and the field. Outcaste women in religious traditions and their identity as single women offers the scholar a vantage point from which issues of sexuality, caste and religion in its complexity continue to bewilder and throw up challenges in terms of methodology and perspective. Moving beyond the order and solitude of the archives to the chaos and dynamism of the field with accompanying frustrations have been extremely challenging.

However, the present paper seeks to draw from my experiences to explore firstly, the possibilities of moving beyond the impasse, both in terms of dialogue and epistemology. Secondly, the issue of concern is the problematic disjunction between activism and scholarship within the outcaste movements and its impact on the production of knowledge and politics of emancipation. Thirdly, the present constraint of institutional resources and effective use of techniques of ethno history towards the project of urgent ethnography to recover traditions on the brink of extinction. And finally, the need for a serious engagement with the politics of reform and the phenomenon of NGOisation in writing histories of women displaced by traditions.

## Diving Deep: A Scientific Search into the Unfolding Story of Women's Lives

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One key feature of feminist research and feminist research methodologies is the focus on women's experience. It is women's experiences in the plural that provide the resources for the research. The expression *diving deep* is an apt imagery to depict the course of exploration into the life experiences of women, not only by the researcher but by the women themselves.

The present paper explains the *diving deep* metaphor of exploring into women's experiences through a concrete study on women and patriarchy. The study focuses on the 'gender paradox', a latent contradiction in the life of the catholic Syrian Christian women of Kerala, caught between two opposing forces: one that pulls them on the path of empowerment and the other that continues to define them in traditional patriarchal terms. The goal of the enquiry is to provide for women explanations of social phenomena and so it entails examining the unchallenged assumptions about women by probing into the social construction of gender and gendered consciousness which underlie their identity construction within a patriarchal framework.

For examining women's lives scientifically, the study deploys qualitative research methods such as In-depth Interviews and Focus Group Discussions. These methods provide greater flexibility of approach in order to probe into the life stories of the women concerned and enable women's voices to be heard. The idiom of woman's voice denotes the subjective, experiential viewpoint of women and it is an important tool for analysing the structures and ideologies that mediate women's everyday existence. Women's subjectivity which becomes evident in the telling of their stories challenges the "objectivity" myth of scholarly ethos, as any objective standpoint can be known to have social, political and cultural influence even on its most basic assumptions, and as Sandra Harding argues, the standpoint that embrace its social/cultural/political origins is less biased and hence more objective.

Diving deep into women's stories also raises the issue of epistemology, by drawing attention to the deep and irreducible connections between knowledge and power. By diving deep into their submerged consciousness, women discover their sense of self, though apparently 'lost' for some, yet surfacing with the possibility of finding themselves anew, thus bringing into relief the emancipatory political agenda of feminist research.

# SUB THEME - 4

## INTERFACE BETWEEN ACTION AND RESEARCH

Coordinators: Seema Kulkarni Soppecom
Swatija Manorama FORUM and Marathamoli
supported by Surbhi Tiwari, SOPPECOM

### Contraceptive Behaviour, Unmet Need and Intentions to Use Family Planning Method Among Married Adolescent Women in Uttar Pradesh

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This study examines three specific objectives: (1) the level of awareness about the different family planning methods and their use among married adolescent women by their background characteristics, (2) the unmet need and intention to use a family planning method among them and (3) the likelihood of adolescent women in unmet need and having intention to use a contraceptive method in future.

The present study borrows data from recent District Level Household Survey (2002-2004). The data was collected from 64,207 married women in Uttar Pradesh and among them 7,030 women were adolescents.

The study suggests that a majority of adolescent women were belonging to low socio-economic status. The practice of low age at marriage forced many adolescent women to enter into childbearing at younger ages. Only 8.2 percent women use any method of family planning, which is very low. The level of unmet need is much higher among married adolescent women than the state average of all women. Women belonging to SC/ST background have low knowledge of modern family planning methods and they use mainly traditional contraceptive measures. Almost 70 percent of adolescents who were identified in unmet need for family planning did not intent to use any method in future. In comparison to OBC and Others, a higher proportion of SC/ST women being in unmet need for a family planning methods did not intend to use them in future. This indicates how far a woman is consistent while responding about her reproductive goals and intentions at two different places in the same survey. This again left policy makers and programme managers confused pondering upon whether unmet need has any practical relevance to be chosen as an indicator of potential demand for family planning in future for adolescent women in a state like Uttar Pradesh.

### Construction of Masculinities and Femininities among Young Men and Women Respectively in Low-Income Communities in Mumbai

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'Male behavior'/masculinity/ 'working with men' has currently figured in the priority agenda of many funding/ research/ and implementing agencies in the development field worldover. Involvement of men in challenging and changing unequal power relations is increasingly perceived to be important and constructive.

Feminisms challenged cultural interpretations of being a 'male' and of the 'masculine'. Social- scientific studies of masculinity since 1980s have delineated how gender and other power structures interact with various socializing institutions to produce masculinity.

The proposed paper is based on the findings of two inter related operations research (a collaborative effort of 'CORO' a Mumbai based NGO, 'Population Council', New Delhi an international research organisation and 'Institute of Promundo', a Brazil based NGO) on 1) 'construction of 'masculinities' amongst young men and 2) construction of 'femininities' amongst young women in low income communities in Mumbai, which addressed unequal gender norms as a strategy to reduce violence against women and risky sexual behavior amongst young men. The research delineated that construction of masculinities ranged from macho men to feminine men along a continuum while construction of femininities ranged from docile, submissive women to 'manly' women along a continuum. The perceptions/notions

of young men and young women about concepts like gender, love and violence were observed to be complimenting each other in producing and reinforcing unequal gender relationships rooted in power structures.

The findings of the operations research are helpful in understanding links between violence, male sexual entitlements and gender oppression of women and in designing large scale interventions to challenge and change unequal gender attitudes of men and women.

## Collaboration with WGWLO in Gujarat: An Experience of Learning Together

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Working Group on Women's Land Ownership (WGWLO) is an informal network of a number of Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) in Gujarat working on the various issues pertaining to women's land rights in the state.

Gujarat Institute of Development Research (GIDR) has been one of the active collaborators right from the early phase of WGWLO.

The collaboration between WGWLO and GIDR has been mainly need based. There has been a conviction on both sides that learning from the other is almost inevitable if the movement/concept, which is relatively more alien to Indian society, is to take roots into the socio-economic settings in large parts of the country. The collaboration between WGLO and GIDR has yielded some positive outcomes with hardly any negative externalities since the collaboration, as noted earlier, is based on the foundation of academic discourse; felt need for learning from each other; and mutual respect as well as freedom to take-off on once own path at certain junctures on the long pathway towards attaining a common goal.

The paper will discuss the context, the modus *operendi*, and the outcomes till date from this collaboration. This will be discussed in the backdrop of the larger context of land reforms and the role played by academia as well as the civil society organizations in initiating processes of positive changes especially in gender context. The paper will highlight main features of research agenda to be undertaken by each partner and also jointly by the two. It will also identify boundaries of collaboration between academia and the network and discuss limitations of collaboration such as this. The paper, it is hoped, would provide a possible model of combining research and action in a constructive manner where the idea is to draw from others' strengths rather than merely duplicating the efforts.

## Shattering the Silence: Research to Collective Action Amongst the New Industrial Women Workers

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India has been an exporter of readymade garments (RMGs) for more than 25 years now. However, it is only in the last 10 years or so that the RMGs industry is beginning to be concentrated in certain geographical areas – Bangalore, Chennai and Tiruppur in the South and the Gurgaon-Faridabad region in the North, thus causing a new wave of industrialization to be witnessed in these areas. Women form bulk of the workforce in this new industrialisation, especially in the South.

During an earlier phase when large numbers of women joined the industrial workforce – in electronic units, jewellery units etc. – there was a lot of academic interest in the phenomenon and researchers were keenly involved in understanding that process. This time around, there has hardly been any interest – be it regarding the issue of migration, working conditions or occupational health issues. Apart from this, the kind of verbal, physical and sexual harassment that women workers are subjected to and the numerous instances of corporal punishment meted out to them, need to be researched; it leads to providing crucial explanations about the nature of the industry.

This paper seeks to lay bare the fact that there is an absolute paucity of research in this new industrial workforce, foreground the importance of research itself in exposing these inherent contradictions, and finally, its relevance and value in supporting the organization of women workers within industry. In effect, the continued relevance of research leading to action, giving voice and bargaining power to women workers.

## Naga Mothers as Agents of Peace

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The paper deals with a region in the northeast, which has been in conflict almost perpetually. The situation in Nagaland particularly draws attention. Our intention is to focus on a very specific case; an association called the Naga Mothers Association (NMA) and its engagements in the public sphere. We use this case as an instance to reflect on the possibilities of activism attainable by women and also to define the parameters, which govern the de-limitation of the same.

The Naga women's case presents interesting grounds for study: First, their case best exemplifies the modes adopted by women confronting conflict situations. So far, studies of women in similar situations reveal, adoption of either of the two roles, adoption of outright anti-state projections of militancy, which is the more common case; or, the more uncommon role of peace–makers, it is in the latter role that the Naga women exhibit their specificity.

Second, despite the vantage gained from the latter role, the Naga women have never used it to the extent possible for furtherance of their own interests. Rather it is seen that women are able to counterbalance the unsettling effects of the clash between the confusing value-systems of modernity confronting tradition on the one hand, and on the other while the youth engage in issues that rupture both self, tribe and the state, their mothers, exhibit Amazonian strength to reconstruct and to heal, by extending familial ties into the wider society.

The Method adopted: Primary sources mainly of the NMA's documents; periodic press releases, speeches of noted personnel speaking from the forum of the association and their appeals placed before the government have been perused. Documents of other organizations along with which the NMA has collaborated have been used. Above all, telephonic interviews of some members of the NMA Executive body, such as the President and the General Secretary as well as of ordinary members were also done.

## Interface between Research and Action: A Case Study of Tamilnadu in the context of Tsunami

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This paper is an endeavour to focus on how research unearths the implications of gender inequalities and discriminations during and after disasters. Research in this sense becomes a powerful tool of advocacy for changes at the policy and programmatic levels. Programmes which remain rooted in gender research do pave the way for far reaching changes in gender roles and relations at all phases of disaster response.

The present paper which elucidates the gendered issues of tsunami is based on a field based study which was supported by Oxfam and carried out by a team of independent researchers. The purpose was to generate a body of knowledge by articulating issues through participatory research process. This was done to have effective interface between research and practice; to bring in corrective steps to engender policies which would further the gender equity in both disaster recovery and development processes.

This paper brings in several case stories, from a gender lens, of major gender issues which were unpacked through field-based studies and the best practices which challenged the entrenched existing institutional norms at the community, market and state and family levels. The issues range from higher mortality rate of women relative to men and its far reaching effect on the status of girls, absence of women specific clothing and sanitary needs to that of their home based occupations in the loss assessments and recovery processes. The issues also bring forth how the aid remains skewed in favour of men for the simple reason of women's pre-disaster weaker social, political and economic status relative to men, thus reinforcing the existing gender inequalities.

## Methodology of Feminist Research: Study of Women in 'Motion': Bidi Tobacco Workers and Devdasis in Nipani

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I was to study Bidi Tobacco Women Workers Union at Nipani, which had organized almost 4000 workers in 60 tobacco pounding factories and was subject of various journalistic articles in the newspapers. Also, the area was in the

news for dedication of young girls to Goddess Renuka, who then would become 'Devdasi' a sacred prostitute. Initially I did not show much interest in the cultural aspect of this phenomenon, even though some of the workers were Devdasis, since it was not my topic of research. I was to study a very vibrant movement of strong force of bidi tobacco pounding workers. I was visiting the place for two successive years and documenting every step in the process of struggle.

Being very close to the action, I could see the paradox of 'Devdasi', as a category, being called as 'bad' woman by the mainstream society, and as a 'victim' by the reformers fighting to rescue them from this practice. During watching the action critically I realized that both the sides had not made efforts to explore the 'self image' of the women who were part of the cult of 'Devdasi'. While both the parties were sticking to their assumptions cultural anthropologist had tried to explain the phenomenon as a legacy, which can be traced back to the period of Mother Goddess, which was another less known facet of the phenomenon.

Two years of constant association with many Devdasis who were part of the bidi tobacco workers' struggle inspired me to do small research on Devdasis in the rural area around Nipani, which could make a critique of the ongoing reform efforts from the feminist perspective, and suggest alternative demands based on the assumption that they have an agency of their own.

## Safety and the City: Women and Public Spaces in Delhi

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Cities and growing urbanisation have become the hallmark of our times.  In this paper we argue that besides infrastructure, the quality of a city has to be judged by what it offers to its citizens and foremost among that must be the right to live, move around and work with dignity and safety. Delhi falls very short on delivering this, especially to the more vulnerable and marginalised populations. We address this issue from the perspective of women's access and right to public spaces. We locate our work within the debates on the nature of violence against women and the sociology of contemporary urban spaces.

In order to understand the gendered nature of access of public spaces and its effect on women's mobility and access to the city, JAGORI conducted over 25 safety audits in Delhi over a period of a year. The safety audit is a tool that has been used in several cities around the world to map public spaces by delineating factors that determine safety or "unsafety" for women. These audits, along with the findings from a survey of 500 women across the city and several group discussions, provide the data with which we explore the ways in which public spaces are viewed and accessed differently by men and women. Through these, we interrogate the gendered nature of public spaces and how this influences women's rights, mobility and their participation in social, economic and political processes that define urban life.

In line with Jagori's philosophy of translating research into action, so that real change may be made, we launched the Safe Delhi Campaign to sensitize the people of the city about the issue of sexual harassment of women in public spaces.

The Campaign has reached out to the "ordinary citizen" to sensitize and involve by speaking with citizens' groups, students and teachers, resident associations, police officials, corporate bodies and bus drivers to develop strategies and take specific actions on safety of women.

## Understanding Muslim Women's Citizenship in Gujarat

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ANANDI – Area Networking and Development Initiatives is a voluntary organisation that works with women from marginalised and vulnerable communities of Gujarat since 1995.

### Post 2002:

Initial focus of action for the organisation was the deprivation that emerged out of looting and burning of assets essential for income generation and habitation. Mobilisation of Muslim women was initiated to ensure entitlements, and to reestablishing livelihoods.

Within a year or two patriarchies within the community tries to regain its hold and the women who were allowed to go out to seek "benefits" from NGOs were being reigned in. On the other hand women who got the opportunity to step out and "see the world" gain knowledge about laws, women's rights were beginning to challenge the patriarchy within family, community and the state.

Political atmosphere in Gujarat -  2002 had exposed the deeply entrenched communal mindset that was consolidated in different ways by the political party in power and their Hindutva politics. Therefore there was a need to look at how do Muslim women look at citizenship; whether the means of mobilisation should be different for these women; what is the role of peace building with a women's focus. There is a lot of research on the sexual nature of violence on women during conflicts, but how do the women who have suffered this live after the intense conflict period ends is a matter of exploration and can give pointers to practioners. Again there is literature on the role of women in peace building – but what is the role when there is denial of conflict after the carnage?

## Dynamics of Contraceptive Use Among Scheduled Caste Women in Uttar Pradesh

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The objective of this paper is to assess the dynamics of contraceptive use among SC women in Uttar Pradesh.

The study is based on Reproductive and Child Health Survey Round-II (2001-02) Phase-I conducted in Uttar Pradesh. Information on SC women (form women's questionnaire) has been analyzed with the help of statistical tools such as percentages, cross tabulation and logistic regression.

The Logistic regression analysis shows that urban women in SC category are currently using and expressed the willingness to use more contraceptives in the future than their rural counterparts. It was also found that women with better educational status, those who receive advises from ANM/Health workers and those who have higher knowledge about the use of contraception are likely to use more contraceptives in the future, though  some of them have never used it. One significant finding emerges from this study is that; there is a positive relationship between knowledge of the traditional methods of contraception and the level of education and standard of living. In the general context, it is expected to have inverse relationship.

Significant differentials can be observed in the use of contraceptives among women by number of living son compared to number of daughters, i.e. women with female children tend to use more contraceptives than women with male children, indicating the preference for at least a male child by the end her reproductive span. Very negligible percentages of women (currently non users) were informed about the contraceptives methods by health workers. It could be due to the fact that health workers inform women only about female sterilization methods rather than informing the utility of other temporary methods of contraception.

## A Method in Madness: Theatre as a Source and Expression of Difference and Collectivity

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Theatre is usually left to be studied as art and culture.  Academics deem it flippant and short-lived.  The role of 'performativity' in gender studies has been emphasized by Judith Butler as a source of agency.  This paper would highlight how theatre has been able to accommodate collectivism and difference almost simultaneously, thereby paving a new way to 'stage' bodies as engendered and empowered.

The paper would dwell on three such expressions of how disenfranchised populace of a system can 'upstage' their point of view.  Those are the dalit women's **Tappattam**, the transgender group **Kannadi** performing their lives and our recent play *Kaala Kanavu* performing the feminist history of Tamilnadu.  Though at first glance it might seem as 'mainstreaming' and therefore 'homogenising', these efforts manage to retain the edginess of existence and the will to survive.  I would equate these ventures to Mahasweta Devi's Draupadi's refusal to clothe her self or Manipuri women's struggle against the military by walking naked or fasting for years.  It is a conscious move to 'make us see differently'.

The way these three theatrical experiences sought to wrestle with caste, sexuality and historiography are new directions to be borne in mind in our research and activism. By choosing exclusive territories it underlines the differences at work. In the case of dalit and transgender it is more explicitly. Feminist historiography on the other hand poses a much more subtle and more complex an issue. It attempts to engage with collective struggles of the region, while emphasizing the gender perspective in the same. Also, given the context of India viz- a viz states, especially Tamilnadu, the play also brings out the different histories of the region as significant. Thus theatre provides us a way to address differences collectively and there lie the strength and challenge of feminist researches.

## Voices from the Underground - VAMP Stigma Index

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Sexuality and sexual relationships have come under tremendous public scrutiny in the age of HIV/AIDS. The epidemic has pushed societies to acknowledge and confront the complex world inhabited by people who are in monogamous relationships within and outside marriage, and people who are in multiple sex partnerships within, as well as outside of a commercial context. Sexuality minorities, sex workers and now, increasingly, people living with HIV—especially women and orphans—are being pushed to the margins by a society that has condemned their very existence. This marginalization has led to a total denial of the right to lead a life free of discrimination, inequality and violence.

Discrimination against sex workers in India is as much an issue as the discrimination faced by other marginalized groups along lines of class, caste, race or religion. Stigmatization, which has its roots in the standards set by patriarchal morality, is experienced as the major factor that prevents women from accessing their rights.

The present paper is based on the VAMP Stigma Index developed by the members of VAMP, the collective of women in prostitution and sex work in Sangli. The stigma index was prepared over a period of time by the women of VAMP which evolved out of their everyday life experiences.

The index reflects the data from an ongoing nationwide study on five thousand sex workers, compiled by CASAM (Center for Advocacy on Stigma and Marginalization), a project of SANGRAM. The data comes from a detailed questionnaire, developed by CASAM with significant input from VAMP members, which inquires about women's family history, work history, sexual history, experience with abuse and relationship with the state. All the questions were constructed by women in prostitution and sex work and evolved out of their every day life experiences.

The paper will try to bring out the various forms of stigma and marginalization that woman in prostitution experience in their day to day life which in turn prevents women in sex work from accessing their rights.

## Participatory Action Research as Problem Solving Research

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Exploring action and research are the potential source of knowledge production. Participatory approach is an attempt to break away from unidirectional control of the professional researcher. Therefore, participatory approach is solving in response to and for the fulfillment of the needy and the less powerful, weaker segments of a social setting and is part of their growth into consciousness.

Thus participatory action research should be modeled with different modules to study the culture specific problems or the concern areas for the ongoing status of women. The research is action-oriented and cannot be treated as "cultural relativism".

Government in many developing countries used popular participation to promote national development through strong interest and even greater favour to promote participation at grassroots level particularly in rural and tribal areas. The under privileged, whether landless laborers, or urban slum dwellers or women, are primarily unorganized. In a large measure, their state of poverty, exploitation and helplessness are related to this non-organization.

The six principles underlying participatory action research are to channelize and standardize the policies and programmes of development. Therefore action research should be equipped with each possibility of incorporating the situation of the people particularly women, the inherent causes underlying their current status/situations and the positive background for the acceptance of govt. policies and programmes.

Thus participatory action research should be the base of and the incentive for the eradication of women's oppression, to stabilize the human existence and facilitating justified human rights.

## Stree Gauki – A Female's Force within a People's Movement

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Our field base, for the study began with our work with Thakars – Schedules tribes, Mahadev Koli and later with primitive tribes called the Katkaris and Agris. Then there were the other backward class and the Marathas operating in remote hamlets of Karjat Tahsil, Raigad district of Maharashtra and Pune. With this our work began for fighting against money lending systems whose draconian attacks into the tribal homes, grabbing for their demands, was inhuman and unforgivable. Struggle for a Patta for the toilers, men and women, continue to till date.

Jagrut Kashtkaru Sanghatana right to the toilers, Bombay Agriculture Land Holdings Act –have insured registration of non- regularized tenants whose name should be given to the Patta . Aggressive campaigns have led to demands for the inclusion of the name of the women/wife too along with men, as she labors equally. This led to severe resistance across all communities but the strength of the people's organization meant that women 'representation' began within the organization.

The formation of the Stree Gauki became the first natural step for the organization and women were projected as the nurturer, and developer of land, food and natural resources thus the fight for acceptance of women as farmers, while continuing to retain the leadership in JKS for joint ownership of property. From here they began taking up right to rations, drinking water, monitoring Adivasi Children's Hostels, availing Government loans of the widows, participation and protection of reserve constituency of local sell governance processes, Violence against women girls, and such other rights of those deprived in the villages.

## Dilemmas in the Research Process

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For the women's movement, research has been a tool as well as a form of action to reveal the many facets of women's lives, issues and stories. However in bringing in the elements of feminism into the research process, there have been many dilemmas which we continue to deal with.

In 1991, the government announced, what was then called, the New Economic Reforms, which ushered in structural adjustment and liberalisation policies. We were seeing the effects of the rapidly changing labour market on women but we found that most studies were at the macro level based on secondary data sources. We undertook a study of 360 women workers belonging to 94 units in the plastic processing industry and 73 units in the diamond processing and jewellery manufacturing industry. Our study covered three areas of the lives of women workers: the adjustments made within their households; the impact of restructuring within their workplace; and their struggles and negotiations with unions and employers.

Research studies are often written down as if they were a linear instead of a zigzag, overlapping process of formulations, indecisions, planning and negotiations. Women's activists have often leaned towards oral testimonies, women's voices and personal narratives. Underscoring this method was the belief that women's experiences and perceptions help us understand their realities. Is a woman's viewpoint more objective than that of others in society?

Another feminist research dilemma has been the selection of the quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection. The qualitative approach has been labeled as a 'soft' data collecting tool compared to the quantitative one. Which is more appropriate for a feminist study? Field work, more than anything else, brings out the aspect of power and representation for the researcher and the researched. We were middle class, educated, women looking for information from working class women that would go into the making of papers and books. Our work would not only represent them but in no way contribute directly to a change in their situation. How were we to handle our frustration and discomfort?

## Negotiating a Feminist Practice of Citizenship: A reflexive look at some ongoing action research projects

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The paper provides a perspective on the multiplicity of *action research* being undertaken by feminist organisations and movements in India addressing issues of women's rights and citizenship. It explores two ongoing programmes of action research, one comprising of individual projects on the theme of Decentralisation and Women's Rights and the second exploring women's rights in the context of conflict or mass violence of political nature. The analysis of these two reveals an example of investigation, which incorporates two core tenets of feminist research, that is, an integration of the perspectives of the researched and an action orientation. In addition to this, the two programmes reflect the belief in collaborative knowledge production among women's rights practitioners who strive for gender justice through changes in political practice and public policy.

Simultaneously, the paper also brings out the differences among the individual projects. In the first programme while some projects revisit the feminist debates about the extent of women's empowerment through political participation at the local levels, others make no theoretical claims. While the former explore the connectivity between the state and the civil society at the local level as women's identities are recast, the latter address the simple question of how participation of elected women's representatives working within the larger patriarchal, social political contexts affect themselves and the development agenda and oriented towards 'producing knowledge for action' which would potentially have a better outreach. By highlighting the differences and convergences in the two kinds of projects, the paper brings out many broader issues about women's empowerment and the critical role of progressive feminist agenda in the present times.

Through a deep analysis of these research works, the paper argues that outcomes for gender transformation hinge very crucially on whether the practitioners of action research follow a tradition that has roots in gender justice movements or employ action research as a 'development tool' for varying political agendas and problem solving. The paper concludes that the insights coming out these works challenge the artificial boundaries of academic research and make a claim why action research should be any less legitimate or insightful than research conducted without explicit political agenda of transformation. The paper shows the ease with which some of the researchers in these programmes straddle the worlds of academic and beyond.

## Building Knowledge into Action: Campaigning Against Domestic Violence

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Research of all kinds – formal, academic, quantitative, qualitative, feminist, participatory, action – has played a critical role in bringing domestic violence into the public and policy domains in India. Quantitative studies have shown that domestic violence is not sporadic, but pervasive, affecting more than 40% of Indian women.

Where domestic violence is concerned, the divide between academic and action research is somewhat blurred, since *all* research, regardless of its nature, has contributed to making this invisible and 'private' form of violence visible and public – an issue deserving action. If formal research has provided *information* on domestic violence, first-person accounts have provided an *emotional* account of violence. Change does not necessarily come about because of information alone – but because of the power of information and emotion. We feel impelled to act not only when we *know* of something, but also when we *feel strongly* about it.

Locating itself in these twin understandings that the lines of research can blur and that information cannot be privileged over emotion, this paper explores a domestic violence campaign that Point of View piloted in parts of Mumbai in 2007. The campaign was designed to inform people on the street, especially women, about the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act 2005, a law that addresses many of the concerns of existing legal options in the context of domestic violence. Through a presentation that is partly visual, we demonstrate how we used a variety of methodologies to spring from research to action to develop this media campaign. Anecdotal accounts, Qualitative research, Focus group discussions, Media research, Visual imagery.

As part of this presentation, we refer to and draw on other media campaigns around the world and in the context of violence against women and ask a broader question: what is it that has the power to create change?

## "Feminist", "Participatory" and "Action Research": How Can the Voices be Heard?: A Case Study on Assisted Reproductive Technologies and Women

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From 2004 to 2006, Sama Resource Group for Women and Health conducted a qualitative study on the implications — medical, social and ethical — of ARTs on the lives of women in the Indian context. Since the society is guided by pro-natalist ideologies, it is self-evident that these technologies far from enhancing women's choices will place women under further medical domination. In this respect, technological reproduction has made medicalised access to the female body acceptable and medicalised abuse that a woman would endure anything to become pregnant. In this context the research was guided by the premise that the proliferation of ARTs in a patriarchal, social scenario make women doubly disadvantaged; they suffer both the burdens of the prevailing patriarchal hegemony, which restricts the role of women to child bearers and those that are created by the 'medicalisation of everyday life'.

The fundamental aim of our study is therefore to bring these issues in the arena of public debate, thereby raising awareness about ARTs and their numerous implications and potential drawbacks. This is necessary in order to enable a truly informed use of reproductive technologies. The study undertook a descriptive qualitative study documenting the different subjectivities and experiences of women undergoing various techniques. Since motherhood is central to the social construction of womanhood, childlessness is a social crisis that cheats women of their fundamental identity. Childlessness is highly stigmatized and forms the basis of multiple exclusions from social and political life. Here we paid attention to women's experiences of childlessness viewed within the family and kin groups, intra-household relations, relations with the spouse, and the effects of medical and other alternative treatments. Most importantly, the class and caste variations of women and how they cope with the issue of infertility and childlessness and the kinds of treatment sought was delved into. The paper will give a detailed account of the findings using this approach, which will facilitate further advocacy on the issue through women's voices.

## Of Erasures and Appropriations: Action and Research during and following the Campaign against Sex Determination & Sex Pre-Selection

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Feminists engaging in campaigns and action have always through their politics extended or added to existing knowledge. Such research and theoretical contributions of feminists have linked the women's movement to Women's Studies. However, when campaigns have run their course, such efforts have opened up avenues for mainstream academia, where these issues then become topics for further research.

This paper will address the way a campaign initiated by feminist health activists against sex-selective abortions and/ or hazardous contraceptives, documenting the issues, processes and outcomes of the campaign, transforms itself into a project that then is heralded by male academics and researchers. There are shifts and erasures of not just the issues that generated knowledge about women's bodies and rights that feminists raised, but also the language of the struggles. For instance, what was consciously spoken of as 'sex-selective abortions' by feminists later became 'female foeticide' completely dismantling the language, history, and agency of women who were at the centre of the struggle, and feminists who addressed these issues. It needs to be noted that such cooption, erasures and appropriations often extend beyond the academia and even become part of state dynamics vis-à-vis movements for abortion rights, and other issues that are part of feminist politics.

While failures may lie with those who did not sufficiently document or place them within the conventions of mainstream documentation, but the onus is also on those who deliberately ignore or erase histories, thus aligning once again with patriarchy's project of 'invisibilising' women's knowledge and struggle.

### Interface between Research and Action

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The Family Welfare Agency is a voluntary social work organization in the B.D.D. Chawls, N.M.Joshi Marg, in central Mumbia. The social workers of FWA use mainly case work services that is, helping individuals and families by means of a one-to-one relationship and through community resources.

In 1979 FWA started a program for elderly by identifying the need of the aged and start appropriate services.

While working we realized that what the agency was doing was no more than the tip of the iceberg. There was need to develop the services for elderly at the city level and the concept of 'Networking' emerged. This was the result of reflection by the practitioners at the agency and professional committee member.

To initiate networking project it was necessary to develop scientific understanding about the organizations working in the field of elderly and situations working in the field. Initiation of two major researches will be presented.

While working in a networking project we observed that leadership of senior citizen do not emerge and less participation of women senior citizen. As we discussed with senior citizen origination we found talented senior citizens but they were not utilizing their talent .For that FWA started a study Talent search among senior citizen and a study why was there less participation of women senior citizen in senior citizen program.

While working in day care center the social worker observed that elder abuse among women senior citizen are more and there is a feeling of no meaning of life. Subsequently FWA decided that to study of "Widow status in Lower Parle"

### Victims or Survivors - A study on the Deserted and Widowed Women in Sangli District of Maharashtra

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Deserted women, cast-away women, thrown away women or parityakta- taklelya striya are different terms used interchangeably for women who are thrown out of their marital homes or in some cases who have chosen to step out themselves. The numbers of such women appear to be increasing thus reflecting the over all status of women in society. Yet we find very little written about them or hardly find a mention of them in the literature on poverty or on social welfare policies. While the women's movement has taken cognizance of this issue at the policy and action level one finds a general lack of concern for the quiet deprivation experienced by widows, deserted and single women.

Construction of and identity of womanhood is determined not only by caste, class and ethnicity but also by marital status. The institution of marriage and the baggage that goes along with it (patrilocal residence, motherhood) have been able to control women and perpetuate exploitation. Death of the husband, absence of a husband or desertion often changes the life of the woman drastically.

A study done by SOPPECOM along with Women's studies Unit of Tata Institute of Social Sciences and Stree Mukti Sangharash Chalwal (women's liberation movement) in Sangli district shows the nature of desertion and widowhood through a powerful set of oral narratives combined with a quantitative understanding of the socio-economic profiles of these women.

This paper dwells more on how the study findings were an effective tool for strengthening the agenda of the movement and how this action research study led to new studies on extent and nature of desertion being initiated in other parts of Maharashtra.

### Women's Land Rights- Rhetoric and Reality

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The gap in feminist action research continues to be in capturing women's agency in managing livelihoods and the strategies employed by rural poor women in coping with significant changes in Indian economy and its concurrent impact on gender relations.

This presentation is based on the experience of ANANDI & WGWLO, Gujarat in feminist action on Women's land rights in Gujarat. The starting point for concerted movement on Women's land rights began with a study to understand the status of women's agricultural land ownership in Gujarat in 2003. The campaign continues to actively supported, advocate and act realise land rights for rural women individually & collectively over private and public properties.

Over the course of last five years, the action-research-reflection cycle has made clear the inter-sectionality of caste, ethnicity, region, marital status, family composition, state laws and its mechanisms on women's land rights.

The action-research has highlighted: The enthusiasm and hope with which women struggle for land rights; Women's agency in negotiating family and community structures; Significance of capacity building of women on laws and entitlements to land rights; Strategies used by women and VOs to support women's struggles for land rights; The role of panchayats, men, local panch and sangathans; Feminist methods of networking; Use of innovative tools for feminist action.

### But dreams are not Bad…Teaching as Praxis

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This paper is an attempt to reflexively evaluate involvement in undergraduate teaching as praxis. Drawing on a vast body of feminist action research, pedagogy and critical research, I argue that in the last two decades the milieu wherein education is imparted and engaged with has been continuously reformulated.

While teaching Sociology as praxis to young women who perceive educational opportunities as the only channel of freedom, the choice between 'practical' and 'critical' strategies becomes a difficult one.

Though in the colonial period the radical non-Brahmin tradition reformulated education as an emancipatory space for women, today it has become a contested terrain. On the one hand expansion of women's education is seen as 'empowerment', women's entry in the organized sector and their access to resources is shrinking.

Young women from lower castes and lower class harness the dreams of material and socio-cultural well-being, their reality is tarred by increasing violence within and outside the household. Though the state endorses the 'empowerment' discourse, it means tokenism and adhocism in economic and political matters.

By critically and reflexively using Sociological analyses and insights on caste, family and marriage a critical interventionist dialogue can be opened up. This process is two pronged: on one level, the young women question their ideals and values and on the other there is a redefinition of worldview. Taking a critical look at the experience of teaching undergraduate girl students as praxis, this paper maps the changing contours of educational arena as far as redefinition of caste, class and gender hierarchy is concerned.

With neo-liberal globalization, the women's movement has lost its force and at the same time the space for emancipatory redefinition of educational practices has been shrinking.

### Linking Action to Knowledge towards Sustainable Development- Rethinking Gender in Watershed Development in Maharashtra'

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In the discipline of development studies and at the development practitioners' level it is well accepted that to achieve sustainable development that we aim for, requires grassroots action with the combination of scientific, economic, social and political knowledge. Action research based knowledge is undergoing rapid change with respect to the complex realities in the development field. Theories are being revisited and reviewed on these lines. The paper includes the discussion on the right to livelihood for women, their access and entitlement to the natural resources. The experience from the ground level can add to the theoretical knowledge on the development of natural resources. it will also take up to critique the policy which very often ignores the very right to livelihood to women who pays high costs for the work but hardly receive any benefit from the watershed development activities.

The paper aims to explore the possibilities of getting the interface between knowledge and action blurred in order to move towards participatory and gender sensitive and rights based approach and ultimately towards sustainable development and use of natural resources.

## Women's' Studies for Clothing, Feminism for Dress? An Inquiry into Gender and Genre

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The problem of genre has been a haunting specter for Women's Studies: how is this disciplinary territory mapped, what kind of texts would it generate, what are the signifiers that would mark inevitably the margins of a feminist text? The relation between feminism and Women's Studies, women's texts and feminist discourse has been— in a sense— under interpreted (against the paradigm of over interpretation in semiotics). This aura and tension comes alive when it is demanded that Women's studies – from being enframed within the discourse of the feminine must emerge – always to issue feminist statements on everyday matters.( Regarding clothing, dress code and women how do they engage in cooperation and conflict?) In this paper I take hold of one register clothing and chart the tension between a discipline (Women's Studies), discourses (discourse of the women in general) and texts ( bounded utterance and topic) and juxtapose it with real conflicts of clothing.

I pursue this through three case studies. Our first case study would be that of Rukhmabai, who inspite of her otherwise revolutionary persona adhered to the old Hindu tradition of dressing like a married women, even after her separation from her husband and more surprisingly took to the widow's dress when her 'divorced' husband passed away. Second is the case of Bollywood women. For this paper I look at the first wave of Bollywood cinema's actresses and their dressing. And lastly, the more contemporary agency, of Sania Mirza or her 'sexy micro mini' debate.

Simultaneously we shall make a review of media reports on dress controversies and supplement it with surveys and discussions conducted with women and young college students with respect to the various dress code debates that have occurred in the last few years.

Such a study especially for those who believe that questions of agency/representation can't be compartmentalized (but undergoes auto-compartmentalization across the territories we've documented) and one cannot separate the serious from the so-called trivial, such a 'action –research' study holds the mirror to norms pertaining to public eroticism in our times.

## Action-oriented Need Based Research

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Being feminist activists over last thirty years meant lot of learning through action and to make this action more meaningful and holistic we have used research and analysis. The nature of research is more in terms of qualitative, open ended interview types with personal involvement in the issue and concerned with outcomes. This kind of research can definitely not be categorized as formal academic research and it leaned more towards change oriented search to make the research more meaningful and focused. The macro level reality of women's subordination has many subtle aspects and to take the localised experiences to an analytical/ theoretical level we considered the process of action research important.

This paper is written to narrate the important actions taken which were followed by the research, evaluation and modified actions. The nature of actions was at group level as group activity.

In 80s the participation in people's science movement along with personal experience while doing academic research in field of applied biology made to think about direction of the developing, progressing trends in life sciences and technology. There was demand from rural activists to get the information about the reproductive technologies in regional languages which would help them to take sides and also take actions. The secondary literature survey gave us a clear cut picture which was not directly applicable to Indian context. And we developed the framework to understand Indian situation and understand the context to disseminate information of reproductive technologies. We shared the framework, with women's health practitioners. The taking into consideration that knowledge which was emerged was given the form of book, ' *Prajanan: Niyantran ki Koshishe and sanvad ke prays'*

Anju and I are working towards addressing the issue of ageing in gender context. We are trying to understand the concerns and needs of elderly women across class and caste and marital status. The need to look at the policy in gender sensitive way we need to understand women as agency after their long drawn struggle from a victim status. The policies which are looking at old age as liability would be more sensitive to take into account the active and positive ageing. The oral narrative form has been used.

## Explorations and Expressions – Girls Speak Out

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The limited scope that girls in India have for self expression is further restricted as they enter the second decade of life. With the exception of mostly urban upper and upper middle class girls, other girls do not really experience the phase of girlhood.

Girls specific programmes and spaces are important and necessary for them to be able to navigate adolescence successfully and productively. This is now also reflected in the objectives of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and of various other plans and schemes.

In order to assist girls in becoming participants in their own development and empowerment VACHA has introduced a number of programmes and activities through which they can acquire confidence and skills and express themselves. This training is preceded or accompanied by visits to various institutions and meetings with individuals for exposure to wider reality and for contextualizing their experience. Girls then make presentations at *basti* and school levels and to the local leadership. Meeting higher levels of bureaucracy and government is also part of this ongoing project.

This paper is based on methodology developed, documentation of lived experiences of girls and their expressions in *Bole Kishori* (Girls Speak Out) and other programmes by Vacha in its work with girls in the 10-15 age groups who study in Municipal schools in Mumbai.

## Self Help Groups (SHGs): An Action Programme and Relevance for Research

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Academicians and policy makers have acknowledged organising women into Self Help Groups (SHGs) globally as a dominating development initiative.

It is significant that the pressure of the forces of liberalization coincided with the focus on the policies to promote SHGs. The state is pursuing the promotion of SHGs in a forceful manner. By doing so it is promoting the linkage of informal sector into market based economy.  With the emergence of micro-finance, government is moving away from its role of direct participation in the developmental programmes.  The claims regarding the empowerment need to be assessed in this context.

The corporate sector has also started climbing on to the bandwagon of promoting and using the SHG network. Through *Project Shakti* the FMCG giant Hindustan Lever Ltd. (HLL) has already entered the hitherto un-under-tapped rural markets.

It is time to take a critical look at the experiences of SHGs in India. The paper  proposes to focus on the experiences of SHGs with respect to their most important twin objectives viz alleviation of poverty and empowerment of women. It also explores the types of income generating activities initiated by SHGs, the kind of asset creation and the nature of the use of credit. It also focuses on the changing role of the state regarding the developmental programmes in the context of the emergence of SHGs.

### Speaking Tree, Womenspeak: The Asia Court of Women on Crimes against Women related to the Violence of Development

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In the context of a praxis approach to political intervention perspectives and processes that informs the organisational ethics of Vimochana and the CIEDS Collective from which it has emerged, I would like to reflect upon our experience of organising *Speaking Tree, Womenspeak: The Asia Court of Women on Crimes against Women related to the Violence of Development* held in Bangalore in January 1996. This event we believe was a turning point for us in Vimochana and many other groups in the movement working on issues related to violence against women.

Central to the Courts of the Women, apart from the voices of women as survivors of and resistors to different forms of violence, is its feminist methodology that seeks to weave together this subjective and personal voice of the woman with the objective and political context within which she is located; the affective and the aesthetic aspect of our senses with the logical and the rational.

Unfolding therefore at the multilayered realms of the emotional, rational and the intuitive, the process of this particular endeavour, revealed for us the deeper connections between the increasing incidence and forms of violence against women in the personal sphere that we work with.

This has subsequently reflected in the ways in which our work has evolved after the organising of the Court, both in terms of initiating new areas of work as also deepening existing ones. As for instance the ways in which we were able to reconceptualise and respond to the issue of prostitution from the lives and experience of women in the *dhanda,* that we had till then seen as a form of patriarchal violence against women; or the ways in which we were able to redefine and respond to the issue of female infanticide and then subsequently sex selective abortions not so much as a problem rooted in *son preference* as much as a product of a development paradigm that devalued the woman aided and abetted by an over technologised medical system.

### Issues in Working on Gender and Health Equity at the Local Level

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This paper emerged in the course of the review of the Gender and Health Equity (GHE) project (initiated in October 2001).It is intended to improve reproductive health and rights outcomes in 60 villages of Koppal district in Karnataka by raising the **awareness** levels; increasing their **access** to public health services; and by generating **accountability** of the public health service providers (three As).

In 2006, the three As were conceptually approached separately to: a) to theorise on each based on field realities; and b) to feed this theoretical understanding back into the field. This paper reflects upon **critical access issues that arise in the course of project implementation.**

The paper reiterates that women are not a monolithic unit grappling with a single set of issues. Further, there is no simple and direct correlation between variables of caste, class and access. It establishes that certain optimal conditions become the non-negotiables for women to assert their health rights. Most of these optimal conditions tend to be located in the larger social determinants of health. It is necessary to generate collective consensus in society regarding the importance of women's access to health care as a basic requirement. This will create a situation whereby women are in a position to exercise agency in this domain. The core contention of this paper is that the right to safe motherhood is exercised by the woman in her individual capacity. Yet unless there is collective consensus on this right, there are multiple barriers inhibiting her from exercising this right as an individual. This closely ties in with Ruger's position that the nature of health norms affects individual's efforts to achieve functioning. As an outcome of this understanding, the GHE project is currently engaged in consolidating information on how individual women's rights are violated because of lack of consensus. Through this, it is developing collective pressure to ensure that this right is not violated. Collective consensus and pressure are being generated at multiple levels: the home, community, village, local leadership and the public health care system.

# SUB THEME - 5

# GENDER SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Co-coordinators : Riddhi Shah, Russell Square International College, Mumbai
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## Increasing Trend in Cesarean Section Delivery: A Threat to Women's Health

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The dramatic rise in the overall rate of cesarean sections, their high cost and the wide variation observed in rates among various populations has raised concern for women health. Though it is justified to perform cesarean section under certain clinical circumstances, it is possible that this extremely useful surgical procedure is being misused for profit purposes in the growing private sectors in both developed as well as developing nations. Because, it no more represents the quality of care but speaks on the unhealthy trend developing both at medical profession and at the community. Therefore, increasing trend in caesarean delivery indicates that the procedure is used for reasons other than maternal complications. It also leads to a risk to the mother's health and an inefficient use of resources. In many, if not most cases, technological intervention in childbirth is unnecessary. Some believe that technology is neutral and value-free and can be used or abused. Therefore it is evident that the development and application of reproductive technologies is creating contradictory possibilities for women. There are a number of clinical as well as non-clinical determinants behind the preference of cesarean delivery. Most important are doctor's economic incentives, growth of private health sectors and socio-economic and cultural factors such as women's autonomy, gender dimension. In India, the increasing rate of c-section delivery is a matter of concern. The present study, therefore, is an attempt to explore the situation in cesarean delivery in India and the states. We also try to analyze the determinants for the preference of cesarean delivery and to explore the interrelationship between the factors and demand for the c-section as well. It also focuses on the demand of women in choosing the c-section and her status of rights for ensuring reproductive health wellbeing. Attempt has also been made to emphasize on the ongoing debates For the study, data has been analyzed based on Reproductive and Child Health Survey (RCH-2002-'04) and NFHS (III). The data reflects that cesarean delivery is more than 10 percent in many states which will be a problem for maternal health in present years. WHO advises that rates of caesarean delivery should be between 5 - 15 percent? Rates higher than 15% indicate inappropriate use of the procedure. Most importantly, in some states like Kerala, Goa, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, the rate is in alarming position.

## Medical Technologies and Women's Lives: Need for a New Approach: A Case Study on Ultra-Sonography And PNDT Act

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Many examples of how technology is affecting women's health can be quoted. Some of them can be listed like ultrasonography, contraceptives, emergency pills etc. Some of the techniques though low cost and easy like Vasectomy-[permanent sterilization for males] are not widely advocated by the male dominated policies.

Thus, now it is time to take up the stand or approach that implementation of the new health technologies has to be supported by the social scientists especially the gender experts in terms of making society aware of the impacts it is going to have especially on women's bodies and overall balance of the society. It is required in the country like India which is dominated by patriarchy in all spheres of life and the women are not the decision or policy makers. Hence, we see that the women's needs, interests and perspectives are not reflected.

The women's movement in India was successful to pressurize the policy makers to have Acts like PNDT but the responsibility of the movement or especially women's studies bodies does not end there. But it also has to take stock

and further pressurize that only making laws will not be enough but gender sensitive approach and women's participation is also required to make women's life safer and to advocate that the technologists and the social scientists have to work hand in hand for the betterment of the human beings especially the women.

The technique of ultra-sonogrphy is widely discussed about its impact not only on women's lives but overall social changes and problems it is creating in the society.

The paper will present some of the research based observations regarding how the sonography is widely used not only in urban areas but in rural areas. The paper further presents a case study about the implementation of the PNDT Act [in Maharashtra where this Act was first implemented] and how women's involvement in the monitoring of the Act is required and possible. It will also share how lack of gender sensitive approach in the implementation of rules which control such technology creates space for malpractices and adversely affect women.

## Impact of Clinical Drug Trials on Women in India

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India is witnessing an alarming trend. All across the country there is a growing number of '*nari*' guinea pigs who have been subjected to clinical trials often without 'informed consent' and in most cases through 'the engineering of consent'.

The international community recognising that human experimentation cannot be wished away has over the years opted for 'informed consent' in place of 'free consent'. While the Nuremberg trials brought to light the horrors of medical experimentation on human beings, and tried to articulate a restraining formula by stressing the concept of "informed consent," the trials also recognized that "*Medical science cannot, unless it is to be brought to a standstill, dispense with the application in suitable cases of new remedies and procedures not yet fully tested. Nor can it do entirely without scientific experiment on human beings itself.* "The Preliminary efforts by the Council for International Organizations of Medical Sciences (CIOMS) resulted into the Helsinki Declaration formulated in the year 1964. This is considered the fundamental document in the field of Ethics, and has been revised from time to time. In1982, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the CIOMS proposed 'International Guidelines for Biomedical Research involving Human Subjects' which was subsequently brought out by CIOMS in the year 1993 and revised in the year 2002.Over the years many countries developed their National Guidelines. In India, The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), in the year 1980, released a Policy Statement on 'Ethical Considerations Involved in Research on Human Subjects' to be followed in India for clinical research.

The author has examined the ethical guideline for research on human subjects prepared by The Central Ethics Committee on Human Research (CECHR) of The Indian Council for Medical Research and draws attention to glaring instances of how these guidelines have been observed more in its breach despite landmark Apex Court rulings against fraudulent and dangerous clinical trials. The author opines that with the introduction of the new Patent regime in India a quantum leap in clinical trials can well be expected both by Indian Pharmaceutical Companies and by MNCs who would rather outsource clinical trials to India to cut costs.

The need of the hour is to contain the growing number of '*nari*' guinea pigs. Legislative reforms, strict application of the rules concerning informed consent and putting in place an effective redress mechanism are indeed imperative.

## Women as knowers? Towards a feminist critique of science in Marxist spaces

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Do women know? Do women know different? Is that knowing science? These are questions that feminist work has tried to answer in its engagements with the 'feminist question in science'. While feminism has mostly achieved consensus with respect to the first two questions – the answer being yes – the last has more often than not posed problems. While women might well know, and know different, the question of their knowledge being objective enough to be called science has not been answered satisfactorily. While positions on contextual empiricism and situated knowledge have directly taken on the objectivity question, stating that objectivity could be maximized through particular positionings, another major strand has been to reject the "we-too" approach to objectivity – already a much-maligned term in its

failure to be anchored to experience, to particularity, to the local. This strand of feminist thinking has preferred the articulation of experiential knowledge as that which cannot only not be accommodated in scientific practice, but *need not be*. Women, then, are granted, by virtue of their positioning "below the platforms of the powerful", the gift of particular perspectives; these perspectives inform their various practices as well as afford them tools to engage with hegemonic forms of knowledge i.e. western science and medicine.

My paper aims to look at the trajectory of feminist responses to science in India, with specific focus on work on the reproductive health apparatus in Bengal. This work has moved from questions of access to the "fruits" of science and technology – a women-*in*-science question – to those of the *terms* of that access or inclusion – a women-*and*-science question. I will examine the genealogies of this shift, particularly the manner in which legacies of Left critique worked for those 'growing up feminist in Marxist spaces' in the '80s. My hypothesis is that this legacy actually shaped the methodologies of feminist work on science, including the shift from access to terms of access. A parallel reading of the shift in Left approaches to science and technology from the nationalist to the postcolonial moments would suggest this. This is not to suggest a relationship of bonhomie or emulation between feminist and Marxist practice in Bengal, but rather a fraught and largely unacknowledged relationship of antagonism.

In the backlash against feminism and against ideological positions in general too, a great deal of gender work has since proliferated, particularly looking at childbirth practices and midwifery, that records this perspectival relationship between women and science, sometimes positioning women as ex-officio knowers, sometimes as learning through living, never a coherent community, and never as subjects of feminism. This kind of work, apart from being read as the new acceptable micro-politics in the new globalised economy, could also be read as a response to what was seen as rigid ideological stances in feminism that read *both women and science* in homogenous frames.

What, then, could be a relevant feminist critique of science in our particular contexts? Can gender work challenging the grounds of feminism be dismissed as the backlash? Is feminist methodology inextricably tied to its Marxist moorings in ways neither useful nor desirable? Will feminist knowledge, like the 'feminine' in hegemonic frames of both politics and science, be experienced but non-knowledgeable? Will this be the only alternative to discredited ideological stances?

## Indian Women's Decision making regarding Pre-natal Genetic Testing

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Pre-natal testing is becoming common in large cities and small towns in India, as pregnant women are increasingly registering with gynaecologists for ante-natal care and delivery in clinics, rather than having traditional home births, although in rural areas the latter is still largely the case. For pregnant women prenatal testing shapes the experience of pregnancy, where they derive either reassurance or anxiety from the results of testing. But do we really know if their agreement to testing in such a context is an expression of 'informed choice', an instance of conformity or a response to coercion, asks Abby Lippman (1991). The technology is presented in the popular media as a broadening of choice. While in principle, prenatal testing and screening create new possibilities of informed decision making for (prospective) parents and individuals, they also carry new potentials for coercion, stigmatization and marginalisation. In the case of testing for foetal sex, it creates a new dilemma whether women's right to abortion should extend to women's right to sex-selective abortion on non-medical grounds.

In the last two decades several macro- and micro-level studies have been done in India to determine the extent of the proliferation of female foeticide, the profile of women/couples who avail themselves of it and their attitudes to it, but hardly any research has been done to study women's use of pre-natal testing for genetic purposes. What does the availability and use of pre-natal testing mean for the management and experience of pregnancy for Indian women? How important is it to give birth to a 'healthy' child in Indian culture? What kind of choices are pregnant women faced with due to the existence of these techniques? What are the factors and actors influencing women's decision-making whether to continue a pregnancy or not? What are the implications thereof for women's health and autonomy? These are some of the questions that I want to explore in the context of India.

The paper is based on theoretical and empirical research. The latter comprises participant observation during genetic counselling sessions and semi-structured interviews conducted at the genetics department and ultrasound department of a private trust hospital and the genetics department of a public hospital in New Delhi.

## Women and Infertility Treatment: A Rights Perspective

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The study tries to capture the procedure of seeking medical treatment for infertility by childless women and men in an urban Indian context, focusing on the gender differences at each level. It aims at understanding the perceptions of women and men with reference to the treatment seeking process, including the various aspects of decision-making and informed choice. The participant groups comprised (i) women and men who were seeking treatment for infertility, either for self or spouse (n=40) and individuals who had discontinued with the treatment (n=15); belonging to middle/upper middle class, in the city of Baroda, India, and (ii) doctors: gynecologists and urologists providing infertility treatment. In depth individual interviews were carried out.

The findings reinforce the fact that the reproductive domain is the woman's domain irrespective of the cause of the problem. Men's descriptions of their experiences too suggest the pressure being on women. Reflecting on the treatment experiences by both women and men, it was felt that minimal reference was made to information giving and counseling for social and environmental causes; and even for medical causes. Multiple views about the doctors' approach were also put forth. Women described the doctors to be sensitive and understanding, but also "mechanical" in their approach. Most of them felt that the doctors were unable to give adequate time and hence their queries could not be satisfactorily resolved. The interviews with the doctors on the contrary describe an idealistic procedure, yet some of them do candidly talk about the problems faced by them in following the same.

The findings have implications on the health system and their role in upholding the clients' right to informed choice and decision making, especially women, who seemed ill-informed in the present study. At the same time neither was any effort made to inform the men, yet they by virtue of being the patriarch could 'ask' for details. The study thus recommends that the quality of care and related services to meet the needs of individuals seeking treatment is a critical issue to be addressed at the level of policy making. More so because of the increasing accessibility of the Assisted Reproductive Technology (ART) in the current scenario of globalization. The societal pressure may drive women to seek different technology. At the same time lack of information and awareness about these techniques and its effects may lead women to allow their bodies to be used as experimental sites.

## The Impact of Globalisation on Women in IT Education

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The present paper examine the various complex mechanism involved in the process of gender, information technology and cultural changes which is specific to globalisation. The research article focussed on the impact of globalisation on women into IT education to identify and compare the factors for Indian women to enter into IT education in comparison to Civil and Mechanical branches of engineering. Although the impact of globalization in the Information technology education on women's empowerment acquires greatest significance yet, it remains marginalized in a developing state like Orissa. In recent times, it is evident that women students in large numbers are gradually entering into technical profession by breaking the traditional boundary. No doubt, it is encouraging which in fact paves the way for empowerment of women. The present study also intends to explore and analyze the massive enrollment, sustainability and socialization of women students in technical education. Further the present study also highlighted the relationship between gender prejudices in technical education and globalisation as exclusive and independent. At the same time they are closely interrelated. It is also expected that the study would lead to appropriate recommendation to overcome the proverbial 'glass ceiling' and 'glass wall'. In Orissa context, engineering profession and education was socially rather than naturally, psychologically or globally unsuitable for many women due to its age old customs and tradition. But now a sea change is perceptible in engineering education in Orissa in respect of entry of women students. They are shining more visibly in IT related engineering subject than their male counterparts.

This paper also seeks to reveal the complex gendered prejudices that prevent women students to enter into engineering study as well as in the career.

## Ensuring Safe Motherhood by Using ICT Tools in Behavioural Change Communication

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In the modern world Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) are widely used to produce, store, process, disseminate and exchange information. The term ICT encompasses a wide range of technologies including the "older" ICTs – radio, press, TV, film, walkie-talkies and telephone to "newer" ones – email, CD-ROMS, websites, computers, cell phones, palm pilots, digital video cameras etc.

The innovative use of the new computer-based ICTs in reproductive health programmes has increased dramatically in the last decade. Gender issues need pro active consideration in the planning, budgeting, training and development of ICT projects. Although ICT can play a central role in providing people access to usable information and education, social and economic development is not possible without the meaningful and sustained involvement of the people who are most affected by developmental changes.

The challenge is to harness the tremendous ICT tools at our disposal to catalyse real, long term differences in the lives of the millions who need it the most. ICTs can be used to facilitate schemes for safe motherhood and for educating the women, specially those in rural areas.

This paper aims to study the following areas:  Impact of ICT on safe motherhood and their use as a tool for the empowerment of women; Use of ICT to promote gender equality and gender sensitivity; Impact of ICT in behavioural change communication with reference to safe motherhood; Challenges and benefits encountered by women with regard to ICT in the field of maternal health; Need for upgrading technological skills in rural areas.

## Need for Access to IT for Women and Yet Problems of Representation of Women through Easier Availability of Pornography

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The third millennium has seen amazing innovation in technology. IT and web technology has furthered the change and in fact has revolutionised the socio-economic setup. Everything from a groom to needle is a 'just a click away' and in fact 'Duniya mere mutthi mein' has become a popular slogan.

Women and people in the margins of society, who are deprived of IT technology, are fortunately being connected to it. Such access has been limited to miniscule proportion of people who have had the advantage of coming within the folds of unionisation, organised under people's movements or under the NGO folds. Today some of the rural women are getting computer literate. RTI has been the greatest boon.

Despite such access, women have remained at the receiving end of the spectrum. Sex selective abortion used for eliminating girl children, a by- product of wonderful genetic technology, Internet, professedly a democratic tool has been abused and misused by the patriarchal societies to suit their ends.

Pornography has proliferated in Web technology and has almost become an industry. Proliferating pornographic sites are the obvious by-products of the commercial economy. Gender based discrimination has come up very sharply. Web pornography has been used to intimidate women at work places and even on the e-mail sites as well as the social networking site. Women have been compelled to leave jobs due to such perversions. Case studies will be presented in my paper.

Cyber crime has fortunately been recognised and jurisprudence has also been developed. Despite available legal remedies, women are at the receiving end in patriarchal societies.

Conclusion: Technology cannot be viewed within a social vacuum. The growing consumer economy in semi-feudal societies, added to it the patriarchal dimension, has created more problems than can be tackled. However the positive aspects cannot be forgotten.

## Information Technology and Question of Women's empowerment: Reflections from Andhra Pradesh

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The rise of Information Society in West not only changed the nature and direction of developed countries but also transforming the socio-economic matrix of the developing societies. India is not an exception to these processes. The growing presence of women in different layers of IT organization has become successful in connecting the horizontal and vertical digital spaces within and across countries. Thus the women of developing countries in general and Indian women in particular tend to attach lot of significance to IT as a source of empowerment. The research paper aims to make an attempt to understand the innovations in technology in the 'core' global economies in shaping the growth of IT industry in 'periphery' (India) secondly, to explore the socio-economic and cultural factors which tend to encourage women to opt for career in IT industry, and thirdly it aims to understand the experiences and expectations of women in balancing the family and work space. The study, based on an empirical data collected through field work in Andhra Pradesh reveals that most of the women attached 'lots of meanings and interests' to IT and allied streams. The social prestige and economic independency and contribution to family on the one hand and matrimonial prospectus on the other encourage women to opt for IT courses.  The study also found that women consider IT education as agency for social mobility in gender and family hierarchy. The study argue that growing proportion of women in the context of IT industry is conditioned by the global market search for cheap labour source (in periphery) and social expectations of men from women such as IT qualification, dowry. The conceptual analysis of empowerment of women needs to be examined and contextualised within the perspective of gender cyber spaces.

## A Study of Women Workers in the ITES-BPO Industry in Chennai

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The Indian Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) industry has become a buzzword in the economic landscape of India.

One of the most commonly cited reasons for the attractiveness of such companies in a country like India is that it is creating job opportunities for less qualified young graduates with relatively less experience. They are paid relatively high salaries.   Notwithstanding these features the attrition rates are high. India's outsourcing industry has been called its golden goose though the BPO workers are only 0.1% of the workforce of the country.

One notable feature is that, women form almost 35% of the workforce in the software industry and this figure is expected to grow. Women dominate in number at call centres back-office services especially data entry operations, as medical transcriptionists etc.

This study aims to look at the various aspects of the employment of women in the BPO industry n Chennai. It seeks to examine the socio-economic background of these women as well as the facilities and opportunities that are made available to them at their workplace, the extent to which the female employees of such companies are able to enjoy their basic rights as workers, and if minimum standards of just, free and fair labour are being maintained in the BPO sector. The paper will attempt to study if the women workers in BPOs face any form of sexual harassment or abuse during the course of their work or in their work environments.

## Issues of Women Practitioners of Science and the Impact of Their Gender on their Practice

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In this study, we examine the availability of economic opportunities for women from an international perspective. We further examine its implications for the economic development of a country. We study data from the fifty countries classified as high human development (HDI) index countries by the United Nations Human Development Report. These countries represent better quality of life, higher attainment levels in education and health services and higher incomes.

In the absence of a homogenous and comparable international data on the number of women in science, engineering and technology (SET) professions that can directly capture women's' participation in SET, we use a proxy variable that gives proportions of female professional and technical workers. Other variables are i) index of female literacy, ii) the public expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP, and iii) ratio of female incomes to male incomes is. We use regression modeling to find that high index of achievement in female education and high per capita incomes are important factors that would contribute to the growth of professional and technical women workers. Gender empowerment index, though highly desirable, does not guarantee increased participation of women in science and technology.

For measuring the equality of opportunities internationally, we look at differences in ranks among the three indicators the Gender Empowerment Measure, the Human Development Index and the Gender Development Index. We conduct five nonparametric statistical tests and the results show that there are no significant differences between HDI and GEM as well as HDI and GDI rankings. This is positive evidence that economic development promotes gender equality. While gender equality is necessary, it is not a sufficient condition for women getting a fair deal in all occupations. Female literacy and public expenditure on education are the two key factors that would most likely overcome occupational segregation and vertical segregation in sciences.

### Women's Experience vs. Dominant Notions: Gender Politics in Science Institutions in India

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Science institutions believe that notions such as 'women cannot do mathematics or science' do not exist in India and hence gender does not operate from with in the institutions. The only issue that the science institutions perceive as women's issue in science is the under representation as women constitute roughly 12% of the scientists holding a permanent/tenured position in the science institution in India and the only issue they are willing to address is 'marriage and family responsibilities'. According to them the very nature of science precludes the possibility of social factors such as gender playing a role in deciding who gets to do science. Yet, coming from middle class families that place a very high value on their daughters' education, prioritizing career demands over domestic responsibilities and seeking to belong as equals in the scientific endeavor, the experience of women scientists tell a different story.

Based on the narratives of the female and male scientists and the data collected from premier research institutions for a project titled 'Gender and Doing Science in India' this paper attempts to demonstrate how gender operates with in the science institutions in the notions that scientists hold about women's competence and commitment to do science, in shaping 'merit' and the career demands placed on a scientist, in deciding who gets to do science and in the awards and recognition given to scientists. The paper also seeks to bring out through the voices of women scientists, how the structure of the institutions and the problems of doing science in a third world country collude with gendered notions prevalent among the scientific community to marginalize them, the sexist attitudes that they encounter on an everyday basis, the way institutions deal with issues such as sexual harassment at work place and what it means to be a woman seeking to pursue science in such a space. The difference in the way male and female scientists account for under representation and the difference in the range of issue they foreground underscore the gender politics that is alive in a space that claims to be gender neutral.

### Poor Visibility of Women Practitioners of Science: A Question of Numbers, Quality, Opportunities and Rectifying Measures

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All over the world with some country-specific differences, fewer women as compared to men are seen as practioners of science. Biology and Medicine see many more women whereas Physics and Mathematics see very few. Over the past decades the absolute numbers and proportion of women entering natural sciences are steadily increasing. Despite this their proportion in permanent jobs and senior positions in academia and industry has remained poor. Natural sciences was one of the last bastions of patriarchy being shaken by the presence of women's movement. In the developed countries for over two decades there have been more organised efforts to highlight minority status of women practioners

of Science. These attempts have focussed attention not only on smaller numbers of women but also discrimination in terms of lower salary, poor promotional avenues etc. In India the era of policy makers wondering about the status of women in different scientific institutions has dawned recently and there is a very long way to go. This, despite 12 women scientists in Bombay coming together, way back in 1973, and forming Indian Women Scientists Association (IWSA). The focus of IWSA's work was never on highlighting the status of women scientists in Indian science scenario, but on increasing scientific temper in the society and other praiseworthy but gender non-specific issues. Under the aegis of Ministry of Science and Technology, Government of India, certain schemes were initiated to promote re-entry of women in Science a few years ago. The national science academies have also taken a note of the skewed proportions of men and women in the field of science. Various initiatives, now in place, are trying to understand the specific problems, seeking recommendations and possible measures to implement, thereby hoping to correct the disparities. Information on some of these initiatives, their objectives, the expected outcome etc. will be presented.

## Diversity Integral to Indian Science and Technology

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Women and girls are grossly under-represented in science and related careers. Even in countries where girls are well represented in science courses at the undergraduate level, there is a distinct pyramidal effect, with the number of women dwindling significantly at the masters and doctoral levels. However, this may not be true in the case of India and hence pose an interesting research question.

The question of engendering science and engineering has often been formulated within the narrow scope of participation 'per se' in terms of numbers.

This paper moves beyond the limitation of data availability, and draws attention to the causes and processes responsible for women's low representation in science and engineering. Thus, data in the current form is indicative of a larger problem and not the problem per se.
Understanding the participation of women in science and technology has four levels.
Firstly, enrolment of students is not independent of the faculty. Hence it may be important to examine the nature of the student and teacher population and the extent of its homogenization at all levels. The shifts in employment of faculty both men and women need to be studied in depth to even attempt to make any meaningful indication of the trends.

Secondly, researches carried out in this area have used dominant paradigms which have overemphasised societal and individual factors to explain the low presence of women. Addressing the issue may lie in examining **'other factors'**. Faculty, performance measures and organizational culture among others requires to be critically reviewed.

Thirdly, the inadequate analysis of the experience of women scientists and engineers who either practice or leave science, resulting from adopting traditional frameworks needs to be recognized. Not treating women scientists as a homogeneous group is equally important.

And finally, the need to reconstruct women's participation in science and technology not as ways in which women can be motivated "in isolation", but to centre stage and redefine the problem within the realm of gender relations. This will mean understanding that male participation in science and technology is just as important.

Further, the body of literature on gender and science point to the lack of sustained qualitative data in virtually all the studies analysed so far, reiterating that the complexities of alienating organisational cultures are not always recorded. It is imperative that research studies need to move beyond the realm of organizational culture of these institutions. Addressing the lack of inter-textuality between three distinct bodies of literature namely gender, development and education may be an important step in the right direction.

## Reaching For the Stars: The Indian Institutes of Technology and Girls

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There are seven Indian Institutes of Technologies ( IITs) in India. Starting with the one in Kharagpur in 1951, these Institutes were part of the Nehruvian vision to become self reliant in science and technology by producing engineers (mainly) and technologists to meet the needs of a newly independent nation. This vision has to some extent been

successful as the IITs now have been recognised world wide for the exceptional quality of their graduates. However, the numbers of women in the Institute remains very low (almost 7-8%) even fifty or more years after their inception.

In this particular paper I examine the reasons why young girls who are otherwise opting for an engineering degree still apply/get in to the less prestigious state engineering schools. My study is confined to Kerala where traditionally more girls opt for engineering degree courses than in other parts of the country. The questions posed here are: Are they not taking the very tough IIT entrance exam ( Joint Entrance Exam – JEE) ?
Are they not getting through?

Are they getting through, yet not being allowed to go and study out of state in one of the IITs (There is no IIT in Kerala) ?

The results have shown that while 48% of the boys were taking the JEE, only 28% of the girls were doing so. It is also argued that due to lack of adequate preparation, the girls are not clearing the exam in equal proportions. Lastly, it is clear that if indeed these girls do clear the exams, they will be allowed to go to the IIT most probably Chennai ( as this is close to home) by their parents who will either finance them or get bank loans. The discussion looks in depth at the reasons behind these differences. Suggestions for change are offered.

Six schools in Trivandrum were chosen initially ( 2 co-educational, 2 boys' schools and 2 girls' schools).  In each school a group of twenty students appearing for the engineering entrance exams were given a questionnaire which addressed a range of issues relating to their background, decision to become engineers, support structure – both familial and at school, their mode of preparation for the exams, attitudes towards various issues and lastly their confidence levels. A questionnaire was also distributed to the teachers. I discuss the problems in using the questionnaire technique in the discussion. In no school was the real motive of the study mentioned. In all the schools a discussion was held with the students after the questionnaire was filled. Additionally a small survey was conducted in a coaching institute meant for IIT entrance coaching.

## Introducing an Inclusive Technology Education Curriculum at School Level

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Technology is a product of social relations and forces, and hence gendered. Various socio-cultural factors keep women from entering fields that are overtly called technology.  Craft unions have played an active role in resisting the entry of women into trades thereby relegating women to unskilled jobs and identifying skilled work with men. Besides, technology selection is shaped by social arrangements reflecting the power structures in society.

The linkages between technology and education are affected by their historical and social settings. Worldwide, there is a trend of less female enrollment in science and technology as compared to the humanities. The appropriate place to challenge this situation, including the existing gendered practices of science and technology, is not at the higher education levels but at school. Technology education at school level in India has had a chequered history, appearing in the guise of subjects like vocational education and socially useful and productive work (SUPW).  Besides, it has been stereotyped on the basis of gender.

The study of pupils' perceptions of technology at the Homi Bhabha Centre for Science Education encompasses what students mean by the term technology, and has a gender focus. The study is a precursor to the development of a technology based school curriculum. Making technology education inclusive assumes significance in the complex Indian context. An inclusive technology education across the country would have to address the nature of activities within the curriculum and its contextualisation. The paper will present some results from the survey of students' perceptions of technology and indicate how a communication and collaboration centred "Design and Technology Education Units" can be inclusive for boys and girls in urban and rural settings.

## Gender, Information and Communication Technology based Functional Literacy

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Traditional family and cultural values of the society, gender based roles and responsibilities do not support and encourage women's participation particularly in the rural areas especially in education. Women face considerable

barriers in access to education and information and time. Proportion of literacy rate among men and women shows great disparity in the rural and tribal areas and women need to be supported. Also, the literacy rate varies based on class and targeting economically and socially disadvantaged sections of the rural communities especially among women helps to reach towards bringing gender equality.

The paper is based on the field level interventions on Information and Communication Technology mediated functional literacy among socially and economically weaker groups through Village knowledge Centers in Kannivadi region of Dindigul dt. Tamil Nadu. It focus on how the needs and priorities of women and men differs and elucidate the various gender sensitive approaches like content of the learning materials, flexible/convenient time and place, women staff etc which enables the participation of women to access and use the technology. Also it would brief about how functional literacy is making the differences in their personal life and helpful to strengthen/improve their livelihood activities. The skills related to reading, writing and numeracy are considered as basic by the women members due to its applicability in daily life and give confidence and skill to access resources, in turn it enhances women's capacity to build sustainable livelihood and participate in the society.

### Women Centred Pedagogy and Ecoenterprises for Multiple Livelihoods among the Women Agricultural Labourers in the State of Tamil Nadu

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The existing gendered power relationship ascribed patriarchal powers and associated patriarchal truths subjugate women and keep them in subordinate position. The hierarchical epistemology of gender promotes social and economic imbalance and reinforce the male domination and female dependency. In reality both men and women in the society promote the patriarchal values, customs and defend the traditional social divisions and related institutions. At present innovative experiments are being promoted with objectives to economically empower women, promote equity and to upset the prevailing gendered power structure. It is expected that the results should reconstruct the social values, generate collective resistance to the current order and dissolve the hierarchical gender categories. New efforts essentially need new pedagogy, which is rigorously participatory in nature, gender sensitive, collective in nature, flexible to accommodate women's concerns, and potential to over come the gendered constrains.

Keeping this as the back drop the paper makes an attempt to capture the processes adopted to set up group based ecoenterprises through technology demystification to produce biocontrol and biofertilizers as multiple livelihood opportunities by the landless women Self Help Groups in Kannivadi region of Dindigul districtt, Tamil Nadu. The paper would focus the women centred pedagogic methods adopted to train the women labourers in the production process, business development, marketing the product, to overcome the gendered constraints and the learning achieved.

### In Pursuit of a Knowledge Platform for Feminism and Women's Studies: OneWorld South Asia and SANGAT

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The paper posits the need to explore special, nurturing and non-critical spaces where feminists from different backgrounds can hone their understanding, sharpen conceptual and verbal tools, share knowledge and strategies for acting together. It is in this context that the proposed paper seeks to establish the relevance of the two-way platform provided by information and communication technologies in the sharing, processing, and even generating of knowledge in the area of feminist and women's studies, especially in a context where existing pools of such knowledge remain sparsely scattered.

Facilitating the exchange of ideas and concepts, collating and disseminating learnings from the grassroots experiences, providing a support structure and collaborative space for further theorising and action, serving as a platform to develop, position and broad-base action and policy research in the area of feminist and women's studies, etc. are just some of ways in which information and communication technologies can underpin and strengthen the women's movement in India and South Asia.

This paper seeks to acknowledge contemporary concerns around levels of infrastructure, access to technology, and the thoroughgoing need for capacity building; at the same time to identify initiatives that transcend barriers of language, literacy and connectivity to provide user-friendly access of information and communication technologies to women, particularly rural poor women. It posits that the *appropriation* of traditional and emerging media has the potential to address some key issues and challenges to the use of knowledge and technologies *by* women *for* women, and herein also lies the potential for feminising online spaces/ feminising knowledge.

Finally, the paper offers the idea of a 'South Asian Feminist Portal' as a common online space for south Asian feminist dialogue being developed through the collaborative efforts of One World South Asia and SANGAT, who bring to the proposed initiative their strengths in information and communication technologies, managing knowledge platforms and partnerships, and providing voice to the voiceless on the one hand (OneWorld South Asia); and in managing feminist networks and serving as a catalyst for collaborative feminist thought, strategies and action (SANGAT).

## Beyond Value-neutral Objectivity: Exploring Feminist Interventions in Epistemology

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This paper examines the feminist transformation of knowledge as justified true belief. It discusses two antagonistic arguments against feminist science and epistemology, namely that of Richard Rorty and Susan Haack. Rorty treats epistemology and science as cultural conversation and dissolves objectivity. Alternatively, Haack retains both as "honest" objective inquiries. However, feminists cannot in a Rortian gesture renounce validity without blunting their own critiques of epistemology. Nor can they adopt Haack's "honest inquiry", since it ignores the relation between knowledge, history and interests. Despite their differences, Rorty and Haack reproduce the ahistorical assumptions underlying traditional epistemology. To challenge them, the context of justification and that of discovery have to be balanced. Feminist epistemology and science have contributed to such a balance. They argue that social hierarchies affect the production of knowledge. Feminists have also reconstructed the notions of validity and objectivity to open up non-patriarchal knowledge.

In its first and second parts, this paper scrutinizes Rorty's and Haack's critiques of feminist epistemology. Its third and final section reflects on the transformations effected by feminist interventions in knowledge and their reconstruction of objectivity.

## Gender, Technology and Institution in the Indian Coal Mining Industry: Exploring the Linkages

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The objective of this paper is to explore the factors leading to increasing gender discrimination in the coal mining workforce in India, where women's participation has gone down drastically from around 25% in 1946 to around 6% in 2004. Over the years, while the coal industry has grown manifolds through various technological up-gradations and policy revisions, the women participation in the labour force has declined.

This paper employs the theories around technological and institutional changes and their impacts. The "social shaping of technology" theory emphasizes on the importance of social, economic and political forces in shaping the technology. It argues that the technological changes are outcome of social contexts and factors and thus technology is socially shaped. This theory establishes a two-way influence between technology, society and economics.

Feminist scholars have argued that the impact (mostly negative) of technological change on women should also be investigated since many of these technological changes are shaped by the existing gender inequalities in society and, in turn, have negative consequences on women.

The present paper analyzes the triadic interaction between changes in technology and institutions and gender bias in the Indian coal-mining sector. The paper examines the technological and policy changes since Independence and their impact on the women labour force in the industry. Primary data collected by the author through the fieldwork in two of the coalmines in Jharkhand, India is used for developing the arguments. The paper argues that the policy changes and technological developments in the industry have resulted in gender-biased outcomes for women workers.

## Local Knowledge, Scientific Knowledge: Building Strategic Alliances for Feminist Gender Concerns

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The internal academic debates in feminism in terms of identifying a consistent position in relation to scientific knowledge sometimes results in extreme polarities, and has profound influence in the context of conceptualizing natural resource management and rural livelihoods. On one hand there are feminist scholars who look towards science and technology as a powerful tool that is capable of empowering rural women with better skills and knowledge. Whereas, on the other hand there are feminist scholars who vehemently propose a turn-around journey towards traditional ways of earning livelihoods, which they argue to be socially equitable and better suited to local ecology, thereby rejecting the scientific elements and external technology in total.

This paper interrogates this polarity between 'traditional' and 'scientific' knowledge by raising arguments based on the ethnographic qualitative field work conducted by the researcher in two villages of Western Maharashtra, India as a part of her doctoral research on local knowledge, gender and soil management. The empirical evidences as generated through the field work reject the 'indigenous/traditional' and 'scientific' hierarchal dichotomy by demonstrating the similarities, dissimilarities and intersections between both local knowledge systems and external knowledge systems based on western scientific principles. The paper further demonstrates the interplay of gender and power as important constituent of local knowledge constructions, thereby rejecting the populist nostalgia over the perfectionism and egalitarianism of traditional knowledge. Despite this, the paper strongly advocates the centrality of local knowledge, constructed by institutions and actors who are placed in the immediate vicinity of the natural resource; interacting with the resource and therefore managing it on a day to day basis. The paper concludes by arguing for a middle ground that critically evaluates both the local as well external scientific knowledge systems including their socio-technical elements and the institutional contexts, to further the feminist concerns for gender equity and women empowerment.

## Rhetoric of the Bio-medical Model and Feminist Understanding of Women's Mental Health

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The historical and political currents that have shaped contemporary feminist debate on mental health have not been an issue of great concern both within the women's movement on the one hand and in mainstream psychology in India on the other. While the feminist critique and understanding of women's health has permeated research and activism in this field, the same cannot be said of mental health. Broadly, mental health has been viewed as an individual attribute, resonating with the dominance of the bio-medical model. As in other areas, feminists question the necessary benefits for women arising from medical understandings of their experiences. This work and insights have drawn attention to the ways in which the medical model serves to draw emotional experiences into the realm of medical discourse, pathologizing emotional distress. Furthermore, by virtue of being individual-centred, the prevalence of the medical model overlooks the social context and social determinants of ill-health, and translates social relations into personal attributes, thereby resulting in victim-blaming. For instance, the experience of child sexual abuse can be transformed into a rhetoric which infantilizes women as the disturbed child. This can be paralleled by reluctance to resource the necessary training for staff to enable them to understand and contain levels of acute distress sustained by women subjected to abusive relationships that are covertly sanctioned by the dominant culture. Problems of mental health lie of course on a broad spectrum, ranging from the severe mental illnesses originating more from biological/ organic factors to the more common kind, linked to psychosocial causes, but involving high levels of emotional distress. Significantly, it is feminist research that has drawn attention to the demographics of distress, pointing out the links between women's overrepresentation in what are known as common mental disorders and their causes, namely, the kind of devalued position and roles women have in our society and the work they do. This paper maps the research and advocacy terrain of women's mental health in India. This field, though populated by a small group, has been impacted by current debates on development, human rights, gender, disability, and brings into its work public health and social justice perspectives, in contrast to the apolitical, individualizing and reductionistic understanding of mental health.

## Impact of Techonology on Women's Lives

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It is not only how women do science which matters but what science does to women; not simply women's lack of power to shape technologies but also the effect of existing technologies upon women's lives. Though there is a growing literature on both production and consumption, our focus here is on production. Feminism has had an impact on several relevant disciplines, bringing scholars to ask questions which had been generally ignored. Industrial sociologists, development economists and labour historians have all contributed; engendering their accounts of the effect of technology.

A small study conducted on 300 women working in IT fields in Bangalore city gave me a vast knowledge and insight into the depth of effect of technology on women's lives. The study showed how the health of these women have been effected because of their indulgence in technological jobs leading to impotency, increase in stress levels as they tend to do dual jobs, spinal problems, priorities on health becomes secondary as they are too materialistic and find no time to take care of their health. My small study will show how the girls and women are affected by health mainly because of the type of life style they adopt in IT field. Their eating habits, pms, pregnancy, child care, motherhood etc seem to be at stake. One important issue too is that as basic education like 10 standard, or a puc get well paid they are neglecting their education too, which have even led to unwed mothers and various other problems.

Finally, we can see how the change in technology has brought about social and cultural changes on women, but the concept of patriarchal and their concepts need to change as the society is still not mature to accept the social, financial, and cultural changes on women and their health too.

## Science and Technology: Towards Hegemony of Gender

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The process of female foeticide or sex selective abortion acts as a double-edged sword for women's health and rights. The discovery and development of the technology and its misuse by the doctors as well as technicians have made irreversible harm to the female fetuses. Apart from technology of Sex determination, technology as a part of the medicalisation process directly controls women's body and society as in the process the birth of particular foetuses is controlled. In such case, the patriarchal power through the reproductive technology is being imposed directly or indirectly over the womb of a woman. Therefore, woman's body becomes a field of power exercise through which the status quo of the patriarchal society is maintained.

The paper describes how in the patriarchal society of India, the socio-economic, cultural and political forces, have influenced towards the biased use of the medical sciences and technologies. While explaining this, the paper has engaged in theoretical debates of patriarchy, gender and science/technology. The paper also included some practical observations from several states of India such as Maharastra, Tamil Nadu, and Karnataka to understand the role of state and non-state actors towards the issue. In the state of Karnataka we have conducted some interviews with the District Health Officers, individual activists, lawyers, and women's organization to understand the role of state and non-state actor's towards the control of the female foeticide.

# SUB THEME - 6

## GENERATING NEW KNOWLEDGE AROUND SEXUALITIES AND GENDERS

### Panel I: Interrogating Gender
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The first panel of the sub theme Generating New Knowledge around Genders and Sexualities addresses, in fact, interrogates gender. Traditional feminist understanding of gender has been understood with sex associated with biological aspects and gender with the social notions of male and female corresponding to the masculine and feminine. Having created these clear and unambiguous categories of sex and gender, the journey of the last three decades for the feminist movements has also meant a further interrogation of gender itself.

The shifts reflect the intersectional nature of gender formation, brought in by struggles and theorizing from race, caste, class, sexual orientation providing the intersections of gender and the realization that the gender associated with the universal category woman no longer holds. The other set of shifts come from the lived realities and experiences of those who even question these intersecting notions, and transgress these given notions of gender. These transgressions and interrogations come from transgender people, hijras, lesbians. Not only do they re-look at notions of gender but also dismantle the binary construction. Placing upfront notions of female masculinities, fluid identities, the challenge is also to the notion of 'woman.'

The three presentations by Sharmila (IIT, Bombay) who looks at the performativity of gender from intersectional locations, Sumathi (Bangalore) who looks at lived experiences of transgressive genders and roles, and Chayanika (LABIA, Mumbai) on the cracking of the binary understanding of gender, will thus provide an exciting basis for discussion and conceptualization on new knowledges related to gender.

### Panel II: "Body Myths : the Natural and the Constructed"
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Women's bodies have been sites for generations of definitions, prescriptions and violations by patriarchies operating in all its forms. Feminism not only visibilised these but also helped unravel and understand them. And yet the dangers of essentialising loomed large over most feminist discourse because in this process of reclaiming the body, it became the prime determinant of "women" as a category. The category of sex as given and biological further added to these debates and understandings.

Many recent debates have, however, brought to light new dimensions of the way in which the naturalness of bodies can be understood, of emphasising how in mainstreaming women's bodies, we, as feminists, have also naturalised them in ways that have obfuscated the social constructions of biology. This panel will attempt to articulate concerns arising from the voices of marginalised peoples that force a reconstruction of the "natural" and the "biological".

The panel will have three presentations. Anita Ghai will speak on the politics of disability and the dominance of the temporarily abled, while Satya from Sampoorna will speak on the concerns and lives of transgender and transsexual persons, and Shalini from LABIA on the concerns and questions being raised by intersex persons. These presentations will raise questions on the naturalness of sex and biology itself, and will help articulate new understandings of what is natural and constructed around the body, and expand the feminist knowledges around the body itself.

### Demarcating Space for Identities in Performance
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In my paper I would like to explore issues of identity that a queer, Christian, performance artist finds herself engaging with in personal spheres, community spaces, performance spaces and feminist discourse. It is an attempt to map out

a location or consider the locations that I as a researcher, performer am engaging with in personal, political and artistic spaces. My performances themselves have explored and continue to explore these multiple identities and concerns. I feel that these experiences and deliberations challenge not simply the assumptions of compulsory heterosexuality, but also the assumptions of how secularism, sexuality and community identity operate within the Women's movement itself and within the Queer community.

As a performer and as a member of the queer community, my interests as a performance studies researcher have almost naturally been drawn to area gender and sexuality in performance. I have been interested in how gender and sexuality gets performed both deliberately and not-so-deliberately in demarcated sites of performance be it on the stage or on social spaces. Active performance of gender bending by gay men and gay artists, in social spaces and performance spaces, and how gender gets subverted is a phenomenon that I feel is actively challenging heteronormativity. It has been of particular interest to me when this has also happened in classical dance spaces and schools that have been established as not simply traditional spaces but preservers of tradition as well. A tradition that assumes a singular homogeneity of values, religion, practices etc in seeing itself as a cultural representative of India.

## Construction of Femininity in 'Kathak'

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All human beings are embodied creatures. Since it is mired in social inequalities, female embodiment is dissimilar to male embodiment and so it is important to know the implications of that for social relations in everyday life.

In this context, the present paper seeks to explore the ways in which the 'ideal' feminine is constructed through the classical dance form of Kathak. The paper argues that the femininity that is sought to be produced through Kathak is informed by patriarchal, heterosexual normativity to the marginalization of other possibilities. The history of Kathak as a dance form that saw the courtesan who was the creator and custodian of knowledge of the art form being marginalized and gradually replaced by the upper caste, middle class 'chaste' woman during the 'renaissance' of the dance, is implicated in this process of centering a particular feminine ideal to the exclusion of all others.

The body of a woman often becomes an instrument and a symbol for the community's expression of caste, class and community honour. Chastity, virtue and purity are extolled as great feminine virtues embodying the honour of the family, community and the nation. The paper explores how the present day practitioners of the dance form (who are invariably upper-caste, middle class urban women) strive to mark themselves as 'chaste' women, in spite of being 'dancers' through transformations in the pedagogical, learning, sartorial and cultural practices surrounding the art form.

The paper will try to map this process through content analysis of the texts prescribed for dance theory exams, that detail the specific types of physical attributes, mental characteristics etc. which are suited for a dancer. It will seek to establish that these prescriptions are Hindu, bramhanical, patriarchal and hetero-normative. The researcher will also draw on her own experiences, observations and reflections being herself a student of Kathak. It will explore, through detailed interviews, the lived experiences of Kathak dancers, to map how they try to embody these ideals in their everyday life practices, through diet, bodily discipline, dress etc.

## Staging Selves: A Transgender Group Performs

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"Ennai naanaga vazha vidu"
"Let me live as myself"

- The last line of the play Uraiyada Ninaivugal performed by members of Kannadi Kalai Kuzhu, the cultural troupe of Sudar Foundation.

Kannadi Kalai Kuzhu is the cultural group of Sudar Foundation working in Tamilnadu. Our office is situated near Chengalpattu, an hour's distance from Chennai. The group came into existence in 2003 to campaign for the demand of electoral i.d. cards. It was part of the campaign along with a legal case filed at the courts. It was a significant victory for members of this group and the aravani community as a whole is the case that they filed and

won in the Trichy high court, Tamilnadu asking for aravanis to get voters identity cards. The loophole however lay in the fact that the judge ruled that they could receive their card in any gender they wish- male, female or transgender. The victory however remains significant however symbolic it may be.

We have two plays in our repertoire so far.  They have been produced with support from Voicing Silence, a project of M.S.Swaminathan Research Foundation.  The first one is called Manasin Azhaippu (The heart calls…) which addresses the human rights and everyday issues of the transgender people in our society.  It was planned to aid the campaign for our right to I.D. cards.  The play touches on citizenship rights, dignity and access to housing.

The second play is called Uraiyatha Ninaivugal (Unsettling Memories).  It is our own life stories strung together in a narrative.  It talks about how our parents and family members dealt with us in our most crucial moments of change and confused identities.  The second play is one that looks inwards.

These plays are in Tamil and the troupe has traveled around Tamilnadu. They have received support from various progressive groups in the state including those that work on issues of caste and class. The process of evolving plays based on sharing has been long, tiresome and at times too emotional but it has been rewarding.  We work with a politics of ensuring basic rights, which we believe is possible only through collective work and critical thinking. Working on these plays has given us a way of articulation to place on record issues of complex dilemmas within ourselves, our communities and the society at large.


## The Colonial State and Sexuality: A Case Study of the Contagious Diseases Act of 1868 in Bombay Presidency

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Nineteenth century India witnessed intense public debates centered round the issue of female sexuality. While in the private domain efforts were made to confine it within the legitimate authority of marriage and family, in the public realm conscious attempts were made to bring female sexuality under regulation and surveillance of the state. Various kinds of manifestation of female sexuality outside marriage were regarded as deviant, dangerous and non respectable.

The paper attempts to examine colonial attitude towards Indian prostitutes as revealed through the Contagious Diseases Act of 1868 which provided for compulsory registration, medical examination and forcible detention of prostitutes in Lock Hospitals for their treatment. Based on inherent race, class and gender differences, it was dictated by the exigency of maintaining political power in a foreign land.

In creation of the colonial image of Indian society as corrupt and prone to sensual delights, the prostitute constituted the central figure. She was seen as an embodiment of dangerous sexuality, disease, dirt, chaos and immorality. While the presence of Indian prostitutes was seen as a normal feature of Indian society, the presence of European prostitutes proved to be a great source of embarrassment for the colonial government and a blow to its moral superiority.  The Act reinforced double standards of male desire and sexuality as 'naturally' promiscuous while women were seen as passive objects of male lust. It was felt that since the British soldiers belonged to the lower class of society, they did not possess requisite education and moral strength of character necessary to check their 'natural' sexual urges. As subalterns, they did not earn adequate salary to maintain their wives and families in India. So it was the moral duty of the British government to make arrangements for the supply of medically safe and hygienically clean Indian prostitutes to cater to the sexual needs of British soldiers. Such a measure also acted as a safe and healthy alternative to homosexual practices found to be prevalent in the army.

Due to the Act, the word 'respectability' acquired new meanings for the newly emerging middle class Indian woman.


## Women's Schooling and Sexuality: Missionary Education and Female Sexuality in the Nineteenth Century : Literary Texts and Missionary Records

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The paper investigates the system of female education in British Bengal to uncover the complexities underlying the figure of the reading woman around the nineteenth and early twentieth century. The research looks at nineteenth century Bengali novels (those by Rabindranath Tagore and Bankim Chandra Chatterjee) as well as the personal

narratives of Bengali women (those of Sarajubala, Sarala Devi Chowdhurani) to uncover the ways in which English education was perceived as shaping women's sexuality. The attempt is to locate how the relationship between English education and sexuality creates the figures of the 'nabina' and the 'prachina'. In novels like Tagore's 'Nashtaneer', the 'prachina' is the domesticised household woman with an unrefined and raw sexual appeal. The 'nabina' is at the other extreme with an exposure to English education and public life. Interestingly, the 'nabina' becomes a sexually dubious entity.

The paper also looks at the way in which this 'sexualisation' of the woman through Western education leads to political subversion. This is clearly manifested in the products of the Western education system like Beena Das, who were politically active in the nationalist movement.

Apart from the examination of nineteenth century Bengali novels and personal narratives, the paper examines the records of Christian missionary societies to see how their educational agendas may be revelatory of such attempts to shape female sexualities. It looks at the archival data on the challenges encountered and strategies employed in the everyday transaction of English education to Indian girls.

Thus, the socio-curricular education of the Indian girls, transacted through the figure of the sympathetic 'memsahib,' will be examined to arrive at an understanding of the ways in which the sexuality of the Indian girl gets shaped in the fraught context of colonial modernity and female solidarity.

## Sociological Reflection on Lesbianism in India

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This paper proposes to reflect on lesbianism at three levels:

1.  Lesbianism within the Indian women's movement -it is important to locate lesbianism to women's question because it can be seen as a revolt against the patriarchal structures. Sexuality has always been relegated to private sphere (and here as individual problem) and has been denied any interrogations. But then, women's question is also framed around the whole dichotomy between the public and private, individual and collective. The emergence of women's question within the agenda for social reform, nationalist struggle and development was limited to the creation and maintenance and reworking of the public-private divides

2.  Lesbianism within sociological understanding of social institution - Sociological understanding of social institution is based on the consensual model that neglects analyses of inequality. Therefore, it is important to interrogate such an understanding of the social institutions in relation to sexuality. The paper attempts to understand lesbianism as a sociological phenomenon, not as an aberration, but as part of the production and reproduction of patriarchal forms of control.

3.  Lesbianism within the Indian society-has activism around the issue created safe space for existence of lesbians. Over the last few years there has been campaign and activism around homosexuality in general and lesbianism specifically. A large number of organizations have been involved in creating safe spaces for those who opt to live with the mainstream trend, considered by majority as abnormal lifestyle. It is important to review the struggle of these campaigns in making lesbianism an important area for interrogation.

    This study attempts in doing a feminist inferred sociology. Feminist theories in no ways attempts to dump sociological theories as useless, but they try to reformulate them from a more gendered perspective. Thus the overall aim to arrive at an interpretative understanding of lesbianism by looking at through the lens of sociologists, feminist and activists.

## Gender and Sexuality in Islam

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Female sexuality in Islam is a dynamic, evolving phenomenon far from some seventh century interpretation of Islam. The cultural construction of Muslim women neither view them as sexual beings, nor encourages them to become active seekers of sexual gratification at their own initiative and initiators of sexual activity as the cultural construction of Muslim men.

Though, women' movement in Muslim countries is advocating for women's rights, these discussions very rarely focus on the issues related to sex and sexuality as such. Women's personal accounts on sexuality are also very rare. Cultural taboos related to sexuality seem to have led women's movements in various Muslim countries to adopt a low-keyed stance on sexuality related issues. This might be due to the fear of potential dangers, both physical and in terms of losing status and reputation in society. Meanwhile, growing fundamentalism employs sexually repressive practices bordering on terror to exercise control over women's sexuality in many Muslim societies. It is difficult to identify a sole and absolute Islamic approach to women's sexuality. Though all are ascribed to Islam, practices vary from country to country or even from region to region within the same country.

The present paper deals with some of the issue of sexuality along with some information on the construction of women's sexuality in the Qur'an and the early fiqh texts (the legal science of Islamic jurisprudence). An attempt has also been made to explore some of the historical and sociopolitical factors that have had an impact on women's sexuality, the nationalist ideologies of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and their efforts to create new mechanisms to control women's sexuality; and the rise of the Islamic religious right, which has placed the construction of an "Islamic" sexual identity of women at the top of its agenda.

## Performing Sexuality": Voices of Women in the Glamour Industry in India

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Being a part of the Indian glamour industry – as a fashion model, commercial model, acting in TV serials, music videos and participating in beauty pageants – involves a certain 'performance of sexuality' that makes the occupation different from others. This performance of sexuality brings women in the industry, is in direct confrontation with "Indian culture", precipitates socialised notions of "good" and "bad" women and foregrounds the conflicting demands that globalising Indian society makes on young women like them. Although at the macro level this enactment is part of a constructed female heterosexuality that is legitimate and 'normal' in the current economic framework, at the micro level for the woman themselves performing this part (of the hypersexual, desirable woman) can be 'abnormal' and beset with contradictions. Often, they pay the price for what is considered a grave cultural transgression.

In this paper, we listen to the voices of women from the glamour industry to explore what this performance of sexuality entails and the cultural tensions around it. This sort of performance of sexuality has been traditionally interpreted as the 'sexual objectification of women' in feminist academic and activist discourse. This paper opens up the issue for the women themselves to comment on and respond to – women who are primarily implicated as the 'sexual objects'. What is it like to 'perform sexuality'? What factors do they take into consideration when deciding on such a performance? How do they experience it as part of their work? And finally, what is the impact of this on their lives and identities?

## Between Force And Choice: Feminists and Sex Workers in Conversation

Shabana Kazi, VAMP and Madhavi Kuckreja, Vanangana, pointofview@vsnl.com

Classic feminist thinking considers prostitution one of the most extreme manifestations of patriarchy, and sees it as a system of coercion, violence and sexual exploitation. All over the world, the women's movement has fought to abolish prostitution, often considered synonymous with sex slavery, and has refused to accept it as sex work. The discourse of women's rights naturalizes the relationship between sexual exploitation and prostitution - it is automatically assumed that to be in prostitution is to be, above all, exploited.

Women in prostitution and sex work, however, see it quite differently. They insist, first and foremost, that no one reality applies to all of them; instead, there are multiple realities and competing narratives. They see their lives like any other, including pain and pleasure, exploitation and empowerment, victimhood and agency, coercion and choice. These lives are not only black (pain, exploitation, victimhood, coercion) or only white (pleasure, empowerment, agency, choice). They are grey.

For some of us, who are both feminists and activists fighting for the rights of women in prostitution and sex work, the polarization between feminism and sex work has represented a continuing point of tension. Women in prostitution and sex work continue to largely remain outside the scope of women's studies and women's rights. Two years back,

Point of View, Mumbai and SANGRAM, Sangli convened gatherings in five cities to dialogue around a series of complex and challenging issues related to prostitution and sex work. These daylong dialogues were held in collaboration with Saheli in Delhi, Vimochana in Bangalore, Masum in Pune, and Sanhita in Kolkata and included feminists, women's rights activists, sex workers, and individuals and organizations working on sexuality.

Building on the schema of these dialogues, we present one conversation between a feminist and a sex worker, which touches on some of the questions raised at these dialogues. This conversation will take place in Hindi. Although sex workers do not typically occupy the domain of women's studies, we have consciously chosen this presentation format for this paper since 'voice' is a critical issue in the representation of women in prostitution and sex work.

## Sex Work Tradition of Tamil Nadu-   A Case Study

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Generally the understanding is that to offer sexual services for some material benefits, be it in cash or kind is considered as commercialization of sex. From the traditional to modern society commercialization of sex or sex work is being protected by state in the name of service with help of different institutions of society.

Viralimalai is a place located in Thiruchirapalli district of Tamil Nadu state. This is quite a famous, historic place and prominent for two things. One is for the puranic Lord Muruga's temple which is very closely associated with the 19th century's devadasi system and the other one is because of the commercialization of sex in the entire state. In this area, the sex service is constantly happening as a continuous process with different cultural faces not ideologically. Over the period it has shifted evolutional multi various dimensions along with social transition i.e., 19th century's devadasi system to commercial sex, kings to feudalist then to sex trade inventors and the persons who are having purchasing power, particular caste to irrespective of all caste .

Based on this understanding this paper is going to be explored  the historical nature of sex  work, role of different institution such as religion, caste ,family, state and market for sex work sustainability, impact of macro policies, socio psychological need and feminization of pandemic disease HIV/AIDS in sex work through conducting in-depth case study in Viralimalai

## Teaching Queer Studies at the University: Debates and Issues

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The proposed paper will examine some of the issues and debates generated around the introduction of a Queer Studies course at the post-graduate level in the Department of English, Jadavpur University, Kolkata. Designed as a fourteen week long optional course, it presented several new challenges in terms of disciplinary positioning, curriculum framing, pedagogy, classroom practice and even evaluation techniques. As such this experiment of teaching Queer Studies within a mainstream arts faculty in a university was breaking new ground. There was initial unease about locating the course within a single discipline department rather than within interdisciplinary schools such as the School of Women's Studies. The disciplinary location necessitated a specific kind of curriculum design for the course which would make it 'relevant' to English studies. The inter-disciplinarity and multi-disciplinarity of Queer Studies was maintained but within a broad rubric of the departmental concerns. There were discussions on whether the course would be entirely theoretical or textual or should it incorporate histories of the movement. There were problems also of finding academics who would be equipped and interested to teach the course. Usual pedagogical practices and class-room techniques as well as evaluation strategies needed to be revised since the course was also trying to 'queer' the neat categorizations of disciplines and the norms of organization and transaction of knowledge in the academy and its prescriptions about what is worth knowing.

The proposed paper will attempt to relate some of the questions thrown up by the introduction of the course in Jadavpur University in 2005 to the controversy on sexuality education raging in several Indian states from the end of 2005.  The proposed paper will attempt to connect these issues and locate them within a larger context of understanding the links between sexuality and knowledge, learning and practice, identity and knowing, epistemology and ethics.

# Whose bodies, whose selves: Youth sexuality and official knowledge

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Youth sexuality in India has been an area of research among demographers for some time, but has come within the ambit of school education more recently, driven by the agendas and discourses of HIV AIDs. A significant aspect of this shift, in which demographic and empirical studies on sexual behaviour have played a key role, has been the constitution of young adults in schools as a new target group for the national programme on HIV AIDs. Within this discourse sexuality gets (both naturally and nationally) subsumed within and at most times even seen as identical to biological sex. The turn to 'life skills' as an approach that seeks to engage in a minimal way beyond the biological model of sexuality falls short of addressing the complexities of young adults' lives. Both models fail to approach youth sexuality through an engagement with gender: hence issues of power, heteronormativity, desire, and the diversity of social and sexual identities young people inhabit remain unaddressed. At the same time, even within this limited framing, the introduction of sex (or 'adolescent') education in schools is emerging as an area of conflict with multiple voices demanding its withdrawal, mainly on moral grounds. This paper attempts a critique of materials developed under the School Adolescent Education Programme (SAEP) to understand the problems around discussions of sexuality in schools and the limits and possibilities of feminist intervention.

## BUILDING FEMINIST PERSPECTIVES ON GENDER AND SCHOOL EDUCATION: CRITIQUES, CHALLENGES AND NEW DIRECTIONS

Coordinators: Nandini Manjrekar, Centre for Studies in Sociology of Education, Mumbai and Nirantar, New Delhi

### Gender and Secondary Schooling: What Do Schooling and Classroom Processes Reveal?

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Recent policy documents, including the Eleventh Plan, have stressed on the need to move beyond elementary education and evolve a long-term perspective for improving quality of education up to high school. The universalisation of secondary education is an outcome of this view where secondary education is seen to provide the critical link in improving retention in schooling. Addressing gender inequality at this stage is also seen as important given the fact that secondary education coincides with the critical period of adolescence, when important life choices are being made.

Given this backdrop, the present paper examines whether classroom and schooling processes in secondary schools question or reinforce existing gender relations. The paper is based on case studies of four government Senior Higher Secondary schools in urban areas of Jaipur, Rajasthan, wherein the interplay of gender in schooling processes was observed at the level of everyday school practice and experience.

The issues covered included: classroom and outside classroom processes; teacher's expectations, perceptions, language and behavior; gender analysis of textbooks etc. In-depth interviews with school principals and educational managers and administrators also provide insights into gender equity policies within the schooling system and the problems of translating policy into practice.

### From Feminine to Feminist: Re-thinking Research on Schooling

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The discourse on gender and schooling in India has been dominated by policy concerns to enroll and retain the girl child. These studies tend to focus primarily on the socio-economic and cultural backgrounds of girls to explain why they drop-out, with a view towards remedying this through measures that include female teachers and scholarships. The conflation of 'gender' concerns with girls enrollment and retention has not been adequately critiqued in educational research and writing. The reason for this is that gender has yet to become an organising concept of research on schooling in India. Gender as a category of analysis is absent in most pedagogical theory including those that proclaim themselves to be progressive and critical.

The proposed paper will discuss the ways in which gender might be framed as an analytical category for the study of schools in India. Keeping in mind the experiences of first-generation learners, this paper will seek to highlight the ways in which schools always already exist not only as gendered spaces, but also as spaces of caste and class surveillance. In what ways would an expanded understanding of 'gender' pose a challenge to existing research on schools? How can a feminist critique of school knowledge, which legitimates personal experience as part of intellectual inquiry, advantage the concerns of these first-generation school goers? Is there incommensurability between policy constructions of 'gender' and the framing 'gender' as an organising concept in educational research that is being proposed?

### Sexualities, Masculinities and Femininities: Teaching Sex: The case of "Life Style Education" in West Bengal, India

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The proposed paper will explore how the global debates on adolescent education, particularly in the context of spreading HIV and AIDS, population explosion and the pressures of international bodies like WHO, World Bank and UNICEF to attain developmental goals are compelling national and state education authorities in south Asian countries like India to introduce reproductive health and sexuality education for secondary level students. Only recently, India's becoming the second most populous nation as well as the increase in the incidence of AIDS particularly among the high-risk, school-going 12-19 year olds has prompted the central government (in the 10th Plan programme) to insist on its inclusion in the curriculum.

The leftist state of West Bengal has been among the first to implement the decision by designing a textbook on reproductive health and sexuality for adolescent learners. This "manual" designed for teachers, launched in June 2005, demonstrates an uneasiness about sexual issues and a reluctance to deal with them. The traditional nineteenth century stricture of abstinence or "*brahmacharya*" is enjoined on the students, there is almost no reference to the use of contraceptives like condoms, sexuality is located strictly within the context of marriage and reproduction and outside the purview of pleasure. The text, paradoxically, echoes the attitudes of the fundamentalist Hindu right although it comes out of a Marxist, "progressive" state. The anti-globalisation rhetoric of the Hindu orthodoxy, which equates economic liberalisation with the erosion of values, sounds little different from the leftist critique of globalization. Yet ironically, it is the pressures of the powerful, global anti-AIDS lobby and their support, which lies behind the rationale, production, and release of the book.

Through a feminist critique of the text, the paper will try to suggest ways of treating issues of adolescent sex and sexuality in a more gender sensitive and socially aware manner within the Indian context, taking into account the problem of "tradition" and the politics surrounding it. The paper will also use some findings from a sample survey conducted among students and data from interviews with teachers and parents to explore the conditions and complex context in which this text is to be transacted.

### The Impact of Revised SCERT Social Science Textbooks: A Case Study in a Government School

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This paper is based on a qualitative study that looks critically at the response of middle-school learners to new civics textbooks produced by the Delhi government in 2004. The books, titled *Hamara Samaj, Hamara Rajya*, involved an effort on the part of the state to address the issue of the absence of gender in curriculum materials. In order to facilitate this, the expertise of institutions was sought, and Nirantar, a resource centre for gender and education, based in Delhi, was asked to coordinate the content.

The paper undertakes an analysis of the perspective and ideology that informs the content of the civics textbooks (specifically the section on the family) and at how it is perceived by the learners (boys and girls) in a government school in Delhi. Does change in perspective and content have any positive interventionist impact on the nature of learning and the construction of gender identities? To what extent do these books create spaces for change, i.e., how do these books respond to the larger goals of social science education?

Through focus group discussions, classroom observation and interviews with class 7 students and government school teachers, this paper looks at challenges that newly-designed curricula faces in the existing education system.

### Gender in the B. El. Ed.  Programme

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The Bachelor of Elementary Education (B.El.Ed.) is a degree course offered by Delhi University. It is a unique initiative started in 1993-94 to address the specific needs of Elementary Education. One of its objectives is to strengthen the

professional skills of elementary school teachers. The course, though it has been so far offered only in women's colleges, has broken previous conventions in terms of its content and pedagogy. It attempts to go beyond the specificity of teaching subjects into developing an understanding regarding the disciplinary questions related to the teaching of language, social sciences, the sciences and math. All four years of the course attempt to integrate gender in various papers – on language, contemporary debates in India etc. In the fourth year a specific paper on gender has been included, titled – 'Gender, Schooling and Curriculum'.

In this paper, I will share my experience of the journey of four years in B.El.Ed. This programme has been designed to produce teachers who not only have the capacity to evolve pedagogy in consonance with the emerging and alternative views of knowledge but have the perspective to be supportive of social processes for the empowerment of deprived sections of society. I will discuss how gender sensitisation is an integral part of this programme and also discuss the course, 'Gender, Schooling and Curriculum'. The paper will look at how the course triggers a critical view of our life situations and an understanding of how it impacts us as individuals and as teachers, through my own experience.

## Gender Analysis of Marathi Language Textbooks over the Last Three Decades

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Language textbooks in Maharashtra are expected to teach the Marathi language and make students familiar with Marathi literature as well as develop patriotism, scientific thinking and feelings of equality and fraternity. Despite the struggles by feminist activists and researchers, these textbooks continue to reflect gender bias and representations of class, caste, religion, region, culture and ideologies continue to be controversial.

This paper seeks to examine these issues in secondary level Marathi language textbooks through a comparative study of these books over the last three decades. The following are some of the issues the paper attempts to critically reflect on:

1. **Gender bias** in terms of representation of authors, content of the lessons, number of lessons that are men- and women- centered, the number of male and female characters in each lesson and in the whole textbook, the roles assigned to male and female characters.
2. **Conceptualization** of ideas of  beauty, ugliness, work, patriotism etc.
3. **Caste representations**: how caste is dealt with, whether it is overlooked or mentioned and if mentioned in which consequences and with what purpose.
4. **Biographies and selection of literature**: whose biographies are selected and which side of that person is focused, which values do these biographies inculcate and which part of the literature is selected.
5. **Religion and culture**: how many religions have got the place in the text, how much space is given to which religion.
6. **Visuals**: the hidden gender and social and religious implications of  visuals.
7. **Language**:underlying tone of the language, which dialects are used, proportion of urban and rural language.
8. **Exercises**: what is considered important in terms of relevance?

## Challenging Population Perspectives in School Curriculum: Moving Beyond Numbers and Stereotypes

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The paper is based on an initiative carried out by Sama,  a resource group for women and health, to identify, analyze and critique the content in secondary school text books / curriculum related to population issues, for classes seven to twelve.  The textbooks that have been reviewed include those of National Council of Education Research and Training (NCERT), Indian Certificate for Secondary Examinations (ICSE), Delhi State Board of Education and the State Board of Education, Uttar Pradesh (2007-08).

Burgeoning population is perceived as the root cause of all problems, as the biggest – if not the only obstacle to economic development.   The poor and marginalized groups / communities, particularly women, are blamed for

'overpopulation'. They are represented as the 'irresponsible citizens' and as primary threats to everything from shortage of food, lack of sanitation, unemployment to myriad of other issues. While patriarchy and unequal gender relations suppress women's agency in decisions regarding her fertility, they are held responsible for giving birth and hence their bodies and minds are targeted, controlled and violated through policies and practices that 'use' women as the tool to achieve demographic goals.

The institution of education, as a vital apparatus of the State, plays a critical and influential role in representing, understanding, analyzing and amplifying crucial social and political issues, including population. The paper challenges the ways in which the institution of Education preserves and propagates certain ideologies related to population that fit well into its own schemes, without providing spaces for alternative voices and approaches. The treatment of population in most Indian textbooks is based on incorrect, incomplete information and outmoded assumptions, with population control offered as the only solution.

## Feminist Pedagogical Options in Primary Education in Rural West Bengal

Bipasa Mukherjee, Kolkata, bipasa_muk@yahoo.com, bipasam@gmail.com

Research on school education in India tends to lack focus on curriculum and pedagogy which are biased in terms of gender, class, religion and other social categories. For instance, in the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), the quantitative aspect of learners are addressed but the quality of pedagogy and curriculum remains unexplored; and we also know that like its antecedent programmes, SSA is failing with its targets. This paper, based on primary data collected through fieldwork in rural primary schools of West Bengal, will attempt to explore the scope of feminist pedagogy to meet the challenges faced by pedagogical practices in the school education system within the context of universalisation. The paper has two sections: the first section examines the theoretical basis of feminist pedagogy, which is an approach that not only includes social categories of gender, class, race, and sexual orientation in classroom discourse, but also recognises students' experiences and perspectives as equally necessary in the creation of classroom knowledge. The second section critically examines pedagogic issues within policy formulation and programme implementation under the SSA. The focus of this section is on the significance of feminist conceptions of pedagogical issues in rural primary education of West Bengal.

## Reflections on Teaching 'Gender' to Teacher Trainees Or, Is Education Liberating for Girls and Women?

Deepti Priya Mehrotra, Lady Sri Ram College, Delhi, deeptipm@gmail.com

The present paper is a series of reflections as I look back on six years, of teaching a course on 'Gender and Schooling'. Several contradictions and challenges, learning and insights, have emerged along the way.

I will describe the course, the students, the college, and pedagogic strategies used in the classroom, to what effect. We will move, with the students, who are teacher trainees (4th year B.El.Ed. students), to another site, which is the *school* classroom. As they intern with government schools, our *college* classroom becomes a place for analyzing gender issues that they identify in schools. Strategic interventions are designed, implemented as far as possible (in school), and analysed.

A central question, with us through the year, is: Is education a liberating force for girls and women? Does it help overcome gender stereotypes? Does it help go beyond oppressive situations and structures?

As we examine ideologies and institutions – the family, media, school, workplace – in the light of feminist theory, contradictions get articulated. Assumptions about gender underlie the choice of school-teaching as a career. Students face many personal-life dilemmas, which they (and we) begin interrogating anew.

As students begin to recognize the politics of daily life, structures and institutions, they pose questions in intimate as well as public spaces. As students struggle to make choices in real life, and take transformative action, many face a backlash. Our experience suggests an urgent need for some basic support systems.

The site of the *school* too is rife with gendered ideologies. The hidden curriculum tends to reinforce gendered structures rather than question or dismantle them. Teacher-interns devise strategies, achieve small milestones, and

are often frustrated. The challenge for the course teacher is to help these experiences become tools for understanding society and self, and gathering power to effect change.

## A Study on Drop-Out Rates among Girls at the Primary-school Level: With Special Reference to Bhubaneswar Slums

Aliva Mohanty

Parental and social attitudes in most Indian cultural contexts tend to perpetuate the stereotype of girls being transient members of families, who will ultimately get married and leave, while boys are the mainstay of support for ageing parents. The girl child is thus socialised into pre-ordained roles that she will assume as an adult. One way to empower women would be to bring them out of the limiting boundaries of the household, and in order to equip women to deal as men do with the external world, education plays an important role.

The present paper was undertaken with the following objectives:

- to study the socio-economic problems faced by drop-out girls.
-  to analyse the views of parents towards girls' education.
- to know the perception of teachers towards drop-out girls.
- to study the impact of government policies on the drop-out rate among girls.
- to suggest appropriate strategies to reduce the dropout rate of girls.

Taking into consideration time constraints and other limitations, a total number of drop-out girl children, one teacher each from five primary schools, and 50 parents in five unauthorised slums in Bhubaneswar were taken through simple random sampling procedure for this study. The study aims to understand the various reasons of school dropouts amongst girls in urban areas. The data collected through this study will help policy makers and NGOs working for the welfare of the girl child to suggest remedial measures to reduce school dropout rates among girls of urban areas.

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### Problems Relating to Schooling of the Marginalised Girl Child in Orissa with special reference to globalisation

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It is a common fact that women all over the world suffer due to gender discrimination. In India, patriarchal norms, poverty and inequalities act to deprive women of their basic rights including their access to education. Globalisation has resulted in increasing marginalization of women and amplified deprivations for girls in terms of education. This paper seeks to capture this situation in the context of the state of Orissa, where, despite measures being taken under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan to enroll and retain children in schools, nearly 6 lakh children in the age group of 6-14 are still out of school, of which 70 per cent are girls.

This paper will attempt to address contexts of schooling of girl children, such as the socioeconomic backgrounds and role of parents and communities as well as the objectives of universalisation of education, and issues of curriculum and pedagogy and their impact on the girl child. The situation of girls' education within the processes of globalisation with particular reference to Orissa will be discussed.

### New Instructions for the Twentieth Century: A Note on Sukhalata Rao's Primers

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In this paper I propose to discuss the work of Sukhalata Rao (1886-1969), the acclaimed Bangla children's author, who wrote as many as seven primers for children over the first half of the twentieth century, two of which are still used by various schools in West Bengal. She was one of the first women to write primers in Bangla, although she did not write primers just for women. Children for her represented an as yet un-gendered category. This is probably one of the reasons why her primers are still widely used today unlike those written by her contemporaries.

After experimenting with Bangla primers she tried out her hand at writing English and Oriya primers in 1964. That she wrote in Bangla, English and Oriya was perhaps her way to understand/ negotiate differences/ similarities in teaching method/s in various language/ cultural spheres. A reviewer of one of her primers pointed out in 1917, 'women are the suitable candidates to teach children…men can never do it that way…in this book the teaching method which the woman writer has suggested is not only unique but also has made it simple and practicable'. This paper will attempt to critically review and understand her work from a historically informed gender perspective.

# SUB THEME - 7 B

# EXPLORING PEDAGOGIES FOR GENDER STUDIES

Coordinator: Rekha Pappu, Secunderabad

## Pedagogies for Gender Studies in Canada and India

Enakshi Dua, York University, Canada

In this paper I would like to explore the connections between pedagogies for gender studies in Canada and those in India. As the Director of Undergraduate Studies for the School of Women Studies at York University, Toronto Canada, I have been engaged with a review of our undergraduate curriculum. Much of this review is to think through how to integrate an analysis of 'race' and diaspora with that of gender. In North America, many Women Studies Programs accomplish this by offering specific courses on racism and gender, and on women in the global south. However, as many anti-racist feminists and post-colonial feminists have noted such courses keeps intact 'white' women as normative, and North America as the centre (see for example Grewal and Caplan, ). As a result, the School of Women Studies at York University has been thinking through pedagogies of gender.

The Centre is thinking about how to teach about gender in Canada in a transnational lens. While we have had opportunities to have dialogues with scholars in women studies in the Caribbean and Latin America around questions of pedagogy, we have not had a similar opportunity to engage with scholars in India. I would like to use this paper to engage with Women Studies scholars in India on how to teach questions of migration from India , racism in Canada, South Asian diasporas, development, poverty, global South in ways that would be relevant to scholarship in India as well as Canada .

## StreeNet

Ara Johannes, Akshara, Mumbai

*StreeNet* emerged in response to a growing gap between women and ICTs (Information Communication Technologies). The project's initial focus was to build ICT capacities within the Women's Movement in India. However, over time a broader potential, of creating gender-consciousness, was discovered and explored. Since then, *StreeNet* has adopted a dual focus of: a) Building theoretical gender perspective; and b) Enhancing ICT capacities for women activists and students.

StreeNet's value lies in the course structure it adopts as well as the methodology applied.

1. It utilizes an extensive, dynamic and interactive medium of learning, i.e. **the Internet**. All pedagogical tools are net-based and some of these include virtual classrooms, chat rooms, online discussion forums, online tests, web-based modules and presentations.

2. StreeNet caters to the busy schedule of activists and students, keeping in mind the multiple responsibilities they simultaneously juggle. Thus, all reading is done at the pace of the e-learner and test dates are left open.

3. Besides providing information related to Gender Studies, new Internet skills are taught online or through workshops. Assignments are structured so as to allow continuous practice of these net skills throughout the duration of the course.

4. All information and skills imparted are relevant to the e-learners' lived experience of gender discrimination. They are encouraged to relate theory and concepts to their own lives. Netskills emphasized are those that can be utilized for online advocacy, campaigning and activism. These include web-based software, list serves, online petitions, blogs etc.

5. Additionally, collective learning is encouraged through the process of sharing insights, knowledge, experiences and strategies. Again, web-based technology in the form of chat rooms, discussion forums, wikispaces, blogs and email groups, facilitates this process.

StreeNet has thus emerged as an effective, enriching, fun and skill-based pedagogical approach to Gender Studies. The paper will explore StreeNet in detail; it's structure, target group, strategies adopted, output, effectiveness and relevance to Women's Studies.

## Introducing Gender Curriculum and Pedagogy : An Experimentation by Karnataka State Women's University, Bijapur

Hemalatha H.M., Karnataka State Women's University, Bijapur

In the last 5 years many of the universities in Karnataka have started PG, MPhil and Ph.D programmes in women's studies. Curriculum has been framed as per the UGC norms. In 2003 when Karnataka State Women's University was established, PG programme in women's studies was also introduced.

Being a women's university, it is resolved to gender sensitise women students  by introducing women's studies as a compulsory course to the students of all the departments. This includes papers on Gender and Law, Women and Development, Women and Health that have to be covered within four semesters.

The objectives of this paper are:  a) To present the challenges that women's studies is facing both in framing curriculum and recruitment / involvement of experts in teaching the course; b) To explore the innovative pedagogy for women's studies on the basis of my experience.

An attempt will be made to : 1) Review the curriculum of the universities which are offering women's studies degree at PG and UG level; 2) Review the syllabi of women's studies which is being offered as one of the papers in social science and arts departments; 3) Examine  the implications of introducing women's studies as a compulsory course on the non women's studies  students and the extent to which they have been sensitised

## Feminist-ing the Mainstream: New Approaches to Gender Studies in Law

Maithreyi Mulurupu, BPS Mahila Vishwavidyalaya, Haryana

The law has been at times an enemy, sometimes a battlefield and often a weapon for feminist scholars and activists.

It was around halfway through the first-ever Feminist Jurisprudence course that I taught, that a student asked me why we didn't study more male authors in the course – were there no men writing about feminism? The discussion led from there to the question of why we didn't study more black-letter law in the course – didn't jurisprudence have to be linked to 'real' law? When I look back upon that particular class, it always seems to me to embody the issues that law school classrooms don't ever seem to address: the equivalence of maleness with neutrality, and of validation with legality.

While gender politics has begun to inform the structuring of curricula in courses in the social sciences and humanities, the law curriculum continues to deal with gender issues by the simple expedient of adding the tag of 'women's issues' to the curriculum wherever an issue of 'special relevance to women' is discussed. This demarcation of gender studies as a special interest area has run counter to any acceptance that gender politics informs the law as much as it does any other social structure.

This paper seeks to argue that it is necessary for the classroom to become a space where gender becomes an issue, not of special interest, but of the politics of the law. In its origins as much as in its action, the law is a political and gendered animal, and in order to combat the myth of the law's neutrality in other spaces, we need to en-gender the mainstream law classroom. Gender politics must, therefore, inform not just the study of criminal law but also the study of civil procedure. By drawing on my experiences teaching the seemingly-diverse subjects of Taxation and Feminist Jurisprudence at NALSAR, Hyderabad, and describing the curriculum development project at BPS Mahila Vishwavidyalaya, Haryana, I wish to open discussion on the development of pedagogies that can help us 'feminist the mainstream'.

## Can One Teach Feminism?

Shilpa Phadke, TISS, Mumbai

*Should one fake an orgasm?*
*How can one deal with sexual harassment that comes from peers not strangers?*

As pedagogues in the early 21ˢᵗ century undergraduate classroom one learns to field the unexpected, respond thoughtfully, if inevitably partially, and to try and complicate the discussion by engaging the sub-textual greys that lurk beneath the blacks and whites and the ayes and nays.

Many of us are familiar with the opening "I'm not a feminist but…" that precedes any case that a student might make for gender justice. Feminism apparently is neither sexy nor does its progressive politics find resonance with young women undergraduates today. Despite or perhaps even because of young women's lack of connection with feminism, their concerns are very relevant for feminist theorizing.

This paper will focus on the question of a feminist pedagogy in a context where young women feel unable to relate to feminism. As a researcher interested in the middle class in globalizing urban spaces, this paper reflects largely on middle class contexts and on women who in many ways have been the beneficiaries of the women's movement in India.

More specifically, I will dwell on my experience of facilitating three short undergraduate honours' credit courses at a South Mumbai college between the years 2005-2007. The idea in this presentation is to speak to these concerns using both theoretical material and experiential anecdotes of facilitating these courses. I also hope to speak to how this works within my own research interests in young women and their relationship to feminism as both a researcher and an advocate. The question that frames the title, focuses on feminism as a politics rather than women's studies as a discipline.

The paper reflects my two over arching concerns: What is the relationship between feminism and young middle class women today? How might it be possible to devise a feminist pedagogic practice that engages the concerns of young undergraduate women in urban contexts today?

## Thinking Gender Curriculum and Pedagogy: What was Before and What can be Done

P. Radhika, St.Joseph's PG College & Research Centre, Bangalore

Today, students who are part of the undergraduate and post-graduate social science-humanities streams, of whom a sizeable category are women, have an exposure to women's issues. In this context, I look at the space of an English classroom in an urban center like Bangalore, where there have been attempts to introduce the question of gender as part of the curriculum at both the BA and MA levels. About a decade ago, Bangalore University introduced a paper on Gender Studies as part of the MA English programme and also brought in relevant texts in the BA Optional English syllabus. The syllabi were formulated not merely to raise the question of 'women' but of 'gender' and in a manner that would take cognizance of issues of caste and community.

My paper will attempt to trace the trajectory of this initiative over the years in the university itself and the different colleges that were affiliated to it. In the last couple of years there have been further curricular revisions with three colleges that teach MA English gaining autonomy.

To conclude, I would like to think through my attempts to bring into the curriculum my own research interests, recognizing the different requirements and demands of the two spaces. I take the instance of my current work where I mobilize the idea of the Feminine Symbolic to understand a set of popular women's novels in Kannada to suggest that this very idea can be used to think of new gender curriculum and pedagogy. This would not merely re-configure the idea of 'women's writing', which earlier, and perhaps even currently, informs literature courses but can also be used to address questions of 'difference' that would be central to formulating any gender programme today.

### 'Masculinity' in the Gender Classroom

Ratheesh Radhakrishnan, Mount Carmel College, Bangalore

The question of masculinity has recently emerged as one of the issues that could be used as a significant tool in the gender classroom. In undergraduate classrooms, women's studies programmes and in gender workshops, the problematic of masculinity is seen to be present both as a topic for discussion and as a strategic tool to discuss more general issues of gender. As a topic of discussion, the question of masculinity has not made its presence felt in any significant way in the classroom even when the need for the same has been widely recognized. Even while some initiatives have organisational links with women's groups, the theoretical and political links with feminism remains an open question. It could be argued that the history of emergence of the study of masculinity in India, especially in relation to its disciplinary locations, has had a significant role to play in this development. On the other hand many courses on feminism have been using the concept of 'masculinity' as a useful strategic location to enter debates on gender. The presence of male students in these classrooms has been an important but not the sole reason behind this development.

The growing mistrust of identity related concerns in the undergraduate and the graduate classroom could also be seen as one of the reasons behind this move. In this scenario, masculinity becomes a tool, interestingly, to universalise and 'humanise' feminist concerns. The presentation does not intend to dismiss either of these positions. It attempts to think through these developments using personal experiences and existing scholarship and to present a thicker picture of this aspect of the undergraduate classroom. Further the paper attempts to present one possible way, different from the above two models, to introduce the question of masculinity in the classroom. For this one might have to go back to some central problematics that feminism has foregrounded.

### Affirmative Student Responses to Gendered Pedagogy: Determiners and Outcomes

Amitha Santiago, St.Joseph's PG College & Research Centre, Bangalore

This paper will focus on the area of gendered pedagogy through an analysis of students' affirmative responses to the same in a Postgraduate English department in Bangalore from 2005-2008, in an autonomous setup. This will involve examining what has engendered affirmative responses to gendered pedagogy in the engagement with issues concerning gender in English literary and popular cultural texts.

I will try to think through the varied factors that have rendered classroom spaces potent such that they produce responses in the form of interventions. These in turn restructure conventional approaches and knowledges as well as argue against corporate sector demands for students who fit the needs of metropolitan, patriarchal markets. That these demands underpin neo conservative, non-gendered pedagogy sustains the significance of gendered pedagogy.

Affirmative responses are foregrounded over responses of resistance through this paper, to examine the scope and reach of the pursuit of gendered pedagogy. This will further enable an analysis of the factors within gendered pedagogy that offer possible negotiations with conventional notions of Self hitherto inaccessible or silenced.

Finally, the question of subsequent knowledge production that intervenes in spaces both outside and within those of academic exchange will be taken on through an appraisal of ways in which new knowledge impacts lived reality. In conclusion, the paper will look at ways in which curriculum and syllabi translate new knowledge produced into structures that further gendered pedagogy.

### REFLECT: A Pedagogy For Empowerment of Women

State Reflect Resource Centre, Kolkata

REFLECT is an approach to learning and social change. REFLECT (**Re**generated **F**reirean **L**iteracy through **E**mpowering **C**ommunity Techniques) emerged as an approach to literacy and social change, which fuses the political philosophy of Paulo Freire with the methodologies of Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA). Other significant influences have been the discourse on human rights, power, and gender justice. More recently, some REFLECT practitioners have also tried to integrate the philosophy of Antonio Gramsci into the REFLECT practice.

Key to the REFLECT approach is creating a space where people feel comfortable to meet and discuss issues relevant to them and their lives. REFLECT aims to improve the meaningful participation of people in making decisions that effect their lives, through strengthening their ability to analyse and to communicate.

A State Reflect Resource Centre (SRRC), Kolkata was formed to coordinate the trainings for facilitators of the REFLECT circles and to build understanding regarding REFLECT as a tool for empowerment. In the paper that SRRC is proposing for the IAWS Conference, REFLECT would be seen as a pedagogy for women's empowerment on the basis of the experience of the SRRC till date in West Bengal. The paper would have two broad sections. In one, the REFLECT methodology and its techniques would be explored. In the other, the issue of how REFLECT has empowered the community women would be explored. The need to take REFLECT further as a pedagogy of empowerment in terms of enhancing its techniques and with the aim of involving more people in the Reflect are, broadly, the objectives of this paper presentation.

## Negotiating Pedagogies: Reflections from Gender Training Experiences in the Development Context

S.Seethalakshmi, Freelance Consultant & Researcher, Hyderabad

The emergence of gender as an analytical category in the Indian development context owes much to the work of feminist theorists as well as the efforts of the women's movement in India. In the process of achieving gender equality as a valued goal, integrating or mainstreaming (in recent times) gender concerns and perspectives into development policy, planning and various programmes are considered critical by the government, international aid agencies and non-governmental organizations. Gender training at various levels (for staff of aid agencies, implementing organizations and members of the target communities) is often seen as an important strategy in the above process. In the past decade or so, there has been a proliferation of gender training or gender sensitization programmes, defined under the broad rubric of 'capacity building processes', as part of larger development programmes. Despite the larger problems of institutionalization of gender in development practice and its depoliticisation to some extent, several examples of gender training also indicate the transformative potential and scope of these strategies, especially for women. While there has been some documentation on the nature and impact of different gender training programmes, the content and pedagogy of various gender training programmes itself has not received adequate attention or serious reflection. Drawing from the experiences of facilitating gender training processes with diverse groups of participants in various contexts (both urban and rural), this paper attempts to reflect on the often dynamic relationship between the changing contexts and subjects and the manner in which they shape the content and pedagogical practices deployed in the training process.

## Exploring Pedagogies in Gender Studies

Meera Swain, National Institute for Social Work and Social Sciences (NISWASS), Bhubaneswar

The clarification of the concept of "gender" along with its conceptual formulations has given rise to a number of discussions about socio-political changes and the process of globalization. The content of Women's Studies / Gender Studies Syllabus included in the various Universities and Institutional courses have not been revised for a long time and the approach towards the teaching technique differs from discipline to discipline since women's studies is a multi-disciplinary subject of study. The course content can therefore be taught by academicians from Economics, Sociology, Anthropology, Political Science, International Relations, History but the methods of teaching and subjective binding do not produce uniformity with regard to the teaching process.

The basic concepts should be an integral part of the discipline with regard to each subject matter of Gender Studies. The comparative analysis of approximate concepts should be critical and scientific. The theories of feminism are the developments in the field of women/gender studies. This gives a clear view of different schools of thought and types of philosophy that surrounds women's status. Therefore this content should be given a scientific approach like "Positivism" and "Relativism", so that no culture should be considered inferior to other.

Thus the objective of the present paper is to argue for more objectivity and research so that the discipline of "Gender Studies" can be more fruitful not only in providing a more detailed status of women but also in developing

parameters for measuring the gravity of sensitive areas. Gender Studies must seek not only to focus on the female population but also the flourishing of human generation and intellectuality.

## Teaching Women's Writing in Delhi University: Challenges and Possibilities

Ashley Tellis

In this paper, I trace my experiences teaching the paper "Women's Writing in the 19th and Twentieth Centuries" in Delhi University at the Undergraduate level between 2001-2003. A third year Optional paper, it spans three continents and two centuries and the challenges it threw up both pedagogically and theoretically need to be analysed and the paper as a whole needs to be placed in a historical context of teaching gender and literature over the last few decades within Women's Studies.

I will tie my discussion of the "Women's Writing" paper to the "Gender and Literature" paper, another Optional paper taught at the MA Final Year level and ask some questions about the pedagogical framework and theoretical conceptions of teaching Gender and Literature, tracing the shift between Women's studies and Gender Studies to theoretical developments within feminism.

Finally, I will relate this to what it means to students to actually do this paper, how it affects their lives (if it does) and how it can be used to empower students, especially women but also men students, in forging their futures.

## Panel

This panel hopes to address three different, yet inter-related, themes. The first relates to the specific issues facing Women's Studies Centres and Programmes in the country, and what impact this has on pedagogy. The second explores problems of disciplinarity both in scholarship and in the context of the classroom. The third addresses the problem of pedagogy in relation to undergraduate teaching. Together these three papers will attempt to raise questions regarding certain fundamental concerns of feminist pedagogy and practice.

## Does feminist scholarship necessarily generate feminist pedagogy? Some Questions Facing Women's Studies in India

G. Arunima, JNU, New Delhi

This paper will address two slightly different issues. The first part will sum up, very quickly, the discussions that had taken place in the *National Workshop on Feminist Pedagogy* (March 2007, WSP, JNU), in order to continue the dialogue that had begun there among different scholars and practitioners of Women's Studies. This, I believe, will be fruitful for the discussions in the IAWS sub-theme on pedagogy. Principally, the March workshop was divided into 4 parts: one – broad thematic issues relating to feminist scholarship and women's studies centres; two – feminist scholarship; disciplinarity; and their relationship with women's studies; three – the context of feminist scholarship in specific pedagogic contexts, particularly at the undergraduate level; and fourth, the experiential issues, and dilemmas, faced by women's studies centres/programmes themselves. In the second part of this paper, I shall raise some questions addressing specifically the last issue of the first part – i.e. – pedagogic, disciplinary and other problems facing WSPs/ WSCs in India, and the possible future and direction of Women's Studies.

## Feminist Sociology and the Question of Pedagogy

Maitrayee Chaudhuri, JNU, New Delhi

The paper will explore the experience of teaching a course on women and society in a sociology department over a period of seven years specifically. However it will also draw from other experiences of speaking on gender issues. These are discussed from different angles — related to sociology and its disciplinary locations; questions of women's studies and feminist politics; and the complex dimensions of pedagogy in particular. The diversity amongst students and the politics of the classroom repeatedly emerge as critical issues in the paper.

## From Women's Studies to Gender Studies: Studying and Teaching Feminism at the Undergraduate Level in Delhi University

Sunalini Kumar, Lady Shri Ram College for Women, New Delhi

Ten years ago, in the academic year 1997-1998, I was privileged to be among the first batch of undergraduate students enrolled for a paper rather clumsily titled 'Women in the Political Process' (WPP). This paper was designed within the Political Science Department of Delhi University, and in my college (LSR), offered as an alternative to the existing, 'safer' option for third year students – a paper on the United Nations. Of a third year class of about seventy students, hardly ten were brave enough to opt for this paper. It was new, there was no information on 'scoring' or otherwise, and worst of all, it was rumoured to be about feminism in a college that was already seemingly saturated with equal numbers of feminist and anti-feminist women. It would be no exaggeration to say that it changed my life, and of all the students who were in my WPP class. A whole new landscape opened up for all of us – a way of looking at the world, a way of looking at ourselves, a way of looking at theory.

Five years after I graduated from LSR College, I started teaching the WPP course in the same college, and am still doing so. In the past three years I have also been asked by the college to design and teach a certificate course on gender studies to undergraduates from all disciplines. It is an appropriate time to examine a range of changes over the past ten years, between being a student of WPP course, to being a lecturer, and the experience of teaching a more informal version of WPP to undergraduates from other disciplines as part of the certificate course on gender studies. I will attempt to do so, looking at among other things, the response of the students to the paper, classroom dynamics including the effect of class and privilege, and larger college politics, located within the context of the University and the ongoing privatisation of higher education. In any such exercise the dangers of nostalgia, and of yearning for a golden past of innocence in the classroom are evident, and I shall try to avoid them! Nevertheless, there are very interesting observations one can draw, some optimistic, some disturbing, which I hope will be a fruitful exercise.

## The Theory of Women's Studies: Emerging Trends

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The discipline of Women's Studies is an emerging one. It is beset by challenges and continues to grapple with questions regarding identity, methodology, epistemology, status and praxis.  In almost three decades of its existence, discernible contours have evolved, but still a concrete theoretical framework has to be put into place. The significant role of advocacy in Women's Studies—a case of praxis constituting theory has also to be incorporated into the framework. The challenge lies in finding a balance which creates the status of a rigorous discipline and allows at the same time its inherent flexibility to be retained. This paper will examine the fundamental concepts of the subject and analyse the directions in which it is moving.

# SUB THEME - 8

## TRIBE, CASTE AND MINORITY: STRUCTURES AND EXCLUSIONS

Coordinators: Manorama Sharma and Sutapa Sengupta, Shillong

### Political Leadership of Women in Pune City : A Dalit Feminist Study (1995-2007)

Sangeeta Thosar, rajsangitta@yahoo.com

In this above mentioned research project a study will be done from Dalit Feminist perspective of the political women leadership in Pune city. The so called mainstream women's liberation movement has been in the hands of white collared upper caste women. They never paid attention to Dalit women's oppression and sub-ordination. Hence during 90's Dalit feminism was propounded.

After the 1990's, that is after the Mandal Commission there was wide spread political awareness among OB C's. This group started entering the arena of political elections to fulfill there political ambitions. Political democracy expended through all these activities. Despite this the condition of women in political field is not much better. Women are not given much space in political fields. Particularly there has been no space for the political participation and leadership of Dalit women in politics. Besides patriarchy, there are also the other factors which are responsible for this condition. The present political parties and the electoral systems are male dominated and on the other side because of the Brahmanism of women's movement, an organized women's movement couldn't evolve. In all these circumstance it becomes necessary to study during the period of 1995-2007 in Pune district how many women participated in political activities? What was the ratio of Dalit women in it.? Which political parties gave political leadership to women. It is necessary to study how the questions of Dalit women and over all caste –class and women's subordination has evolved during this period. All these aspects will be studied from the Dalit Feminist perspective.

### Tribe, Gender and Region in Northeastern Women's Writing: Some Theoretical Reflections

Ashley Tellis, Assam, ashleytellis@hotmail.com

In this paper, I want to explore the categories 'NorthEast', 'tribe' and women's writing' by looking at writing by some women in the region, namely Temsula Ao, Mamang Dai and Irom Sharmila. I want to look at how this writing is produced within the region, the tribe, the community and the gender axes and how it is consumed and read by mainland India. Writing from the Northeast is seen, when it is seen at all, from an anthropological lens which does not pay any attention to particularity or the contexts of literary and cultural production in the specific locations from which this writing emerges.

Submitting this anthropological lens to critical analysis, I want to explore how the conjunction of tribe, gender and minority articulates itself in the writing by these three writers.

### Paradigm Shift

Leena Mehta, ACT NOW, actnow_ind@india.com

Sweeping generalizations are often heard about the rural impact of some developmental intervention: one notable case is that of SHG movements in India. A change driven by motivation and commitment rather than money.. A story about the economic empowerment, of government accountability and revival of dying traditions "WAVLI" by BAIF. This is a story of revived cultural identity for tribal communities. A tribal woman's day starts from early dawn and ends late at night, taking care of food, water and health needs of the family, apart from contributing to breadwinning.

Forming and nurturing small, homogenous and participatory self-help groups of the poor offers a potent tool for human development, allowing poor households to collectively identify and analyze the problems they face in the perspective of their social and economic environment, pool their meagre resources—human and financial—and prioritize their use for solving their own problems. The emphasis on regular thrift collection and its use to solve immediate problems of consumption and production not only helps meet their most emergent needs but also trains them to handle financial resources more skillfully, prudently and with a more lasting impact. From an isolated small-scale vegetable cultivation and gathering of minor forest produce, "Wavli" is now a group activity of raising nurseries, grafting mango and cashew saplings, and other non-conventional activities.

There has been a consistent effort to divide the tribals and to deny them their fundamental rights. The latest is a circular of the Gujarat Government insisting that the tribals leave the forest areas of the State. This is in consonance with the move to call the tribals "Van Vasis" instead of Adivasis. The latter provides them with an identity wherever they are, the former denies them of the identity once they leave the forest areas or if the forests are rampaged and pillaged as it is today by politicians and rich vested interests.

## Matriliny and Gender Equality : A Reality Check

Susmita Das, St. Mary's College, Shillong, susmita_7stm@yahoo.com

Equality between men and women remains as elusive dream in most societies including the Indian ones where men-women gap continue to persist unabated. Equality between men and women seems to have never been an order of patriarchy. The matrilineal family organization that descends through female line is always considered to be supportive of its women (although it puts enormous responsibilities on them) as it is known to accord a better position to its women folk. It is however, not to say that men's position in matriliny is in any way less important and therefore, can be compared and placed on a similar platform to that of women in patriarchal society. Moreover, it may not be wrong to say that patriarchy have glorified the existing gap contrary to the matrilineal society.

It is against this backdrop and general belief of equality of status which matriliny projects that the present study tries to focus on. The paper focuses on the existing pattern of literacy and employment participation and the gap that exists between men and women. As the paper is on the Khasi and Garo matrilineal group it assumes even greater significance as the society by being matrilineal, gives the impression that women enjoy a comparatively higher position that is the society stands on more or less egalitarian ground. Contrary to this what one notices is not only a widening gender gap but there emerges yet another gap and that is between the two forms of matriliny vis-a vis the women's status. It is this aspect of gender gap that the current study intends to focus on and highlight the existing nature of regional variation as well.

## Absence of Rights - Basis of Exclusion - Study of Adivasi Women in the Adilabad Region

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Adivasis are minorities who are amongst the most marginalized of all communities in India. This paper is about access to resources, property, livelihood options, all of which are closely related to each other in the context of adivasi women in the Hill forests if the Godavari region, with specific reference to Kondareddi, konda kammara tribes of East and West Godavari Districts and Gonds of Adilabad in Andhra Pradesh.

The purpose of the paper is to show that specific property rights and traditional land cultivation did not go together. So long as adivasis practiced shifting cultivation or *Podu vyavasayam* as it is known in Andhra Pradesh, individual property rights neither existed nor were of any value. Men and women were equal partners in the process of cultivation. The colonial rulers imposed a forest policy, which continues to be the basis even now, requiring 'pattas' or title deeds. In *podu vyavasyam*, communities owned the land and cultivated jointly. Shifting cultivation, living close to forests, required and promoted community living. This meant that miseries were also shared. Communities provided social security to women, when they became widows, or were deserted. Forest policy and other development policies, systematically, brought the adivasis from the heart of the forests to its fringes. Cultivation, particularly in the Adilabd region has changed to settled cultivation. The average size of land holding is 1-2 acres, title deeds of which, are often non existent, but when they do exist they are in the name of the adivasi men. This is a region where extensive

deforestation has taken place due to smuggling of timber. Settled cultivation requires irrigation facilities, which is conspicuous by its absence. This only complicates the struggles of adivasi women. Changes in sources of livelihood, and the conditions of living, alter the usefulness and meaningfulness in their knowledge as well, which is fast becoming redundant. The extent of non-tribal encroachment, and also domination of other tribal committees has impacted their lives significantly.

The paper is about the process of exclusion of adivasi women by denying them right to property.

## Gender in Dalit Identity Construction in Punjab

Rainuka Dagar & Pramod Kumar, Chandigarh, idcindia@idcindia.org

Caste antagonism in Punjab is becoming more pronounced as an exclusive Dalit identity is getting nurtured in the backdrop of assertive masculinities. The core elements of the emerging Dalit identity include an assertion of de facto recognition of their rights, occupational mobility, status parity through adoption of cultural markers and parallel religious symbols, and transforming their women from objects of sexual liaison with upper caste males to icons of group honour. Historically the superordination–subordination relational paradigm could not provide the Dalits with a reservoir of symbols around which an identity could be evolved. The Dalit identity assertions are multi-dimensional articulations for recognition of the individuals as human, escape from social abuse, equitable share in decision-making and corresponding power, privileges and social status.

The crucial aspect of Dalit identity assertion is to redefine inter-group relations with female sexuality as central and to put in place control-oriented mechanisms within the group. These mechanisms are blatant and violent rather than normative. Further, the core of this identity formation process is an adoption of universal standards to construct parallel status markers. Interestingly, hegemonic subordination of the Dalits expressed in survival alliances is being changed to an exclusive identity while having elements of upper caste practices.

## The Development Onslaught & Women in Dalit and Adivasi Struggles

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The adivasi and the dalit communities in India bear the real burden of the present model of development. The women in these communities for the same reason are the most exploited and oppressed section of the country. The problems faced by them include a wide range of issues from the lack of basic necessities in life and livelihood to the increasing level of violence both from the State and the mainstream civil society.

However, my attempt in this paper is to discuss the need for a dialogue between the movements and struggles of both these communities. Though both are oppressed, the history of oppression and the relationship of these communities to the mainstream civil society have different trajectories. Dalits as the people at the lowest in the hierarchy of the Hindu caste structure experience exploitation from the very mainstream to which they are inherently part of. The very survival of the caste system is based on their existence as an oppressed community. Whereas the Adivasi community has a different history and has not been part of the mainstream civil society. The recent past have shown that the number of atrocities on the adivasi community is alarmingly increasing: in the case of many large scale industrialization projects like mining; for the struggle for land and water and the related issues of displacement and/or the destruction of the adivasi culture.

Today, considering the fact that these sections of the society are worse hit by the onslaught of the development programmes, and that they have many common issues to address, I believe it is a worthwhile exercise to look into the possibilities of a dialogue between these communities. Such a dialogue could possibly lead to a better understanding of the major political battle they have to fight, and possibly fight together. A gender perspective analysis of the same will bring in the similarities of the problems faced by the women and men in these communities and the limitations of the modes of negotiation put forward by both.

Some of important factors which I feel worth comparing and debating is the increasing levels of violence on the women in these communities; the forms of patriarchy operating within these communities; the modes of negotiation attempted by these communities in recent struggles as in the case of West Bengal and Orissa and the attempts if any, for a dialogue between the leaders or members of these movements in different part of the country.

## Women and Literacy: with special emphasize on S.T. Women

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Literacy is an important parameter to measure the level of empowerment achieved by any particular group or community.  It is the initial input or primary tool to build the infrastructure to support such important structures / systems as communication, learning and information.  The need for alliterate population and universal education was recognized as a crucial input for nation-building and was given due consideration in the constitution as well as in the successive five year plans.

In order to assess the contemporary state of education and empowerment of the Tribal women, we used the gender-wise decennial census data to compare levels of literacy achieved by the S.T women in relation to other women (S.C and total).  The study reveals that S.T women are lagging behind the S.C and total literate women in the country.

## Issues of Gender Identity Among Protestant Mizos

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This paper is based on a study conducted among Mizo Christians. In this study I have examined the ways in which gender inequality is maintained and perpetuated by the protestant Christian community in Mizoram, in particular among those belonging to the Presbyterian Church, Synod, the Baptist Church and ECM (Evangelical Church of Maraland). I also looked at the ways in which different gender roles are perpetuated by religious and cultural norms which in turn create inequalities between men and women. The study has shown the influence of religion in transmitting cultural and traditional practices in the social sphere. The continuation of patriarchal practices that hindered women's agency in the family, economy, and society is reinforced in the religious sphere.

The study highlights the present gender roles and relations within the community, the ways in which members of the Christian church understand gender roles and relations, the role of women in church, and how religious and cultural beliefs shape one's perception and personality. The gender division of labour in terms of economic and the religious emphasis on sexual norms, and reproductive health is also discussed. The study among the middle class and upper middle class educated people reveals that despite the claim that Christianity brought gender equality, one can see that one kind of inequality intersects with another and gender inequality remains intact.

## Revisiting the Status of Women and Health Seeking Behaviour in Jharkhand

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Care during pregnancy is one of the most important components of reproductive health. In Jharkhand where only 36 percent of mothers received at least three or more Antenatal Care checkups, where only 18 percent of the births are delivered in a health facility and where 20 percent of the mother received check-ups immediately after delivery and where the Maternal mortality rate (307) as well as Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) are still very high (69), it is important to examine the underlying causes of low coverage of the most important health checkups among women in the state. It is also important to mention that most of the research which dealt with mother's health highlighted the issue of lower status of women and its association with health care. Thus in this paper we felt the need to examine the correlation between the status of women along with other demographic and socio-economic variables with the level of health indicators during and after pregnancy (ANC, Delivery, and PNC) among mothers in the state.

More than half (59%) of women in Jharkhand don't get an opportunity to go to school, which is more in the rural areas than in urban.  Around three-fifth of women in Jharkhand were found to be employed/working of which most of them are in agricultural sector or working as unskilled labourer. Out of total employed women in the state (58%), less than half of them are earning in cash. While analyzing the level of decision-making among women, only 41 percent of them do participate equally with their husband in decision like health-care, major household purchases, daily household needs and visiting family members and relatives.

Significant positive relationship has been observed between variables of women's position and status and health seeking behaviour during pregnancy and delivery among women in Jharkahnd.

### Rajasini Smiles: A Case Study

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The state of Orissa has a total strength of 22.21 per cent of its total population as tribal population, approximately seven million. Most development efforts in the tribal areas have not produced the desired results:

- Many times such schemes turn out to be fragmentary and at times cross-purposive
- During the past several decades there have been changes in our approach to tribal development

Against this backdrop the organization Bharat integrated Social Welfare Agency (BISWA) is active with its objective of empowering women in the field of micro finance, micro enterprise, micro insurance and social development in all the tribal conglomerations, since its inception, in 1994. The organization is very much dedicated towards the welfare of the backward and down trodden communities with special reference to women.

The present paper highlights the thematic areas: education and the processes and institutions for transformation of knowledge:, highlights strengthening the potentials existing in the tribal women individually and in groups. It makes an attempt to make the voice of Rajasini to reach all the women in our country, where she speaks in her own word, "Hold your head up. It's the simplest, most effective way to look confident. Good posture accompanied with fabulous smile gives you the "winner's Vibe" You are guaranteed to be success. I avoid looking like a figure at the wax museum, instead I've showed my teeth whenever possible, yes people respond well."

### Re-defining Sexualities, Re-locating Feminist Discourse: Towards a critical approach to feminist knowledge production

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This paper deals with the cultural construction of feminist knowledge which often reproduces and rearticulates structures that are oppressive in content and production

By looking at the sexual harassment law in the country and sexual harassment committees in the universities critically, an effort is made to understand the possibilities and limits of dominant ways of knowledge production and its implementation which often results in weakening the cause of women.

Another major issue the paper would elaborate is the middle-class imagination of feminism which excludes the larger population of 'women of difference.' The researcher would examine how the sexual harassment law and its protection is available only to those women who work in middle class working spaces and how it is discriminatory to 'Other' women who are not into the so 'feminine, decent' jobs. For example, when Chitralekha, a Dalit woman autodriver in a moffusil town in Keralam, tried to partake the caste/patriarchal hegemony, her autorickshaw was burnt by the workers of CITU. The issues of caste and gender often become elusive when it comes to real-life situations and that make thousands of Dalitbahujan women apprehensive about mainstream feminism.

The researcher would argue that this imagination perpetuates multi-level violence, i.e., it is always violent to the 'other' Dalitbahujan women and even to the dominant womanhood (read savarna) when they take on dominant patriarchal power structures. I would go further to state that only when the feminist knowledge production deals with the complex questions of interlocking systems of oppression and dominance, it can pose effective challenges to the compound web of power relations that are thrust upon women.

### Women and Decision–making in Mizo Society - The Politics of Exclusion

Audrey Laldinpuii, North –Eastern Hill University, Shillong, audreysailo@yahoo.com

In the context of assumptions about the empowerment of women it is interesting to ask the question of position of women with regard to decision making in Mizo society. An enquiry is made into the structure and functioning of the important decision –making bodies in the traditional society and how far it was woman friendly. An attempt is also made to see how far the institutional change (introduction of democratic institution) after Mizoram became a part of democratic India in 1947 brought about a change in the position of women in terms of decision – making in the public arena. Besides, a brief account of the interim period of the British rule in Mizoram and the effect of Christianity and formal education that was introduced during the period is briefly dealt with.

This paper seeks to provide an explanation for the exclusion of women from decision-making bodies under the new democratic institution inspite of the Constitutional guarantee for gender equality. It tries to provide an explanation for such a trend through an attitudinal survey that was carried out in two villages i.e. Chaltlang and Sateek. Chosen on the basis of simple random sampling 100 respondents, 50 males and 50 females each from the two villages were interviewed to understand the general perception of people towards the participation of women in politics. An enquiry is made regarding whether people continue to hold on to their traditional values and how the persistence or otherwise of traditional values is affecting the participation of women in politics under the new democratic setting. An attempt is also made to identify the factors responsible for the persistence of the traditional value of gender inequality and its consequences fro the politics of exclusion of women from important decision-making bodies in the Mizo society.

## Why Tribal Women are Lagging Behind? A Case Based on Orissa State

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There has been a declining trend in the growth of tribal women in Orissa.  The positive sex ratio shows a declining trend constantly over the past few decades.   Tribal habitat is invaded by outsiders and industrialists and displaced them to a place where the problems are multifolded and the most affected groups are women in particular.  Loss of natural habitat and environmental deterioration caused many adverse impacts on tribal groups who thrive and prosper on the natural environment around them.  Forest which was their source of livelihood has been destroyed under the pretext of area development.  Environment is a part and parcel of their life and  destruction of such precious environment hit their lives very hard.

Tribal women's status in the family is comparatively better but data proved an alarming increase of violence and atrocities at the domestic front and also in the society, are the clear indications of the present status of tribal women in Orissa and all these things reduced the status of tribal women . To bring these ethnic groups parallel with the developing groups, they should be properly equipped with education, economic empowerment, skill up-gradation to adjust with new situations.  Government policies and acts are not sufficient to reduce the plight of these women.  It is a practical suggestion that human approach, a proper plan for these groups and practical rehabilitation programs in displaced and migrated areas to some extent will help them to be empowered.

## Women in Tribal Societies: Some Reflections on Khasi Matriliny

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A look at the situation of contemporary *Khasi* Matriliny shows that it is facing serious challenges from forces which want the *Khasi* society to fall in line with the Patriarchal and patrliniel world. Organizations demanding a switch over to patriliny are gaining strength particularly among the urban educated elite. A new bill on *Khasi* lineage too has sparked of a debate on the matrilineal system practiced by this community. Because of the traditional land tenure system of the society, to some extent, the possibilities of women exercising control over property also existed. In the *Khasi* traditional system, there are two types of land - *Ri Raid* lands are set aside for community use and over these lands people can have occupancy rights or the rights of use but there can be no heritable transferable or saleable rights. The *Ri Kynti* lands, however, are "under the direct control of the owners over whom are bestowed proprietary, heritable and transferable rights".  These *Ri Kynti* lands can be handed down as ancestral property. However, the *Ri Raid* lands can evolve into *Ri Kynti* lands if the occupants make any permanent improvements on it like construction of permanent structures, planting of fruit trees and such other things. With the permission of the village *Durbar* as *Nongbri* puts it "those with better resources could, through the application of labour and capital establish durable assets on *Ri Raid* land and claim the same as their personal possession. As the weight of tradition is still considerable in the society, even now private property is being registered either in the name of the woman or being willed to the youngest daughter. The breaking down of the clans make it very often impractical for the maternal uncles or the married brothers to exercise actual control because they also are getting busy with their own families. As a result, the husband-wife relationship becomes more real and the assertiveness which the *Khudduh* is showing may be only a transitional phase because gradually the husband will begin to control the property. This, therefore, is the time to give serious thought to the question of giving rights to women though this alone will not ensure that gender ideology will also change Apurba Baruah

## Scheduled Tribe Women in Higher Education

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In India, there are 427 tribal groups comprising 8 per cent of the total population. The tribes are isolated, socially undeveloped, economically disadvantaged and mainly confined to hilly and densely forested areas. India is the second populous country in the world with 6.77 crores of tribal population. Most of the tribal people are poor, illiterate and inhabiting the inaccessible forests and hilly areas. They lag behind in all spheres of life in comparison with other sections of the population. The Government of India has launched a number of schemes for the promotion of education and welfare among the tribes. In spite of these efforts the rate of literacy has not been improved. In case of the primitive tribes it is very poor and among women it is very low. The Indian government has expressed a strong commitment towards education for all; however, India still has one of the lowest female literacy rates in Asia. In 1991, less than 40 percent of the 330 million women aged 7 and over were literate, which means today there are over 200 million illiterate women in India. This low level of literacy not only has a negative impact on women's lives but also on their families' lives and on their country's economic development. In this back drop an attempt was made to understand the socio-economic background of tribal women who are pursuing their higher education.

## S. N. D. P. and Ezhava Women: Negotiations And Possibilities

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My study attempts to explore the space that Ezhava women have come to occupy in contemporary Kerala through the examination of Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana Sangham's (S. N. D. P.) *Vanitha Sangham* (women's group). Ezhavas are a powerful community in terms of their sheer number in Kerala. They are also considered to be the most powerful among the backward castes of Kerala. Historically, S. N. D. P. has played an important role in the upliftment of Ezhavas. S. N. D. P. was formed in 1903 under the spiritual leadership of Sree Narayana Guru with Kumaran Asan, the famous poet, as its General Secretary.

While rejecting the degrading customs imposed upon Ezhava women by marking them as 'low-caste', S. N. D. P.'s reform agendas shifted them from earlier matrilineal familial formations and 'enabled' them to be attuned to the emerging patriarchal formations in Kerala. However, regarding the role of women in the organization itself, there are not many historical records. In the new phase of the S. N. D. P., we can see that *Vanitha Sangham* got a lot of attention. *Vanitha Sangham* was first registered in the year 1975. Now S. N. D. P. has 4542 *Vanitha Sangham* Units. In the year 1997, after Vellappalli Natesan took over its leadership, women were being heralded as the strength of S. N. D. P. Since then, these units have emerged as a major platform for a large number of Ezhava women to appear in the public sphere, either through processions, public meetings, felicitations of achievers etc. Though women's representation in the administrative level of S. N. D. P's Sakha, Union, and Yogam is very limited, the idea is not to problematise gender issues in connection to S. N. D. P.'s general policies. What I have done is examine these women as a category that negotiates through the programmes of S. N. D. P. The study therefore attempts to bring forth women's role in strengthening the community through different programs and ideals of S. N. D. P. It also tries to locate possibilities for an agency for Ezhava women within the gendered configurations of S. N. D. P.

## Mainstreaming of Tribal Communities: Its impact on Tribal Women in Maharashtra

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This paper presents emerging discriminatory norms in 15 tribal majority districts in Maharashtra.

a. **Gender Roles**: Most of the domestic work like cooking, cleaning and childcare is women's work. The common scene at the hamlets across the state is fetching water is women's (and girls') jobs, Marriage ceremony – traditional marriage ceremony had its own spice and fun – dance and drinking were two major activities. Now we can see *pandals*, bands, processions – everywhere the bride is following the groom- as if doing *saptapadee*., Women Self Help Groups cleaning village - re-emphasizing role of women, The roles of men and women in various social functions (community management) .

b.   **Gender Stereotypes**: Want of son – the concept that 'son carries on the family name' is slowly trickling in, Concept of 'head of the family', Activity profile of tribal men and women, Types of organizations that are established of tribal men and women, Participation in Panchayat Raj, Schemes for Tribal women and men.

c.   **Access to and Control over resources**: Ownership of assets, Mobility of men has increased but women's mobility has remained restricted – division of 'public and private worlds types of decisions women and men take, education status.

## Conclusion

From the examples quoted above, we can certainly see that interaction with mainstream world has a negative impact on the lives of tribal women. Stopping the interaction fully and isolating tribal communities is not the solution. We need to closely interact with tribal communities and make them aware that the values of the 'mainstream society' they are following are not good for quality of life of women (and hence the tribal communities). The tribal communities need gender sensitization as much as the mainstream community does.

### Regional Variation's of Caste:Case Study of the Local Salt Making Women of Goa v/s the Migrant Salt Making Women of Karnataka

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Salt production had been a prosperous local industry in Portuguese India till the beginning of the 17th century in Goa. This paper examines the differences that exist between the local salt making women and the migratory women labor which hail from Karnataka. It attempts to examine the information through the live voices of both these groups. I shall draw upon the following sources:

1.   My own interaction and interviews with these women.
2.   Oral testimonies in the form of local dance (*fuggdi*).
3.   To know which caste they belong to.
4.   To understand the socio-economic and the health problems.
5.   To know whether the political office is given to them at the village level.
6.   To study the transitional or the changing aspects.

This essay, which is a part of a larger study, attempts to understand the position of the local salt making women v/s the migrant women. It will focus on the variations of the local salt making women and the migrant women and will show why these differences exist. It also seeks to study myths and stereotypes about these women that lead to social prejudice and exclusion of this marginalized group.

The paper attempts to argue in the context of increasing inequality and the disparities among women wherein she is not paid equally for equal work. This paper works at the innovative livelihood strategies adopted by the local salt making women in the period of globalization. This paper hopes to explore these and more issues and raises some of the key questions that emerged from interview schedules for a larger discussion.

### Status of Tribal Women in Orissa: A Case among "Kisan" Tribe

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Tribal culture is assumed to be part of Hindu social system but they have their own respective "identity" which distinguishes even one tribe from the other. The studies on "Status of Women" is more crucial one to be incorporated in the homogeneous society within a patriarchal belt/principle of social structure. In case of tribal women the context of development is more viable than empowerment and liberalization as most of the studies reveal that tribal women are enjoying higher status than the non-tribals belonging to patriarchal principles/structures. Therefore to cite the example of tribal women for the better status of non-tribal women is the main purpose of this paper.

Though she is not a part of the inheritance rule of inheritance of lineage  after marriage and after death, but she is assigned with some specific functions and nobody should exclude her from that. It is true that she is the inheritor of the family ornaments particularly her mother's. She can enjoy her property even the landed (agricultural or hill) property in her name.

The role of women in historical development in the socio-economic and political sphere: The girl is empowered to give her consent with regard to choice of her partner. This is a very good example of gender equity among the tribals which needs to be clarified with the other non-tribal societies where the girl is not even told about the proposal before marriage and she has to accept it as such.

Her labour is weighed with much honour and regard, which is fortified with the custom of "Bride Price", as the parents/guardian of the girls, are losing family's labour force when she is marrying out. The Groom's family is providing "Bride Price" in a hope that they are gifting additional labour in their family. Moreover the working ability and capacity is a criteria of choosing a bride than her beauty. However, this has both the positive and negative aspect, as she is not taken as another member of family but as a major source of labour supplement.

Thus status of tribal of women in Orissa is a major concern area of research so that the positive aspects of the tribal society which are different from the no-tribal society can be highlighted for the benefit of the non-tribal women. The present study is an attempt towards the above goal.

## Women's Empowerment in Tribal Society: A Study among Juang of Orissa

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The present paper intends to highlight issues relating to empowerment of tribal women towards an understanding of the nature of their socio cultural and economic problems. It includes social, economic and political empowerment of tribal women and their development in present scenario. This is an Anthropological study based on empirical data collected through field work among women folk of Juang tribe of Keonjhar District, Orissa. Juang tribe is identified as one of the primitive tribes of Orissa. There are as many as 55 tribal communities inhabiting the Keonjhar district and Juang is the dominant ethnic group in the study area. The tribal population is about 45% of the total population of the district.

It is observed that through the process of modernization and acculturation the Juang women are coming in contact with outsiders. But they are not entirely rooted out from their traditional way of living. Traditionally the status of women in Juang society is high. But the participation of Juang women in economic activities empowered them to take decision in economic field by themselves. The political empowerment of women demands that they must be able to think and act according to their conscience. When they become the part of the main stream, they become marginalize and empowerment has negative consequences on them. Due to lack of proper cultural assimilation and socio cultural barriers, they are neither here nor there with the right socio-economic and cultural footing.

## Educational Status of Women: An Interregional Perspective on the Scheduled Castes & Scheduled Tribes of India

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The Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes in India have been socio-economically oppressed, culturally subjugated and politically marginalized for centuries. It is only now that they have begun to articulate their identity, asserting not only equality for themselves but also struggling to bring about revolutionary changes in the existing social order.

Economic growth per se will have little significance till the socio-economic status of disadvantaged people particularly of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes is raised to the level of the dominant classes. In this context education is significant both as a tool and as an indicator of empowerment. This paper in an attempt to focus on the following issues in the light of the major governmental policies related to education.:

(i) disparities in the educational attainments of Scheduled Castes & Scheduled Tribes, women vis a vis each other and the general population.

(ii) interstate differences in the level of attainments with special focus on the comparison between the north eastern states & the rest of India.

(iii) extent of male/female disparities in the educational level amongst Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

For the above analysis this paper will draw on secondary sources of data available in government documents and reports at the national & state level.

In India the policy makers have adopted a conscious policy of compensatory discrimination in favour of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, such as reservation of seats in educational institutions, scholarships, reduction in cut off points, raising the maximum age limit, increasing the number of attempts in competitive examinations etc. However these policies are not only gender insensitive but seem to be based on the mistaken premise that the castes & tribes are a homogeneous block and a single policy can be tailored to fit the needs of all. As a result interregional as well as male-female disparities continue to be significant. In conclusion this paper will also be suggesting possible solutions to increase the reach, efficacy and gender sensitivity of government policies.

## A Study on The Plight of Women Manual Scavengers In Chennai – A Human Rights Perspective

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Manual scavenger means a person engaged in or employed for manually carrying human excreta or any sanitary work like cleaning of drainage. Manual scavenging involves the removal of human excreta using brooms and tin plates. The excrement is piled into baskets which scavengers carry on their heads to locations sometimes several kilometers from the latrines. Refusal to perform such tasks leads to physical abuse and social boycott. Most of the manual scavengers in India are women. Legally, cleaning of dry latrines and transporting of human excreta has been banned since 1993.

In the absence of an adequate economic alternative, it is often seen that manual scavengers are not able to quit their degrading work. Manual scavenging still exists in parts of India without proper sewage systems. According to government statistics, an estimated one million Dalits in India are 'Manual scavengers', who clear feces from public and private latrines and dispose off dead animals; unofficial estimates are much higher. Handling of human waste is a caste-based occupation, deemed too "polluting and filthy" for anyone but Dalits. Besides the discrimination faced by the manual scavengers generally, women scavengers are more vulnerable to other abuses.

This paper intends to study on the human rights issues of the women manual scavengers in the city of Chennai, where manual scavenging is common.

## Position of Women Within Tribal Structure and Exclusion from Developmental Process- A Study With Regard To Witchcraft

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Indian newspapers periodically publish reports about women who, after being accused of being witches, have been beaten, had their heads shaved or had strings of shoes hung around their necks and some have been killed. Many times the belief in witchcraft leads to violent incidents resulting in the plucking of teeth, breaking of hands and legs, cutting off of tongues, and in some cases burning to death of the so-called witches. Gruesome murders take place and sometimes women are banished from the village after subjecting them to severe torture. Often a woman is branded a witch so that one can throw her out of the village and grab her land, or to settle scores, family rivalry, or because powerful men want to punish her for spurning their sexual advances. Sometimes it is used to punish women who question social norms.

In present Indian society the phenomenon of witchcraft is not only prevalent in tribal and rural societies but is also found in modern urban societies. The UN has also released figures of the victims of witchcraft and black magic around the world. The world body has named India along with countries in Africa, Asia and South America as a high-incidence zone for witchcraft related killings. In India, the highest incidence of witchcraft-related crimes occur in Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Orissa, Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh. But only a few Indian states have outlawed witch-hunting. As the fear of witchcraft and its existence is culturally rooted, sometimes even the lower rung of the police and others fail to take note of the violence. At times the criminals escape punishment for their misdeeds. Only 2 percent of people charged with witch-hunting are convicted in court. People go scot-free because witnesses are hard to come by.

The present paper highlights position of women within tribal structure and analyses how women have been marginalized and excluded from the mainstream of developmental process in the name of witchcraft. It deliberates on historical and present day phenomenon of witchcraft in India. It makes an in depth analysis of etiology of witchcraft and propagates for a strong central legislation to punish the wrongdoers who in the name of superstition perpetuate all kinds of violence against women. The paper also emphasizes upon the role of society, media, police and judiciary in educating the masses and in combating atrocities against women in the name of witchcraft.

# LANGUAGE, LITERATURE AND CULTURAL PRODUCTION

Coordinator: Mitra Parekh, Mumbai

### Bengali Women's Travelogue: Reading Nabaneeta Dev Sen's *Karuna Tomar Kon Path Diye*

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Women's travelogue is a less looked into form of literary expression and has received little attention until recently. Feminist scholarship has brought attention to travel accounts.

Nabaneeta Dev Sen's *Karuna Tomar Kon Path Diye* is a travelogue written in 1977 in Bangla and published in 1978 (Kolkata). Dev Sen through this travel account of hers pens a humorous picture of her visit to the Kumbha Mela at Prayag. It is about as she states in one of her articles in 'The Hindu' about her visit to the Kumbha Mela at Prayag where "on a whim" she "dashes off" after attending a seminar at Hyderabad. It was written during the 1970's when women had come a long way in terms of being mobile and had started to travel for various reasons including professional and academic reasons, still the traditional norms could not think of nor accept a female traveler 'alone'. A single female traveler was viewed as a person questioned by the traditional set stereotypical norms of society. Who represents the society in Dev Sen's narrative? It is the people she comes in contact with. She negotiates and represents the recurrence of images of staying in a patriarchal world.

My paper will focus on three related issues of how Dev Sen's narrative is a divergence from the set trend of companionate travel associated with women. I will analyse the narrative pattern in Dev Sen which is a rare combination of fine humour, deep human concern, and high intellect and will try to examine how skillfully she uses humour in her language to bring out the grimness of the society which cannot accept a 'single' female traveler. Along with it, the paper will also present a study of the narrative as it shapes the feminine consciousness as the object of male gaze and a possible returning of the gaze.

### Recasting Reform : Phulmani, Karuna and Others...

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The first piece of prose fiction written in Bangla happens to be *Phulmani o Karunar Biboron* (The Story of Phulmani and Karuna) by Hannah Catherine Mullens (1826-1861). Published in 1852, *Phulmani o Karunar Biboron*, has multiple dimensions that can be reviewed in the light of contemporary social reformation debates and present perspectives on women's writings.

Three women constitute the prime force of the narrative. Narrated by a district magistrate's wife, who walks into the lives of Phulmani and Karuna, it is a narrative overloaded with a restrained missionary zeal. Karuna, quarrelsome rustic women is reciprocated by Phulmani, an ideal native woman converted to Christianity. The narrative weaves around Karuna's transformation into a 'charitable Christian woman'.

Probably due to its overtly Christian voice, *Phulmani o Karunar Biboron,* has failed to catch the attention of present scholarship when compared to other nineteenth century texts like Rasasundari Debi's autobiography *Aamar Jiban* (My Life). This paper will review Mullen's novel in this light of partial oblivion and will succeedingly move into other debates.

The paper will also bring in contemporary theorization from French feminist theory to make an appreciation and critique of the texts regarding narrative strategies.

### Marginalisations and Discriminations: Portrayal of Women in the Poems of Jayanta Mahapatra

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Jayanta Mahapatra in his poetry portrays the fall of the Oriyas in each and every level of life. As a poet he oscillates between tradition and modernity. His concept of tradition includes history, legends, myths, oral literature and the articulation of Oriya life primarily in rural setting involving life with all its natural emotion, customs and religious practices. Mahapatra laments for the loss of such values and practices with the advent of modernity. Nowhere Mahapatra hints that this should be subverted, but he definitely wishes the prevalence and practice of values and customs of Oriya life which contribute to the identity of Orissa.

It is in this broad perspective that Mahapatra's sketch of women in his poetry is to be evaluated with particular reference to his collection of poems, "Random Descent". The suffering and marginalization of women do not escape Mahapatra's attention. Mahapatra speaks about the women with reference to the various cultural practices and about their dream and vision in the vortex of liberalisation and globalisation.

The paper will evaluate the major images through which Mahapatra shows how the women in Orissa live more with adjustment, rather less with protest. The women in Mahapatra's poetry are to be studied from socio-cultural level to psychological level.

### A woman's Unheard Voice: A critique of a few Epistles

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Shantilata Ghosh travelled to Kashmir with her husband in 1950. Her epistolary communication in *Bangla* with her family in Kolkata is a repository of expressions that give us an interesting insight into the lived world of her life. Though she went as her husband's companion and was at a disadvantage for having impaired hearing she nevertheless made her mark with the power of her pen. A reading of the unpublished letters suggests how a childless, partly deaf woman, the second wife of a middle-class Bengali *bhadrolok* was able to rise above the limitations of her circumstances and establish her identity as a sensitive individual writing poetry and gifted with an endless appreciation of the beauty of this universe. Through her silent observations which she pours out in her letters we are able to catch a glimpse of her milieu, especially in Kashmir. She faintly mentions the political turmoil of the area, living as she did, among sadhus, a forced protected existence. Shantilata in a man's world sees things through a woman's eyes and conveys it with a mixture of candour, playfulness, mock-seriousness and skepticism.

### Lingual Manifestations of Feminine 'Suffocation' in Nina Bouraoui's French novel: *La Voyeuse Interdite*

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Nina Bouraoui, a woman-writer in French of diasporic origin has been a prolific writer in the international (mediterranian) scenario of Women's Studies. Born of an Algerian father and a French mother, hopping to & fro between two cultures, it has been a challenging & agonising feminisric experience for the writer. In the light of her autobiographical work, this paper envisages to discover and analyse from lingual perspective the 'suffocation' of herself and her fellow women folk as expressed in her prestigious *Inter Livre* Award winning novel entitled "La Voyeuse Interdite" (the Forbidden Voyeur), which Nina Bouraoui wrote at a very young age of nineteen.

### Literary Feminism and Issues of Son Preference in Indian Society

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Literature as a cultural construct not only mirrors society but can also offer a corrective to it by suggesting alternative modes of being and becoming. Son preference in Indian society has been prevalent since ancient times. Ironically, the

technological advances in contemporary times are also being used in the aid of selective female fetus abortions and much more so, among the urban & literate sections of Indian society. Within this scenario, how has literary feminism responded to the continuing prevalence of son preference in Indian society? What are the strategies being used by the writers of literary texts, to inculcate awareness and attitude change?

The paper offers a comparative analysis of a variety of selected contemporary literary texts, which engage with the theme of son preference and its related issues, across genres, regions and languages, in India. Mrinal Pande's short story, *Girls* (1983), translated into English, from its original in Hindi, Chitra Divakaruni's novel in English, *Sister of My Heart* (1999), Rashmi Bajaj's selected poems in Hindi, *Mrityorma Jeevanam Gamaya & Masheen* (1998, 2006) Vaasanthi's novel, *Birthright* (2004),translated from the original in Tamil & Surjeet Jassal's Panjabi poem, *Ik Dhi Shikwa* (2005), would be examined for their feminist sensitivity and subversive strategies employed, in responding to issues of son preference, in the Indian socio-cultural context.

## Women's literary production, State and Empowerment: Case of A Newsletter of Mahila Samakhya Gujarat

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Language is labelled as 'mother' tongue, but women for centuries have been strategically 'distanced' from the spoken as well as written word. Since women were not allowed to be part of 'mainstream' mode of knowledge production, they create their own communication patterns, which are transported and transformed through generations. And inevitably therefore their patterns are remaining as 'alternates' in the margins and do not form the text on the pages of 'his-tory'.

Mahila Samakhya means women speaking with equal voice [(*mahila*-woman), Sam (equal) - akhya (voice)]. Mahila Samakhya, programme of education for women's equality is currently operational in 15,800 villages of 63 districts of nine states of India. This paper limits itself to Gujarat, one of the initial states, where the programme was launched in 1989. This paper explores the journey of transformation of original conception of 'participatory, feminist, empowering space' into state defined, top-down 'space' using 44 issues of the newsletter published over the period of 14 years (April 1992 to April 2006) using methods of textual analysis and content analysis. Researcher was instrumental in conceiving, coordinating and publishing 16 issues of a newsletter titled 'apani vat' (our chat) at Mahila Samakhya Gujarat with 'rural, poor, semi/illiterate women' during 1992 to 1996. After she left the programme in 1996, the newsletter was continued in the same name till November 2004 and was renamed as 'samakhya no suraj' (sun of Samakhya) and latter changed to 'Samakhya samachar' (Samakhya news).

The political economy of newsletter production may provide insights into reasons for such shifts; the paper limits itself to 'contents' of 44 issues of the newsletter and examines the texts to draw conclusions. While newsletter publishing is a popular 'voicing' practice among women's organisations and women's movement, the paper explores taking a case how it can be a tool for 'agenda setting' and 'silencing' of concerns with the passage of time.

## Feminisms, Knowledge Production and Citizenship: Representing Women in the 'War on Terror'

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While the corporate media's reporting of the 'War on Terror' has come under criticism for its obsequious apologetics for the Bush Administration's imperialist policies, little attention has been paid to the unprecedented access to mainstream media acquired by elite Muslim women journalists and writers in the West. This paper examines representations of Islam, the 'West', women and gender relations in two documentaries and two feature films made by (or with the significant participation of) Muslim women activists. The four films are *Beneath the Veil*, *Faith Without Fear*, *Osama* and *Kandahar*. These films have been chosen for study as they have been widely distributed to mainstream audiences and are also being integrated into the Women's Studies curriculum.

Drawing attention to the complex role of 'independent' women/ feminist filmmakers/activists, who are rarely associated with the dissemination of imperialist ideologies and war propaganda, my paper demonstrates how these

films have contributed to mobilizing popular support in the West for the invasions and occupations of Afghanistan and Iraq, and for the erosion of the citizenship rights of Muslims.

### Status of a Woman in Religion

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Religion has been playing an important role in the day-to-day life of a woman. In fact, whether they are believers or not, most women are affected in one way or the other by the attitude of different faiths towards women, directly or through their traditional influence on society or the State. This influence is seldom benign: women's rights are often curtailed or violated in the name of religion.

While examining the status of Women within these major religions of India- Hinduism , Islam and Christianity, we find that there is no religious teaching which says anything derogatory about women, in practice all the religious and their followers have made women second rate human beings in varied subtle ways.

The History of Human Civilization reveals that woman was once regarded as an embodiment of depravity, shame and sin in the world. The birth of a daughter so embarrassed a father that he could not raise his head for shame. For this reason, the inhuman custom of disposing of daughters by killing them became common in many nations. Besides the illiterate and ignorant people, the learned scholars also disputed for generations whether woman was a human being and whether god has granted her a soul.

However, in this millennium the status of a woman in every religions is now began to change constantly but retaining her dignity. The spirit of sisterhood has played an important role in this transformation. The greatness of a religion lies in respecting woman and shall have all the rights to attain her due rights.

### Negating the Norm and Breaking the Barriers : Lived realities of caste and their representation in hegemonic discourses

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Realities of caste and the normative hegemonic processes of constructing knowledge about them are an instance of how wide the gaps are between the two.   Dalit women's autobiographies pose a challenge in many ways to such dominant representations and hegemonic practices which have endorsed the oppressive caste practices in the Indian society. As an instance of this, I would first like to present a comparative analysis of the life of the Mahar community and its life in two books: one is Atre's *Gavgada*, a text by a renowned sociologist in Marathi and the other is *Jina Amucha*, a dalit woman's, Baby Kamble's, autobiography.

The discussion of how a dalit woman's autobiography challenges the dominant academic discourses is followed by a discussion of how the dalit woman has taken on the task of debunking established mythologies as a part of their politics of resistance which they have inherited from Mahatma Phule. The paper goes on to discuss the Tulsi story in established brahminical mythology and Baby Kamble's subversive narration of the tale of Tulsi as she came to know it from her community's cultural inheritance. In the process, the paper argues, the dalit woman writer seems to break open the stranglehold of established patriarchal practices and caste ideologies and paves way for alternative traditions of knowledge construction.

### On Autobiography

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Autobiography as part of feminist literary tradition is a literary form, where the author as it appears is not dead but has been resurrected. Women's autobiographical writings are literary and cultural sites where we come across mobile and multiple subjectivities. As a genre, they are different in terms of their cultural and ideological orientation. Women write autobiographies that emphasize their private life as part of a larger social fabric in contrast to men's autobiographical texts, where an individual agency is foregrounded in the public sphere. The woman autobiographer in

the process of writing negotiates with the "Symbolic Order"; is engaged in the process of acquiring a fixed subject position/agency and simultaneously is located within the ideology of femininity and self-effacement. This body of writing is marked by a variety of discourses.

The present paper seeks to read Krupabai Satthianadhan's Saguna described as the first autobiographical novel in English by an Indian woman as a narrative located in socio-cultural milieu of late nineteenth century Western India. This period has been described as the age of reforms and gender was central to the social reform movement. The figure of the New Woman emerged at the juncture of colonial, indigenous and nationalist reform movements. This figure was a re-alignment of past and present needs and the New Woman was a self-educated and self-reliant individual who participated in the domestic and the public sphere. The narrative was also governed by novel as a realistic literary genre, which in the context of nineteenth century India was a complex socio-historical cultural site. Reading of "Saguna" as an autobiographical novel will be deconstructing essentialism and tracing multiple subjectivities.

## Eroticised Violence in Medieval Women's Mystical Literature

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Scholars of women's religious history and spirituality readily agree that medieval Veerashaiva women mystics in Karnataka like *Akka Mahadevi, Remmavve, Satyakka* etc., utilised vocabulary and imagery of sexual love to describe their often intense and passionate relationships with the divine. The numerous writings on women mystics also repeatedly note that they hopelessly blur the line between the spiritual on the one hand and bodily/sexual on the other. Similarly, in addition to eroticism, scholars agree that suffering and violence were often defining characteristics of the religious experience of medieval women mystics. The language used to describe this suffering was often brutally violent, replete with description of assault and annihilation, agony and affliction. Given the two motifs – eroticism and violent suffering – in medieval women's mystical literature, it should not be surprising to find that these themes are often intertwined in their discourse.

In this essay I will attend to the rhetoric of eroticised violence in medieval women's texts. In the first section, I shall offer a brief summary of the general understanding of the Veerashaivism in the 12th Century and introduce the women associated with that tradition. In the second section I will sketch the primary lenses through which feminist scholars have analysed this literature: the recovery of women's voices; the re-evaluation of sexuality and the erotic as good and positive and the forces over against the patriarchal domination of them. I will make a brief assessment of these readings and reason to argue why I believe the lenses that produce them need to be supplemented by readings derived from yet another lens, a lens that neither ignores nor glorifies the erotic violence within these texts.

## Role of Women Publishers and Unheard Women Voices

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The voices of women in male dominated literatures are gradually increasing in the contemporary age. The voices of women from common masses are also being heard in society. The medium of communication of these voices are the books through which Literature is made available to the people.

The role that publishers play is important as the publishing sectors continues to be male-dominated. The voices of common women can be best spread through women publishers. The background, skill and opportunities should be made available to women to join the business of publishing so that more and more women writers can publish their work. Women publishers will be able to provide better openings to writers to share exchange and educate society about issues concerning women.

Feminist writing has brought in a new way of thinking and expression as opposed to earlier conventional and conservative methods. Women feel encouraged to question age-old prejudices of patriarchal culture. Feminist literature can be used to as tools for revolution and also create awareness amongst women about their rights. Thus publication houses run by women involved in publishing feminist writings are urgently required today to give more power to women in India who have been silenced through the last 5000 years of Indian civilization.

### Folklores of Magahi and Bhojpuri region

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The multi layered society of Hindi region reflects its feudal values through its customs, religion and cultural byproducts. On the one hand its utopian cultural values beholds women as respectable, worth-worshiping, high esteemed-'naryastu yatra poojyante, ramante tatra devta'. On the other hand, the harsher reality is just the opposite which keeps women in patriarchal protection, stops them participating in public sphere and encourages their low status.

Women express this unequal reality in the folklores and folk literatures. The folk expression does gives voice to the grief and joy of the women, their inferior position in patriarchal hegemonic cultures and their resistance to the same.

This paper studies few of the folksongs sung during marriage ceremony and festivals especially during the popular 'Chatth Pooja'. The paper looks at the marriage ceremony as a kind of small public sphere for women within the boundary of the family, where women gather together and participate collectively sharing their joys, sorrows and views. Chhatth Pooja, on the other hand is wider public sphere where the women come out of their homes, gather together on the river banks, where caste and creed doesn't matter.

### Some Reflections On Language And Feminist Discourse

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The paper explores certain aspects of feminist philosophy of language. New theorization in semiotics shake our firm beliefs in classical laws and exhibit 'complex constructs' and their oppression specially of women providing them its consciousness. Feminist discourse can be seen as a collective engagement of women's own analysis of structures and systems.

Language creates and reinforces forms of behaviour and is often sexist. Researcher suggests that exclusion of women from language argued by Irigary & Kristeva may be considered metaphorical if seen from Chomsky's perspective. Feminists observe that not only female referential words are negative but there are also no words to describe women's strength and negotiating power. Three areas have been discussed – Do men and women use language differently, Presence of Sexism in language and strategies to address it and the question whether women can articulate their experiences in the oppressors' language. Lakoff's experiments are examined and the views of Spender are also considered. The researcher remarks that Feminists work on language is different from many philosophers of language as they examine particularities instead of general structure of language. It may, however, be useful to remark that speech act philosophical theories like those of Austin can be well utilized by feminists as also the concept of conversational implicature.

### Movements and Songs that Move

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In the last twenty five years of working with women from villages and different parts of rural India, I have witnessed their various ways of expressing themselves. They have used the written and the spoken medium to express their joys, their sorrows, talk about their situation and their visions of the future. One of the ways has been that of songs – songs that have emerged as individual and collective voices. In this paper I would like to trace the journey of women's expressions by looking at the songs that have emerged specifically in rural Maharshtra.

Until the decade of the eighties, the image of the woman was that of an ideal 'woman'. Also the mode of communication was primarily that of *bhajan*, *kirtan* and religious discourses. These were the only spaces available for women to express themselves. The urban women's movement took a decade before it reached the rural parts of the country. *Mahila mandals* set up in the villages gave a new space for expression. The songs also underwent a change and so did the image of the women. Songs written by social reformers were used and they highlighted the secondary status of women in society.

The last decade has seen a phenomenal change in the nature and number of songs as women have got involved with various organizing efforts and are coming out together. Songs on women's friendships, equality between men and women, and many more new topics found voice. The language is transforming as the writers of the songs change. Ordinary women are using the local tunes and beats to come up with their own ways of expression, their issues have changes with their political engagements and new songs have blossomed. In this paper I would like to use examples of these songs and trace this journey.

### The Poetry of Kamala Das: A Critique of Patriarchy

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Women have, in all ages, been considered inferior to men. This gender bias is not only present in their social life , but also in their literature. Their experiences and writings are limited by the Patriarchy and if they trespass the limitations ,they are considered as the baser beings. Male writers talk of body and sex in symbols, but if a female writer talks of female anatomy and experiences, she is termed as a 'prostitute'. The female writers and readers always have to content themselves with such misogynist practices prevalent in all ages. Despite the gender bias of Patriarchy, it has been found that the female writers write differently because of their biological and psychological changes. Their literature is considered as authentic because it is based on experiences. With the specialization of women writers in certain genres such as Diaries, Autobiographies, Bildungs Roman, Confessional Literature etc, it has been found that the 'gender dictates the genre'.

The present paper is a modest effort in analyzing the poetry of Indian English poet, Kamala Das, which present the critique of Patriarchy. She drew the attention of the publishers and critics by the publication of her first collection of poems, **Summer in Calcutta(1965),** in which she emerges out to be a rebel. She protests against the patriarchal setup and challenges it by candidly celebrating the female body. In one of her poems, **'The Old Play House'** she protests against the male domination and the consequent dwrrfing of female. She writes as a feminist and all her poems cover the major issues of Feminism.

### The Unsung Telugu Women Writers of the Colonial Period  – A Study on Pulipaka Bala Tripura Sundaramma's Stories

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The impact of the Nationalistic movement during the British Colonial period not only created an opportunity for the women to raise their voice against social evils prevailing during those times but also created an opportunity to express their ideas through writings. It is generally apprehended that the active struggle for the rights of women have gained momentum in 1960s, which is considered as the decade of recognition that also brought many women into the field of literary creation, but prior to that many Indian women especially in Telengana region have also made a attempt not only to provide insights into their lives but also tried to uncover the marginalized power politics of Hindu familial and social structure. It might have been the lack of proper education, exposure or the social constraints that prevented them from providing any solutions, but their literary standard provide an insight of gems articulately embodied by shells in the name of cultural and traditional values. One such unexplored gem is Bala Tripura Sundaramma, an unsung Telugu women writer of the Colonial period.

For the purpose of the study the author has explored into five-stories of Bala Tripura Sundaramma, whose biography is yet to be explored, but her writings provides an insight of the repositories of women's wisdom and the conventional web in which the women of her period were articulately woven into.

### Towards a pervasive Dalit feminist discourse

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Over the last three decades**,** Women's writings in Kannada have played a seminal role in articulating women's sensibilities, experiences and demands effectively. Women's movement and Feminist literary movement have contributed considerably for this to become a reality. Women who were marginalized hitherto in society like dalits

and muslims find expression in a creative way, thereby lending authenticity to their literary experiences. What was until recently not available in the literary tradition is now presented by women writers as something unique. Among such writers, Geetha Nagabhushana is prominent. Incidentally, she won the Central Sahitya Akademi award in 2005. Geetha Nagabhushana's works have extended the horizons of Kannada narrative literature by including new dimensions not thought of before. Having been born in an illiterate lower caste family herself, she had to face all the ordeals that the upper castes subject the lower castes to .That humiliation did not , however, dissipate her. Quite to the contrary, she brought into Kannada Literature abundant disturbing aspects of the lives of the slum dwellers, their sorrows and pains in particular.

The world of experience that Geetha unravels in her short stories and novels is both novel and unique. Most of the types of women that Geetha caricatures are such that they have no counterparts in the works of others.

### Storytelling, Gender Politics and Female Agency: Revisiting *Arabian Nights* with Geetha Hariharan

Rashmi Tikku, Nagpur

Hariharan's *When Dreams Travel* explores the politics and gender of oral narrative by revisiting one of the most famous feats of storytelling – *The Arabian Nights* which addresses the burning question, 'what is it to talk for your life?' in a hostile patriarchal framework where to fail is sure death. The novel exhibits phallocracy as the human condition within which female agency has to operate. It is this possibility of a radical restructuring of the accepted codes of power relationships that makes Shahrzad an iconic figure within the text. She posits – in her act of storytelling – the idea of women as agents of change and seems to suggest a realm of agency by which a person in a subordinate position can escape from being marginalized.

The novel opens with a tableau or frieze titled 'in the Embrace of Darkness'. It is a scene bristling with sexual antagonism. The setting is the familiar situation of *The Arabian Nights* frame story, with Shahrzad and Shahryar occupying the main roles of storyteller and listener, and with Dunyazad and Shahzaman, the siblings of the two main protagonists in secondary spectator positions. The triumph of Shahrzad in such a context foregrounds the power inherent in storytelling and the power relationships of language games.

The text foregrounds female agency in the act of communication, highlighting the subversive power in language to make dreams/imagination travel. The paper will use the text to foreground the deeper concerns many female authors like C.S.Laxmi (Ambai) have voiced through their fiction in the power of morality and linguistic performance to voice female agency.

### Beyond the Veil: A comparative Study of  Ruqqaiya Sakhawat Hussain, Ismat Chughtai, and Qurraitulain Hyder

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My paper conducts a comparative study of three  Muslim women writers Ruqqaiya Sakhawat Hussain, Ismat Chughtai, and Qurraitulain Hyder, who were feminists by instinct much before the concept was introduced. All three started writing at a time when women's writings were not taken seriously. Their works, which dealt with the everyday lives of women , were either trivialized and marginalized ( as in the case of Ruqqaiya  Sakhawat Hussain) or labeled as obscene and challenged  in court (as in the case of Ismat Chughtai) or treated as shameless (as in the case of Qurraitulain Hyder). Only recently have these writers been given their rightful place in the feminist canon.

My paper will highlight the presence of nascent feminism in early twentieth century Muslim women's writings as opposed to the notion that Western feminism liberated Eastern women. My paper will also compare and contrast the perceptions of the three writers about the oppression and suppression of women.  Apart from this, my paper will focus on the role of food, clothes, cultural traditions like religious and social practices, language and class used by the three writers in defining the status of women.

## Discerning the Underbelly: Mainstream Bombay Cinema and the Organization of Sexuality

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The realm of the sexual when linked to pleasure is approached obliquely at best by most people working in the field of gender and women's studies. This poses a problem (particularly for women) at two levels. The first is that in an ironical replay of the politics of patriarchy, sexual speech, by women unless clothed in the language of violation ('I didn't want it') or ignorance ('I didn't know what it was'), becomes immoral at best and illegitimate at worst. The second is that the pleasure quotient which constitutes the realm of sexuality as surely as violence does, is admissible only in the context of legitimising violence (women like to be raped) or male sexual pleasure. More recently sexual discourse has had to confront the challenges posed by the outed gay community in India. It has also had to address the logic of insatiable consumerism of capitalism which has spawned a plethora of images which sometimes follow the logic of pornography.

The problem compounds when we are then face to face with a medium whose business it is to pleasure and often via representations of the female body and assumptions about its pleasures. Mainstream Bombay cinema has and continues to be part of the process of constructing and producing meanings of the sexual through its representations, narratives and treatment of themes. This paper will set out, examine and analyse some of the crucial ways in which the sexual is articulated in the context of contemporary mainstream Bombay cinema. In relation to this, it will identify some of *what* is available representationally, narratively and thematically and build into that, the more difficult and analytical questions regarding *why* we have these representations.

## Women Artists – Unearthing the Hidden

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The aim of the present research paper is to investigate the position of women as 'women artists' in the field of fine arts. Gender being a common variable in sociological research definitely has some substantial impact on the outlook and behavior of the individual. Here women as subject would imply professional women engaged in fine art and who express their creativity through the medium of painting.

The primary data is part of a larger research in the field of sociology of art. The women artists who were respondents are contemporary fine artists of Baroda city in Gujarat.

Gender within the contemporary art world has an ambiguous status. The term 'artist' when ever and where ever mentioned implies 'male artist'. This it self reflects that the language we use has underlying assumption and reflects male dominance. But do women artists want to be known as 'women artists'? The history of women artists in India is as recent as 1970s, but women artists have existed since the ancient times as is evident from some feminist historiography.

The women artists who were interviewed, expressed their desire to be known as only 'artists' and not women artists; as placing them into a separate category would mean they would be judged differently from male artists. If the art is to be understood or judged then the creators' gender should not be considered as an important element in the process of viewing or appreciating art. Thus there is an inherent tension as to whether the aspect highlighted by feminist art historians is crucial to the art world or has it further led to a dilemma in the minds of the women artists to be considered a separate category.

It is important to note that in traditional Indian art individuality of the artists was not a matter of celebration; it may be so due to the cultural inclination of the Indian psyche towards collectivistic feeling rather than individualistic approach towards life. The women artists who have achieved laurels in the art world which is still dominated by men needs be unearthed and applauded for as it would mean celebrating the progressive atmosphere in contemporary Indian society.

### Kodungallur Bharani: Performing the Anti-Modern

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Power according to Foucault is productive in so far as it constructs certain kinds of knowledge systems. The cultural sphere is a major space wherein the constructions of such dominant knowledge(s) take place. In such a context I would look at the way in which Kodungallur Bharani, a specific cultural (ritualistic) practice found in Kerala subverts various aspects of the dominant discourse in terms of gendered bodies, the structure of the family etc.

As against dominant cultural practices one finds that here the woman (deity) gets manifested in her "dark menstrual" phase rather than in the way in which her body gets represented in popular culture. Usually it is the non menstrual aspects of a women's life that gets represented. I would look at the implications of such a representation in the cultural sphere. Moreover the ceremony also opens up a space wherein there is subversion in terms of gendered bodies. For instance all the members of the family, irrespective of the hierarchised structure, participate in the singing of "theripattu". In a context where, talking about sex is itself considered to be blasphemous, such a performance gains significant proportions.

In such a context I would look at Kodungallur Bharani as part of a subaltern or rather minority knowledge system whereby some kind of a subversion takes place at the level of popular culture. Also I would look at how such a performance would also involve a critique of the discourse of modernity which seeks to construct knowledge systems based on the binaries of civilization/barbarity at large.

### Commodification of Women by Media

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Does destiny of the women depend upon the color of her skin? Or How thin she looks? Or the softness of her hair? Or on the cosmetics she use?

A quick survey of all the commercials on television and ads in newspaper would make us believe that it does. The mainstream media have been reinforcing the traditional stereotype image of women, their perpetuating the status-quo. Thus women are shown as housewives, or even if they are working, they are shown as secretaries, stenographers, airhostess, school teachers, receptionists where they are expected to look attractive and make their bosses and clients happy. Seldom one comes across women in the role of a tough journalist, engineer, lawyer, driver or a scientist.

Even if the women are shown in a high profile job's media portrays them as fair, clear skinned, soft, beautiful, with long shiny hair, colored lips, thread eyebrows and rose cheeked high class women.

In spite of a global woman's movement that has lasted more than three decades and made substantial gains on both legal and cultural fronts in most nations of world there has been store stability in sexist media representations every where. This is certainly not to argue that such imagery has gone unchallenged by feminist scholars, by pressure groups, by women media workers and by ordinary women like me and you.

But it's so depressing that we women are still stuck with the obsession created by the media and looking forward to become like one shown by them; agreeing to what they say and not fighting back.

### Re-inventing Myths, Retelling Stories: Reading Amy Tan's Joy-Luck Club and Kitchen God's Wife

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Asian–American women writers, writing from the interstices, in their short stories, autobiographies and novels record the ethnic marginal women's journey from silence to voice through the vehicles of story-telling, widely considered to be a female act. Particularly for women writers of Chinese ancestry, writing is not only an act of self assertion, but also an act of defiance against the weight of historical and societal injunctions of a patriarchal society which viewed women as "hsiao ren"( inferior beings ) as compared to "ren" (human beings); and where foot binding, concubinage , female slavery and female infanticide were common practices.

My study will look at two novels (*Joy Luck Club* and *Kitchen God's Wife*) by Amy Tan the Chinese-American writer, who like the afro American novelist, Toni Morrison, believes in the generative power of the word, and through the use of talk stories writes back against the male Eurocentric hegemonic discourse. While *Kitchen God's Wife* is a retelling and decentering of an old patriarchal myth in a new feminist perspective, *Joy Luck Club* redefines Chinese immigration by recollecting stories of 4 Chinese –born mothers to their American born daughters, and illuminate the multiplicity of experiences of Chinese women who struggle to fashion a voice for themselves in a culture where women are conditioned to be silent. The study will also make passing references to autobiographies and fiction written by other Asian- American women writers who have emerged in the current literary scene.

## Women and Early Talkies: Encountering Conventions and Canons

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This paper explores what may be referred to as a 'popular–melodramatic' film, and examines the polysemic tendencies of early Indian talkies. In an effort to understand the diversities in narrative patterns, visual styles, modes of address, audience responses and ideology, I primarily analyse a film about a Vaishnavite poet, Chandidas by Debaki Bose (1932, Bengali ).

Notions of public, and private/personal; and indoor–outdoor are addressed in rather complex fashion in this film. While these binaries overlap, a popular film about a medieval poet connects contemporary discontents with the new cinematic form. Indeed, Partha Chatterjee's premise (1993) becomes problematic as we read some of the films of the thirties. In Chandidas, Rami is the 'washer woman', who is allegedly 'coarse, loud, quarrelsome… sexually promiscuous'. Yet Rami threatens to reform social conditions even as she represent her class and caste. Truly, Rami becomes the 'new woman'. And, unlike the nineteenth C Bhadralok women who were pushed to private spaces, Vaishnavite women, women from the lower strata or working class/working women, had relative independence and were remarkably vocal and mobile, with greater access to public spaces. Thus, while Rami is deeply conscious of her sexuality and desire, she is also conscious of the ruptures it creates within the social paradigm.

In fact, the 'women's question' need to be readdressed, since what emerge from popular texts are images of more vocal women who not only question their own marginalised locations, but use their own positions to interrogate class-caste hierarchies and social exploitations. Such films become vehicles of emancipation and modernity for the masses.

## Depiction of Women in Dogri Language

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Growing up female in a patrilineal Indian society involves many subtleties and complexities. Women grow up as gendered subjects in the society. Dogras are the major inhabitants of Jammu region. The community mainly comprises of Rajputs, Khatris, Brahmins and Mahajans. The language spoken by them is Dogri. Like all other languages Dogri also comprises of many sayings and proverbs in everyday language, which form an integral part of the language. An in depth analysis of Dogri with a gender lens shows that women are referred to in many of these sayings and proverbs as an important constituent of the society. This reference is mostly the reflection of the socialisation of the Dogra women in which women are ridiculed, are projected as inferior being, remain mostly unwanted and are seen as a cause of all evil happening in the society. Even the sociological analysis of Dogri folksongs also leads one to conclude that there are loud biases and prejudices against women as there is no birth song available on the occasion of birth of a girl child.  The life cycle of a Dogra woman goes through different stages and phases. Every stage is marked by certain customs, traditions and rituals, which form an integral part of her being. The socialization process that she undergoes remains to be the chief factor in constructing her identity. The present paper tries to focus how this process of socialization through the use of language and practices within the family and the society constructs the identity of Dogra women and how the gender roles are conceived, enacted and learnt within a complexity of the Dogri language.

## Gender and Language

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Language works through its use and use reflects the meaning and if we want to know the meaning of word, we must know how it is used and no meaning can be gained if we would like to understand it out of the context. And one another thing that is important to understand the meaning is that we do not understand the word in isolation, we understand it in relation with other words. In this way, language provides a category through which we perceive ourselves, understand ourselves and others also. But this category is not neutral. There is nexus between power, privilege and languages. Meanings of the terms are tied with actual power structure, so the discourse of dominant group prevails. For example – Black is the name of colour, but this is not the whole meaning, it is mostly used as value loaded: as Black woman, Blacken the face, Black deed, Black day, Black money etc. It is used to dehumanize humiliate and to degrade. It is used as something unfortunate, and its obvious reason is that power and privilege are in the hands of whites, so they constructed the symbols in their favour, and degraded and humiliated which is non similar to them and now if we say that we are fighting against colour discrimination, we are simply making a false commitment, because if our language inherits a category which shows its disrespect to Black then it is useless to say no discrimination will be done on the basis of colour. Here language not only gives the space for discrimination but also provokes its use. Such is the case with women where power is in male hand. They have construct language that favours them. If our society is patriarchal culture is patriarchal, so is the language, where word 'female' used as derogatory word, sometimes directly some time indirectly. Language is context specific, culture specific and gender is used as an overwhelming category, which categorize women centric word either to represent feminine characteristic as or to show their subordination. Language reflects the subordination of women, creates a space for this subordination and also provokes to use it. Language participates in our life not passively but actively. And in this participation it is tied with actual power structure. Therefore it is essential to detangle the relation between power and language and to deconstruct it.

## Gender and Writing

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According to some critics, Feminist criticism is rooted in the fundamental that women are seats of consciousness: are selves, not Others. Women in literature written by men are for the most part seen as Others, as objects, of interest only insofar as they serve or detract from the goals of the male protagonist. Such literature is alien from a female point of view because it denies her essential selfhood.

The task of feminist critics is to expose the male dominance over female which constitutes all pervasive power in our cultural ideology where the fundamental concept is power politics. There is no scope of female space in the patriarchal order. The ideas including the feminist notions are contaminated by the male society. There is no reason to hide that Mary Wollstonecraft was inspired by the male dominant ideas of French Revolution and Simone de Beauvoir was inspired by Satre's phallocentric categories when she wrote *Second Sex*. Thus ultimately what really matters is not whether the theory is by a man or a woman but now its effects are feminist or sexist in nature.

Feminist literary criticism leads to a critique of sex-gender system. Women do, however, find themselves, confronting one universal-that, how much power or status is accorded to women in a given culture, they are in comparison to men, devalued as 'the second sex'. That 'one is not born but rather becomes a woman' is the thesis of Simone de Beauvoir's *Second Sex*, the pioneering and the most comprehensive study of human ideology.

We have noticed that any work of woman writer is not regularly feminist. The feminist criticism is a political discourse and if a woman writer chooses to write a feminine article, it surely becomes a political choice. It is not just objective but a feminist perspective.

## Gender in the Poems of Emily Dickinson

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Emily Dickinson (1830-1886), an American poetess dared to write inspite of the existing rigid moralism in society of mid-Victorian America. Inspite of coming from west, with a family background of politics, education and opportunities;

only 14 poems were published during her lifespan. It was after her demise that a family member accidentally discovered some odd 17,76 poems in her room. A book of poems was brought out in 1890 with portions revised and updated. But a serious and successful effort to officially present Emily Dickinson to the literary world was between 1951-1955. All her poems are numbered and the first line of the poem is shown as the title.

Though Emily Dickinson wrote on a number of themes adopting a technique and narrative strategy essentially feminine. Keeping in mind the theme of the conference I would be limiting my research paper on selected poems of Emily Dickinson which are gender based.  Poem 273 goes as:

He put the Belt around my life-
I heard the Buckle snap-
And turned away, imperial—

"He" denotes the male, representative of the male superiorly, used to trapping or subjugating the female. 'I' not only speaks of the poet's voice but is also symbolic of the helplessness of the female who are passive observers of the process of lashing. The male turns away unaffected by the whole episode—.

## Women's Schooling and Sexuality: Missionary Education and Female Sexuality in the Nineteenth Century: Literary Texts and Missionary Records

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The paper investigates the system of female education in British Bengal to uncover the complexities underlying the figure of the reading woman around the nineteenth and early twentieth century. The research looks at nineteenth century Bengali novels (those by Rabindranath Tagore and Bankim Chandra Chatterjee) as well as the personal narratives of Bengali women (those of Sarajubala, Sarala Devi Chowdhurani) to uncover the ways in which English education was perceived as shaping women's sexuality. The attempt is to locate how the relationship between English education and sexuality creates the figures of the 'nabina' and the 'prachina'. In novels like Tagore's 'Nashtaneer', the 'prachina' is the domesticised household woman with an unrefined and raw sexual appeal. The 'nabina' is at the other extreme with an exposure to English education and public life. Interestingly, the 'nabina' becomes a sexually dubious entity. In one way, the English educated 'nabina' is typecast as someone sexually transgressive, who fails the standards of conservative Indian womanhood. At the same time, she gets invested with a polished and heightened sexual charm as a result of the intellectual and civilisational impact of her education. It is this dynamic of education and sexuality in nineteenth century British Bengal that the paper tries to explore.

# 'POLITICAL PERCEPTIONS IN WOMEN'S WRITINGS

Coordinator: Sarmistha Dutta Gupta (Sachetana and Ebong Alap), Kolkata

### Gendered Constructions of Identity: An/other History, An/other Subjectivity

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The paper proposes to examine the visible and invisible spaces of women's politics of intervention in/around the grand narratives of Partition and the Sylhet Referendum specifically in the geo-cultural space of the Surma-Barak Valley in Assam, but also having its bearing on the politics and society of other states in north-eastern India. In this context one marks a total absence of women from the political documents on Surma-Barak valley in the early twentieth century.

Although the presence of women in the public realm was not recorded, they existed in male imagination in the form of heroic characters like Ranachandi in *Ranachandi*, or suffering women as in Surendra Chakrabarty's novel *Ashrumalini* published in 1935. Under these circumstances, women's political presence and participation can be traced only in the construction of certain types of subjectivities in certain categories of women who either internalized the offered models by her male counterpart or celebrated a self reflexivity, creating alternative mediums of expression. Such alternative mediums of expression do not stem from already existing documents and sources of history, but they arise from women's encounter with the world that forms and re-forms their subjectivities.

The study would focus on the off-stage subjective roles of women as evident in folk songs like *baromashi geet* and dances like *dhamail*, embroidery and katha stitch, which inscribe the political on the personal. In one's attempt to render women visible in spaces where her presence has been erased several sources discovered in the late twentieth century would be used. Mention may be made of diaries of women, like Subarna Prova Das' *Jharapata*, which narrates her life and the stories of emancipatory struggles of twentieth century women. Suhasini Das, revered as 'mother' in Bangladesh, kept an account of the tense days and nights of the Sylhet Referendum in her diary. This day-to-day account recalls the tragic drama of Partition. Dairies and letters from jail such as Suroma Ghatak's *Shillong jailer Diary* gives an account of struggle and women's perspective towards reform in the jail and at the same time a firm resolve to carry forward the agenda of class struggle.

### Fragmented Political Narratives: The Fictional and Autobiographical Writings of Bengali Women

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In an episode of the cartoon series *Calvin and Hobbes*, Calvin tells Hobbes, 'History is the fiction we invent to persuade ourselves that events are knowable and that life has order and direction.' The political narratives of Bengali women who lived and worked in the decades leading to the independence and partition of India can be perceived as disruptive of the ordered and knowable history while also reconstructing our knowledge of events, through a different perspective and uncovering of 'peripheral' events. These writings also suggest the elusive and fragmentary nature of the historical narrative that is often unrecognised amidst the plethora of data and documents.

The writings of middle class Bengali women in late colonial and early post-colonial India range across diverse genres but in this paper I will examine some fictional and autobiographical writings to understand how these two genres were used by women to construct their own political narrative, disruptive, incomplete and fragmentary.

The autobiographical writings are quite explicitly political documents outlining lives, events, and times. Interestingly there is also evident a reluctance in these writings to foreground the gender politics that inform the political practices within the various movements as well as the lives of the authors within the family and community and in the political arena. On the other hand, in many of the fictional writings where the strand of political narrative may be located only as a sub-text, how the politics of gender undercuts the entire narrative of the political movements in pre- and post-colonial India is subtly but unambiguously presented.

The texts that will form the core of my analyses include the autobiographical writings of Sarala Devi Choudhurani, Santisudha Ghosh, Manikuntala Sen and the fictional writings of Santisudha Ghosh, Sabitri Roy, Sulekha Sanyal among others.

## Voicing the Silence: The Genocide and After

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Great human tragedies have often inspired literary masterpieces all over the world. The two World Wars, the Holocaust, and the Partition of India are some examples. But there have also been times when writers have remained mostly silent on tumultuous and dreadful times. Most of the Gujarati writers have chosen this silence as far as the Genocide of 2002 is concerned! Under the circumstances, a few women writers have had the courage to write about the genocide. They are few in number but this paper would attempt to look at what they have written, their omissions and commissions as well as the politics of silence that most others have chosen.

The women writers I am going to talk about are Suverna, Himanshi Shelat, Varsha Adalaja, Mihal Dave, Usha Upadhyay and Rita Bhatt. They have written mostly articles and short features in periodicals as well as short stories, poems and plays. Some of them have also translated short stories from other Indian languages on communal violence into Gujarati. One or two of these writers were actively engaged in rehabilitating victims and there have also been attempts to write 'true stories' based on interviews with the victims of genocide. At least one among them, namely Himanshi, has written satires to lash out at the double standards of large sections of Gujarat's civil society who have chosen to ignore this dark episode.

But why is writing on the genocide so sparse in Gujarat? There are two major literary organizations in the state — the Sahitya Academi which is directly under the state government and not at all autonomous. The chief minister himself heads it. The other is the Gujarati Sahitya Parishad — a 103-year-old organization dominated by rightwing writers who are mostly Brahmanic or so-called 'Gandhians' and who have behaved indifferently towards the genocide. So the literary atmosphere could be one of the most powerful reasons for writers not wanting to write about the genocide and after. Could it be due to fear of marginalization? Could it be not wanting to be black-listed by the state or the establishment? Or is it because most of them are post-establishment and believe in Hindu hegemony? This paper seeks to address some of these questions as well and women's perceptions in relation to this complex situation.

## Women's Autobiographies: Writings into History

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Lee Horsley, in his *Political Fiction and the Historical Imagination,* opines that every history is contemporary history. Accordingly an autobiography is contemporary history in terms of the subjective understanding of the person who authors the text. Recently a number of autobiographies have succeeded in making their way into the discourse of alternative writings in contemporary Kerala. Many of these autobiographies are written by women.

Among these autobiographies, there is one written by Vinaya, who was an employee of the Kerala Police Service. It is called *Ente Katha : Adhava Oru Malayalee Yuvathiyude Jeevitharyathra* (My story, Or the Journey of a Malayali Woman). Primarily she foregrounds the politics of a gendered body which becomes a determining force in regulating and controlling her social identity. She denies the 'validity' of a 'feminine' body throughout the narrative. Vinaya's autobiography tries to show how she has challenged mystified notions of womanhood. The regime of government, of which she herself was a part, had tried to make her silent as recorded in the account of her resistance. Eventually Vinaya's protest culminated in her expulsion from government service. Therefore, I would look at Vinaya's text as

exploring the strategies of suppression and agencies of power within the regimes of government and also compare her autobiography with some other contemporary women's autobiographies from Kerala.

## Questions of Gender and Questions of Class: A Study of two Telugu Autobiographies

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To understand the multiple dimensions of women's participation in the nationalist movement and the Communist movement in Andhra Pradesh from 1920s to the 1950s, we propose to look at two Telugu autobiographies—Goparaju Sita Devi's *Janai Janma Bhoomisha* and Devulapalli Sri Rangamma's *Naa Jeevitham; Gnyapakalu* in this paper.

Sita Devi, hailing from a family of nationalist and Communist leaders, writes about the gradual development of women's movement in Andhra Pradesh. She represents that generation when the Congress, leading the country's freedom movement, said more and did less with regard to emancipation of women. Later, when the Communists inspired movements in her state, Sita Devi joined their cause and moved to the grassroots level where she got an opportunity to dedicate her life to the women's movement. Sri Rangamma, wife of the communist leader Devulapalli Venkateshwar Rao, on the other hand talks of how her husband encouraged her to participate in some of the activities of the party and at the same time questions the choices granted to women like her by the party. There is a touching recollection of the pathetic condition in which she waited years together for her husband to return from self exile. Responsibilities of the family that the party thrust on them have also been critiqued.

The paper would show how these autobiographies throw light on the causes which drew women to such political movements; the efforts made to involve women and the limits of such efforts made thereof; and how questions of class and questions of the nation's freedom clashed with questions of gender. It captures women's perceptions in their own words in those decades of the twentieth century wherein much was hyped about emancipation of women.

## Women in the Constituent Assembly: Politics of Representation and Identity

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The Constitution of India, considered to be the expression of the will of the nation as formulated and framed by the Constituent Assembly, has been subjected to various critiques from the time of its inception. Feminist critiques agree upon the patriarchal nature of the constitutional logic but have seldom tried to examine the roots of that logic. Despite being hailed as 'India in microcosm' and praised as a true representative of the nation, the Constituent Assembly at no point consisted of more than fifteen women, that is, less than six per cent of its strength. The history and politics of this representation suggests that women's participation in the making of the Constitution was only a reflection of the politics of inclusion and exclusion that informed the nationalist movement of the period. Women's movement and nationalist movement in the twentieth century were related to each other in an overlapping system of dependencies. Their problematic relation was also intensified by the fact that there was not one unified women's movement with a defined feminist ideology.

Women's politics regarding the nation were also caught between questions of gender and community. Begum Jahan Ara Shah Nawaz, an important member of the All India Women's Conference, decided that her principal loyalty was with the Muslim community. She opposed the AIWC's position against separate electorates and reserved seats for women and joined movements in support for Pakistan. Elected to the Constituent Assembly of undivided India she later became the vice-president of the Pakistani Constituent Assembly. In contrast, Begum Qudsia Aizaz Rasul, as a member of the Indian Constituent Assembly, asked Muslims to give up their reserved seats.

The present paper challenges the notion of the objective authorship of the Constitution; however, its basis is not a simple one of exclusion of women. It examines the issue of possible splits in their voices caused by their vexed relation with the anti-colonial and nationalist politics. Reading the female voice in the Constituent Assembly within the paradigms of representation and identity stated above, the paper tries to find the causes and configuration of the splits in the political perceptions of women.

## Women and Society: Through the Lens of a Gandhian Politician

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This paper will focus on Dr Phulrenu Guha's book entitled *Women and Society* which was published in July 1987. Dr Guha [1911-2006] was an eminent social activist and a veteran Congress leader. She participated in the nationalist movement and in post-independent India she was a member of both the Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha . She was the union minister in charge of social welfare in the Indira Gandhi government in the 1970s. But most importantly, she was the chairperson of the Committee on the Status of Women in India (CSWI) which was responsible for the preparation of the 'founding text', *Towards Equality* in 1975. This document is upheld as the path-breaking report on the status of Indian women shattering quite a few myths about the position of women in Indian society.

*Women and Society* is a compilation of articles written by her and deliberates on several aspects of women's lives, specifically on the political identity of women as a citizen and also as a participant in the process of development. I propose to analyse the perceptions of this ace politician and social worker on issues pertaining to women at various levels. The paper would try to reflect on the task visualized by her in empowering marginalized women and making them self-reliant through skill-building for self-employment and income-generation opportunities. It would also try to show the importance she laid on women's holistic development, especially on their awareness-raising, confidence-building and leadership training.

## Redefining Politics? Nation in Women's Narratives

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Women's narratives usually depict the home and the relational. Looking at women's autobiographies this general perception can be put to a challenge. Women have been aware of the public sphere, participated in matters of the public sphere, and expressed their perceptions about the public sphere in their writings. This paper will be an attempt to find answers to the following:

- What is the understanding of state and women's citizenship in women's writings?
- Do women consider themselves as active agents negotiating with the state or as passive victims of state decisions?
- What is the difference in the manner in which women participating in political processes write about political issues from those who perceive the political as non-participants in the public sphere?
- The autobiographies written by Bengali women that will be chosen for this study are of two types: women writing about their lives and reflecting on politics and women political activists writing autobiographies. Very few among the women autobiographers of the nineteenth and early twentieth century actually participated in India's struggle for freedom and written their experiences on it. The other issue that finds reflection in women's autobiographies is the Partition as well as the 1971 creation of Bangladesh.

Histories of the nation-state have usually silenced alternative histories and perspectives. Women's stories of the nationalist aspirations, Partition and other conflict situations are denied the 'official' status beyond their 'private' space, and issues of violence experienced by women are rarely allowed to be passed on to the next generation officially. Life histories of women actually become a disturbing influence on the grand narrativization of the nation state. Thus this paper will not just be a description on the narratives but also pose an important methodological question on the use of women's narratives for purposes of imagining a nation.

## Political and Feminist Concerns in Attia Hosain's Sunlight on a Broken Column

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Women's writing has relevance for several reasons—it not only projects the observations, situations, responses and struggles of half of humanity, it also reflects a consciousness constructed by gender. At another level it questions values and structures considered axiomatic. It focuses attention on the definition of freedom and creativity.

Attia Hosain's novel *Sunlight on Broken Column* is set in the tumultuous period immediately preceding India's Independence and its partition into two separate nations. The novel is divided into three parts and explores themes of family, rebellion and social and political change. At first glance, the novel seems more concerned with tracing the female protagonist's evolving understanding of her identity and her often embattled or enabling relationships with various members of her extended family. But it is hard to completely disentangle her developing sense of self from that of the nation's, whose formation serves as the backdrop for her own. She has to confront the changes that are occurring within her own home and in the world at large. The choices she makes, the identifications and alliances she seeks or rejects are undoubtedly related to her personal self, but they can also be seen as identifications and alliances that the emerging nation may need to negotiate. The protagonist's own fight for independence is a struggle to break free from the claustrophobic traditional life she is forced to lead. She can only do this when she falls in love with a man whom her family has not chosen for her. It portrays on the one hand, an aspect of social change within the family and at the same time there is a larger historical theme of the political choices that a family such as the protagonist's is faced with. The writer stresses the fact that not only should women get more space within the existing social order but they should also try to challenge the existing status quo. The present paper proposes to examine Attia Hosain's *Sunlight on a Broken Column* on the lines suggested above.

## Two Karnataka Women Leaders and Fifty Years of the Making of the State

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This paper seeks to explore the writings of Yashodhara Dasappa and Leelavathi Devi R Prasad — two well-known politicians from Karnataka. They have both been state ministers and have contributed to the development of the state. They have also been popular for their initiatives with regard to women's development in rural areas. Yashodhara Dasappa was a Gandhian and worked for the upliftment of Harijan women. As a Congress leader she tried to raise the political consciousness of rural women in the state. She also was president of Kasturba Welfare Trust. Leelavathi Devi R Prasad worked for the co-operative movement, development of irrigation in the state and upliftment of women. She has also contributed to Kannada literature.

The first section of the paper discusses the contributions of these two women to the nationalist movement in the erstwhile Mysore State. In the second section, the focus is on the role played by them since the reorganization of the state in November 1956. In the third section of the paper, the political perceptions of these two politicians, as reflected in their writings, has been commented upon.

## Gender–political Intercept in a Tamil Novel

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In this paper a reading will be undertaken of the Tamil novel, *Unmaiulla Kavignan* (The Truthful Poet), by Mahalakshmi Subbu Arumugam. Mahalakshmi talks about 'Villu Pattu', a folk musical form of Tamil Nadu and its practitioner — her husband and the famous poet, Subbu Arumugam. The writer has no formal education but has evolved, with active support from her husband, to an extent where she is his critic as well as biographer. More often than not, all the name, fame and fortune of distinguished public figures are at the expense of their wives. The wife might put up a radiant front for the husband's benefit but usually has nothing positive to say about him so far as their personal relationship is concerned. Much less is the probability that she is moved to record his life story in print! The fact that she does so, is in itself is a subversion of patriarchal norms.

Though she confers sufficient importance on her husband so as to record his life story, she also stakes claim as the only appropriate person to be able to do so. At another point she says, 'A wife alone can do justice to her husband's life story. Only she can bring alive the joy and excitement of their shared life. It is equally important that the husband conducts his life in such a way as to provide the necessary inspiration to his wife in this noble task.' In other words, she is seizing the agency to record his\their life story while pinning the responsibility on him to inspire her. Therefore, the paper tries to provide an insight into the author's notion of companionship, the kind of egalitarian world she longs for, her distress at the existing inequity and her desire to transform the world through her writing.

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## SUB-THEMES

1.  Issues of Gender and Development: Perspectives and Conflicts
2.  Feminism and Knowledges of Violence
3.  Rethinking Feminist Methodologies in Contemporary Research
4.  Interface between Action and Research
5.  Gender, Science and Technology
6.  Generating New Knowledge around Sexualities and Genders
7.  Pedagogies, Schooling, Gender Studies
8.  Tribe, Caste and Minority: Structures and Exclusions
9.  Language, Literature and Cultural Production

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