

Colloquium



## **TRANSFORMATION FOR SUSTAINABILITY?**

**Gender and its Intersections  
within Participation in Higher Education**



10-11 February 2020

Venue: Professor Anita Banerjee Memorial Hall, Jadavpur University

**School of Women's Studies**

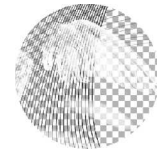
Jadavpur University

Kolkata – 700 032

**Funded by RUSA 2.0, Jadavpur University**

# TRANSFORMATION FOR SUSTAINABILITY?

## Gender and its Intersections within Participation in Higher Education



## CONCEPT NOTE

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Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are the intended key drivers of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which identify a number of global challenges to be addressed within Lower-Middle Income Countries (LMICs). Quality education (SDG 4), gender inequality (SDG 5), and strong institutions for peace and justice (SDG 16) have a direct bearing on the academic functions of social formation and knowledge building. Feminist scholars globally have critiqued the adherence to liberal feminist and neoliberal framework in the SDG framework.

- Cognizant that the SDG framework may not be fit-for-purpose, what can be done with this powerful external referent?

Parallel to increasing commodification and privatization of higher education institutions, has been a feminization of the education market into flexible, peripheral labour such that teaching resources have been increasingly casualised, rendered docile and deprofessionalised. Women's Studies Centres (WSCs) face a drastic reduction in investment. The wide gender disparity among academic staff and their positions of power in universities continues. The disparity is exacerbated when gender intersects with other markers of difference, including caste, class, ethnicity, ability, sexuality, language, location, displacement. Yet those located within such categories are cited in policy rhetoric as beneficiaries.

- Cognizant that institutions are not fit-for-purpose, how might their transformation be re-imagined?
- What do discourses and constructions of 'transformation' and 'sustainability' reveal about the conditions of possibility?
- How might feminist scholars bring their expertise to bear on theorizing the lived experiences of those who (mis)fit in the margins and in the mainstream to inform counter-narratives of higher education?
- What truths are to be told about the functions of the policies of affirmative action, gender equality, sexual harassment, etc. in terms of participation in institutions of higher education?

- What are the parameters of power and inclusion which determine who gets to become a learner and then a teacher?

The Indian University Grants Commission (UGC) has mandated WSCs to inform the achievement of the SDGs of promoting equality and empowerment of women. Indian feminist scholars, within and beyond such WSCs, have contributed towards challenging notions of main(male)stream authority within the sphere of academic influence – academic methodologies of practice in teaching and research; knowledge systems; and participation within the ‘institutional logics’ of the academy’s hegemonic culture(s).

- In what ways may a feminist vision and praxis contribute to the transformation of higher education, its sustainability in terms of gender equality, peace and justice?

This colloquium invites scholars and practitioners to come together, to speak and write a way through the impasse of intellectualization, feminization, and dehumanization of the current conditions of our positioning. Key to the ethos of this gathering is the reflexive openness and self-criticality to engaging with the problematic of how the ‘claiming’ of diverse experiences of systemic injustice, may also lead to certain inhabiting and reproducing of institutional power.

Nandita Banerjee Dhawan, Jadavpur University  
Dina Zoe Belluigi, Queen’s University Belfast  
November, 2019



COLLOQUIUM SCHEDULE

First Day - 10 February 2020

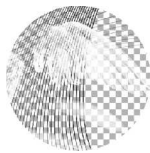
Time	Panel	Description
10:00am		Registration and Tea
10:30am		Welcome and introductions
11:00am	Panel 1	<p><b><u>(Un)veiling the hidden: Gender work, privilege, and its paradoxes</u></b>  <i>Chair: Shefali Moitra</i>  <i>Professor, Department of Philosophy (Retired); Former Director, School of Women's Studies, Jadavpur University</i></p> <p>Asha Achuthan/ <b>Gender Work in Higher Education: Feminist Perspectives</b>  Anurekha Chari-Wagh/ <b>Interrogating Privilege, Feminist Praxis and Higher Education</b>  Anagha Tambe/ <b>Paradox of Gender Inclusive University</b></p>
12:30pm		Tea and snacks
12:45pm	Panel 2	<p><b><u>Untangling the powerful external referent of the SDGs</u></b>  <i>Chair: Swati Ghosh</i>  <i>Professor, Department of Economics; Director, Women's Studies Centre, Rabindra Bharati University</i></p> <p>M. Satish Kumar/ <b>Talking Dirty! How Far Sustaining a Neoliberal Frame is Relevant?</b>  Nilanjana Sengupta/ <b>Social Inclusion without Transformation: The Human Face of Globalisation</b></p>
1:45pm		Lunch
2:45pm	Panel 3	<p><b><u>Ugly truths of interactional dynamics I</u></b>  <i>Chair: To be announced</i></p> <p>Diganta Mukherjee/ <b>A Quick Glance at the Survey Data of the Project "Transformation towards Sustainability in Higher Education"</b>  Maroona Murmu/ <b>Inefficacious Affirmative Action and Social Exclusions in Higher Education</b>  Dina Zoe Belluigi/ <b>"Sustainability is based on the faith we have towards the work that we are doing": Within and at the borderlands of the Academy</b></p>
4:15pm		Tea
4:30pm	Panel 4	<p><b><u>Complexities of (Im)possibility</u></b>  <i>Chair: Anirban Das</i>  <i>Associate Professor, Cultural Studies, Centre for Studies in Social Sciences Calcutta</i></p> <p>Usha Raman/ <b>The Politics of Process: The Limits and Possibilities of Critical Pedagogy</b>  Asima Jena/ <b>Decoding the Policies of Affirmative Action in University: Sub-alternity and the Problematic of Language</b>  Hardik Brata Biswas/ <b>Within/Without: Inscriptions of Erasure in Women's Studies?</b></p>
6:00pm	Film shows	<p><b><u>Divergences: Transitional narratives</u></b></p> <p>Dina Zoe Belluigi/ <b>Counter-stories of author-ity in Transition</b>  Debalina Majumder / <b>Katha (Monologues)</b></p>

**Second Day - 11 February 2020**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Panel</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>10:00am</b>		Reflections: Day 1
<b>10:30am</b>	Panel 1	<p><b><u>Ugly truths of interactional dynamics II</u></b>  <i>Chair: Malini Bhattacharya</i>  <i>Professor, Department of English (Retired); Former Director, School of Women's Studies, Jadavpur University</i></p> <p>Nandini Ghosh/ <b>Disability Gender and Higher Education: A Note on Inclusion</b>  Ranjita Biswas/ <b>Filling out the Queer Gaps in Higher Education</b>  Grace Ese-osa Idahosa/ <b>Dirty Body Politics: Habitus, Gendered Embodiment, and the Resistance to Women's Agency in Transforming South African Higher Education</b></p>
<b>12:00pm</b>		Tea and snacks
<b>12:15pm</b>	Panel 2	<p><b><u>Practices of (Im)possibility</u></b>  <i>Chair: Paromita Chakravarti</i>  <i>Professor, Department of English; Former Director, School of Women's Studies, Jadavpur University</i></p> <p>Rekha Pappu/ <b>Economic Aims of Education: How are they Relevant for Women?</b>  Sunita Singh/ <b>Issues of Gender Inequality in Indian Classroom with Especial Reference to Socio-Economic Status and Academic Disciplines</b>  Rukmini Sen/ <b>Pedagogies of Transformation? Contemporary Feminist Practices within and beyond the Classroom</b></p>
<b>1:45pm</b>		Lunch
<b>2:45pm</b>	Panel 3	<p><b><u>Rooting and shifting academic citizenship</u></b>  <i>Chair: Nilanjana Gupta</i>  <i>Professor, Department of English; Former Director, School of Media, Communication and Culture, Jadavpur University</i></p> <p>Somdutta Mukherjee/ <b>Higher Education, Higher Stakes? (Re)locating 'gender' and 'resistance' in Higher Education Institutions in India</b>  Nandita Banerjee Dhawan / <b>(Dis)loyal Intellectuals, (Ir)responsible Practices: Shifting Narratives of Academic Citizenship</b></p>
<b>4:15pm</b>		Tea
<b>4:30pm</b>	Discussion	<b>Reflective Dialogue: The Unframed? The Unasked?</b>
<b>5:30pm</b>		Thanks

## ABSTRACTS & BIONOTES

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**Anagha Tambe**

### **Paradox of Gender Inclusive University**

The last two decades have witnessed profound transformations in the field of higher education in India, in terms of expansion, privatization and usability. A critical inquiry of gender in higher education reveals narrowing of gender disparities as enrolment of women increases, gender-focussed schemes are launched, and institutionalization of women's studies expands in universities and colleges. This presentation seeks to examine this new visibility of women and gender in higher education, which seems to be more blinding than revealing. This visibility seems to mark not decline in sexism, but rather it's surfacing in more contentious and elusive forms. Firstly, the intersection and tension between categories of gender, and caste, class, ethnicity has led to wider disparities amongst women from different social groups; and to a tangential relationship between the academic fields of women's studies and social exclusion studies. Further the inclusion of women and gender seems to be in disjuncture with more political and democratic engagement with gender. This presentation will explore how the drives towards inclusivity in higher education are entangled in complex exclusionary processes, with the working of sexism in intricate intersection with other axes of social power. It will examine the processes of negotiation and confrontation, addressing the peculiar mix of mainstreaming and critical marginality of women and gender that has rather enabled to imagine the University differently. It will thus urge for rethinking the institutional and academic practices of the university, rather than the celebratory narrative of the gender inclusive university.

## Bio note

Dr. Anagha Tambe is an Assistant Professor and at present the Director of KSP Women's Studies Centre, Savitribai Phule Pune University. She holds doctorate from University of Mumbai, and MPhil from Delhi School of Economics, after her post-graduation from University of Pune. Her broad areas of research include gender, caste and sexual labour; genealogy of Women's Studies in India; and inequalities and democracy in higher education. Some of her publications are on the devadasi question in contemporary Maharashtra, and debates on sex work in India.

She is engaged in designing and teaching courses, and developing critical bilingual pedagogies in Women's Studies. She has edited, translated and written many teaching learning resources in women's studies, also in Marathi. Anagha is presently the General Secretary of Indian Association for Women's Studies, the national level professional body for Women's Studies in India.

### *Awards received:*

Fulbright-Nehru Academic and Professional Excellence Scholarship, 2018-19, Five College Women's Studies Research Centre, Mount Holyoke College, MA Research theme: 'Vulgarization' of Folk Culture: Gendered Labour, Sexual Performance and Caste Stigma in Contemporary India.

### *Publications on Gender in Higher Education:*

- "(Hyper)Visible 'Women'/ Invisible (Dalit) Women: Challenging the Elusive Sexism in Indian Universities" in *Strategies for Resisting Sexism in the Academy*, ed. Gail Crimmins, Palgrave MacMillan, 2018.
- *Inclusive Universities: Linking Diversity, Equity and Excellence for the 21st Century: A Research Report*. Co-authored along with S. Kamat, S. Dyahadroy, S. Hurtado and X. Zúñiga, KSP Women's Studies Centre, University of Pune (India) and College of Education, University of Massachusetts Amherst (USA)

### *Research on Gender in Higher Education:*

- 'Inclusive Universities: Linking Equity, Diversity and Excellence for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century', a project supported by USIEF, New Delhi (Obama Singh Initiative), conducted in collaboration with University of Massachusetts, Amherst, 2013- 2017.

This project mapped the diverse social profile of students in a state university in western India and investigated their experiences of the learning environment of the campus. It created a tool of campus climate survey for studying inclusivity of campus.

- 'Higher Education Success and Social Mobility: A Study on Coaching Schemes for SC/ST/OBC and Minorities in Universities and Colleges' Pune chapter of UGC supported project conducted by NUEPA, 2017.

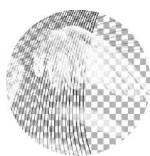
- A Study of Teaching/ Learning of Women's Studies in Contemporary India, a project supported by ICSSR (jointly coordinated), 2013- 2016.

This research study analyzed the transformations in women's studies in India in the new millennium, the fraught process of expanding institutionalization of WS in India through the development of teaching programmes (Masters) in WS. Under this project in- depth case studies of 21 women's studies centres across India were conducted. On the background of feminist discussion on the disjuncture between the intellectual-political and institutional projects of WS, it studied changing contours of WS through debates on disciplinarity and professionalization of WS.

- 'Developing Open Knowledge Resources in Indian Languages in Women's/ Gender Studies' in collaboration with the CILHE- Centre for Indian Languages in Higher Education, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, 2014- 2016.

This project was conducted with dual aim of creating digital resources in Marathi in Women's Studies, and producing knowledge through collaborative process by very people who use those knowledge resources. It involved creating annotations/ wiki-entries in Marathi of 100 key texts of Women's Studies in India through collaboration amongst WS research students. The most unique part of this project is that these annotations are largely done (prepared and/ or translated) by the researchers cum teachers for whom English is not first language (ENFL).

- 'Educational Attainment and Challenges amongst DTNTs', a project supported by CSD (Council for Social Development, Hyderabad), State chapter of the ICSSR funded national level study, 2012- 2014.
- 'Building Teaching and Research Capacity in Women's Studies: Reimagining Higher Education', a project supported by Navajbai Ratan Tata Trust, Mumbai, (co-investigator), 2008- 2011.



**Anurekha Chari-Wagh**

### **Interrogating Privilege, Feminist Praxis and Higher Education**

One of the questions that this colloquium is interested in is to reflect on ways feminist vision and praxis contribute to the transformation of higher education. In the context of transformation of higher education, engagement not only with the idea of the discipline, but a reflection of the practitioners of the discipline (in this context sociology) is relevant. The analysis should be framed within the larger context of higher education policies, where the



different practitioners of the discipline, which includes the teachers, institutional authorities and the students, are engaging with the discipline. Thus I am interested analysing micro structures of everyday life, especially how power gets institutionalized and creates and supports patterns of inequality. In this context the classrooms and the process of mentoring become crucial sites within higher education that has the potential for feminist vision and praxis to be realised. A critical analysis of these would lead us to engage with not only the classroom, its composition, the practices of teaching and research and but crucially the idea of a teacher itself. Such an engagement could be analysed by focussing on the making of sociology and gender studies by examining the autobiographical journeys and shaping of the disciplines particularly by contextualizing either marginalities based on structural identities such as gender, caste, class, tribe, minorities, region, language, disability, queer, etc but also privileges enjoyed and wielded in relation to the it.

In this platform I wish to engage with the idea of privilege, as it structures the manner in which power operates in structuring one's access, engagement and relationship with knowledge production, consumption and distribution. In my classrooms, I have faced the challenge of problematizing the privilege, that I have as upper caste, urban English educated, middle class heterosexual women hold in my everyday practices. While drawing upon feminist pedagogy I could think of ways in which I could address marginalities within the classroom, but I fall short I believe in engaging in a holistic manner, my privilege and that of the students. While engaging on this I am inspired by the work that engages with the experience of 'white privilege', that argues that one has to first see privilege before one can give it up and this is challenging as the experience of privilege has been invisibilised, normalised and naturalised. It needs continuous self-reflexivity and recognition that being a teacher that believes in feminist vision and praxis, necessitates personal accountability.

In this colloquium, I wish to discuss three aspects of privilege, in the context of a feminist sociologist teacher:

1. To interrogate the overwhelming invisible presence of privilege and lack of recognition of the structures that render it normalised and naturalised.
2. To examine as to what extent is engaging and recognition of one's privilege crucial to the process of transformation of higher education.
3. To reflect on ways to engage with privilege within classrooms and mentoring process within the larger context of feminist praxis within higher education.

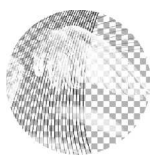
To address the above aspects, I ask the following questions:

1. How do the teacher and the student engage with privilege that is invisibilised, normalised and naturalised? In what ways and practices does a one problematize privileges in their everyday practices so that it becomes visible and emancipatory?
2. In what ways curriculum invisibilises privilege in terms of syllabi and prescribed readings?

3. What are the pedagogical strategies one could use to engage with the concept of privilege?

#### **Bio note**

Dr. Anurekha Chari-Wagh is an Associate Professor, Department of Sociology, at University of Hyderabad, India. Anurekha specializes in the areas of gender and development, land rights for women, gendered citizenship and feminist pedagogy. She has published on the above issues in national and international journals and chapters in edited books. Anurekha was also awarded C V Raman, Post- Doctoral Fellowship, UGC 2014-2015, where she worked at Department of Sociology, University of Connecticut on Wages, Credit and Land Rights in Globalizing India. She was also the coordinator of sociology papers: Sociology of India and Sociology of Gender under the Ministry of Human Resource Development, University Grants Commission, (UGC) India E-Pathshala programme 2012-2017 for developing E-content Post Graduate material in Sociology.



**Asha Achuthan**

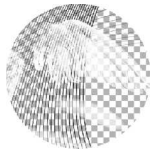
#### **Gender Work in Higher Education: Feminist Perspectives**

The distance between gender work and feminist scholarship in higher educational institutions and education policy, is something i see working insidiously, so that the feminist burden, if you will, or the hidden feminist queer work, is about re-iterating feminist perspectives on gender work that otherwise occupies HEI spaces in a depoliticized, aperspectival, manner, fulfilling a *regulatory* function rather than a perspectival one - whether in curriculum or policy. Examples include the kinds of work that occupy public health disciplines, management studies, development studies, even, where gender gets included either as demographic, or 'location', or simply 'women' [of course cis only]. I hope to flesh this out a bit via concrete examples from HEI spaces like the one I occupy.

#### **Bio note**

Dr. Asha Achuthan presently teaches at the Advanced Centre for Women's Studies, TISS. She was initially trained in medicine from Calcutta University, and went on to work on an Mphil in Women's Studies from Jadavpur University, and thereafter completed PhD in Cultural Studies from Centre for the Study of Culture and Society, Bangalore. Her current work explores the contexts of gender and biomedicine, with a focus on feminist epistemological critiques of the same. She has published in the areas of gender diversity in science institutions, feminist standpoint methodologies, interdisciplinarity in higher education, sexuality and the nation. She is currently preparing a manuscript on the place of the dai, or midwife, vis-a-vis the

modern therapeutic as well as the canonical indigenous, in the colonial period. Asha was recently Charles Wallace Visiting Fellow at the King's India Institute, London, UK, working on research related to the status of the dai or midwife in colonial contexts. Asha is member, Indian Association of Women's Studies.



**Asima Jena**

### **Decoding the Policies of Affirmative Action in University: Sub-alternity and the Problematic of Language**

This talk is a reflective note of my experience of mentoring subaltern students at peripheral locations – away from the “powers” of metropolitan centres of learning which perform the role of knowledge validator and gate-keepers of the knowledge production and dissemination. At a macro level, my forays into teaching happened at a critical time. To put it crudely, during that time, new Central Universities were instituted with the aim of democratization of higher education (idea of “justice” was translated through providing special fellowships for research students from the weaker sections), while at the same time, privatization of higher education was growing/expanding in unprecedented manner which precisely attracted students of privileged backgrounds. Gender and class distinctions can be drawn in terms of different set of students accessing private and public universities. Further, setbacks were also seen through ascendancy of saffronisation of education. Feminist pedagogy recognize that teachers and students are alike “texts” of their own to the classroom to which, shape the transactions within it. Since the University was headed by a visionary - who staunchly subscribed Ambedkarian Pedagogy and valued teaching in a jargon free and dialogic manner, in this colloquium, firstly, I intend to share complex layers of experiences. Though handling subaltern students broadened my horizons, it equally brought tensions, dilemmas, etc – of mentoring at CUG at initial years. Students from the marginalized communities enriched the classrooms in terms of sharing their experiential/subjugated knowledge. However, at times language was becoming a significant barrier for them to communicate. As a teacher, one significant constraint for me was how to apply emancipatory pedagogy into class-room practice, particularly, how to communicate some of the complex ideas in simple language – internally it was causing me insecurities that I might in the process distort the nuanced meaning. Secondly, it purports to encapsulate the impact of the shifts in the education policy under the right wing regime – it entailed change of guard in the University too. These impacts were noticeable in the classroom, subversion of affirmative action especially the issue of scholarship, sexism, knowledge production process, etc.

## Bio-Note

I have been with the Department of Sociology, University of Hyderabad since September, 2018. Earlier, I was associated with the Centre for Studies in Society and Development, Central University of Gujarat from 2011. I studied Sociology –MA, MPhil and PhD – from University of Hyderabad. My doctoral work among the performing communities of coastal Andhra, focused on the politics of risk discourse, the way in which the HIV/AIDS discourse shaped the identity of subaltern women as well as the process of subversion and negotiation against the discourse.

### *Research Inquiries*

My areas of interest lie in sexuality studies, sociology of health, sociology of gender, studies on development and contemporary debates in ethnography and labour. My recent research is centred on three research themes. Firstly, it excavates of the contribution of sexually subaltern groups in Indian history –late colonial and early Independence –through an inter-disciplinary methodology. Secondly, it interrogates the dominant sociological theorization of “labour”, approaches labour from the axis of gender, sexuality and disability by deploying embodiment perspective and maps its complicated entanglement with caste, state and market in India. The third research preoccupation involves analysis of food-regulation and its implication on public health in India.

### *Publications*

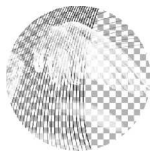
#### *Journal Articles*

1. “Critical Reflections on Health Sector Reforms in India: A Seminar Report” (With Madhumita Biswal), *Indian Journal of Medical Ethics*, 2018.
2. “Whose Body is Legitimized for Sterilization After All?” (with Madhumita Biswal), *Society and Culture in South Asia*, 2014.
3. Stigma, Sex Work and HIV: Contradictions and Lessons Learnt from a Community Led Structural Intervention in Southern India”, (with Monica Biradavolu et al), *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*, 2012.
4. “Challenging the Stigmatization of Female Sex Workers through a Community Led Structural Intervention: Learning from a Case Study of a Female Sex Worker Intervention in Andhra Pradesh”, (with Kim Blankenship et al) *AIDS Care*, 2010.
5. Culture, Propertied Classes and Dynamics of a Region: A Study of HIV/AIDS in East Godavari District (Andhra Pradesh)”, (with Purendra Prasad), *Sociological Bulletin*, 2009.
6. Can Sex Workers Regulate Police: Learning from an HIV prevention project for sex workers in South India”, (with Monica Biradavolu et al) *Social Science and Medicine*, 2009.
7. Exploitation of Child Work and Risk: A Study in an Urban Slum in Bhubaneswar”, in Kailash Satyarthi and Bhupinder Zutshi (ed) “*Globalization, Development and Child Rights*”. Sipra, 2006.

*Chapters in Edited Book*

“Legitimizing Violence: A Narrative of Sexual Health.” In Purendra Prasad and Amar Jesani (Ed.). *Equity and Access: Health Care Studies in India*, Oxford University Press. 2018.

“Interface between unequal power relations in Gender and Health: A Case of STIs in India,” in *Gender Issues and Challenges in Twenty First Century*, edited by Uttam Kumar Panda, New Delhi: Satyam Law International, pp-3-24, ISBN:978-93-82823-20-9). 2015.



**Debalina Majumder**

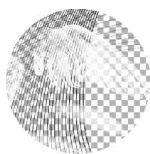
**Katha (Monologues)**

A trilogy of short films based on three true stories: a gay man and his father, two women in love and the everyday plight of a transgender individual.

**Bionote**

Debalina is an independent filmmaker and cinematographer. Her film *Joy Run* travelled to the 55th Berlin International Film Festival as part of ‘Shoot Goals! Shoot Movies!’ short film competition of the Berlinale Talent Campus 2005. *A Stranger in a Bioscope* was also a part of the same festival, produced by Sabotage Films, Berlin. She has made feature length documentary films, short films, travelogues, music videos, telefilms and mixed genre. She is also a still photographer and passionate about issues of gender and sexuality, environment and occasionally writes for newspapers and magazines.

Debalina’s latest film ‘*If You Dare Desire...*’ (*Aabar Jodi Iccha Karo...*) can be seen in conjunction with ‘*...and the unclaimed*’ (*...ebang bewarish*), a documentary, made in 2013. These films have toured several international and national film festivals. ‘*If You Dare Desire...*’ won the Diversity-Award for best feature film at the 18th Barcelona International LGTIB Film Festival (2018). Her films have also competed and shown at the Mumbai International Film Festival (MIFF), British Film Institute (BFI), International Documentary and Short Film Festival of Kerala, Channel 4, UK, Vancouver Queer Film Festival, and so on.



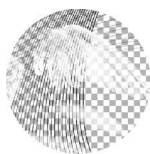
**Diganta Mukherjee**

**A quick glance at the survey data of the project “Transformation towards Sustainability in Higher Education”**

Some preliminary observations on the survey findings will be presented with particular attention to two issues. The first issue is related to self-realization. The situation in terms of self-realization is quite good in teaching and research where the median opinion is “strongly agree”. It is alright for interaction dimensions (median “agree”) but weak in terms of administration (median being neutral). The second issue is regarding gaps between principles and practices for policies and initiatives formulated to address the inequalities in current university system. Here it is seen that equality preserving policies are deemed adequate in all dimensions (median opinion is “agree”). I further make some observations on the concordance of opinion in these dimensions. An institute-wise disaggregated view will also be presented.

**Bionote**

Dr. Diganta Mukherjee did BStat, MStat and PhD (Economics) from Indian Statistical Institute, Kolkata. His research interests are Welfare & Development Economics, in general, and multidimensional poverty, in particular. He is also active in the area of Finance, particularly mathematical models for pricing contracts and Analysis and Modelling of Network data. He is an ex-faculty of Jawaharlal Nehru University, Essex University, ICFAI Business School. He is presently a faculty at the Indian Statistical Institute. He has over 80 research publications in national and international journals and authored three books. He has been involved in projects with large corporate houses and various ministries of Government of India and Government of West Bengal. He is acting as technical advisor to Multi-Commodities Exchange, Reserve Bank of India, Securities and Exchange Board of India, National Sample Survey Office, National Accounts Division (Central Statistical Office).



## Dina Zoe Bellugi

“Sustainability is based on the faith we have towards the work that we are doing”: *Within* and *at the borderlands* of the academy

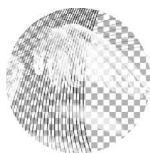
My research and practice circle around questions of the agency and ethico-historical responsibility of academics and artists in contexts undergoing transitions in author-ity, and the conditions within which they are situated. For the most part, this grew from my concerns around the *development* of artists and academics in South Africa in the aftermath of colonialism, apartheid, conflict and negotiated revolution. Of necessity these concerns have extended to other contexts, including those within the ‘global South’ such as this deliberation in India, to challenge growing discourses of exceptionalism, essentialism, and the difficulties of sustaining hope against a backdrop of intractable crisis and inequality – to find spaces for comparison, wisdom and solidarity for generative critique.

I draw from transdisciplinary orientations in critical theory, including literary theory informed by postcolonial and feminist re-animation of ‘situating the author’ within interpretation: to consider ways in which research, teaching and artmaking may enable re-authoring, commemoration and archiving of histories and current experiences of inequality and the persistence of unjust legacies, towards transforming systems of oppression and machinations of domination. The historic responsibility of bearing witness and negotiating the difficulties and human costs of the im-possibility of representation and social justice, remain pressing. Parallel to this, is my interest in the creativity, empathy and solidarity to produce generative conditions for counter-narratives, and counter-archives of transformation.

- While the issues of access of students and staff to higher education institutions is no doubt a concern, my own contribution is in the scholarship and lived experience of ‘participation’ once such structural access is supposedly addressed by policy. In particular, the complexities of interactional dynamics, the politics of belonging and the interpretative lenses of assessment regimes on academic staff, and in particular those with the mixed blessing of being ‘first generation’;
- As such, I hope to explore the interpretative lenses of those who are concerned about the knots of mis/recognition, de/legitimation and internalised/ oppression at the level of the meso-curriculum of the institution (i.e. that which ‘schools’ its academics in their social formations and knowledge formations).
- For this colloquium, and my time at JU, I hope to hear and learn of the gains made for the conditions of possibility of those *within* and *at the borderlands* of higher education, in light the decades-long mainstreaming of gender in policy within the country.

## Bio note

I am currently an academic in Critical Higher Education Studies at the School of Social Sciences, Education and Social Work at Queen's University Belfast. I chose to relocate to Northern Ireland in 2017 – to learn intellectually and experientially from that post-conflict settler colonial context which had often pitted through the politics of comparison with my homeland of South Africa. Prior to this position, I was a Senior Lecturer at the Centre for Higher Education Research, Teaching and Learning at Rhodes University in South Africa for a decade, and a lecturer and practicing artist at the same institution during that time and a decade before. Often outside of the flow, I reach for knowledge and referents which matter to address injustice. As such, I have moved from an initial foci on the agency of individuals who are figures of authority, responsibility and transformation (academics, artists, diversity officers etc) to the disciplines and areas of formal education that are meant to develop or inculcate their critical consciousness (academic development; the creative arts in higher education) to the institutions of reproduction that constrain radical change (institutional meso-curricula; assessment and evaluation regimes; inter/national influences, drivers and levers). I have tried to inform micro-curricula teaching, academic development of educators, policy formulations and their accountability processes. At each decision to engage, I have felt such attempts as necessary but often ineffectual and insufficient – and that my own actions and frameworks are most blinkered when individualistic, decontextualized and for disciplinary ends; and when enacted without a wider solidarity that holds me to challenge and keeps me persisting alongside or behind those better placed. Towards this, I intend to utilise this opportunity to invite and connect interested scholars to contribute to the growth of international networks for Advancing Critical University Studies, where committed scholars, practitioners and policy makers across the globe actively pursue an emancipatory imagination for the future university. Twitter: @DZBelluigi



**Grace Ese-osa Idahosa**

### **Dirty Body Politics: Habitus, Gendered Embodiment, and the Resistance to Women's Agency in Transforming South African Higher Education**

In discussing the difficulty with transformation, research notes that women and Blacks are excluded and marginalised by the cultures and practices within universities in South Africa. While the literature highlights the invisibility of these minorities in universities, with their bodies only becoming visible as tokens, or when representing minority issues, it is silent on how this plays out in interchanges in the transformation process, the embodiment of gender, and the resistance to women's agency within the field of higher education transformation. Adopting a hermeneutic phenomenological lens and Bourdieu's concept of field and habitus,



this study examines ten academics' experiences of having agency to effect transformation. In particular, it explores women's narratives of body-centered attacks in expressions of resistance to their transformation strategies, revealing the normalisation of the White, male body. This normalisation obscures the gendered processes of transformation and the bodily resistance to women's agency, revealed in tugging, pulling, shutting doors and having metaphorical knives pulled from their backs. The study argues that this not only prevents women from exercising their agency, but also ensures the reproduction of oppressive relations within the university and should be directly addressed in the struggle for transformation.

Idahosa GE. 2020. Dirty Body Politics: Habitus, Gendered Embodiment, and the Resistance to Women's Agency in Transforming South African Higher Education. *Gender Work Organization*. 1–16. See link to article: <https://doi.org/10.1111/gwao.12425>

### **Bio note**

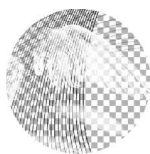
Dr. Grace Ese-osa Idahosa is a post-doctoral research fellow at the Centre for Social Change, University of Johannesburg, South Africa. She holds a PhD and an MA in Political Studies from the Department of Political and International Studies, Rhodes University. Her doctoral research was a hermeneutic phenomenological study which dealt with the subject of agency in the context of South African higher education transformation. Grace's current research draws on the premise that if universities are to contribute to societal development, they will first have to transform themselves. She employs a structure, agency and transformation framework to understand how and under what conditions, individuals have the agency to effect transformation within their institutions. Furthermore, her research interrogates how social factors like gender, race, class, sexuality and ethnicity, intersects to enable/limit agency within specific contexts and is explored in her new book titled 'Agency and Transformation in South African Higher Education: Pushing the bounds of possibility'. Her research interests include, higher education, social/organisational change, institutional culture, and body politics.

Her current project, titled 'Mid-level Managers Agency for Transformation in Post-Conflict Higher Education', is funded by the SRHE. The project interrogates the ways in which university middle-management, who are in key positions to engender social change within the higher education sector in Northern Ireland and South Africa, can be better empowered to enact their agency; and in what ways this is impacted by their gender and social location. By considering the structural position and power of managers to enact their agency, the study will contribute to comparative transnational findings regarding the challenges and possibilities for change within two post-conflict contexts, where the social location of such individuals intersects with the reception of their gender and other structural/social positions.

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See link to book on agency and transformation: <https://www.routledge.com/Agency-and-Social-Transformation-in-South-African-Higher-Education-Pushing/Idahosa/p/book/9780367074302orcid.org/0000-0002-8950-6651>



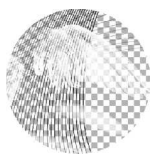
**Hardik Brata Biswas**

**Within / Without: Inscriptions of Erasure in Women's Studies?**

I have been part of institutional women's studies in the sphere of higher education in India for quite some time now (2005-2019). My work as a scholar has been shaped through feminist thinking and critical practices and I continue to be a learner. However, the major share of my experiences have been inside the porous boundaries of academic women's studies. I will try to discuss a few points about the transference and changes in what constituted women's studies in terms of curricular prominence, participation, general and specific academic attitudes towards the interdisciplinary space of women's studies and the liminal spaces of epistemic and other 'violence' from within the stakeholders that have constituted our notions of the 'inter-discipline'. While it is almost needless to emphasize the importance of feminist thinking in broadly perceiving the social and acknowledging it as a necessary political task; simultaneously there has been systemic pedagogic erasures, misreading, populist notions and a plethora of 'common sense' flooding the ambits of higher education almost to a certain degree of appropriation in the region.

**Bio note**

Currently post-doctoral fellow at the School of Media, Communication and Culture, Jadavpur University, Hardik Brata Biswas, MPhil, PhD, received his initial training in English and Comparative Literatures before shifting to the School of Women's Studies, Jadavpur University, for working on his research degrees. He was recipient of the SEPHIS/FORD fellowship under the programme Histories of Modernities and Sexualities in the Global South. He was Sir Ratan Tata Trust PhD fellow at the School of Women's Studies, JU. As an India Foundation for the Arts grantee he built a digital archive of visual materials pertaining to lives of middle class Bengali women from the 1880s to the 1970s. He has published on women's issues, sexualities, visual studies, arts practices, and feminist methodologies. Right now, he is working on non-Brahmin, lower caste, working lives and related visual practices in West Bengal. He also teaches at the Women's Studies MA programme at the Diamond Harbour Women's University and other universities.



**M. Satish Kumar**

### **Talking Dirty! How far sustaining a neoliberal frame is relevant?**

Development, while expanding the global wealth, has also resulted in extreme forms of inequality. Such inequities have fomented uncertainties and resultant precariousness. Precarity in development has also created deep schisms in the lives of the ordinary people, thereby becoming the new normality. Such a condition is clearly visible both in the developed and the developing world.

The consequence is that liberal space has shrunk in the wake of neoliberal assault of key institutions across the world. There is in existence a nexus of market-dominated global economics perpetuating and reproducing the politics of neoliberalism. Thus, challenging such entrenched orthodoxies becomes critical even as we seek to find common causes within some of the more pluralistic projects. We have over time become “less willing to sacrifice empirical realism for abstract universalism” (Arnott and Wrigley, 2003: 2) even as we are leaning towards more eclectic approaches to recover alternative conceptualisations.

In this sense, transformations for sustainability has to emerge within the context of inequality, tax injustices, increased corporatisation of power, and institutionalised corruption among others. What then has emerged in the context of developmental thinking are issues of a) *non-linearity*, b) *complexity* and c) the *intersectionality* of development. The fact that growth takes pre-eminence over redistribution in embedded liberalism matters for gender equality, because redistributive policies, including gender equality ones, are the first to be shed when growth is sluggish or in times of crisis.

#### **Bio note**

Dr. M. Satish Kumar is the former Director, Queens’ Academy India. With 32 years of engagement with the HE in India and UK, is a leading international expert on colonial and postcolonial studies focused on South Asia, covering many areas across social sciences and humanities. He is heavily engaged in key issues of international development and its ramifications across urban and rural contexts. In particular, challenges of heritage management in the context of rapid urbanisation are a current area of research. His knowledge and expertise is widely sought by Governments, charities and other organisations and he has been an active advisor on subjects such as international development and higher education to the Department for International Development, Northern Irish Assembly, Indian Government, Royal Irish Academy, Belfast City Council and Habitat for Humanity amongst others. Dr Kumar is also extensively involved in the academic community as a member of peer-review colleges for AHRC - GCRF and Newton Fund and a reviewer of proposals for a range of other funding bodies such as the British Council. He is currently a Visiting Professor in Kannur University,

Kerala (2019) and in Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi (2020). He has also held a number of visiting Professorships in the University of Calcutta (2016-17), Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, (2015-16) and in the Soka University of America, California (2008-09). Dr Kumar's valued contributions to international interdisciplinary research and teaching have been recognised through a number of awards:

He was awarded the Queen's University Teaching Award (2014) as nominated by the students out of 1175 academic staff. He was presented with the Bhoovigyan (Earth Scientist) National Leadership Award for contributions to Population, Environment and Development Studies. India, December 20, 2002 and the SGI Merit Award for Peace and Culture, Japan, 1992. He was a member of the Expert Panel of All Party Group on International Development, Stormont Assembly, Northern Ireland. He successfully coordinated the launch of the major international Exhibition: Gandhi, King, Ikeda Peacebuilders' Exhibition in Queen's (27 October to 21 December 2005). He coordinated the Annual QUB-India Lecture Series, from 2008-2011, and the first joint venture of Irish and Indian Poets in Delhi, Hyderabad and Kolkata, (2010).

Key publications are:

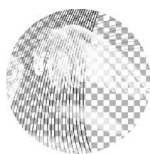
2019 "Geography and Decolonisation". Special issue of *Journal of Historical Geography* edited jointly with Dan Clayton, vol.66.

2019 "Ireland and Irishness: The Contextuality of Postcolonial Identity". *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* (jointly with Lauren Scanlon)

2019 "Fast Identification of Interesting Spatial Regions with Application in Human Development Research", *Springer Journal Transactions of large Scale Data and Knowledge Centred Systems (TLDKS)* (C. Duffy, D. Padmanabhan, C. Long, A. Thorat and A. Dubey)

2018 "Beyond the Field of One's Own: Moral Economy of Dowry", in *Beyond Language: Envisioning Alternative Nationalities in Nineteenth-century Assam*, in *Blending Region and Nation: Essays in Honour of Prof Amalendu Guha*, (eds.) Sajal Nag and Ishrat Alam, Primus, New Delhi, pp. 217-249.

2017 "From Decolonial to the Postcolonial: Trauma of an Unfinished Agenda", *The Calcutta Journal of Political Studies*, Vol.1: 75-79 ; 2016 "Development-The Story of an Idea", in *80-20: Development in An Unequal World*. Eds. Tony Daly, Ciara Regan and Colm Regan. Oxford: New Internationalist, pp.34-51.



**Maroona Murmu**

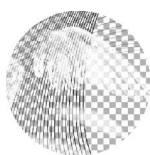
### **Inefficacious Affirmative Action and Social Exclusions in Higher Education**

The belief that the thirty four years of left front rule in the state has somehow abolished caste prejudices or caste based discrimination from West Bengal has persisted over time. Due to pervasive dominance of the upper castes over political, social, economic and cultural domains, political or academic discourses dismiss caste-based dominance as an illogical and irrelevant analytical category. Ironically enough, the very fact that such dismissive generalizations go unchallenged expose how strong and pervasive the operation of caste system is. While debates rage on ‘hyper invisibilization of caste’ or ‘West Bengal exceptionalism’, the ‘absent minded casteism’ of the upper caste *bhadralok* Bengali is on display down to this day. The everyday treatment of the dalits and adivasis by the upper caste *bhadralok* betrays the tight hold of caste in West Bengal. Discrimination, dismissal, oppression, deprivation, injustice, contempt and most importantly trauma of humiliation and harassment, violation of dignity and human rights on account of caste disparity are brutal everyday realities in this state.

Since the intensity of structural and symbolic violence is more powerful here, those under casteist scanners can feel the palpable hatred but evidence is hard to come by. The victims alone understand that communities here “live together separately”. Soon after dalits and adivasis enter academic and professional spaces, the process of social exclusion and institutionalized discrimination begins so that the oppressed never assert their equal status. Due to “discriminatory inclusion”, these people are made to understand that these particular spheres do not “belong” to them and they are an “inefficient” lot. The magnitude of structural violence, mental harassment and humiliation is so powerful that it curbs the very will for assertion and resistance. Since Brahmanism invests a good deal of regular and consistent enterprise to sustain discrimination and excommunication in social, religious or cultural spheres within its stratified social structure, degradation and discrimination by the upper castes is internalized to the extent that discrimination gets naturalised. Normalised exclusionary behaviour – nuanced and blatant – driven by caste make adivasis and dalits believe that there is no scope of mobility for them. They shrink as individuals following every instance of discrimination that they do not rise against, and eventually settle down to gradually accept contemptuous caste abuse, domination as unchangeable destiny. This also leads to the “voluntary elimination” and “invisibilization” from the space which they have got into, reducing their agency. Few of the adivasis who dare to break the shackles of caste and protest, risk enforced public humiliation in personal and professional life. Many of them face mental-health issues and suffer self-flagellation and anxiety disorder. Since they have to perpetually prove themselves to the society, they never believe that they are good enough even if successful.

### **Bio note**

Maroona Murmu is currently an Associate Professor at the Department of History, Jadavpur University. Prior to this, she was a lecturer at Saheed Nurul Islam Mahavidyalaya under Calcutta University and at the Department of History of the University of Burdwan. After passing her undergraduate course from Presidency College, she received her master's, MPhil and PhD degrees from Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. Apart from research publications on gender studies in colonial India and caste question in Bengal in several journals and edited books, she has a book titled *Words of Her Own: Women Authors in Nineteenth-Century Bengal* published by Oxford University Press.



### **Nandini Ghosh**

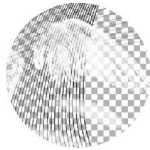
#### **Disability Gender and Higher Education: A Note on Inclusion**

Access to education for disabled people is fraught with many barriers. While the type and degree of impairment influence access to education, it is further impacted on by other identity markers as well as access to infrastructural and other resources. As has been amply demonstrated, attitudinal barriers keep disabled people out of schools and other educational institutions. This means there are lesser disabled people in a position to access higher education. This paper will argue the problems of access to higher education for persons with disability are two-fold – objective indicators of enrolment, curriculum and evaluation systems and specific facilities are balanced against subjective factors like attitudinal barriers and social issues. The agenda to include disabled people in education therefore needs to be comprehensive in approach and sensitive to diverse needs. The other programme needs to sensitise people across sectors about inclusion along with encouraging disabled people and families to embrace higher education.

### **Bio note**

Nandini Ghosh is Assistant Professor of Sociology at Institute of Development Studies, Kolkata, West Bengal, India. She obtained her PhD degree in Social Sciences from the Tata Institute of Social Sciences Mumbai in 2008. She has published a monograph, *Impaired Bodies Gendered Lives: Everyday Realities of Disabled Women* in 2016. She has edited *Interrogating Disability in India: Theory and Practice* (2016) and *Caste and Gender in Contemporary India: Power, Privilege and Politics* (co-edited with Supurna Banerjee, 2018). Her other publications include 'Bhalo Meye: Cultural Construction of Gender and Disability in Bengal' in Renu Adlakha (ed.), *Disability Studies in India: Global Discourses, Local Realities* (2013); 'Sites of Oppression: Dominant Ideologies and Women with Disabilities in India' in Tom Shakespeare (ed.), *The Disability Research Reader: New Voices* (2015)

and Processes of Shaming: The Limits of Disability Policy in India, in Zoya Hasan, Aziz Huq, Martha C. Nussbaum, and Vidhu Verma (eds) *The Empire of Disgust: Prejudice, Discrimination, and Policy in India and the U.S.* (2018). Her areas of interest are qualitative research methodology, sociology of gender, marginalisation and social exclusion and social movements.



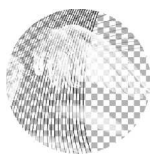
**Nandita Banerjee Dhawan**

**(Dis)loyal Intellectuals, (Ir)responsible Practices: Shifting Narratives of Academic Citizenship**

Gendered understanding and beliefs reinforce dominant structures of power, privilege and authority in patriarchal institutions with ‘masculinist’ and ‘elite’ spaces of higher educational institutions being no exception. The presentation will focus on how the understanding of ‘academic citizenship’ is shaped and influenced by everyday gendered experiences of and interactional dynamics within academic staff in university spaces. I use insights from our project on transformation in higher education to study how dominant cultures are produced and reproduced in varied contexts of institutional and disciplinary hierarchy, embodied and perceived differences, and ‘performative’ academic culture. How do academic citizens bargain, manipulate, subvert or resist dominant cultures that structure academic alliances and social networks (formal and informal) in higher educational institutions?

**Bio note**

Nandita Banerjee Dhawan is Assistant Professor and at present Director of School of Women’s Studies, Jadavpur University, Kolkata. Her research interests lie in the areas of feminism, gender and intersectionality, higher education, urban restructuring, new middle class, intimacies, domestic violence and Hindutva. She is the Principal Investigator of a project titled, “Transformation towards Sustainability in Higher Education? Interactional Dynamics in Gender and Intersectionality” in collaboration with Dr. Dina Zoe Belluigi, Queens University Belfast, UK. She has co-edited a volume titled, *Intimate Others: Marriage and Sexualities in India* and a reader on Women’s Studies titled, *Mapping the Field: Gender Relations in Contemporary India*.



**Nilanjana Sengupta**

### **Social inclusion without Transformation: The Human Face of Globalisation**

In the context of the SDG framework there has been a greater attention paid to gender equality in public policy all over the world, including India. The framework, however, has been of ‘inclusion’, driven by physical targets (how many women were included/benefitted etc.) rather than structural/institutional change or any analysis of impact. The WID framework still dominates, with ‘gender’ being evoked to pacify men and say it is not about women’s rights, but to empower the family through the ‘agency’ of women. Here agency is seen as the individual’s ability to make use of some of the benefits of inclusion (access to credit/education/training etc) and transform the condition of her family in terms of upward economic and social mobility. An ideal success story is of one who has been able to garner a bigger share of the cake NOT of someone who wants to destroy this cake and make a different one. Intersectionality is reduced to a category of inclusion rather than an analysis of oppression and struggle. Public policy stops and wants to stop at including the Dalit woman in the SHG group or in the classroom. At best, it would like some anecdotal evidence of the Dalit woman starting her own business and earning incomes that feed her family throughout the year. It certainly does not want processes of feminist conscientization, collective action and shift of institutions. It does not want the Dalit women in SHGs to come together to question public officials about why water is not provided in their ‘side of the village’ or why they have been ghettoized into a separate Anganwadi (the upper castes in the ‘other side of the village’ have a separate Anganwadi) which does not open all days of the week. Considering Srilatha Batliwala and Rowland’s framework of “Power To, Power Within and Power With”, public policy is most deeply uncomfortable with processes of power within and power with. This is perhaps the reason why programs like Mahila Samakhyas that focused on education and feminist conscientization and led to powerful community leadership and collective action in states like Bihar, invited Government ire and were shut down. Contrarily, microfinance programs like Velugu (SERP) which focused on inclusion and individual growth, evoking the collective only in terms of a vision of financial sustainability (joint liability for credit or livelihoods training), received applause and was taken up and upscaled at the national level. Be it livelihoods, education, or health...public accountability stops at physical inclusion. Unless public policy and public institutions take responsibility for creating an enabling environment for generating leadership and agenda setting by those who have been excluded so far, unless the approach changes from that of beneficiary to that of an agent who decides and participates in the course/journey of her change/development—meaningful transformation will never happen. But this implies a disruptive process, something that shakes the foundations, be it of patriarchy or caste—and why would the state invest in such a process? Does this call for some insidious strategies which will speak to the state’s need for appearing the benefactor as well as unleash processes far beyond the control of the state?

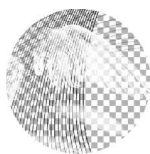


## **Bio note**

Nilanjana Sengupta is a Technical Specialist II with fifteen years of experience of working on issues of livelihoods, poverty, economic empowerment, financial inclusion and violence through a gender intersectional lens. Her specific focal areas have been labour, microfinance and governance within a gender and development (GAD) framework. At ICRW, she handles research and programs focused on livelihoods, entrepreneurship, capacity building and institution building, among other activities. She has been engaged in designing research, preparing proposals and conducting in-depth qualitative analysis on core development issues and human rights issues, including the trafficking of women and girls. An economist by training, she also has skills in quantitative analysis.

Currently, Nilanjana is leading a project entitled *Testing and Scaling approaches and interventions to support gender transformative work with NRLM* (National Rural Livelihoods Mission) funded under a range of initiatives by IWWAGE (What Works to Advance Women and Girls in the Economy), established by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation in India. As part of the project, she is doing intensive process documentation and developing Proof of Concept of a gender transformative program implemented by partner ANANDI in Madhya Pradesh, in collaboration with the Madhya Pradesh State Rural Livelihoods Mission.

Nilanjana has taught for over a decade in well-established Indian universities and has conducted collaborative training, capacity building and research on gender, livelihoods, sexuality and violence work with NGOs and community-based organizations. She has also worked with the gender and governance team of UN Women, India Office and played a key role in developing knowledge, training and advocacy materials on gender responsiveness of institutions of local governance. She has regularly published in journals on gender and development, and her recent book *Domestic Days: Women, Work and Politics in Kolkata*, published by the Oxford University Press, has received notable attention.



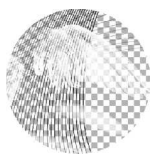
**Ranjita Biswas**

### **Filling out the queer gaps in higher education**

My presentation will attempt to look at the different levels of marginalisation that students from the queer community face in the space of higher education. It will talk about how homophobia and transphobia operate resulting in not just challenges in accessing higher education but also in defining queer experiences of inhabiting the university space. Higher education institutions are increasingly becoming more aware about queer lives and queer life worlds. From starting the first queer studies course to having student collectives that identify as queer, Jadavpur University has come a long way towards visibilising gender-sexual non-conforming bodies, desires and issues around these. What has been the reception and response to such presence? Have these efforts been merely tokenistic while rest of the space remains completely untouched by queer perspectives? What policies and practices are needed to protect the rights and safety of queer students in higher education spaces? What research initiatives need to be pursued that question modernist ideas of fixed binary frameworks of gender sexuality? What can queer theory offer us by way of theoretical frameworks to be able to do so?

### **Bio note**

Ranjita is a mental health professional, researcher and activist. Her interest areas of work are gender sexuality and mental health. She has done her doctoral thesis in Women's Studies from Jadavpur University, Kolkata. She is a member of Sappho for Equality, working for the rights and social justice of lesbian, bisexual, queer women and transmasculine persons. She has co-edited a volume titled, *Intimate Others: Marriage and Sexualities in India*. Her recent research work with Sappho for Equality has been on "understanding genders and sexualities: exploring expressions, roles and identities with a focus on transmasculinity".



**Rekha Pappu**

### **Economic aims of education: How are they relevant for women?**

The Sustainable Development Goal 4 is primarily about *quality education*. The conception of ‘quality education’ is in fact to be found in the elaboration that SDG 4 provides of the function of education as “a force multiplier which enables self-reliance, *boosts economic growth* by enhancing skills, and improves people’s lives by opening up opportunities for *better livelihoods*” (emphasis mine). This understanding of education foregrounds the economic aims of education and aligns itself with the human capital approach towards education. It stands in contrast to the liberal viewpoint according to which the primary aim of education is to enhance individual autonomy, largely through the cultivation of reasoning abilities and development of critical thinking.

While the argument about economic gains from education is explicitly proposed in select policy pronouncements and practices in relation to vocational education, there is a near complete silence regarding the economic aspects (or more properly, regarding employment prospects) in relation to a majority of the programmes offered in institutes of higher education, especially in the liberal arts. I seek to reflect on this silence and the implications that it has both for the curriculum that is envisaged and the pedagogy that is practiced in these institutions. This discussion becomes particularly relevant in the context of an emerging trend that is peculiar to South Asia and which involves women withdrawing from the labour force as their educational attainments increase.

Education for long has been regarded as a tool of women’s empowerment. It is believed that education would enhance women’s agency and autonomy leading to their greater involvement in a labour market that would draw on their increased education and skills. The situation on the ground, however, is at complete odds with such expectations. The data published by the 66<sup>th</sup> round of NSSO on employment and non-employment (for the period 2004-05 to 2009-10) as well as the report of the survey on employment and unemployment (2011-12) by the Ministry of Labour and Employment revealed that while women’s presence in education has been steadily increasing, there is a decline in their participation in work.

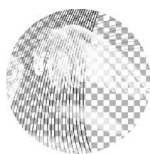
Three key arguments have been extended to explain the decline in female employment in spite of the growth of female education in India: First, instead of necessarily seeking employment women return to fulfilling the demands of domesticity after completing their education and in fact use their education for status reproduction and the reinforcement of patriarchal norms. This tendency can also be traced to the ‘income effect’ explaining why women with higher education stay out of the labour force if there is another earning member in the family. Second, women face ‘discouraged worker effect’ in different ways through occupational segregation, wage and other forms of discrimination, stigma, etc. Third, gendered patterns of

investment in the education of girls are such that women are mostly provided education in streams that have lower labour market demand. Along with these analyses that have emphasised the cultural dimension of the problem, there are also studies that have highlighted structural aspects of the Indian economy. It has further been pointed out that the cultural and the structural influence and shape one another.

Given the complexities involved in terms of the existing links between education and employment of women, it is important that we, as educators in institutions of higher education, reflect further on how economic aims should be conceptualised and incorporated into the forms of education that we provide in universities and colleges to the youth, and especially to girls.

### **Bio-note**

Rekha Pappu is Associate Professor at the Azim Premji School of Education, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Hyderabad. As a researcher, teacher, and consultant, she has been working for over two decades with institutions in the academic and the development sectors. Her research interests are in the areas of education, gender and development. She has published in these areas in academic journals as well as newspapers and magazines. She has also edited the first Social Watch Report of Andhra Pradesh titled *Rethinking Priorities: Making Policy as if People Mattered*. She was the Coordinator & Director of Anveshi Research Centre for Women's Studies, Hyderabad (1997 - 2003) and also the Convenor of the Andhra Pradesh Social Watch (2004 – 2005). She has been a Fulbright-Tata Visiting Fellow at the Institute for Research on Women and Gender, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, USA (2001), a Visiting Fellow at the Institute for Development Studies (IDS), University of Sussex, UK (2003) and a Key Technology Partnership Fellow at the University of Technology, Sydney (2015).



**Rukmini Sen**

### **Pedagogies of Transformation? Contemporary Feminist Practices within and beyond the Classroom**

The thoughts and arguments explored through this paper are mostly emanating from teaching Sociology, from a feminist/social justice perspective at Ambedkar University Delhi, at a very new Delhi government funded social science and humanities University, doing undergraduate and postgraduate teaching simultaneously, much like Jadavpur University, since 2010. This paper will look at two courses that I have developed and transacted in the last ten years at AUD, both MA Sociology courses—one Law and Society (Elective course) and another Relationships and Affinities (Compulsory course). Doing an auto-ethnographic enquiry, I will engage with the a) rationale/objectives of these courses, b) discuss in detail the methodology of one assessment in both the courses. Although none of these courses are done through Women's Studies centres/departments, yet because of my ideological and academic inclinations have firm roots in feminist jurisprudence and feminist anthropology respectively. I will address questions of gendered realities of justice and citizenship that these two courses aim to unpack, and try to think with and beyond the SDG rhetoric about how in Indian HEIs, there may have been a creative engagement with questions of gender inequality and justice in multiple ways for a long time.

Classroom is the main site through which I am interested in encountering these questions and reflecting on the transaction of these two courses. A social science classroom still has more women than men, which is representative of a certain composition and dimension of higher education in India, which has seen increased participation of women in HEIs in the last decade. Being a state university, which offers complete fee waivers to students from Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Persons with Disabilities category, the composition of the class, with the goals of affirmative action, strongly followed by the University, are plural, with first generation university entrants co-existing with the pass outs from elite Delhi colleges. This composition always has an impact on the way both these courses are received, which has an outside the classroom field activity as well. Taking the classroom discussions and conceptualizations outside is an intrinsic feminist praxis that the courses aim at, through court visits and walking - to know and build relation with the city and self. Making a claim on public spaces as a feminist practice is common through reclaiming the night walks, which has for long remained a women's movement agenda globally. Walk as feminist pedagogy that both these courses aim at redefine gendered notions of citizenship and freedom and gets connected to the transformative potential that these courses seek to achieve through its readings. Any attempt towards pedagogic transformation is always marked with hesitation and being able to sustain some of the practices has been challenging, yet promising.

### **Bio note**

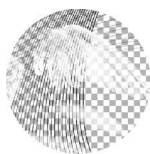
Rukmini Sen is Professor in Sociology at the School of Liberal Studies of Ambedkar University Delhi. She is also currently the Director of the Centre for Publishing at AUD. She has previously worked at WB National University of Juridical Sciences and Centre for Women's Development Studies. She is teaching courses Law and Society, Relationships and Affinities, Gender and Society, and Social Research

Co-investigator, Feminist Taleem: Teaching Feminisms, Transforming Lives: Questions of Identity, Pedagogy and Violence in India and the UK (2017-20; Ongoing). This project is funded by UGC-UKERI in collaboration with the University of Edinburgh, Scotland

- Curated 'City through Feminist Lens', a walking tour across the city of Delhi, as part of the above-mentioned UGC UKERI project. The walk intended to understand the city through the role of women's colleges, hostels, women's political associations and women's journalists collectives played in the life of the city of Delhi
- Partnering from AUD on Women's Equality, Empowerment and Leadership through Safe Higher Educational and Work Spaces as part of the Women in Security, Conflict Management and Peace (WISCOMP) project on Youth Countering Violence against Women in India

Her recent publications include:

- a) (2019) 'Conversations among Women: Is there a new language in hesitation?' in (Re)claiming Lesbian Feminisms: Transnational Dialogues with Contemporary Heteropatriarchies edited by Kath Browne, Marta Olsak and Julie Podmore and Niharika Banerjea, published by Yoda Press
- b) (2019) Co-editor Trust in Transactions, Orient Blackswan, New Delhi
- c) (2018) Co-editor special issue 'Indian Feminisms, Law Reform and Law Commission of India: Special issue in Honour of Lotika Sarkar', for the Journal of Indian Law and Society, published by WB National University of Juridical Sciences, Kolkata, 6 (Monsoon)
- d) (2017) Co-editor Power and Relationships in the Academia: Feminist Dilemmas beyond the List-Statement Binary at the Economic and Political Weekly Engage.



**Somdutta Mukherjee**

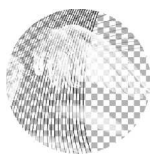
### **Higher Education, Higher Stakes? (Re)locating ‘gender’ and ‘resistance’ in Higher Education Institutions in India**

In this paper, I would try to look into the ways in which the rhetoric of ‘gender’ is shaped in the context of higher education. In the personal narratives of academic staff in institutions from where I would draw examples, gender is often seen as a ‘problem’ but not a problem of higher education institutions; it has to do with government policies, gender sensitization workshops, Internal Complaints Committee, Vishaka Guidelines, etc. Gender is not seen as something which is integral to the structure but often seen as something outside of the institutional structure and could be evoked if and when there is policy-based need or pressure. In such a milieu, when one is ‘doing’ gender, being a gender person in ‘mainstream’ disciplines or in Women’s Studies, the road is never smooth. Oftentimes, one has to pave one’s own way. But, how one does that given the over arching influence of dominant institutional culture, government policies?

When in recent times, the University Grants Commission (UGC) issued the Draft Guidelines for Development of Women’s Studies Centres in Indian Universities and Colleges 2019, it could be seen that for UGC, Women’s Studies is still relevant in higher education institutions. Also, UGC’s focus on introducing new Women’s Studies centres in colleges and universities reflect the same. It has to be pointed out here that UGC has emphasised a lot on ‘women leadership’ and it has been officially declared that centres will be supported to undertake research on women leadership. It is imperative to look into this notion of leadership. For UGC, the vision of Women’s Studies’ centres is clear – “to empower women in India to live with dignity so that they can contribute as valued partners in sustainable development of the self, families and the nation”. What is at stake when one transgresses the boundaries of such vision and look for other conditions of possibilities?

#### **Bio note**

Somdutta Mukherjee is currently working as a freelance researcher and teaching Women’s Studies at a women’s university in a district near Kolkata. Her areas of research/interest are: gender and intersections; higher education; new media and social movements. She has done M.Phil in Women’s Studies and M.A. in Film Studies from Jadavpur University.



**Sunita Singh**

### **Issues of Gender Inequality in Indian Classroom with Especial Reference to Socio-Economic Status and Academic Disciplines**

Gender inequality in education is a persistent problem in Indian society, observed at almost all levels and very vivid in higher education. In spite of gender equality being a key objective of education policy in India for more than three decades, it has lacked critical edge in implementation. This inequality may be due to factors like cultural or religious beliefs, locality, family background and socioeconomic status. These factors cannot work alone, they are intersecting with each other and act in totality in creating inequality in education. In this forum, I want to draw attention of participants towards two important factors, one is socioeconomic status and other is educational disciplines or subjects. Economic status of one's family play a very important role in determining the type of education one receives. As, in India we have maximum youth population but not so many higher education institutes especially government funded colleges. So, most of the youths who do not get admission in government colleges move to private colleges which are affordable for students belonging to families having low socioeconomic status. Thus there is unequal access to higher education for students of different economic status. In fact, it is a cyclic chain of inequalities: inequalities in access to education results in inequities in access to work place, which results in inequalities in employment resulting in inequalities in earnings contributing in turn to poor socio-economic condition. This cycle continues and parents of poor socio-economic status again do not arrange for good quality education for their wards. In case a family of lower socio economic status manages the accessibility of one of their wards to higher education they preferably send their boys to college and stop education of their girls. Therefore, girls/ women are generally found to be lagging behind men in higher education in India as in many other countries.

As per census report 2011 there is approximately 17 percentage point gap in male and female literacy rate (female 65.46% and male 82.14%). Women constitute 43% of the total enrolment in higher education in 2011–12, and it reaches at approximately 47% (UGC Report, 2017-18) while there were only 14 women per 100 men in higher education in 1950–51, according to the available UGC statistics. Thus, compared to the earlier decades, this marks a significant improvement. While this data is an all-India average across all disciplines of study, there are wide variations between different states and also across disciplines. Women students constitute 11% in engineering/technology, 4% in medicine and less than 5% in education. Nevertheless, the overall level of participation of women in higher education has improved remarkably and the current overall level is quite impressive.

The data from the 2005 India Human Development Survey (IHDS) also support my points that social background, access to learning resources, time devoted to formal learning activities,

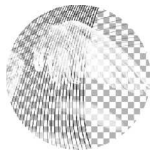


and cultural attitudes regarding the education of girls may contribute to ongoing gender gaps in learning. Children from low-SES are more likely to drop out of their schools, or quit school. In fact, according to 2007 data collected by the National Centre for Education Statistics, low-SES children had nearly a 17% dropout rate compared to high-SES families at around 3%. So, we should not be relaxed that gender inequality in higher education is going to fill since it is including good number of girls coming from economically sound family. Therefore, we should analyse gender inequality in terms of socio-economic status also.

Being a teacher the general classroom observation also shows that parents from poor families do not invest much on education of their daughters. They think that a graduation in arts subject is enough for them because graduation in science is comparatively much more costly. Classroom participation and classroom experiences of students are also quite different for these students especially for girls coming from poor families. They generally feel shy, uncomfortable and inferior to participate in group talk. To address these issues I tried to implement some innovative pedagogy like cooperative and collaborative learning. When students of different abilities and status are working in a cooperative classroom it creates a harmonious and pleasant classroom environment. It can increase motivation and face to face promotive interaction, where all team members motivate each other in positive manner. When the students are working in such a way, the learning process becomes interesting and enjoyable (Panitz, 1999). During peer interaction all students are benefitted from constant coaching, encouragement and constructive feedback from their team members. It has been perceived that these innovative practices play very important role to increase confidence level and self-esteem of students of low-SES. As a result they become more successful in their academics as well as in their career. So, we can state that being a teacher we can employ such innovative practices in the classroom that may prove helpful to address gender inequality in reference to SES and only then we can proceed towards sustainable development in education.

#### **Bio note**

Sunita Singh is Associate Professor in Faculty of Education, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi. She has been awarded PhD in Education from Lucknow University. She has written more than 50 research papers/articles in reputed national and international journals. She has completed two research projects. The area of specialization of Dr. Singh is psychology of learners and learning, guidance & counselling and science education. She has got additional experience of academic counsellor of BEd, MEd certificate in Guidance, MA in Education, and taken classes for IGNOU, she has participated and presented more than 60 papers in conferences, seminars, etc. and delivered resource talk at various national and international academic platforms.



**Usha Raman**

### **The Politics of Process: The Limits and Possibilities of Critical Pedagogy**

Over the past few decades, the public university classroom has been steadily diversifying, with students from varying backgrounds coming together, often exposed to socio-economic and cultural difference for the first time. At the same time, there has been a narrowing of the idea of higher education, with a greater focus on employability and marketable skills, and moving away from a more expansive notion of liberal education as a path toward inclusive participation and self-realization. In a field such as media studies, this produces a range of tensions, challenging both teachers and students in multiple ways. In addition to the inevitable politics of difference arising from experienced and perceived identities, there are the problematics of pedagogy. Should one teach to an ideal or to the demands of the industry? How does a feminist or critical sensibility express itself in a skills classroom? How far should (and can) critique go without limiting the capacity to engage in an imperfect industry? Can a feminist sensibility model power sharing in a diverse classroom in a way that builds transformative skills? I explore these questions with reference to my own experience as a teacher of journalism and a feminist media scholar, while also reflecting on how my teaching and research practice informs my participation in the institutional aspects of the Indian public university.

#### **Bio note**

Usha Raman is Professor, Department of Communication, University of Hyderabad. Her research interests include cultural studies of science, health communication, children's media, feminist media studies, and the social and cultural impact of digital media. Before joining the University, she headed the Communications Department at L V Prasad Eye Institute, where she was responsible for internal and external communications. She has written for the popular press on topics related to health, technology, women's issues, education and digital culture. She currently is a columnist for *The Hindu*, and edits a monthly magazine for school teachers, called *Teacher Plus*. Usha received her doctorate in Mass Communication from the University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia, USA, in 1996. She has been a visiting fellow at the University of Sydney's School of Public Health (2013) and the Centre for Media, Communication and Information at the University of Bremen, Germany (2019). As a Fulbright scholar, she spent the fall of 2016 at MIT's Department of Comparative Media Studies/Writing. Apart from several book chapters and journal articles on her core research areas, her publications include "Writing for the Media" (Oxford University Press), a volume of poetry entitled "All the spaces in between" (Writers Workshop) and a children's book "Under the Bed" (Spark India).

Our special thanks to members and friends of the women's studies community who took out time from their busy schedule to chair the sessions in the colloquium. We are grateful to you for your continued support, association and intellectual guidance.

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**TRANSFORMATION FOR SUSTAINABILITY?  
Gender and its Intersections  
within Participation in Higher Education**

10-11 February 2020

Venue: Professor Anita Banerjee Memorial Hall, Jadavpur University

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