



**Abstracts of 11th International Conference on
Gender & Women's Studies 2024**

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KEYNOTE SPEECH I

From Discipline to Control: Gender Dynamics in the Digital Age

Dr. Michelle Philip

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In the contemporary digital era, the paradigms of gender dynamics have undergone significant transformations. The keynote address aims to explore these shifts through the lenses of power, control, and gender. Drawing on Foucault's theories of disciplinary societies and Deleuze's notion of control societies, this address will interrogate how digital technologies have reshaped the mechanisms of power and gender relations. Historically, gender dynamics have been governed by disciplinary mechanisms—schools, families, workplaces—that sought to normalize behaviour through surveillance, regulation, and correction. However, in the digital age, these mechanisms are being supplanted by more fluid, porous and pervasive forms of control. The rise of digital platforms, social media, and surveillance technologies has enabled new forms of monitoring and regulation that transcend physical spaces, creating a virtual panopticon that constantly shapes and reshapes gender identities and relations. This keynote will delve into the ways in which digital technologies both empower and constrain gender identities. On one hand, digital platforms provide spaces for marginalized voices to be heard, fostering new forms of gender activism and solidarity. On the other hand, these same technologies can reinforce traditional gender norms and perpetuate gender-based violence and discrimination. The keynote will argue for the necessity of a nuanced understanding of digital gender dynamics, one that recognizes the potential for digital spaces to both challenge and reinforce existing power structures. In conclusion, the address will emphasize the importance of developing strategies to harness the transformative potential of digital technologies while mitigating their capacity for control and surveillance. It will call for interdisciplinary collaboration to create inclusive digital spaces that promote gender equity and empowerment.

Keywords: *Digital Age, Gender Dynamics, Power, Disciplinary Mechanisms, Surveillance, Virtual Panopticon*

KEYNOTE SPEECH II

BRIDGING POVERTY and GENDER DIVIDES: Transformative Changes through Hand in Hand India SHGs in Bihar and Jharkhand, India.

Dr. Madhu Sharan

President, Hand in Hand, India

Economic growth accompanied by poverty reduction and gender equality are critical development goals for all rising economies. However, despite significant improvements in economic growth metrics, India still lags behind in several social and development indices. In this context, the self-help group (SHG) movement of 'women collectives' has played a critical role in addressing development challenges related to poverty, gender inequality, and socio-economic development by promoting social capital, skills, livelihoods, financial services, and the social and economic empowerment of women. Through field studies and impact evaluation findings, this paper expounds on the role of SHGs in bridging divides of gender and poverty and in impacting social and economic transformations in over 80 villages in two of the most backward districts of India, Bihar and Jharkhand. The project areas in both states suffer from high incidences of poverty, illiteracy, malnutrition, lack of skills, limited employment opportunities, and deep-seated gender inequalities, leading to excessive occurrences of child labor, poor health, and gender-based disparities in communities.

Against this background, Hand in Hand India (HiHII), a leading NGO, has been working extensively at the grassroots level on several projects related to health, education, women empowerment and community development. In one of our flagship projects, we are working with over 2,000 families of 'out-of-school children,' supporting them with school enrolment, better health, and nutrition. Additionally, we are working with the mothers of these children by forming them into 'mothers' collectives,' training them in the importance of education, health, skills development, livelihoods promotion, finance, and accounting. This enables them to start income-generating activities to support themselves and their families and ensure continued education and improved health standards for their children. This strategy has been successful, as the mothers' collectives have gained knowledge, skills, social solidarity, self-esteem, and economic self-reliance, leading to their social and economic empowerment. Furthermore, they have liaised with village administration, local leaders, and other important stakeholders to tackle critical issues of gender inequality and community development. Through community engagement, networking, and advocacy, they have become formidable agents of socio-economic change in their villages, successfully addressing issues related to school education, clean drinking water, toilet construction, sanitation, child and maternal health, family planning, immunization, livelihoods development and market linkages, delivering positive results. Going forward, our endeavour will be to capitalize on their collective strengths to drive deeper transformative changes, gender equality, and inclusive growth in societies.

Keywords: *Poverty, Gender inequality, SHGs, transformative changes*

KEYNOTE SPEECH III

(VIRTUAL SESSION)

Écriture feminine and women fiction writers of Pakistan

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The concept of *Écriture feminine* (Feminine Writing) was introduced by Hélène Cixous in her important work “*Le Rire de la Méduse*” (The laugh of the Medusa), published in 1975, and translated into English and published in 1976. Cixous belonged to the trilogy of French post-structuralist feminists along with Luce Irigaray and Julia Kristeva, who talk about female sexuality. According to Cixous, feminine writing is the writing where a woman writer writes herself. According to her, this writing must defy the patriarchal notions of writing as men have always been the custodians of pen and have formulated all principles and norms of writing and call it as the standard or the objective form of writing. They never took into account the world of the feminine and as women were not writing, they were not included in any such exercise. Women in general have been told that pen is the tool of men and has been taken away from them just as their bodies have been snatched from them.

Since the essay, “*The laugh of the Medusa*” is also an experiment of *Écriture feminine* in-itself, I have tried to see if Cixous has actually defined feminine writing in any way or not. And I have also tried to explore the implications of any experiment as regards to feminine writing, both in content and form, by Pakistani women writers and how any such experiment will work in this regional context. There have been experiments in form of writing as regards to fiction in Pakistan, especially in some contemporary novels written by men. In this paper, I have explored the works of Pakistani women fiction writers to see where do they stand in context with defying or deconstructing the masculine hegemony in outlining the principles of writing as Cixous suggests and if there has been any experiment as regards to the content as well as form of writing by them.

Keywords: *Écriture feminine, women fiction writers, fiction, Pakistan women writers, poststructuralism, feminist post-structuralist theory, deconstruction*

Theoretical Aspects of Improving Gender Policy in Uzbekistan

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This article discusses the social, philosophical, economic and political aspects of the gender problem. The measures to address gender equality in Uzbekistan are analyzed. The article says that the basis of all reforms in Uzbekistan is directly related to issues of gender equality. The role and significance of the research methodology for ensuring the equality of women in Uzbekistan is revealed. The issues of improving the social status of women and strengthening their economic rights in the implementation of state programs are considered. The issue of using the full potential of women in all areas of society is considered.

Keywords: *state, politics, women, NGOs, gender issues, women's rights, strategy, national program, political processes.*

Perspectives on Gender and Justice in Tarsem Singh's Films: An Analysis of the "Act of Looking" in Laura Mulvey's Theory

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With the introduction of the cinema, narrative representation has expanded the impact of visual and acoustic elements. This study focuses on narrative construction in the cinema produced by visual images. It considers this type of narration as the theoretical basis for how the "act of looking" is presented in Laura Mulvey's thesis "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" (1975), particularly in the context of Freudian psychology. A character's act of looking can be analyzed through gendered power in the fundamental structure between the male subject and the female object. This power relation is based on visual pleasure whereby *women's display* can be defined as "To-be-looked-at-ness."

In this context, this study aims to analyze and review how perspectives on gendered performance and justice are visualized in the Indian director Tarsem Singh's contemporary films and how his work deconstructs patriarchal power through the act of looking. As a film director, Singh's work is primarily visual. His storytelling is secondary. Thus, an analysis of his film images is particularly significant. In addition, each of the three films is examined through the philosophical lens of justice. It is revealed that the films address the psychological depiction of women, minority groups, and people with disabilities.

Mirror Mirror (2012) is a creative adaptation of the Brothers Grimm's *Snow White*, in which female empowerment is achieved through personal creativity and commercial appeal. *The Cell* (2000) presents the female psychologist Catherine Deane as a protagonist and visualizes the subconscious mind of the criminal from her perspective. *The Fall* (2006) represents the fictional tale of five brave men who combat a dictatorial order. This story is told by the hospitalized stuntman Roy Walker, who creates the whole story as an omniscient narrator. Thus, these protagonists control the narratives visually. In this sense, the gendered dichotomy is overcome in these films.

Keywords: *gender performance, justice, narrative cinema, visual impact of film*

Factors Affecting Muslim Women's Participation in Peace Processes Beyond Culture and Religion: A Comparative Study of the Experiences of Women in Afghanistan, Nigeria, and Sudan

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Women are generally portrayed as victims of war and conflicts. However, women are also active, strong, and resourceful agents as family caretakers, advocates of peace, relief workers, mediators, or combatants. The unrecognition of women's various roles undermines their chances of being involved in formal peacebuilding and negotiations that establish post-conflict state-building, thus marginalizing them further from the political decision-making processes that have a direct and indirect impact on their life. Despite growing evidence of the positive contributions women make to peace negotiations and agreements and the durability of peace, women continue to be excluded from negotiation tables and constitution-making. This paper will look closely at the findings of research studies on women's role in peace processes and the factors that affected their inclusion or exclusion in the process. Focusing on Muslim societies, where culture and religion tend to be essentialized as the reason for women's oppression, discrimination, and marginalization, the paper highlights the active, various roles Muslim women play during conflicts arguing for contextualizing culture within political, economic, and security factors to understand the obstacles to their participation in peace processes. The arguments apply feminist theory on gender roles and patriarchy to explain why women are excluded from conflict-resolution processes, and the lens of postcolonial and Third World feminism to understand the perspective of Muslim communities on involving women. Within the framework of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, the paper follows the experiences of women in Afghanistan, Nigeria, and Sudan to argue for utilizing women's agency to ensure peace through local culture and religion, especially in the context of terrorism and extremism.

Keywords: *peacebuilding, Muslim women, UNSCR 1325, feminist theories*

The influence of patriarchy on domestic violence among Indian women globally.

Lata Satyen, Madeleine Bourke-Ibbs and Bosco Rowland.

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Domestic violence is a serious and preventable human rights issue that disproportionately affects certain groups of people, including Indian women. The impacts of domestic violence on the health and wellbeing of victim survivors are profound and enduring. Feminist theory suggests that domestic violence could result from the patriarchal ideologies of male perpetrators; however, this has not been examined in the context of women from the Indian subcontinent. This study examined the experiences of domestic abuse (physical, sexual, and psychological) and controlling behaviour of Indian women across 31 countries. We explored the relationship between the patriarchal beliefs held by the women's partners and the women's experience of domestic violence. Data was collected from 825 Indian women living in 31 countries across Asia (37.1%), Europe (18.3%), Oceania (23.8%), the Americas (16.1%) and Africa (3.2%) through an online questionnaire. The women were aged between 18 and 77 years ($M = 35.64$, $SD = 8.71$). This study used an intersectional feminist framework to examine the variables. The data was analyzed using a hierarchical linear regression. The findings show that the majority of participants (72.5%) had experienced at least one form of abuse during their relationship, with over a third of them (35.1%) having experienced controlling behaviour. In support of the central hypotheses, after controlling for potential confounders, the results show that women whose partners showed greater endorsement of patriarchal beliefs were more likely to have been abused by their partner or a member of his family ($\beta = 0.34$, $p < .001$) and were less likely to have access to freedom during their relationship ($\beta = -0.38$, $p < .001$). The findings of this study highlight the need to engage with men in Indian communities through culturally-tailored intervention strategies designed to challenge the patriarchal ideologies that propagate, justify, and excuse domestic violence. This is essential to address the pervasive crisis of domestic violence and to ensure the safety of women and children everywhere.

Keywords: *Domestic violence, Patriarchy, Indian women*

Factors associated with knowledge on HIV, TB and Malaria among pregnant women and their perception of access to RDTs for HIV, TB and Malaria in Savannakhet Province, Lao PDR

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Lao PDR continues to experience challenges in combating the treatable and preventable diseases HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis (TB) and malaria among high-risk groups including pregnant women. Community-based intervention for mothers requires more evidence on awareness of such diseases and access to rapid diagnostic tests. The study aims to determine the factors associated with knowledge of HIV, TB and Malaria, their access to rapid diagnostic test of such diseases among pregnant women of local community. This is a cross-sectional quantitative survey exploring pregnant women's awareness of HIV/AIDS/TB and Malaria in three remote districts (Phin, Thapangthong and Atsaphone) in Savannakhet province, Lao PDR. 189. A face-to-face questionnaire was administered to 189 pregnant women. Descriptive and inferential statistics were applied to determine the associated factors with awareness of pregnant women on HIV/AIDS/TB and Malaria. This study is under the **HEALTH project/ Expertise France**. Most participants were pregnant at 28 – 42 weeks (50.3%); ranged 4 – 38 weeks, with a mean age of 24.3 years old (range: 14 - 48 years old). Most participants were farmers (94.2%), 54.5% were illiterate, 74.0% were of the Mon-Kmer ethnic group, and 60% had an income lower than the average. Only 56.6% had accessed ANC, 39.1% attended ANC during the first trimester with only 19.6% having at least four ANC consults. Less than half of the participants demonstrated (45.5% and 42.3%) a high level of knowledge of HIV and TB respectively, while slightly above half (54.6%) demonstrated a high level of knowledge related to malaria. Slightly higher than half (53.3% and 52.9%) perceived to have easy access to HIV and TB services respectively; while 72.5% perceived to have easy access to malaria. Less than half of the participants felt it was easy to get tested for HIV (46.5%), TB (52.9%), and malaria (72.5%). Very few of the women (1.6%, 2.1% and 8.5%) reported having had a test for HIV/TB/malaria respectively. Educational level was associated with both knowledge of HIV and TB. Factors associated with knowledge of HIV were higher household income and attending ANC more than 4 times. Factors associated with knowledge of TB were age; number of children under 2 years; high knowledge on HIV and malaria. In addition, factors associated with knowledge of malaria were number of children under 2 years, high knowledge on HIV and perceived easy access to Malaria test. Factors associated with perceived easy access to HIV rapid test and TB test were high levels of TB knowledge, attending ANC and high satisfaction on health. The number of children under 2 years was associated with perceived ease of access to HIV rapid test. While factors associated with malaria test were having a high knowledge of malaria and attending ANC more than 4 times. A very low awareness on HIV, TB and malaria was identified among pregnant women in rural communities of Savannakhet. Strategies to improve the knowledge of HIV, TB and malaria in Lao PDR should focus on women who live in rural areas, emerging regions with high incidence of HIV, TB, malaria, ethnic pregnant women, the poor, and illiterate. Lastly, efforts are needed to increase access to early detection and prevention of three deadly diseases such as HIV, TB and malaria among pregnant women by increasing their accessibility to rapid Diagnostic Test (RDTs) for HIV and malaria and TB test.

"Navigating the supposed juxtaposition of “religious” vs. “secular” aspects: A case study of Muslim women’s domestic violence related experiences in Houston, Texas”

Dr Sonia Kapur

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United States*

Studies have indicated that Muslim women are faced with a double burden as targets, because of their intersecting identities of gender and religion. In the last several years, based on this fact, there is a growing demand and institution of programs to address the needs of Muslim women, especially so in the domestic violence arena. This study explores the challenges that abused Muslim women face in navigating Muslim marriage laws through interviews with abused Muslim women in Texas. The larger context and environment of the country and developments in the world have shaped perceptions and interactions that impact the abused Muslim women in many significant ways. Often such implications are not recognized and this study highlights those. The findings of this study will be useful for policy makers to understand what policies may address the domestic violence related needs of abused Muslim women.

Objectification: the female body and the phallus effect

Sofia Rosa

PhD student, Fine Arts at FBAU and a collaborative researcher, CIEBA

In the 20th century, a revolution began with the denial for mimetic representation. Simplification is one of the procedures manifested and by accepting the reduction of the identifiable references it is created a determinant distance from the subject. Gaston Lachaise, for instance, reduces the female body into a manipulated object with particular interest on a volumetric and erotic expression. From this point of view, the title offered by Marcel Duchamp - "Please, touch" - sounds like an encouraged invitation. The articulated dolls conceived by Hans Bellmer and the pieces of furniture made by Allen Jones on the other hand demonstrate the female figure represented as an object but seem to show this bodily transformation as well expressed with quite materialistic emphasis. Focused on a parallel between male and female artists we point out contemporary artists such as Louise Bourgeois, Sarah Lucas and Monica Bonvicini and the explicit content produced that echoes the objectual tendency. The intention, on the other hand, seems to be focused on a communicative dimension that transmits conscious criticism of gender roles.

Women against Women: Who justify wife beating?

Suparna Das

Asian University for Women, Bangladesh

While the Indian economy races towards being the fifth largest economy of the world, women continue to struggle to maintain their safety in the domain of their homes or outside. Recent National Crime Records Bureau's data (2022) provide evidence of a 4% surge in crime against women in India compared to 2021 and the prime contributor is cruelty by husband or his relatives, accounting for around one-third of the total crime against women. On the one hand, the increasing female labor force participation rate indicates women's contribution to the economy and their financial empowerment, on the other hand, crime data shows a contrasting picture of abuse and oppression even within the household. What is surprising more, is that the National Family and Health Survey (NFHS-5, 2019-2021) data shows not only around 30% of married women have experienced domestic violence, but 45% of women themselves justify wife beating by their husband. Therefore, it creates a puzzle that in the era of woke ideologies, women empowerment and equal rights how it fails to create a safe space for women even inside their homes; and additionally, how women themselves could justify domestic violence. Applying probability models on the NFHS 2019-21 data this paper attempts to understand the attributes of the women who justify domestic violence. The paper finds that younger, less-educated, poor, village women are more likely to justify domestic violence, and women who are not aware of the world around them, and are not familiar with using the internet are more likely to justify violence. Additionally, it is found that women who justify wife-beating are also more likely to face domestic violence. The paper provides evidence that in spite of women's improving educational attainment and working status, the deep-rooted patriarchal mindset makes women still believe that it is justified to get beaten by husband for disobeying him or challenging his authority.

Keywords: *crime against women, wife-beating, justifying domestic violence*

Factors Influencing the Underrepresentation of women with disabilities in Higher Education in India

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The education of women with disabilities is a pressing concern in the world. Women and disability is a neglected area which lack quality research and investigations into the challenges that face in developing countries such as India. The primary goal of the present research was to investigate the causes underlying the underrepresentation of women with disabilities in higher education in India. This study employed with systematic literature review as a methodology and research questions have been developed under three domains such as their participation rate in higher education, unique hurdles faced by women with disabilities, and exclusive policies related to higher education of women with disabilities in India. The analysis of the data out of the selected 12 studies revealed that the number of girls or women with disabilities attending or completing higher education is limited in India due to various reasons like gender discrimination, socio-cultural inequalities, lack of family support, attitudinal barriers, and the threat of sexual abuse and violence as being disabled women. The study also found that there are no exclusive policies in India to cater to the higher education needs of disabled woman in India which is highlighted as the implication of this study.

Keywords: *intersectionality, women with disabilities, gender disparity, underrepresentation of women with disabilities, higher education of women with disabilities*

Articulating Activism: Imagining Pedagogy for the Future

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The capitalist phase of neoliberalism is impacting the life worlds of people across the globe. Some perspectives celebrate the nature of this ideological-political conjuncture. There are critiques of its perilous effect on the life chances of diverse people. History of sociology also possesses the genealogy of sociology in the context of the changing nature of capitalism. Economic sociology attempts to revisit the history of the sociological ideas on the economy and society. At the same time, there are theoretical possibilities in the field of public sociology to challenge the new social and economic upheavals. Political sociology is facing theoretical challenges in the complex environment of post-fascism and similar forms of retrogressive politics. Sociologists are also forced to reflect upon authoritarian populism and its critiques in the time of global, economic vicissitudes. Academicians are facing questions regarding their silence related to the emerging gap between theory and practice. Sociologists also have to reflexively articulate the inherent contradictions related to the translation of the sociological theory into praxis. New forms of governance and state formations are influencing the nature of foregrounding sociology. On the contrary, new political assertions that are not dependent on the existing framework of traditional political parties and social movements are gaining momentum as well. The social composition of the sociologists in the backdrop to the nation/post-nation debates is departing from the sociology of sociological knowledge and related responses. Subdisciplines within the grand sociological tradition have been questioned in the time of linguistic and cultural turn. Debates on the geopolitics of knowledge and creolization have posed questions to conventional sociological academic practices. Decolonization of the disciplines forces us to rethink the colonial, anti-colonial, and post-colonial tensions embedded in contemporary sociology. Social theory has questioned the foundational nature of sociology too. This paper attempts to revisit the question of activism in the context of the intersections existing between economic sociology, public sociology, political sociology, and the aforementioned important theoretical developments. It attempts to probe the whether sociological construction of activism engaging with the post-structural challenges, decolonization, creolization, and so on? Whether the sociological encounter with the category of activism leads to the empirical wilderness? Whether sociological theoretical positioning of the idea of activism is moving toward, non-committal abstractions? Whether the empirical and theoretical in global sociology can strike balance in their inquiry related to the epistemological and ontological dimensions of activism? This paper, therefore, invokes an interdisciplinary groove that revitalizes the pedagogy for the future. Thus, it problematizes the hegemonic understanding of the category of activism.

Keywords: *Activism, Political Sociology, Decolonization, Creolization, activism.*

Exploring Gender and Sexuality Portrayals in Indian Media and Culture

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Swayam, a feminist, women's rights organization has been working relentlessly to end violence and discrimination against women and girls since 1995. We provide direct support to women survivors of violence, their children and families through a range of interventions and support services. We also actively work with individuals, families, institutions, State agencies, community-based organizations and educational institutions to address structural patriarchal mindsets and stereotypes through a range of preventive interventions.

Our preventive work aims to create a gender-just lens at various levels of society. We use media in the form of short films, spots, radio and television broadcasts, newspaper coverages, and social media awareness to shape societal perceptions. It is hence important to look at gender and sexuality portrayals in media. These are multifaceted, evolving issues that intersect with culture, identity, and representation. Historically, mainstream Indian media has often reinforced traditional, patriarchal and heteronormative gender roles and sexual identities, marginalizing non-normative identities and experiences. Over time, there has been a gradual shift towards more diverse and inclusive portrayals, but the stereotypes and misrepresentations still persist.

The current study employs an exploratory qualitative design to determine: the existing biases in gender and sexuality issues as showcased through media and cultural practices; impact of the same on society; and what people are doing differently to change the narrative. Cluster purposive sampling was used to gather the experiences of 120 individuals, including 40 professionals and personalities in the world of media, 40 feminist activists working on gender and sexuality and 40 individuals from the larger community, through structured surveys and in-depth interviews.

Results throw light upon patterns of bias related to gender and sexuality, existing in mainstream mass media (print and electronic) and cultural norms. Traditional media representation reinforces gender stereotypes and legitimizes heteronormative stories which stigmatize and shame non-conforming gender and sexual identities. This in turn poses resistance to creating inclusive and safe spaces. Additionally, traditional cultural practices often impede gender explorations, thus limiting opportunities for individuals to self-express for fear of societal exclusion. Results also highlight innovations and initiatives adopted by individuals and institutions to challenge patriarchal stereotypes through media and paradigm shift in culture.

Ultimately, promoting diverse and inclusive representations requires a concerted effort from media creators, producers, and consumers. By advocating for authentic media portrayals, supporting under-represented voices, and creating inclusive cultural practices, we can contribute to a more diverse landscape that reflects the rich tapestry of human experiences.

Keywords: *Gender, Sexuality, Inclusion, Media Representation, Culture*

Feminist Discourses on Social Media, Social Conditioning and its Challenges in Contemporary India: A Study of Different Cases, Activism, and Propaganda Related to Indian Women

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Feminism as rightly believed is the equality in political, social and economic spheres with a focus on gender-sensitive equity. The paper sheds light on Feminism in the Indian context and reflects on its multifaceted landscape which comprises the historical roots, societal perceptions shaped by social conditioning and contemporary identity threats. It starts by delving into the rich tapestry of Indian feminism and its unique identity. Indian Feminist history was not only powerfully forged by female leaders such as, Razia Sultan, Rani Laxmi Bai, and Indira Gandhi. But also, unlike western feminism, was championed by male exponents like Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar, reflecting a complex interplay of gender dynamics within Indian society. Apart from powerful individual figures, Indian history has also seen influential movements of women coming together and bringing change in the society. The study furthers into how social conditioning plays a significant role in shaping individuals' perceptions of any and all movements, but feminism falls prey to the rusty end of the knife. Despite feminism's foundational aim for equality, it grapples for societal acceptance, and thus often ends up being misrepresented and misunderstood. In this technological era, social media has become a key player in conditioning society and acts as a double-edged sword, both perpetuating stereotypes and fostering awareness. In this context, media representation plays a crucial role in shaping perceptions around feminism. Social media proves to be a useful tool in mobilizing support and awareness of feminism; however the paper critically analyzes how Indian Feminism often finds itself stuck in a complex web of social conditioning, media portrayal and societal perception. Mainstream media often sensationalizes feminist discourse, portraying it as radical or deviant. Instances of false accusations labelled as feminist actions further perpetuate negative stereotypes, undermining the credibility of the movement. The paper discusses how mainstream media's portrayal of feminism often distorts its message, sensationalizing cases with an edge towards patriarchal notion and fuelling societal backlash against feminism. It examines instances where media sensationalism unjustly tarnishes feminism's reputation, such as the Shraddha Walkarcase and the Zomato delivery boy incident. It argues that such misrepresentations stem from conscious media manipulation and unconscious patriarchal opinions deeply ingrained in society. The paper concludes by addressing the existential threat caused by the misrepresented portrayal of feminism in the realm of media, which threatens the authenticity of the core principles of equality and feminism itself.

Keywords- *Indian Feminism, Social Conditioning, Social Media and its portrayal*

Impact of Natal Family Support and Working Status on Suicidal Ideation and Spiritual Wellbeing of Women Survivors of Marital Family Violence in Relation with Ego Resiliency

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Violence against women (VAW) is on a rise globally. India recorded a 31.36% increase in incidents of crimes against women from 2016 to 2022. VAW, which is a form of gender-based violence (GBV), prevents women from accessing resources like education, employment, health facilities, legal redressal, etc. Domestic Violence (DV), the most prevalent form of GBV, affects women irrespective of age, caste, religion, socio-economic status, educational background, geographical location, and other identities. Abuse within the home manifests in many forms including physical, emotional, or mental, sexual, and economic abuse. In case of marital family violence (MFV) which is violence a woman faces in her marital home, several factors play a role in the impact it has on the survivor's mental health.

The study employs a cross-sectional and exploratory research design to gain a more nuanced understanding of marital family violence. It determines the role natal family support and working status play on mental health outcomes, namely, suicidal ideation and spiritual wellbeing of MFV women survivors. Additionally, it investigates whether ego resiliency of survivors in conjunction with their abusive situation determines impact over their mental health.

Experiences of 72 adult women survivors of MFV aged between 21 and 35 years have been gathered through simple purposive sampling from local NGOs that work to stop VAW and GBV. Data has been collected through standardized questionnaires, including, Adult Suicidal Ideation Questionnaire (ASIQ), Spiritual Wellbeing Scale and The Ego Resilience Scale and analysed using the SPSS software.

Results indicate no significant difference between the working and non-working groups in terms of their suicidal ideation or spiritual wellbeing. This can be because majority women do not earn substantially to contribute to their economic independence and wellbeing. However, natal family support plays a role in the overall spiritual and existential well-being of survivors, with a greater sense of wellbeing being prevalent amongst those who get some kind of support from natal family members as opposed to those who do not. Natal family support on the other hand, does not play a significant role in suicidal ideation among survivors, indicating the grave impact that violence can have on one's mental health despite a social support system.

Since marital family violence is the most reported form of DV, and its impact on mental health of survivors is often dependent on their social support system, the study throws important light on natal family support as a means of combating MFV.

Keywords: *gender-based violence, domestic violence, marital family violence, mental health outcomes, natal family support*

How Women of Far-flung Areas Turned Social Influencers Using Smartphones: A Case Study of Rural Bihar

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The women of rural Bihar have been experiencing great upward mobility and empowerment in recent years. The credit for their incredible transformation goes to the low-cost Internet-enabled smartphones that eroded all kinds of socio-economic and geographical barriers and opened a new world to them. They used this tiny gadget to entertain themselves, express themselves, voice their concerns against the customs and atrocities, and demand their fundamental rights. However, these come with their challenges, and often, they face severe antagonism and sometimes physical assaults for speaking against society's anti-women attitude on social media. This study is an attempt to understand the rise of women Social Media Influencers from rural Bihar; the state ranked second in India for domestic violence and atrocities against women by the National Family Health Survey-5 report, 2023.

The study aims to document the themes, contexts, tones, and behavioural patterns women social media influencers of Bihar have been using to transform themselves into celebrities. It will also try to understand several positive and negative changes these women have experienced with the advent of social media.

To obtain the first objective, content analysis of the digital influencers' vlogs will be done to understand their initial and present story contents, viewership, and the striking point of algorithms at which they become famous. For the second objective, a critical discourse analysis of the messages exchanged between the influencers and their followers will be done to comprehend their parasocial relationship. The in-depth critical analysis of dialogues, narratives, and message exchanges will help analyse their real-life situations and problems.

Two digital influencers, Arti Kumari and Neha Singh Rathor have been chosen as the subjects of the case study. Both of them have more than two million followers on social media. The former is a lower-class woman who rebelled against her parents in support of her boyfriend and rejected all social conventions. The latter is a young woman from rural Bihar who endured domestic violence and experienced gender inequality since childhood. Her songs in Bhojpuri, a dialect spoken in the state, and Hindi challenge the validity of social and political structures.

Keywords: *Woman, Parasocial Relationship, Social Influencer, Empowerment, Rural Bihar.*

Association of Polygyny and violence against women: A case study of Arunachal Pradesh

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A bill was introduced in the Indian parliament on 6th February 2024 to ban polygamy and grant inheritance rights to sons and daughters. The present Indian government also seeks to implement Uniform Civil Code citing that the proposed bill will give equality and justice to women folk in India. Violence against women is a global problem that accounts for an increase in suicide abetment, murder, and mental health of children and women. India is a male-dominated country, where women often become sufferers of domestic violence abuse, exploitation, and other cruelties. The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) recorded a staggering 4, 45,256 cases registered in 2022 which accounts for 51 FIRs every hour.

In regard to India, the practice of polygamy is illegal as per the Hindu Marriage Act, of 1955, except for the Muslim community. Polygyny is one of the major social problems, especially in Arunachal Pradesh; the state has witnessed numerous crimes against women due to polygyny. Ironically there is no clear law and provisions on polygamy; the customary law of different communities comes into play while dealing with polygamous related cases. The objective of my study is to understand the problems associated with polygyny practises in Arunachal Pradesh and violence against women related to this practise. And to elucidate the underlying issues, what are the steps taken up by the state government and women association and public of the state? The study is a mixed method, on-line questionnaires has been employed and two case studies has been selected for the study. NFHS -III, NFHS-IV, NFHS-V (National Family Health Report) data report has been analysed and interpreted to understand the prevalence of polygyny and spousal violence. The NFHS provides nationally representative empirical data on cross-sectional, demographic details and health survey of India.

Content analysis of two case studies involving murder of late Techhi Meena Lishi and an abetment to suicide case of late Techhi Neme Tok has been analysed using NVivo software. The objective of collecting online questionnaires is to understand the opinion of the women folk related to polygamy; their participation and activism against polygamy in the state, this will add support to my study from the primary data collected.

According to the report of NFHS-4 during 2014-16 nearly 38.5% of polygynous women compared with 24.3% of non-polygynous had to face spousal violence.

Keywords: *Polygyny, violence against women, case study, Arunachal Pradesh*

The insertion of Brazilian women in the field of industrial inventions at the turn of the 19th century to the 20th century

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The objective of this article is to analyze the space occupied by Brazilian women in the field of industrial inventions at the turn of the 19th century to the 20th century, in Brazil. In this sense, this text presents research on the inventions of technological artifacts created by Brazilian women or women residing in Brazil, in the period from 1873 to 1910. These are inventions for which patent registrations were requested, or rather, industrial privileges, an expression used in period and which are part of the Collection of the Industrial Privileges Fund of the Brazilian National Archives. The methodology adopted was based on the results of a survey carried out by Silva (2019), in which out of a total of 9,301 requests filed in Brazil, in the period from 1873 to 1910, 73 requests for registration of industrial privileges had women as inventors. Based on these 73 requests, the first stage of the research presented in this article was to identify inventions created by Brazilian women. The next step was to separate these industrial privileges according to the industrial areas of such inventions. The third stage consisted of an analysis of the applications of these artifacts, identifying which of these inventions were directly related to female work and uses at the time, in order to identify the interests of Brazilian women at the time. The results showed that of the 73 inventions created by women, 45 were inventions by Brazilian women or women residing in Brazil. This set of 45 inventions presented great diversity between them and was not restricted to inventions aimed at the feminine universe, ranging from the creation of passenger cars for trains, refrigerators, machines for manufacturing glass bottles, medicines for treating erysipelas, among others inventions, including vests for women. This research reveals, once again, the already ancient potential of women to create technological artifacts and reinforces the importance of creating public policies that aim to increase the inclusion of women in technological courses, in addition to the need to abandon the false myth that women do not have interests or skills in technological areas.

Keywords: *women, industrial privileges, patents, technological inventions*

Gender back on the agenda: The complex interplay of factors that defy attainment of gender equality in institutions of higher learning workplaces in Zimbabwe.

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This study interrogates workplace gender inequality in 2 Zimbabwe universities. This qualitative research utilized document analysis and fieldwork. Document analysis involved analyzing and evaluating employment records of full-time workers at the 2 institutions, at the time of carrying out the study, to make deductions and arguments thereupon. Fieldwork data was solicited through semi-structured one-on-one face-to-face interviews with 22 women employees from 2 purposively sampled universities. The universities were purposively sampled on basis of having the greatest number of female workers. The female employees were put into 2 strata – academic and non-academic. Within each cluster women were stratified into 3 levels of employment hierarchy – low, middle, and high. From each stratum, random sampling was then utilised although representativeness was not an issue to consider. Data were analysed through the thematic-content analysis approach. Results revealed that institutions of higher learning workplaces are inundated with complex layers of horizontal and vertical gender segregation, which leads to gender inequality, the effect of which is a disgruntled, dissatisfied, demotivated and uncommitted woman-workforce whose stress levels are unproductively high. Chief causal factors for the gender inequality among others are rampant sexual harassment, discriminatory practices and processes, sociocultural factors that led to unconscious bias, gender-choking corporate culture, inflexible work options and gender-blind institutional policies. The article shares insights in the form of evidence-based recommendations, on how the universities can navigate the workplace gender segregations, thereby generating narratives that can inform policy and practice at the studied universities. The key suggestions were that the institutions need to craft policies that are gender-considerate and institute programs that mitigate gender bias and discrimination as a better and actionable forging headway. The study contributes to literature, workplace-practice, and future research trajectory on workplace gender equality management.

Keywords: *workplace, gender segregation, factors-interplay, gender inequality*

Cultivating Gender Equity in Indian Educational Spaces Through the Prevent and Protect Program

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Gender-based violence (GBV) is a severe human rights violation which can be prevented in multiple ways, one of which is the empowerment of women. Promoting gender equity through research-backed culturally responsive programming that empowers women can be a promising tool to reduce GBV. Additionally, since college aged women worldwide are at a disproportionate risk of experiencing GBV, it is necessary to identify effective interventions to reduce GBV and further gender equity in educational spaces.

This presentation will discuss the development, implementation, and evaluation of the Prevent and Protect (PnP) GBV prevention (GBVP) program for Indian college women. PnP was piloted in three colleges in Pune, India. Six-hour and 12-hour versions of the program were implemented in an additional college in Pune, India. Participants are currently completing surveys to determine the effectiveness of the PnP program over six months. PnP is an innovative approach to GBVP, women empowerment, and gender-equity oriented social change, which is grounded in intersectionality and feminist theory. It includes five evidence-based components that educate participants on gender-equitable attitudes, relationship norms, sexuality education, bystander intervention, and self-defense skills. PnP is a tool to empower women through the cultivation of intersectional feminist consciousness, thereby promoting attitudes and skill development that can boost gender equity in educational spaces. Specifically, PnP is a comprehensive GBVP program which focuses on developing feminist consciousness and empowering participants through a combination of attitude and behavior change.

In this presentation, the researchers will discuss how the development, implementation, and evaluation of PnP is focused on increasing gender equity in Indian educational spaces. As such, the researchers will discuss how scholar-activism led to the development of PnP, and how the implementation of PnP can lead to development of feminist consciousness and increased women empowerment. Further, the preliminary results of the effectiveness of PnP will be shared. This presentation will have implications for women's studies scholars and activists who prioritize increasing gender equity, empowering women, and feminist scholar-activism.

Keywords: *gender-based violence prevention, feminist scholar-activism, women empowerment, gender equity*

Reshaping Women's Subjectivity in International Law: A Foucauldian Analysis of Olympe de Gouges' "Declaration of the Rights of Woman and of the Female Citizen"

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This paper investigates how Olympe de Gouges' "Declaration of the Rights of Woman and of the Female Citizen"¹ contributed to reshape women's subjecthood in international law by challenging the prevailing patriarchal structures of power. In doing so, this paper analyses today's value of the Declaration in advancing a feminist vision of international law and enhancing women's subjectivity in the international society.

Drawing upon Foucault's notions of subject, power, and resistance², this paper analyses how De Gouges' Declaration functioned as a political and discursive tool that disrupted the dominant gender relations of power embedded in legal discourses of the time. Foucault's concept of power not merely as repressive but also productive provides a nuanced understanding of the ways in which the Declaration intervened in the construction of women's subjecthood within the legal domain.

Through its assertion of women's rights and demands for equality, the Declaration embeds a particular form of feminist resistance that seeks to subvert patriarchal power and redefine the parameters of legal subjecthood for women. By situating the Declaration within the broader context of the French Revolution and the emergence of modern legal frameworks, this paper elucidates its significance in reshaping conceptions of women's subjectivity and agency within international law.

Through a Foucauldian analysis, this paper illuminates the complexities of power relations inherent in the construction of women's subjecthood in international law, highlighting the transformative potential of discursive interventions such as De Gouges' Declaration in challenging and reconfiguring dominant legal paradigms. Ultimately, this paper contributes to a deeper understanding of the politics of gender and power in the construction of legal subjectivities, paving the way for further inquiry into the intersections of law, feminism, and resistance.

Keywords: *women, subjecthood, international law, Foucault, power, resistance, feminism.*

¹ Olympe de Gouges, *Déclaration des droits de la femme et de la citoyenne*, 1791.

² Michel Foucault, *The Subject and Power*, *Critical Inquiry* 8, 4 (Summer, 1982).

Development of a Behavior Change Intervention to Promote Equitable Attitude Towards Women Amongst Adolescent Boys.

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In the context of socio-economic and cultural disparities, women face significant obstacles, ranging from limited access to education and healthcare to systemic barriers in labour markets and political participation. To rectify this situation, there is an urgent imperative for customized interventions aimed at bolstering their socio-economic status. Behavior changes interventions (BCIs), in this connection, emerge as pivotal tools for nurturing an equitable and inclusive social landscape. BCIs are meticulously crafted to address individual, interpersonal, and societal levels of influence, thereby facilitating shifts in mindset, values, and practices conducive to gender equality and women's rights.

This study delineates the developmental and testing process of an intervention designed to cultivate equitable attitudes towards women among adolescent boys. In this effort, the researcher draws upon the Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1977) and the Social Role Theory (Eagly, 1987) to provide a conceptual underpinning.

Objectives of this study are: -

1. To develop a behavior change intervention that aims to promote equitable attitude towards women amongst the school going adolescent boys.
2. To test the effectiveness *of the developed intervention*.

The development of this intervention navigated through important stages that involved (a) exploration of existing qualitative knowledge and current state of affairs of attitude towards women and (b) the elaboration of the theoretical grounding of the current status of operant attitudes and scope of their change through theoretical tweaking. This helped to design the intervention sessions and to draw out their likely impact on adolescent boys. This intervention included focused sessions of workshops, classes, short films, videos, group discussions, debates and essay writing. 25 students aged 13 to 15 years were exposed to this intervention weekly for six months. Each session spanned over 45 minutes of a class and half day of workshop. The intervention was delivered in a pre and post experimental setting and the outcomes were measured with the help of Attitude Towards Women Scale (ATWS) administered before and after the exposure.

There was statistically significant effect of the overall ATWS ($t=20.92, df=24, p<.001$), and its sub-dimensions such as domestic ($t=4.54, df=24, p<.001$), educational ($t=13.31, df=24, p<.001$), healthcare ($t=16.32, df=24, p<.001$), employment ($t=5.44, df=24, p<.001$) and societal ($t=13.97, df=24, p<.001$). These results revealed that our newly developed intervention casts its significant influence in the sense that when adolescent boys are properly exposed to its sessions, their set of attitudes towards women tends to get more equitable and sympathetic. These findings also help to reconfirm the premise of the theories that inspired to develop this behavior change intervention.

Keywords: Attitude towards women, Behaviour change interventions, Gender equity

Beyond the Binary: Exploring Women's Agency and Resistance in the Mughal Empire and Questioning the Historiographic Methodology

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It is worth noting that the literature from the Mughal period, often written primarily by men, is scarce in records on the contributions made by women to Mughal society. This paper attempts to highlight the areas where women have played a more varied and active role in Mughal society than what has been described in traditionally more male-centric historiography. The simplistic binary narrative of women functioning only in roles of domesticity and private lives as opposed to men occupying positions of authority and public spaces does not reflect the entirety and nuances of the historical reality of life in Mughal India, as this paper will illustrate in depth. Women from different social classes and within the royal household had varying levels of power and interaction, and they played a significant role in defining the cultural, religious, and moral structure of Mughal society. This paper explores and presents this diversity through a discussion of various relevant historical case studies.

As television shows like Sanjay Bhansali's *Heeramandi* (2024) are released, and images and narratives of historical women, beyond royalty, are discussed, it becomes even more important to re-evaluate even older cases of women whose lives and stories were intentionally silenced due to bias in traditional historiography and writing. This paper thus corresponds to varying themes of the conference, from a more feminist historiography in practice, representation of womanhood, to historical women's leadership and political participation.

As we evaluate traditional methodologies of history creation, one specific case study on women's leadership and lack of representation is that of the *Urdubegis*. During the period of Mughal Emperor Babur and his descendants, there is a negotiation between women and the cultural/religious norms present that allowed for a wider variety in the type of roles women played in Mughal society. A prominent role here is of the *Urdubegis*, an exclusive group of women warriors who protected the Emperor and his extended household. The *Urdubegis* did not follow many of the conventional norms that was expected of women in Mughal society. This paper also comments on the traditional representation of the *harem*.

In its discussion of the role of women in Mughal society, this paper explores and questions the role of *Urdubegis* and the lack of historical resources available on them. Further, it suggests research methods that might allow our historiographic methodologies to be more inclusive from a gender perspective.

Keywords: *Inclusivity, Diversity, Urdubegis, Gender, Representation.*

A Room of One's Own and a Voice of One's Own: Woolf and the Ongoing Fight for Women's Equality in the Public Sphere

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Virginia Woolf's seminal work "A Room of One's Own" continues to resonate as a powerful exploration of women's struggle for equality in the public sphere. Published in 1929, Woolf's writing highlighted the challenges women face in achieving creative expression, intellectual freedom, and a voice of their own. Despite progress, the ongoing fight for women's rights remains a pressing issue, as women encounter barriers such as gender bias, discrimination, and underrepresentation in different domains. The study critically analyses the Woolf's work and its implications for women's equality, focusing on themes of access to space and voice as fundamental components of gender empowerment. Through examining historical and contemporary contexts, the study highlights the persistent relevance of Woolf's ideas in addressing systemic barriers hindering full participation in public discourse. Through close readings and textual analysis, Woolf's arguments are explored, emphasising the importance of economic independence, access to education, and the role of space and voice in shaping women's identities. The study emphasise the need for ongoing advocacy, intersectional inclusivity, and active policy-making to promote the gender equality, drawing inspiration from Woolf's writing and dismantling structure.

Keywords: *Feminism, Virginia Woolf, Gender Discrimination, Gender Equality, Patriarchal Subjugation, Women Autonomy.*

Echoes of the Time: A Reflection on the Life and Learnings of Constance Prem Nath Dass.

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Nineteenth century was time of silent social upheaval in India which was prominently evident in reforms pertaining to women. Education of/ for women was receiving foremost attention, specifically in context to women taking up the roles of educators. Though the journey ahead was long and trying for many aspiring women of the later nineteenth and early twentieth century; the zeal behind their intentions wasn't tenuous. This paper presents one such life history of Constance PremNathDass, an alumni of Goucher College, Baltimore in 1911. She later pursued her Master's in Education at the teachers College. Columbia University, New York. The reflections made on her life, which wasn't entirely a rose walk; have a deep link with her academic learnings and contributions made therewith, as a pioneer women educator in India. She was the first Indian principal of Isabella Thoburn College, the first Christian College for women in Asia.

Developing the life sketches of educators, specially women, who initiated in re-establishing the structures of academia (in context to Indian scenario), is an essential discourse on how the methods of learning developed around restrictive factors like gender, religion, and class. The information collected is through a ten-year long association with two granddaughters of Constance Dass. Her exemplary contributions as a Vice-principal and later as the principal should be shared as the stepping stones in pillaring the academic acropolis of higher education for women. The resources, viz., personal diaries, treasure of photographs (both in India and America), academic achievement certificates add up adequately with the oral collection of information on her.

The importance of oral history methods as education tools has been gaining grounds because it is not purely technical but engages educators on a human level. The stories not only are a learning of new methods but are inspirationally moving.

Colonizing the Hijra Body: Categorization, Medicalization and Racialization

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In the last part of “Society must be Defended” and *The History of Sexuality* (Vol. 1), Foucault expounds on biopower which acts a positive power over life. Biopolitics functions as a positive power (something that produces) which is not only the “calculated management of life” (Foucault, 1978, p. 136) but also functions as a form of power which exposes a whole population to death. It is worthy of noting that biopolitics functions at two levels, individual and population. Using the experiences of Nazi and Stalinist regimes, Foucault highlights how certain masses of the population are eliminated or executed for the protection and survival of a nation or class or race. Thus, racism becomes a crucial political tool which allows for biological division and regulation of the human species as well as offers a justification for the extermination of the people who are considered inferior. Modern racism for Foucault develops with “colonized genocide” (Foucault, p. 176) so that this right to take life could be justified. Mbembe builds on this argument of Foucault and colonization to suggest necropolitics which argues for “subjugation of life to the power of death” (Mbembe, 2003, p. 39).

For Mbembe, various types of “weapons are deployed in the interest of maximum destruction of persons and the creation of death-worlds, new and unique forms of social existence in which vast populations are subjugated to conditions of life conferring upon them the status of living-dead” (p. 40). Mbembe in the article argues that an excess of population is produced by modern day capitalism which needs to be managed in a particular way through the exposure to dangers and risk. Further, this population needs to be confined in specific places such as concentration camps, favelas or even prisons which would enable the management of people. Thus, the use of necropolitics in this way allows for the elimination of human populations. However, necropolitics is not limited to mass killings; it is deployed through “small doses” (p. 36) of death that structures everyday lives of individuals. For Mbembe, Necropolitics implies a certain kind of surveillance which is not for the purpose of discipline but to extract from people a maximum of utility. In this light, necropolitics destroys bodies and the values of social existence. Using bio- and necropolitics I would like to look at the role of 1871 Criminal Tribes Act (CTA) of the Indian penal code which targeted the Hijra community.

1871 CTA was introduced by the British replacing the 1533 Buggery Act. While this section criminalized non-procreative sexualities, it was used to target the traditional community of Hijra in South Asia. Hijras had been a part of the South Asia for centuries and it stood at odds with the western concept of morality and gender. British empire uses body policing and medicalization to pathologize and regulate all forms of non-heteronormative behaviors. However, in 1947 when India made its own constitution, section 377 was built into the constitution which led to the stigmatization of the Hijra and LGBTQ+ community in independent India. For this paper I would like to write a feminist genealogy exploring aspects of the 1871 CTA in colonial and independent India with emphasis on the bio- and necropolitics as a strategy to discipline, regulate and marginalize the Hijra community.

Keywords: *Biopolitics, Hijra community, 1871 CTA, Racialization, Medicalization*

Rising Drought and Its Effect on Livelihood Vulnerability and Farm Productivity by Gender: A Case Study in West Bengal

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This study has attempted to investigate farm productivity difference and the nature and magnitude of livelihood vulnerability of farmers across gender in the Bankura region, West Bengal, a district officially marked as 'drought laden zone' of India, in face of rising frequency of droughts since last two and half decades. A multistage purposive random sampling technique was used to select study sites and collect farm-level data of 200 farmers/cultivator households (100-female and 100 male) using a well-structured and pre-tested schedule in the year of 2022. The findings revealed that female cultivators/farmers are comparatively more exposed to changing climate of increased drought incidence than are the male farmers. Due to the lack of basic amenities and economic resources, the 'Livelihood Vulnerability Index Score' was significantly higher for female farmers. As a result significant difference in paddy productivity, the chief crop cultivated in the study area, between male-headed and female-headed cultivator households was observable. The paddy productivity of male-headed farmer households was noted to be a perceptible 14-19 percent higher than that of female. The study further revealed that if female-headed households had experienced the same return on their resources as that of their male colleagues, even in the arid drought prone condition, their productivity gap would have decreased by more than 7-10 percent thus substantially nearing closure of the existing gender gap. This result calls for urgent steps on the part of the government like providing female farmers-cultivators with innovative, practical and gender sensitive methods so as to reduce the extent and dimensions of livelihood vulnerability and develop livelihood resilience for this 'at risk' zone of the nation so as to enable them improve farm productivity and thereby meaningfully contribute to national food security almost at par with the male counterparts.

Keywords: Gender, Drought, Farmer, Livelihood Vulnerability Index, Farm Productivity

Why are women more vulnerable to communicable diseases than men? A Systematic Review

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Women are reported to be at higher risks and more vulnerable to infectious and communicable diseases than men. It is well known that social, economic, environmental and demographic factors have collectively influenced women's health. Many policies and interventions have been implemented to enhance the social and economic conditions to improve women's health. However, in the last decade, women still continue to be more vulnerable to a core group of communicable diseases. This paper intends to examine why women are more vulnerable to communicable diseases than men. A systematic review of articles published on PubMed and Taylor and Francis platforms was conducted in April and May 2024 and the publications from 2014 to 2024, reporting vulnerabilities of women to communicable diseases were included. The results were synthesised by using thematic analysis. The review found out that both physiological, social, and environmental factors influenced women's vulnerabilities to communicable diseases. Commonly cited as well as emerging factors in the last decade have been discussed. It also synthesised the preventive measures and interventions to improve women's health. The paper discusses the findings using the life course perspective to understand the relationship between social context and health practices.

Keywords: *Women's health, gender, communicable diseases, vulnerabilities*

Isolation and Debasement of Power: Depicting Hegemonic Masculinity in Indian New Wave Cinema

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The Theoretical Model of Hegemonyⁱ, underpinning the concept of hegemonic masculinity owes much to critical structuralism in Antonio Gramsci's Marxist analysis of class relations. Thus, the idea assumes power as fundamentally a contested entity between social groups, women, and men. The critical structural entities such as the state, education, religion, media, political institutions, and business are structurally and historically dominated by men.ⁱⁱ Indian New Wave filmmakers often considered Hegemonic Masculinity the most influential theoretical concept in gender history. Filmmakers like Adoor Gopalakrishnan, Shyam Benegal, and Girish Kasaravalli not only widely attributed the term "hegemonic masculinity" through their cinematic lens, but they also depicted how hegemonic masculinity legitimates and reproduces the socio-economic and cultural relationships in terms of power and dominance. By describing the conflicts between power and powerlessness or depicting the debasement of power, Indian New Wave filmmakers depicted how 'Hegemony' refers to a historical situation or circumstances while power is won and held.ⁱⁱⁱ In this part, I will discuss how social relations regarding hegemonic masculinity are inextricably linked to the gendered psyche and power domination, where the concept of hegemonic masculinity should explore both socio-hierarchical and psychological domains. Here, Shyam Benegal's 'Ankur' (1974) and Adoor Gopalakrishnan's 'Vidheyan' (1994) will be discussed, exploring how Masculinities are constructed in ways that realise the class and caste dividend. It will also depict how marginalised masculinities are dependent on hegemonic masculinity for authorisation.

Keywords: *Isolation, Debasement of Power, Hegemonic Masculinity, Indian New Wave Cinema*

Relativity of Food Concerning Gender in Japanese Literature

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This paper will reflect upon the representation of food in Japanese literature. Food is an essential part of life that connects us to different cultures, nature, and each other. In Terry Eagleton's words, "Endlessly interpretable," and food, like literature," looks like an object but is a relationship."³

A question arises: What is the need to read about food? When it is just considered a commodity. How has food been written in the literature? Thus, exploring food in Japanese literature gives an intimidating tour of the post-world War time. Food has been changing with time, and the factors affected are nationalism, industrialization, citification, and the social construction of gender.

What is the necessity of reading food in the literature? What sort of knowledge can be acquired through literature? I will try to answer these questions in this paper by observing and stating the incidents from several pieces of literature written in the later 20th century and keeping the different elements under the umbrella. The multiplex relation of food with food, rituals, politics, gathering, appetite, celebration, caring, pride, abundance, poverty, communication, employment, and hunger. To understand the food in the literature, first, we need to comprehend the ties of food with society and culture.

My paper will majorly focus on the concerns of gender and food. Somehow, food is always drawing an analogy to women. The image has a peculiar connection to the food or cooking. For a woman, food is a tool to configure power and explain gender-oriented roles.

Keywords: *Food, Woman, Gender, Power, Society*

³ Terry Eagleton, "Edible Erciture," pp.204-205.

On Love and Anguish: The Jurisprudential Evolution of the Philippine Law on Violence Against Women

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Violence against women (VAW) is defined by the United Nations in a 1993 declaration as “any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life”. Cognizant of its international obligations to address and combat VAW, as well as its commitments in the Constitution to guarantee full respect for human rights in general and to value the dignity of women and children in particular, the Philippine government enacted Republic Act (R.A.) No. 9262, otherwise known as the Anti-Violence Against Women and Their Children Act of 2004.

In the twenty years following the enactment of R.A. No. 9262, the Supreme Court of the Philippines has aided legal practitioners and the general public in understanding the nuances of the law.

Utilizing the doctrine and empirical methodologies, this paper delves into specific Supreme Court decisions applying and/or interpreting R.A. No. 9262, namely: (1) *Garcia v. Drilon and XXX v. AAA, et al.*, both filed by men praying that R.A. No. 9262 be declared unconstitutional; (2) *Knutson v. Sarmiento-Flores*, which ruled that a father can file an action under R.A. No. 9262 to protect his minor child; and (3) *Agacid v. People and Jacinto v. Fouts*, which held that R.A. No. 9262 applies to lesbian relationships.

Viewing the letter of R.A. No. 9262 through the lens of these landmark decisions, this paper puts forward the following conclusions: (1) the Judiciary is a critical partner in putting the Philippines' VAW legislation in practice; and (2) owing to its role in conclusively interpreting the law, the Supreme Court's point of view plays a critical role in applying R.A. No. 9262 to situations that may be described as “unique”.

Keywords: *violence against women, jurisprudence, law*

Striving for Equity: Exploring Gender-Inclusive Medical Leadership in India

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Introduction There is a notable gap in studies examining the impact of gender within socio-cultural norms in non-Western professional settings, especially concerning the well-being of women physicians.

Methods Using purposive sampling and thematic data analysis, we recorded interviews with 30 physicians in India during May to July 2023. Participants were aged 34 to 65, with experience ranging from five to 35 years, in various clinical (37%), surgical (30%), para-clinical (23%), and hospital administration (10%) roles, 97% were postgraduates, and 53% were women. The research questions explored how leadership roles happened; managing key challenges; barriers and enablers, and practical interventions to support women into medical leadership positions.

Results Findings revealed that the majority of interviewees believed gender-related barriers were obstructing women's progress and success in medical leadership roles in India. These barriers were identified within three overarching domains: (i) specialty, (ii) organisational, and (iii) socio-cultural. Interviewees commonly acknowledged the male-dominated landscape of medical leadership although some women stated they did not perceive any barriers for women's advancement to leadership roles. Interestingly, male surgeons held the perception that women might not be as effective in certain surgical disciplines, such as orthopaedics and neurosurgery. Some men physicians, however, considered women physicians in India are highly effective multi-taskers.

Conclusion - We recommend structural reforms in medical education, leadership development, workplace systems and cultures, and improved implementation of equality, diversity, and inclusion policies in the Indian context.

Keywords: *Gender inequality, medical leadership, Academic medicine, India*

Activism, Advocacy, and Social Change

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The HIV era is known for PLHIV's narratives of societal lived experiences, that are stories of fear and discrimination fraught with isolation, hopelessness, shame, and guilt experiences, among many others. The focus groups on theological reflections on PLHIV's faith-lived experiences, that created contested spaces in a context of pain and confusion. The research objective was to explore the lived and embodied theologies of people living with HIV and AIDS; among the 60 members of the Siyaphila support group. The research question focused on the lived and embodied theologies of people living with HIV and AIDS members of the Siyaphila support group networks. The study employed a phenomenology research design through purposive sampling and interpretative techniques to generate results and findings about embodied theologies. The findings confirmed that for the Siyaphila support groups network members, lived and survived through faith experiences of pain and abandonment. Participating in the Contextual Bible Studies as Theological tool to engage in promoting advocacy through activism tools from Ujamaa Biblical Research Centre enabled the HIV and AIDS activists to identify with a suffering Jesus Christ who is always with the poor as they journey through their life struggles to the crucifixion. In this way faith-lived experiences with HIV and AIDS were deeply positioned with searching for God and meaningfulness of life with incurable illness and eventualities of death. Decisively, this study found that emerging embryonic lived and embodied theological experiences are prevalent among the PLHIV, this contributes to new knowledge about embodied theology within Pastoral Care and Counselling. Numerous ways people explore healing and therapeutic spaces in difficult contexts that bears various vulnerabilities and brokenness that manifests in expressions of multifaceted theologies created and shaped by lived experiences calling for liberation theology of both body and soul. Through wrestling with life challenges and seeking advocacy and longing for freedom of the oppressed urged to reclaim contested spaces for liberation that are expressed in the tapestry of incipient theologies of life in unfamiliar spaces venturing to the unknown territories waiting to exhale and explode to new Social change.

Keywords: *Advocacy; AIDS; HIV; PLHIV; Liberation, Embodied Theology; CBS (Contextual Bible Study).*

The Filipina in the 21st Century and the Shadow of the Maria Clara Ideal

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Despite leaping progress in improving the gender gap in the Philippines, the inescapable shadow of the *Maria Clara* ideology continues to plague Filipina's progress in the 21st century. *Maria Clara* an ideology that prevails as the ideal Filipina, submissive, pure, innocent, significantly lingers even in today's socio-political discourses. The researcher scrutinized; 1. How did patriarchy a lasting legacy of Spanish colonialism construct the *Maria Clara* dogma? and 2. How did the state, religion and education remain the hegemonic tools that perpetuate the persisting *Maria Clara* ideal even in today's Philippine society? In the lens of feminist literary criticisms and post-colonial feminist theory the researcher employed literary and historical analysis in elucidating the construction of this ideology and how it was maintained. The researcher culminated that patriarchy is the institution that continues to oppress women particularly in post-colonial societies such as the Philippines. The construction of the *Maria Clara* ideology exalting her on the pedestal is a manifestation of this patriarchal hegemony that continues to impede women's progress in the Philippines. The researcher argues that the function of woman in post-colonial societies within the context of Catholicism as part of the ideal familial unit has been harbored and used by the state, and is deeply ingrained in the socio-political fiber of the Philippine society impeding women's freedom and gaining equal footing with men. The researcher argues that Filipina's must reclaim the image of *Maria Clara* her indigenous roots, the westernized version of her, the modern, and all the parts of her that was vilified by centuries of different phases of colonization to create a new Filipina woman unencumbered by her past.

Keywords: *Filipina, Southeast Asian literature, postcolonial society, Maria Clara ideology,*

ⁱ Hegemony, a pivotal concept in Gramsci's Prison Notebooks and his most significant contribution to Marxist thinking, is about winning, holding power, and forming (and destroying) social groups. In this sense, knowing how the ruling class establishes and maintains its domination is essential. The ability to impose a definition of the situation, to set the terms in which events are understood and issues discussed, to formulate ideals and define morality is an essential part of this process. Hegemony involves the persuasion of the more significant part of the population, mainly through the media, and the organisation of social institutions in ways that appear "natural", "ordinary," and "normal." The state, through punishment for non-conformity, is crucially involved in this negotiation and enforcement.

Connell R (1987), 'Gender and Power: Society, the Person and Sexual Politics', 107; published by: Allen and Unwin, Sydney p-95.

ⁱⁱ Whitehead Stephen M. (2002), 'Power and Resistance' in the book of Men and Masculinities, published by Oxford, UK, p-91

ⁱⁱⁱ Connell R.W. (1987) Masculinities, Berkeley: University of California Press, see also. Connell, (1987) Gender and Power: Society, the Person and Sexual Politics, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press,