



Indian Association for Women's Studies

XIII National Conference

Resisting Marginalizations, Challenging Hegemonies : Re-visioning Gender Politics

Organized by

IAWS

with the

Department of Women's Studies

Mahatma Gandhi Antarrashtriya Hindi Vishwavidyalaya

Wardha

21-24 January 2011

The Indian Association for Women's Studies (IAWS) was established in 1982 to further the field of women's studies and women's studies perspectives in different disciplines and to help strengthen the movement for women's equality through networking, conferences and campaigns, and collaboration with institutions/agencies working for similar objectives. IAWS is governed by its Constitution and registered under the Registrar of Societies, New Delhi. It is voluntarily managed by an elected Executive Committee. Members include academics, researchers, students, activists, social workers, media persons and others, women and men. IAWS marked its Silver Jubilee after completing 25 years in 2007. From its inception, IAWS has continuously sought to further the engagement between women's studies academics and the women's movement. Major platforms for this are the regional workshops and the National Conference, which is held every two or three years on themes of contemporary significance. The XIIIth National Conference is being organized in collaboration with Mahatma Gandhi Antarrashtriya Hindi Vishwavidyalaya (MGAHV) in January 2011 at Wardha. The MGAHV is an Indian central university established in 1997 for the promotion and development of Hindi language and literature, through teaching and research.

The first decade of the twenty-first century has been witness to continuing marginalization of large groups of people, rendered invisible and inconsequential by the power of the state, capital, and other social forces. There is an entrenchment of older inequalities even as newer voices assert their claims from the margins. There are at present sustained and resurgent efforts to resist and challenge hegemonies in the spheres of the state, natural resources, labour, body, markets, culture and ideology, conflict, language, sites of law, boundaries of relationships and the interfaces of these arenas. It is in the above context that we felt the need to engage with experiences from the field, and new areas of research, rethinking several of the old questions and seeking new alliances in the face of emerging challenges. The XIIIth IAWS National Conference around the theme, Resisting Marginalizations, Challenging Hegemonies: Re-visioning Gender Politics, provides us with the opportunity for dialogue, to challenge hegemonies, forge broader alliances and build alternatives.

The district of Wardha lies in a region of multiple social and geographical locations. While it is part of Vidharbha in Maharashtra, it is also situated in central India, and is culturally and linguistically diverse with Hindi and Marathi elements. Its relevance for organising a National Conference is both because of its accessibility from all parts of India and because of the important social and political issues which have arisen in recent years. The persistence of agricultural distress in the Vidarbha region has important implications for women's land rights. The agrarian crisis has precipitated a spate of farmers' suicides in the state of Maharashtra as elsewhere, posing new livelihood questions for the surviving women and their families. The adivasis/tribals, dalits and other disadvantaged groups struggle against the loss of work, culture, space and dignity. These are symptomatic of the crisis of livelihoods and the accompanying social and cultural spaces confronting women especially in villages and forests.

The IAWS conference provides us an important opportunity to engage in meaningful dialogues where we can articulate, analyse, understand and seek answers to the struggles and movements of dalits, tribals and women for an equitable society. These engagements will help us put together alternatives that encompass policy, track change, build upon and rely on the insights of the women's movement. Through its plenary panels and sub-themes, the organisers of this Conference invite participants to focus on a contemporary gender politics that captures the resistances and challenges that come from the margins.

XIII National Conference on Women's Studies
21-24 January 2011

**Resisting Marginalizations, Challenging Hegemonies:
Re-visioning Gender Politics**

Organized by
Indian Association for Women's Studies
at
**Mahatma Gandhi Antarrashtriya Vishwavidyalaya,
Wardha**

IAWS Registered Office
C/O Centre for Women's Development Studies
25 Bhai Vir Singh Marg (Gole Market)
New Delhi 110 001
Tel : + 91 11 2334 5530, 2336 6930
Fax : + 91 11 2334 6044

IAWS Secretariat
School of Women's Studies
Rabindra Bhavan, 3rd Floor,
Jadavpur University
Kolkata 700 032
Phone: +91 33 2414 6014
Telefax: + 91 33 2414 6531

Conference e-mail: wardha.conference@gmail.com
Website : www.iaws.org

XIII National Conference, 21-24 January 2010, Wardha

IAWS

A

IAWS Executive Committee (2008-2011)**President:** Anita Ghai (Delhi), anita.satyapal@gmail.com**Vice-President:** Meera Velayudhan (Ahmedabad),
meera_velayudhan@hotmail.com**General Secretary and Coordinator Eastern Region:** Samita Sen
(SWS JU, Kolkata), sensamita@yahoo.co.uk**Joint Secretary:** Rukmini Sen (Delhi), rukminisen18@yahoo.co.in**Treasurer and Coordinator Southern Region:** M. Indira (Mysore),
mahindira@yahoo.com**Editor:** S. Anandhi (Chennai), anandhister@gmail.com**Members**Ilina Sen (Wardha): **Coordinator Central Region,**
sen.ilina@gmail.com

Meena Gopal (Mumbai), meenagopal2000@yahoo.co.in

Uma Chakravarti (Delhi): **Coordinator Northern Region,**
umafam@gmail.comWandana Sonalkar (Aurangabad): **Coordinator Western Region,**
wsonalkar@gmail.comSandali Thakur (Delhi/Patna/Pune, co-opted): **Student Co-ordinator,**
sojourner.sandali@gmail.comMamta Singh (Wardha, co-opted): **Student Co-ordinator,**
singh_mamta05@rediffmail.com, mrosaline0@gmail.com

Sumi Krishna (Bangalore, ex-officio): sumikr@gmail.com

Mary E. John (Delhi, ex-officio): maryjohn1@gmail.com

IAWS Secretariat
School of Women's Studies
Rabindra Bhavan
Third Floor, Jadavpur University,
Kolkata-700 032
Tel: + 91 033 2414 6531/2414 6014,
Fax: + 91 033 2414 6531**Contact:****Local Organising Committee**Prof. Ilina Sen
Head, Dept. of Women's Studies
Mahatma Gandhi Antarrashtriya Hindi Vishwavidyalaya,
Wardha
sen.ilina@gmail.comProf. Manoj Kumar
Dean, School of Culture
Mahatma Gandhi Antarrashtriya Hindi Vishwavidyalaya,
WardhaMs Supriya Pathak
Asst. Professor, Dept. of Women's Studies
Mahatma Gandhi Antarrashtriya Hindi Vishwavidyalaya,
WardhaShri Narendra Singh
OSD Campus
Mahatma Gandhi Antarrashtriya Hindi Vishwavidyalaya,
WardhaDr. Rashmi Tikku
Women's Studies Centre
LAD College,
Nagpur.
rashmitikku@gmail.com**Department of Women's Studies,**
Mahatma Gandhi Antarrashtriya Hindi
Vishwavidyalaya
Gandhi Hill, PO Manas Mandir, Wardha 442 001.
Maharashtra. Tel. 07152 232947
Mamta Singh: 09049967421
Pratyush Prashant: 09370047284**Conference e-mail:** wardha.conference@gmail.com**Website:** www.iaws.org

Content

Concept Note	1
Sub-themes	
1. Controlling Resources: The Politics of Exclusion	4
2. Conflicts and Resistances: Challenges before the Women's Movements.....	5
3. Sites of Justice	7
4. Composite Cultures and Hegemonic Ideologies	9
5. Languages, Voices, Representations	11
6. State, Nation and Citizenship	13
7. New Markets and Interlocking Inequalities: Labour, Education, Health and Marriage	14
8. Re-imagining Relationships, Transcending Boundaries	16
9. Body Talk: Interrogating Boundaries and Hierarchies in Feminist Discourse	17
10. Women, Labour and Questions of Marginalization	19
Provisional Conference Programme	22
Information on Participation and Paper Presentation	23
Pre-Conference Workshop for Students	24
IAWS Membership Form	26
General Information	27
Conference Registration Form	28

LAW S

Resisting Marginalizations, Challenging Hegemonies : Revisioning Gender Politics

Concept Note

Resisting Marginalizations, Challenging Hegemonies: Re-visioning Gender Politics

The first decade of the twenty-first century is witness to continuing marginalization of large groups of people, rendered invisible and inconsequential by the powers of the state, capital, and other social forces. There is an entrenchment of older inequalities even as newer voices assert their claims from the margins.

There are at present sustained and resurgent efforts to resist and challenge hegemonies in the spheres of the state, natural resources, labour, body, markets, culture and ideology, conflict, language, sites of law, boundaries of relationships and the interfaces of these arenas. While numerous struggles envision a polity and society with a meaningful citizenship, feminists are having a fresh look at experiences from the field, rethinking several of the old questions and seeking new alliances in the face of emerging challenges.

In the market-dominated trajectory of development adopted, the state and capital are seeking greater control over natural resources; and they are also facing spiralling resistance, giving rise to varied sites of conflict, especially in the least developed regions of the country. Women are major participants in the new struggles of the day; they are challenging new forms of patriarchies and seeking to forge broader alliances and building alternatives.

It is not just against the state—women face conflict and confrontation even within family, caste, religious and ethnic groups, within professional institutions, in regional struggles, and other spaces. They experience conflict as part of collectives from forces outside, but also within them. They are targets of sexual violence within the family, in caste and communal conflicts and in situations of state repression. Social change and radical political movements sometimes provide the locus for challenging traditional gender roles and norms; simultaneously, however, newer forms of marginalizations are being engendered. The state is increasingly complicit with these processes of marginalizations—present today more in its repressive, extractive and appropriative roles than the ameliorative one of providing constitutional guarantees. The state functions in the interests of a few and, therefore, fails to provide entitlements and citizenship rights to vast sections of the country. It is based on such an understanding of the state that the women's movements approach law—recognising its repressive role, but going beyond this, as a site of possible reform as well. We cannot but recognize that, for the marginalized, the law opens up new vistas through the language of rights, compensatory jurisprudence, legal certification, while also exhorting vigilance to issues such as patronage of vested interests, dominance of customary justice, and other reactionary processes.

The state, market, and family mediate the arrangements of women's labour within the larger domain of work. Recent restructuring of markets and developments in technology have contributed towards the marginalization of labour, with

disproportionate impact on women. One result has been the increasing presence of women in streams of migration. Another has been the interlocking of markets in land, water, labour, marriage, education, health, which serve to perpetuate, even deepen, inequalities of gender. On the obverse, women workers have contributed greatly to innovations in strategies of collectivization and negotiation, providing new meanings to ideologies of contract and legitimacy of consent. Markets have become the sites of marginalization as well as of resistance—stretching from the local to the international.

Feminist discourses have just begun to understand the significance of the body as a cultural construct and as a site of disciplining. A complex interplay of power configures the body; those that are hungry, impaired, not healthy, considered fat, or altered by technology are an ever-present challenge to the dominant tropes of naturalization. The body is also central to questions of gender. Women's relationships to their bodies are extended as they continually form, negotiate, re-build, and survive relationships they have with people, locations and ideologies. The most potent challenge is posed by women at the margins of the hetero-normative family, conventional conjugality and patrilineal inheritance; new relationships are forged through migration for livelihood and in confronting notions of stigma.

In the domain of culture and ideology, hegemonic nationalism prevails even as its newer versions are nurtured through the media and other cultural modes. Cultural and territorial hegemony reflected in the idea of the nation-state has been interrogated and articulated in nationality movements, specifically in

the North East and Jammu & Kashmir. The misrepresentation and marginalization of women and their interests coincides with this hegemonic representation of 'Indian culture'. Understanding the significance of language as a tool of dominance has been central to the feminist project—originating from international but also national spaces. The diverse voices emerging from the margins—those of the queer, sign-language enabled, dalit, adivasi, muslim, are unable to enter into conversation with the mainstream or with each other due to the absence of translation. There are, however, also sites of resistance—to sustain and revive cultures at the margin as well as inspire new egalitarian cultures. The new social movements such as the dalit movement asserts its cultural rights through resistance, offering a counter discourse to dominant narratives of power and contributing greatly to an understanding of culture as a site of difference, multiplicity, contest, and negotiation. Women's movements too have contributed to such processes—through an articulation of resistance in the form of paintings, songs, films, documentaries, poetry, autobiographies and so on.

We have today a conjuncture of opposites—persistent exclusion of large sections of people, increasing privilege of a few and the very real possibility of new connections and conversations. What kind of politics of gender is appropriate for this moment? This conference hopes to survey the existing field, capturing the resistances and challenges coming from the margins as well as prospecting for the future of our movements.

Plenary Panel I : Marginalizations and Feminist Concerns: Resistances and Challenges

The theme plenary will focus on contemporary gender politics with an emphasis on resistances and challenges emerging from margins. The panel speakers will reflect on their understanding of violence and exploitation faced by marginalized groups, and explore the challenges these pose to feminist politics. This will contribute further to ongoing debates between various margin(s) and centre(s) both within and outside women's movement.

Plenary Panel II : Engendering Youth: Agency, Mobilization, Resistance

In order to reach out to the younger generation of women, college and university students as well as those in their early professional careers, the 2011 conference will have for the first time a Youth Plenary. In the midst of the far reaching changes that are happening with respect to redefining sites of law, development and displacement, re-imagining human relationships, negotiating new cultural spaces as well as new conflict zones and experiencing inequalities based on intersectional locations, the challenge before the youth in contemporary times are manifold. It is the youth who, both as a category as well as in alignment with others, have a potential for questioning givens and collectivizing. The panel aims to explore how the concerns of young feminists provide new directions for discourses of feminist politics.

Plenary Panel III : Challenges Facing Women in Central India

The regional plenary will try to unravel the nature of the multiple historical, political, socio-economic, and

developmental reality of the central Indian region in which Wardha is located. The Nagpur - Wardha region has historically been part of Central Provinces and Berar and its successor state of Madhya Bharat before being integrated into Maharashtra at the time of the states reorganization. There are strong historical links to the Mahakoshal and Chhattisgarh regions. The Wardha-Nagpur belt was also at the centre of the labour movement in the entire central India in the decades of the 1930s and 1940s.

The crucial issues across the central Indian region today are the crisis of the present model of development exemplified in Vidarbha's notorious record of farmer suicides, and the presence of large dalit and indigenous populations struggling to break the stranglehold of pre-ordained hierarchies. Incidents like the Khairlanji massacre and the reports of sexual violence percolating from the highly militarized tribal belts make us realize the extent of the challenges that confront the women of this region.

Plenary Panel IV : Writing Resistance: Feminist Engagements in South Asia

The South Asian Plenary is an expression of a collective journey undertaken by South Asian feminists since the IAWS Conference at Jaipur (1995). The IAWS has provided a platform for exchange of ideas on issues related to the theme of the conference from South Asian perspectives and experiences. This conference brings together for the first time feminist writers and cultural activists from South Asia who have played a significant role in women's movements in their respective regions. Their 'visibility' will lead to an effective understanding of their valuable engagement with gender issues and its relevant politics in South Asia.

Sub-theme 1

Controlling Resources: The Politics of Exclusion

The increasing control over resources—land, forest and water—and the consequent denial of access to food, education, healthcare, and livelihood is sharpening the politics of exclusion across the country. Inequalities that have persisted for decades have only got further exacerbated in post-Independent India. Sharp inequalities in the control over productive resources such as land and water—making for the most effective ways of controlling natural resources and dominating the dalits—have marginalized large segments of people. In recent years, especially, the interventions of state and international policies packaged as ‘development’ is creating new exclusions in areas otherwise neglected by social policies, wherein predatory capital, international and national, is taking over forests and the mineral wealth they contain. The state is using its power to sign away rights to the land through MoUs. Capital depends on the state, which with its coercive apparatus unleashes repression upon those opposing this relentless resource grab. Orissa, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand are becoming sites of intense conflict and repression. Even as resistance continues, the losses incurred are humongous. Forest dwellers, slum dwellers, fishing communities, agricultural labourers, industrial

workers and others are pitched against these insurmountable obstacles.

Feminist politics needs a new rigour in the face of these tumultuous changes so that far from seeing processes of marginalization as victimizing, such an exercise will help address the various ways in which the stranglehold of patriarchy is deepening. The politics of exclusion, for women in particular, has been always both covert and overt. Today, women’s systemic exclusion from resources has been accelerated by mining and big dams, factory closures, beautification of urban areas, export promotion zones and agrarian distress. Resistance movements are seeing the participation of women; yet, the question of how patriarchy operates in each of these contexts is yet to be clearly delineated. This sub-theme will attempt to evolve an understanding of resources, both tangible as well as symbolic; there are major struggles today to challenge monopolies over symbolic resources—the media, the erection of statues, the naming of streets—leading to significant re-configurations of meanings for those challenging hegemonies. Events at Khairlanji reveal how it became a challenge to the upper castes’ hold on knowledge when a Dalit girl pursues higher education and a challenge to their coercive power when a Dalit woman upholds her constitutional right to file an FIR when the upper castes use their traditional powers to unleash violence upon dalits. There is a plethora of questions demanding answers. Women’s right to safe shelter is yet to be realized; instead, forced evictions seem to be on the rise. The right to agricultural land for women has come at a time when land acquisition by state and capital is happening at an unprecedented rate. Right to work is facing different problems by different sets of

women, be they dance bar girls, sex workers, vendors and hawkers or casual workers. State initiatives to dole out programmes such as NREGA are too little and too late. The extent of displacement and the range of dispossessions are staggering. We need to share amongst us what these experiences have been in order to arrive at some understanding. Such an understanding will help inform strategies for the women's movement as well as contribute new dimensions to all movements resisting the plundering of natural resources and people's resources.

Coordinator

Ranjana Padhi
Feminist Activist/Independent Researcher
22, Rahul Park Apartments
Marutrao Gaekwad Nagar
Aundh, Pune 411 007, Maharashtra
Tel: 09766236365
E-mail: ranjanapadhi@yahoo.co.uk

Sub-theme 2

Conflicts and Resistances: Challenges before the Women's Movements

Women have been enduring almost invisible forms of systemic and structural violence within the family and community since ancient times. And whenever women have sought change within these patriarchal institutions, they have experienced conflict. However, long before these battles of inequality and injustice could be won, the formation of the nation-state imposed upon women newer forms of violence. The conflicts were further heightened with the coming of the neo-liberal regime. And this in turn brought varied processes of dispossession for different communities in the form of land alienation, new forms of labour and bondage, fascist and caste-based assaults, development-induced displacement from livelihood and culture forcing a situation of conflict. Women of these communities were confronted with dual forms of conflict—one that rested within the family and community and the other with the state.

Earlier the context of conflicts were more localised since the power centres they were opposing were based in local socio-political structures. The political-economic relations in the neo-liberal regime shifted the context of conflict to system of global governance making conflict resolution more complex. In such a situation, women were drawn fully into conflict with the state leaving little space for dealing with conflicts

within the family and community. It must be noted here that women have always sacrificed the 'woman question' in the larger interest of the community in conflict, whether local or global. The community on the other hand has often used women as 'targets of conflict'. The state has played an even more dubious role in not only creating situations of conflict, but during conflicts is guilty of complicity in perpetrating violence against women as a tool of repression of community resistance. Gujarat and Chhattisgarh stand out as exemplary instances of this.

Women have waged resistance to injustice and inequality within family, community, state and now the market in various forms and means though not explicitly recorded. In their resistance to conflict within the family, community and state, they have challenged traditional gendered roles and norms and continue to struggle despite continued repression. Their contribution in strengthening the larger community struggle, whether directly or indirectly has resulted in manifold gendered consequences. As passive supporters, they are used as human shield by the community and are thereby pushed to the forefront of violent attacks, or as caregivers they visit the markets/towns for procurement of food articles or medicines or visit police stations to look up their missing/arrested family thus exposing themselves to illegal arrests and detention. A large per cent of women also undertake the precarious responsibility of fleeing to safe areas with children and the infirm. As active supporters, they become targets of violent vengeance from opposing community forces, they get raped and murdered in fake encounters by security forces and, as witnesses to brutalities by the state, are persecuted to either turn hostile or abandon homes to flee to safer locations.

While casualties of a gory nature are heightened in active conflict situations, protracted low intensity conflicts multiply women's vulnerabilities and risks to violence and their daily lives become a constant struggle intensifying their gendered roles. In a situation of complete collapse of the criminal justice system, acts of violence on women hardly find any conducive space to get registered or seek justice, often leaving women to bear the pain and humiliation. In conflict situations patriarchal values are reinforced, thus burdening women's role and risking their lives.

While a majority of women may be passive victims in conflict, women who have actively participated in the conflict, as members in armed outfit countering the state, as representatives in community vigilante groups or representing the state as special police officers in paramilitary outfits, continue to confront the gender question. In ideologically firm parties such as CPI(Maoists), where women constitute about 45% per cent of their cadres, they have had to struggle for long years *within* the party, not just for their rights, but also to make the party see that equality between men and women is as central to a dream of a just society as is socialism.

Women have also actively participated in resistance movements and found unique ways of expressing their anger against repressive forces. Manipur women's 'naked protest' in July 2004 against rape and murder of Thangjam Manorama by Indian Army reflects their extreme outrage against a callous and insensitive state.

The women's movement today finds itself challenged to redefine its mandate and take stock of the newer terrain that women are forced into their struggle for equality and justice.

Coordinators

Malini Subhramaniam
Independent Researcher
PUCI, Chhattisgarh
19, Flower Valley, VIP Road, Raipur
Tel. 09407694320
E-mail: malini_s@sify.com

Sharanya Nayak
ActionAid India, Padmavati Nivas, Pujariput,
Koraput - 764 020, Orissa
Tel. 06852 - 250815 (R), Tel. 09437111120
E-mail: sharanya_n@yahoo.com,
sharanya.nayak@actionaid.org

Sub-theme 3

Sites of Justice

This sub-theme will address concerns of justice and law, exploring the meanings of both in contexts of marginality that give rise to complex, intersectional manifestations of injustice. As these are sometimes, lawful, sometimes not, the core concern in the deliberations on justice and law will be to unpack the relationship between the two. What are the ways in

which gender figures in this deeply contested relationship between justice and law? What are the meanings of gender? This sub-theme will explore the relationship between justice, law and gender along four tracks:

1. Development: Development projects across the country have paid scant attention to the needs of people of entire villages being displaced. Coal-mining, dams, wildlife sanctuaries, industries and now special economic zones have posed the biggest threat to the survival of adivasi and dalit communities. Displacement has meant deep-rooted dispossession in terms of loss of community assets—schools, local institutions and infrastructure around which these communities have built their lives.

If displacement foregrounds one set of crises faced by agricultural communities, mass suicides by farmers—women and men; spiralling of starvation deaths over the past five years, particularly acute in rural and forest areas; the total absence of reasonable health care; issues of reproductive health, to which are tied questions of choice and informed consent, especially in clinical trials; and the relationship between the increasing ill health of India's impoverished and the increase in witchcraft accusations have specific implications for our understanding of justice.

The relationship between forced displacement and domestic violence is well-documented. The impoverishment of women survivors of domestic violence through eviction from the family home and dispossession from commonly enjoyed resources continues to pose a major threat to women's security.

What are the intersections between justice, law and

gender in the context of the development experience?

2. Conflict: In areas where there is armed conflict, high militarization, or there is the presence of secessionist/armed political movements, the dynamics of the legal process is radically different and formal justice systems rarely appear within the realms of engagement. There is a specificity to women's experience in these areas as well. The scale and gravity of the assault on Kashmiri women, women of north-east India over the past two decades, Muslim women in Gujarat in 2002, adivasi women of Vakapalli in Andhra Pradesh in 2007, etc. must be located within the larger framework of collective violence which has included the disappearance, mass killings of men of these communities and the collective sexual assault on women. Discourses of honour coexist with guarantees of impunity to perpetrators and skewed political deliberations that completely exclude women and their concerns. There is a sharp rise in stress related morbidity among women.

What are the range of concerns that must be foregrounded in dealing with questions of justice and the rule of law in areas where conflict is ever present – either overtly or just below the surface?

3. Sexuality: The question of sexuality is tied closely to questions of choice in relationship and the important issue of consent. This extends from choice in matters of marriage and informed consent in contraception and sexual relationship in heterosexual contexts to the right to sexual orientation. Queer women especially, more vulnerable in comparison with queer men, face physical and verbal abuse, battery, house arrest, coercion into heterosexual marriage and expulsion from the family home. There

has been also an increasing trend towards suicide pacts among queer couples unable to cope with violently hostile environments and the absence of legal protection. But, is legal protection alone the answer to the question of justice? Witness the increasing stridency of community courts and families in denying young men and women the right to choice of relationship, and forcing them into non-consensual forced marriages or resorting to murder to prevent the exercise of the freedom to choose. Sexual desire for the woman with disability has remained unarticulated. At the core of the problem of choice, is the question of culture and public morality that is violently misogynist.

What is the relationship between sexuality, justice and gender?

4. Disability: Consent and custody are deeply embedded in law and are the wellsprings from which justice is either denied or delivered. The intersections between state, family and society are critical, especially in the denial of individual volition. This gets expressed in myriad ways, each more horrific than the other, with states and often families as well participating in and justifying the denial of active choice in decision-making. Differently-abled women, for instance, continue to suffer violence in families and communities with little recourse to redress. The fact of disability compounds their experience of disadvantage and disempowerment. Located as it is within the 'abnormal persons approach', the institutional apparatus of the state denies rights and obscures that denial in the name of care or protection for 'dependent' people.

What are the specific protections in place to safeguard

life and liberty and what are the specific ways in which the law alienates liberty from citizenship in the case of persons with disabilities in India?

Sub-theme 4

Composite Cultures and Hegemonic Ideologies

Transformatory movements and politics have articulated challenges to the hegemonic culture, but not always in 'un-gendered' ways, while challenges to the varied forms of patriarchal culture have been informed by caste, class and community. Gendered representations in subversive literature such as feminist literature can demonstrate this. Struggles against cultural injustices, not merely recognize the cultural 'difference', but interrogate the structures within which it is produced and subordinated. Hence the revisioning of politics through the domain of culture would mean upward revaluing of 'disrespected' identities and cultural products of 'maligned' groups, recognizing as well as the positive valorising of cultural diversity, but more significantly seeking the wholesale transformation of dichotomous or hierarchised societal patterns of representation, interpretation and communication in ways that would change the very structures of the attribution of values to cultures.

This sub-theme will seek to analyze how the hegemonic and 'normative' culture is produced, resisted and negotiated and also delineate the mediated relations between culture and other social processes, including productive processes. The

Coordinators

Kalpana Kannabiran

Senior Fellow and Director,
Chityala Ailamma Centre for Interdisciplinary
Research
CACIR-Asmita, Plot 283, Street 6, East
Marredpalli,
Secunderabad 500 026
Phone: 040 27733251/27733229
email: kalpana.kannabiran@gmail.com;
kalpana.cacir@asmitacollective.in

Vrinda Grover

Human Rights Lawyer
N 14A, Saket, New Delhi - 110 017
Tel. 09810806181
email: vrindagrover@gmail.com

emphasis will be on how knowledge, power and culture are interlinked and how the effects of power in society ensure that the traces of cultural exchanges are effaced. In this context, the sub-theme will seek to highlight how cultural hegemony is produced through subjection of marginalized groups, in particular women of different groups through the domination of cultural practices alien and oppressive to them, the non-recognition or obliteration of their diverse cultural practices, its disrespect and humiliation in public spaces and in everyday life. The existence of multiple, competing, or conflicting cultural practices enable the marginalized groups to confront and voice their rejection and contest their cultural devaluation and domination, even though not always and everywhere, and often in discrete ways.

The way the term 'composite cultures' is used underlines the complex and contested constitution of culture whereby different hierarchised practices—from classical music to film music to folk music, just to illustrate, are brought together often in oppositional ways.

Underlining the compositeness is all the more urgent in the context of global capitalism and also in the context of a 'unique/distinct Indian' taking varied forms with an underlying politics of religious fundamentalisms, which in particular seeks to exclude pluralism on the grounds of the purity of certain cultural practices over others on the grounds of authenticity to be constructed in ever narrower circles. The 'localized' and diverse articulations of the cultural practices including food, clothing, art and so on are overshadowed in this process of homogenization and hegemonization of culture. The marginalized cultural practices cannot be celebrated as these may contain

within them inegalitarian and oppressive dimensions and yet they may be appropriated to claim diversity and identity and be commoditized after investing them with an ethnic value.

The following areas may be examined, analysed and interrogated for its gender implications:

- ❑ Culture— from rituals to oral traditions—as a site of hegemony as well as resistance;
- ❑ New cultural practices—from CDs or internet to 'folksongs', affirming yet contesting hegemonic ideologies;
- ❑ Globalization and production of cultural commodities;
- ❑ Recovery or reinterpretation of cultural practices marginalized by fundamentalist forces;
- ❑ Cultural politics of the state and the economy;
- ❑ Transformatory movements/politics and its politics of symbolic/cultural change

Coordinators

Anagha Tambe
Swati Roy

Krantijyoti Savitribai Phule Women's Studies
Centre,
Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Bhavan,
University of Pune, Pune 411 007
Tel: 02025690052, 02025601300
E-mail: kspwsc@gmail.com

Sub-theme 5

Languages, Voices, Representations

Language has become a major site of contestation for women, especially in recent times.

Firstly, as feminist politics and feminist theory come up with new terms, slogans and phrases and challenge the meaning of other words, phrases, etc. we are confronted with the state on the national level, and international agencies and forums on the international level generating their own terminology which co-opts some of our demands and challenges. With their highly efficient mechanisms of dissemination, terms like 'empowerment of women (through self-help groups)', 'commercial sex worker', 'stakeholder', even 'margins', slide into feminist discourse without much contestation. We need much more discussion about new linguistic practices which are being thrust upon us.

Secondly, within the feminist movement, we now have diverse voices asking to be heard, of women who feel that their concerns have not been adequately addressed so far. In India, Dalit and Bahujan women, adivasi women, Muslim women, women from the north-east, disabled women, women from the LGBT community, have not only been speaking and writing about their own experience in self-narratives and in fiction, but they are also challenging some accepted

formulations and theories. This opens up exciting prospects, but not enough dialogue takes place because of language barriers. More energetic projects of translation can address these problems to some extent. But we should also think of producing more specifically feminist criticism to explore these new possibilities.

Thirdly, we need to recognize the divisions created by proficiency in English or the lack of it, familiarity with local realities/culture/politics or the lack of it. The role of the English language in creating and perpetuating hierarchies of knowledge and power is particularly significant in higher education, and therefore affects women's studies too. Even within regional languages, the use of highly Sanskritised vocabularies and mechanical borrowing from English-language discourses effectively supports hierarchies of knowledge. Countering this, language becomes a significant component of identity politics, and we need to reflect on the implications of contestations and negotiations in this area.

We therefore invite papers on any of the above three topics. Explorations of how a feminist discourse is being undermined by the way the national state, commercial media and international agencies use language are welcome. These can relate to women's studies together with any other discipline/s. For example, in economics, the entire international development agenda together with its 'human development' face dominate research and the content of teaching in universities and colleges. 'Women' are very 'visible' in this discourse, but is this what we want? Language can sometimes determine agendas;

we should be very wary about linguistic usages that are being thrust on us. We can also look at strategies to subvert this kind of practice. The interdisciplinarity in women's studies is an issue here, and this is part of the overall vision of this conference.

Language is also a medium for the expression of identity. If there are now new initiatives of self-expression within the women's movement, and we are all becoming more sensitive to diversity among us, then language can also be used as a bridge, through translation and multilingual activities. But we must be careful that we do not merely cater to a need for novelty, which can easily be taken over by a commercialized consumerism, and can find legitimation in a post-modern celebration of *difference*. So feminist literary criticism and theory need to look at *why* we are listening to these new voices, how we are enriched by them, what new creative initiatives are coming out, that push in the direction of greater freedom for women in general, even if among us our needs, the constraints we face, our articulations, are different.

If we recognize diversity, we also recognize that it is not merely difference. We all confront hierarchies of knowledge and power, but some of us have the advantage of proficiency in English, or of being close to Indian-language elites. Gender is also a part of the perpetuation of these hierarchies, and also of challenges to them. We can have papers on new pedagogical experiments that draw the marginalized into our discourse, without requiring them to alienate themselves from their backgrounds. We can talk about how state policies and the language and practice of

bureaucracies help to exclude some and include others only on accepting certain conditions. These are some of the possibilities for this sub-theme, fitting into the general theme of *Resisting Marginalizations, Challenging Hegemonies: Re-visioning Gender Politics*, all in the context of language.

Coordinators

Wandana Sonalkar

Department of Economics/Women's Studies Centre
Dr. B.Ambedkar Marathwada University
Aurangabad
Tel. - 09423781196
E-mail: wsonalkar@gmail.com

Dilip Chavan

School of Languages and Literature
Swami Ramanand Teerth Marathwada University,
Nanded - 431 606.
Tel. - (02462) 229325, 229575, 229242/43 Extn. - 208

Sub-theme 6

State, Nation and Citizenship

An important debate in feminist scholarship concerns the relationship of women with the modern state. Is the state an instrument of women's oppression or can it be used as an agent to challenge patriarchal authority? There are arguments that the state is a 'contested terrain' on which battles, both for and against patriarchy, are fought. However, in India, it is the repressive face of the state that is most visible today: for decades, the state has brutally suppressed the struggles for self-determination of the people of Kashmir and the north east and has effectively kept them under army rule under the pretext of preserving 'the unity and integrity of the nation'.

Similarly, since the process of so-called 'economic reforms' and neo-liberal policies were initiated by the Indian state in the 1990s, the state has facilitated large scale loot of the natural resources of the people such as land, forests and minerals by the private corporate sector, both Indian and foreign, under the garb of 'accelerating growth' of the economy, threatening millions of ordinary people with large-scale displacement and destitution.'In every situation, whenever the people have resisted these machinations, the state has responded with an assault on their democratic rights and aspirations by using the might of the police, the paramilitary forces and the army against them. The last few years have been witness to frequent violent clashes between the people

and the state and the armed thugs of the private sector: Kalinga Nagar and Kashipur in Orissa, Singur and Nandigram in West Bengal and Bastar, among others. In Chhattisgarh, the assault of the state on the protesting tribals has taken a particularly vicious turn with the active involvement of the state-sponsored private militia, the Salwa Judum, to facilitate the setting up of many large mining projects of the corporate sector in the state. In all these agitations, where women have participated actively like never before, rape and sexual assault on them by the agencies of the state have been used abundantly as instruments of suppressing the people, especially in the north east and Kashmir, where women have been in the forefront of the struggles.

Simultaneously, the compulsions of maintaining its political legitimacy in the face of the growing awareness and aspirations of the people about their rights, have forced the state to respond to a limited extent with affirmative measures and policies. For women, measures like the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act and the proposed law against sexual harassment at work, while for the poor, the NREGA has been the most visible policy affecting their wellbeing. Here too, however, the lack of commitment of the state is evident in the half-hearted and flawed implementation of these laws and policies.

For women, what possibilities do these developments offer to a rethinking of legal empowerment? Do these engagements with the state offer new or different articulations of citizenship? The challenge before us in the women's movement and in women's studies is to arrive at an understanding of the Janus-faced state and formulate our theoretical positions and action plans accordingly.

Coordinators**Sanober Keshwaar**

Marine Chambers, 4th floor, Flat No.1,
Next to Gol Masjid, New Marine Lines,
Mumbai 400 020.
Tel. (R) [022] 2201 5304; (M) 09969067166
Email : ksanober@gmail.com

Nandini Manjrekar

Associate Professor
Centre for Studies in Sociology of Education
Tata Institute of Social Sciences
Mumbai, Tel. (M) 09324764425
Email: nandini@tiss.edu,
nandini.manjrekar@gmail.com

Sub-theme 7**New Markets and Interlocking Inequalities:
Labour, Education, Health and Marriage**

One way of understanding how patriarchal, hegemonic forces structure gender relations is in terms of interlocking markets. In mainstream Economics, the concept of market signifies any structure that allows buyers and sellers to exchange

any type of goods, services and information. Under Capitalism's inherent tendency of commodification, markets permeate and commodify all human relations and institutions under an integrated, all encompassing and cohesive global capitalist economy. Market relations lead to undue exploitation of labour and women in particular are victims of both capitalist commodification and patriarchal subjugation.

Under the aegis of structural adjustments policies, different forms of privatization of infrastructure and services that were previously the responsibility of the state have created hybrid private-public formations and graded degrees of commodification, commercialization and privatization. Under such a variety of hybrid institutional orderings, a plethora of 'new' markets (or new twists to old market relations) have emerged— marriage, entertainment, health care, education, drug, weapon etc., besides markets in carbon trading, pollution rights and even new markets for basic common goods like water.

Market transactions cannot be disembedded from social and geographic relations. Each economic act or transaction occurs against and incorporates a geographically and culturally specific complex of social histories, institutional arrangements, rules and connections. Thus, market exchanges of any kind involve a history of struggle and contestation.

This sub-theme would like to focus on significant interlocking markets, notably (but not restricted to) markets of labour, marriage, education and health. Too often, the focus is on their role independently, such as the low labour participation rates of women, gender gaps in access to and achievements in education, or the changing nature of 'compulsory'

marriage in our context. The sub-theme would especially like contributions that look at persistent inequalities and their interlocking character.

For instance, India has a vast pool of both skilled and unskilled labourers, of which only about 9 per cent are in the organized sector. The majority of women labourers are unskilled and, therefore, in the unorganized sectors. There is considerable literature on the gender and class specific issues related to the unskilled, unorganized market. In this sub-theme we would like to extend the debate on labour markets to the ways in which women's marital, health status and educational level have either made or marred their participation in labour market. And how new labour markets (say, in the SEZs) have impinged upon women's health, marital situations etc.

In India, the links between marriage and market have been very strong for centuries. Now novel marriage markets are emerging (even as caste, class, religion and region continue to hold sway). The conception of the ideal bride in matrimonial advertisements has evolved through every decade from the 1960s. By the 1990s, the demand was for professionally qualified and physically perfect working women. 'Dowry' in its globalized consumerist avatar continues to control supply and demand and has given birth to scores of ancillary industries like fashion, jewellery, household accessories, beauty products and so on. Even seeming equality in access to education may mask deeper inequalities, such as education being used only to enhance the 'product's' brand value in the marriage market. Indeed, even some religiously sanctioned and legal marriage systems may be just a way to procure cheap sexual and physical labour.

Health is one of the fundamental human rights but under structural adjustments policies, government disinvestment and growing privatization have transformed wellness and healthcare into a swiftly burgeoning commodity market. India is emerging fast as a cheap global destination for medical tourism but ironically there is a grave shortage of nurses who are migrating for more lucrative opportunities abroad. Affordable health care is still a mirage for the vast majority of poor Indians, and particularly poor women as the health and pharmaceutical sectors are being 'corporative'. Reproductive health of women continues to be the primary focus of state and governmental policies, as if women only die during childbirth and other diseases and health problems do not affect women's wellbeing. The sub-theme seeks to explore how inequalities in the health market interlock with other markets (such as for resource use) and impinge upon women's wider burden of disease, mental health issues, ageing and so on.

The much sought after Indian workforce that has propelled the nation to the top of several global competitive indices is not only attracting prospective employers but also driving a very new and proliferating education market. Increasing privatization in the field of education and the rising cost is making quality education prohibitively costly for the poor. Even as educational opportunities for better-off sections of women and men are opening up, gender differentials continue in many states. Market pressures are reflected in the hierarchy of subjects, with philosophy, history and even basic science losing significance in relation to commerce, business studies, and new technologies. Indeed, that Women's Studies is at the bottom of the hierarchy in most universities

reflects the invidious workings of the employment market.

This sub-theme invites papers that deal with the ways in which the hierarchies, inequalities and disembeddedness of markets, from the local to the global, impinge on women. It would like to explore how different markets interlock, deepening inequity, and also like to understand how women are contesting, resisting, and negotiating the new markets.

Coordinators

Sudeshna Mukherjee

Assistant Professor
Centre for Women's Studies
Bangalore University, Bangalore-560 056
Tel: (O) 080 2961795,
(R) 96080 25201112,
(M) 09448836100,
Email: sudeshna_socio@rediffmail.com

Suparna Kar

Assistant Professor
Department of Sociology
Christ University
Hosur Road,
Bangalore-560 029
Tel: 09886170004
E-mail: suparna.kar@christuniversity.in

Sub-theme 8

Re-imagining Relationships, Transcending Boundaries

The host of socio-economic processes, including increased migration, expanding mass media and communication technologies, and changing opportunities for work and earnings that have gained strength in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries have ensured that women's relationships to their spatial, familial, cultural, and economic boundaries are changing. A larger number of women now migrate within the country and out of it; a greater number of women and men now live outside the conventional heteronormative boundaries and seek unconventional sorts of work; many women and men negotiate family and community relationships differently. Contemporary state welfare, too, rests upon the identification of women as key agents of social development at the local level and brings an increasing number of women into the public domain, which is changing gender relationships within families and communities.

These changes are threatening hegemonic forms of brahmanical patriarchy in different ways and to different degrees; and the responses of these forces have often been violent. However, it may be important to note that such responses are neither exceptions nor the handiwork of cultural fascists alone. The

structures and contingencies that curtail freedom, desire, and dignity are coming down with an unimaginable viciousness on people who choose to live together or even have affective relationships across the rigid boundaries of caste, sexuality, religion. Many of these responses are *banal*— it is everyday evil perpetrated against women by individuals and groups who believe that they are entirely moral, law-abiding, and acting in society's best interests, according to time-tested socio-cultural norms. Even when physical violence is not unleashed, hegemonic brahmanical patriarchies render abject those who raise a challenge: they are stigmatized as undeserving, abnormal, polluted, or despicable because they are disabled. Marginalization, thus, intensifies beyond deprivation into abjection.

We still have a long way to go before relationships that are not named are accepted as legitimate. Even the state is implicated in interfering in aspects of relationships—such as caring, for instance, for a disabled child, or inheritance, in the willing of property by same sex partners to each other, or in refraining to offer protection in the case of unconstitutional strictures of caste panchayats or the power of caste-based collectives, who trigger riots by whipping up caste animosities. Development and welfare, too, are pegged on heteronormativity and the heterosexual family is still assumed to be the basic unit of development and state welfare.

This sub-theme will explore the range of changing gender relationships, the continuous challenge this offers to the normative, the strategies of disciplining and forms of punishment/retribution unleashed by the dominant, and the complex interplay of consent and resistance these evoke.

Coordinator

Mini Sukumar

Centre for Women's Studies,
University of Calicut, Kerala
University Campus, Malappuram District
Kerala-673 635
Tel: 09495629694
E-mail: minisukumars@gmail.com

Sub-theme 9

Body Talk: Interrogating Boundaries and Hierarchies in Feminist Discourse

The women's movement has historically engaged with the body as a central theme. There are however certain areas of silence and elision, unease and anxiety about the body. Feminist engagement with the female body has been strongly influenced by hierarchised binaries of nature/culture, body/mind, reproduction /production. The woman's body has historically been a site of oppression and women's movement has engaged with such violation through different mechanisms. While there has been an extensive

research on issues of violence like rape, sexual harassment and dowry deaths, women's groups have also successfully campaigned for effective legal reforms. Indian feminists have also highlighted how women's bodies are marked by caste, religion and other identities and how they are targeted during conflict and sectarian violence. However, in our struggle to reclaim our corporeality, we have perhaps been less able to engage with the body as a site of pleasure and resistance.

In this sub-theme, we invite an engagement with the body as a site of challenge, where norms are contested. We need to understand the body as a site in which boundaries blur, hegemonies are questioned, hierarchies overturned—in the way we eat, laugh, dress, dance, work, desire and live our lives. The sub-theme is structured so that we take the binaries and related hierarchies around the body, constructed by the women's movement and outside of it, and interrogate them.

Some hierarchies for discussion and challenge:

1. Violations/Victimhood vs. Pleasure/Agency

The focus on violence against women rather than women's sexual pleasure within the hierarchy of concerns in the women's movement, for instance, has made it difficult to understand why women go back to violent partners, the existence of certain sexual identities and relationships, the pleasure in sexual acts like Bondage, Domination and Sadomasochism. Despite considerable debate around sex work, it is difficult both within and outside the movement to challenge the hierarchies that exist between intimate/unpaid and paid sex. The overwhelming

focus on women's vulnerability to violence reconfirms the patriarchal construction of women as victims. We urgently need to understand women's agency, while taking into account social structures and material realities in our lives. Also do we as feminists find ourselves getting trapped in the 'good woman' image?

2. Exploitation vs. Liberation/Agency

Binaries of exploitation and liberation which frame women's labouring bodies limit our debates on sex work, migration or even SHG related work. We as feminists also need to engage with the possible spaces of female expression and agency within the arenas of media, art, sports, even religion and to move beyond debates on sexual commodification in the neo-liberal era to explore dimensions of female spectatorship, enjoyment and participation. Keeping in mind the material realities of sexual exploitation, can we take forward the complex and emotive debates related to Dalit women, or bar dancing or sex work, which have so far been framed in terms of the binaries of exploitation/indignity vs. sexual/economic independence?

3. Natural/Normal vs. Constructed/Abnormal

Activism and research around queer issues and sexuality has crucially raised the question of who is the subject of feminism—is it only 'woman'? Insights have been offered—particularly by transgendered / transsexual communities—that bodies and genders are not coterminous; that gender is performative. The privileged position of the 'natural' female body is questioned as we increasingly come to terms with the constructed body—constructed not just by culture but by technology, to reassign sex or to reproduce

(through assisted reproductive technologies). This challenging of the 'natural'/ 'normal' is also reflected in the concept of 'Temporarily Abled Bodies' proposed by disability rights activists. Issues of disabled people's sexuality are questioning our notions of what bodies are entitled to desire and be desired.

The hierarchies related to the body exist in a range of sites including education, technology, health / medicine, law, labour and culture. Within education, for example, ideas of the 'normal', 'healthy' and 'unhealthy' citizen are maintained and reiterated. This involves disciplining the body to perform certain everyday acts—ranging from what you eat, how you exercise, how hygienic you are, what you wear, who you desire—that come together to define the unique nature of the nation and the ideal citizen. Hierarchies of reproductive and sexual health and rights still frame women's bodies in health discourse, as do binaries of disease and wellbeing, particularly in the field of HIV and AIDS activism.

This sub-theme invites papers that seek to understand why such binaries of the body have endured and continue to be nodes of feminist activism. And what are the experiences and discourses that force these binaries out of shape? Interrogating hierarchies is critical in terms of the inclusion of those perceived to be marginal—based on their sexuality, caste, gender, dis/ability. The realities of those at the margins also crucially go beyond 'inclusion' to alter mainstream constructs related to the body—What is healthy? Who is desirable? What is pleasurable? What could be liberatory? It is hoped that the sub-theme will address these and other questions associated with boundaries, hierarchies and subversions related to the body that might not have found a place in this concept note.

Coordinators

Paromita Chakravarti

Joint Director

School of Women's Studies,

Jadavpur University, Kolkata - 700 032

Tel: (M) 09830944361, (O) 24146531

Email: swsju@rediffmail.com;

chakravarti6@gmail.com

Nirantar- A Centre for Gender and Education

B-64 (2nd Floor), Sarvodaya Enclave

New Delhi 110 017

Tel: +91 11 26966334

Fax: +91 11 26517726

E-mail: nirantar.mail@gmail.com

Sub-theme 10

Women, Labour and Questions of Marginalization

The theme of marginalization has been important to writings on women and labour in India and outside. Today we need to critically re-examine and re-conceptualize the terms in which earlier concerns

about marginalization were framed to make them more meaningful for the present.

A category which recurs in discussions around women's labour is that of 'exclusion'. What does 'exclusion' mean in the present context? In historical writings, processes of industrialization and mechanization were associated with the exclusion of women from 'productive' employment and the valorization of the 'male breadwinner' norm in labouring households. The idea of the male breadwinner never had real meaning in the Indian context, yet the 'female breadwinner' has remained a perpetually elusive figure. Partly this has to do with the problems with available statistical evidence on women's employment and the masculinist biases of enumerators. It is also to do with the 'invisibilized', nature of women's occupations, with large numbers working in spaces hidden from public view. Even with the obviously skewed nature of data on women's occupations, the increased participation of women in the burgeoning 'informal sector' is quite apparent. Can we see this as a process of 'feminization' of the workforce? What are the problems with using such categories?

In discussions around women's work, the significance of rural work is often missed out. We need to examine the shifts in the gender composition of the agricultural labour force and understand how these changes influence the lives of women. How do differences in the nature of women's participation in rural work in different regions manifest themselves in family and gender relationships?

Recent trends in women's migration throw up new issues and problems. The changed context of

migration today raises important questions about women's 'agency'. Is it possible to sift out 'autonomous' migration by women from other migration? In what ways did decisions to migrate subvert or challenge hegemonic norms?

How do processes of globalization and informalization today impact on movements of women to demand insurance and protection? Recent writings suggest that informal workers are using alternative strategies to make demands for their sustenance and protection from the state. Women play an important role in these new movements. It will be important to look their strategies and see how these affect gender equations at home and outside.

Some of the themes this sub-theme hopes to explore are:

- 1. Urban work, informalization and 'marginalized' labour:** The general idea is to examine various forms of 'visible' and 'invisible' work of women: work outside the home and in the space of the domestic. To what extent does increasing informalization, closure of traditional industries and unemployment of men in the present context unsettle hegemonic norms and caste prejudices against women's work? What do flexible labour strategies of employers mean for women?
- 2. Women and rural work:** It will be important to examine regional and long-term trends in women's rural work focusing on labour in the fields and on seemingly insignificant forms like, 'dung work' at home, for instance. How do variations in the women's labour in different ecological zones, and crop regimes impact on family and gender relations?
- 3. Women and migration:** This will look at women in

different kinds of migration: rural-rural, rural-urban and circular migration. What does migration mean for 'left behind' women in areas where there is an increased migration of men? In contrast, in other regions where a larger number of women are migrating, what are its consequences? How do we differentiate between the varied implications of these forms of migration on women and on gender equations between men and women?

4. New social movements: This will explore modes of organization, demands and strategies of new movements for welfare and sustenance. In what way do these movements empower women? How do these movements create possibilities of new spaces for the marginalized, in the public sphere?

Running through all the themes will be a general focus on issues of marginalization today and what it means in terms of the experience of women. Is there an intensification of marginalization and how do women resist it? While this overall focus is important we need to look at other situations today in which men feel disempowered and emasculated. What significance does this reversal have for understanding relationships of gender? The panel intends to review the implications of recent trends in informalization, rural work, migration and organized resistance mean for a politics of gender today.

Coordinator

Chitra Joshi
Associate Professor
Indraprastha College,
University of Delhi
Address: 61 Dakshinapuram,
Jawaharlal Nehru University
New Delhi 110 067
Tel: 09810933772
E-mail: chitrajos@gmail.com



Provisional Conference Programme

Day One:

10.00 AM – 11.30 AM
 12.00 Noon – 01.30 PM
 01.30 PM – 02.30 PM
 02.30 PM – 04.30 PM
 06.00 PM – 08.00 PM

Friday, 21 January

Inauguration
 Madhuri Shah Memorial Lecture
 Plenary I: Marginalizations and Feminist Concerns: Resistances and Challenges
 Lunch
 Sub-theme Session (parallel session)
 Cultural Programme

Day Two:

10.00 AM – 12.00 PM
 12.30 PM – 02.00 PM
 02.00 PM – 03.00 PM
 03.00 PM – 05.00 PM
 06.00 PM – 08.00 PM

Saturday, 22 January

Sub-theme Session (parallel session)
 Plenary II: Engendering Youth: Agency, Mobilization, Resistance
 Lunch
 Sub-theme Session (parallel session)
 Cultural Programme

Day Three:

10.00 AM – 11.30 AM
 11.30 AM – 01.30 PM
 01.30 PM – 02.30 PM
 02.30 PM – 04.30 PM
 05.00 PM – 07.00 PM

Sunday, 23 January

Plenary III: Challenges Facing Women in Central India
 Sub-theme Session (parallel session)
 Lunch
 Annual General Meeting
 Reviewing Pedagogy and Themes in Contemporary Women's Studies

Day Four:

10.00 AM – 11.30 AM
 11.30 AM – 12.30 PM
 12.30 PM – 01.30 PM
 01.30 PM – 02.30 PM

Monday, 24 January

Plenary IV: Writing Resistance: Feminist Engagements in South Asia
 Reporting of Sub-themes
 Valedictory and Vote of Thanks
 Lunch

Information on Participation and Paper Presentation

Participation

Participation is open to all those who register for the Conference. To be eligible to present a paper and to receive the conference kit, however, participants will have to become IAWS members. Otherwise, membership is optional, though we strongly urge all participants, who are not yet members, to join the association. The subscription details and membership form have been included in this brochure and are also available on the IAWS website: <http://www.iaws.org>. All participants and paper presenters are requested to complete registration formalities and make travel bookings early.

Paper Presentation

If you would like to present a paper in one of the sub-themes, kindly prepare an abstract of about 500 words.

The abstract should clearly contain the following:

Title

Name of author/s

Full address for correspondence

Telephone and E-mail id

Abstracts should be sent to sub-theme coordinator(s) concerned, preferably by e-mail.

Abstracts should reach sub-theme coordinator(s) by 15 OCTOBER 2010

Acceptance will be communicated by 15 NOVEMBER 2010

Following acceptance of abstracts, sub-theme coordinators will communicate with you regarding paper presentation.

Abstracts will be published as part of the conference proceedings.

Pre-Conference Workshop for Students Thursday, 20 January

Provisional Programme

9:30AM

10AM to 1PM

1PM to 2 PM

2PM to 5 PM

6PM to 8PM

Introduction to the Workshop

Session I: Women's Studies: Pedagogy and Curriculum

Lunch

Session II: Women's Studies: Experiences and Concerns

Cultural Programme

Themes

a. Women's Studies: Pedagogy and Curriculum

In this theme, we invite students to share salient features of the courses on Gender/ Women's Studies that are offered in their respective Women's Studies Centres/ Departments. Some important issues arising in the theme will range from the pros and cons of standardization of syllabus to the contribution of Women's Studies in the realm of concepts and methodologies. It is important to examine pedagogical practices in women's studies to analyse whether this is leading to the democratic creation of knowledge. What are the responses of students to questions arising out of social movements of minorities, dalits and adivasis who fight for their rights? In this context, diversity in classrooms in terms of gender, caste, language and religious identities of students becomes significant. Another vital issue is the interdisciplinarity of women's studies and its relation with other disciplines. Has women's studies succeeded in contributing meaningfully to existing disciplines or has it become ghettoized? It is crucial to analyse and revisit the relation between women's studies and women's movement. The university campuses provide the required interactive space for students from diverse backgrounds to engage in activism. It will be interesting to explore the different spaces in the campus which are available to students for this purpose. What is the provision of 'extension' or 'field action' within the UGC women's studies centres/ NSS/ students' union/ cultural, literary, film clubs/ other platforms/ internet?

b. Experiences and Concerns

This theme focuses on experiences and concerns of students arising from their engagement with Women's Studies and feminist politics. A gendered analysis of women's lived experiences and their negotiations with families have been an important focus of women's studies. The students can talk about ways in which the use of gender lens has altered their relationship with the world and how they have negotiated with such changes. How has the feminist critique of family—a critical site of female dependency—influenced power dynamics and inter-personal

relationships in their families? There have been serious concerns regarding available career options for students of women's studies. How is Women's Studies as a choice of subject perceived? It is also important to assess the status of Women's Studies Centre/ Department within the University as well as its relationship with other departments/ disciplines. Women's Studies is variously perceived as a site for political activism, a space for male-bashing, a 'lesser' discipline in terms of academic rigour, a course with no job security, and students situate themselves in a defensive position vis-à-vis the course, its relevance and their own identities of pursuing women's studies as a career. What are the various ways through which these notions affect their lives? This session also aims to discuss the processes through which peer-groups are formed in the campus. Is it true that it is difficult for students of Women's Studies to communicate with those from other disciplinary locations, particularly natural sciences, technology and management, confining the Women's Studies discourse to those who are already converted? There is also a need to interrogate the bases of alignments (particularly peer-groups and intimate relations) in the campus, say, on the lines of caste, region, ideological affiliation, language, religion, gender and sexuality.

Paper Presentation

We intend to invite ten students in each theme to present their paper (10-15 minutes each), followed by an open discussion. The names of these speakers will be decided upon on the basis of abstracts as well as social and regional location, in order to have a wider representation.

If you would like to present a paper in one of the sub-themes, kindly prepare an abstract of about 500 words in English. However, selected students can present their paper in a language of their choice, provided they submit the English translation to us, at least a month before the workshop.

The abstract should clearly contain the following:

Title
Name of author/s
Full address for correspondence
Telephone and E-mail id

Abstracts should be sent, preferably by e-mail, to:

Sandali Thakur: sojourner.sandali@gmail.com

Mamta Singh: singh_mamta05@rediffmail.com, mrosaline0@gmail.com

IAWS Membership Form

MEMBERSHIP

IAWS is a vibrant platform primarily because of the diversity of its members. It is a common platform for Women's Studies scholars from different locations.

IAWS members of the three categories of Life/Ordinary/Student can:

- Initiate activities along with the Association in an effort to augment IAWS' interaction, networking, research, documentation and dissemination objectives
- Participate in various activities and conferences organized by the Association
- Participate in running the Association by voting on the membership of the Executive Committee and standing for the elected offices
- Contribute to and receive a periodic Newsletter that disseminates information about the Association's activities in different parts of the country, explore gender issues, and may include book reviews, announcements, seminar/ workshop reports and lots more.

Subscription

The subscription for different Membership categories is as follows:

- Individual Ordinary: Rs.700/- for 3 years; Individual Life: Rs.1,500/-
- Institutional Ordinary: Rs.5,000/- for 3 years; Institutional Life: Rs.10,000/-
- Student: Rs.250/- for 3 years (student identification to be attached.)
- SAARC region: US \$ equivalent of Rs.700/- for 3 years
- Friends of the Association: US \$ 100 will be welcome

The ordinary/student memberships run from 1 April of year one to 31 March of year three.

Subscriptions must be made out to the "Indian Association for Women's Studies" through a Money Order/Demand Draft (or a cheque payable at par in Mysore).

Please ensure that the membership form is completed in all respects and that it is sent to the following address:

M. Indira, IAWS Treasurer, Centre for Women's Studies, University of Mysore, Manasgangotri, Mysore 570 006

THE INDIAN ASSOCIATION FOR WOMENS STUDIES MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name (in full) _____

Address for communication _____

City _____ Pin code _____ State _____

Telephones (office/ home/ mobile) _____

E-mail _____

Education _____

Affiliation / Vocation _____

Interest in Women's Studies (Please tick categories applicable)

Teaching _____ ; Organization & Activism _____ ;

Media & Communication ; _____

Research _____ ; Administration of Programmes _____ ;

Any Other (please specify) _____

Type of Membership (Please tick category applicable)

Ordinary _____ Life _____ Student _____

Institutional (Ordinary) _____ Institutional (Life) _____

Details of subscription amount paid (e.g. DD No., Amount and Date) _____

Place: _____ Date: _____

Signature: - - - - -



General Information

Registering for the Conference: Registration forms should be filled in clearly and completely.

LAST DATE FOR REGISTRATION: 15 December 2010

- Registration for students (with proof of student status) with accommodation: Rs.100
- Registration for students (with proof of student status) without accommodation: Rs.50
- Registration for outstation participants with accommodation: Rs.500
- Registration for outstation participants without accommodation: Rs.300
- Registration for local participants: Rs. 50 (They have to become members of the IAWS)

Completed Conference Registration Forms and Membership Forms along with Cheques or Demand Drafts drawn in favour of the **Indian Association for Women's Studies**, payable at **Kolkata** to be sent to IAWS Secretariat (address on form).

- Accommodation will be available (in addition to University premises) at:
 1. Yatri Niwas, Gandhi Ashram, Sewagram, Wardha
 2. Centre for Science for the Villages, Dattapur, Wardha
 3. Gandhi Vichar Parishad, Gopuri, Wardha
 4. Mahatma Gandhi Institute for Rural Industrialization, Wardha
- Closer to the time of the conference, further details will be available on the IAWS website, at the Secretariat Office, or through enquiries to the following e-mail: wardha.conference@gmail.com
- Accommodation cannot be guaranteed for participants registering on the spot
- Transport will be available at the Wardha (for those coming from the Mumbai or Kolkata routes) and Sewagram (for those coming from the Delhi or Chennai/Kerala sides) stations on the January 20 and 21. There will be help desks at both stations. Those alighting at Nagpur can take a train/ bus (from the state transport bus stand, 2 km from railway station) to Wardha.
- Registered participants will be sent receipts along with more information on the place of accommodation and any other relevant details. Please retain your receipt and bring it with you.
- On the conference days, as well as on the day of the preconference workshop, transport will be available at the place of accommodation in the morning to bring the delegates to the conference venue. Transport will be arranged for their return in the evenings.
- All persons above 12, accompanying participant, must either register and attend the conference or make own arrangements for accommodation
- Foreign University students: May register in advance but the payment may be made when they arrive.

Conference Registration Form

Please fill in CAPITALS

1. Participant information

Name: _____

Department/Institution: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Phone/Fax/Email: _____

2. Are you an IAWS Member? Yes No

If you have sent the accompanying Membership Form to Mysore
(Refer section on IAWS Membership Form)

DD/ Cheque No. _____ Date: _____

Bank: _____ Branch: _____

3. If you are an IAWS member:

Type of membership: _____

Membership Number: _____

Date of expiry of membership (unless it is life membership):

If you are not a life member, would you wish to upgrade to life
membership? Yes No

Do you want any change in the contact address?

Yes No

If yes, new address: _____

Do you receive the IAWS newsletter on time? Yes No

If no, please mention the address at which you want the newsletter to
be delivered: _____

Your role in the Conference: _____

Check appropriate category:

Paper Presenter Participant Sub-theme Coordinator

Details of Payment of Registration Fees:

DD/ Cheque No.: _____ Date: _____

Drawee Bank: _____ Branch: _____

Payment to be made in favour of *Indian Association for Women's
Studies*, payable at *Kolkata*.

4. Type of Participant:

Student Local Outstation

5. Other information

Do you require accommodation? Yes No

Do you require special ground floor accommodation? (for disabled
persons, senior citizens, pregnant women etc.) Yes No

Do you require creche facilities? Yes No

Date of Arrival: _____

Date of Departure: _____

Please return completed form with payment to:

IAWS Secretariat
School of Women's Studies
Rabindra Bhavan
Third Floor, Jadavpur University
Kolkata-700 032

Resisting Marginalizations,
Challenging Hegemonies :
Re-visioning Gender Politics



IAWS

Indian Association for Women's Studies



IAWS

Indian Association for Women's Studies

XIII National Conference
Wardha, 21-24 January 2011

Plenaries

- I. Marginalizations and Feminist Concerns
- II. Engendering Youth: Agency, Mobilization, Resistance
- III. Challenges Facing Women in Central India
- IV. Writing Resistance: Feminist Engagements in South Asia



<http://iaaws.org>

Sub-Themes

- I. Controlling Resources: The Politics of Exclusion
- II. Conflicts and Resistances: Challenges before the Women's Movements
- III. Sites of Justice
- IV. Composite Cultures and Hegemonic Ideologies
- V. Languages, Voices, Representations
- VI. State, Nation and Citizenship
- VII. New Markets and Interlocking Inequalities: Labour, Education, Health and Marriage
- VIII. Re-imagining Relationships, Transcending Boundaries
- IX. Body Talk: Interrogating Boundaries and Hierarchies in Feminist Discourse
- X. Women, Labour and Questions of Marginalization