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# Abstracts



# Economic Growth, Human development and Grass-roots Citizenship: A Gender Perspective.

## Taking Stock of Progress on Gender Equality: What Can we Learn?


**Prof. Naila Kabeer**

Gender Institute  
London School of Economics

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I have been asked in this presentation to discuss a number of issues of concern to this conference: to take stock of what has been achieved on gender equality so far, with a focus on South Asia; to consider how current models of development are performing in terms of gender equality and to draw out their lessons for South Asia; and finally, to consider women's agency at the grassroots level in the promotion of a social justice agenda.

Let me address the first concern by drawing on the findings from the latest Global Gender Gaps Report 2014. This is a report that has been published annually by the World Economic Forum since 2006 in order to capture how we are doing on some key manifestations of gender inequality across the world. The Global Gender Gap Index is a composite measure made up of four weighted sub-indexes which measure different dimensions of gender equality. The education measure is a weighted sub-index of female to male ratios in literacy, primary, secondary and tertiary education). The health/survival measure is a weighted sub-index of female to male ratios at birth and in healthy life expectancy. The economic participation and opportunities sub-index weights the female to male ratios in labour force participation rates, wage earnings, estimated earned income, legislators/senior officials/managers and professional/technical workers. The latter two measure inequalities in positions of power and decision-making. Finally the political leadership sub-index is a weighted measure of the ratios of female to male seats in parliament, in ministerial positions and as heads of state over last 50 years. We should pause to ask what the political empowerment indicator actually tells about gender equality in the political domain and whether indicators that capture political empowerment at the grassroots level might not be more appropriate - and I speak as someone from a country where women have been heads of state for over two decades now. Unfortunately, as the report point out, there is



no information on this at the global level. We will return to this issue later.

A global snapshot of the gender gap averages on these four sub-indexes tells us that the 142 countries including in the report had closed almost 96% of the gap in health outcomes by 2014, 94% of the educational attainment gap but only 60% of the economic gap and only 21% of the political. In sum, we appear to have done quite well globally on the health/survival and educational index, poorly on the economic participation/opportunities index and abysmally on the political leadership index.


Disaggregation to country level suggests less room for complacency even on the human development front. While 25 countries had fully closed the gender gap in educational attainment, 29 were still below the world average (weighted by population). 35 countries had closed the gender gap on the health/survival index but 9 countries were below the world average. Only 14 countries had closed more than 80% of the economic participation/opportunities gap, 17 had closed less than 50% of the gap while 34 countries were below the world average. Finally on political leadership, only 2 countries had closed more than 60% of the gap, 37 had closed less than 10% of the gap and 98 countries were below the world average.

Regional disaggregation tells us that North America had the highest score on the Gender Global Gap Index followed by Europe and Central Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, sub-Saharan Africa with Asia and the Pacific and the MENA region with the lowest scores. Unfortunately, for the purposes of this exercise, this way of defining regions is not very illuminating. There is very little spread in the performances of the just two countries included in North America (USA and Canada) which both have an overall score of 0.75 but considerable spread in the next best performing region of Europe and Central Asia where scores ranged from 0.86 in Iceland to 0.61 in Turkey.

The two worst performing regions are MENA and the Asia-Pacific region. There seems to be greater homogeneity in the MENA region. Israel is the outlier with an index of 0.70 but all the other countries in the region are below 0.65 with the lowest score reported by Yemen at 0.51. While Israel has an overall rank of 65, all the other countries in the region are ranked 1 in the 100s with Yemen at 142, the lowest overall rank. The Asia-Pacific region, on the other hand, includes countries as heterogeneous as Australia, on the one hand, and Bhutan, on the other. Within this region, Philippine was the best performer in the region has an overall score of 0.78 and an overall rank of 9 while Pakistan as the worst, with an overall score of 0.55 and an overall rank of 141, just above Yemen.

Disaggregation by income levels also proves interesting. While the Global Gap Index is generally higher among higher income countries, there is considerable overlap with lower income countries. For instance in the highest income country group, 7 countries feature in the top 10 ranks but 8 are ranked below 100. Higher per capita income does not translate automatically into progress on gender equality. A focus on five main countries in the South Asia region underscores this point. Bangladesh, with the second lowest per capita GDP in the region (after Nepal), ranks highest in the region (at 68), outranking Sri Lanka (at 79) which has the highest per capita GDP. India with the second highest per capita GDP is ranked second lowest (at 114), above Pakistan (141). A closer reading of the sub-indexes complicates the story. Bangladesh, for instance, is ranked below Sri Lanka on all the sub-indexes except political leadership. A different measure of political participation may well have given Sri Lanka the top place. However, Bangladesh outranks India on each of the sub-indexes. It also outranks Pakistan on 3 of the four sub-indexes: the exception is health and survival.

This comparison with India is, of course, a problematic one. There are likely to be some




states in India that might outrank other countries in the region on the global index as well as some of the sub-indexes while others might occupy far lower ranks. But regardless of how we choose to analyse India, I want to draw out two broad generalizations from these ranking exercises that will frame the rest of my discussion. First of all, they suggest that progress on basic human capabilities, such as health and education, has been easier to achieve than progress on livelihoods and political participation. Barriers in the economy and the political domain appear to be harder to surmount than those relating to improvements in human capabilities. And secondly, they suggest that economic growth, which is at the heart of the current development paradigms, does not translate very systematically into progress on gender equality. I would suggest that there are two broad reasons why this might be the case: one relates to variations in the patterns of economic growth and the way that they impact on different groups of men and women in the economy. The other relates to geographical variations in the structures of patriarchal constraint which mediate the impact of economic growth.

### **Geographies of gender, varieties of growth**

In discussing the structures of patriarchal constraint, I have found it useful to draw on an important analytical distinction made by Ann Whitehead (1979) between the social relations which prevail within the different institutions that make up society. She distinguishes between 'gender-ascribed social relationships' and relationships that are 'bearers of gender' provides a useful way of capturing the gendered aspects of these collective structures of constraint and their variations across the world. Gender-ascribed constraints are rooted in the customary norms, beliefs and values that characterize the 'intrinsically gendered' relationships of family and kinship. They spell out dominant models

of masculinity and femininity in different societies, allocating men and women, boys and girls to different roles and responsibilities on the basis of socially-constructed aptitudes and dispositions. Variations in the gendered division of labour between productive and reproductive work observed in different regions of the world partly reflect variations in these gender-ascribed constraints. The general assignment of primary breadwinning responsibilities to men helps to explain higher male labour force participation rates across the world. But while most societies ascribe primary responsibility for unpaid reproductive labour to women and girls, there is remarkable variation in socially-ascribed expectations regarding their contribution to production and hence in female labour force participation rates.

This has given rise to very distinctive 'geography of gender' in patterns of labour force participation. As early as 1970, Esther Boserup (1970) had noted these patterns, pointing to the high levels of labour force participation documented in Sub-Saharan Africa and South east Asia where women were expected to play an active role in the productive domain as farmers and traders while identifying the MENA region and South Asia as characterised by particularly low patterns of female labour force participation. Although the countries in these regions varied considerably in terms of religion, language and so on, they shared certain aspects of their family, kinship and community relations in common. To use Caldwell's summary, they were patriarchal in the structure of authority within the household, with senior males exercising decision-making authority over other members; patrilineal in that property and descent was traced through the male line, leaving women effectively without property of their own; and patrilocal in that women left their natal family after marriage and were absorbed into their husband's lineage. In addition, these regions practised some version of purdah. Not only were women expected to confine themselves to unpaid domestic work, but there were strong norms of female seclusion,



restricting their mobility in the public domain. Cultural expectations of female dependency, and the son preference that this gave rise to, meant that these regions were characterised by the phenomenon of 'missing women', deficits of women in the overall population reflecting forms of gender discrimination that lowered women's life expectancy relative to men (Amartya Sen, 1990).


While the institution relations which characterise the public domains of markets, states and civil society are not intrinsically gendered in the way that family and kinship relations are, they become 'bearers of gender' when they reproduce the norms, values and practices of the domestic domain, norms, values and practices which should be seen as societal rather than purely domestic. The laws of a country frequently codify the inequalities of the familial domain, upholding patriarchal privileges in inheritance and authority so that women, if they inherit at all, do not inherit on the same terms as men, where they must frequently ask their husband's permission to open a business or a bank account. Employers frequently express a preference for male labour on the grounds that they are the primary breadwinners or that they have a stronger attachment to the labour market or a preference for female labour because they can be paid less as secondary earners or they have naturally nimble fingers. NGOs and social movement frequently reproduce gender, class and caste hierarchies within their ranks so that they appear as microcosms of the rest of society. Gender, as Whitehead put it, is never absent: purportedly impersonal 'public' institutions became 'bearers of gender' when they reproduce or exacerbated preconceived notions about masculinity and femininity through their rules, norms and practices.

Whatever the strategies for growth adopted by a country, therefore, we would expect its impact on gender equality to be mediated by these local structures of patriarchy. But variations

in strategies for growth introduce additional variations in how benefits are distributed across the population. Strategies for growth have varied over time. Most developing countries embarked on import-substituting, state-led industrialisation strategies after gaining independence in the post-war period, using Keynesian macro-economic management to achieve nationalist ends. The oil shocks of the 1970s and the ensuing debt crisis in many of these countries coincided with the rise of neo-liberal ideologies within wealthy donor countries and their dissemination across the world through the lending policies of the international financial institutions. The result has been a major shift across the world towards export-oriented growth strategies based on the liberalisation of markets, trade and capital flows at national and international levels.

It could be argued that there was a strong male breadwinner bias to the early state-led, highly capital-intensive import-substitution strategies. They promoted large-scale capital-intensive industries, privileged male employment and tied access to social security to full-time, lifelong employment of the kind largely enjoyed by men. At the same time, the state also took responsibility for the social welfare of its citizens and there was a gradual, though highly uneven, expansion in welfare services in most developing countries, creating formal employment opportunities for educated women and supporting many more in their reproductive roles.

The shift to neo-liberal policies has been associated with a very different set of outcomes. Efforts to create flexible labour markets in order to attract 'footloose' capital and to enable countries to compete in international trade have led to the dismantling of state protections previously accorded to labour. Where these cutbacks in state welfare provision have not been accompanied by an equivalent expansion in affordable market provision, it has been the unpaid labour of women, particularly among low-income groups, that has had to make good the shortfall. The male



breadwinner bias of earlier policy has been partly attenuated by women's access to jobs in export-oriented sectors, but the reduction of the role of the state has meant the loss of one of the few sources of 'good jobs' available to women in developing countries as well as a decline in state support for their reproductive responsibilities.

To sum up, therefore, we would expect the inter-relationship between economic growth and gender equality will be mediated by a variety of contextual factors, including the broad policy regimes within which growth strategies are embedded, the role of the state as well as the structures of local patriarchy. It thus rules out the possibility of making a priori generalizations about how the inter-relationship will play out in different contexts. We will therefore turn to a number of studies that have explored the inter-relationship between gender equality and economic in greater empirical detail using macro-econometric regression analysis. One set of studies extends the long-standing tradition of growth modelling to incorporate variables measuring gender equality which, given endogenous growth theory, focus on measures of gender equality in labour and human capital. These studies are interested in the instrumental role of gender equality, the extent to which it can contribute to economic growth, where growth is seen as a reliable measure of a nation's progress.

A second set of studies reverse the question to ask about the impact of economic growth on gender equality. These studies rest on the argument that gender equality in the different domains of life – the family, the market and the state – is essential for women's empowerment and for equitable development. Economic growth is a means to this overall goal, an important means since it generates the resources that make the realization of this goal more possible, but still only a means. Its effectiveness has to be judged by the extent to which it contributes to intrinsic goals of development, including progress on human development and gender equality. In the next two


sections, I will summarize the findings from these studies and elaborate on their broad implications before addressing the specificities of the South Asia case. I will drawing for this summary on a review of the relevant macro-econometric literature carried out by Luisa Natali and myself (Kabeer and Natali, 2013) as well as a more recent article in which I explored some of the causal mechanisms driving the macro-econometric findings (Kabeer, 2015).

## **The impact of gender equality on economic growth**

In considering how gender equality might contribute to economic growth Klasen (1999) has spelt out two broad possible pathways which I have called 'family mediated' pathways and 'market mediated' pathways. Family mediated pathways rests on the point I made earlier. Regardless of the role that women play in the productive economy in different regions, most societies ascribe primary responsibility for unpaid reproductive work in the domestic domain to women, particularly women in their roles as mother and wives. It is this feature of the gender division of labor within the family that is hypothesized to underpin the family mediated pathway through which gender equality translates into economic growth. Greater access to valued economic resources by women is likely to translate into greater say in intra-household decision-making, particularly in relation to their reproductive roles. It is therefore likely to lead to their greater control over their own fertility as well as higher levels of investment in the health and education of their children, thereby reducing the overall dependency burden in the economy and increasing the productivity of the next generation of workers.

Market mediated pathways rest on the requirement that economies make optimal use of their human resources. If talents and ability are assumed to be randomly distributed by gender, the failure to educate women to the same extent





as men and to utilize their capacities in the economy to the same extent as men represents a market distortion, an artificial restriction on the available pool of talent.

Macro-econometric studies into the impact of gender equality on economic growth tend to use measures of education and labor force participation for which data is available at the global level. These studies have generally found increases in women's education and labor force participation rates relative to that of men are associated with higher rates of growth. These kinds of findings have given rise to headlines such as those found in the Economist in 2006: Forget China, India and the internet: economic growth is driven by women.


There are some variations in these findings worth noting because they reflect specificities of time and place. For instance, Dollar and Gatti found that the positive impact of gender equality in secondary education only came into effect in the more developed countries, ie those which started out with a higher level of female secondary educational attainment. They suggested that secondary education was less likely to be relevant in less developed agricultural economies where there was less demand for skilled labor. Not providing girls with secondary education did not carry an economic cost in such contexts.

This interpretation is consistent with the finding reported by another study that gender equality in primary education had a greater impact on growth in poorer countries, probably via the longer term effects of female literacy on infant mortality and children's education. It is also consistent with the finding reported by Klasen (1999) that the greater gender equality in years of schooling had a negative and highly significant impact on fertility rates and under-five mortality and that including fertility and child mortality in his estimates of growth reduced, but did not eliminate, the association between female education and growth. These studies provide support for the family mediated pathway through

which gender equality in education contributed to growth.

The importance of policy regimes and context was also highlighted in a number of studies. For instance, Klasen and Lamanna found that the impact of gender equality in education on growth rates was weaker in Latin America and SSA in the 1990s, the aftermath of structural adjustment programs when growth rates slowed down for reasons unrelated to female education. Baliaoune-Lutz and Gillivray (2007) used data for 31 SSA and 10 Arab countries to explore the impact of gender inequality in education and employment on growth. They found that female share of the labor force had a negative impact on growth. This was likely to reflect the contexts represented in their sample. SSA countries which had lower than average growth rates also had a long-standing tradition of female economic activity, much of it in the agricultural sector and over-represented among unskilled, low productivity labor. The Arab countries, particularly the oil-producing ones, had higher rates of growth but a largely male labor force. What they did find in these contexts was that greater gender inequality in literacy rates had a negative impact on growth more generally but a positive impact in economies characterized by greater openness of trade. Again trade liberalization policies were likely to have gone further in African economies where there was a larger share of less educated women in the agricultural export sector. This supports a point made by Seguino (2000) that trade induced growth may be promoted or accompanied by greater gender inequality.

Of particular interest here is the study by Esteve-Volart (2004) which explored the impact on state-level growth rates in India between 1961-1991 of the ratio of women to men in the overall labor force as well as women's share of managerial positions. Her findings were: both measures of inequality were associated with lower growth rates; the impact of gender inequality in the overall labor force was greater than the impact



of inequality in managerial positions. The impact of managerial inequality was mainly confined to the non-agricultural sector. A simulation exercise by Rao et al, using her results, suggested that if all Indian states were characterized by Karnataka's female to male ratio in management, total output would rise by 35%. As the authors point out, while caution needed to be exercised in extrapolating regression results, the exercise does suggest that India's massive underutilization of women's potential contribution to measured market activity came at a high price in terms of measured growth foregone.

The high level of aggregation at which these largely cross-country macro-econometric studies are carried out make it causal pathways through which the impacts they suggest might work. Better insights into these pathways can be found in studies carried out at lower levels of aggregation. For instance, we find considerable evidence in the demographic literature of the impact of women's education and employment on their fertility levels, on use of family planning and, particularly in relation to women's education, on child survival. But in addition, micro-level studies have also found that women's access to valued economic resources, including education, paid work, credit, land and transfers of various kinds, are more likely than similar resources in the hands of men to lead to investments in health and education of children, and hence the productivity of the future generation of workers. Studies from the South Asian context to this effect include those relating to the impact of microfinance in Bangladesh, land ownership in Nepal and participation in the NREGS support this generalization.

However, micro-level studies into the impact of gender equality on household earnings, the main way that the direct market mediated pathway might operate at the macro level, tells a more complicated story. First of all, women's domestic responsibilities make it more difficult for them


to engage in market-oriented activity of the kind that enters into calculations of economic growth. And secondly, those women who engage in such activity enjoy lower returns than men.

These inequalities in the returns to market activity reflect a variety of factors. They reflect inequalities in assets and capabilities of various kinds: education, training, quantity and quality of land, access to finance and capital and so on. They also reflect inequalities in returns to these assets and capabilities so that women with the same level of education or size of landholding as men enjoy lower returns. These inequalities in returns may reflect direct discrimination as when an employer decides to pay a higher wage to a man with the same credentials as a woman on the grounds that he is the primary breadwinner or because he is believed to have a stronger labour market attachment. But more often they reflect the widely observed gender stratification of the occupational hierarchy in which women tend to be crowded into a fewer range of activities than men, activities that are less well paid, more likely to be in the informal economy and to represent more precarious forms of work.

There are a variety of interlocking factors which explain women's confinement to the less well-paid occupations and activities within the economy. They include the inequalities in assets and endowments noted earlier, the powerful cultural norms about socially acceptable activities for men and women, local notions of masculinity and femininity, external discrimination and internalized constraints. And finally they include the material constraints imposed on women's time and physical mobility by their unpaid domestic responsibilities.

Such an analysis puts a question mark over the claim made by the Economist about women's contribution to economic growth which is largely premised women's market participation in wealthy countries and takes no account of the barriers to women's labor force participation in some of the other regions of the world. Instead it is more in





line with a recent claim by the McKinsey Report (2015) that 'in a full-potential scenario in which women play an identical role in labor markets to men's, as much as \$28 trillion or 26 percent could be added to global annual GDP in 2015'. By 'full-potential scenario' they mean erasing the current gender gaps in labor force participation rates, in hours worked and in representation within different sectors. But, as it recognizes, this is a formidable task to achieve. How formidable it is becomes clear when we examine the uneven impact of economic growth on gender outcomes in the labor market and other measures of gender equality.

### **Economic growth, gender equality and labour market outcomes**

There is a strong assumption within mainstream economics that economic growth will promote gender equality, both through a family-mediated pathway by loosening the pressure of poverty that leads families to discriminate against the wellbeing and human capital of less productive or less valued members and through a market-mediated pathway, whereby increased market competition will increase the costs of gender and other forms of discrimination on the part of employers and lead to more egalitarian labour market outcomes. This is not borne out by the evidence.


Macro-econometric studies on this topic have used various measures of gender equality: labour market outcomes, wellbeing, agency and rights. In addition, along with measures of economic growth, they have included a number of other variables intended to take account of the broader policy regime, such as trade openness, the rule of law, foreign direct investment, social expenditure and so on. The findings from these studies can be summarized as follows.

First of all, economic growth in recent years has been associated with a reducing in the gender gap in labour force participation but it appears

to be the pattern rather than the pace that has been responsible. Export-oriented growth, in particular, has been associated with higher female than male elasticity of employment in low and middle income countries. However, type of export also matters. Much of the expansion in female employment has been in countries that have adopted export-oriented, labour-intensive manufacturing as the core of their growth strategy. The weakest impact on female employment is generally found in oil-exporting/oil remittance economies which, as we noted earlier, privilege male labour. In the MENA region, for instance, female labour force participation has tended to be highest in the non-oil export countries of Morocco and Algeria which have had to rely on female-intensive manufacturing to earn foreign exchange. At the same time, public policies helped to offset the impact of oil-dependence on female labour force participation in countries like Egypt where the state guaranteed public sector employment for university and technical school graduates, although this has declined in recent decades.

Secondly, while per capita growth rates, along with trade and FDI inflows, have led to a decrease in the gender gap in wages for high/high middle income countries, they have not had much impact on the gender wage gap in poorer countries (Remco Oostendorp, 2009). Wages are, of course, only one dimension of the quality of employment but the persistence of the gender wage gap is indicative of the persistence of the gender segmentation of the occupational structure. There has been some decline in the horizontal segregation of labor markets so that women are spread out over a greater range of jobs but little change in vertical segregation: women continued to be confined to less well paid and generally less desirable jobs than men.

There are a number of reasons why the quality of women's jobs has not increased in line with their increasing share of the labor market. The deregulation of labor markets as part of the liberalization process has meant that women



gained jobs at a time when jobs have generally become more casual and informal (Guy Standing, 1999). Furthermore, their main gains in the formal economy have been in the labor-intensive, price-sensitive sectors of the export market where it precisely the lower costs associated with female labor relative to male that has driven these sectors' profitability and explained the preference for female labor (Seguino, 2000).

While gender segregation of the labour market, and the crowding of women into a limited number of occupations, undermines their general capacity to bargain for better wages, their bargaining power is further undermined by the high levels of capital mobility that characterizes these sectors. Efforts by women workers to demand better terms and conditions in these sectors have been frequently met either by the flight of capital to other locations or the subcontracting of the work to second and third tier firms in the global value chain where conditions are more informal and wages are lower (Kabeer, 2015). However, we have seen international mobilizing efforts lead to greater social responsibility on the part of some of the corporations concerned and improvement in the conditions of their workers, at least in factories that deal directly with these corporations.


### **Economic growth, women's wellbeing, agency and rights**

Studies into the impact of current growth strategies on other dimensions of gender equality draw attention alert us once again to the importance of contextual factors in mediating the relationship between economic growth and gender equality, including levels of development and structures of patriarchy. This point is made in Seguino's study of the correlation between per capita income levels between 1980 and 1995 and the Standardized Indicator of Gender Equality developed by Dijkstra (2002) using 1995 data. The SIGE is a composite index which combined five measures of relative wellbeing:

gender disparities in education, life expectancy, labour force participation, senior occupational positions and parliamentary seats. Seguino divided the 101 countries in her sample into four groups (quartiles) ranging from the poorest 25% countries to the richest. She found a strong positive correlation between the 1995 SIGE and per capita GDP in 1995 within these countries. In other words, within each quartile, better-off countries reported higher SIGE indexes with the size of the correlations rising from the first to the third quartile and then falling in the fourth (where presumably there was greater uniformity in SIGE values).

However, the correlation between per capita GDP growth rates between 1980 and 1995 and SIGE 1995 was negative for the lowest two quartiles and positive for the higher two quartiles, with the largest correlation for the highest quartile. In other words, economic growth was negatively related to gender equality in the lower income countries so that the countries that grew most rapidly within these groups recorded far less progress on gender equality. It was only once countries had reached a certain level of income that greater growth led to rising levels of gender equality.

The importance of context is also highlighted in the attempt by Dollar and Gatti (1999) to explore the impact of economic growth on four measures of gender equality: female secondary educational attainment, controlling for male; gender differentials in life expectancy at birth, a measure of overall health inequalities; an index of women's legal economic rights (equal pay legislation); marriage rights (equality of sexes within marriage and divorce proceedings); and political rights (the number of women in parliament; the year women were given the right to vote). They also found that growth rates had very little impact on these measures in low to lower middle income countries measures but as countries moved from lower middle to higher income levels, the impact of growth became positive and significant.



The main exception to this pattern was gender inequalities in life expectancy which appeared to decline steadily with economic growth.

The study also drew specific attention to the influence of the 'geography of gender'. It found that gender inequalities tended to be higher in countries with majority Muslim, Hindu and Shinto (the ethnic religion of Japan) populations, after controlling for other relevant factors. While they interpret this as indicative of 'religious preferences', I would suggest that they are better interpreted in terms of cultural values and the social organization of family and kinship systems associated with these.

The relevance of the geography of gender in mediating the impact of economic growth on gender equality is also evident in Seguino (2002) which estimated the relationship between economic growth and changes in the quality of life indicators of women relative to men in eight Asian countries between 1970 and 1990. These indicators were female share of paid work force, female to male secondary school enrolment, male to female mortality levels, female to male population ratios, female to male educational attainment and decline in fertility. Ranking the countries according to growth rates and changes in the wellbeing indicators, she found that the association was weak. Indeed, in some versions of the exercise, the fast growing economies of


South Korea, Singapore and Hong Kong, achieved less in terms of gender equity per unit of growth, than the slower growing and poorer economies of Sri Lanka and the Philippines.

She then used regression analysis to estimate the relationship between economic growth and the sex ratio of the overall population for the eight countries. Her model included women's share of employment and female literacy rates as measures of women's agency and bargaining power (with controls for male literacy rates.) She found that growth in per capita income had a positive impact in two of her three attempts to model this relationship and a negative impact

on the third but was not statistically significant.. While overall government expenditure as a share of the GDP had a negative impact, the share of expenditure on public education had a positive impact, but again the results were generally not significant. The only variables that were both positive and statistically significant for all three models were women's share of the labor force and literacy rates.

In a 2006 study, Seguino studied the impact of GDP growth in Latin America and the Caribbean on gender inequality using spanning over 1970-2000. She used three measures of gender inequality: female to male population ratio; ratio of female to male gross secondary school enrolment; and ratio of adult female to male mortality rates per 1000 - relative to the reference population of Sweden. She also included women's share of the labour force as a broad measure of their bargaining power as one of her explanatory variables.

She found that economic growth had a significant negative impact on female to male population ratios while value added in manufacturing and services as share of GDP and the growth rate in government expenditure had significant positive effects. The female share of the labor force was positive but not significant: it was possible that the female-intensive employment effects of structural change were already captured by variables measuring shifts in the economic structure. Growth rates also proved insignificant as far as ratio of male to female gross secondary school enrolment rates were concerned. The impact of the ratio of manufacturing value added was positive and significant while the ratio of trade to GDP proved negative and significant. She suggests that that the increase in female education associated with the shift to manufacturing was likely to reflect the effect of an increase in women's work opportunities. Finally, economic growth led to a rise in female to male mortality as did increased share of debt to GDP but women's share of the



labor force and growth in government expenditure both reduced this ratio.

Speculating as to why economic growth appeared to reduce the ratio of females to males in the population while raising female to male mortality rates, Seguino suggests that the answer might lie in patterns of growth which resulted in increased economic security and job flexibility due to processes of globalization that make capital more mobile. It was possible that women were bearing the costs of economic insecurity to a greater extent than men, holding back improvements in women's relative wellbeing.

On the other hand, assuming that the positive impact of the shift to manufacturing on female to male population ratios and secondary educational attainment operated via women's increased work opportunities, and given the positive impact of the female share of the labor force on female survival chances relative to male, Seguino concludes: "Despite the fact that female share of the labor force includes both employed and unemployed women as well as paid and unpaid work, it is clear from these results that women's economic activity improves their well-being. Whether the bargaining power that this confers on women to negotiate with male members of the family, or because women directly generate income, the effect is positive and significant in most cases here' (p. 21).

The strategic impact of women's labor force participation is also highlighted in a study by Balamoune-Lutz (2007). She estimated the impact of economic growth on gender inequality in literacy rates among young people and adults in the 1990s in 30 SSA countries ( a period as we have noted of very low growth) and 32 from outside SSA. Only the dummy variable for Islam proved significant in her non-SSA sample and was associated with higher levels of gender inequality. But in the SSA sample, she found that not only did economic growth and trade liberalization fail to improve gender differentials in literacy rates in sub-Saharan African countries, but in most

specifications of her model, they increased gender inequality. However, she found that women's share of the labor force reduced gender inequality in literacy rates.

Further insights into the strategic impact of women's education and employment can be found in lower levels studies. While we have already noted the positive association between women's access to valued economic resources and children's wellbeing, this is in conformity with socially expected patterns of behaviour on the part of women, a 'compliant' form of agency. The question that remains is to what extent women's access to economic resources translates into forms of agency that have the potential to challenge the gendered structures of constraint or transformative forms of agency.

There is a great deal of micro-level evidence to suggest that women's access to valued economic resources, not only employment and education but also very often land and credit, has positive impacts on women's agency and wellbeing (Hanmer and Klugman, 2015). It has also helped to nuance the relationships documented in the macro-economic literature. For instance, it suggests that it is the terms on which women enter the labour force, particularly the extent to which they are able to control the proceeds of their own labour, rather than participation per se, that determines the transformative potential of their work (Whitehead, 1985; Maertens and Swinnen, 2008; Kabeer et al 2013). The need to disaggregate the resources in question and examine how their impact might vary in different contexts was highlighted in our comparative study of women's economic empowerment in Egypt, Ghana and Bangladesh. To summarize our findings:

- Women's education, particularly post-secondary education, had a positive impact on a range of empowerment indicators at the level of the individual, the family and the community, including a sense of control over one's own life in all three contexts.

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- Women's access to market-oriented work outside the home (or off-farm in the case of Ghana), had a positive impact on a range of empowerment indicator at the level of the individual, family and community, including a sense of control over one's own life (or sense of empowerment in the case of Ghana) as well as weaker son preference (formal employment in both Egypt and Bangladesh)
  - Ownership of property (land or housing) also proved a significant predictor of empowerment in Ghana but more so in Bangladesh (it was excluded from the Egypt estimates as it was too low and unvarying)
  - The impact of membership of association varied considerably. In Egypt, associations were largely associated with state sector employment and their impact confined to voting behaviour and access to formal credit (available to government employees). In Ghana, associations were largely church-based and apart from facilitating women's access to credit, also gave women some status in the community in that their advice was sought by others. It was in Bangladesh that membership of associations, mainly microfinance based, proved most positive. Not only was it associated with the purchase of new assets, access to formal saving and credit facilities, to be expected given the nature of the association, but it was also associated with increased decision-making in relation to own health, mobility in the public domain, including visiting one's natal family, voting in local and national elections, and voting according to one's own decision, reporting work that was valued by the family. However, it was also, somewhat unexpectedly, associated with stronger son preference.


To sum up the discussion in this section, a major reason why the impact of economic growth on gender inequality has been so weak and inconsistent relates to the considerable

variation in growth strategies and the extent to which states are willing to intervene on behalf of labour, particularly the working poor as well as to the rigidities of patriarchal constraints within different regions. However, while our findings tell us that market-led economic growth cannot be relied on to generate gender equality, economic growth that is accompanied by an expansion in women's labour market opportunities does appear to have a positive impact on a range of measures. Indeed women's labour market participation appears as an important pivot around which a more synergistic relationship between economic growth and gender equality might revolve – though preferably in a context of an overall expansion in labour opportunities rather than at the expense of male employment. This is the point that Seguino makes in her statement that 'livelihood inequality buttresses other forms of gender inequality – such as education, health, life, bodily integrity and dignity. For this reason, livelihood equality is a pivotal change target in order to transform a comprehensive stratified gender system into one that is gender equitable'.

Let me cited findings from a number of other studies that support the transformative potential of women's engagement in the labour market. The first of these is Seguino's own analysis of data from the World Values Survey which found that an increase in women's share of employment over time appears to lead to the weakening of restrictive gender stereotypes about women's roles in society (Seguino 2007). This finding held for women and, to a lesser extent, for men, regardless of their class background. Economic growth also had a similar impact, suggesting that cultural resistance to gender equality is lessened by the general expansion of economic opportunities.

The second is a study was carried out by Richard Anker and relates to determinants of women's share of positions of decision-making power and authority in the labour market, generally measured by their share of the occupational group made





up of legislators, senior officials and managers (LSOM). He found that while per capita GDP did not prove to be significant, women's share of the non-agricultural labour force, particularly once it reached 40%, had a statistically significant relationship to their share of decision-making positions in the labour market.

The other variable that proved important in his study was the percentage of women in parliament, one of the indicators that enter the political leadership sub-index of the Gender Gaps Index. But the relationship between percentage of women in parliament and percentages in key decision-making positions in the labour market is an interesting one. It is positive up to the point that women make up 25% of parliament and then turns negative for higher female shares. Anker offers an interesting explanation for this which is that female shares of parliament higher than 25% tend to reflect the influence of quotas which raise the number of women parliamentarians above the number it might otherwise have been.

The implication, if this is the case, is that quotas bypass the socio-economic and cultural changes that lead to the election of women into parliament the absence of quotas. In other words, the positive association between women's share of parliament and their share of decision-making positions reflects underlying changes in society rather than a causal relationship whereby women's increased representation in parliament leads to policies which promote women's representation in the higher echelons of the labour market.

Third, there are studies by Dreze and Sen (1995) and more recently, Klasen and Wink (2001) into the determinants of 'missing women' in the Indian context. The Dreze and Sen study used cross sectional district data from 1981 and found that female labour force participation at district level reduce both excess female mortality in the under-five age group as well as total fertility. Female literacy reduced excess female mortality, under-five child mortality more generally as well as fertility rates. Male literacy rates by contrast


were associated with higher levels of excess female mortality. And in terms of the geography of gender, excess female mortality along with under-five mortality and fertility rates were all lower in the southern states of India. An update on these findings is provided by Klasen and Wink, using data for 1971-1991, data for 1971 to 2001 using a more restricted set of variables and data from 1961 to 2001 using an even more restricted set of variables. They found that female labour force participation and literacy rates significantly reduced the sex ratios in all three time periods while male literacy had a negative but insignificant impact for the period 1971-1991 for which it was available. States in the south, east and west of India all had lower sex ratios than the north.

### **The South Asia story**

If women's access to labor market opportunities provides an important basis for the transformation of other aspects of gender inequality, what does this say about the South Asian context. I would like to focus here in greater detail on Bangladesh and India, two of the countries I am more familiar with. As we have seen, despite its far lower per capita GDP, Bangladesh has been ranked higher than India on key economic, social and political indicators. It is not just the indicators compiled by the WEF that has helped to track the progress Bangladesh has made on social and economic indicators relative to other countries in the region. It was also ranked 112 out of 145 countries according to the UN's Gender Inequality Index for 2011 (UNDP, 2011) while India was ranked 129 and Pakistan was ranked 115. Similar findings are reported in the statistics compiled in recent publication by Dreze and Sen (2015), which compared Bangladesh, West Bengal and India as well as in a recent issue of the Economist which compared Bangladesh, India and Pakistan.

And while a comparison of these indicators do not always place Bangladesh ahead of the others, the point to bear in mind is that Bangladesh has





achieved remarkably rapid progress at very much lower levels of per capita GDP than West Bengal, India and Pakistan. What these comparisons also point out is that progress on gender equality in Bangladesh has been part of a larger story of progress on human development. What I would like to touch on here are some of the factors that might explain Bangladesh's performance in spite of its relatively low rates of per capita GDP. I want to touch in particular on its development strategy, its social structure and the role of civil society.


**Development strategies:** One of the most obvious differences between India and Bangladesh is the divergence in their female labor force participation rates over time. Female labor force participation rates in Bangladesh have risen gradually but steadily reaching 36% according to the Labor Force Survey 2010. In India, on the other hand, female labor force participation rates have been stagnant for several decades and have fallen dramatically since 2005. The contrast is particularly striking for West Bengal and Bangladesh, neighboring regions with shared histories, cultures and languages but different majority religions and divergent political trajectories. While male activity rates were, and remain, high (over 80%) in both contexts, female rates began out extremely low: they were around 4% in the 1970s in both West Bengal (Dyson and Moore, 1983) and Bangladesh (Mahmud, 2003). They had risen to 26% in Bangladesh by the late 1990s and to 36% in 2010 (Mahmud, 2003; Government of Bangladesh, 2011). By contrast, female activity rates in West Bengal stagnated at around 16-17% for the past two decades (World Bank, 2008) and declining, as in the rest of India between 2004/-5 and 2009/10.

There are two major aspect of the development strategy in Bangladesh that help to explain this steady rise in female labor force participation rates: the garment industry and the microfinance sector. India, with its strong state and large domestic market, was able to resist the turn to neo-liberal policies till quite late in its history.

Its industrial sector is thus far more dominated by the large-scale capital-intensive industries that characterized the import-substitution phase, industries that are largely dominated by unionized male labor. In fact, the manufacturing sector in India has been characterized by a dual structure, with the majority of its establishments either concentrated in large scale (500+ workers) establishments or at the other end of the spectrum in small-scale (5-9 workers) establishment. One result of this is that labor displaced from agriculture has either dropped out of the labor force or been absorbed into the tertiary sector but the higher levels of remuneration in the tertiary sector suggest that it is not the poorer sections of the population that are finding jobs within it. It is significant that the largest drops in labor force participation rates in the recent statistics has been largely rural, and in fact largely, women from poorer rural households.

The dualistic structure of Indian manufacturing appears to explain why economic liberalization in India has not seen a closing of the gender gap in manufacturing. Menon and Rodgers (2006) found that while (cheaper) female labor rose in both smaller scale establishments as well as the larger scale more capital intensive establishments that had been protected in the pre-reform era, the percentage rise was much higher at the smaller scale end. They also found that increasing openness to trade led to higher gender wage gaps in the previously protected sector: the cost cutting measures taken to deal with international competition protected male jobs and male wages relative to female to a greater extent in the previously protected industries - a reflection perhaps of the greater presence of largely male-dominated trade unions in this sector.

This is a marked contrast to the Bangladesh scenario. Bangladesh embarked on a liberalization program by the late 1970s, an indicator of its aid-dependent status, with the result that it moved away from the largely male dominated, high-wage, capital-intensive and highly unionized jute



industry for its foreign exchange earnings to a female-dominated, low-wage, labor-intensive industry with unions largely forbidden to operate. The result has been to generate jobs for around 4 million women or around 15% of women aged 15-30. The exploitative conditions that prevail in these factories, particularly those at the smaller-scale and informal end, are of course well known but studies tell us that these jobs have given women considerable bargaining power within the home, including a reduction in physical violence within the home, as well as generating a steady demand for girls' education.


The second aspect of Bangladesh's development strategy has been the spread of microfinance. The vast majority of organizations in Bangladesh's sizeable NGO sector is now engaged in providing microfinance services, primarily to women, with or without other kinds of services, whether geared to entrepreneurship or citizenship (or both). The presence of NGOs in around 78% of its villages means that it reaches a much larger percentage of working age women and their families than the garment sector. The fact that the vast majority of working women in Bangladesh are in various forms of self-employment is a reflection of the role of microfinance.

As in India, there are reasons to question whether official statistics are capable of capturing different categories of women's economic activity. However, efforts to interrogate official statistics in India seems to have largely focused on the exclusion of various unpaid, subsistence-oriented activities as one factor explaining low rates of female participation (Hirway, ; Kapsos). Our own efforts to collect better data on women's work using the same definition as the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics found that a great deal of the excluded activity was home-based paid work by women. Using the 7 day reference period adopted by the BBS, gave us female labor force participation rates of 67% compared to BBS estimates of 30% for the 8 districts in our study. Extending the reference period to 12 months

increased our estimates to 73%, an increase of 6% suggesting that women engaged in most of the relevant activities throughout the year. Disaggregating these activities suggested that just 10% of our sample were engaged in paid work outside the home, 48% were engaged in paid work within the home and 15% described themselves as engaged in unpaid subsistence activity. The importance of livestock and poultry as a factor in predicting the likelihood of women's paid economic activity within the home is another factor suggesting the importance of microfinance, as a large number of loans to women are used for this form of enterprise. In short, the spread of microfinance in Bangladesh since the 1990s has probably reduced the need for poorer women to engage in agricultural labor and increase the likelihood of home-based work. The widespread influence of microfinance on women's paid work opportunities has served to transform their previous status as economic liabilities within family and society into a new status as economic assets.

**Social structure and civil society:** I do not think that quality of governance can contribute a great deal to the explanation of Bangladesh performance on human development relative to the rest of the sub-continent. First of all, India has had near-uninterrupted democratic rule since independence in 1947 while the Bangladesh has spent a considerable amount of this period under military rule. Secondly, turning to the WEF indicators of political empowerment, Bangladesh has had female prime ministers for around 24 of the last 50 years during which time it has been ranked as the world's most corrupt country by Transparency International for 5 consecutive years.

And while political leaders in both countries have made various declarations about the important of gender equality as well as put in place various legal and policy provisions to this effect, the difference between the two countries may lie in the ease with which such policies and



laws are translated into their intended outcomes. As Rehman Sobhan (2000) has noted, while class inequalities have widened in Bangladesh in the course of economic growth, they are not as closely bound up with the deep-rooted and durable inequalities based on the ascribed identities that characterize the semi-feudal or caste-based social structures which continue to characterize India and Pakistan. Bangladesh society remains more fluid with considerable scope for upward mobility. Its hierarchies are more exposed to challenges from below because their legitimacy is not deep rooted. Progressive discourses about women's rights and gender equality may be easier to disseminate in the smaller and more homogenous social context of Bangladesh than it is within the more caste stratified context of India or the semi-feudal and ethnically divided context of Pakistan.

It is this question of fluidity in a society and the ease with which new norms, values and ideas can travel and permeate a society that may distinguish Bangladesh from India and Pakistan. The improvements in Bangladesh's human development and gender equality indicators have relied not only on purposive policy interventions on the part of government but also on the agency of ordinary people. It is everyday forms of agency that lie behind one of the most rapid fertility declines in demographic history along with comprehensive immunization coverage, access to safe drinking water, the availability of sanitary toilets, infant, child and maternal mortality, female literacy and child malnourishment.


NGOs in Bangladesh have been instrumental in bringing about changes at the grassroots level through the associational route as well as the financial. While most of the older NGOs have lost the radical politics that characterized them in the early post-independence years, their focus on building associational ties among women, ties which are often based on legal education and rights awareness has combined with other changes in society to bring about a major change

in the grassroots political agency of women. The NGO contribution to expanding service delivery has been an important dimension of social change but NGOs have also acted as conduits for new norms and values which go right down to the grassroots. And as we have seen, NGO membership appears to have been associated with women's empowerment on a number of indicators, including indicators of political participation at the grassroots level.

However if we were to unpack the concept of India into its constituent parts, we are likely to find similar examples of collective action at the grassroots level: self-help groups, women's unions and social movements of various kinds have all played an important role in promoting citizenship at the grassroots in Indian states. We know, for instance, that the NREGS has been most effective in reaching women and in addressing caste disparities in those areas where these organizations are active. Sanyal has talked about collective action in West Bengal of the kind we have seen in Bangladesh in relation to credit-based self-help groups. We know also that while Kerala has been a model state in terms of decentralization, its Kudumbashree program has both benefited from state initiatives to deepen democratic decentralisation as well as contributing to this process. Collective action and grassroots citizenship must be built from below but it can benefit from support from above.

## Conclusion

There has been very uneven progress on the key dimensions of gender inequality in the world today. We have made considerable advances in closing the gender gap in key human capabilities of education and health, less progress in closing the gender gap in economic resources and opportunities and least progress in closing the gender gap in political participation, at least at the higher levels of decision-making. I would like to draw out some broad lessons from the



analysis presented here. First, the fact that progress in human capabilities, a good measure of productivity, has not translated into progress in labor market outcomes should not detract our attention from what education in particular has achieved in terms of gender equality, not only promoting investments in children's health and education, frequently closing gender gaps in these capabilities, and empowering women on a range of indicator, including decision-making within the household, mobility within the community and sense of agency. What it does tell us is that, contrary to the predictions of standard economic theory, the barriers to women's progress in the labor market cannot be reduced to inequalities in productivity. Instead, there is a complex and interlocking set of patriarchal constraints, material as well as ideological, and cutting across different spheres of society that make rule out the possibility that addressing one set of inequalities will automatically address the others.

At the same time, there are clearly certain pivotal inequalities, action on which can act as structural catalysts on other constraints. We have argued that inequalities in market

market participation is one of these. For many of us in the South Asian context where women are expected to be dependent to male family breadwinners for much of their lives - their fathers, their husbands and then their sons - unless of course one comes from households that cannot afford the luxury of female dependence, the idea of having an income of one's own is likely to have enormous appeal. But there are other reasons for acknowledging the importance of gender equality in labor market outcomes. Markets have become the primary institution through which the people make a living and plan for the future. They have become the primary institution through which the benefits of growth reach those who must rely on their labor to make their living. And while we may be deeply critical of a model of growth that relies on untrammled market forces and has been associated with untrammled growth in

inequalities, curtailing women's participation in the market place is not a solution. We need to acknowledge that labor markets are the primary way in which women, particularly poorer women, enter the public domain in this region of the world. Women's struggles for economic citizenship in the market domain have the potential to open up access routes to citizenship in other domains.

However, as we noted earlier, the right policy interventions can support women in their struggles for better livelihoods. We can learn from the experiences of other countries, but what matters is not the replication of such lessons but getting to the core of what make interventions effective. We do not need to imitate the family-friendly policies that have allowed the Nordic countries to persistently occupy the top ranks of the gender equality league tables since the labor markets in South Asia do not resemble the labor markets in the Nordic countries nor do South Asian countries have the resources that industrialized countries do - although greater attention to an effective and progressive taxation system might expand the resources at the disposal of the state. Instead we need to find ways of achieving what is at the core of Nordic policies - enabling women with reproductive responsibilities to participate in the market economy while encouraging men to take up a greater share of unpaid reproductive responsibilities. Well-designed social protection: the NREGS, the Mid-Day meal scheme, the ICDS program are examples that could be improved on.

We have seen the seen the transformative potential of education, particularly post-secondary education, on women's lives. And this education that is not necessarily of a particularly high quality. We might want to ask what better quality education tailored to challenging gender stereotypes on the part of boys and girls and nurturing their capacity to aspire might achieve. Life-long education that equips men and women to adjust to rapidly changing market forces but also to become active citizens, participating in the collective decisions that affect their lives is a



second core lesson.

The final key lesson is the importance of organizational capacity and collective action as a means of mobilizing around gender inequality, and inequalities more generally. The lesson I think from Bangladesh and from other countries that have made progress on gender and other inequalities is that it is change at the grassroots level that makes for long-lasting change. We do not need to prescribe what form this collective action should take – it is not always something that lends itself to policy recommendations but we should bear in mind the finding from a widely cited study that the greatest progress on law and policy relating to violence against women has been made by societies which have a strong and active autonomous women’s movement as well as allies within the state.

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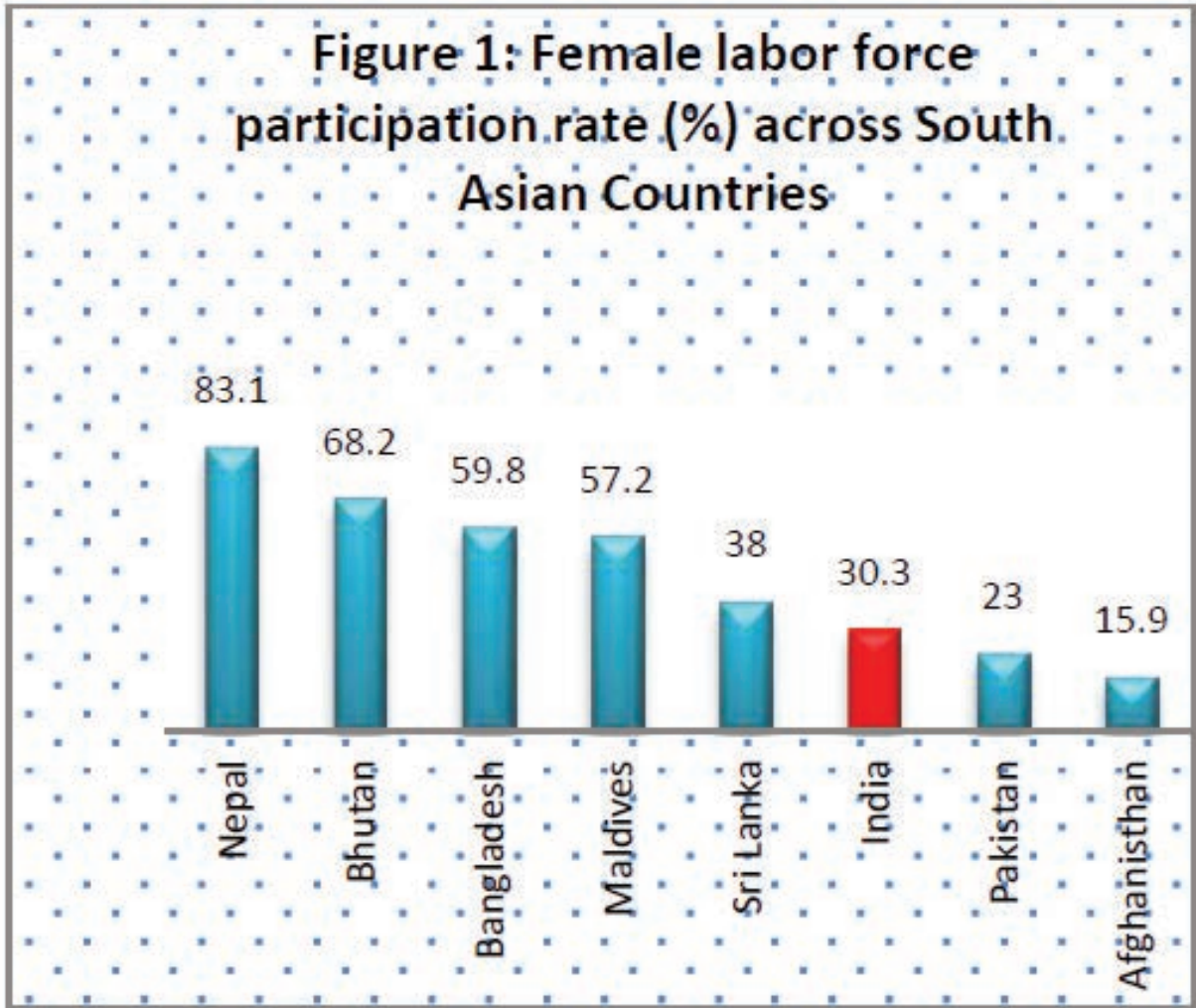


**Table 1 Gender gaps in South Asia 2014: ranking and scores**

	Bangladesh		Sri Lanka		Nepal		India		Pakistan	
GDP (PPP) per capita (constant 2011, international \$)	\$2364		\$8856		\$2118		\$5,050		\$4360	
	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score
<b>Overall gender gap:</b>	68	0.697	79	0.690	112	0.646	114	0.646	141	0.552
<b>Health and survival</b>	122	0.966	1	0.980	88	0.972	141	0.937	119	0.967
Sex ratio at birth	1	0.94	1	0.94	1	0.94	139	0.89	1	0.94
Healthy life expectancy	131	1.02	1	1.06	97	1.03	95	1.04	128	1.02
<b>Educational attainment:</b>	111	0.940	59	0.994	122	0.889	126	0.850	132	0.805
Literacy rate	109	0.88	86	0.97	128	0.66	126	0.68	129	0.63
Primary enrolment	1	1.00	70	1.00	79	1.00	117	0.97	131	0.87
Secondary enrolment	1	1.00	1	1.00	1	1.00	116	0.79	119	0.74
Tertiary enrolment	118	0.68	1	1.00	120	0.64	111	0.78	103	0.95
<b>Economic participation:</b>	127	0.477	109	0.591	122	0.547	134	0.410	141	0.309
Labour force participation	94	0.70	126	0.48	16	0.93	130	0.36	137	0.30
Wage equality for similar work	105	0.57	11	0.78	85	0.62	109	0.56	111	0.55
Estimated earned income	102	0.52	127	0.38	101	0.52	135	0.24	136	0.18
Legislators, senior officials and managers	122	0.06	72	0.40	107	0.16	-		124	0.03
Professional and technical workers	118	0.32	76	0.90	121	0.24	-		119	0.28
<b>Political empowerment</b>	10	0.406	50	0.196	61	0.176	15	0.385	85	0.127
Parliament	75	0.25	130	0.06	35	0.43	111	0.13	71	0.26
Ministerial positions	122	0.07	136	0.03			107	0.10	138	0.00
Years with female head of state: last 50 yrs	3	0.70	6	0.38	64	0.00	1	0.72	23	0.10



**Figure 1: Female labor force participation rate (%) across South Asian Countries**



Source: WDI, World Bank




## Presentation of the Report of the High Level Committee on the Status of Women in India (2013-15)

**T**he mandate of the High Level Committee on the Status of Women in India was to carry out a comprehensive study on the status of women since 1989, and to recommend appropriate policy interventions based on a contemporary assessment of women's economic, legal, political, education, health and socio-cultural needs.

Since 1975 when the first Committee on the Status of Women in India (CSWI-1) had submitted its Report highlighting the fact that the dynamics of social change and development in post Independent India, had adversely affected large sections of women and had created new imbalances, manifested specifically in declining work participation rates and a declining sex ratio, women's issues have been heavily debated and researched throwing up a voluminous and rich literature on women's work, their substantial contribution to the national economy, their poor access to and control over resources and the need to guarantee them equality in all spheres.

While during the period since then has seen unprecedented progress in women's education, political participation in local governance and to some extent in health, there is a disturbing continuity in some critical indicators of women's well being, the sex ratio and labour force participation rates. There have been progressive legislations in response to significant international



conventions on women's rights and from women's organisations within. While women continue to be vulnerable, they have acquired a strong, collective voice. The economy grew at an average annual rate of 7.26 per cent over the last five years. Yet, the journey toward equality and empowerment remains as fraught with uncertainty as ever.

Life expectancy of women has risen; infant and child mortality levels have improved in some states. However, mortality rates for girls in these states are higher than that for boys. While primary school enrolment for girls has shown remarkable improvement across several states, dropout rates at secondary levels remain disturbingly high. Age at marriage has shown a slight improvement, but in many districts 80 per cent of the girls are married off under-age. The sex ratio is falling drastically; among the reasons for this the most significant perhaps is gender-biased sex selection. Female labour force participation rate continue to be low and has been declining; in 2012, at 33 per cent, it was substantially lower than the 50 per cent global average. The number of women engaged in household duties and performing unpaid 'economic' activities has grown; almost 40-44 per cent women are still engaged in gathering fuel and firewood for household use. Defining and measuring women's work continues to be a dilemma. There are inheritance laws on paper but few women have land and assets in their names.


Women's empowerment indicators, such as education, health and employment, not only have wide inter-state variations, but also inter-district variations in the same state. There are emerging areas of concern and new geographies of worsening indicators. For example, immunization coverage for girl children has worsened over the years, and new geographies are emerging with alarmingly low sex ratios unfavourable to girls. The 2011 Census identified 262 districts as 'Gender Critical', or districts with low sex ratio (less than 900); low female literacy (less than 30 per cent) or low female work participation rates

(less than 20 per cent).

Like inter-state and inter-district variations, there are significant variations between different social groups of women—Dalit women, Muslim women, Adivasi women, single and excluded women especially widows, differently abled women, elderly women, migrants, displaced and trafficked women, women in the unorganized workforce, women infected and affected by HIV/AIDS, and women in conflict zones. Women in these groups bear the burden of multiple marginalizations and fare lower on various indicators compared to their male counterparts as well as when compared to women from other communities. The intersection of gender with caste, religion, ethnicity and exclusion in various forms adds further layers of discrimination reinforcing gender oppression.

However, the progress in gender equality would not have been possible without the hundreds and thousands of women's organizations, influenced by the vibrant women's movement, working for the cause of gender-based discrimination and violence. Some of these movements, such as the Dalit feminist movement, have emerged out of a sense of neglect when both the Dalit rights' movement and the women's movement have ignored the multiple marginalizations of Dalit women

The committee found that empowerment of girls and women cannot happen only through laws and government schemes and programmes. As traditional institutions of family, religion, education, marriage etc., remain stubbornly patriarchal and subordinate women, modern day institutions perpetuate the same norms. No doubt development has brought about changes in the socio-economic and political spheres for women, but there has hardly been any change in the division of labour by sex; the structures of gender subordination within families (reflected in the socially constructed gender roles) extending into the public sphere have remained remarkably stubborn. This brings into focus the relationship



between patriarchal structures and the extant system of production; the patriarchal nature of institutions that surround women, starting from the family and extending into economic, social, cultural, political, and religious spheres, impact strongly on women's choices regarding livelihoods, access to and control over resources vis-à-vis men and perpetuation of social norms and practices.

Emphasizing the role of the state in ensuring equality, the report recommends that entitlements be guaranteed through gender-sensitive institutions. Adequate resources to be planned and allocated through gender budgeting and other explicit means. Strong monitoring mechanisms must be in place with

accountability towards the community of women that these interventions seek to address. There must be rigorous institutional reforms, including those in the private sector and in the media to ensure effective implementation of women's empowerment programmes and creation of gender equitable norms.

Based on our studies the Committee recommends that highest priority be accorded to the following issues:

- Declining child sex ratio
- Violence against women and girls
- Economic disempowerment of women and girls
- Feminisation of poverty



## Note on Positioning Kerala

**Centre for Development Studies, Trivandrum**

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**R**esearch carried out at the Centre for Development Studies on gender inequality goes back to the 1970s a part of the a new wave of scholarship set off by the report on the Committee on the Status of Women in India Towards Equality, which threw into sharp focus the deterioration in the material conditions of women post-independence. While in its first two decades, research at CDS focused explicitly on a wide range of issues related to women's work participation, gender was implicated in research on population, nutrition, agrarian relations and family. Since then there has been considerable engagement with reproductive health and ageing as well as critical engagement from a gender perspective of human development in Kerala, political decentralization and migration.

The plenary seeks to highlight some of the ongoing work at CDS and will include five papers: i) demography of sex ratios in Kerala, ii) women's work and the NREGS in Kerala, iii) landholdings, technology and women's work, iv) gender differences in the utilization of inpatient care by the elderly and v) gender, family and international migration from Kerala.

### **Demography of Sex Ratios in Kerala**

**Prof. S Irudaya Rajan**


The paper will provide the trends in sex ratios in Kerala in the context of female adverse trends in India and fears that historically favourable trends in Kerala have been subject to reversals in recent decades. It will examine the demographic conditions underlying the recent trends.

### **Gender differences in the utilization of inpatient care by the elderly**

**Dr. U S Mishra**

This paper examines utilization and financing of elderly inpatient care in India with a specific objective to unravel intersecting inequalities in distressed financing. The analysis reveals significant gender differentials as well as income gradient in both utilization and financing of elderly inpatient care in India. The econometric





inferences are consistent with the theoretical inferences and unravel significant disadvantages for elderly females in accessing distressed financing. It is also observed that households are more likely to resort to means such as borrowings, asset selling and contributions from friends and relatives to support hospitalization of elderly male. Given the disutility associated with distressed financing, even richer households are less likely to incur debt for inpatient care of female elderly. In view of such intricacies, this paper argues for universal health care coverage and calls for policymaking to strengthen community-based elderly health care.

## **Landholding, technology and women's work**

**Prof. K N Harilal**

Using a Kerala-wide survey on landholdings, the paper will analyze the dynamic between women agricultural labour and the use of machines in agricultural work and their male counterparts. It is found that, women's participation in wage work is high even in areas where machines are used or mechanization is quite advanced. But this is not so in the case for men.

## **Women's Participation in MGNREGS in Kerala: Context, patterns and implication**


**Dr. Vinoj Abraham**

This paper tries to answer the question as to why there is a substantially large participation of women in MGNREGS in Kerala when the participation of women in other sectors is relatively low. More than 87 percent of the workers in the MGNREGS were women, compared to the All-India average of 50.2 percent in 2014-15. While the overall labour participation of women in Kerala was a paltry 26 percent in 2009-10, which had been more or less stagnant in the long

run. Studies argue that the low participation of women in work is to be seen within the argument of stigma and status attached to work.

Using data from an evaluation of the MGNREGS scheme in two districts in Kerala it is argued that the choice between MGNREGS and other employment, within households, is predicated on gender. Further it is also noted that the participation in MGNREGS, unlike in other parts of rural India, is only partially driven by the need for alternative income sources for the household. Gender wage gap and the minimum wages floor of MGNREGS gives partial explanation to the relatively lower incentive for women to participate in the labour market and incentivizes them to engage in MGNREGS. But this does not fully explain the reason for higher participation in the MGNREG scheme as most participants were first time entrants and did not consider any alternative employment previously or after joining MGNREGS. Moreover, given the argument of stigma and status attached to women's work, thus apart from the economic rationale there seems to be other factors that drive women's participation in the scheme.

It is argued that within the gendered context of women in Kerala's labour market the placing of MGNREGS as a 'public works' scheme generated a space for women to enter. MGNREGS carries the tag of being a public work, in two senses. One the scheme is funded by the Government and wages paid are by the Government. Secondly, works taken up are largely public in nature, i.e., no exclusive ownership for the assets created under the scheme. In effect the esteem for the programme among women seems to arise from being able to act as 'agents of development'. In other words, MGNREGS provided an avenue for women to extend their role as agents of development, while they were not inclined (or not allowed) to participate in a market economy. It can be argued that NREGS, in some ways, was placed within the gender context of 'care giving' but this time moving out from the household to



the public domain as well. It is within the broad notion of 'agents of development' that NREGS and its gains are articulated by the workers and beneficiaries.

Within this notion of 'agents of development' the role of Kudumbasree in the initial days of planning and implementation of the MGNREGS scheme was crucial. Another important contributor is the local level government structure with substantial women presence at the Panchayat level, which seemed to encourage women's participation in the scheme. The specifics of the programme in terms of design and implementation also allowed for participation of women. NREGS also seem to provide an occupational arena segregated for women, which they seem to fill out.

In terms of implications, the gains from MGNREGS seem to be to fulfill women's role as care givers within the households as well. Yet, the gains for women are perceptible along the path of economic and social empowerment. Their economic empowerment stems from their enhanced ability to earn, engage in the credit and consumer market actively, and decision making on spending. The social empowerment stems from formation of collectivities, greater interaction with formal structures of administration and

governance.

## **International migration from Kerala, gender and family**

**Dr. Praveena Kodoth**

The paper will explore the ways in which women workers from Kerala have negotiated overseas mobility in the context of a history of male dominated international migration that contributed to institutionalizing of the male provider family. In the early twentieth century, migrant jobs in the Presidency towns and urban centers provided the economic resources for men to claim exclusive sexual access to their wives and other marital property relations where polyandry or matrilineal property relations limited such property relations.

Since the 1970s, surging remittances have been channeled to support marital protectionism and to reinforce conjugal identities. Women's ability to negotiate international mobility has been structured by the reinforcement of the norms of the male provider and marital protectionism, enabling women to go overseas as nurses and domestic workers but also subjecting them to stigma.



## Until how long caste-based discrimination would remain excluded?

**Ms. Manjula Pradeep**  
Executive Director of  
Navsarjan Trust


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**C**aste-based discrimination affects more than 260 million people in the world. Centered more in the South Asian region, where India has almost 200 million people, which is the highest population affected historically by this form of discrimination, for more than 3000 years, but the problem is global with the global diaspora.

The debate on inclusion of Caste-based discrimination was taken up at the U.N. World conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance held at Durban in September 2001, but since then, the Indian government has taken a stand that at the United Nations that caste-based discrimination is an internal problem.

However, since the U.N. Sub-Commission on Human Rights decided in August 2000 to take up this topic as an important human rights issue of the day and appointed two Special Rapporteurs, the various studies they have conducted have revealed that the issue is broader than caste-based discrimination in South Asia but has existed and continues to exist in parts of Africa, Latin America and the Middle East, and in some countries of Western Europe (particularly among the diaspora communities). As a result of deliberations and dissemination of information on this topic by the Sub-Commission in parallel with other similar efforts by the Human Rights Committee of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), the Human Rights Commission's (now, the Human Rights Council's) Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism and racial discrimination and the International Labour Organization (ILO), the issue of discrimination based on work and descent is regarded as a specific and important human rights issue to be properly addressed by the international community.

At its fifty-eighth session, the Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights examined the progress report on the topic of discrimination based on work and descent (A/HRC/Sub.1/58/CRP.2) submitted by Yozo Yokota and Chin-Sung Chung as Special Rapporteurs pursuant to Sub-Commission resolution 2005/22. The progress report focused on the analyses of the replies to the Questionnaires



to Governments, national human rights institutions, relevant organs and agencies of the United Nations system and non-governmental organizations for the purpose of identifying best practices and to obtain more comprehensive information on constitutional, legislative, judicial, administrative and educational measures taken to address the issue of discrimination based on work and descent.

In its resolution 2006/14 the U.N. Sub-Commission on Human Rights, endorsed the Special Rapporteurs' proposals to organize: (i) two regional workshops, one in Asia and one in Africa, before the end of the first quarter of 2007, in order to encourage the interactive participation of representatives of affected communities in discussions with the Special Rapporteurs on this topic; and (ii) a consultation meeting in Geneva during the second quarter of 2007, in order for the Special Rapporteurs to receive the views of Governments, United Nations bodies and agencies, non-governmental organizations and representatives of affected communities on the finalization of the draft principles and guidelines for the effective elimination of discrimination based on work and descent. The Special Rapporteurs regret that the Human Rights Council did not formally hold such regional workshops and consultation meeting pending the decisions. However, the office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights organized in Kathmandu, Nepal, on

23-25 April 2007, a workshop on Social Inclusion: Supporting Political Participation and Economic Empowerment in which the issue of discrimination based on work and descent was included as an important topic. Using this occasion, the International Dalit Solidarity Network (IDSN), in collaboration with the International Movement against All Forms of Discrimination and Racism (IMADR), the Lutheran World Federation and the office of the High Commissioner, organized an informal Expert Consultation on the Draft Principles and Guidelines for the Elimination of Work and Descent Discrimination in Kathmandu on 26 April 2007.

The Sub-Commission further requested the Special Rapporteurs to continue and complete their study on discrimination based on work and descent, to finalize draft principles and guidelines for the effective elimination of this form of discrimination and to submit their final report in 2007 to the Sub-Commission or its successor body, or in the absence of either, to the Human Rights Council. The present final report has been prepared in response to this request and is submitted, in the absence of the Sub-Commission or a successor body, to the Human Rights Council. But for past more than two years, the report is waiting to be endorsed by the General assembly so that caste and discrimination based on work and descent gets included in the U.N. agenda.



## Women's Movement in North East India


**Ms. Monisha Behal**  
North East Network

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**T**he women's movement in the north east region needs attention because a large section of India's population may not have heard that a movement of this kind took place in the periphery of India. But it actually has a long history of struggles by women, for women from the beginning of the 20th century. This is evident from the personal accounts of women, followed by writers and political commentators of those times. The women's movement could not have occurred in the north east region all at once or as a composite whole because of the diversity within it and the different languages spoken there. In addition, statehood came to most of the hill regions at different times, between 1960s-1980s (Manipur was merged with India in 1949) and so on. Assam's history is different from Manipur though women's collective role in Assam was significant between 1920s-40s during the freedom movement. By the 1950s the movement took a back stage and organizational building took place in the form of Mahila Samities. There are similar cases of women's collective strength seen in the form of protest in context of village feuds in Manipur, the erstwhile Lushai Hills, (Mizoram), and Nagaland.

We all know of the political conflict that has ravaged the north east region for over 60 years now. Based on the people's desire to live in their own environs and stick to their culture, the unrest against the Centre's attempts to integrate the region with 'Delhi' was perhaps the main reason resulting in animosity. Whatever the case maybe, the experiences of women have been traumatic, what with militarization, brutal violence, weakening of state services that had a heavy toll on the collective strength of women. Frequent instances of rape, sexual assault and bodily harm forced women to recede and only stick to their most traditional activities of agriculture labour and housebound activities.

The importance of the women's movement is seen in their collective strength. The collective strength has always been seen as 'a way of life', something that is a common scenario and therefore acceptable to society. The reason is because traditional women's work in the field of agriculture and weaving have always been done collectively. There have been women's societies, women's labour groups, always together, in relation to their work. But when it came to decision making in local



governance or rural home matters the subtle hand of patriarchal authority pervades the home and the hearth. In more formal terms the imposition of local customary laws, in tribal societies, is perhaps the reason why women could never fight collectively against their own discrimination and thus against their own men. Along with this, the subsequent years of change in small communities, their economies to globalization have changed the 'power' of women's collective voice And yet collective role of women in negotiating peace for their society is acceptable to society, as long as it does not challenge their own society and as long as the women are fighting for the society's cause. This is a unique and yet paradoxical truths of the women's movement, which we often exalt and uphold as unique to the region. There are many events that have witnessed the collective action of women protesting against military force, shielding the men from arrests, sounding lamp posts to warn security forces from house searches etc. All these go on though there is an absence of women in direct dialogue and negotiations at the planning table or when decisions have to be made at a critical peace debate. It has therefore been difficult for women to achieve a certain degree of autonomy because of certain conventional views and customary laws. There are certain hill states where women are barred from being part of local governance and community planning of village affairs including matrilineal areas of Meghalaya.

Manipur's women were perhaps the first in churning out a movement, as early as 1904, when they strongly protested against the treatment of their men folk by the British through forced labour of felling trees and collecting wood in the Kabaw Valley (now in Myanmar). The success of this protest is signified by the immediate withdrawal of forced labour which took place within 24 hours of

the agitation. Once again the Meira Paibis (torch bearers) of Manipur valley, originally known in the 1970's of pulling out drunken men from their homes, gained worldwide attention with their naked protest against the alleged rape and murder of Manorama Devi, (2004), by the paramilitary forces. Holding banners such as 'India Army, Come Rape Us' brought national shame to our country which also brought in the introduction of the Jeevan Reddy Committee on AFSPA in 2004. That review never ever got published nor made open to the public, only to be seen in The Hindu newspaper. The protest of Irom Sharmila, almost in its 14th year, against AFSPA and she will break her fast if it is repealed.

There is evidence of women, in Nagaland, being engaged in peace processes using strategies on peace agreements and local debates. Once again it is in favour of their state and the good of society. But the collective voice of women demanding their right to be a part of the political process has been frowned on and women have woken up to the reality that customary laws are a male preserve, a subject that is increasingly visible in Nagaland's women's groups. Again, local matters of protesting against a rape or domestic violence are characterized by silent marches which, more often than not, never make news.

The years between the 1990s to the initial years of 2000 witnessed a more assertive stand on the part of several women's groups, which found the concept of "needs to rights," as an effective strategy, particularly Assam, to pursue women's empowerment. And yet, gender justice is in question when the call for women's space and decision making has not gained collective consciousness of the State and civil society till today.






## Nepal's New Constitution (20th September, 2015) & Issues of Inclusion Exclusions: Caste, Ethnicities, & Regions

**Ms. Rita Thapa**  
Tewa, Nepal

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A civil war raged in Nepal for 10 long years (February 1995 – April 2006) when the Maoists declared an armed revolution and took to the jungles and the State repressions (thinking they could be subdued) began. Over 16000 people lost their lives, hundreds of thousands of people were internally displaced, hundreds of thousands left the country, government infrastructures were destroyed (schools, police posts, government offices, bridges, etc.), and 7/8000 women between the ages of 19 – 35 years were suddenly widowed. With the advent of the peace process when the Maoists aligned with the key political parties agreeing on a Republican and a federal State, and the overthrow of the rule of Monarchy, the 2 constitution making processes in two Constituent Assemblies spanned some 8 years out of the almost decade long post conflict transition. During these times the disenfranchised and disadvantaged groups struggled in an ongoing way so that their rights could be ensured and their voices heard in the constitution in the making.

Significant in all this were women in all their diversity, constituting 51% of the Nepali population who have been historically subjugated and treated as second-class citizens, began demanding from the streets, full and equitable citizenship and representation rights. In the same way, the indigenous people, the dalits, and other interest group also raised their voices to ensure their rights and interests were legalized in the new constitution. Among these were the Madhesis (literally those who live in the Madhesh or the southern Tarai belt of Nepal. Among these were the Tharus who are the indigenous people of the Madhesh or the geographical Tarai belt of Nepal who make up almost 50% of the population. The Madhesh is therefore, populated by three main/major categories of people: 1) the Madhesis who are of Indian origin or of marriage; 2) the indigenous people of the Madhesh – the Tharus, and 3) the people of hill origin living in Madhesh. All of them have been living there for generations and all of them have many sub categories. They are also diverse in their languages, traditional



and cultural practices, as well as in their religions and religious practices e.g. although many may claim to be Hindus, some of their ways of worship may lean towards worshipping the environment and the planets. In all of them a marked class/caste variations also exist.

In all the positions of being disenfranchised or excluded, women suffer additionally and differently. With the dominance of patriarchy, women suffer further discriminations and disadvantages from the moment of their birth. Some may not even get to be born owing to sex selections and feticide or infanticide. From veiling in some of the categories, lack of access to education, lack of mobility, lack of control over resources, and harmful traditional practices e.g. identifying women as witches, women are in places of perpetual subjugation often suffering a high level of violence e.g. domestic violence or sexual violence (within and outside the home). These discriminations are more pronounced in the Indo-Aryan groups and are lesser in the groups of Mongoloid origin. Although in Nepal's struggles for democracy in the past 2.5 decades, women's political participation and their empowerment has significantly increased, their overall status and political representation leaves much to be desired.

The 20th September 2015, the Constitution of Nepal is promulgated and has been proclaimed as a very progressive document (which to a great extent it is), accomplished through a widely participatory and a consultative process. It has also been over emphasized by the three major parties that everything in remaining shortcomings can be amended. But the struggles continue. The Madhesh has been in agitation and on the streets for almost 1.5 months. This has cost over 40 lives on both sides (the State and the agitating activists). Over this period many of the 20 odd districts have been under high alert or curfew – some for over 45 days.

One can imagine the impact of these on the lives of the local people. Owing to the geo-political location of this unrest, there have been largely perceived inappropriate levels of interventions and interference from neighbouring state of India not the least an un-proclaimed blockade along the entire length of the southern border begun right after the promulgation of the Constitution. This has had a huge negative implication for Nepal, negatively impacting the day-to-day lives of its citizens regarding food and fuel. This also happened on the aftermath of the earthquake and just before the major festivities in Nepal.

Women do not have the same citizenship rights, as do men. Their representation is ensured up to 40% at the district level in the constitution which is really big compared to many others, but the citizenship provision is particularly discriminatory to women, as women cannot pass on citizenship independently to their children while the men can, and neither has the representation of women in the executive, judiciary and commissions been ensured. Yet largely in terms of the broader terms of exclusions, this constitution is more progressive than ever before and compares better than some of the progressive constitutions of the world.

The learning in Nepal has been that although the constitution or legal documents are fundamentally essential, its enactment and its practice throughout the board depends on the ongoing practice of political leadership, all those working in an official capacity, and of course, the ongoing learning and responsibilities of every citizen. The important things in these power readjustment and power sharing owing to major transitions caused by these reformulation and redefinition of the State and in bringing the marginalized people into the center, is how can leadership minimize the inevitable costs and discomforts of the citizenry at large who will be inevitably negatively impacted in this processes unless prior care is taken and planning done.



## Gender and Collective Bargaining, Emerging Forms of Collective Mobilisation

**Dr. Sumangala Damodaran**  
Ambedkar University Delhi

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**T**he paper will address some of the issues that have arisen around the involvement of women in collective bargaining processes at an international level, but will focus specifically on developing countries. It will address questions to do with women's participation in collective bargaining processes vis-a-vis employers as well as men workers within trade unions in general as well as in the context of the restructuring of work in the last three decades or so. In doing so, it will broadly review evidence from different parts of the world with regard to women's role in trade unions.

The paper will also address the particular conditions of employment and labour markets in developing countries that throw up specific challenges for collective bargaining as an idea as well as its practice in different contexts. Drawing on varied experiences as well as conceptual issues that arise from a gendered analysis of labour markets, patterns and conditions of employment of women, it will extend the idea of collective bargaining beyond the shopfloor and the enterprise to forms of collective mobilisation that emerge from particular realities of women's lives and bring forth the various trends that have been seen particularly in developing countries. In particular, the presence of a large informal sector as well as the increasing trend towards informalisation within the formal sector, the blurring boundaries between manufacturing and service employment and the increasing divergence between work, workplaces and workers will be addressed. It will also attempt to analyse the implications of varied forms of gendered collective mobilisation for an understanding of the relationship between gender and labour as well as policy.



## Probing the Low Participation Rates: A Comparative Analysis of Women's Employment in India and Kerala


**Prof. Neetha N**  
CWDS, New Delhi

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**W**omen's low presence in employment has been an issue since early stages of development in our country. The issue was one of the major concerns identified by the report of the first Committee on the Status of Women in India in 1974. Participation of women in economic activity world over has normally been positively related to opening up of the economy, whether the link is seen through the expansion of women-oriented sectors or through the cost-differential dimension. In India too, in the aura that has been created around liberalisation, a sense of a benign and socially progressive influence of free markets has been projected, reflected in a widespread understanding that new opportunities of employment for women are opening up.

However, the macro data on women's employment did not show any signs of increased participation of women. Added to the issue of low and stagnating female participation is the declining trend in participation that has been noted during the last two decades with a significant fall in the FWPR between 2004-05 and 2011-12. Thus, during a period of high economic growth and expansion of service sector the puzzle around women's employment is a debated issue. The overall changes have not only deepened some of the concerns arising out of the limited understanding of women's employment but also have raised newer concerns.

In the context of Kerala, several conundrums have been there for a long time. The unique development path of the state, though did not lead to high economic growth resulted in better social and human development indices which is often compared to that of developed economies. Apart from the larger question of social versus economic development and other related puzzles, women's status in the state remains as an important riddle. Kerala is marked as an outlier in terms of many indicators of women's status with high female literacy, low maternal mortality and so on. High female literacy, thought to be an important marker of women's better status, does not seem to have made much dent into women's economic and other social life, even after many decades. Employment trends and patterns of women in Kerala since 1990s consists two phases - from 1993-94 to 2004-05, and



post 2004-05. The initial phase is characterised by a better labour force participation rate for women, albeit, with low workforce participation and high unemployment rates. The second period, in contrast, represents a declining labour force participation rate with a decline in work force participation rate alongside a reduction in unemployment rates. The first phase is an often discussed dilemma, seen as an outgrowth of 'Kerala model' of development, a paradoxical situation that had uniquely placed the state from rest of India. The second phase took the state closer to that of the all India pattern with low work participation rates and low unemployment rates.

In the above backdrop, the present paper provides a comparative analysis of the trends and patterns in women's employment in India and Kerala. based on the disaggregate analysis of the data on employment and unemployment from the National Sample Survey (NSS) since 1990s. While doing so, the various explanations for the decline in female work participation rate for the country such as: (1) the increasing attendance in educational institutions; (2) increased household income; and (3) insufficient job opportunities for women are duly examined.

The decline in share of agriculture and an expansion of service sector with differing employment elasticities coupled with gendered understanding of various occupations have influenced female employment outcomes in the country. The specificities of female employment in the country in terms of nature and sectoral dimension are examined which provides insights into the complex process which determines female employment. Self-employment has always predominated over wage employment in rural areas because of the dominance of peasant agriculture. The dominance of contributing family workers in women's self-employment is an important feature not only in rural areas but also in urban areas. What is noteworthy in terms of structural change in employment is the increasing share of regular workers, especially

in urban areas. Following the larger pattern, self-employment of women in Kerala also show a decline but, the decline has been drastic in the second phase. The composition of self-employment in the state is also different from that of the all India pattern with own account workers constituting for the largest proportion. The share of regular work though has increased as in the case of all India pattern, the increase has been much lower compared to that of casual workers. Casual work, given the irregularity in employment associated with it alongside other uncertainties seems to have had a discouraging impact on many women leading to their withdrawal from the labour market in the state. Changes in the sectoral distribution of female work force show the increasing importance of service sector. It also needs to be emphasized that, unlike in other countries, the growth of the service sector in India has not been substantial enough to absorb a large proportion of the female population. The paper suggests that service sector has not been able to fully absorb women workers who are displaced from agriculture and other traditional sectors of employment. Further, there are concentration within specific sectors such as education, paid domestic work, trade and health. The sectoral segregation by gender seems to have confined women to search for employment in particular sectors and occupations, in line with prevailing social norms. Though women's employment in Kerala largely echoes the all India pattern, paid domestic work is yet to become a significant sector of growth in the state.

The paper also examines the educational and social group identities of women workers which are central in understanding the decline in participation rate, nature or sector of employment. The decline in WPR though is visible across all social groups, the decline has been particularly marked among Muslim women. Though similar pattern marks the state of Kerala, the decline has been much sharper. In this context, the paper argues that there is an immediate need to understand



the specificities of female employment and its interrelation with overall social and economic changes in the state. The paper also examines the educational dimension of female employment which dominates some of the established understanding on women's employment by analysing trends in work participation rate across various educational categories. Based on the

analysis of data pertaining to the country as well as the state, the paper argues that education is not a simple panacea for employment problems. More than mere education, the level of education seems to determine labour market outcomes of women in Kerala which is also reflective of both opportunities for employment as well as social acceptance of certain categories of work.





## Gender and Informality in Employment

**Prof. Preet Rustagi**


Institute for  
Human Development

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**E**mployment in India has been and continues to remain informal both for women and men. Is the binary construct of formal-informal appropriate and adequate in appreciating the nuances associated with informality? Does the approach to informality from a lens of formality blinker it? What specificities tend to be associated with women workers that problematise the discourse on gender and informality in employment? Amidst the large and diverse set of women workers in informal employment, there are issues of self-employment (without an employer-employee relationship); entrepreneurs, employers who hire workers with or without capital; home based workers (contractual, piece rated, group or on a variety of relationships); casual labour; part time/temporary workers; non-standard, vulnerable and survival forms of employment; above minimum wages; basic social protection measures; and so on. Issues relating to measurement and analysis remain major, which can be sorted out over time. Recognition of informal workers and their work in itself poses a big challenge given the fracturing prevalent with low to negligible levels of dignity of labour in society. For example, the difficulty in recognising domestic work, especially that of a part timer, as work that can legitimately be considered for various worker rights benefits, such as minimum wages, hours of work, weekly holidays, collective bargaining, unionisation and so on, and the challenges this poses are among the several instances of women workers in informal employment.

Women's participation in the labour market is often invisibilised given the household level involvement as unpaid workers, the self-employed often tend to be with little or no control over resources and decision making, making them akin to unpaid family helpers alongside those who have the ownership and control over finances (generally men). Just as is the case with measurement, notions of informality stem from the residual approach keeping the reference point as formal employment. The binary construct within which formal-informal tends to be discussed can by itself be questionable.

Is the informal declining or increasing over time? With the expanded statistical definition of informal enterprises, employment and sector; the informal employment is seen expanding in terms of entering the formal sector as well, and not enough jobs being generated within the formal sector. Informal



employment within the informal sector includes self-employed (employers, own account workers and unpaid contributing family workers) and wage employed (employees of informal employers). As Chen and Doane (2008) clearly specify informal employment outside the informal sector includes unprotected wage workers in formal firms as well as those who work for households (as domestic workers), for no fixed employer (as casual daily labourers), or under subcontracts (as industrial outworkers).

A majority of women workers are involved in informal sector as are the men too. The share of women tends to be larger compared to that of men. A part of this is due to the agricultural activities and women's participation as unpaid family helpers, but the nature of their work participation in other activities also tends to be predominantly informal. Several categories of employment which are feminised remain informal with barely any social protection provisions. The survival instincts of poor women push them into entrepreneurship and varied forms of employments, almost entirely informal. The near illiterate and low capabilities constrain women's access to the more standard forms of employment and keep them informal.

Informal employment globally seems to be the trend rather than the expected shift towards formality. With more and more jobs getting contractual, non-standard, vulnerable and precarious, the concern to understand and address the issues surrounding informal employment gain momentum. Women workers across the

diverse economies have always been involved in informal employment much more proportionate to men. The specificities associated with women's employment which lend itself to informality have received some attention. However, the approach to measuring informal employment as a residual remains something which needs to be altered. The need to recognise the informal sector and the employment it generates as dynamic and not something that is almost entirely dependent on the formal economy challenges the erstwhile conventional approach.

Even advanced capitalist economies displayed a shift towards small scale, decentralised and more flexible economic units, several of them akin to sweatshop production, in search of 'flexible specialisation' (Piore and Sabel, 1984; Chen, 2012). More and more jobs were associated with informalisation of employment relations since the 80s. The increasing competition across industries and countries with globalisation pushed economies towards informalisation of the workforce (Standing, 1999). Some of the major concerns highlighted in the 2013 India Labour and Employment Report relate to the slow transfer of workers from agriculture to non-agriculture; increasing informalisation and contractualization; collective bargaining shrinking- sharp decline in incidence of strikes and rise in closures; and increasing labour market inequalities. There are some positive aspects as well such as the rising real wages, diversification in employment and unionisation of unorganised workers.



## Linking Institutions and Livelihoods: Reflections on Women, Work and Skills

**Ms. Nalini Nayak**

SEWA, Kerala

&

**Prof. AV Jose**

Honorary Visiting

Professor, CDS

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This paper reflects on the changing scenario in women's work and employment. It is organized in three parts. The first part of this paper makes an attempt to understand the direction and magnitude of changes in key variables such as labour force and employment in relation to some historical antecedents specific to the experience of western industrial economies. We use the long-term changes in industrial economies as a template for assessing similar changes, if any, in the Indian context, which is attempted in Part II. Data available from the National Sample Survey suggest that India is at the early stages of a qualitative transformation leading to improvement in worker participation rates along with changes in the distribution of work force into sectors, status groups, gender divisions and skill categories. There have been some gains from managing the labour market on the supply side through an improvement of the age structure and skill composition of the work force. There is however, a long way to go with the maturing of markets. At best one can accelerate the process with a significant increase of social spending and with the right mix of policy interventions.

In Part III the paper highlights the lacuna in existing institutional mechanisms to prepare women for the labour market while also suggesting ways in which efforts can be made to extend existing facilities and infrastructure to reach out to women so that productivity and marketability of existing work/skills can be enhanced while also developing out of the box possibilities to provide varying skill sets to women to meet the needs of society today.



## Equal Laws but Unequal Protection

**Dr. Gita Gopal**  
Gender Advisor,  
Government of Kerala

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**1.** No country or state can prosper if it leaves its men, women or transgender behind, be it on the grounds of caste, religion, or sex. Growing inequalities have significant costs for any country. It impedes future and more extensive poverty reduction as well as significantly shapes the opportunities of education and upward mobility of disadvantaged individuals (OECD 2014).

2. This paper argues that while the language of development in Kerala has been one of women's empowerment, the formal and informal legal frameworks within which issues have been addressed is one of protection. This has exacerbated gender inequalities, generated significant backlash, and made women more vulnerable in economic and political dimensions. It concludes that the Kerala Government has taken the right step in shifting from a focus on women to one of gender equality and women's empowerment. The challenge lies in the implementation because the regulatory framework continues to speak the old language of protection.

3. This presentation focuses on the status of women in Kerala to demonstrate that despite the high levels of education and health, gender equality remains at a distance. After setting the context in the State, it primarily looks at the extent of violence against women, and suggests the reasons for this before focusing on selected laws, critical for women. The presentation aims to demonstrate how these laws have strengthened women's dependency and reinforced patriarchal attitudes for the majority. To do this, it selects specific rights of Hindu woman: right to inheritance within the natal family; rights of a wife upon entry into, and during, marriage; rights of a woman seeking separation or termination of marriage; and right to devolve property upon her death. It concludes that while these laws have by and large aimed to protect women, and have brought relief to some women who are able to deal with the complexities and costs of legal disputes, they have exacerbated or reinforced gender inequalities for the majority of socially and economically disadvantaged women. The presentation, then, suggests some needed changes to the overall governance framework for addressing gender issues as we move ahead if we are to include and empower disempowered women.



## Transgressing the Borders of Legality: Gender, Citizenship, and Transnational Migration of Women Domestic Workers


**Dr. Bindhulakshmi  
Pattadath**

Associate Professor  
Tata Institute of  
Social Sciences, Mumbai

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**T**his paper foregrounds the experiences and engagements of women as migrant domestic workers in the state and non-state activities embedded in transnational migration. These divisions between state and non-state activities are not clearly demarcated, but, here, I make this division consciously in order to derive a distinction of the formal activities that have been legitimized and sanctioned by the state and legal system and the non-formal activities that have not been sanctioned by the state and legal system. Even though it is not legally sanctioned, the latter often get a licit existence within the gray areas of transnational migration. It is usually referred as illegal, criminal, undocumented and so in the official parlance. The engagement of women migrants with this non-state realm is usually considered as one of the victim-perpetuator engagement and this sphere is often perceived as a violent, criminal, and illegal which needs to be reformed, checked, regulated and curbed with the involvement of a liberal modern state practices. There has been very little research on the active engagement of women within the non-state activities other than this victim discourse.

The purpose of this paper is to move beyond the state (Appadurai 1996) to understand the gray areas where non-state actors often play and contribute to gendered transnational activities. Is it possible to move beyond the state when state and non-state activities are not clearly demarcated and not mutually exclusive? How do we study the non-state activities that, contributes to the construction of a particular gendered subjects in lieu with the state's own production of gendered subjects and citizenship. By analyzing the life history narratives of women domestic workers, this paper understands the construction of their gendered subject positions within the transnational activities and tries to understand the ways in which other dominant engagement of state overlaid and often legitimized by these subject positions. More specifically it looks for the production of dominant discourses of women migrant



domestic workers as 'runaways' and 'absconders' and try to understand the effect of these gendered subjectivities in their life courses as transnational migrants.

This paper analyses the trajectories of travel mobility of migrant women domestic workers and tries to understand their engagement with the state and non-state actors at various points of their labour mobility.

The central argument I want to bring in this

paper is the negotiating strategies of women domestic workers when they move as migrant domestics. Though there are various formal regulations that operate in order to curtail and regulate the movement of women domestic workers, this paper show the ways women bypass those regulatory channel. There are scores of non-state actors who facilitate the 'smooth' travel for women when the state and formal mechanism fail to facilitate a safe travel





# Gender Matters: the Differential Morbidity, Response and Resilience Mechanisms among Women in the Context of Emerging and Re-emerging Communicable Diseases in Kerala


**Ms. Sivaja K Nair &  
Dr. Umakant Dash**

Research scholar & Professor,  
Dept of Humanities and Social  
Sciences, IIT Madras

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**T**he present epidemiological context of Kerala is marked by the emergence and re-emergence of infectious diseases that co-exist with non-communicable diseases. The emerging and re-emerging of communicable diseases have been identified as a major public health concern in the state in terms of mortality and morbidity associated with it. However, there exists differential consequence of diseases on men and women owing to factors such as gendered divisions of labor, access to resources, social norms, behavior patterns and role expectations along with other structural inequalities that function collectively in producing gender disparities in health (Sen and Östlin 2008) (Sen, George et al. 2002). It has been noted that the failure of the health system to take into account gender and other social aspects of diseases hampered the effort to successfully address social disparities in health (Tolhurst, De Koning et al. 2002).

The present study explores this gendered impact of these communicable diseases with special focus on vector borne diseases such as Chikungunya, Malaria, Dengue and Leptospirosis - the incidence of these diseases have become widespread and frequent in the state according to the recent data available. The study majorly focuses on the morbidity patterns, response to illness and the resilience mechanisms adopted by women in association with these diseases. It adopted a mixed methodology and employed a primary survey among 429 individuals who had any of the select communicable diseases in the current year in the district of Trivandrum. It is examined in this paper how the socio-structural inequalities have influenced women's treatment seeking behavior, response to illness,



disease management and resilience throughout the disease episode. A major chunk of women who had experienced these illnesses belong to lower income group who are unemployed. Their household responsibilities and non-availability of alternate support mechanisms prevented them from availing effective treatment seeking and care provisioning. This paper also discusses the ways in which women had effectively made use of existing self-help groups network to access various supports including financial. It hence calls for the expansion of health system to include such contextually relevant institutions or spaces, which could lend support in health promotion, disease prevention and management. The paper highlights the gendered aspect of (emerging and re-emerging) communicable diseases, which is an imperative for the policy makers to initiate a gender analysis of health care

Key words: Emerging and re-emerging communicable diseases, Morbidity, Resilience, gender disparities in health

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## Family Planning Policies and Women in Iran


**Ms. Tahereh Yadegari**

MA Anthropology, Hyderabad  
Central University

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**H**alf of the world's population is approximately composed of women. Women play an important role in determining health and survival of family as the basic unit of society, therefore women's health is not only important because of their own needs, but also it deserves attention due to their contributions to health of societies. Based on international efforts, women's status has dramatically improved in many parts of the world; however there is yet discrimination against women in many developing countries regarding social and health status and right.

In case of Iran, women's freedom of movement is restricted in several ways. For instance during recent years there is a new law for those women who tend to obtain a passport and travel abroad that their husbands officially written consent is required. Thus sex segregation in several public spaces limits women's freedom of movement. Despite of such limiting environment, Iran has an active and visible women's rights movement. According to the 2010 Freedom House report, many of the current laws are actually more conservative than the customary practices in most of the Iranian society, with the exception of some groups (such as some tribal communities) and some underdeveloped areas where the practices are more traditional. For this reason, women's rights activists have made advocating for reform of discriminatory laws their top priority, including through the high profile "One Million Signatures Campaign" to change such laws. In the domain of reproductive health, Iran is categorized as "on track" towards improving maternal health, according to analyses of the reduction of the Maternal Mortality Ratio conducted by the Maternal Mortality Estimation Inter-agency Group. Maternal mortality is estimated at 30 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births. According to data from the Iranian Ministry of Health (from 2005), the antenatal care coverage (at least once) is 98 per cent. The coverage in skilled attendance at delivery, which is one of the most critical interventions for safe motherhood, is also high (97 per cent). Therefore, over the last quarter century, many developing countries, including Iran, have undergone a drastic fertility decline after wide adoption of family planning through the country. But the literature documenting this demographic shift has largely focused on investigating the determinants of contraceptive use and the role



contraceptives have played in declining fertility rates. In contrast, there has been less research examining the impact of family planning use on women's lives and right. Half of Iran's population consists of women and their health requires to be prioritized while Iran's authorities are calling for new population expansion policies since 2012. Two proposed laws pose a major threat to the human rights and fundamental freedom of women and girls in Iran, aimed to increase population growth, when women are already suffering increased discrimination and violence. The laws of Increasing fertility rates and prevent population decline threatens women's right to sexual and reproductive health. If passed, the law would curb women's use of modern contraceptives, outlaw voluntary sterilization, ban the provision

of information on contraceptive methods, and dismantle state-funded family planning programmes, the very programmes that have been so widely praised for improving women's access to contraceptive goods and information, including in remote and poverty-stricken areas of the country.

In this paper the impact of different phases of family planning policies, mainly the last phase of increasing population, on women's health, ability and right in terms of right on their own body, fertility and the number of delivery is viewed and discussed.

Keywords: Fertility- Family Planning Program/ Policies- Discrimination- Population- Violence- Sterilization- Women's right- Childbearing- Contraception



## Cries from the Womb: An Attempt to Fight Female Foeticide

**Ms. Usha Sharma**

Department of Education,  
Maharashtra


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**'O**h, God, I beg of you, I touch your feet time and again,  
Next birth don't give me a daughter, Give me Hell  
instead..'

-An old Folk Song from Uttar Pradesh.

One of the contemporary issues in Indian society relates to the most weaker & vulnerable sections, women and more specially the girl child. The rights relating to girl child "right to life and dignity" is still violated in some areas. Though the constitution of India guarantees equality for women and has also started so many initiatives like the Beti Bachao Abhiyan for empowering the girl child, we still see female foeticide prevailing in many societies. With the introduction of ultra sonography, sex determination has spread like an epidemic in many towns and villages especially among the male child seekers who can pay hefty charges for the sex selection test.

People are unaware about the legal implications of using sex determination tests. The illegal acts of crime in the form of female foeticide go unregistered in many cases. Due to this, the statistics related to the sex ratio is skewed in different states of India like Haryana, Bihar, Rajasthan & Daman & Diu. According to the recent census survey the sex ratio is lowest in Dadra & Haveli. Thus there is a need to fight the social issue of female foeticide in Dadra & Haveli. For this there was a need to test the awareness of people towards the issue of female foeticide, causes and its implications. The pre service teachers were targeted in this research because they were the ones who would have been in marital relationship in a few years' time and may have contributed to the issue of female foeticide. Apart from this the prospective teachers had a topic of Gender discrimination in the curriculum in Sociological Foundations of Education. For this purpose the researcher along with co researchers as B Ed students did a need analysis related to awareness of the issue of female foeticide .Based on the need analysis which was done through a structured questionnaire later on an awareness program to fight female foeticide was created & named as Nanhi Pari Project This included a skit based on save the girl child, a self-composed song as a cry of a girl child from womb, video clip based on female foeticide and an innovative board



game related to the schemes & legal aspects for fighting the issue. The researcher tested the perceptions of prospective teacher towards the issue through a structured questionnaire. The prospective teachers felt that to fight the issue of female foeticide, there was a need of more legal actions & schemes, more awareness on health implications of female foeticide and also women empowerment. Also the program was evaluated through an interview schedule by the pre service

teachers & it was found that the program was an information giver, sensitizing & giving future aims. Thus it was concluded that the program though had some limitations that it was done only on twenty two pre service teachers, in a particular college of education with a short program showed such positive results then there is a hope of fighting this social issue if a longitudinal study is done for the same group.





# An Intervention Study on Decision Making and Self-Esteem among Institutionalized Adolescent Girls

**Ms. Chaithra and Ms. Kavita J**

Psychiatric Social Worker,  
Department of Psychiatric  
Social Work, Assistant  
Professor, Department of  
Psychiatric Social Work,  
NIMHANS, Bangalore

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**I**ntroduction: Four prominent theories exist regarding adolescent risk taking, and decision making (Botvin, 1986). The first theory examines dispositional traits and states that individual differences in personality and disposition account for variance in adolescent risks. The research is inconclusive as to how personality and disposition account for adolescent risk taking. The second theory investigates biological factors. Genetics, neuroendocrine influences, and pubertal-hormonal changes are directly related to adolescent risk taking (Udry, 1988 & Udry, 1990). The third theory embraces a developmental perspective. Adolescence is described as a time when young people are exploring and achieving autonomy. It is at this time that adolescents are seeking their own identity, opinions and values. These developmental goals influence adolescents in making decisions (Lavery et al., 1993 & Zuckerman et al., 1978).

Consistent with the above argument, Josephs, Larrick, Steele, and Nisbett (1992) found a correlation between risk-seeking tendencies and self-esteem in the domain of monetary decisions, with higher self-esteem associated with more risks taken in positive gain scenarios. When decision outcomes were withheld from the individuals in order to remove the “threat” to self-esteem, however, the low self-esteem group was equally as risk seeking as the high self-esteem group. This research suggests, then, that the potential damage to self-esteem due to failure motivates those with lower self-esteem to avoid risk.

Life skills are a group of psychosocial competencies and interpersonal skills that help people make informed decisions, solve problems, think critically and creatively, communicate effectively, build healthy relationships, empathise with others, and cope with and manage their lives in a healthy and productive manner (WHO, 2001).

**Objective:** To prepare an appropriate life skills intervention package for institutionalised adolescent girls and test its efficacy.

**Method:** In the present study the researcher adopted a Quasi Experimental Research Design (before-and-after without control group design). The researcher has selected single test



group consisted of institutionalized adolescent girls. An assessment with standard tools was done prior to the intervention (pre-test), followed which life skills intervention was implemented. An assessment with the same tools was done again after the life skill intervention (Post-test). , the researcher selected 30 girls with the help of simple random sampling technique (Lottery Method). The paired't' test was used to find out the significant differences between the Pre-test scores and Post-test scores of self-esteem and decision making of the institutionalized girls. Cohen's d was used to find out the effect size of the intervention.

Results: There was improvement in self-esteem and decision making after psychosocial interventions among the respondents. The value of decision making found to be higher among the girls after the intervention (M= 44.53, SD=3.24) than the baseline assessment (M=30.96, SD=6.3). There was a significant difference found ( $t=12.919=p<0.001$ ). The value of self-esteem found to be higher among girls after the intervention (M= 27.1, SD=1.88) and lesser during baseline assessment (M=16.63, SD=3.28). There was significant difference found ( $t=19.546, p<0.001$ ). Cohen's D was utilized to measure effect size, a positive large effect was found for decision making ( $d=2.71$ ) and self-esteem ( $d=3.91$ ).

Conclusion: The current study shown that there will be increase in self-esteem, decision making level after the life skills education. The staffs who are working with children specifically

those who are working with children with difficult circumstances can be trained in this area. This will help in reaching the children to enhance their skills in a larger population. Longitudinal studies can be done to observe the long term impact of life skills education on adolescents.

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## Psychosocial and Clinical Profile of Women Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse with Psychiatric Disorders

**Ms. Kavita Jangam,  
Mr. Muralidharan K,  
Mr. Tansa K. A,**

Assistant Professor,  
Dept of Psychiatric  
Social Work,  
Additional Professor,  
Dept of Psychiatry,  
Research Officer,  
Dept of Psychiatric  
Social Work,  
NIMHANS, Bangalore.


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**B**ackground: Studies have demonstrated a strong association between maltreatment in childhood, suicide attempts and the development of mental health problems later in life. The incidence of psychiatric diagnosis has been reported to be significantly higher among women and men with history of childhood sexual abuse as compared to women and men who have not reported history of childhood sexual abuse (Martin, Bergen, & Richardson, 2004). There is also a growing body of literature looking at the link between childhood sexual abuse and severe mental illness such as schizophrenia and bipolar affective disorders (Varese, Barkus, & Bentall, 2011; Chen et al, 2010; Read, Bentall, & Fosse, 2009).

**Objectives:** This paper presents the findings from a retrospective study conducted at tertiary psychiatry facility, with objectives of studying the prevalence and association of childhood abuse (physical, emotional, sexual and neglect) and self-harm among women with psychiatric disorders availing treatment at in-patient and outpatient basis. This study was funded by NIMHANS intra mural funding.

**Methodology:** a total of 609 women between the age group of 18 to 50 years, diagnosed with psychiatric disorders were consecutively recruited for the study from in-patient and outpatient setting. for better comparison, 100 healthy controls were recruited for the study. Two psychiatrists independently confirmed the diagnosis. ICAST - R (ISPCAN, 2006) was administered to assess childhood abuse & suicide behaviour questionnaire was used to assess suicide past, present and future suicide behaviours. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 13) was used for analysis and since all the variables were categorical and for comparison between study and control group, chi square test was used for analysis.

**Results:** Of the 609 respondents, 12% reported childhood experience of sexual abuse where as physical and emotional abuse was more common. There was no significance difference in the reporting of abuse among the type of disorder but women with mood disorder, reported slightly higher percentage of all



type of abuse. Though there was no significant difference in reporting of abuse between study group and healthy controls, the percentage of reporting abuse was comparatively higher among study group. The risk of suicide behaviour was more common among women with mood disorders and with history of multiple types of abuse.

Conclusion: women with mood disorders reported significant abuse and neglect histories with significant higher frequencies of suicide behaviours. These findings have implications for assessment and therapeutic management of women especially with mood disorders.

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# Population Debates in Colonial India: A Feminist Response

## **Mr. Ramneet Kaur**

Research Scholar  
Department of  
Political Science  
University of Delhi

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In the colonial period it was argued that “population explosion” is a leading challenge to the nation’s development and economic modernization, therefore, compulsory birth control was the logical and necessary solution. However, the birth control was not posited as women’s right as a citizen but as a means to either national development or the reduction of extraordinary high maternal mortality rates. Though the birth control was introduced to improve women reproductive health status but actually the aim was only to reduce “numbers” for which women bodies were used as field for experiments. The commitment to population control marginalized many aspects of women reproductive health status by subjecting them to involuntary sterilization, and harmful contraceptives. The population policy was pursued relentlessly compromising women’s health and accelerating the declining sex ratio. The women bodies become the prime target for achieving the state’s objective of reducing population. In this paper I will show how in pre and post-colonial India debates about over population made women bodies a battlefield on which through use of various methods attempts were made to reduce population and have development. I will argue how in this process woman’s bodies the control of women over their bodies was neglected and the reproductive rights of women were marginalized in the name of development. In this paper I will discuss the biasness of population policies which were though carried out in the name of development and improvement of women’s reproductive health status but in actual just only concern with the aim of reducing numbers of people.



## Perception of Social Support and Maternal Mood during Pregnancy

**Ms. Supraja T A**  
**Ms. Kavita V Jangam**  
**Ms. Geetha Desai**  
**Ms. Veena A Satyanarayana**  
**Ms. Thennarasu K**  
**Ms. Latha Venkatram**  
**Ms. Aruna Muralidhar**  
**Ms. Prabha S Chandra**  
NIMHANS, Bangalore

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**B**ackground: Pregnancy is generally considered a period of emotional well-being for women. However, women in the perinatal period are likely to experience affective disorders at varied levels of severity with the prevalence of depression during pregnancy ranging between 10% and 25% (Gavin et al, 2005; Dayan et al, 2006; Nasreen et al, 2010). Further, there are other psychosocial factors that affect maternal well-being during pregnancy. Few studies have been conducted in South Asia and particularly in India on antenatal mood; majority of the studies have focused on the relationship of antenatal mood to pregnancy outcomes. There is a dearth of studies exploring the factors related to antenatal maternal mood.

**Objectives:** The purpose of the study was to examine the relationship between the perception of social support and the experience of depressive symptoms among pregnant women during the antenatal period.

**Materials & methods:** This enquiry was conducted as part of a cohort of pregnant women from urban Bangalore. 450 consecutive consenting women aged between 18 and 39 were recruited for this study less than 16 weeks of pregnancy from the antenatal clinic of a Government BBMP Hospital.

Perceived social support was assessed using the Maternal Social Support Scale (MSSS), an instrument used to identify at-risk women during the prenatal period. The MSSS is an 8 - item scale





focussed on assessing support from different sources namely, spouse, family and friends. The Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS), a 10-item self-report scale, was used to screen for depressive symptoms during pregnancy. A cut-off score U10 on the EPDS was considered indicative of probable major depression.

Observations: More than half of the women had completed secondary education (51%). Almost 40% of the women were primiparous and had been married for less than 2 years.

8.5% of the women scored above the cut-off for depressive symptoms on the EPDS (U10). A correlation was done to examine the relationship between perceived level of social support and EPDS scores. Perceived social support and depressive symptoms scores were significantly correlated,  $r = -0.597$ ,  $p < 0.001$ .

While the findings reveal that pregnant women who perceive poor social support are more likely to report more depressive symptoms on the Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale, it further remains to be seen whether one is predictive of the other.

Conclusion: Regular antenatal assessments should include an evaluation of maternal mood as well as the available support systems for the pregnant women.

Keywords: Depression, social support, pregnancy

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## Economic Empowerment & Women with Locomotor Disabilities: Barriers in the Society

**Mr. Nayan Roy Chaudhuri,  
Mr. Abhijit Ghosh**

National Institute for the  
Orthopaedically Handicapped  
National Institute for the  
Orthopaedically Handicapped

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**A** woman's role, in most communities, is still to be a wife, mother, and homemaker; while the man is the main decision-maker and earning member. While public attitudes are changing, illiteracy rates among women in our country are falling, and more and more women are entering the labour market but the situation, however, has changed little for women with disabilities.

Violence against women with disabilities is a global problem. According to Human Rights Watch approximately 300 million women around the world have mental and physical disabilities. Women with disabilities comprise 10 percent of all women worldwide. In low and middle income countries, women constitute 75 percent of all disabled people. Women with disabilities are more vulnerable to violence and other human rights abuses.

The WHO disability and rehabilitation program supports member states in the development of policies and programs that enhance the quality of life and equality of opportunities for all people with disabilities.

Gender inequality, discrimination and limited job opportunities are just a few of the barriers thousands of women with disabilities across the world battle every day. These barriers often prevent not only their full participation and integration into society, but they also prevent them from sufficiently economically empowering themselves - whether in a traditional work environment or as entrepreneurs. By extension, these barriers affect their access to proper healthcare, housing, training and education.

Attitude is one's judgment about a person, group, object or an idea that how one evaluate things. One can't omit the word



attitude from the social definition of disability. Attitude can create or remove barriers to the life of persons with disabilities

A disabled person, like every other person, is a 'social being' therefore, no different from other able-bodied persons. It is an irony, however, that one is not accepted by the society as he /she is, for it invariably focuses its attention on his/her disabilities rather than on his/her abilities, victims of disease, accident or negligence, they have been further victimized by their peculiar and irrational prejudice of the society.

Women with disabilities living in poverty and most marginalized in mainstreaming society. They are deprived of social, political, economic, and health opportunities. The problems of women

with disabilities become very complex with other factors such as social stigma and poverty.

A study was conducted on 75 cases from rural and urban areas of West Bengal. Interview schedule has been used for data collection.

The study identifies that in rural areas women with locomotor disabilities are mainly illiterate and they have to depend on their family members due to lack of awareness on benefits and economic facilities. Usually the women with locomotor disabilities belong to poor socio economic condition.

Key words- Empowerment, Women, Locomotor Disability, Gender inequality, Discrimination, Human rights.



## Understanding Masculinity: Men and Boys for Equality and Gender Justice: The Indian experience

**M**asculine cultures infuse all significant aspects of modern life and masculinity refers to the socially produced ways of being male. That is to say, men learn to be men and this “learning” is expressed both in terms of social structures as well as in the ways in which men present themselves in everyday life. So, for example, the idea of “men’s work” and “women’s work” relates to social structure whereas the ways in which men speak, behave, gesture, and interact with other men (as well as women) reflect the behavioural aspects of masculinity. The Indian family has been a long-standing site for reinforcing the most pernicious aspects of masculinity. Our family lives contain elaborate formal and informal means of reinforcing and celebrating male privilege. Sons are brought up to both perpetuate and condone gender hierarchies and are nurtured with a sense of entitlement.

There has been a lot of work done by academicians and practitioners in India. Lot of work has happened in the past 20 years, which remained either unnoticed or not given due importance both by large sections of the development sector and the Government. However, the work with men and boys started from the point of view of family planning, sexual and reproductive health and HIV context, it also looked at issues of early marriage. However it did not remain there; the discourse has moved rapidly in the past 10 years where sexual and intimate partner violence, orientations and norms of social behaviour have also come within the purview of the masculinity agenda.


### Masculinity and religious, socio-economic interface in South Asia

**Mr. Subhash Mendhapurkar,**

Founder/Director, SUTRA,  
Himachal Pradesh

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The session plan broadly needs to cover the theoretical perspective that enquires into a range of socio economic , cultural and religious aspects that cross each other , how they affect the shaping of men and their behaviour. What are the



push and pull factors that influence the societal norms in relating to men and masculinity? This understanding is important to unpack the layer that surrounds the construction of masculinity. It would be good to touch not only the Indian context but also the South Asian perspective as it is mostly in the same socio-cultural and religious frame.

### **Working with Men to for Gender equality and reconstructing masculinity: The grassroots experience**

**Mr. Anand Pawar,**  
Executive Director Samyak, Pune

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Once the unpacking of the masculinity agenda is done , it would be worthwhile to dwell more on the Indian context from a practitioner's perspective; the presentation will look into rich grassroots experience of deconstruction and reconstruction of masculinity- Why such process is needed, how it happens and how it has influenced the notions of gender equality in men and boys. This presentation would give a sound viewpoint towards the process of grassroots engagement, the experience emerging out of it.

### **“Possibilities and Challenges in dealing with Masculinity: The Praxis view...”**

**Mr. Satish Kumar,**  
Additional Director,  
CHSJ, New Delhi

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Further opening the work with men and boys on masculinity, the next logical presentation needs

to look into various possibilities and challenges while dealing and working with men and boys on masculinity. The praxis view on construction and manifestation of masculinity brings out different set of challenges to reconstruct the alternative masculinity. At the same time it opens up various possibilities to look in to issues, problems, norms and patterns that have the potential to bring positive changes. It would enable us to holistically understand the theoretical and practical nuances on dealing with masculinity in the southern context.

### **Engaging of Feminist allies in addressing Masculinity**

**Ms. Bimla Chandrashekar,**  
Ekta, Madhurai

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The work on masculinity cannot be in isolation; it has to be rooted in the larger societal realities where patriarchy possesses a formidable challenge to a gender just society. Therefore, the final segment of this session would look into the fact that any engagement on masculinity needs to be in sync with the feminist ideas and principles. The work with men and masculinity has to be deeply engaged with the practice of feminism .Therefore, there is a natural alliance with the feminist movement.

One could also look at it from the fact that ,as the numbers of men involved with feminist activism by challenging masculinity continues to grow, exploring the dynamics of power and privilege in the larger society warrants increased attention.

The session would bring out feminist experiences of working with men as allies of the feminist movement, highlighting the need for a balance between challenge and support for men striving to be allies of the movement and why this could be a great strategy.



## Corporatisation of Health Services and the Rise of the Medical Industrial Complex in India

**Prof. Rama Vaidyanathan  
Baru**  
JNU, New Delhi

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**T**his paper seeks to examine the transformation and consolidation of markets in the health service system in India. The complex architecture of the private sector includes a range of actors and institutions are hierarchical and embedded in a complex network of power. These networks are engaged with political processes at the local, state and central levels. With the entry and expansion of foreign capital, several partnerships have emerged with the domestic hospital, insurance and diagnostic sectors, giving rise to a medical industrial complex. The rise of this industrial complex has redefined and reinforced the idea of health care as a commodity.

## Global Health Crisis, Transnational Capitalism and Gender Solidarity


**Prof. David Legge**  
La Trobe University  
in Melbourne

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**W**e are in the midst of a global crisis: a crisis of global health, global warming and widening inequalities. There have been some relative improvements but the absolute burden of disease and injury – pain, grief, disability and premature death – remains huge.

The dynamics which stabilise this crisis reflect a diverse range of oppressions, exclusions and exploitations, at all levels. Not all of these can be attributed directly to capitalism but the global crisis of transnational capitalism, and the neoliberal policies being implemented to manage it, creates a conducive environment for a wide range of other oppressions and exclusions.

The global economy faces a rolling crisis of over-production, under-consumption and over-accumulation. ‘Over-production’ refers to the fact that, with globalisation and technology, the big corporations can now produce for bigger and bigger markets using fewer and fewer workers. However, people who don’t have jobs can’t buy stuff. This is why we also speak of ‘under-consumption’ as the other side of over-production: lack of demand because of



lack of buying power. The other side of this crisis is the rising tide of profit with nowhere to go because of reduced scope for new investment in real productive capacity. This is the crisis of 'over-accumulation' and this is what lies behind the rapid and huge expansion of the financial sector over the last 30 years. Money which might have been invested in productive enterprise goes into speculation, debt funded consumption and financial churning with the continued extraction of fees.

The imbalances in the global economy threaten all of us and we have basically two options. First, we can work together to stabilise the global economy for an equitable and sustainable future. Alternatively, we can ignore the fundamental imbalances and focus on securing our own future even at the cost of the environment and the billions of vulnerable people who live outside the gated communities.

This is the significance of neoliberalism. Neoliberalism is a program of global reorganisation directed to securing the future for the transnational capitalist class even at the cost of exacerbating the looping instabilities in the global economy.

The negotiation of the various World Trade Organisation agreements between 1986 and 1994 was a major engagement in the reorganisation of the global economy. The net effect of the full set of World Trade Organisation agreements was to extend the market reach of the TNCs producing manufactured goods, to maintain protection of the transnational food companies, to extend protection for TNCs in knowledge intensive industries and to open up national economies to transnational financial and banking corporations. Thus, while the global economy was facing an increasing imbalance between productive capacity and purchasing capacity, the neoliberal program was about strengthening the position of transnational corporations, notwithstanding that it was also exacerbating the imbalance between productive capacity and effective demand.

The corporations did not get everything they wanted through the WTO and as the WTO strategy ground to a halt, the focus shifted to regional trade and investment agreements and the neoliberal agenda is now being pursued through an alphabet soup of regional agreements.

This brings us back to the question of resistance. Implementing a strategy of resistance and an alternative program for global reform both call for some clarity about how the global economy is governed; and in particular about the forces which are driving the neoliberal agenda. By some accounts the big transnational corporations are now so big and powerful that they effectively write the rules which frame the global economy. However, there is another school of analysts who argue that TNCs remain rooted in their home country and that, in advancing the interests of their own TNCs, nation states are actually promoting their national interest, or at least that of their elites.

American sociologist William I. Robinson offers a framework which recognises both the rising power of the TNCs and the continuing dynamics of imperialism. Robinson argues that a new global class structure is emerging with the transnational capitalist class counter-posed against an assembly of subaltern classes, including national working classes and the reserve army of two billion excluded and marginalised people.

Robinson argues that, while the subaltern classes identify with local, ethnic and national subjectivities, the transnational capitalist class knows itself, recognises its own self-interests and is globally organised; both through the TNCs and through political elites in the imperialist countries (and their allies in collaborating governments). The struggle around the governance of the global economy involves this transnational capitalist class, aware of itself, relatively coherent and well organised, over-riding a much more dispersed set of classes and constituencies, divided by gender, ethnicity and nationality, with faint solidarity and limited organisational cohesion.





This analysis suggests that a key task for progressive politics globally is to build the solidarity, the shared consciousness, and the organisational links needed to create an assembly of social and political movements globally, based on national working classes and excluded and marginalised groups, which can overcome the power of the transnational capitalist class, contain the reach of the corporations and disarm imperialism.

The analysis I have presented so far draws mainly on class analysis and political economy and to this point I have made only passing references to gender. So what is the value added by feminism and gender consciousness?

Patriarchy has a long history of oppression and violence which certainly antedates capitalism and neoliberalism. However, in the present conjunction the power structures of patriarchy reflect and reinforce the oppressions and exclusions of neoliberal capitalism.

The intersections are complex. They include the aggressive masculinity which permeates the culture and practices of corporate capitalism and neoliberalism. The interplay of patriarchy and capital is also evident in the under-employment, vulnerable employment and lower remuneration experienced by women as compared with men in many different countries and industries and in the exploitation of women's work in the reproduction of labour. Capitalism is also a direct driver of patriarchy; men as victims of capitalism become the oppressors of patriarchy. However, patriarchy also has the effect of weakening the global movement against neoliberalism by keeping many women out of political struggle.

The struggle for gender equity must be a top

priority; partly because of the life damage for which patriarchy is directly responsible; but also because of the numerous ways in which patriarchy is complicit in the crimes of neoliberalism.

However, gender equity will not by itself overcome the hegemony of the transnational capitalist class, nor will it reverse the neoliberal policies which are driving the present crisis. Wresting control of the global economy from the hands of the transnational capitalist class and setting a new course for global equity and sustainability call for broad assembly of social movements, organised, coherent and self-aware in our diversity.

Speaking as a man at this conference, I want to focus specifically on the possibilities of gender solidarity as a critical strategy in such a global mobilisation. Gender solidarity requires that men, individually and collectively, find ways of recognising and renouncing patriarchal relations and patriarchal forms of practice. It requires that men, individually and collectively, face up to their controlling behaviours and bullying.

None of this will be possible without gender equity. Women living under the continuing threat of violence cannot be expected to reach out to men to assist them in managing their patriarchal tendencies. Gender equity is a condition for gender solidarity.

Political economy and class analysis are powerful tools for understanding global economic governance. However, building gender solidarity will be critical in the global mobilisation needed to hobble the transnational capitalist class and to redirect the global economy towards equity, sustainability and human fulfilment.



## Private Capital in Healthcare System in India: Some Observations and Concerns

**Indira Chakravarthi**

Public Health Specialist,  
Visiting Fellow, JNU


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**H**ealthcare systems in many countries, including India, have been undergoing significant reforms over the past two decades. The academic and policy discourse on reforms focusses largely, if not exclusively, on public health systems – their functioning and poor performance, and how to reform them to function as a safety net providing skeletal basic services for the poor. Further, this discourse is dominated by health economics that has framed healthcare financing solely in terms of public spending and individual spending (out-of-pocket expenditure) as a marker of private spending. While there is promotion of public-private partnerships, and reference to ‘commercialization of healthcare’, however, the nature of the PPPs and processes by which such commercialization is taking place are largely ignored; there is not much study of the transformations in the private sector of the healthcare industry in the country over the last decade- its expansion, and impact on the healthcare system, on medical practice, and costs of care.

This paper draws attention to the nature of the private capital investments in the healthcare industry. It begins with a brief description of the features of the healthcare industry and proceeds to look at the sources of the financial investments. It then looks at the impact of such developments and experiences of other countries with similar healthcare industry, and discusses the implications for healthcare provisioning and health systems in general. Information for this study has been obtained by tracking business news reports and analyses, publicly available information and reports of relevant companies from their websites, industry intelligence reports and available government data.

### **Healthcare as a “big business opportunity”**

Since the 1990s the provision of health services has been projected not just as a social good but also as a viable economic venture. The overall Indian healthcare market today is estimated to be worth US\$ 100 billion and is expected to grow to US\$ 280 billion by 2020, an annual growth rate of 22.9 per cent. Healthcare delivery, which includes hospitals, nursing homes and diagnostics centers, and pharmaceuticals, constitutes 65



per cent of the overall market ([www.ibef.org/industry/healthcare-india.aspx](http://www.ibef.org/industry/healthcare-india.aspx), 20.10.15).

Healthcare has also become one of the top priority sectors for private equity funds. According to IBEF, as of August 2015, the average investment funds in healthcare chains had increased to US\$ 20-30 million from US\$ 5-15 million ([www.ibef.org/industry/healthcare-india.aspx](http://www.ibef.org/industry/healthcare-india.aspx)). Private equity investments into the private healthcare provider sector stood at \$552 million in 2014, slightly lower than the \$786.2 million in 2013, according to Thomson Reuters data (<http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/healthcare/biotech/healthcare/malaysias-ihh-buys-global-hospitals-for-195-million/articleshow/48711426.cms>).

### **Private Equity Investments in healthcare companies**

According to the Principal Investment Officer, International Finance Corporation (IFC)-South Asia, "India is a very important market for the IFC and the World Bank Group, particularly in the healthcare sector. IFC has a strong investment portfolio in the Indian healthcare sector, with commitments of over US\$ 450 mn, representing over 30 percent of its global health investment portfolio". Since 2002 IFC has extended loans to Apollo Hospitals twice, as well as to Max, Rockland, Artemis, and Duncan-Gleneagles hospitals. In March 2015 IFC made a venture capital investment of \$5.5 million in the eye-hospital chain Eye-Q Vision, to fund expansion of its services to non-metro cities. In 2014 it invested \$7 million in the dialysis provider Nephro Plus for expansion. Bessemer Venture Partners (BVP), a USA-based venture capital investor had also invested in NephroPlus.

Tata Capital Healthcare Fund was also making private equity investments in specialty care.

Overseas firms, such as the Dubai-based Aster DM Healthcare and ABV Group were reported to be investing in luxury healthcare in India. In


August 2015 Parkway Holdings, a hospital chain owned by Malaysia's IHH Healthcare Bhd, was reported to be buying a 73.4 per cent stake in Hyderabad-based GE Medical Associates Private Ltd that runs Global Hospitals, for Rs 1284 crores. IHH was to invest Rs 265 crores into Global Hospitals, to fund its capital expenditure requirements.

### **Personal loans for expensive medical procedures**

In August 2015 Tata Capital entered into a collaboration with Mya Health Credit for operating its scheme of granting loans to patients for non-emergency procedures at empanelled hospitals. It planned to target middle and lower middle class patients who are unable to afford treatment immediately due to financial constraints.

### **Impact of private investments**

In the context of USA it has been found that the capital market has had a major role in restructuring the health care sector. As the level of outside financing has grown, traditional concern for the patients or even attending physicians tended to become secondary after profitability. The important question that emerged was whether the requirements of private capital could be made compatible with the larger need to provide healthcare services to marginal populations. A review of studies of the market mechanisms in medical care in US care indicated that features of the market, such as how investors allocate capital were incompatible with the pursuit of a more efficient and equitable healthcare system. Competitive or financial threats compelled a very large portion of all providers (including non-profit providers) to merge with larger entities, with resulting loss of local managerial control. Rise in investor-owned hospitals had increased rather than lowered costs of healthcare. In Australia it was found that corporate investment clearly undermined the capacity of the state to intervene



in the healthcare sector, and there was loss of political and bureaucratic control over the planning of appropriate hospital services.

Given such adverse experiences, there is need to study the impacts of the growing private investment in the hospital industry in India. Some of the specific questions that need attention are:

-Is it possible to regulate size, geographical spread, services provided by this industry driven by profit maximization and expansion?

-Impact on cost? Is it possible to impose controls on costs of the services offered and on income maximization (profits)?

- Impact on autonomy of doctors, on availability of doctors and nurses

-Impact on medical practice in general and rational, ethical practice, in particular.

-Is it desirable to have PPPs with the for-profit hospitals sector?




## Indian Pharmaceutical Industry: An Overview of Policy Level Changes and its Implications for Access to Medicines

**Santhosh M.R**  
TISS Guwahati

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In India, health is a shared responsibility of the central, state and local governments. However, the glaring reality of India's health system is that it continues to be one of the most privatized health systems of the world. It is a mix of exorbitantly priced private health care and a public health system which is afflicted with chronic systemic problems. Since the health security cover being negligible, the mammoth burden of healthcare falls on to the households which may or may not have the requisite finances to deal with it. Households spend a sizeable amount of money on medicines. In fact, studies have shown that their out-of-pocket (OOP) expenditure constitutes 69 per cent of overall health expenditure. Further evidence shows that, while 70 per cent of the households' out-of-pocket health expenditure in urban India goes into buying drugs, in rural India the share is as high as 77 per cent. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimated that 50 to 65 per cent (499-649 million people) of the population in India lacks access to affordable and quality medicines. It is also an irony that this situation continues to exist even today when rest of the world looks up to India as the 'pharmacy of the world.' The irony of the situation also lies in the fact that 90 per cent of the Indian pharmaceutical market consists of drugs that are generics/off patented. The question to be asked is what contributed to this deplorable state of affairs in the Indian pharmaceutical sector.

Indian pharmaceutical sector has undergone plethora of changes in the last few decades. Drug policies and other policy level changes relating to IPRs, privatization, pricing, foreign investment and drug quality have far reaching implications for access to medicines not only in India but also for other developing countries. In fact the policy level changes have facilitated both the making and the unmaking of so called "the pharmacy of the world". For instance the introduction of Patent Act, 1970, which kept food and pharmaceuticals outside the span of product patents, played crucial role in the growth and evolution of domestic players in the Indian pharma sector, which was otherwise under the dominance of foreign players. Similarly, policy decisions regarding foreign investment, pharma PSUs and drug pricing in




the 1970s also benefited the domestic players considerably; thanks to the Hathi Committee recommendations. In fact these policy inputs laid the foundations for the emergence of Indian pharmaceutical industry as 'the pharmacy of the world' in the beginning of the 21st century.

With the introduction of various policy measures in the 1990s, several major changes occurred in the drugs and pharmaceutical sector in India. During the 1990s, much of the regulatory mechanisms that the government had imposed during the previous decades were either dismantled or diluted. There has been a remarkable departure from the hitherto stated positions of the government on the issues relating to patent regime, foreign investment, import export, price control and other regulations. What was less obvious in the beginning of these reforms is how the industry would respond to these changes and how it would impact on the access to medicines. Commentators on the pharma industry have made various kinds of observations and predictions for the future.

Mid-1990s onwards policy commentators such as Keayla (1994) and Amit Sengupta (1994) cautioned about the possible threats and ramifications of new policy reforms. Similarly, Sengupta (1999) and Jayashree Watal (2000) have argued that there would be sharp increase in the drug prices in India. In 2000, Eric Sean Smith noted that most of these fears are exaggerated and also argued that India may become a centre of global importance in pharmaceutical production and research. Similarly, Lanjouw (1997) argued that a number of Indian pharmaceutical companies would successfully survive the transition and emerge themselves as more innovative companies. He also argued that low manufacturing costs will continue to give Indian pharmaceutical companies an advantage in competing for world generic market. Responding to these predictions and apprehensions, if we look at the present status of Indian pharmaceutical industry, India has become Centre of global

importance, but not exactly as predicted by some of the commentators. Here, we also realise the fact that the sector is being marred by variety of issues and problems. Of these, escalating drug prices is the most serious one that needs urgent attention of the policy makers. With the introduction of TRIPS compliant patent regime in India, MNCs started introducing so called 'blockbuster drugs' in India. Most of these drugs are prohibitively over-priced. As a result, the patent challenges and demands for the issuance of compulsory licenses for overpriced drugs scripted an entirely new chapter in the Indian pharma politics. Thus TRIPS- compliant patent regime also has further added to the challenges to access to affordable medicines in India. It should be also noted that various provisions of the Indian Patent Act such as Section 3(d) are being attacked both in the domestic courts as well as international fore. Another matter of serious concern is that the MNCs are regaining their lost ground in the Indian pharma sector in the post-TRIPS phase. The increasing number of mergers and acquisitions and contract manufacturing and research deals are symptoms of this problem. It is true that some of the domestic players have grown and evolved themselves to the stature of MNCs. However the Indian industry has become increasingly import dependent and export oriented; neglecting the domestic needs and epidemiological realities.

Succumbing to the pressures of global trade, India has signed or has been negotiating a few free trade agreements (FTAs) in the recent past. Some of the FTAs with the developed countries, which are under negotiations, are reported to be detrimental to the access to medicines in India as it proposes to introduce new exclusivist regimes of such as 'data exclusivity' and enhanced standards of patent protection. Various commentators have cautioned that these FTAs will have far reaching implications even for other least developed and developing countries that depend on Indian generic medicines. The opponents of such FTAs allege that WTO/TRIPS plus provisions and



commitments can damage the pharmaceutical industries of the developing countries such as India. In the changed circumstances, those who might have opposed TRIPS in the early 1990s are now forced to defend TRIPS against the FTA provisions which are increasingly TRIPS plus.

The gender linkages of the policy induced changes in the pharmaceutical sector needs to be explored with a more nuanced understanding. For instance, due to biological constitutions, women have specific health requirements. Therefore, it is important to scrutinise the above discussed changes and find whether these requirements are being compromised. The examples of access to drugs used for the treatment of breast cancer and cervical cancer give us a rather bleak view. Even the biosimilars of medicines such as Trastuzumab, which is used for the treatment of breast cancer are prohibitively overpriced and thus out of the reach of the millions of needy women. In another instance, though the efficiency of cervical cancer/HPV vaccines is a point of contention they are exorbitantly priced.


It is a widely accepted fact that the drugs and pharmaceutical industry is very much entrenched in the dichotomy of profit maximisation and unmet drug needs of the bulk of the population. On the one hand, we hear the glorious stories of pharma companies making their way into Fortune 500 list. And on the other hand, we hear the gory

stories of millions of people dying due to the lack of access to medicines in the treatment of diseases such as Malaria, AIDS, TB, Cancer. The fact of the matter is that drug manufacturing in the modern era has not been in tune with the epidemiological needs of the population and yet amasses huge wealth. Both the national and global policy measures have not been successful in addressing these multifaceted problems related to access to medicines.

Moreover, pharmaceutical industry has not yet addressed these issues responsibly. In fact, in the never ending search for profit, pharma corporations have come up with different tools that endow them with “exclusive rights” such as patent and data exclusivity. These tools are primarily devised to consolidate the monopolistic /oligopolistic market structure so that any threat of competition could be wiped off. This has serious implications for the health of the populations as modern health delivery system is built around the bio-medical model of health.

The schism between profit maximisation and unmet drug needs of population has been well documented in different points of history. The current situation calls for an urgent need for concerted efforts of the government, industry and civil society to address these issues and problems of the pharmaceutical sector with utmost importance.





# Gender differences in positive mental health of young people: Lessons learned from a cross-sectional survey in Kerala, India

## Dr. Nima Ganga

Post Doctoral Fellow,  
Duke University

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### Purpose

The primary aim of this study is to examine gender differences in positive mental health status and its determinants among young people in Kannur district of Kerala, India.

### Methods


The 20-item Achutha Menon Centre Positive Mental Health Scale (AMCPMHS) was used to measure positive mental health in a cross-sectional survey using stratified cluster sampling with probability proportional to size (PPS). The scale was administered to the study participants along with a detailed interview schedule containing questions on individual characteristics, family background, details of social interaction, social capital and outlook towards life. There were 453 participants in the sample (230 males, 223 females); ages 18-24. The survey was conducted from June to December 2010.

### Results

The mean score of the AMCPMHS in this population was 60.37 (SD=12.08), out of a possible 100. Young men reported significantly higher positive mental health scores compared to women (63.61 vs. 57.04,  $p$ -value =  $<0.001$ ), a difference of about half a standard deviation. This difference remained statistically significant after adjusting for financial status ( $p$ -value  $<0.001$ ).

Socioeconomic status and related social variables will have varying impacts on the positive mental health of men and women. The three socioeconomic status variables (financial status, education and caste) are stronger predictors of female positive mental health than male positive mental health. This observation is confirmed by gender stratified linear regression models.

Financial status has a similar association with a much larger gender gap in positive mental health at the lower end of the scale as compared to the higher end. Women, when they have a better financial background improves with a significant 6.06 points in positive mental health compared to male who improves it at 1.65 point with a better financial status.



For education, relative to being currently a student, men with less than a primary education are expected to have a 6.11 point lower score on the positive mental health scale, while the same comparison among women would predict a 19.46 point difference (p-value for interaction term <0.001). As a result, women with secondary education score 16.75 (-17.70 ( $\beta$  for females) - (-0.95) ( $\beta$  for males) points lower than similarly educated men, while women who are currently studying are 0.95 (male: 63.14 (SD: 9.58); female: 62.19 (SD: 9.61)) points lower in positive mental health score from fellow male students.

Finally, while low caste was not a significant predictor of men's positive mental health, low caste women's positive mental health was 5.72 points lower compared to women belonging to the higher castes (se=1.96, p-value=0.004).

This pattern was largely consistent but weaker when examining social stressors and resources. For example, while both men and women benefit from higher social participation, women

benefited twice as much, which each additional activity being associated with a 5.15 point higher positive mental health score among women and a 2.44 points higher among men (p-value for interaction<0.001).

Having someone to count on for support in a crisis was associated with a 4 point higher positive mental health score among women but was not correlated with positive mental health among men (p-value for interaction=0.10), a pattern that was consistent with, but weaker, for number of intimate friends.

## Conclusion

This study reveals that in Kerala, in spite of its high female education and better sex ratios, the positive mental health of its very young females is significantly low. It identifies better finance, education and social networks considerably improves the female positive mental health more than these factors contribute towards better male positive mental health.



# A Critical Analysis of the Sexual Harassment Laws in India

**Ms. Mokshda Bhushan**  
Amity Law School, AUUP

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Following the Dec 16, 2012 gang-rape in New Delhi, there has been an outcry for the effective protection women in the law, leading to amendments in existing criminal laws and emergence of new gender specific laws. To protect the dignity and safety of women in the workplace, the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act 2013 was finally enacted, years after the Vishakha Guidelines (2006) laid down by Supreme Court. The new Act has had mixed responses. Questions arise as to whether the law has been effective in preventing sexual harassment at the workplace. Are women actually using the law? Or is the fear of losing their job holding them back? Are companies complying with the mandatory provisions of the Act? Indian society is a patriarchal structure where gender bias and sexual harassment has permeated every aspect of the criminal justice system, even the Judiciary. Whether they are journalists, maids, law interns, or even judges, many women had alleged sexual harassment, but how many cases have actually been heard and justice delivered remain to be seen.

This paper purports to explore the offence of sexual harassment against women in India, and the extent to which the laws to protect working women is being implemented and used, (or abused), and the response of the criminal justice system and women at work to this form of violence, to suggest the best practices.

Keywords: sexual harassment against women, criminal justice system, judiciary, gender bias, patriarchy.



## RTI as a TOOL for Strengthening Women's Social Security

**Mr. A. Aravindan,**  
Assistant Professor

**Ms.Samanvi Narang,**  
Student, B.A.LL.B.(Hons.)  
III Sem College of Legal Studies,  
University of Petroleum and  
Energy Studies, Dehradun

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**S**ocial Security is a far reaching methodology intended to avert hardship, guarantee the person of a basic minimum income for himself and ensure from vulnerabilities. The state bears the primary obligation of developing appropriate framework for providing assurance and protection and assistance to its workforce. Social Security is increasingly viewed as an integral part of the development process. It helps to create a more positive attitude to the challenge of globalization and the consequent structural and technological changes.

The objective of this paper is to analyze the influence of Right to Information on systems of Social Security in India. This study will also analyze the impact of globalization on the Social Security System in general and with respect to the situation in other Countries. The legal aspect of the social security will also be explained with the help of various case studies.

Authors will also research upon why and how information and awareness are the vital factors in widening the coverage of Social Security schemes. What legal reforms, procedural and substantive law, in India specifically require so as improvising the situation of not only the unorganized sector workers but also of organized sector workers for better protection of Social Security benefits. Further, the lacunas in the concerned legislations in the context of social security will be examined with an emphasis on gender discriminatory laws not only in India but in other countries as well.

Keywords: Social Security, Globalization, Right to Information



## Gender Sensitivity: Law and Society

**Mr. Apoorva Kumar**  
Amity Law School, Delhi

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**W**hile the history of “Hijras”, as commonly known in India can be traced since the time of epics like Ramayana and Mahabharata, it is shameful that they attained political and social recognition very recently and evidently only after the latest Supreme Court Judgment in April 2014 (NLSA Vs. UOI) until which they were crawling under the shadows of the sinful society. The community has been deprived of basic Fundamental Right, Social, Economic and Political empowerment along with necessary amenities to sustain life and earns living by petty works like singing/ dancing and majorly prostitution. They face discrimination, sexual and mental harassment, eve-teasing, sexual diseases, substance abuse and yet Justice never approached their doorsteps. Though, initiatives have been taken towards giving this community an identity but are definitely not significant as, prior to the judgment they were referred as “OTHERS” and now they belong to a “Transgender Community” and have an option on Birth Certificates, Voting Rolls and Voter ID cards other than M (male), F (Female). Not only in India but globally the community has been suffering since the origin. They need more than recognition and right to vote etc. They need to be accepted by the society just like the other two forms of human beings are (male and female). They never chose to be what they are and it’s neither a disease nor an allergy. A surgery or operation is not a solution, the society needs to change its perspective and give them equal footage as any other Human Being.

Key Words: hijras, discrimination, recognition, fundamental rights



## Women in Combat: Marching their way towards Gender Inclusion

**Mr. Aishani Anvekar**

Symbiosis Law School, Pune

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**T**he Induction of Women Officers (WOs) was approved by the Indian Cabinet on Parliamentary Affairs as Short Service Cadre in 1992. The initial term of engagement was five years, which was later increased to 10 years with an option of extension by other four years, making it a total of fourteen years. Today, there are nearly 1400 WO's in the Indian Army, which is about 3 percent of the authorised number.

In the past few years, it has been rather regrettable that the Armed forces have been dogged by controversies regarding endowment of permanent commission to WO's and permitting them to command certain units. Recently, in an article dated May 30, 2015, Defence Minister Manohar Parikar explicitly ruled out recruitment of women for combat operations in armed forces, stating safety as a concern. He further added that women would be encouraged to be a part of other operational units of the Indian Army. Surprisingly, various other nations of the world that propagate the ideals of liberalisation and equality have similar limitations when it comes to recruiting females in combat roles. For example, in Britain, women are able to apply for most jobs in the Army except those whose "primary duty is to close in with and kill the enemy". Similarly, China and the USA, almost completely restrict recruitment of women in combat functions.

Numerous countries where women are in fact included in combat zones, no prominent steps are taken in order to ensure their trouble-free sustenance there. Women in the Indian Army have raised various administrative to social challenges that have not been catered to, in order to improve the conditions that they currently function in, for example, basic legal barriers that prevent women from getting permanent commissions in every part of the military (including combat operations), is absent at this point.



After completion of the fourteen year limitation, it is impossible for a female to look for a new job, starting at an opening position. Lack of job security and appreciation with this regard, is their primary complain. Further, it is essential to realise that increased sensitization programs and effective grievance redressal mechanisms to ensure a comfortable transition and low attrition rates, is absent in most states. A combination of various factors that make active participation of women in militia roles, rather difficult, is not been looked into by most world economies.

Our focus with regard to this paper, is to develop the various challenges faced by women

placed at diverse positions in the armies all over the world. Further, we intend to highlight the drawbacks and limitations of the present stature and develop an outline based on equality, by reaffirming the functions highlighted via United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325. Finally, we aim at establishing an unified body or mechanism, in order to provide a legal and psychological framework that would increase female participation and placement in combat roles, across the globe.





## Including Gender in Education: The Politics of Data and Development

**Dr. Dipta Bhog,**  
Nirantar, Delhi

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In the data driven discourse that has come to dominate education over the past two decades, gender has come to be a critical marker. Starting out with the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (Education for All), that focused on Elementary Education to the new frontier of Secondary Education, the inclusion of girls in schooling has become a major arena of policy and programmatic interventions by the Indian State. Data has provided the rationale for work on gender in the education system and this has resulted in influencing the manner in which 'gender' is understood and practiced in the education system. This paper looks at the impact that statistics and the neo-liberal discourse of investment and benefits has on how policies related to both girls and adolescent girls imagines their role in achieving the goals of development. How international and national discourses on gender are intertwined, and whether education is the site where social change, empowerment in the context of gender are part of the vision and mandate of educational interventions are questions that need to be explored. This paper looks at whether 'gender' in education has come to represent inclusion through a process of containment of its disruptive potential.



## Impact of Education on Women's Health, Skills and Employment and Empowerment

**Dr. Akhila Radhakrishnan**  
Planning and Evaluation  
Specialist, UNICEF Tamil Nadu

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**K**erala has unique attainments evidenced by a number of developmental indicators. Its improvements in numerous social and health outcomes are often attributed to the early start and sustained growth in the literacy status of girls and women. Girls outnumber boys at all levels of schooling and even in higher education. However, these high levels of literacy and education among girls have not transformed into economic outcomes, such as in women's employment. The globally accepted hypothesis that education increases labour force participation continues to be proven wrong in the case of Kerala, as the female work participation rate in Kerala continues to be the lowest in the country. This paper will explore the background and possible reasons for the imbalance between education and women's work participation. It will also discuss how education has not been an adequate condition for social empowerment of women in the state. Having said so, the paper will discuss how, on the other hand, there are also continuing pockets of female illiteracy in this enviably developed state. It will zoom focus on some of the most backward pockets in terms of female illiteracy, to argue that while on the one hand when even high levels of girls' education have not been translated to productive economic and social returns in the state, what would be the future development story from these pockets with low levels of female literacy? The status of girls and women in some of these 'last mile development pockets' will be visited to show critical challenges that the state is groping with. These may help to throw light on the potential scope for expanding the space for girls and women in the development graph of Kerala. The author will thus discuss the enigma of Kerala's development versus its gender development.



## Education, the Third Eye and Women's Political Agency: Three Moments in History

### **Prof. Uma chakravarti**

Feminist, Historian, New Delhi

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In this paper I will explore the life and times of three women: Subbalakshmi, born in 1898, self-taught and outside the formal schooling system who was briefly associated with the national movement in the 1920s, her granddaughter Mythily Shivaraman born 1939 and highly educated in Madras, Delhi and the US who became a full time political activist in Tamil Nadu through the 1970s and into the new millennium, and Dayamani Barla, born c. 1965 who fought back adversity, studied against all odds and is now a full time political activist on adivasi rights, land struggles and the environmental movement. I will look at these lives through the prism of the third eye, the capacity to analyse the social world, which Jotiba Phule regarded as the primary purpose of education through the structural factors that facilitate or impinge on women's political agency. I will use my films to provide a lens through which we can think about the relationship between education and women's political agency--their oppositional imagination that led them to imagine another world.



## Challenges and Issues of Home Based Work: A Case Study of Beedi Rolling Industry in Malabar

**Ms. Suramya T.K.**


Research Scholar, IIT, Madras

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The umbrella term informal sector covers wide variety of labour relations and conditions of work. Within the informal sector, certain groups of workers are more invisible and vulnerable than other categories. Home based workers are one group of this kind, mainly because of the fact that large part of them is 'women and work in not very clearly designated business places'. In traditional industries such as weaving, beedi rolling, coir making, cashew processing etc. subcontracting has become the major production strategy through which the employers reduces the cost of production. This has become a prominent method of extracting cheap labour from woman and children. Low level of educational qualification and skills, social taboos, burden of domestic work and care activities, lack of access to markets and resources etc. are the major reasons for women's participation in home based work.

Beedi rolling is one of the oldest traditional industries in Malabar, Kerala which spread across some major centers such as Palghat, Kannur, Tellicherry and Kasaragod. When we trace back the origin of this industry in the early 20th century, it started in the factory based organised sector. But with the introduction of the Factories Act of 1937 these factory based production units began to vanish and slowly the beedi rolling started shifting to the unorganised sector, which are mostly household production units. This shift in the beedi production from factories to the household resulted in many issues such as the exploitation of workers by the contractors, extended working hours, abysmal wage levels etc. Home based beedi production has created a class of middle men who refused to provide any kind of legally compulsory protection to these workers. Thus we can understand that the whole idea of home based beedi production is primarily to reduce the production cost through extracting cheap labour from the vulnerable groups such as woman and children.

This paper is concerned with the analysis of the process of informalization in beedi industry in Malabar with the enactment of the Factories act of 1937. This study is trying to unravel the factors behind the transition of beedi industry from an organized factory based structure to a more unorganised home based



working style as a result of the legal intervention of the state. Further, the study will be also focusing on the challenges and issues of home based work in the beedi rolling industry and the impact of state intervention on the working conditions. Paper will be primarily based on the secondary sources such as the various reports of the labour commissions and govt. records, Acts, memoirs of workers and trade union leaders, newspaper articles, trade union records, other relevant books and studies in this area. First section of the paper will be dealing with the origin, growth and factory based working structure of the beedi industry in Malabar. In the next section paper will analyse the

introduction and impact of the Factories Act of 1937 and how it led to the disintegration of factory system in beedi rolling. This section will explain in detail the branching out of the production units and resulting in the female dominated home based production structure.

The last section of the paper will analyse how the shift in the beedi production from factories to the households had resulted in many challenges and issues in the industry. In addition to this the paper will also explore the link between the increased participation of woman in home based beedi rolling and poor wages & working conditions.

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## Female Domestic Workers: Performing Gendered Labour in Global Markets

**Ms. Nargis Vasundhara**

Department of Sociology,  
Delhi School of Economics,  
University of Delhi

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Lewis Coser (1973) had predicted the obsolescence of the servant's role post-capitalism when writing in the seventies. Coser's claim on the slow obsolescence of the servant occupation does not, however, seem to fit very well when one studies the literature on paid domestic work bordering the twentieth century. With the rapid disappearance of male servants as domestic workers, the re-imagined roles of the female servant as a worker have taken on a gendered definition for the same. Globalization has been identified also as a contributor to the feminization of international migration as well as migration from rural to urban areas in search of jobs. Anthropological accounts highlight the plight of women in poor countries of the global south migrating to do 'women's work' such as care-giving, cleaning, cooking, washing and so on in the north. Barbara Ehrenreich and Arlie Hochschild (2002) have spoken of this in terms of the 'female underside' of globalisation.

Narratives and ethnographic accounts of female workers from the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and other South Asian countries immigrating into America and Europe testify to the global female migrant flows of paid domestic workers. Important transnational migratory flows of female workers include Southeast Asia to the Middle East and the West, from south to north America and from Africa to various parts of Europe. Saskia Sassen (2002) has addressed globalisation as a process which has greatly increased the demand in global cities for low-wage workers to fill jobs that offer few advancement possibilities. Sassen writes keeping the vantage point of female immigrants whom she feels are vital in building new economies. She goes on to highlight that how in these cities, the urban areas within nations, have seen an explosion of wealth and power, yet a paradox to this are the seemingly low wages and benefits female workers receive even as they cater to the high growth sectors and are high in demand.

Domestic labour is relegated to the unorganized and informal sector in almost all economies of the West largely due to the gendered nature of the female domestic worker's occupation, i.e. to work in peoples' homes as a care-giver/nanny/home-maker. Further, the fact that this labour migration pattern has



workers primarily from the underdeveloped or developing third world countries selling their cheap and menial labour into the developed, first world nations adds to the derogatory status accorded to female domestic workers. Their social status is very low and they are therefore vulnerable to exploitation. Going beyond the objective understanding of the female worker's domestic roles, my paper will dwell into a more subjective concentration on the formation of the many identities globalization has created

for the migrant female worker. Issues relating to her migration, her family left behind leading to broken families/divided homes, underpaid female labor force, non-recognition or her 'invisible' work roles, absence of laws, her exploitative work environment, her citizenship and legality/illegality status on emigration constitute a few of the many concerns which are intrinsic to the life world of the migrant domestic worker.

Key Words: Domestic Work, Globalization, Migrant Women, Unregulated Economy, Identity.





# Explaining Gender Discrimination in the Employment and Earnings of Engineering Graduates in India

**Dr. Pradeep Kumar  
Choudhury**

Assistant Professor,  
JNU, New Delhi

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In many developing countries, including India, the gender differences in employment and earnings are a common phenomenon and also seen as a serious policy issue. The employers positive discrimination towards male candidates, keeps many talented and highly qualified females out of the workforce. In India, the female labour force participation (FLFP) has remained lower than male participation and in the recent years it has fell down further. According to the International Labour Organization's (ILO's) Global Employment Trends 2013 report, India's FLFP rate fell from 37.3 per cent in 2004-05 to 29 per cent in 2009-10. Out of 131 countries, India ranks 11th from the bottom in female labour force participation. The most recent figure of World Bank shows a FLFP rate of 28.7 in India, as compared to the world average of 50.4 (World Bank Indicators for Social Development, 2012). Further, in the economics of education literature, labour market discrimination against women is one of the most cited explanations of the gender gap in education (Kingdon, 1998). Some of the potential causes of the discrimination against women in the Indian labour market lie with the established argument that employers expect, on an average, better performance from men compared to women. They might feel that male employees tend to work for longer hours, while there may be interruption of the work by women because of uneven pressure of family responsibilities. Also, it is relatively easy to transfer male employees from one establishment of the company to the other as compared to



female employees.

What are the factors that determine the gender discrimination in employment and earnings among engineering graduates? Economist Paula Stephan (1996) has observed that the extent science and engineering jobs value measurable skills and knowledge over less tangible traits such as personality or appearance (which are more important in some non-science and engineering jobs such as management, sales and service), then a small set of human capital variables might be expected to capture a large portion of the gender variation in employment opportunities and offered earnings. A similar argument is also given by Kingdon (1998) for India. However, by contrast, sociologist Laurie Morgan (1998) offers an alternative view and argues that since science and engineering jobs have been traditionally male-dominated, women find themselves at a disadvantage in terms entry, pay and promotions. This view suggests that factors other than human capital are likely to account for much of the gender variations in the employment and earnings. Combining these two alternative views, one can suggest that both human capital and socio-economic factors are likely to account for much of the gender differential in getting a job and also in earnings. Thus, in this paper both human capital and other socio-economic factors are included in the analysis to understand the

gender discrimination in employment and offered earnings of engineering graduates in India.

The issues raised in the paper are analysed using the data collected in 2009-10 through a survey among the fourth year students in Delhi who have gone through the placement exercise. The author finds, among other things, that a smaller percentage of women engineering graduates than men have got job offer and it varies widely across socio-economic settings. Also, it is found that the offered earnings of women are about 54 per cent less than that of men. The results provide strong and consistent evidence that institutional factors account for a sizable portion of the employment and earnings gap between male and female graduates, with type of institution (government/private) contributing a large part of it. There is no significant difference in the employment of students by their branch of study (traditional/IT-related) but it has a role to play in the offered earnings of the graduates. The study suggests in minimising the gender discrimination in terms of employment and earnings of engineering graduates that may increase the access of females to this discipline.

Keywords: Engineering Education; Gender Discrimination; Employment; Earnings; India



## “Groomed” Bodies at Work

**Mr. Ipsita Pradhan**

Research Scholar,  
HCU, Hyderabad

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**W**ith the development of neoliberalism, the ambit of work for a livelihood has been checkered with a plethora of new varieties of work in conjunction with the amplification of the services offered for a price. Thus the stability of the service economy in India gets ramified in the form of call centers, opening up of shopping malls and multiplexes in cities on a large scale, chains of beauty salons, gyms, slimming centers and the like. . In this paper, I attempt to explore shopping malls which have become signifiers of development, modernity and spaces of leisure, functioning as spaces of work. Focusing on the organised retail sector women employees who form a significant part of the workforce in this sector, I show how there is an attempt to use their bodies as a site for the production of a particular kind of body-image which would assimilate with the spectacle that the shopping mall, as a larger social space offers. High emphasis on self-grooming forms a critical component of the “neo-liberal subjectivities” (Gooptu, 2009) . This in effect, is believed, to be laying the path towards upward social mobility and a secured future. There is also an emphasis on emotional labour in this sector and in the Hochschildian sense (Hochschild, 1988); it involves the manufacturing of certain kinds of emotions to suit particular kind of job requirements. Be it aesthetics or emotions, the socialization of the requirements of this work, is rooted at the training level. The disciplinary mechanism also ensures that the aestheticized bodies conform to the norms of the brand that they work for. Using the Foucauldian concept of Panopticism (Foucault, 1975), it is evident that a subtle coercion exists in these new spaces of work. Linking these modern spaces of work, I also attempt to look at these women in the spaces of their personal lives and what are the negotiations that have to make to be a part of these new emerging work options and what effect does it have on their mobility. In conclusion, the paper, through preliminary research, in a shopping mall in Hyderabad, tries to see how neoliberal subjectivities also provide an opportunity to place oneself in the emerging workforce, which does not require significant technical educational qualifications yet provides a window for construction of a selfhood vis-a-vis the contemporary scenario in the nature of work, yet, significantly different from the kinds of work which were available a generation ago.



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## Recognising Unpaid Work Critical for Securing Women's Human Rights

**Mr. Anil Kumar**  
PWESCR, Dehradun

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All women work and engage in multiple economic activities significant for their family and national economy. Nevertheless, women as workers are largely invisible, unrecognised and underestimated. Globally, only 51 per cent of the female population in the age group of 15 and above is accounted as economically active. These statistics ignore the magnitude of 'unpaid work' undertaken by women right from their childhood to old age. Women play significant roles in household and agricultural sectors and are primary agents in the livelihood activities involving land, water, forest and other natural resources. They invest huge part of their time and energy for providing nutrition and food security to their families. However, these vital contributions women make in household sector, farming, animal husbandry, etc. are highly undervalued and unrecognised.

The paper emphasizes on unpaid work which comprises a spectrum of work which includes care giving to children, elderly, sick; domestic work such as cooking, cleaning, water and fuel collection; and also the subsistence work for the family farm and enterprises. The burden of this unpaid work traditionally falls on women because of the ascribed gender roles. Women's work is not considered to be the part of the market or paid exchanges of goods and services and therefore is not viewed as economically significant. Underestimation of women's work has been prevalent, namely in subsistence production, informal paid work, domestic production and related tasks and volunteer work. Domestic work and caring for people have remained invisible in the economic calculations and policies despite the fact that it contributes around 10 to over 50 per cent of GDP. The 1995 Human Development Report noted that women accounted for more than half of the total burden of work---work time spent either in market-based economic activities, in the subsistence sector, or in unpaid household or community activities---53 per-cent in developing countries and 51 per-cent in developed countries. However, women's paid market activities represented only one-third of this work compared to three-fourth of men's work. By not acknowledging unpaid work only a partial picture of the work done in the economy is presented which doesn't



recognize women's contribution in securing food security and also to the national economy.

The paper argues that women's unpaid work and its centrality to the national economy of countries need to be recognized. It recommends that the State should facilitate such policies which emphasizes on recognition, reduction and redistribution of the women's unpaid work which will allow women to fully and equally enjoy their human rights. Thus the recognition of unpaid work

requires recognizing right to livelihood of women which includes ambit of rights, i.e., right to food, natural resources and markets. Investments in infrastructure and technologies could be effective in reducing the time spent by women on unpaid work. Redistribution of the unpaid work requires such policies which supports equal distribution of the unpaid work not just within the household, but also to the state and private sector.



# Gendered Employment Dynamics in Unorganized Manufacturing in India: a Decomposition Analysis


**Jaya Jumrani and  
Pavithra S**

Scientists, Research ICAR-  
NIAP, New Delhi

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In an otherwise laudable economy of ours, informal sector accounts for a vast proportion of the poor and vulnerable working population. According to official statistics, as high as 92% of our 475 million labour markets are employed in the unorganized sector. The term 'informal sector' gained importance after the International Labour Organization (ILO) evolved the conceptual framework and guidelines for the collection of statistics on informal sector. Nevertheless, there has not been any single definition of informal/unorganized sector in India. Different criteria have been used to identify the informal sector but none of them is universally applicable under various empirical situations. In common parlance, the terms informal sector and unorganized sector are used synonymously. Though the terms are quite similar to each other, they are not strictly identical. For this paper, we have used the National Sample Survey Office's (NSSO's) framework of informal sector according to which the informal sector is conceptually a subset of the unorganized sector.

Indian manufacturing sector is a critical component of our economic base due to its contribution in terms of its income- and employment-generating potential. Similar to the nature of manufacturing sectors in other countries, our manufacturing sector also has a dualistic structure: organized and unorganized manufacturing. Despite 16 % contribution towards the gross domestic product (GDP), the manufacturing sector in India has not grown at the desired rate. An overall mismatch is observed in terms of the growth in output and growth in employment in the organized manufacturing. The unorganized manufacturing sector accounts for almost 80% of the total manufacturing employment but approximately contributes to only one-third of the output. A large number of studies have been undertaken for the Indian organized manufacturing sector while their number is limited for its unorganized counterpart. Given its significant share in total manufacturing employment and recent rising informalization of labour in organized sector, the unorganized manufacturing is expected to play the role of a shock absorber. Moreover, it provides employment to a large segment of the vulnerable population which includes female workforce or those who would have otherwise remained unemployed. It thus



becomes imperative to understand the gender dynamics in the unorganized manufacturing sector.

With this backdrop, the paper seeks to provide systematic evidence on the structural shifts in employment from a gendered perspective. Using the unit-level data from two NSS rounds (56th and 67th), we followed accounting decomposition method and analyze the changes in female shares of manufacturing employment at the sub-national level over a period of 10 years. Between 2000-01 and 2010-11, the share of female employment in total manufacturing employment increased from

34% to 37%. These patterns were predominantly driven by labour-intensive manufacturing industries. The analysis also highlights the relative importance of within-industry versus employment reallocation effects in explaining these changes. The analysis encompasses the manufacturing sector as a whole and also focuses on the three broad industry groups viz., labour-intensive, capital-intensive and intermediate manufacturing industries. A further detailed analysis is also undertaken for some key industries of particular interest.





## Constituting Gender and Work: A Case study of Theeramythri Programme for Fisherwomen in Kerala


**Ms. Aswathy P**

Research Scholar, IIT, Madras

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**D**evelopment policies and practices play a constitutive role in the production and reproduction of gender identities of women and their work. The policy focus on women's empowerment and poverty eradication through these livelihood programs is severely critiqued by scholars for its instrumental approach (Jackson 1996). The seeming success and popularity of state-promoted development policies, especially those promoting women's livelihood and income-generation activities, may not necessarily mean a change in gender practices or empowerment, but might reflect instead proximity and conformity to existing patriarchal norms and gender ideologies (Devika and Thampi 2007). Further, they may result in the feminization of responsibilities and a concomitant increase in women's workload or women's subversion of policy intentions itself (Kalpana 2011). Rather dismissing these development policies and practices as entirely exploitative, it is also important to trace the possibilities for greater autonomy, personal freedoms, increased choices and decision making, negotiations within households due to women's participation in these programs. Thus the actual impact of women's engagement in paid work calls for subjective evaluations and testimonies of the women themselves (Kabeer 2000; 2001). It is in the backdrop of these debates on gender, labour and development policies, this paper tries to explore intended and actual outcome of their engagement in a state-sponsored livelihood program namely Theeramythri for fisherwomen in Kerala. The study used empirical field data collected from Trivandrum district by employing qualitative methods of data collection such as semi structured interviews, in depth group interviews, focused group discussions (FDGs) and case studies.

Theeramythri is perhaps one of the few livelihood interventions exclusively for fisherwomen in Kerala. The program assumes significance in a context where the lives and traditional livelihoods of the artisanal fishing community are at threat due to the mechanization since late 1950s that got accentuated by the neo-liberal policy change in the past three decades. There has been a resultant pressure on women to find alternate livelihood in the context of general failure in integrating them into existing development interventions. This paper tries to argue that both



the conceptualization and the implementation of Theeramythri and fisherwomen's participation in it are influenced and mediated by the patriarchal gender ideologies and practices of the state and the community producing enabling and constraining options for different groups of women within. Women's experience of work and empowerment, perception of identity, the profitability of their initiatives and their capacity to build social networks all vary across and within the economic activity groups fostered by Theeramythri. There exists a significant mismatch between the policy intentions, expectations of the state officials and narratives of fisherwomen regarding 'women's work' under Theeramythri. This calls for a critical (gender) analysis which incorporates the micro level field realities and women's testimonies (both individual and group) along with the analysis of macro level policies to understand unanticipated outcomes of well-intended policies on women's lives in Kerala's fisheries sector.

Key words: Gender and Labour; Gender ideologies; Developmental policies; Fisherwomen; Theeramythri

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# An Investigation into the Gender Dimensions of Taxation in India

**Ms. Sunpriya  
Balachandran,**

Assistant Professor on  
Contract, All Saints' College  
Thiruvananthapuram

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**G**iven that women in our country confront a number of gender - based challenges, it is difficult to think of any domain of public policy that could be perceived as 'gender neutral'. One of the cornerstones of tax policy, and central to tax reform efforts in India, is the issue of equity, along with issues of efficiency and ease of administration. A key challenge facing developing countries is to be able to generate sufficient public resources in a way that does not place an undue burden on the poor and marginalized. Since women are particularly vulnerable to poverty, systematic and robust assessments of the manner in which developing countries are attempting to increase their revenue pool and the impact of this on poor women are urgently needed. Recent discussions on mobilizing domestic resources as part of the financing for development agenda have highlighted the fact that relatively little attention is paid to gender biases in taxation in India.

A study on the gender implications of taxation in India is both timely and important as the gender responsive budgeting in India pays attention only to the expenditure policies of the government from the perspective of gender. However, no significant effort has been made to scrutinize the gender dimensions of the revenue generation policies in India. This paper seeks to address this gap by analyzing some gender dimensions of revenue generation policies in India.

Gender implications of taxation policies are a critical concern as, in the case of India like in several other countries, there are a number of problems that mostly affect women. Unequal property ownership, disproportionate contribution in unpaid labour within the family, wage discrimination between men and women and the resulting unequal distribution of power within the household - all of these needs to be taken into account in the way taxation policies in the country are designed.

This paper primarily deals with analyzing the existing tax structure in India on the basis of the redistribution aspects of



taxation, that is, from the purview of tax justice. The focus of the paper is on the literature available on taxation in India as well as around the world on the gendered implications of taxation and points towards ways of formulating policies for a more gender - sensitive tax regime. The scope of the paper is limited since the idea of looking at a tax

regime through a gender lens is relatively new to the discourse owing to the absence of either the methodology or the disaggregated data to arrive at significant results.

The purpose, however, is to point towards lacunae in the existing tax regime and to open up avenues for further research.



## Such a Long Journey - Claiming Media as a Gendered Space

**Ms. Pamela Philipose**


Senior Fellow, ICSSR

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It can be argued that greater gender equality within the media could potentially contribute towards making society more gender equal. Yet despite women having participated in the media discourse in various ways since the 19th century as well as feminist articulation and action in more contemporary times, the media have remained a site largely controlled and dominated by men. Earlier feminist theoreticians like Thusman<sup>1</sup> wrote about the “symbolic annihilation” of women in the media, while Gallagher, in 1981, pointed out that the dominant image of a woman across the world was a “non-image”<sup>1</sup>. In India, the three decades since those observations were made have witnessed a great deal of change with the post-liberalisation burgeoning of media presence and an unprecedented expansion of new communications technology. What is striking, however, is that gender underrepresentation and stereotyping have continued to mark the media in varied and profound ways. If in the Global North the media remain largely controlled by a “white, middle- and upper-class male elite”<sup>2</sup> (Meyers), the scenario in a country like India is similar, although caste and ethnicity are also factors here.

The remarkable persistence of gender inequality in the media in India has had two direct outcomes: gendered asymmetries in the flow of information and the skewed presence of women employees within media houses.

To examine the first aspect, the paper looks at the filters that shape the information that comes into and emerges from the newsroom. They range from the larger politico-socio-economic environment within which political and corporate interests exercise their influence on the media to the manner in which copy editors perform their gatekeeping role to the newsgathering approach of the smallest cog in the news machine - the reporter. All news generation and general production routines within mainstream media houses conform to this strictly laid down vertical hierarchy which is also largely patriarchal. Given this backdrop it is easier to understand why men continue to dominate the news cycle. A 2010 survey found that 78 per cent of the people heard or read about in the news media in India were men.<sup>3</sup>



While structured hierarchies in newsgathering and processing contribute towards the generation of gender biased content, so do barriers to employment and poor working conditions which serve to push women out of the profession prematurely or limit them to its lower echelons. According to a recent study, there are four times the number of men as women in Indian journalism and although the last two decades have seen a surge of women in various media sectors, helped by the mushrooming of mass communications institutions across the country, many of them drop out or are prematurely forced out of the profession, with just a few making it to the top decision-making and managerial positions within their organizations. In 2006 a study revealed that only 17 per cent of key decision-makers in the Indian media were women although their representation was somewhat better (32 per cent) in the English language electronic media. According to the same study, women accounted for 16 per cent of top editorial posts in the English print media and 14 per cent and 11 per cent in the Hindi print media and electronic media respectively <sup>4</sup>.

At the district level the scenario is more dismal. In 2012, the Media Studies Group pieced together data obtained on 255 districts of 26 states through a series of RTI applications. It concluded that the representation of women media persons at the district level is just 2.7 per cent, with at least six states not having any women at the district level. Across India as a whole there were only 329 accredited women journalists at the district level.

Maintaining the life-work balance has been a major challenge for women journalists in India with the responsibilities that come with child birth and rearing impacting negatively on their careers, especially because many media managements are reluctant to provide paid maternity leave. According to the president of the Delhi Union of Journalists, since these managements are increasingly focused on "productivity" today, the chances of women being hired get considerably

diminished if they have childcare responsibilities <sup>5</sup>.

Another major factor that is a source of great disquiet is ubiquitous sexual harassment, both in the course of work in the field and within the workplace. With their cost cutting measures, managements have transferred the burden of ensuring the safety of their women employees on to the women themselves. Their drive to excel has resulted in many talented women paying a great personal cost. Delhi-based Saumya Vishwanathan, a television journalist, was shot dead while driving her car home from work late in the night after completing a television report on the Malegaon blasts for her channel. In the Shakti Mills Case, the Mumbai photojournalist who was subjected to gang rape while at work was on a temporary assignment.

Within organizations too the situation is far from satisfactory. Most women who face sexual harassment at the hands of their male seniors, or are at the receiving end of offensive and abusive remarks, have preferred to keep silent for fear of losing their jobs. Those who have spoken up have had to face considerable personal and professional difficulties. This culture of silence has resulted in managements remaining apathetic to the issue and has shown great tardiness in setting up redressal mechanisms mandated under the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2012. The advent of digital technology has brought in a new pattern of sexual harassment -- vicious, anonymous, real time online trolling.

What have been the responses to these structured, disabling realities? The paper looks at this aspect and considers possible strategies for making the media space more equal and empowering for those who have been silenced, marginalised or denied presence within it.

Keywords: Media, News, Women, Gender, Sexual harassment



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<sup>1</sup> Gallagher, Margaret, 1981: Unequal Opportunities, The Case of Women and the Media, UNESCO

<sup>2</sup> Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP), 2010

<sup>3</sup> 'Inside the News: Challenges and Aspirations of Women Journalists in Asia and the Pacific', 2015, UNESCO, UN Women and International Federation of Journalists (IFJ)

<sup>4</sup> CSDS survey of the social profile of 300 senior journalists in 37 Hindi and English newspapers, 2006

<sup>5</sup> Interview with Sujata Madhok, Delhi Union of Journalists



# Key Talking Points

## Sundance Institute

### Women Filmmakers Initiative

#### From Research Phase I (2013) and II (2014)

**Ms. Pat Mitchell**  
CEO, POW Strategies

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#### QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS: BASELINES

- 4.2% of directors were female across the top 100 box office films each year from 2002-2013.
- 24.3% of directors of U.S. narrative and documentary films from 2002-2013 at SFF were female
- 17.1% of directors of U.S. narrative films from 2002-2013 at SFF were female
- 35.3% of directors of U.S. documentary films from 2002-2013 at SFF were female
- 24.4% of all U.S. narrative competition directors from 2002-2013 at SFF were female
- 13.9% of all U.S. narrative non-competition directors from 2002-2013 at SFF were female
- 41.7% of all U.S. documentary competition directors from 2002-2013 at SFF were female
- 25% of all U.S. documentary non-competition directors from 2002-2013 at SFF were female
- In 2013, 50% of films in the US Narrative Competition were directed by women (8 out of 16).
- In 2014, 54% of films in NEXT were directed by women (6 out of 11).

SUBMISSIONS DATA (Note: not from USC scientific data)


In 2014, **23.4%** of all films (U.S. and International) submitted were directed by women; whereas **29%** of all films selected were directed by women (35 films out of 119 total).

PIPELINE DATA

**Sundance has been a pipeline for many female directors.**

There were only 41 unique female directors across 1,100 top grossing movies from 2002-2012. Of these, **41.5% had come**





**through Sundance Institute's Programs as content creators having screened a film at the festival, participated in Labs, and/or been award recipients.**

#### ARTISTIC SUPPORT DATA

**Female storytellers compete and flourish at Sundance Institute labs.** Of the 432 lab fellows between 2002 and 2013, a full 42.6% were female. Women comprised 39.3% of the fellows in the Feature Film Program (FFP) and 54.5% of the fellows in the Documentary Film Program (DFP).

**FFP and DFP lab projects helmed by females finish strong with artist support.** A total of 116 FFP projects were brought to the labs; 77 had male directors attached (66.4%) and 39 had at least one female director attached (33.6%). The percentage of lab projects completed did not vary by gender; roughly 41% of male-helmed and female-helmed projects were finished. Out of these completed films, 33.3% featured female directors. 81.3% of all finished films went on to play at the top 10 festivals worldwide. Again, no gender differences emerged in exhibition rate. A full third of these prestigious spots were awarded to female-helmed projects. Thus, female-directed stories consistently take up a third of the space whether in the labs, among completed projects, or at elite exhibition venues. Women are completing and exhibiting their work at just shy of their participation rates at the Labs.

#### FESTIVAL DATA

The percentages of female participation as directors and producers at SFF from 2002-2013 often fluctuate but no continuous and sustained increases or decreases occur across the 12 years. **From 2002-2013, for dramatic features, females accounted for 24.4% of all competition directors and 13.9% of all non competition directors. In documentaries from 2002-2013, females accounted for 41% of all competition directors and 25% of all non competition directors.**

Female directors of Sundance Film Festival U.S. narrative films exceed those of the top 100 box office films, and of the top-grossing films, Sundance has been a pipeline for many female directors. At the Sundance Film Festival, female directors comprised 22.2% of the narrative Competition categories and 14.5% of the Non-Competition categories (Premieres and Niche=Midnight, NEXT, New Frontier, Spotlight). As a comparison, only 4.4% of directors were female across the top 100 box office films each year from 2002 to 2012. This represents a very steep fiscal cliff for women moving from directing independent to studio films. Further, there were only 41 unique female directors across 1,100 top grossing movies. Of these, 41.5% had come through Sundance Institute's Programs as content creators having screened a film at the festival, participated in Labs, and/or been award recipients.

The last two years show a narrative bright spot with 50/50 Female Directors in the 2013 U.S. dramatic competition and **54%** (6 out of 11) female directors in the "Next" Section this year at the 2014 Sundance Film Festival. This is far ahead of the average in these categories, both at the festival and in the industry. Maybe this is a sign of good things to come!

**Female directors are important for facilitating behind-the-camera equality.** When compared to films directed by males, those directed by females feature more women content creators (writers, producers, cinematographers, editors) behind the camera. This is true in both narratives (21% increase) and documentaries (24% increase).

**Across all behind-the-camera positions, females were most likely to be producers. As the prestige of the producing post increased, the percentage of female participation decreased.** This trend was repeatedly observed in both narrative and documentary filmmaking. Less than one-third of all narrative producers, but just over 40% of associate producers were female. In documentaries, 42.5% of producers and 59.5% of associate producers were female.



## QUALITATIVE FINDINGS: BARRIERS

A sample of 51 independent filmmakers and executives/high-level talent spontaneously mentioned five major areas that hamper women directors' career development:

- Gendered Financial Barriers (43.1%)
  - (a) Independent narrative film relies on a funding structure that is primarily operated by males.
  - (b) Female-helmed projects are perceived as lacking commercial viability.
  - (c) Women are viewed as less confident when they ask for film financing.
- Male-dominated networks (39.2%)
- Stereotyping on set (15.7%)
- Work and family balance (19.6%)
- Exclusionary hiring decisions (13.7%)

### PERCEPTION

**29.4% of respondents questioned the veracity of data on the low number of women in independent film, expressed that the situation for women was improving over time, or disclosed that the state of gender equality for females in independent film was not different than other industries.** These points of resistance illustrate how industry perceptions may unknowingly perpetuate barriers for female directors and producers.

### DOCUMENTARIES A FEMALE-FRIENDLY ARENA

Documentaries represent a more female-friendly arena than narrative film. Of the individuals who mentioned a gendered financial barrier, 36.4% indicated that the documentary community has a more democratized funding structure, is led by other women, and that lower thresholds for funding present fewer hurdles to creating films. Additionally, the points of entry

and crew leadership requirements are perceived to create an environment in which women can succeed.

### OPPORTUNITIES

**Opportunities exist to improve the situation for women in independent film. Individuals mentioned three key ways to change the status quo:**

- Mentoring and encouraging women early in their careers (36.7%)
- Improving access to finance (26.5%)
- Raising awareness of the problem (20.4%)

This last strategy may be particularly salient, given that some respondents indicated a belief that gender inequality is improving over time or is not any worse than in other industries.

**When industry leaders think director, they think male.** Traits were gathered from 34 narrative and documentary decision-makers and filmmakers. We explored whether attributes of successful directors reflect stereotypical characteristics of men or women. Nearly one-third of traits (32.1%) were coded as masculine and 19.3% feminine. For documentaries, the percentage of male-linked (23.1%) and female-linked characteristics (20.5%) was nearly equal. In narratives, masculine attributes (e.g., aggressive, a general rallying troops for combat) outnumbered feminine traits (e.g., collaborative, supportive) by a factor of over 2 to 1. The disparity between documentary and narrative traits reflects the gender balance seen among documentary directors and the gender imbalance in fictional content. Moreover, the lack of fit between perceptions of women and narrative directors reflects skewed cultural norms about leadership. Conceiving of the directing role in masculine terms may limit the extent to which different women are considered for the job.



## Public Private Partnership and Shared Social Responsibilities

### **Dr. PTM Sunish**

CEO, The Gender Park

&

### **Ms Shanthi Joseph**

Director, Alterneit Lifestyles


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**T**he discourse of governance in India and the world has changed over the decades. The focus on development has gone through such rapid expansion that the State has not been able to keep up with meeting with the requirements to be able to facilitate the same. And so the welfare interests of the state found the resources and expertise of private players to bring about effective Public-Private Partnership (PPP) models. The conundrums that exist in the development paradigm is usually addressed individually by stakeholders, governments and NGOs. While the PPP model is known to work in enhancing public infrastructure, the need of the hour is to identify other methods through which this model can be best used. With the advent of the PPP there has been a mutual sharing of the ownership of the state's welfare intentions and this has given rise to a culture of collaborative plans of action to tackle developmental issues.

This paper will identify the relevance of the PPP model in social development matters such as establishing gender equality, economic sustainability etc. While the model is beneficial and profitable to public and private parties and economic model of association also derives social effects. For instance, the cause for gender equality isn't one that should be a concern for the government alone. The effort towards achieving a gender-just society can be realised when the change percolates across institutions whether public or private. The case studies of two celebrated PPP models of The Gender Park and Kerala State Women's Development Corporation will highlight the functioning of the same.

#### 1) She Taxi of The Gender Park

She Taxi is an innovative public-private partnership (PPP) that supports gender equality. Initiated by the Gender Park, Government of Kerala, it is a platform to promote a sustainable business model for the economic empowerment, safety, and security of women through promotion of entrepreneurship. While encouraging women to be a part of the transportation industry and also actively use the services available, it also



supports gender equality and transformational change by encouraging women to enter a traditionally male sector, and supports them to independently earn an income. All this is achieved with little investment from the Government, and through partnership with several private sector agencies. This unconventional PPP model, in fact, generates additional revenue for the Government.

2) Sandesh One of Kerala State Women's Development Corporation

The Sandesh One under the banner of the

Kerala State Women's Development Corporation works to identify such social needs and cater to them responsibly by identifying the right solutions and taking them to the grassroots. Solution providers play an integral role in the Sandesh One programme. People who can identify with this programme and are in agreement with its values and philosophy can become part of the Sandesh One network. Using the PPP Model Sandesh One aims to have over X entrepreneurs in Kerala in a span of X years.



## Integrating Gender and Human Rights into the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development


**Prof. Radhika  
Balakrishnan**  
Rutgers University,  
NEW Jersey, USA

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**H**uman rights represent the framework for social justice embedded in the Millennium Declaration; however in pursuing the Millennium Development Goals [MDGS], the commitment to human rights was not placed in the forefront. A renewed and vigorous commitment to human rights implies a fundamentally different post-2015 agenda from the MDGs. A post-2015 agenda cannot solely be about developing countries, as developed countries also have national and international responsibilities to respect, protect, and fulfill human rights. Moreover, with the rapid growth of many emerging economies and the crisis in countries of the Global North, the traditional distinction between developed and developing is becoming increasingly blurred. Nor can the agenda adopt a one-size-fits-all approach that fails to acknowledge the diverse constraints imposed by the structure of the international trade regime and the global financial architecture.

This new post-2015 agenda has to integrate gender at every level and do more than give lip service to gender equality. It has to engage with the multiple forms of inequality at both national and global levels to provide a meaningful framework for thinking about a political and economic agenda anchored in social justice. Concerns about employment have to go beyond the number of jobs and must include the quality of employment, the continuum of paid and unpaid work, and whether or not the right to work and the right to leisure are being realized. A balance of both national and global governance predicated on the realization of human rights is required, which both protects policy space to support development while also providing guidelines that establish an enabling environment for achieving broadly shared well-being. In order for the post-2015 agenda to be meaningful, the current structure of global economic governance has to be revisited. Increasingly, the realization of human rights and principles of gender equality require more effective global coordination across a range of policy areas, from macroeconomic management to addressing climate change.

The global financial crisis, whose true extent became apparent in 2008, demonstrated that the state of the macro economy can have a direct and immediate impact on the realization of social



and economic rights and advancements towards achieving substantive development outcomes. However, the MDGs make no

reference to macroeconomic policies. Macroeconomic policies are treated as backstage interventions, setting the stage for achieving the development goals, but the MDGS offered little concrete policy guidance. Yet the standard approaches to macroeconomic policies over the past three decades have often undermined, rather than supported, the realization of rights and desired development outcomes.

The period since the global financial crisis has been marked by retrogression in the realization of social and economic rights for many people in many countries. The failure of key governments to implement adequate regulation of financial markets and institutions during the three decades leading up to the crisis is a failure to meet the human rights obligation of the state to protect rights from the actions of third parties that might threaten those rights. The policies of fiscal austerity that have been implemented in some countries in the wake of the crisis are further compounding the adverse impact of the financial crisis on enjoyment of economic and social rights. The crisis demonstrates that the action or lack of action, by one country can dramatically affect the realization of rights elsewhere.

More broadly, whether monetary, fiscal, and exchange rate policies are aligned with the most pressing concerns of social justice, human rights and development remains a critical issue.


A new understanding of development needs

to be framed in terms of the achievement of social justice, and development partnerships as the cooperation of governments, international agencies, businesses, and civil society organizations to achieve social justice.

Social justice can be articulated in terms of human rights norms. Human rights are not rights of individuals considered in isolation from other human beings.

Realizing women's rights necessitates going beyond the promotion of women's empowerment in the labor market. The question of the enforcement of labor rights, the quality of employment, and volatility of earnings must also be considered. One reason women face different economic circumstances to men is because of their responsibility for unpaid labor. Work must be viewed as a continuum that encompasses both paid and unpaid labor in order to understand the constraints women face in realizing both their rights to decent work and rest and leisure. Unpaid work needs to be brought to the forefront of an agenda that promotes the realization of women's rights: it must be recognized in statistics and policy, reduced by public investment, and redistributed so that unpaid work is shared equally between men and women.

A new understanding of development needs to be framed in terms of the achievement of social justice, and development partnerships as the cooperation of governments, international agencies, businesses, and civil society organizations to achieve social justice.



## **Feminist Reflections on Power, Politics and Policy Transformation: a Case Study on Engendering Governance through Supporting Organising and Building Institutions of the Poor Under the National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM)”**

**Sejal Dand,**  
**Sita Mamidipudi**  
(ANANDI)  
**Subhalakshmi Nandi,**  
**AjitaVidyarthi**  
(UN Women)


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**A** major project of the women’s movement over the past two decades has been to mainstream gender in public policy, and getting the state to acknowledge, worldwide, that women’s empowerment is key to achieving any transformation: whether economic, social or political. Globally, poor, marginalized and socially excluded groups have leveraged the language of human rights to demand their rights to public resources, goods and services as well as social recognition. At a time when the terms ‘rights’, ‘justice’ and ‘equality’ are regaining a political character, feminism represents an ideology that seeks to transform social relations of power that oppress or marginalize a set of people, whether by gender, caste, class, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, nationality, race or religion. It stands for a “new social order, one in which both men and women can individually and collectively live as human beings in society... (it) stands for economic policies based upon food security, clean renewable energy and ecological soundness, ... for economic transformation that creates greater social equity and human development. ” <sup>1</sup>

The earliest feminist conceptualizations of empowerment <sup>2</sup> noted the transformative potential of ‘political mobilization, legal changes, consciousness raising and popular education,’ and the intertwined nature of the economic, political and social facets of women’s lives. The gender equality perspective of empowerment envisions it not only as challenging patriarchy, but also structures of class, caste, ethnicity, race and religion which are entrenched in social relations of power <sup>3</sup> . For feminists, this process of empowerment can only come about via organizing: building women’s collectives, feminist leadership and movements in the context of rights and empowerment.

There are two ways of understanding public policy engagement with women’s collectives: On the one hand, as social movements





demand the accountability of the state to the realisation of women's human rights, solidarity-based collectives (particularly those from the most vulnerable communities) have been organizing at the local, national and global levels. In India, large-scale movements have engaged with the executive to critique and lobby for just public policy outcomes; and with the political body to demand rights to social protection, food and health driven by local collectives of women and men and their federations at the village, district, state and national levels.

On the other, collectivization is being used as a strategy within public policy by both state and non-state organizations. Through national schemes such as the National Rural Livelihoods Mission<sup>4</sup> or the older Swarnajayanto Gram Swarozgar Yojana, or state-wise schemes such as Indira Kranti Patham, Kudumbashree or Tejaswini, the government has routed interventions to eradicate household-level poverty by creating women's Self Help Groups as microfinance institutions.

Such programmes tend to see women in an unproblematized manner as members of the household, instrumentalizing their role as the most effective anti-poverty agents. Self-Help Groups promoted through such programmes focus on savings and credit, skill-building and productive activities sans building women's voice and agency, or challenging relations of power.

Such strategies evolve from the 'gender myth' that giving poor women access to economic resources such as credit leads to their overall empowerment. Women are assumed to be easy to mobilize and better credit risks. They are seen as the last line of the delivery mechanism for most state programmes at the household level. These groups, when promoted by the state, also create a paradox: Unless the role of the state programme changes to that of enablers or facilitators, the scope of their collective action is depoliticized, and their potential to challenge and change existing unequal social relations or demand their rights from the state gets dimmed.

This paper reflects upon the experience of ANANDI<sup>5</sup> (a feminist collective based in Gujarat, India) and UN Women (the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women) of engaging with the National Rural Livelihoods Mission in Bihar and Madhya Pradesh. UN Women and ANANDI entered into a partnership with the Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD), Government of India (GoI) to support the gender-responsive implementation of the National Rural Livelihoods Mission from April, 2014. The pilot was implemented in the Madhya Pradesh State Rural Livelihood Missions (MPSRLM) and in the Bihar Rural Livelihoods Promotion Society (JEEViKA BRLPS).

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<sup>1</sup> Batliwala, Srilata (2013). *Engaging with Empowerment: An Intellectual and Experiential Journey*. Women Unlimited, New Delhi.

<sup>2</sup> Sen, G., & Grown, C. (1988). *Development, Crisis and Alternative Visions: Third World Women's Perspectives*. New York: Development Alternatives with Women in a New Era (DAWN).

<sup>3</sup> Batliwala, S. (1993). *Women's Empowerment in South Asia: Concepts and Practices*. New Delhi: Asian South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education and FAO.; Kabear, N. (1994). *Reversed Realities: Gender Hierarchies in Development Thought*. New York: Verso.

<sup>4</sup> NRLM has an outreach of 197 lakh households across the country and is currently the single largest programme to collectivize rural women in India. It is mandated to create strong and dynamic institutions of the poor, through which it builds social capital and collective bargaining power. It works through a three-tier structure of women's groups - SHGs at the neighbourhood level, and their federations at the village and cluster levels form the building blocks of the programme.

<sup>5</sup> Area Networking and Development Initiatives (ANANDI) is an NGO based in Gujarat, India. It has been working with over 10000 rural poor women in five districts of the state since 1995.





## Dismantling Heteronormativity: An agenda for Gender Equality in Media


### **Dr. Pranta Pratik Patnaik**

Assistant Professor, School  
of Social Sciences, Central  
University of Rajasthan

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**T**he politics of media representation of women has primarily revolved around body images and stereotypical roles within a heterosexual matrix. There has been not only the mere counting of her appearances on the screen but also her visual appeal. This has resulted not only in strengthening and legitimizing heteronormativity but also leaving out other points of intersections like caste and class unquestioned. The paper is an attempt to put forth these dimensions by examining the representation of same-sex love in Hindi cinema. Same-sex love in Hindi cinema is portrayed as a dangerous breach of nature and tradition that must ultimately be eradicated. The overarching theme of being threatened, disowned and shunned by family is universal and sadly, very relevant. The paper takes into consideration two Hindi films on lesbianism – ‘Fire’ and ‘Girlfriend’. These films can be simultaneously read as a liberatory narrative that celebrates the differences from heterosexual norms as well as provides a platform for gender fluidity. One of the main purposes of analysing these films is to show how not only family but class, religion and nation intersect with sexuality. Through a critical analysis of such films, the paper exposes the inherent sexual bigotry of “hetero-ideology” (Roof, 1996) and the failure of the society to eradicate such prejudices.

The paper also takes into consideration the media coverage, local protests and contestations on this issue by political parties and women’s organisations, of what constitutes as ‘Indian’ when the entire nation seemed to have carried the cultural baggage of



what is descent and the ethics of censorship. This would unravel the entire closet of power structure that controls and regulates the representation of women in media. It is no longer a question of who handles the camera or who the director is but a question of globalization of sexual culture, which is seen to be a threat. The paper also locates the background of the director as well for it has an important bearing in relation to what is being produced and how the issue is being handled in cinema.

The purpose is to critique how the stereotype of alternative sexuality tends to neglect the everyday life and reality of lesbians in the society.

Apart from that, it tries to ask a very pertinent question towards the notion of gender equality - Are lesbians outside the entire discourse of gender equality? Are we trying to resolve the puzzle of gender equality by leaving out an entire maze of sexuality?

Moreover, can we really perceive gender per se or should we critically analyse the role of caste and religion in enforcing such heteronormative discourses of gender equality? From the standpoint of intersections of gender, the paper takes a critical view on the discourse of gender equality and tries to assimilate a new dimension for a better understanding.



## Love, Sex and Relationship as Consumerism: An inquiry into Contemporary Bazaar of Films


**Mr. Aamir Qayoom Wani**  
Gender and Women studies  
programme in (WSDC)  
Delhi University

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**T**he present day life is witness to the intellectual seduction of technology. In an age of Google existence; ideas of love, sex and relationship have undergone a radical shift. It's a common nowadays to find the young population watching porn, dating online, chatting on omegle, changing partners frequently, due to avenues of easy accessibility. Life style of live-in relationship, friends with benefits has come to occupy the mental geographies of contemporary populace.

My paper would study how recent Bollywood films that deal with the changing mores of love; relationship and sexuality have concomitantly affected each other. What nurtures such ideas is a wave of feminisation of Bollywood movies; that have radically tried to engage with deconstruction and reconstruction of the notions related with sex, sexuality and relationship in present society. My paper would also study social media as an important phenomenon where whole discourse related to sex and relationship has changed.

My paper would further inquire into questions of how the technology has manipulated the ideas related to sex, love and relationship. How bodies melt in the touch phone culture, where sex with Robots is also entertained? How has the boom of technology and social media given space to gay and lesbian networking? My paper will further engage in the de-mythification project carried by such movies and social media. This paper will also be an enquiry into questions of how these movies become the site for the derivative discourses to impregnate the public imagination. It critically reflects upon the way intimate



relationships have undergone a remarkable change in the age of Maggie intellectualism. It also tries to offer the critique of electronically mediated communication where bodies have become malleable and subject to the alteration, where real 'me' is taken out and replaced by the technologically modified 'me' through interaction with the changing notions of love and sexuality through interaction with the Google existence.

Globalisation beyond modernity represents a phase where ideas related to love, sex and relationship are in constant flux. Hence my paper tries to give space to the kinky ideas in aim to discuss the questions. Is there any space for the 'true love' unmediated by the technological

overreach? With the social media rewriting and reshaping memories, bringing clashes in real identity with the cyber identity how does one hold to the constant notion of love, sex, and relationship given the fact that identities tend to be fractured and constructed in cyber space that renders questionable any simple comparison between online and off line sociality? This paper will also look into the how profiling of self-constructed image happens? Overall through my paper I wish to show how protagonist "hero" gets replaced by "Shero" and their articulations and representation related to love, sex and relationship in present society? How these movies are influencing the discourse around 'sexpectations'?



## “Examining The ‘Intersectionality’ In Feminist’s politics of India: Reading Through Subaltern Women”


**Mr. Jadhav Prathap  
Singh Tania, Mr. Anupam  
Patel and Mr. Latha K.V**

Research Scholars at  
Department of Political  
Science, Central University of  
Hyderabad

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**W**omen’s freedom from exploitation and dominance, in any sense is central to moral political ideas with regard to the women question. But, the process of marching towards the women’s liberation generated disputed ground among the Indian feminist scholars and activists. The binary produced among the feminist scholars is due to socially constructed identities like class, caste, tribe and religion. Thus, in the diverse society, how do we understand the women question and how the moral question addresses the lower strata women question? In this context, there has been debate on the concept of ‘intersectionality’ within the feminist politics in India. Hence, this study tries to focus on the debate on intersectionality between the subaltern scholars and activists and other scholars like Menon and Mary John.

As in the social entity the higher strata exercise their power over the lower strata individuals irrespective of their sex. Thus, the women of the lower strata bear more burden than the higher strata. But, the question raised on this burden theory by feminist scholars. This has become a strike point to argue for feminist scholars: the subaltern strata feminist views that justice has to be carried in layered process and other scholars argued that identity entities became a hindrance to feminist politics and women as a whole entity and the only counter



force is patriarchy. This views of binary feminist could be witnessed on the debate of the women reservation bill, women's rights at work places and also at social and political spaces. Therefore, the study focus on the women politics in Indian political process and examines the policies of women concern. The paper argues that even within the feminist movement and politics, women of the subaltern or lower strata remain the subaltern. The intricacies involved in the approach of non-subalter feminist scholars, because the approach witness of rigid theorization of women as sole entity and fails to understand and do not

offer further moral issues of intersectionality with the spatial and cultural boundaries. Whereas the Subalter scholars bring their lively experiences and uses the intersectionality as core in their feminist politics.

Methodologically the women question would be understood by both placing the theoretical construction of the women problems and women politics in India. These aspects could be traced by studying the writing of mainstream feminist scholars and subaltern scholars and also takes the views of some of the feminists from subaltern group.



## Lost Dreams of Kashmiri Pandit Women

**Dr.Jiji Paul.S**

Asistant Professor, Mar  
Dionysious College, Pazhanji

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**K**ashmiri Pandits are the original inhabitants of the Kashmir valley. The beginning of the 14th century and the period that followed witnessed so many incidents in the life of the Pandits. Origin of Kashmiri Pandit community covers more than a period of five thousand years. Kashmiri Pandits are Saraswat Brahmins. According to Kalahana, his Rajatarangini explained the origin of the community their beliefs, customs, traditions, socio-economic situations along with certain festivals of Pandits. Before Independence, Kashmiri Pandits lived a peaceful life in the valley and enjoyed all rights available to the citizens. During the communal flare-ups of the partition, their land lordship over agricultural land got eschewed under the tenancy and land reforms initiated by the people's government in 1952 affected a large number of Pandit families. During the year that followed Pakistan sent guerillas to Kashmir in 1965 under "operation Gibraltar" which lead to a full-scale war. Six years later another war between India and Pakistan resulted in the bifurcation of Pakistan and formation of Bangladesh and subsequent signing of Shimla Agreement under which both countries were to resolve the issue bilaterally. The minority Pandits of the valley became the victims of this operation and they were gunned down indiscriminately, hanged or murdered by other brutal means. Torture, molestation and rape, threatening letters and telephone calls, posters and bit notices pasted on doors and warnings through newspapers for the whole community to leave the valley within short and specified time. Pakistans sponsored militancy badly affected Kashmiri Pandit woman life. Family relations broken, Divorce rates are increased,mentally and physically they becomes week, Important thing is morethan 60% woman had lost their peace. They becomes the victims of stress and manifestation of diseases. Nearly Thousand female members of this community have been done to death, and nearly three hundred thousand forced into exile. Militancy had taken more than 500000 innocent woman, men and children lives. Every year Central & State Governments spending cores for creating everlasting peace in Jammu & Kashmir. Authorities must implement urgent steps for solve their Mental and physical problems; otherwise in future this may create another challenge against our glorious democracy.



## The Political Economy of Violence: Women and Livelihoods in Post-War Sri Lanka

**Ms. Mira Philips,  
Ms. Nadhiya Najab,  
Ms. Yajna Sanguhan  
and Ms. Prashanthi  
Jayasekara**

Colombo's Centre for  
Poverty Analysis (CEPA)

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In Sri Lanka, violence, including mass death, displacement, abduction and sexual violence was pervasive throughout the 30-year conflict and its ramifications are still felt by the communities in the conflict-affected areas <sup>1,2</sup>. Human exposure to violence is an indication of the absence of security and protection. However, this study moves away from a linear approach to violence as a compromise of physical safety. Instead, it uses the theory of structural violence to illuminate the complex ways in which violence is constituted and perpetuated and to highlight that it cannot be understood in isolation from political and economic processes. Additionally, this study looks beyond the idea that structural violence is simply a denial of basic human needs or rights; but the ways in which violence is reproduced by political economic relations that are unique to post-war settings, and also how violence occurs regardless of the existence of war <sup>3</sup>.

While there are many ways of exploring how violence is reproduced by political and economic conditions in post-war settings, this study has chosen to explore how these conditions play out specifically within livelihoods. It will focus on women and women-headed households, as their position is made precarious not only due to their unique physical insecurity, but also their economic insecurity, which is conditioned by patriarchal and cultural norms that complicate their entrance into the public sphere <sup>4</sup>. Additionally, their insecurity stems from the double burden they carry in participating in income-generating activities while serving as caregivers, and the male-centric notions of the 'head-of-the-household,' which undermines their rights to such things as ownership of land - a necessary asset for livelihoods and often for access to loans.

Thus, this study seeks to examine the gendered and violent implications of the patterns of employment and livelihoods that have emerged in the post-war political economic context of Northern Sri Lanka. It will examine the continuities and changes in post-war political economic relations that have shaped the intersectionality of gender relations, and how these in turn create and reproduce women's vulnerability to violence. It will also examine the role of the state especially in relation to the provision of basic entitlements and social protection, and the





state's constitution of the idea of 'the woman'.

This study is still on-going. The methodology adopted is a case study approach, based on in-depth interviews and life histories of women living in the Jaffna District of Northern Province, Sri Lanka. When selecting case studies we especially focus on women who are engaged in different livelihoods and experience various forms of violent and precarious conditions. We also pay a special emphasis on women's different experiences with the war, and as a result who are widowed, displaced, have lost family members and therefore are sole-breadwinners of their families.

In addition, women's economic insecurities such as experiences of indebtedness and deprivation, loss of right to land, and experiences of physical insecurities and violence is taken into consideration. The case studies are being carried out in Kayts, Pallay, Jaffna Town, and Sarvakattu within the Jaffna District due to the various geo-political, economic and social characteristics and vulnerabilities that are inherent to these different locations. The research presented will be part of a first cut of data analysis, gathered from an initial round of case studies, interviews with key persons, and a comprehensive literature analysis.

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<sup>1</sup> Hyndman, J. and De Alwis, M. (2004). "Bodies, Shrines and Roads: violence, (im)mobility and displacement in Sri Lanka." *Gender, Place & Culture: A Journal of Feminist Geography* 11 (4): 535-557.

<sup>2</sup> Women and Media Collective (2014). "Women Claiming Rights: Using Normative Frameworks of UNSCR 1325 and CEDAW Study on Women Affected by Conflict in Post War Sri Lanka: Selected Cases of Marginalisation and Poverty; Female Headed Households; Female Ex-Combatants; Land Rights and Domestic Violence." [https://www.scribd.com/fullscreen/212202777?access\\_key=key-1jz6uliwpddvkwqax&allow\\_share=true&escape=false&view\\_mode=scroll](https://www.scribd.com/fullscreen/212202777?access_key=key-1jz6uliwpddvkwqax&allow_share=true&escape=false&view_mode=scroll)

<sup>3</sup> Taghdisi Rad, S. (forthcoming). "Political Economy of Aid in Palestine: From Development Delayed to Faded Nationhood." *Stability: International Journal of Security and Development* (special issue of papers from CEPA-SLRC Symposium on the challenges of post-war development in Asia and Africa). Referenced in Nagaraj, V.K. (2015). "War, Conflict and Development: Towards Reimagining Dominant Approaches." *Economic and Political Weekly* 1 (9): 44-48.

<sup>4</sup> Wanasundera, L. (2006). "Rural Women in Sri Lanka's Post-Conflict Economy." *FAO Regional Office of Asia and the Pacific Publication* (13): 1-44. <ftp.fao.org/docrep/fao/009/ag114e/ag114e00.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> Centre on Housing Rights & Evictions (COHRE) (2011). "Shadow Report to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of the Discrimination of Women." [http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cedaw/docs/ngos/COHRE\\_CEDAW\\_48th.pdf](http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cedaw/docs/ngos/COHRE_CEDAW_48th.pdf)



## Third Gender and the exercise of Citizenship; Experiences of Transgender migration from Kerala to Tamil Nadu

### **Anzu Augustine**

Thematic Anchor (Social Development)  
Kudumbashree, National Resource Organization.

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**T**he belongingness towards a nation is reaffirmed through its citizenship. Citizenship is evolved considering different aspect that influences an individual. Hence it is always associated with diverse rights of an individual, community and society. The paper attempts to have a panoramic view of citizenship through gender lines especially in the context of transgender. The citizenship of transgender is analyzed through the experiences of them as an individual, community and being part of society. It points out the relevance of the positive/negative effects of performativity (Judith Butler) of gender in practicing the idea of citizenship. Sexual citizenship is a postmodern term that was coined by the occident to understand the rights through a gender perspective. It has the implications of various rights including civil, social and political from a gender perspective. To comprehend the mainstreaming of transgender in the context of two different states in India, a qualitative study was performed on the culture and behavior of individuals and their groups through their experiences.

The paper analyzes the idea of sexual citizenship in the context of Kerala and Tamil Nadu. Though the nation has always envisaged the collective advocacy of Trans gender from different states for their rights, Kerala has always stood apart due to its own regressive reasons. Despite the high literacy rates and good achievements in social indicators, recognition for transgenders took different trajectories in both the states(Kerala and Tamil Nadu), unlike the various caste and gender movements where they had similar experiences to share to rest of the country. It is precise that Tamil



Nadu has reached far ahead in establishing and understanding the third gender. Nevertheless in the last five years Kerala has indeed achieved a gradual progress in the visibility of transgender within the state. The states separate policies for transgender and recent discussion in the legislative assembly for the welfare of transgender depicts the evolving change. The study was conducted based on the lived experiences of people who have forcefully migrated to Tamil Nadu from Kerala. The conclusions are derived by mapping the reasons for their migration, the role of space and social

institutions, and the factors that influenced their lives directly or indirectly. Indeed the difference between the two states in terms of evolving the idea of sexual citizenship and the influence of the history, culture, literature and religion is also discussed. A detailed analysis through the context of Tamil Nadu is manifested through the study. It opens the doors to think on the context of Kerala which could have been similar and in a better pace to ensure the rights of transgender. To project the exercise of citizenship in the two states of the same nation with similar background is the objective of the study.



## Contested Body and Desire: Lived Experiences of Lesbians in Kerala


### **Agaja P**

Research Scholar,  
Hyderabad Central University,  
Hyderabad

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**T**his paper tries to locate the lived experiences of Lesbian women in Kerala. Since lesbian desire is a challenge to monogamous ideal family set up their boy and sexuality is always under the constant surveillance of mainstream society. As Erving Goffman (1963) puts it “Social deviants including homosexuals are the folk who are considered to be engaged in some kind of collective denial of Social order. They are perceived as failing to use available opportunity for advancement in the various runways of society; they show open disrespect for their betters; they lack piety; they represent failures in the motivational schemes of society”.

The State of Kerala has achieved a developed status due to improvement in socio-economic factors and Kerala is far more advanced than other Indian states in terms of developmental indicators. But this development was brought in to Kerala society by strictly ensuring the public -private dichotomy and hence placing women exclusively in the domestic domain by naturalising heterosexual desire. As J.Devika (2013) vehemently argues “The developmental discourses of Kerala which shaped Kerala modernity also in a way re-in forced hetero sexual monogamous, nuclear family structure”. Thus with Kerala modernity sexual morality has also become part of Malayalee public. Lesbians in Kerala are the victims of sexual morality. They are forced to give up their identity and desire to protect the honour of the family. “The question of gender-appropriate behaviour is linked to legitimate procreative sexuality” says Nivedita Menon (2010). Even though



as Tharayil (2014) mentions “Sexuality becomes a convergent belt on which all kinds of social anxieties are shifted, especially when there is major economic as well as social re-structuring in society. Insecurities about impending collapse of prevailing family structure and gender relationships could be among the complex psycho sexual instruments that motivate such outcomes.” Thus Kerala Model of development seems to be a failure in ensuring gender equality or development in Kerala never tried to address gendered dimensions of inequalities. Also Kerala model of development was implemented without disturbing middle class morality.

Feminist engagements in Kerala have tried to address the gender inequalities in Kerala society but at the same time earlier Feminist movements ended up reproducing gendered

binaries. Feminists in Kerala have failed to address the Lesbian identity crises. “ A great deal of Feminist debates in 1970s onwards focussed on Sexual violence, and seldom engaged with the structure of sensual pleasures in any analytical way. Moreover they were also reluctant to engage with same sex love. (Tharayil, 2014).

Hence this paper is an attempt to examine the varied dimensions of lived experiences of lesbian women in Kerala. This issue has been located by criticising Kerala model of development and main stream feminist engagements. Since Lesbians very hardly come out and articulate their identity it is been difficult to locate the issue. Hence the major focus of the paper would be to historically locate the various trajectories which naturalised patriarchal heterosexual family set up to be the ideal norm.



## Inclusion of Women with Disabilities; Need of Gender Framework

### **Dr. Jayaraj M.K**

Director, State Institute for  
the-Mentally Challenged  
Thiruvananthapuram,

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It is quite widely accepted fact is that women with disabilities being absent from national democratic structures, within the international system, there is an invisibility of their rights, even though the non-discrimination is a fundamental principle of all human rights laws available.

In Kerala where the existing status of women is predominantly backward while comparing their gender counterpart. In the state of Kerala where the quality of life of the disabled groups like persons with locomotor disabled, Hearing Impaired and Visually Impaired are far better than any other state of country. Government provides some opportunities for education and employment but in the case of the disabled group who are suffering disability stemmed out of the disorder or damage of neurons are not getting much attention and social visibility here.


It is precisely observable that in the case of women with disability though they are physically disabled or intellectually disabled, the deserving considerations are not getting.

One of the studies conducted by National Federation of the Blind in South Asian Countries emphasises that, women with visual impairment are not getting representations even in their organisations where are supposed to fight for preserving the rights and opportunities of visually impaired. The same scenario is existing in the case of the people with physically handicapped and hearing impaired.

The issue of intellectually Challenged should address separately in this regard, because the insensitivity of society towards this particular group is more discriminatory than any other sect. When I happened to get an opportunity while Government of Kerala deputed me as one-man commission to study the issues pertaining to people with intellectually challenged in Kerala, I could assess the alarming situation faced by the women or girl with intellectually challenged in general and the mother's of children who are shouldering all the burden of the problem.

The fundamental inequalities inherent in the multiple contemporary forms like the state economy and the social relations pose obstacles to the realization of equality and justice of vast number of women with disabilities.

Present highly discriminatory system is not only incompatible



to the protection and needs of women with disabilities, but also represents the foremost threat to their achievement of universal equal rights.

Gender inequality and injustice may become discrimination, which infiltrate in to all stages of women's life and in many ways makes women invisible within the system.

Exclusion of women with disabilities from structures and programmes, creating an undemocratic system that keeps women on the margin. In the environment of greed and disparity between the rich and poor, women with disabilities find themselves limited to corner politics. In these spaces they confronted by insecurity in many forms including insecurity related to food, livelihood, housing, increasing violence etc. As victims of a hegemonic system that sets its own unconstitutional rules of governing its policy, women are marginalized and women with disabilities are at the extreme periphery.

Differential treatment of women with disabilities continued to exist despite the standard-setting documents of the Human Rights declaration, which currently remains at the core of the global human rights region.

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), and Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination are note worth to mention here.

Women are in general a disadvantaged sect in the patriarchal society which is not relieved from the hangover of feudalist pattern of thinking and practice and where women with disabled are more discriminated from all the social discourses. Women with disability are subjected to multi-faceted discrimination and exploitation, so that to ensure equal opportunity protection of rights and the participation of women with disabled required escalating appropriate political and practical modus operandi.

Also we have to question the inability of system to remove many of the barriers created by the state, society, and family. The deconstruction of existing gendered framework required for ensuring equal opportunity, justice and rights of women with disabilities in our society. In other sense, for achieving this objective it is required to create an atmosphere to help for the change of present power equation in this regard.



## Gender and Disability: An Inter-sectional Approach

### **Ms. Mercy Kappen**

Director of Visthar Academy  
of Justice and Peace  
Bangalore

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**P**ersons with Disabilities face exclusion, discrimination and denial of their rights and dignity at different institutional levels; household, community, market and the state. Girls and women with disabilities are often at greater risk, both within and outside home. Disability and gender intersect with identities of caste, class and sexuality. Neither the women's movement nor the disability rights movement have given sufficient attention to the concerns and struggles of women with disability.

The paper will present two case studies from Karnataka - one of a Devadasi woman with disability and the other of a female to male transgender. Drawing on their lived experiences, the paper establishes the need for an intersectional analysis and alliance building taking into account multiple identities and diverse disabilities, especially of girls and women with disability.

## The Advantage of being Disabled'

### **Ms. Sabriye Tenberken**

Founder, Kanthari International

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**1**. What is disability? - Transformation of disability to possibility, from blind = useless / objects of charity, to blind = focus, imagination, power of communication, problem solving.

2. Disability as a new way forward -The environment and the circumstances determine whether a disability becomes an advantage. If we create the right environments to integrate people with disabilities, there is a win for everyone.

3 What does integration mean? - Why has the term 'integration' has been replaced by the term Inclusion'? - When the original meaning of Inclusion is to close in or lock in Coming from the margins of society,





## “Making space for women in urban governance? Leadership and claims-making in a Kerala slum”

**Glyn Williams**

University of Sheffield, UK

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This paper looks at the role of gender in the shaping and exercise of political authority. Its empirical focus is a slum in central Trivandrum, Kerala’s capital city, which is undergoing a phased process of formalisation and rebuilding funded through a flagship Indian national programme, the JNNURM. The upgrade project should offer a dense network of ‘invited’ spaces for female participation within urban governance, both through women’s presence within democratically elected municipal councils, and the deliberate linking of its implementation to Kudumbashree, Kerala’s network of women only neighbourhood groups that are responsible for implementing various antipoverty interventions throughout the state. Drawing on oral histories of the slum’s evolution, interviews with project participants, and detailed ethnographic observation, we highlight the contests over identifying the list of JNNURM beneficiaries who would ultimately be granted a government-built flat at the project’s completion. This key task in the project’s implementation has been devolved to the local level, and therefore offers important insights into the practical efficacy of these invited spaces. The contests over this list show how ‘actually existing’ urban governance unfolds, and in particular highlight the interplay of formal and informal practices at work in ‘fixing’ a list that had local legitimacy. They also illustrate the ways in which power and authority are contested, and the role gender plays within performances of leadership. Women’s political agency and efficacy are hampered both by Kerala’s restrictive gender norms and by the high stakes and highly masculinist struggles present within its urban politics. The paper’s theoretical contribution is to broaden our conceptualisation of leadership and claims making in the Global South, and within this to pay proper attention to the gendered nature of political space.




## Women's Livelihood and Negotiation of Public Space A Comparison of two sites

**Vinoj Abraham & Devika J**  
Centre for Development  
Studies

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**A**bstract: Kerala, acclaimed as a model developmental state, had been largely successful in reducing poverty through state interventions of land redistribution, welfare distribution and investment in human development since the mid-1960s. Yet it is increasingly being recognized that with the rising tide of development in Kerala there exists islands of poverty, entrenched within intersections of multiple vulnerabilities. These multiple vulnerabilities have been conditioned and structured by the historical, social and geographic space that sections of the Kerala population occupy within the society. Poor households characterized by such vulnerabilities try to diversify their livelihood options towards mitigation of poverty related risks. But the options available to these households are again set within the traditional economic contours of these sections of the society and their relations of exchange with the rest of the society. Women in these islands of poverty occupy a singular place. Among the different layers of vulnerabilities that characterize poverty they are perhaps the most affected, as they face the added dimension of gender norms. Poor women are active participants in the labour market, seeking to enhance their earnings through various livelihood options. However, the specific historical and social contexts by and large shape the livelihood choices made available to them. Within this limiting arena of gendered spaces, yet, women seek to enhance their livelihood options by positioning themselves in public spaces. Public spaces provide them with greater autonomy, new social networks and alternate sources of credit, all of which may be instrumental in expanding their horizons of employment opportunities, even under conditions of poverty and lack of skills.

In this paper we try to understand how poor women negotiate their contextual spaces to enhance their livelihood options. This study is based on a primary survey collected from women in two such spaces of poverty one an urban slum-Kulamnagar, and another, a rural fisher village, Adimalathura, in Trivandrum District. Firstly, we intend to expose and contextualize the multiple dimensions of vulnerabilities in these two locations in an effort to draw the commonalities in these two sites. Both locations were spatially segregated from 'upper caste' and other religious groups and were marked by the abjectness of these spaces. Further, the overwhelming presence of children and young people in



the population, wherein the larger demographic character is that of a more aged population, is probably indicative of the low life expectancy in the regions and outmigration of older men. In terms of educational attainment both the locations present a picture of comparable educational deprivation in relation to the state average.

Secondly, we try to locate the added dimensions of vulnerability that women face in these sites, and delineate the divergent paths that these two locations have in terms of gender dimensions. The urban location, Kulamnagar was stigmatized not only in terms of the poor living and physical conditions of the colony, but also in terms of the occupations that they engaged in. Kulamnagar as a producer of stigmatized services to the society earned stigma to the members of the community as well. In Adimalathura, while the stigma associated with caste, religion and the location was persistent as in Kulamnagar, the stigma associated with their occupation was limited. Though fishing and fish vending was considered backward, their social usefulness was recognized and accepted. The stigma attached to both economic and social spheres of life in Kulamnagar extended to marriage relations as well, and which were largely fragile. In Adimalathura too marital relations from outside the site was not very common, but interviewees recollect that this was mostly due to poor income levels of fisher community here and not related to stigma and marital relations were stable compared to Kulamnagar.

Thirdly, we analyse how these above contexts shape the choices that are offered for women in these different labour markets and how do they engage with these labour markets in their efforts to enhance earnings. It is perplexing that despite the extremely vulnerable conditions under which households survive, in Kulamnagar nearly 50 per cent of the working age women had receded to domesticity while in Adimalathura this share was only 29 per cent, probably that the specific contours of stigma, operating through caste,

religion and especially gender reducing their life chances in Kulamnagar. That the majority of occupations in these sites are still largely guided by the geographical locations and historical space they occupy points to the general absence of capabilities that encourage economic mobility. Whether it is Kulamnagar or Adimalathura, rural or urban, majority of women make their home as their work place for their principal occupation. But for the women of Kulamnagar their workplace either had to be within their homes or outside the Kulamnagar colony, implying that the colony itself was not a place of engagement. For the women of Adimalathura, while, home, community and the outside world seem to be a continuum of workspace. This distinction between the two sites is probably a reflection of the availability of physical space required to engage in livelihood activities. The urban site, constrained by physical space limit the possibility of self-employment for women, while the commons available for rural areas enhances the possibilities of self-employed activities for women. In both the regions a majority of women were involved in livelihood activities generating income on their own through sale and service of local goods and services. In terms of livelihood options women in Adimalathura had much larger set of livelihood options compared to women in Kulamnagar. Fourthly an analysis of their engagement in public spaces, in terms of organizational involvement of women is provided. It can be seen that women in Adimalathura had a wider and deeper involvement in various types of public and social organizations compared to women in Kulamnagar. Further, a notable feature is that women in Adimalathura had greater interconnectedness among different organisational types than women in Kulamnagar. Fifthly, we find that livelihood diversification was associated with the nature of involvement of women in public spaces.



## The Influence of Parental Variables on Gender Discrimination of the Primary School Child in Port Harcourt Metropolis Of Rivers State, Nigeria

**Dr. Anero, Nnamdi**

Faculty of Education  
Ignatius Ajuru University of  
Education, Port Harcourt

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The study titled “The influence of parental variables on gender discrimination of the primary school child in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State, Nigeria” was designed to determine how parental level of education, marital status, religion and parental parentage status influence the level of attention parents give to their boy or girl primary education. The attention of parents in this study was considered on the basis of sending or denial of primary school education to the child, provision of the child’s school needs and the decision to send the child to private or public primary school. To generate data for this study, accidental sampling technique was adopted to sample 500 parents. ANOVA and t-test were used as statistical tools to analyze the data generated. Some of the findings revealed that parental education significantly influence parents in sending the child to either private or public primary school, the level of provision of the children’s school needs on the basis of gender or complete denying or sending the child to primary school. The study also established that parents’ marital status did not hold any significant influence on needs provision of the child, sending or denying the child primary school education and whether the child be sent to either public or private primary school. Based on these, the study recommends that the church, mosque, mass media and other apparatus of enlightenment needs to engage on enlightenment campaigns to educate the parents on the needs not to discriminate in the attention they give to the primary school age children on the basis of gender




## VET (Vocational Education and Training) and Labour Market Outcomes: A Gender Perspective

**Ms. Andrea Vincent**  
ISEC, Bangalore

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**T**his paper will analyse the gender difference in the participation in vocational education and training programmes and its impact on labour market outcomes. The study will utilize latest NSS data on employment and unemployment (2011-2012) and skim through previous NSS data. Labour market outcome will be studied in terms of labour force participation, work force participation, unemployment rate, occupational status and wage. The paper will give a national picture and drill down to Kerala.

Skill development programmes are given high priority due to increase in the working age population and the expected demographic dividend. Vocational Education and Training aims in imparting employability skills and prepare young adults to the world of work. Vocational education and training is gaining momentum in India as there is change in the age structure of the population which resulted in the bulge of the youth population in the country. This rise in the youth population is termed as a window of opportunity as it reduces the dependency ratio. If this change in age structure is properly utilized it will result in demographic dividend. Demographic dividend can be defined as a rise in economic growth with the increase in share of the working age population (James, 2008). India will have a window



of opportunity for twenty five years and India will have world's youngest workforce, much younger than China and other OECD countries (Planning Commission, 2008:91). Increase in women's participation in workforce that is expected to come along with a decline in fertility is assumed to be one of the important contributors to economic growth and demographic dividend. But in India lack of significant increase in women's participation in labour force is often said as an important reason for India not able to reap the benefits of demographic dividend (James et. al 2014). Appropriate investment to form a high quality human capital is very necessary to take advantage of this stage of demographic transition.

If India's skill development strategy is intact India will be able to meet its own manpower requirements as well as would have a surplus of 47 million workers to provide to other countries where there is a man power shortage (King, 2012). Skill development has been a focus of 12th five year plan as India is having more number of youth population and to benefit from the demographic dividend. India will have about 63 per cent of its population in the working age group by 2022 (GOI, 2011). The target of the plan is to increase the skilled workforce from 10 percent (including formal and informal) to 50 percent by 2022, which will create a 500 million resource pool. According to National skill Development policy (2009) the main aim of skill development is to achieve "inclusive growth" and provide opportunities for all including youth, women and marginalised sections in the society through enhancing individual's employability (wage and self-employment) and ability to adapt to the changing technological and labour market situations. So it is also very necessary to know how inclusive VET scenario in India in terms of providing training and employment to women and the marginalised sections of the society.

It is widely seen in the literature that there exists gender bias in the enrolment of vocational courses (World Bank, 2008) and VET is more

gender segregating than the general education (Estévez-Abe, 2011). Women's participation is very less formal and informal VET and they are disadvantaged because of low level of schooling and illiteracy as well (Hartl, 2009). Women are often into stereotyped training and occupations (Mayoux, 2005). Women are often into handicrafts food processing and other areas which are considered as female domains. These sectors yields low returns. There are very limited numbers of studies which address this issue of gender and VET in India and none of the studies have focussed the labour market outcomes in terms of wage, employment status and work status after the 11th plan period. A detailed and systematic study is required to examine the outcomes of VET in both the genders by comparing it with general education graduates. This paper will analyse the participation of both genders in both formal and non formal VET (National and Kerala), educational background of people opting for VET, Field of training, and labour market outcomes of VET graduates and compare it with general education graduates. Literature will be reviewed to understand the best practices followed in other countries to enhance women's participation and labour market outcome of VET.

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## Absence of Transgender in Curriculum

### **Sundara Raj T**

Assistant Professor  
Department of Sociology  
Periyar University,  
Salem, Tamil

### **Kiran Paul**

Research Assistant,  
Department of Sociology  
Periyar University,  
Salem, Tamil

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**D**uring the 2011 Census, a column named 'others' were added to the gender category with the intention of enumerating transgender persons and 54,854 children in the age group of 0-6 identified as 'others' instead of male or female. Research has shown that majority of transgender children became aware about the mismatch between their gender identity and assigned identity at a very young age. This Awareness of gender identity of a non-conforming nature at the young age makes school a crucial institution in the lives of transgender children. Research literature examining the school experiences of transgender persons and representation of them in textbooks shows discrimination in both. The responses of transgender people about their school life reveal shared but isolated experiences of childhood and the common theme that binds these experiences is social exclusion. This significantly reduces their social integration and leads to marginalisation later in life. This study looks at the National Curriculum Framework 2005 and textbooks by NCERT and found that they fail even to mention the term transgender and rather tend to use reductionist egalitarian language. The Framework conflates the concepts of sexual orientation and gender identity and is heteronormative in character suggesting only two possible identities i.e. male and female. The study also points out that the New Education Policy which is being formulated may continue the neglect of transgender children. It is time transgender rights activism turn their focus to schools and curriculum more vigorously and the consultation on NEP may provide an ideal opportunity to exert influence for an inclusive education which respects gender variances.

Keywords: Transgender, LGBTQ, Gender Non-conforming, School, Education, Social Exclusion, Heteronormativity






## Muslim Women and Access to Public Sphere: Constraining Role of Education

**Khadeeja Mangat**  
Research Scholar, JNU

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**M**uslim women in the late nineteenth century were part of the informal education system which gave them a certain vantage point over their counterparts in other religious groups who were completely shunted from any form of learning. Muslims in Kerala were undergoing a process of revival during the early twentieth century whereby the propounders were mostly involved in reforming the community. The attempt was to bring back the textual religion into the Kerala Muslim culture. (Malik, 2003) Even though Muslim women were never the direct participants of the revivalism nor they had any agency, they were the main subjects of the revivalist project. In their attempt to revive the religion they discouraged Muslim women from involving in rituals and practices which gave them certain social roles as well as access to public sphere. (Hussain, 2009) Muslim women were also discouraged from learning the religious lessons in vernacular language and those of them who taught girls in such languages were less promoted. This led to the disappearance of Muslim women from a lot of spaces outside the private domain, or so to say the public sphere/space. Thus the Islamic reformism could be seen as part of the reconstitution of patriarchy which aimed at improving the status of the community through individual liberation, but without considering the gender aspects.

Muslim women were not introduced to the formal education before the reformist period but were a part of the Madrasa education system. It is a remarkable development that reformist intervention brought a change in this situation and women



started going to formal schools. But how far has this attainment of education brought a change in their social spaces is a matter of concern. Even though they progressed in some aspects like to read and write languages other than the vernacular language Arabi-Malayalam, which was the script used by the traditional Muslims of Kerala and to be exposed to other forms of knowledge, they were denied of a lot of other freedoms like engaging in some ritual practices which were practiced traditionally. Even though the claim of the reformists was that such practices were out of the textual religion women lost a space of their own.

The paper would thus try to contest and critically look into the popular imagination of education, precisely the modern education, as

a vehicle for women empowerment. Since the religious reformism had a huge impact on the lives of Muslims in Kerala the paper would briefly throw light into what reformism was meant to Muslim women. The paper would be a sincere attempt to analyze how education has limited women from having access to public sphere which is against the popular understanding of the purpose of education. The paper would deeply explore how despite of getting better education Muslim women in Kerala lag far behind women of other socio-religious groups in getting employed and being visible in the public domain. Thus the broader understanding of how education of women itself is a male project would be looked into.



# Educational Schemes Serving Poor Students: a Case Study of Performance of Girl Children in Dhuri village of West Bengal

**Ms. Anima Mali**  
Research Scholar  
Tata Institute of Social  
Sciences, Mumbai


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**I**ntroduction: Gender based discrimination against women and children are deep rooted all over the world. Sex selection before birth and discrimination after birth of a girl child is a continuous process in India. In the Human Development Index and Women Development Index Report, elementary education and gender equality have been emphasized. Millennium Development Goals-3 proposes Gender Equality and women empowerment whereas Goals-2 ensures Universal Primary Education, ages between 6 to 14 years.

This paper will focus on the structure of poverty and the health related infrastructural constraints of the girl children of rural West Bengal while assessing the progress of universal elementary education with the emphasis on KGBV and Kanyashree Prakalpa. KGBV is a residential programme for girl students from poor socio-economic background. It has aim to provide education for these girls.

**Methodology:** For this paper both primary and secondary data will be analysed.

**Impact and Result:** Scholarly studies show that West Bengal is a poor performer in terms of educational achievements. Secondary data show that the enrolment and actual class attendance did not coincide with each other. Due to lack of



infrastructural facilities in school, low level of family income, household atmosphere, household responsibilities, early marriages many girls ages between 10-16 years quit their study on the mid-way of schooling.

For this paper one KGBV hostel and its adjacent school Janapriya Nagar Janapriya Vidyalaya in Dhuri village (multi-faceted, as per reports of NGOs it is a crime zone for girl child trafficking) of South 24 Parganas of West Bengal have been selected. This study (through continuous observation, interactions with students, interviews with parents and villagers, feedback from teachers, attending awareness programmes of Kanyashree Prakalpa etc) indicates that awareness in the society is noticeable. Problems of drop out, early marriage, girl child trafficking are reduced partially. Balanced food given to the

children from the hostel also helps to improve their health which raises their energy level thus improving actual attendance than day scholar students. Quality education among KGBV girls is also noticeable. On the other, Kanyashree Prakalpa is getting popular which aims to reduce drop out and restrict early marriage of girl child in West Bengal. 'Kanyashree' scheme has also been recognized by UNICEF as a model of progress. The implementation of this scheme is also being observed which produces positive impact on society.

Conclusion: Proper implementation of these two schemes may help to increase educational participation of girl children thus reducing the gender disparity to some extent.

Key Words: Education, drop out, infrastructural facilities, awareness.



## Access to Education in Muslim women in Nepal with reference to Gender Equality Approach


**Dilli R. Prasai**

Lecturer

Tribhuvan University, Nepal

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The Paper has been carried out to study the educational status of Muslim women regarding their access and hindrance to education and the impact of their current living standard over education in Nepal as well as representative character of South Asia . To accomplish this objective, 60 Muslim women from Indrapur VDC of Morang Eastern areas of district in Nepal were taken as sampled population which constitutes 51% Muslim women of the every VDC. The researcher extracted the details of 520 individuals from those 60 Muslim households. The study shows that the Muslim women of the study area have a very poor access to education. The literacy situation in this population is only 43% which is below national standard of 65.9%. Muslim females enjoy lower access to education than that of Muslim males. They are often confined only to the household chores of child care, housekeeping, gardening and agricultural tasks. There is in Nepal a long tradition of discrimination against indigenous people, lower caste groups, women and those not belonging to the dominant religion. For a long time, this was legally authorized and even enforced by the government. According to the 2001 Census, almost 103 castes and ethnic minority groups (125 as per the census 2011) comprise around 36% of the total population of Nepal. Nepal's Constitution, following the international practice, guarantees that you have the same basic rights as everyone else, and these include the right not to be discriminated against



because of your minority status in any way. In January 1971, Nepal joined with other nations in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. Under this law, Nepal has agreed to go beyond its commitment not to discriminate against minorities. It has condemned all forms of discrimination based on race, or color, or descent or national or ethnic origin. It has also agreed to take positive steps to eliminate in Nepal all such forms of discrimination (Centre for constitutional dialogue 2009). It is obvious that access to education is a main vehicle for social inclusion of any group (Rana et. al. 2009).

Muslims women in special focus group and has developed special policies and programs to increase the excess of this disadvantaged group in main stream education. These all policies and programs have been developed in the line of the world declaration of EFA. The vision of

World Conference on Education for All, Jomtien 1990, was that by 2000 access to basic and primary education would be universal and the basic learning needs of all people should be met. Accordingly, the EFA vision of Nepal is to ensure that by 2015; all children in Nepal will have quality basic and primary education without having to feel prejudices in the form of cultural, ethnic or caste discrimination. The Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal as well as the “National Foundation for Development of Indigenous Nationalities Act 2058 (2002)” has recognized minority children’s need for education through their languages. The provision made in the Education Act (7th Amendment) for the use of mother tongue in primary classes has been a positive step towards addressing the instructional needs of indigenous and linguistic minority children across the country.





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