

WOMEN'S STUDIES AND DEVELOPMENT CENTRE

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Final Report

PROJECT

DEVELOPING INDIAN PERSPECTIVES ON FEMINIST THEORY AND METHODOLOGY

April 2004 – October 2005

A Joint Research by 6 Women's Studies Centres sponsored by
DEPARTMENT OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Ministry of Human Resource Development

Government of India

Project Reference No. F. No. 1-50/2002-Research

Implementation Committee:

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01. CONTEXT

The Department of Women and Child Development, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India, sanctioned a project titled '**Developing Indian Perspectives on Feminist Theory and Methodology**' to the Women's Studies and Development Centre (WSDC), University of Delhi, for a period of eighteen months beginning in April 2004. The project concludes in October 2005.

It is commonly known that scholarly work and teaching of Feminism and Women's Studies in India has been heavily dependent on western feminist theory. Concepts, though adopted in India, have yet to be indigenized in terms of cultural determinants, location and history. Literature survey shows popular pamphlets with titles such as "What is Patriarchy?" or "Women and Law," which have served a useful purpose for awareness raising through NGOs and community work force. However, within higher levels of the classroom, or for guiding high quality, academic research in India, *interdisciplinary theoretical parameters* have not been established. Commendable empirical analysis has been accomplished in specific areas such as literacy, population and health, but one misses the broader base which clearly identifies, with pedagogic indicators, the frames of

reference appropriate to a feminist discourse for India. Women's Studies Centres and NGOs have made sporadic efforts in this direction. However, there is no consolidated body of theory and its demonstrable link with empirical research.

One may note that *UGC guidelines for Women Studies Centres* has listed "feminist theory" as one of the thrust areas of research. No doubt, university centres with their multi-disciplinary resources are well positioned for such enterprise. The *UGC Guidelines for the X Plan* explicitly state:

"The Centre is to play a vital role in academic upliftment in including and creating , short term and basic foundation courses to incorporate new gender perspective in all faculties. It will act to develop, update and restructure curricula, syllabi and special paper"(*UGC Guidelines for Women's Studies Centres under X Plan*) .

Pertinent also in the context is the *National Policy for the Empowerment of Women*, issued by the Government of India in 2001, which recognizes the need to create an environment through a set of policy prescriptions which cover a wide range of issues: changing laws, civil and property rights, equal access to health care, quality education, participation indecision making. According to Dr. Sarojini Thakur who was a member of the drafting Committee for the Policy, "An important aspect of the Policy concerns operationalization—how to translate in into a set of concrete actions." (*Women's Studies in India, Contours of Change*, 21)

Added to this is the persuasion and urgency built into the *UN Millennium Development Goals* in which Goal Three is to "Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005, and at all levels by 2015". In a news item posted on the web on **October 12, 2005** by BuaNews (Tshwane) The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) says gender equality and provision of reproductive health are crucial to the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The report titled "The Promise of Equality: Gender Equity, Reproductive Health and the Millennium

Development Goals" It says discrimination effectively squanders human capital by denying half of the world's population the right to realise their full potential

02. RESEARCH GAPS

The main gap noticed was a Feminist Theory framework within which interdisciplinary studies and empirical research could be placed in the context of India.

In Feminist theory, Indian scholars have responded to debates on feminism and women's issues. However most of the commonly available studies on women have an empirical base rooted in Indian conditions, whereas the analysis has used well-honed western tools. This has resulted in gaps at several levels of knowledge building and policy advocacy. Lately publishers in India such as Kali, Zubaan, Women Unlimited, Sage, Oxford University Press, Macmillan, Rawat Publishers, Sahitya Akademi, The Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Allied Publishers have been bringing new material to the market and the academia. NGOs such as Jagori and Saheli have been publishing awareness raising pamphlets. These efforts are laudable and we acknowledge their contribution to furthering our thoughts on the project. But there is a felt need for books that would be interdisciplinary, relate to university curriculum, and be created from a sustained process of consulting with students and teacher communities.

03. THE PROPOSAL

We proposed to bridge this gap through discussion, research, and formulation of feminist theories for Indian academia and praxis.

Women's Studies and Development Centre (WSDC), University of Delhi, wished to take a lead role through this project for instituting a joint research programme with 5 other Women's Studies Centres. This was based upon the principal that a feminist theory framework should relate to a wide range of experiences in university classrooms. The regional

aspects should be addressed and culture specific research should also be accorded space in a multi-layered society as in India. However, delimitation of consultation area was also necessary due to practical constraints. The actively engaged centres in this project were in North India. Expert opinion was sought at other, further locations, specially SNTD, Mumbai.

International opinion and participation was also an important component of this project which was built upon the premise that Feminist theory from western sources was commonly in use. Volunteer professional assistance was given by many colleagues in USA, Australia, Canada and UK for which we remain grateful.

Structure for implementing the project took the following shape:

Nodal Centre:

Women's Studies and Development Centre (WSDC), University of Delhi

Partners:

1. Sarojini Naidu Centre for Women's Studies at Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi
2. Women's Studies Centre, Lucknow University, Lucknow,
3. Women's Studies Centre, Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra
4. Centre Women's Studies and Development, Himachal Pradesh University, Shimla
5. Centre for Women's Studies, University of Rajasthan, Jaipur;

04. THE OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- i. To evolve an Indian Perspective on Feminist Theory by reconsidering the key terms such as Patriarchy, Gender Difference, Equality, Labour, Family, Community etc;
- ii. To suggest methodology suitable to Women's Studies research in India;
- iii. To establish an active Network with the centres at the universities: Jamia Millia Islamia, Lucknow, Kurukshetra, Shimla, Jaipur;

- iv. To test the research methodology and Feminist theory framework through an action- research model directed towards young adults and adult subjects from a cross section of university related community.

According to the proposal approved by DWCD, the wider universe of the study is to include the following issues and themes:

1. *Globalization Policies and Indian Women's Perspectives;*
2. *Women and Work: Theoretical Inputs*
3. *Power in the context of Indian Feminist Theory*
4. *Identity and Indian women's Psyche*
5. *Theories of Development and Indian Feminist Theory*
6. *Jurisprudence and Indian Feminist Theory*
7. *Women's Rights and Theoretical Perspectives*
8. *Representation of Women in Marginal Literature and Folklore*
9. *Women in Visual and Print Media: Theoretical Inputs*
10. *Feminist Methodology: Indian Perspective*
11. *Women and Health: Research Gaps, theoretical tools to be developed*
12. *Census Data: Reinterpretation from Indian Feminist Theoretical Perspectives*
13. *Education: Research Gaps: Theoretical Inputs*
14. *Women's Political Participation: Assimilation of Field Experience for Indian Feminist Theory*
15. *Women and Subjectivity: Philosophical Reflections*
16. *Religion: Inputs for Feminist Theory*
17. *Eco-feminism: Indian Issues for Feminist Theory*
18. *Mainstream Indian Literature: Theoretical Formulations*
19. *Indian Women in Historical Contexts: Foundational Aspects*

05. PROJECT METHODOLOGY

- Library Survey

- List of consultants and experts
- Workshops and group discussions
- Partnership meets
- Commissioning special papers
- Obtaining expert opinion
- Consultancy with gender specialists
- Collecting occasional papers and manuals
- Data collection
- Workshops for creating the structure of the Reader in Feminist Theory
- National Seminar to present draft of original papers
- Teleconference
- Video conference
- Field visits to Haryana, Himachal and Uttaranchal
- Writing of drafts of academic papers
- Editing and revising papers
- Using British Council Women's Studies Network (WSN)
- Contact with Women's Studies scholars in the USA
- Support from Fulbright programme of USEFI in Delhi through placement of a visiting scholar at WSDC
- Presentation of CD based on project process
- Compilation of anthology of essays
- Preliminary discussion with publishers

Periodic in-house review meetings at WSDC

Fulltime project work by the appointed Editorial Assistant

Submission of interim reports to Department of Women and Child Development, GOI

06. WORKSHOPS

WSDC organized a workshop in two phases on 18 June and 2 August 2004 respectively. The objective was to create the organizational structure of a proposed *Reader in Feminist Theory* emerging from the project.

Workshop : 18 June 2004

On 18 June it was a highly interactive programme. Participants presented their views on the project and the list of themes. The viewpoints were contested and debated productively, leading to a consensus on the topics which would bring depth and focus to the overarching themes in the project's original list .

Discussion on the structure and the format of the proposed *Reader* resulted in the suggestion that there should be an introductory chapter, which would address all the issues mentioned. It should deal with the basic concepts pertaining to feminist theory and methodology and describe the need to reformulate those concepts in an Indian context. The Introduction should also provide a rationale for the *Reader*. It should be comprehensive enough to capture the essence of the *Reader* on the whole and give a preview of its specific sections as well.

Participants suggested that the *Reader* should acknowledge and take into consideration the latest published literature on the subject. It was felt that there is need to sharpen and modify some of the topics of research given in the project proposal. It was also necessary to reduce the number of topics, as there was budget allocation only for 15 original papers. It was suggested that topics should be thematically divided and overlaps, if any, should be avoided.

Participants discussed each of the topics in the project list and made suggestions on how they can be refined and brought into conjunction with academic debates on feminist subjects today.

The following suggestions emerged:

- Basic concepts of gender, sex, and patriarchy need to be addressed with reference to their specific meanings within an Indian context.
- Some topics, which were not mentioned in the proposed list, should be taken into consideration. These are:
 - Women's movement in India.
 - Family and marriage including the issue of women and reproduction.
 - Women and poverty: feminization of poverty. (This can be covered under the section on Development also).
 - Women and sexuality
- The topic called 'Globalization policies & Indian women's perspectives' should be merged with the topic, 'Theories of Development and Indian Feminist Perspectives'. Globalization needs to be specified in an Indian context.
- Women and poverty is an important area and should form an independent topic. If there is no space for it as an independent topic then it should be covered under 'Theories of Development and Indian Feminist Perspective'. Feminization of poverty in particular should be addressed. This paper should also include women and state, economic opportunities and public policies.
- 'Women and Work: Theoretical Inputs' needs to be renamed as 'Women, Work and Employment: Theoretical Inputs'. This section will deal with the definition of work, sexual division of labour, household work, issues of employment, labour and technology. The paper should also include census data and show its drawbacks.

- There is a need to re-address the topic, “Power” in the context of Indian Feminist Theory’, as it is vague at present.
- ‘Socialization and Gender Identity’ was thought to be more appropriate a name for the section on Identity and Indian Women’s Psyche, since it extends the boundaries of the topic by incorporating both sociology and psychology into its analytical framework.
- Another broad topic named Women and the Law which will include the philosophy of law, history of law, history of personal law, jurisprudence, property rights, land rights, women’s rights, concept of equality and Constitutional rights was proposed. The concept of jurisprudence, which was mentioned earlier, will be covered under this broader topic.
- Instead of ‘Representation of Women in Marginal Literature and Folklore’, ‘Women in Folk Tradition’ was suggested. This paper should include examples from counter-traditions.
- ‘Women and Mass Media’ was suggested instead of ‘Women in Print and Visual Media’ as it will address every form of media.
- ‘Feminist Methodology: Indian Perspectives’ will emphasize participatory research, case studies and oral history.
- The section on ‘Women and Health: Research Gaps, Theoretical Tools to be developed’ will incorporate all the issues regarding physical and mental health, reproductive health, occupational health and the gaps between research and policy as well.

- The section on Census data is problematic since its theorization is a difficult task. It needs to be introduced in each of the topics and thus dropped as a separate topic.
- ‘Women’s Political Participation: Assimilation of the Field Experience for Indian Feminist Theory’ can be termed as ‘Women in Politics: Assimilation of Field Experience for Indian Feminist Theory’.
- The topic Women and Subjectivity: Philosophical Reflections needs some reconsideration. It was suggested that women’s subjectivity has been denied in Philosophy. Moreover, the term subjectivity needs to be better clarified. An alternative name, i.e. ‘Women and Agency: Philosophical Reflections’ was suggested for this paper.
- The paper ‘Religion: Inputs for Feminist Theory’ should be renamed as ‘Women and Religion: Inputs for Feminist Theory’.
- The topic ‘Mainstream Indian Literature: Theoretical Formulations’ should be modified as ‘Indian Literature: Theoretical Formulations’ and the focus should be on women’s writings.
- ‘Indian Women in Historical Context: Foundational Aspects ’ was proposed to be framed as ‘Women in History: Foundational Aspects’. The paper should include women’s movements in India.
- The topic ‘Minority Women: Theoretical Insights’ appears to be narrow in scope and it should be broadened and renamed as ‘Women, Caste and Community’.
- It was debated whether ‘Gandhi & Women: Women’s Agency Revisited’ should be retained as it is. Participants felt that Gandhi offered some significant insights into Indian women’s situation. Developing Indian feminist perspectives should

critically examine Gandhi's views on Indian women. Thus the paper should be broadened and renamed as 'Women in the National and Colonial Heritage'. It should include women's contribution to the anti-imperialist struggle.

The proposed revised topics, which emerged out of the discussion, are as follows:

1. Theories of Development and Indian Feminist Perspectives
2. Women, Work and Employment: Theoretical Inputs
3. "Power" in the context of Indian Feminist Theory
4. Socialization and Gender Identity
5. Women and the Law
6. Women in Folk Traditions
7. Women and Mass Media
8. Feminist Methodology: Indian Perspectives
9. Women and Health: Research Gaps, Theoretical Tools to be developed
10. Education: Research Gaps and Theoretical Inputs
11. Women in Politics: Assimilation of Field Experience for Indian Feminist Theory
12. Women and Agency: Philosophical Reflections
13. Women and Religion: Inputs for Feminist Theory
14. Eco-feminism: Indian Issues for Feminist Theory
15. Indian Literature: Theoretical Formulations
16. Women in History: Foundational Aspects
17. History: Culture-specific area of Himachal Pradesh
18. Women, Caste and Community
19. Theorizing Violence Against Women
20. Women in the National and Colonial Heritage

The *Reader* covering these issues should be written simply and as objectively as possible without overlooking the complexities involved.

Workshop: 2 August 2004

On 2 August, based on the project proposal approved by the Department of Women and Child Development, topics were further discussed and given a sharp focus.

Topics for the sections should be thematically arranged and overlaps, if any, should be identified. There was a detailed discussion on the sections of the *Reader*. Gender as an analytical tool was thought to be of prime importance and to be dealt with accordingly. Other issues to be considered are problems of pedagogy and interdisciplinary aspects in the subjects: Sociology, Social Work, Economics, Political Science, Philosophy, History, Literature, and Psychology. While theorizing the Indian context, the heterogeneity of the Indian situation should also be kept in view.

Following decisions were taken on the basis of these suggestions.

There should be four major sections in the *Reader*. Each sub topic will cover identified areas and each essay will offer an in-depth study.

The four sections and the topics they will include are as follows:

- 1. Feminist Theory and Methodology for India:**
 - a. Gender as an analytical tool
Concept of power and patriarchy
Methodology
Problems of Pedagogy
 - b. Women and agency – self, subjectivity and identity
 - c. Women's movements
Ideological bases and contestation
National and colonial heritage

2. History and Society:

- a. Socialization and Gender Identity
- b. Family and Marriage
- c. Women in History: Foundational Aspects
- d. Women, Caste and Community
- e. Women and Religion: Inputs for Feminist Theory
- f. Women and the Law
- g. Women and Customary Law in India

3. Gender, Culture and Sexuality:

- a. Sexuality,
Theorizing Violence Against Women,
Women and Mass Media
- b. Indian Literature: Theoretical Formulations
and literary representations
- c. Theories of Masculinity

4. Political Economy:

- a. Education: Research Gaps and Theoretical Inputs
- b. Women in Politics: Assimilation of Field Experience for Indian Feminist Theory
- c. Theories of Development and Indian Feminist Perspectives
Public Policies
Women and Globalization
- d. Women, Work, Employment and Livelihood: Theoretical Inputs
- e. State and Patriarchy: Institution and Process

It was decided that

- Around 15-16 papers of about 4000 words each will be commissioned.
- There should be a main Introduction to the *Reader* and a sectional Introduction for each unit. Essays should be illustrative. Introductions and essays should correlate with each other.

- The time frame for the draft of the paper was 3 months, as the material would be presented at a National Seminar in early December 2004.

07. NATIONAL SEMINAR

December 16-17, 2004

A National Seminar was organized at the South Campus, University of Delhi was attended by academicians, activists and students seriously involved with women's issues both inside and outside India. Planning and implementation was led by Delhi University while an ongoing consultancy was assured from Women's Studies Centres in Jamia Millia Islamia, University of Rajasthan, Jaipur, Himachal Pradesh University, Shimla, Kurukshetra University and University of Lucknow. In addition to the participation of 6 partner universities in India, the seminar engaged the attention of scholars from USA, Australia and New Zealand.

December 16, 2004

Inauguration: The seminar began with welcome remarks by Prof. Malashri Lal, Director WSDC.

The Chair for the inaugural session **Dr. Hema Raghavan, Dean, Student's Welfare**, University of Delhi, emphasized the uniqueness of the Indian tradition and experiences and hence the need for Indian feminist perspectives particularly in the form of published material.

Mrs. Reva Nayyar, Secretary, Department of Women and Child Development, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India was the Chief Guest for the occasion. She focussed on the need to create a knowledge base for empirical studies of women in India and also in order to bring about sensitive policies and their efficient

implementation for women. She was glad that University of Delhi has taken up this initiative of theorizing and conceptualizing Indian feminist concepts and experiences. Mrs. Nayyar also informed the audience about the two level approach of Gender mainstreaming at the administrative level by DWCD. 1) Gender budgeting where all schemes should have 30% allocation for women (as described in IX Plan) and separate component for gender (as described in X Plan) under their budget heads. 2) Directives to all Government Departments and Ministries to include a mandatory gender component in their schemes especially those closely associated with women. In this process of gender sensitization, DWCD is attempting to collaborate with academicians by building up a network with Universities in India and abroad which would enable the articulation of multiple viewpoints in the Indian context. A major step towards this enterprise is the National Resource Centre, a women's resource portal in an electronic mode which is to be inaugurated by Department of Women and Child Development in March 2005.

In his special address the Guest of Honour, **Prof. V.N. Rajasekharan Pillai, Vice Chairman, University Grants Commission** talked about the integration of education and society and that of text and context. The main challenge before Indian academia, according to him is to build up a conceptual framework which is deeply rooted in its specific culture and thus can effectively be realized within its own societal parameters. Encouraging Women's Studies as a general social science and humanities discipline, he mentioned that 56 universities in India have introduced Women's Studies Programmes. He also welcomed proposals from different Women's Studies Departments and Centres for an International Seminar on Women's Studies which UGC is willing to support. Further, he gave details of special training programmes initiated by UGC for women managers of Higher education.

Special Invitee **Ms. Kamal Singh, Head, Governance and Social Justice, India, The British Council**, New Delhi also commented on the necessity for theoretical underpinning to validate experiential learning and more so in case of Indian Feminist causes. She strongly stressed on the need for a wide women's studies network and shared

her experiences in this regard. She mentioned the collaborative effort of British Council, New Delhi and WSDC, University of Delhi in creating a Women's Studies Network involving 24 universities all over India which was launched in July 2004. She also cited examples of major networks the British Council is promoting and the possibility of cross-overs between these ongoing networks. Throughout her speech she explained and encouraged the utility of the virtual space to build up a national as well as international frame for Women's Studies and mentioned various initiatives that have been taken and can further be taken by the British Council in this direction.

Thereafter the seminar went into academic sessions on the optimistic note as Dr. Hema Raghavan described this endeavour as an attempt not only to 'know the path but also to walk the path'.

Paper Presentations: The inauguration was followed by three sessions comprising of seven papers altogether. Papers were presented by scholars from both India and abroad, though their focus was India. Different states were well represented among the paper readers and participants. All the sessions were received with great enthusiasm and led to stimulating discussion among paper readers and general participants. The main areas which were covered on the first day are creative theory and feminism, politics, economics, literature and minority women's issues. Some of these papers provided broad conceptual frameworks to deal with particularistic issues whereas others took up specific experiences and worked towards their theorization. The papers were meticulously researched and presented original viewpoints relating theory to practice. Though offered as drafts for discussion in the current phase of the project at WSDC, the ideas were thoroughly worked out. Major responses from the audience would be incorporated in the final versions.

(See Annotated List of Papers for details)

December 17, 2004

Paper Presentations: Day two of the National Seminar had four sessions with nine papers being presented. These papers covered a wide range of areas including sexuality,

media, queer theory, marginal literature, development theory, politics, women's agency, history, law, sociology, psychology, theories of masculinity so on and so forth. All the presentations were accompanied by interactive sessions which were both analytical and constructive. The inter-disciplinarity of approach and breakthrough in some formulations of feminism for India made for hearty discussions. Along with the traditional theories, the adaptation and the search for alternative discourses for India featured in the formal and informal exchanges. Ideas from the previous day were cited frequently lending continuity and validity to the development of conceptual frames that the seminar aimed for.

(See Annotated List of Papers for details)

Fifteen occasional papers which had been placed on display captured people's attention and were well appreciated. Many participants sought copies for closer reading. Some of these papers were the full text of the seminar presentations whereas others were related to regional perspectives or specialized topics such as disability, health and environment. The mandate of the total project guided the selection.

Valedictory: Ms. Ritu Menon, Publisher, Women Unlimited, chaired this session which aimed at a review of the theoretical positions presented in the seminar. She espoused a need for interdisciplinary approach and mentioned core disciplines such as philosophy, economics, natural sciences which have always been resistant to feminism and thus needed to be addressed with urgent attention.

Prof. Jasbir Jain, Professor Emerita, University of Rajasthan, Jaipur in her comments highlighted two positive points of the seminar: firstly, it managed to engage a large number of speakers seriously working on women from a wide geographical area; secondly, it covered almost all the important issues pertaining to women. According to her the most important theme before Indian feminist theorists is 'culture' which is crucial to the understanding as well as realization of feminist principles in the Indian context. The other phenomena, which require special attention by feminist theorists, are role of the State - both as a governing authority and as site of shifting ideology, and the function

of media in interpreting women's issues. She mentioned the dichotomy in social observances that create a visible gap between feminist ideals and actual practices. She addressed the significance of Women's Studies as a distinct discipline not only at the university level but also at the school level, at the very inception of education. Further, Prof. Jain emphasized the need to revisit the concept of feminism in the Indian context and consequently to innovate a new language and terminology suitable to that particular context. Moreover these epistemological understandings should have phenomenological implications in the everyday life of common people.

Prof. Malashri Lal in her review expressed her concern about the academic colonization of 'Feminism' in India and located problems in the limited knowledge base, particularly in the form of published material for use in curriculum. Against this backdrop, she placed WSDC's current endeavour to develop Indian perspectives on feminist theory and methodology and she thanked DWCD for their encouragement in such an enterprise. The unique nature of an Indian feminist perspective is that it remains marked by the strong association between Women's Studies and Women's Movement. Such connections will be celebrated and the spirit of sharing will be strengthened by the interdisciplinary approach under this project. She also encouraged the combination of oppositional and collaborative approaches in order to understand and theorize the situation of Indian women.

In the concluding speech Dr. Manjeet Bhatia, Project Co-ordinator, WSDC, thanked all the participants especially outstation scholars for their valuable suggestions and stated that these suggestions would be kept in mind while finalizing the papers and formulating the 'Reader on Feminist Theory' through frequent consultancy meetings in Delhi. She mentioned other important areas such as religion, history, law, as an analytical tool which could not be covered under this seminar. These papers are likely to be included in the proposed Reader. She said that the project target requires the final versions of the papers to be available by March 2005. if possible another National Seminar will be convened.

The National Seminar has proved to be a successful event which brought experts from all the field to a common platform. It generated considerable support for new ideas and raised enthusiasm among the people involved with women's issues. This opens up new directions towards the assimilation of feminist theory and practice in the Indian context and marks a major breakthrough in formulating concepts for Feminism in India.

WORKSHOP:

CD Testing and presentation of Summary Report: 27 September 2005.

The primary objective of this meeting was to present before a learned audience the progress of the project throughout its 18 month pursuance in Delhi and the partner universities. A CD has been prepared for an easy representation in 20 minutes which covers all operational aspects of the project. The dissemination of the findings at the workshop is expected to give publicity and facilitate the use of the *Reader in Feminist Theory with an Indian Perspective*.

The workshop was attended by 50-60 academics and NGO leaders. The Inaugural lecture was given by Dr. Jyotsna Chatterjee, Director of Joint Women's Programme, a leading institution for promoting women's rights and research about women. On behalf of WSDC, Prof. Malashri Lal's opening statement about the rationale for the project was followed by the presentation of the CD by Dr. Manjeet Bhatia. Thereafter theoretical frames were presented by Dr. Malathi Subramanian, Dr. Zarina Bhaty, Dr. Malabika Majumdar, Dr. Indu Agnihotri. Our special outstation invitee from Chandigarh was Dr. Rajmohni Sethi.

The audience participants were appreciative of the range and scope of the anthology which is the direct outcome of the project. It was commented that the collection far exceed the immediate brief of the project which sought to bring together 15 essays and had a list of 19 topics. The WSDC team explained that many issues emerged as requiring in-depth attention and it appeared more beneficial to split some of the broader areas for

detailed focus. Also some scholars in India and abroad had showed a deep interest in the project and, upon invitation, submitted original papers on specialized aspects of Feminist Theory and Methodology for India. Some essays were designated as Occasional Papers / Manuals and Regional Perspective. The collection was considerably enriched by these contributions.

In the final reckoning, the topics guided the selection of the papers according to the guidelines approved by the Department of Women and Child Development. The project co-ordinators evolved a satisfactory chapterization and table of contents which addressed most of the issues originally identified. Where modifications have been made in consultation with Experts it fills the gaps in present knowledge and meets a felt learning need. The team remains grateful for the commissioned as well as generous, voluntary contributions of expert knowledge. We are also grateful to our Consultants and those who gave their Expert Opinion in the form of publishable papers.

Many participants at the CD testing workshop expressed the need to have the material available very soon for public access since several new courses at Delhi University reflect a gender component. In the larger context of building a knowledge base for feminism in India too, the anthology was gauged as being significant.

It was decided that the CD and two copies of the anthology would be kept at the WSDC library for ready consulting. The WSDC team was urged to publish a suitable book based on the material collected in the duration of the project. The team agreed to pursue this proposal after the submission of the report to the Department of Women and Child Development in October 2005.

08. FIELD TRIPS

Rationale: The project envisages a **link between theory and practice**. It also has a component where partnerships will lead to the dissemination of **regional** experiences. The further intention is to seek curricular information from the universities to determine

the different levels at which Gender and Feminist theory finds presence. The GOI Policy on the Empowerment of Women and the UGC Guidelines encourage **community action** for WS practitioners. The Field visits to strategic locations were designed so as bring convergence to these various objectives.

Field Trip : Shimla, Himachal Pradesh 5-11 May 2004

Himachal Pradesh University, being one of our partners in the project , helped to organize a visit which would bring focus to some concerns identified in the *Reader*, namely, the uses of cultural products in creating empowerment for women, and the role of religion and spirituality. It may be noted that both approaches are unique to India and no theoretical work has been attempted as yet. While our experience was limited to the region, it carried the nucleus of thought for formulating directions for feminist enquiry.

Literacy Training

On 5 May 2004 a meeting was held with the *Himachal Gyan Vigyan Samiti*, (HGVS, a branch of the BGVS), an organisation given the mandate to spread literacy, education, and scientific attitudes throughout the state of Himachal Pradesh. Office bearers and community workers informed the Delhi team about the prevailing conditions for women in the region. In summary, we were told that there was less concern with dowry and a greater dignity given to women in Himachal than in the neighbouring states of Haryana and Punjab, although working women uniformly are oppressed by the “double burden” of having continuing sole obligations for domestic and childcare duties as well as commonly working in the labour force. The high literacy rate can be attributed to the consistent effort of the State government and the NGOs who take awareness to the grassroots through standard literacy training methods as well as through more creative cultural modes such as the indigenous *Kala Jatha* (cultural festival).

Women and Spirituality

WSDC team were part of the *field visit* to the temple of Tara Devi. In a programme coordinated by culture specialist Dr. Meenakshi Faith Paul, the Delhi team spent the afternoon at a historic site and learned of the religious influence of the goddess Tara. An audience had been arranged with the temple priest Shri Gautam Maharaj who told us of the story of the *Devi Sthapana* (the establishing of the deity) about 500 year ago and the powers of the goddess as a protector of the region. She was first worshiped in the form of Kamakhya, and later as the manifestation of the more benign Durga. Shri Gautam, who is a Vaishnav, discontinued the practice of animal sacrifice at the temple. The move in the area, according to him, is towards peace and environmental harmony. His views were elaborated upon afterwards in a tea following the audience with the priest by some other officials who serve at the temple. Questions asked by the Delhi team were moderated and explained by Dr. Meenakshi Faith Paul whose current research project is on the goddesses of Himachal Pradesh. The team also benefited from the participation of one faculty member, Dr. T.D.S. Alok, and one doctoral level researcher, Mr. Manish Verma, from H.P. University, both of whom had also attended the workshop at HPU.

WSDC team also participated in a *community outreach workshop* with Children and Women at the Himalayan Brahmo Samaj. Spread over a vast hillside, the main buildings date from 1886 and the Samaj, established by Keshav Chandra Sen, an associate of Raja Rammohan Roy, has a continuous history of initiating social reform, specially relating to the upliftment of women and girl children. The workshop with the visiting team from Delhi was organised by Mrs. Shail Pandit whose family has been entrusted with furthering the goals of value based education for the community which resides on the Samaj estate.

The gathering of 24 children and women was subdivided by age for intensive discussions with resource persons. A feedback session brought in reports on the attitudes and values that determine the status of girls and women in Himachal. The youngest group was given a drawing exercise, the group of young adolescents were queried regarding the way that

gender roles impact on their lives at school and in their family as well as their projections about the gender roles they will inhabit in their adult lives, the teenage group was asked to reflect on word associations, and the older group of married women and mothers was engaged in analysing the social import of their daily activities. Since the community members originally came from different parts of Himachal, a rich and varied picture emerged about popular culture and the impact of media, especially on women's status and gender roles.

Field trip: Kurukshetra: March 2005

This was a four-day field trip to Kurukshetra in relation to the project. It was organized with the help of our **partner Women's Studies Centre at Kurukshetra University**. 15 case studies of elected women panchayats (including 6 sarpanchs) were recorded in order to study women's agency through political space at the grassroots level created by the 73rd Amendment. Open-ended questionnaires were used which broadly include village profile, personal profile, political profile, experiences as a woman and life beyond the panchayat. Beside 15 women panchayats 100 more people were interacted with who were mostly their family members neighbours, co-workers and so on.

Following villages were visited:

Heri Markanda (Saraswati Colony), Umri, Narakatari, Bhorsaida, Kheri Ram nagar, Dayal Pura, Alampur, Fattupur, Jyotisar, Lohar Majra, Ithan Bori, Samastipur, Isha Kapur and a couple of neighbouring villages.

Most of these villages subsist on agriculture and it is the women who are mostly responsible for looking after the cattle and working in the fields. Due to urbanization, gradually the fields are being sold off. As a result the men have suddenly got some easy money and have started indulging in vices such as drinking.

Findings

It was found that these villages are dominated by a highly patriarchal system. Although the women have been nominated/and, in some cases, elected to the posts of 'sarpanchs' and 'panchs' the work is mostly carried out by men of the family - usually the husband, son or the brother-in-law. The women are discouraged to hold/attend meetings on their own. Whenever they are required to attend the meetings in the city, either some male relative participates as a proxy or the women are escorted by male relatives who usually give their opinions and decisions. With regard to the funds received for the welfare/development programmes of the villages, it is the men who decide how the funds are to be utilised.

Response to interviews and discussions

A wide range of women was interviewed. Some of them belonged to the higher castes while others were from the reserved category. Some of them were illiterate yet were aware of what they should be doing but were prevented from taking up authority in their own hands by the men in the family and in the village. While several were blissfully ignorant of what it meant to be a Panch/Sarpanch, some of the women were educated and were articulate about their duties and the handicaps faced by them

Almost all the women said that they would serve for another term if given a chance. This demonstrates that even though they did not handle power directly, it surely enhanced their status in the family and the village. They felt that it is useful to have women as Panch/Sarpanch as the women in the village find it comfortable to talk to them about their problems and give suggestions. They wanted to upgrade the school for girls so that most of the girls could access higher education. Self-Help-Groups are effectively working in the villages. These schemes are gaining popularity as it gives the women power through access to finance.

The new leadership

A majority of the women panchayats were active and enjoyed their newfound recognition and authority. However, patriarchal shadows were more than obvious in the perception of issues and solutions. The women were expressive and forthcoming. Out of 15 respondents 3-4 were merely “rubber-stamps”, automatically granting authority and control to their husbands and family members. A few others said they were unable to shake off the dominating presence and identity of their families. These views were deeply internalized.

Observation

Panchayat had brought power to the elected women, but they were striving to find a balance between inherited patriarchal values and the new opportunities for decision making and public authority. They all wanted education to be given to girl children as a key to understanding social structures.

Field trip: Uttaranchal: April 2005

Another major field trip was undertaken to Uttaranchal in April 2005 with the objective of direct interaction with women and community in the Srinagar and Rudraprayag areas of Uttaranchal. The major areas of focus were *Women and Education, Women and Health, Religious and Cultural Practices, Environment Issues in the Region, Women and Politics*, the possibility of *Women’s Studies Network in the state*, direct experience of community living in a village called Benji, in Rudraprayag district.

Women’s Issues in Gharwal University

In the context of the DWCD project we focus here on our interaction with the University. Garwhal University, Srinagar, was established in 1975. It has a high enrolment of women

students. In our interaction with **Prof. Anupama Nautyal**, Head, Department of Political Science, the following points were highlighted:

- The Garwhal University has applied to UGC for a Women's Studies Centre but has not received any information about further processing of the request.
- Given the tradition favourable to women's education, the presence of women on campus is highly visible. They enroll mainly for humanities and social sciences. A recent trend has been towards medicine and science subjects.
- Prof. Nautyal heads the Committee against Sexual Harassment at Garwhal University. The Complaint Committee against Sexual Harassment was instituted in 2004. No cases have been reported formally. Occasional incidents of "eve teasing" are remedied through direct discussion. The relationship between men and women students is cordial, generally. The campus environment is safe for women.
- While cases of sexual harassment were rarely brought to the Committee, it was observed that outside campus, in the disadvantaged social segments, there were incidents of domestic violence. The prime causes were poverty, male alcoholism, unemployment, drug abuse, behavioural problems, men in armed forces, lack of education.
- The induction of women into the Panchayat had resulted in some improvement in the power balance within the family and the community. The generation divide was an interesting phenomenon as Prof. Nautyal pointed out. Women above the age of 40 suffered from an inferiority complex, whereas women in 18-40 age group were educated and conscious of their rights. The university had organized Yoga and Karate camps for the women. It was noted that students were not very aware of world issues. Prof Nautyal felt that the education system should be more conducive to knowledge production and research.

Meeting with **Dr. Himanshu Bourai**, also of the Political Science Department led to discussions on her work with grassroot issues and women's participation in development, labour, management of resources and decision-making. Her objective was to make

Uttaranchal women of this region more participative in policy decisions on agriculture, forestry and water management.

NGO activity in Rudraprayag

The innovative work being conducted in this area relates to *medicinal plants* both in terms of cultivation and research and in applying its products for therapeutic purposes. We were interested in the impact on women and found that work in these regions is primarily the responsibility of women. They are environment sensitive and there is traditional respect for flora and fauna. The medical faculty we met in Srinagar also confirmed that NGOs and Govt sectors are working together or effective use of traditional knowledge. Given the hard terrain, many women are unable to come to hospitals. Dai training and capacity building of local women in simple medical procedures is being thought about.

This is **environment conscious region** and we found a close link between religious practice and respect for Nature. At the conceptual level Religion and Women is a topic for Theorizing with reference to the unique conditions in India. On field, by visiting some temples, speaking to religious leaders and mahants, and also women priests, and women caretakers of the deity, we came away with valuable empirical data.

Village Camp at Benji

Visits were also made to women Panchayat and village communities, specially during our stay at Village Benji, which is not approachable by a motorable road. In this remote area, we gained direct experience of the present thinking on education, employment of women, changing traditional norms. In this agricultural community, Nature dictates the products and hence nutrition and household economy. Enormous regard is expressed for girls education, with children walking many miles or families partially relocating to small neighbouring towns to have access to a good school. Its a hard life for the adult women who gather and carry huge loads of broken branches of trees for fuel (the law not to cut

trees is respected). They also have to fetch water from community sources. In talking at interviews, they wanted their daughters to have an easier life and saw education as the key.

Summary

The field trip to Uttaranchal was aimed to enrich our theoretical understanding of women's situation (one of the main objectives of the DWCD project) with the help of empirical experiences facilitated by the intensive interaction with local people at various levels. Our discussion with different groups has not only enlightened us but also given us a direction to develop links between WSDC and partner organizations in the State. With these connections we hope to build up a long-lasting partnership between academia and activism which would work with a positive vision of change for women.

09. SUPPORT FROM OTHER INSTITUTIONS

- **British Council Women's Studies Network** established on July 28, 2004, is an all India network. **WSDC was the initiating collaborator** in this enterprise which held its founding meeting in Delhi on July 28, 2004. We co-hosted a seminar "*Networks for Change Indo-British Partnership in Gender Equality – A collaborative initiative of Women's Studies Network*". Representatives of 24 Centres participated in the Programme. WSDC team was able to contact several outstation experts on the topics under discussion and to build up strong links with its partners in the project.

List of WSN members

1. *Jamia Millia Islamia, Delhi*
2. *University of Delhi, Delhi*
3. *Rani Durgavati Vishwavidyalaya, Jabalpur*

4. *Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh*
5. *Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra*
6. *Panjab University, Chandigarh*
7. *Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi*
8. *Himachal Pradesh University, Shimla*
9. *Jadavpur University, Kolkata*
10. *Gauhati University, Guwahati*
11. *Utkal University, Bhubaneswar*
12. *University of North Bengal, Darjeeling*
13. *Berhampur University, Berhampur*
14. *Calcutta University, Kolkata*
15. *SNDT Women's University, Mumbai*
16. *Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai*
17. *M S University of Baroda, Vadodara*
18. *Goa University, Goa*
19. *Avinashilingam Deemed University, Coimbatore*
20. *Pondicherry University, Pondicherry*
21. *Karnatak University, Dharwad*
22. *Sri Padmavati Mahila Visvavidyalayam, Tirupati*
23. *Bangalore University, Bangalore*
24. *Andhra Unuiversity, Visakhapatnam*

It was a valuable forum for disseminating information about the **DWCD Feminist Theory project** and for gathering special perspectives from the Directors and Project Officers who attended the conference. SNDT agreed to participate by sending an article. Universities in Pune, Jadavpur and Calcutta, being old Centres, shared their experience of long years with WS teaching and projects. In particular, our five partner universities from North India found an opportunity to plan the process of regional inputs in the project. Culture specific themes were important as inclusions for understanding Feminist Theory. The subject of language and vocabulary also came up.

An innovative aspect of the WSN was the launch of a **Virtual Conference** in parallel with the actual. Designed to demonstrate the easy and usefulness of web based connectivity, members signed up and held dialogues on issues relating to violence against women. While the actual conference ended on 30 July, the virtual connection carried on for 2 weeks. The WSN was established on a long term basis with a group id for the 24 members. It continues to be in use.

- **Consultation with Jamia Millia Islamia**

Considering Jamia Millia Islamia is the only partner within Delhi, a consultancy meeting was organized between the co-ordinators associated with Sarojini Naidu Centre for Women's Studies at Jamia and WSDC to discuss the mutual assistance that can be rendered. JMI has proposed Undergraduate courses in Women's Studies and building teaching material towards the implementation of these courses. The curriculum guidelines prepared by WSDC pertain to Certificate and Diploma courses at the Undergraduate level and a Study Seminar at the Postgraduate level. At the meeting the curriculum details were shared and discussed. Both universities expressed the opinion that a *Reader in Feminist Theory*, as conceptualized by the DWCD project, would be extremely useful.

- **Fulbright Programme: United States Educational Foundation in India**

Under the aegis of the Fulbright programme, Dr. Lucinda Joy Peach, from the Department of Philosophy, American University, USA, was affiliated to the WSDC for a period of seven months, January-July 2004. As a specialist in Religion, Law and Ethics, she contributed substantially to the DWCD project. Dr. Peach has been associated with the Women's Studies Programme at her own university and could bring the experience of her research and teaching to our discussions in India. She lectured extensively at colleges throughout Delhi University, and contributed a key paper to the Reader we were devising. Dr. Peach made a generous contribution of books on Feminist theory to the WSDC library, and helped with making our faculty at WSDC conversant with the current

discourses on the subject. Dr Peach also traveled to our partner universities in Jaipur and Shimla and participated in all aspects of the project development in Delhi.

- **Shimla: Indian Institute of Advanced Study**

May 2004

Workshops/Seminars were held in Shimla from May 4-9, 2004 involving WSDC, University of Delhi, Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla and Centre for Women's Studies and Development, Himachal Pradesh University, Shimla.

Colloquium on *Women in Media and Indian Culture* was co-hosted with the prestigious Indian Institute of Advanced Study on 6 May 2004. Almost 40 persons including Fellows and Associates of the Institute, university faculty, visiting scholars and writers of international repute, attended the programme.

The Inaugural session was chaired by the eminent philosopher, Prof. Margaret Chatterjee, and the key note address given by well known art historian, Prof. B.N. Goswami, on the subject, "Stepping into the light, softly: Changing Images of Women in Indian Art." It led to the next talk by Dr. Sukrita Paul Kumar on "Images of Partition". Following from this, perspectives on history and "Folk Textuality" were presented by Prof. Pankaj K. Singh. The final paper in this session by Prof. Malashri Lal used Deepa Mehta's film *Fire* to open into current debates on the identity of women.

The second session brought focus to visual imaging in advertising and electronic media. Prof. Lucinda Peach, speaking of "The Ethics of Gender Advertisement in Cross-cultural Perspectives," showed examples of "the beauty myth" and the commodification of the female body. Dr. Manjeet Bhatia attended to the legal aspects and cultural implications of the "Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act" of 1986. Dr. Meenakshi Faith

Paul and Dr. Kamal Kumar spoke of the Television and the impact of popular programmes such as “soaps” in changing value systems relating to gender and women’s status and roles in India.

A stimulating discussion ensued from the papers. It was felt by many that a “coarseness” has entered the representation of women in media. Agreeing that media has substantial impact on social action, the colloquium recommended that academic analysis should underscore the need to curb negative imaging, and that laws which prohibit offending use of women in media should be strictly implemented.

May 2005

On invitation from the Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Director of WSDC was invited as Visiting Scholar. Through lectures and interaction with Fellows and Associates, the papers on literature and culture were discussed. The excellent library facilities helped in the editing of the draft papers.

- **Shimla: Himachal Pradesh University**

May 2004

On 7 May 2004 **Seminar on *Women in Media and Popular Culture***, was co-hosted by Centre for Women’s Studies and Development, Himachal Pradesh University. The morning session, chaired by Dr. Sukrita Paul Kumar, opened with a presentation by Prof. Lucinda Joy Peach engaging an active response from the audience to the gender imagery in the Indian magazine advertisements she was showing. Why are women used to “sell” products which have no relation to the woman’s body which is so prominently displayed in many advertisements was the question frequently asked. The effect of globalisation and the capital market were factors discussed at length. Other speakers brought attention to practices in Himachal: Prof. Usha Bande speaking of “Identity Formation through Folk

Ways,” shared her research about the custom of “Bahuli” in Maharashtra and “Ralli” in Himachal, special festivals for adolescent girl children. Other participants responded with information on customs such as the “Reeth” by which a woman enters a second or a subsequent marriage in Himachal. It was pointed out that in the vast expanse of the state, there are many cultural and linguistic differences and any generalization about “women” should be avoided. Prof. Usha Pathania led the discussion with contributions from journalists, researchers, historians, experts in Tribal areas, students and project staff. The impact of media on traditional ways and the rise of educational levels were often mentioned. The group concluded that much more knowledge regarding gender and women’s status could be gained through continuing the cross-cultural and interdisciplinary dialogue in future seminars, colloquia, workshops or other formats, involving participants both in and beyond HP.

August 2005.

Director WSDC visited HP University to hold focused discussion on the project with partner institution the Centre for Women’s Studies and Development. At a meeting with Dr. Usha Bande, her paper on “The Female world of Two Folk Games from Himachal Pradesh and Maharashtra” was to be finalized. Problems relating to the transference from orality to scripted language was resolved through the introduction of notes on translation. The manner of collecting the cultural material as also recorded for further use.

In a meeting with Prof. Usha Pathania and researchers at the Centre, the utilization of the proposed Reader was discussed in relation to courses taught at the university and the needs of advanced level researchers. It was felt that such a book would break ground in Feminist thinking in India. A suggestion was strongly made that the material should also be available in Hindi.

Prof. Usha Pathania expressed her happiness at the smooth functioning of the partnership and drew up plans for further joint research. Topics proposed dealt with women and technology, psychological attitudes to women and girl children, culture and religion,

women and entrepreneurship. Both the Directors of Delhi and Shimla spoke in favour of multi centre research for the breadth of vision that it encourages and the cultural diversity it introduces.

10. PRINTING AND PUBLICATION

- **Reports for project: ‘Developing Indian Perspectives on Feminist Theory and Methodology’**

1. *Interim Report I* (April-June 2004)
2. *Interim Report II* (July-August 2004)
3. *Interim Report III* (April-Dec 2004 combined)
4. *Interim Report IV* (Jan-March 2005)
5. *Interim Report V* (April-June 2005)
6. *Final Report* (April 2004-October 2005)
7. *Executive Summary of Final Report*
8. *CD on project Progress*

- **Reports of activities:**

1. *Academic programme and community action in Shimla, May 2004*
2. *Workshops, June 2004*
3. *British Council Women’s Studies Network, July 2004*
4. *National Seminar, December 2004*
5. *Field trip to Kurukshetra, March 2005*
6. *Field Trip to Uttaranchal, April 2005*
7. *British Council : V-Connect virtual conference, July 2005*
8. *Review meeting in Shimla, August 2005*
9. *CD Testing Workshop: 27 September 2005*

Project related printing and publications by WSDC and its team members

- I. *Signifying the Self : Women and Literature*, co-edited, Malashri Lal (Macmillan 2003)
- II. *Theorizing Women: Feminist Theory and feminism – A Bibliography of Resources available in Delhi Libraries 2003-2004*
- III. *Gender and Society: A Resource Guide to Selected Periodical Literature with special reference to India available in Delhi Libraries. 2004-2005*
- IV. *UGC News Special Issue on Women’s Studies, June 2004*
- V. *WSDC Newsletter 13 focus on DWCD project*
- VI. *WSDC Annual Report 2004-2005*
- VII. *Women in India: Legal and Human Rights* by Sadiq A. J. Syed – A Handbook published by WSDC in association with The Centre for Professional Development in Higher Education, 2004.
- VIII. *At Home in the World. Co-editor Malashri Lal , ICCR 2005*

11. COMPILATION OF BACKGROUND AND GUIDED DISCUSSION

Refresher Course in Gender, Culture & Development (WS-8) : January 10 to February 01, 2005 Course In-charge: Prof. Malashri Lal, Director, WSDC. *Course Conveners: Dr. Deepali Bhanot, Janki Devi Memorial College: Dr. Manjeet Bhatia, WSDC*

- *Selected Topics:*

Concepts in Women Studies

Gender and Identity

Human Development Indicators

Women's Movement

Women and History

Marriage and Declining Sex Ratio

Subjectivity of Women

An Introduction to Feminisms

Family Law

Engendering Citizenship

Patriarchy

Cultural Construction of Gender

Feminist Jurisprudence

Representation in Politics

Recent Debates in Feminist Theory: Democracy Justice and Difference

Gender, Family and Kinship

Relevance of Women's Studies

Women as category in Judith Butler

Creative Writing and Gender Issues

Women and Development

Background Reading material for Refresher Course on “Human Rights, Gender and Environment,” Oct 4 – 25, 2004. Compiled by Dr. Shashi Motilal, Department of Philosophy, and Dr. Bijaylaxmi Nanda, Miranda House, with assistance from WSDC library.

- **Contents**

1. Introduction: Dimensions of Power and Social Transformations –Manoranjan Mohanty
2. Caste of Class or Caste-Class: A Study in Dalitbahujan Consciousness and Struggles in Andhra Pradesh in 1980s- Kancha Illaiah
3. Caste, Gender and Indian Feminism- Anupama Rao
4. Caste and Women – Leela Dube
5. The History of the Idea of Human Rights – Kenneth Minogue
6. What are Human Rights – Amurice Cranston
7. The Politics of Human Rights- Daniel P. Moynihan
8. The Development of Human Rights in International Law- Daniel Driscoll
9. International Dimensions of Human Rights and International Obligations of India- Naorem Sanajaoba
10. Human Rights and the United Nations: A Survey- V.S. Many
11. Human Rights Commissions in India- H.D. Agarwal
12. The Changing Definition of Rights in India- Manoranjan Mohanty
13. Consumerism and New Classes in India- Achin Vanaik
14. Towards a Theory of Patriarchy – Sylvia Walby
15. The Nationalist Resolution of the Women’s Question- Partho Chatterjee
16. Law Reform and Discrimination Against Women- Archana Parasher
17. Uniform Civil Code: Debates in Feminism Today- Nivedita Menon
18. Redefining the Agenda of the Women’s Movement within a Secular Framework- Flavia Agnes
19. Women’s Movements- Ghanshyam Shah
20. The Gender and Environment Debate: Lessons from India- Bina Agarwal
21. Changing Terms of Political Discourse: Women’s Movement in India, 1970s-1990s-Indu Agnihotri and Veena Majumdar
22. Gender, Environment and Structural Adjustment- Kumud Sharma
23. Human Rights and Environmental Movements- Ghanshyam Shah
24. Environmental Policy in India- Shyam Diwan and Armin Rosancranz

25. International Protection of the Environment of the Environment – S.K. Verma

12. STAFF TRAINING

Editorial Assistant

Ms. Bidisha Chaudhuri was appointed on 18 June 2004 on the position of editorial Assistant. Her qualification is M.A. (Sociology). She had previously worked on gender issues and was now accorded specific training for the purposes of understanding the requirements of the project. In particular Bidisha Chaudhuri read a number of books on feminist theory and discussed them with specialists from different departments such as Sociology, Psychology, English, Political Science, Philosophy. She read extensively into almost 15-18 scholarly journals and extracted articles which were pertinent to the topic. She examined bibliographies previously made by WSDC namely *Gender and Society: A Resource Guide to Selected Periodical Literature with special reference to India available in Delhi Libraries* and *Theorizing Women: Feminist Theory and feminism – A Bibliography of Resources available in Delhi Libraries*.

At in-house discussions it was determined that a series of Occasional papers and backgrounders will be prepared for the project. These are expected to help the editorial process. While focused training was given to the Editorial Assistant during the first month of her appointment (June 2004), weekly meetings have been held with project Director and project Coordinator.

The duties of the Editorial assistant to maintain records, send interim reports to the DWCD, be in constant contact with paper writers, receive draft papers, edit and send back for revision, fill in information gaps where required, organize seminars and workshops, participate in selected field trip, write draft of final report and prepare material for final submission.

Ms. Bidisha Chaudhuri fulfilled her duties with sincerity and efficiency. Upon receiving a scholarship for Higher Studies in Europe, she resigned from her **position on BENJWAL**. As the project was nearing completion, it was decided not to make a fresh fulltime appointment to this post. The remaining work was to be conducted in house with periodic assistance from outside sources as required.

13. DATA PROCESSING

The data processing had been one of the most crucial and engaging tasks as the materials came from various centers and were often bunched together. Primarily it involved typing in the raw material on curriculum, survey and research conducted by the partner universities. It was also necessary to keep detailed information of each of the partners and to be frequently in touch with them regarding revision, update and retyping of the data. A consolidated list of the contributors was prepared and has been constantly upgraded in the course of the project.

Large quantities of analytical material had to be prepared periodically to ensure sufficient coverage of the various topics selected. It was significant effort to keep track of contributors from many centres in Delhi, other parts of India and some who were also abroad. Back up documentation to several papers were prepared at WSDC through data collection from public and archival sources.

Typing, computer work, photocopying, relaying of information and data, and review and reformatting of data and other research material was a continuous part of the project. Understandably, almost all papers underwent several revisions.

14. PROJECT PREPARATION

Library survey of key terms in Feminist Theory was undertaken at Central Reference Library, Centre for Women's Development Studies, South Campus Library, and Janki Devi Memorial College Resource Centre.

In June 2004 Editorial Assistant to the project compiled information on the topics identified at the workshop.

Project Director worked on a review of Feminist Theory from sources in the UK and USA.

Project Coordinator worked on a review of Feminist Theory from Indian sources.

15. VISITING SCHOLAR TO WSDC

Prof. Rajmohini Sethi (Retired Professor of Sociology at Punjab University, Chandigarh), Contributor to the project spent 14 days as Visiting Professor at WSDC. During her stay Prof. Sethi delivered a lecture on “*War Widows of Punjab: A Sociological Analysis*” on 28th February at Delhi University, South Campus. In the ensuing discussions links were Made between the material presented by her and the larger concepts of kinship and family that she would be addressing in the current project. Prof. Sethi also spent time with the project staff and academics at WSDC discussing her research paper.

16. COURSES DEVELOPED BY WSDC

In conjunction with the activities of the Project, WSDC has developed two courses which are being implemented at the University of Delhi. Material in the Reader will find an immediate audience so we are keen to publish the manuscript in the best way possible.

Undergraduate Level: The Certificate Course in Women’s Studies is being taught in 2004-2005 at 6 colleges in collaboration with WSDC. It is an add-on course which students volunteer to read along with the courses they are enrolled for in the undergraduate Degree programme.

- Daulat Ram College
- Indra Prastha College

- Institute of Home Economics
- Janki Devi Memorial College
- Kamla Nehru College
- Ram Lal Anand College

Syllabus for Certificate Course (add-on and part time)

Unit 1 : Understanding Feminism:

- a What is Patriarchy?
- b Social Construction of Gender
- c Gender and the Family
- d Kinship and Marriage Systems

Unit 2: Literature, Culture, History

- a. Women's Writing
- b. Women in **Print** Media
- c. History of Women's Movements in India
- d. Women and Nationalism: Partition as Social and Literary History

Unit 3 : Women and Law

- a. Women in the Indian Constitution
- b. Personal Law: Gender Perspective
- c. Gender in Public Policies
- d. Women and Human Rights

Unit 4: Women and Public Policy

- a. Women and Political Participation

- b. Reproductive Health & Population Policies
- c. Identity & Politics of Representation
- d. National Policy for Women's Empowerment

Unit 5: Guided Project Work

Post Graduate Level: A Study Seminar on Gender and Society is being offered as a short term course for participants at the post graduate level. It is open to students enrolled in pg departments of Delhi University but is also open to outsiders as long as they fulfill the eligibility requirements. The project is supported by the Delhi Commission for Women. The schedule period of teaching the Study Seminar in November 2005-January 2006.

Syllabus for Study Seminar

Unit 1: Theoretical Challenges (First Week-9 hours)

- a. Feminist Theory-1 (Sex and Gender)
- b. Feminist Theory-II (Concept of Patriarchy)
- c. Women in History

Unit 2: Women in Indian Society (Second week-9 hours)

- a. Socio-economic Indicators
- b. Women and Work
- c. Violence against Women

Unit 3: Cultural and Literary Paradigms (Third Week-9 hours)

- a. Family and Socialization
- b. Representation of Women in Literature
- c. Representation of Women in Culture

Unit 4: Gender and Social Change (Fourth Week-9 hours)

- a. Women and Law
- b. Debates on Development
- c. Women's Political Participation

Unit 5: Fieldwork and Report (four weeks-2 of work with allotted NGO and 2 weeks for report writing)

**17. COURSE DEVELOPED WITH ASSISTANCE FROM WSDC
RESTRICTED B.A.**

New **BA Programme** at the University of Delhi has introduced a Foundation Course on **Human Rights, Gender and Environment**. WSDC participated in the discussions, helped to create reading material and is committed to conduct teacher training for this course which has a special emphasis on Gender. Information coming in shows the wide popularity of the course at the same time that reading material is not readily available. Once again the Reader created by the DWCD Project will prove useful.

Syllabus B.A. Programme- Foundation Course (July 2005 onwards)

Title: Human Rights, Gender and Environment

Objectives:

The course aims at enabling the students to understand the issues concerning the rights of citizens in general and the marginalized groups in particular, and assess the institutional and policy measures which have been taken in response to the demands of various movements. Conceptual dimensions, international trends and the Indian experience form the contents of the course.

Outcome:

The study of this course will equip the students with theoretical and conceptual understanding of socio-economic and political problems of marginalised groups in society such as women, dalits, minorities and adivasis and repercussions of contemporary developments such as globalization on them.

I. UNDERSTANDING SOCIAL INEQUALITY

1. Caste, Gender, Ethnicity and Class as distinct categories and their interconnection.
2. Globalisation and its impact on workers, peasants, dalits, adivasis and women.

II. HUMAN RIGHTS

1. Human Rights: Various Meanings
2. UN Declarations and Covenants
3. Human Rights and Citizenship Rights
4. Human Rights and the Indian Constitution
5. Human Rights, Laws and Institutions in India; the role of the National Human Rights Commission
6. Human Rights of Marginalised Groups : Dalits, Adivasis, Women, Minorities and Unorganised Workers
7. Consumer Rights: The Consumer Protection Act and grievance redressal mechanisms
8. Human Rights Movement in India

III GENDER

1. Analysing Structures of Patriarchy
2. Gender, Culture and History
3. Economic Development and Women
4. The issue of Women's Political Participation and Representation in India
5. Laws, Institutions and Women's Rights in India
6. Women's Movement in India

IV ENVIRONMENT

1. Environment and Sustainable Development
2. UN Environment Programme : Rio, Johannesburg and after
3. Issues of Industrial Pollution, Global Warming, threats to Bio-diversity

4. Environment Policy in India
5. Environmental Movement in India

18. CD PREPARATION AND TESTING

A CD had been commissioned and prepared to present the status of the project as to its objectives and the range of topics that have been covered. This was deemed to be a suitable documentation, as it would provide a fairly adequate idea about the development of the project, and its activities, WSDC publications, project papers, relevance and significance of the project and would also show a way forward. This Power Point Presentation of the project has been tested, expanded and updated over time, keeping with the pace of the project.

The latest version was shown at a seminar for CD Testing on 27 September 2005 at the South Campus. The objective is to present to paper writers, colleagues, specialists in Women's Studies, researchers, students, and potential users of the *Reader*, the synopsis of the material collected during the project period. With final list of papers with us and abstracts of the same, it is necessary to revisit the structure evolved at the inception of the project and to determine the modifications that are inevitable. A structure for the book should emerge from the CD testing session.

19. CONSULTANCY

We held regular consultancy meetings with experts across disciplines and geographical boundaries. We consulted university teachers, researchers, scholars, activists. Prof. Manoranjan Mohanty, Dr. Patricia Uberoi, Dr. Tanika Sarkar, Prof. Jasbir Jain, Dr. Sukrita Paul Kumar, Dr. Deepali Bhanot, Dr. Archana Parashar, Dr. Lucinda Joy Peach, Prof. Usha Pathania, Dr. Zarina Bhatti, Dr. Radhika Chopra, are among those who are deeply involved with women's issues and were willing to share their expertise with the project staff. Their long association with the field in question is crucial to the theoretical

understanding of the major issues pertaining to the empowerment of women in India. These consultations helped us to build our knowledge base and to develop a critical vision on the subject.

Dr. Indu Agnihotri, CWDS, has lent frequent support to the project by way of extended consultancy discussions.

Twelve occasional papers/manuals were received by February 2005. The in-house committee at WSDC discussed criteria for adequate coverage of the topics listed in the project and identified any gap areas that may still be remaining. The occasional papers that were original submissions were also being edited with the possibility of including some of them in the anthology prepared for the project. The final document emerged through the editorial process.

EXPERT OPINION was sought in particular from the following scholars. In addition to clarifying ideas relating to the evolution of the project, they kindly gave their expertise in the form of papers which could be included in the anthology. The academic gaps that were identified in the course of the project were possible to address and fill in the best possible manner by means of the expert essays:

Dr. Rachana Johri,

Dr. Sadhna Arya,

Dr. Malathi Subramanian

Prof. Radhika Chopra

Dr. Zarina Bhatta

Prof. Tanika Sarkar

20. OCCASIONAL PAPERS /MANUALS

Occasional Papers were discussed, invited and received from the following scholars. Given their status in Women's Studies in India and the regional coverage that was presented in some of them, it was decided to include the **original papers** them in the final anthology:

1. Dr. Malabika Mazumdar
2. Prof. Hajira Kumar
3. Dr. Sudhir Verma
4. Dr. Usha Bande
5. Dr. Joy Deshmukh
6. Dr. Radha Chakravarty
7. Dr. Karen Gabriel
8. Dr. Shormishtha Panja
9. Prof. Jasbir Jain
10. Prof. Rajmohini Sethi
11. Dr. Reicha Tanwar
12. Dr. Rakesh Chandra

List of Occasional Papers/Manuals:

1. Bina Agarwal, *Bargaining" and Gender Relations: Within and Beyond -the Household.* (printed)
2. Veena Poonacha *Women's Studies in Indian Universities: The Changing Parameters of Struggle.* (original)
3. Shashi Bhardwaj, *Manu's Women: Some Reflections* (draft)
4. Compiled by Nutan P.Jain, Sunita Nigam, Parul Tandon, *Mental Health among Indian Women Indian Institute of Health Management Research, Jaipur* (printed)

5. Compiled by Y. Sathyapriya, Anju Bala, Sunita Nigam, Nutan PJain, *Reproductive Health – A Human Right Indian Institute of Health Management Research, Jaipur* (printed)
6. Preeti Singh, *Women in Call Centres* (WSDC research)
7. *Status of the Adolescent Girl in Slums of Haryana: A Review Women’s Studies Research Centre Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra* (field report analysis)
8. Esha Niyogi De, *Anti-imperialist Humanism: the Feminine in Rabindranath Tagore’s Theatre.* (original)
9. Tanya Caulfield, *Happily Unmarried: Interrogations of the Single Woman in South Asia.*
10. Anita Ghai *Disabled Women: An Excluded Agenda of Indian Feminism-* (printed)
11. Harveen Sachdeva Mann, *The Undiscovered Country-Suniti Namjoshi, Diasporic Sexuality and the Textual Politics of Inter-nationality-* (original)
12. Radhika Chopra, *Profiles of Change: Men and Gender in Contemporary India-* (committed to publication elsewhere)

21. PROFESSIONAL CONTRIBUTORS

All Professional Contributions, Occasional Papers, Expert Opinion and Consultancies that resulted in original research papers relevant for the Proposed Reader in Feminist Theory are brought together for ready reference in the following Annotated List of Papers. Contributions came from some international experts and Indian experts who were willing to be associated with the project on a voluntary basis. The order followed is according to the Chapterization of the

Reader. The anthology has five sections which emerged from the decisions taken by the project team according to the nature and range of the papers as they were received. Section 1 provides a broad Overview of critical issues and is followed by subject specific reflections which many a times use interdisciplinary approaches. Regional perspectives from our partner universities are included within the subject areas which they relate to.

PROPOSED CHAPTERISATION OF ANTHOLOGY

Title: FEMINIST THEORY: INDIAN PERSPECTIVES

Section 1: *Toward a Feminist Theory and Methodology for India*

1. Jasbir Jain, "*Ladki Ki Jaat*" : *Theorizing The Woman Question*
2. Manoranjan Mohanty, *Women's Rights and Theoretical Perspectives*
3. Sadhna Arya, *Interrogating Development: Indian Feminist Perspectives*
4. Archana Parashar, *Women and the Law*
5. Veena Poonacha, *Women's Studies in Indian Universities: The Changing Parameters of Struggle*

Section 2: Interrogating History, Philosophy and Identity

6. Tanika Sarkar, *Women's Histories, Feminist Writings*
7. Malabika Majumdar, *Rules That Govern the Estate and Status of Hindu Women*
8. Lucinda Joy Peach, *Women and Religion: Inputs for Feminist Theory*
9. Manjeet Bhatia, *Development and Agency: Philosophical Reflections*
10. Rachana Johri, *Gender Socialization and The Question of Identity*

Section 3: Re-forming Social Construction

11. Rajmohini Sethi, *Theoretical Perspectives and Cultural Practice: Family, Marriage and Kinship*
12. Zarina Bhatti, *Ethnography of Gender Among North Indian Muslim*
13. Reicha Tanwar, *Women in Haryana: Role And Identity*

14. Hajira Kumar , *Indian Muslim Women: The Process of their Empowerment*
15. Usha Bande, *A Space of Their Own – The Female World of two Folk-Games*

Section 4: Literature, Culture and Sexuality:

16. Radhika Chopra, *Profiles of Change: Men and Gender in Contemporary India*
17. Karen Gabriel, *Seeing the Sexual: Mainstream Bombay Cinema and the Organization of Sexuality*
18. Shormishtha Panja and Malashri Lal and *Indian Literature: Theoretical Formulations*
19. Radha Chakravarty, *Forms of Marginality: Class, Caste and Gender in the Fiction of Mahasweta Devi*
20. Esha Niyogi De, “*The Humanness of Woman*”: *Rabindranath Tagore’s Feminist Imagination*
21. Harveen Mann , “*The Undiscovered Country*”: *Diasporic Sexuality in Suniti Namjoshi’s Because of India and The Mothers of Maya Diip*

Section 5 : The Politics of Being and Becoming

22. Indu Agnihotri, *Globalisation, Resistance and Change: Reflections on Indian Women’s Experience*
23. Joy Deshmukh, *Women, Work and Employment: Theoretical Issues*
24. Malathi Subramanian, *State and Patriarchy: Institution and Process*
25. Sudhir Varma, *Women’s Political Participation: Assimilation of Field Experience for Indian Feminist Theory*
26. Rakesh Chandra, *Negotiating Spaces: Gender in classrooms for girls in Uttar Pradesh*

ANNOTATED LIST OF PAPERS ACCORDING TO PROPOSED CHAPTERISATION

Title: *FEMINIST THEORY: INDIAN PERSPECTIVES*

Section 1: Towards a Feminist Theory and Methodology for India

1. Jasbir Jain, “*Ladki Ki Jaat*”: *Theorizing the Woman Question*

This paper focuses, firstly, on the constructs that confine and define womanhood and go on to be internalized through socializing processes; secondly, the nationalistic and postcolonial formulations of gender issues and thirdly, it attempts to work out a methodology for interpretative and formulative strategies. References are mainly to the Indian situation and a conscious effort has been made to avoid generalization. When some psychological and philosophical concepts are adopted they too function in a double-layered manner – the core concept and the cultural connotation. Universal concepts cannot be carried over from one culture to another in all their pristine purity. The tempero-spatial realities modify and alter them. This is specially so in case of gender where political ideologies, economic forces and religious constructs jostle with each other.

2. Manoranjan Mohanty, *Women’s Rights and Theoretical Perspectives*.

The draft of the paper, presented at the National Seminar for the project explored gender, class and caste from the perspective of a proposed “creative theory: feminism and gender” that calls for a focus on location and specific histories. The unique condition of caste-based hierarchies in India constitute the seeds of a discourse on gender that must take note of the emerging theoretical notations from academia as well as the ground swell of political reorientation made possible by recent legal and social action. The intersections clustered around the gender discourse are immensely complex in India. “Creative theory” must first sift through the vast information on women now available and arrive at key directions that feminist thinking can take. The paper, to be finalized is

based on the “Introduction”, Manoranjan Mohanty ed., *Class, Caste, Gender*, Sage Publications, 2004.

3. Sadhna Arya, *Interrogating Development: Feminist Perspectives on Gender and Policy*

New research and expert opinion explores the evolution of theorizing on gender and development, explaining the historical context for the emergence of feminist frameworks on development as well as the debates and critiques that contribute to making frameworks shift and lead to new frameworks. While taking into account the international developments that impacted on the emergence and evolution of these frameworks and debates and the subsequent production of literature in the field, it is argued that the need is to situate our critical reflections within our own specific histories and experiences. In the context of India, then there is a need to make an assessment of the last fifty-five years of development thinking and planning from the perspectives of women. This will also include an analysis as to what extent the shifts that came in the state policies were the result of pressure of women’s movements in India or were influenced by the initiatives being taken at the international /UN level. Were they able to include the experiences of women and address their issues?

4. Archana Parashar, *Women and the Law*

This paper analyses the nature of legal knowledge and the relevance of feminist critiques in challenging some conceptions. The paper is divided broadly into five sections. Part one discusses the generic understanding of the nature of law as universal and neutral. Part two analyses feminist challenges to such a conception of law. In Part three a brief account is presented of how legal theory and legal scholarship has dealt with the issue of women and the law. In this part an argument is made for the need to reconceptualise the feminist project as one of the constructing and inclusive legal theory. Part four explores how the extensive feminist legal critique is marginalised by mainstream scholarship in

the discipline. In the last part an argument is made for legal feminists constructing legal theory specifically suited to Indian society

5. Veena Poonacha, *Women's Studies in Indian Universities: The Changing Parameters of Struggle* -

Describing the political impulses that led to development of Women's Studies scholarship/programmes within and outside the University system, this paper underscores some of the changing parameters of the struggle confronting it. These challenges arise partly because of the current policies that support privatization/globalization of education and the cutbacks in state spending; partly because of the growing conservatism in the universities. Both these trends have serious implications for the future of women's studies in the university system, its disciplinary boundaries, theoretical frameworks and its political potential. Additionally, despite the inroads made by feminist scholarship, Women's Studies still remains marginal to the predominantly patriarchal set-up of the academia. These patriarchal structures continue to influence feminist intellectual enquiry by determining the criteria for scholarship and also exercising controls over appointments of personnel in Women's Studies departments

Section 2: Interrogating History, Philosophy and Identity

6. Tanika Sarkar, *Women's Histories, Feminist Writings*

Women's histories, however, predated feminist writings. They were composed around three major themes. One of the important sites of their emergence was the narrative of anti colonial struggles of the Gandhian era. The second field where women's historical presence was registered was in the arena of 19th century social reform. This, however, was marked by an interesting paradox which leads to the third major theme in women's history. Reforms, in a nationalist reading, were construed as a recuperation of authentic and classical religious traditions rather than modern rethinking, introspection, innovation. In recent explorations of history, there was a striking absence of feminist concerns and

women's histories within the production of the "Subaltern Studies" perspective. Feminist historians, simultaneously stimulated by radical struggles and history writings, set out to translate their own experiences and understanding into a separate realm of feminist histories of women and gender that was nourished by the intertwined promise, and failure of this historical moment.

7. Malabika Majumdar, *Rules That Govern The Estate and Status of Hindu Women*

This paper attempts to clarify the arguments offered in the Brahminical texts that relate to the estate and status of Hindu women. The complexities in this area has accentuated by the interventions and interpolations of colonial administrators. In the 19th century most Hindu intellectual social reformers experimented with the past in a manner that could best be classified as "dynamic classicism". The search for a glorious Hindu identity through Sanskritic models often mellowed the embarrassing issues that related to estate and status of Hindu women. These insertions in interpretations have generated a popular belief that women's position was relatively equitable under Vedic community system and it was only during the period of promulgatory law that estate and status failed to match her dignity. Many studies in the post -colonial period that meticulously archived the contents of the Brahminical texts make up for some of the earlier scholastic deficiencies. This paper clarifies some aspects of jurisprudence as found in the scriptures. It is bereft of all evaluative motives and hence it does not counter the anguishes shared by the feminist scholars who have voiced concern about gender discrepancies found in the scriptures.

8. Lucinda Joy Peach, *Women and Religion: Inputs for Feminist Theory*

Women and religion is a vast topic in any sense. Because of the religious pluralism and complexity of religion in India, it is even more difficult to talk about women and Indian religion in a brief essay. My enterprise will be a modest one: outlining some of the most prominent strategies that feminist interpreters of religious traditions have used in

responding to the sexism and patriarchy that are evident in institutionalized religious traditions. Since feminists in the West have written far more on religion to date than have Indian feminists, I will begin with an overview of their approaches. I will follow this with a discussion of some of the ways in which the Indian religious landscape presents limitations for the application of these strategies, and describe how feminists are both using, as well as diverging from these approaches in their interpretations of Indian religions.

9. Manjeet Bhatia, *Women and Subjectivity: Philosophical Reflections*

Women's agency is difficult capture in a framework of analysis. The problems relate to both theoretical and empirical formulations. Several gender issues arise from the immediate context which, nonetheless, require to be placed within frameworks which would encourage a broader base for philosophical critique. The paper discusses two approaches to the problem "Bargaining" and "Human Capability". The first offers useful insights into women's status in poverty stricken regions such as India. Yet the second, "capability" approach, provides a far more comprehensive frame of inquiry. The paper field-tests this theoretical tool with the help of case studies of elected women members in *panchayats*

10. Rachana Johri, *Gender Socialization and the Question of Identity*

The socialization of gender and its relationship with identity has been explored from multiple perspectives. The past three decades, in particular have seen a proliferation of research in the social sciences documenting the processes of gender socialization in India. However, this research has not always been motivated by feminist concerns. The problem is particularly striking where analyses of gender have rarely moved beyond research on sex differences. Where research does exist, gender appears mostly as an independent variable with minimal understanding of its embeddedness within contexts and power relations. The opinion presented in this paper attempts to document the received wisdom regarding gender socialization and identity with a deliberate focus on psychological

aspects of identity and also to consider alternatives. This study particularly draws on the research on the mother's love for daughters in a world that prioritizes the birth of sons.

Section 3: Re-forming Social Construction

11. Rajmohini Sethi, *Theoretical Perspectives and Cultural Practices: Family, Marriage and Kinship*

Feminist discourse in postcolonial India has been successful in mapping gender and the complex ways in which gender bias permeates many of our historical, sociological, literary or religious texts. However, while the feminist intellectual has been successful in unraveling the layers of patriarchal bias that permeates these texts, in doing so, s/he was him/her-self engaged in dialogue with western consciousness. Contemporary feminist scholarship considers all such work as inauthentic and devoid of acquaintance with the Indian social epistemology and cultural practices. The present enquiry makes an attempt to explore and explain the social relations and organization pervading the world of women who are situated on the margins. The partially situated knowledge thus gained by women would be within the matrix of family, marriage and kinship and would contribute to a broadened understanding of social relationships. It would also help to de-centre the existing dominant discourse and continually displace, rework and inform how power organizes social life. This paper endeavors to explore the interdependence between family, marriage, kinship and gender. Firstly it provides a brief review of the studies on family and kinship and later draws attention to some varied cultural practices and the imperfections within them

12. Zarina Bhatti, *Ethnography of Gender Among North Indian Muslim*

Among Indian Muslims, Islamic injunctions have been considerably diluted by the socio-economic, cultural and political structure of the wider Indian society. In India the Little Tradition Of local culture has often overruled the Great Tradition of Islam (Singer). Indian Muslim society could not escape from accepting Indian cultural traditions and its social structure, and adopted many Hindu customs and rituals in their daily life. Thus,

there has existed from the beginning a confusion between the religious precepts and the existing social reality, a confusion which has continued to the present day, blurring the understanding of Indian Muslim community, particularly the understanding of Indian Muslim women's status. Indian feminist scholars and activists too, have been caught in this confusion and had been hesitant in addressing Muslim women's issues for fear of hurting religious sentiments

13. Reicha Tanwar, *Women and Education: Role and Identity- A case study of Haryana*

The geo-economic conditions of the region as such gave rise to a different construction of gender, particularly in relation to the role of women. The rugged terrain, the lack of irrigation resources, and the migration of male members of the household for service based occupations in the army, police and other services left no option for the women of households but to cultivate the lands. That active participatory role of women became a part of the peasant culture and ethos in due course of time. This cultural ethos can be seen to exist in a fairly homogenous form among all castes and classes of the region, that is, both the dominant and the subordinate castes, and among the high and low with small variations. It is important to understand why Haryana's progress could not translate into the socio-economic well being of the women of the state. The process essentially involves the goal of challenging subjugation and subordination. Empowerment thus includes parameters that operate at the macro as well as micro levels. In this context the paper focuses on the role of education in the empowerment of women in the state and presents a brief review of the system concerned with special emphasis on the attitudes towards girls and the notion of social change.

14. Hajira Kumar, *Indian Muslim Women, Issues, Concerns and Obstacles in the Process of their Empowerment-*

All women in general and Indian women in particular are disadvantaged. Among them, the Muslim are specifically deprived, impoverished and vulnerable. The paper gives an

account of the miseries and sufferings of Muslim women who are lagging behind their non-Muslim counterparts in India. They are also much more disadvantaged than the women of many other countries. Their problems revolve around educational and economic deprivation. Moreover their vulnerability to sexually transmitted diseases particularly HIV/AIDS worsens their situation. Due to typical minority syndrome, Muslim women are, by and large, untouched by the winds of change. Both government and the NGOs must try to get the support of religious leaders for initiating any change or developmental process among them. Once the initial acceptance is created, Muslim women will also progress rapidly.

15. Usha Bande, *A Space of Their Own: The Female World of Two Folk-Games from Himachal Pradesh and Maharashtra*

This paper leads to discussions of multicultural transferences within India. Also opening up the query about gender and genre, it speaks of folklore and games people play as a manifestation of cultural practice. Theoretical insights about how “play” and “lore” reveal deep seated stereotypes associated with girls and women are boldly original and sometimes provocative. The paper explores folk narratives and practices that are primarily oral in character. A comparative study from different regions/provinces is a forceful way to develop integrated approaches to the women’s question. The conditions depicted in folklores may not be ideal, but they can be wrought into effective instruments of change. Specific practices will be reviewed and theoretical frameworks will be suggested in the analysis.

Section 4: Literature, Culture and Sexuality:

16. Radhika Chopra, *Profiles of Change: Men and Gender in Contemporary India*

From the late 1980s onward there has been a self conscious move among men and men’s groups to think more self consciously about relations of gender and their own roles in

perpetuating discriminatory gender practices. Such self-conscious collective attention to the structures of gender, power and hegemony also produced more concerted thinking about men's need to change and involve themselves more closely (and caringly) in the lives of their partners. This kind of collective rethinking was generated and encouraged partly by the globally visible and politically active gay movements, and in part by reconnection with family life and labour at times when global economies were in a state of enormous structural shifts. More women were in the workforce and more men were doing work that was classified as "non-masculine". Men's own response to feminist debates demanded a dismantling of existing gender orders that discriminated – often violently – against women. This paper is a step in detailing the biographies of men involved in issues of gender and in creating contexts for gender equity.

17. Karen Gabriel, *Seeing the Sexual: Mainstream Bombay Cinema and the Organization of Sexuality*.

This paper attempts to set out and analyse some of the crucial ways in which sexuality gains representation in the context of contemporary mainstream Bombay cinema. The prefatory discussion on what constitutes the field and dimensions of the sexual will argue for the importance of nuancing the ways in which the sexual is routinely considered. It will explore the relations between the organization of the sexual and the representations of it within cinematic narratives that generate meanings, constructions and contestations of the sexual. The present concern with the terms in which the sexual gains articulation and visibility, leads us to understand the nature of the medium as one that negotiates the domain of the public space and the terms in which women and gender relations enter this space. Cinema's historical and acknowledged self-consciousness of itself as a public voice needs to be factored into any understanding of why it produces the images it does. Similarly, its representational and narrative genealogy needs to be factored in while understanding its narratives of the sexual.

18. Shormishtha Panja and Malashri Lal *Indian Literature: Theoretical Formulations*

This paper deals mainly with the problem, not immediately apparent in Western Feminism, of evolving a feminist paradigm that can do justice to the twin polarities of Indian English feminism and Dalit feminism the one linked with privilege and a foreign language; the other with extreme poverty, economic and cultural linguistic. The extreme nature of difference within the Indian feminist discourse is not present to the same degree in the feminist discourse of the West. This is something that Indian feminists must come to terms with and decide whether there can indeed be a single, meaningful, unitary if not unified feminist discourse in India. The paper attempts to formulate theoretical parameters which may be operational for Indian literature. Illustrations and references span a range from Bama to Arundhati Roy.

19. Radha Chakravarty, *Forms of Marginality: Class, Caste and Gender in the Writing of Mahasweta Devi*

As a writer with a conscience, Mahasweta Devi sees herself as a rebel against the Bengali literary establishment. Unlike her literary predecessors, who generally placed their female protagonists within narrow, apolitical social frameworks, Mahasweta perceives women's oppression as linked to other forms of social exploitation and discrimination, based, for instance, on class and caste. Mahasweta's representation of these intersecting forms of marginality serves as a useful reminder of the need to rethink the premises of Indian feminism, which tends to focus on the situation of upper-class, upper caste women. Her fiction asserts the need to expand the field of enquiry to include the dispossessed and disenfranchised, and to adopt an approach that recognizes heterogeneity and culture-specific hierarchies of power. However, as an educated, empowered woman's attempt to speak for the marginalized, her writings also raise questions about the ways in which such interventions can sometimes enact unintended appropriations of voice and identity. Mahasweta's works thus confront us with an apparent paradox, for they simultaneously foreground and problematize the possibility of subaltern speech.

20. **Esha Niyogi De, “*The Humanness of Woman*”: Rabindranath Tagore’s *Feminist Imagination***

This essay studies Rabindranath Tagore’s representations of women’s voices in selected creative and critical works: the letter/essay “*Narir Manusatya* [The Humanness of Woman]” (1928); the poem “*Sadharan Meye* [Ordinary Girl]”(1932); and the dance-drama, *Chandalika* [The Chandal Girl] (1937). All these pieces were written late in life. In this phase, Tagore’s creativity took a pro-woman turn at the same time that he was growing critical about the gender hierarchies being endorsed by contemporary discourses of nationalism. The paper argues that the sexual imagery in two creative pieces in question--the poem and the dance-drama--show a complex dual focus. On the one hand, they represent the autonomy of women’s voices, needs, desires, while on the other, they explore in what ways male privilege must be challenged such that women’s individualities and interests could be represented in the most non-coercive way.

21. **Harveen Sachdeva Mann, *The Undiscovered Country-Suniti Namjoshi, Diasporic Sexuality and the Textual Politics of Inter-nationality***

This paper examines *Because of India* and, in particular, the set of selections entitled “*In this Kind Country*” and the novel *The Mothers of Maya Diip* to underscore Namjoshi’s ambivalent, plurivocal response to the overarching question, “But then how are we all to live?” (*Because of India*) Whereas some poems attest to Namjoshi’s continuing attachment to Hindu India, it also points to her resistance to the (autochthonous) mother country’s silencing and erasure of the Western-influenced lesbian-feminist daughter. The *Mothers of Maya Diip* problematizes the hypocritical, exclusive, even murderous nationalist ideology of power even as it is espoused by women.

Section 5 : The Politics of Being and Becoming

22. Indu Agnihotri, *Globalisation, Resistance and Change: Reflections on Indian Women's Experience*

Women in India have acquired increased visibility in the public sphere in recent decades. However, this does not necessarily signify an improved status. The mass of women, in fact, today face impoverishment, loss of livelihood and assets and are victims of violence that is unprecedented both in nature and scale. Ironically, for women the new global era comes alongside a fresh wave of orthodoxy which attempts to push them back into an imaginary past invoked in the name of “tradition” and “identity”. Women confront reconfigured patriarchies in a social world dominated by free-market ideology while state and fundamentalism vie with each other to further restrict their choices. Experience shows that beneath the jingoistic slogans fanning fundamentalist mobilizations and hostilities built up around caste, culture, region, religion, language and nation, there runs a bond of commonality of both – women’s oppression, as well as their struggle. Women’s survival is linked to the search for alternate paths to peace, progress and development, despite the fact that declarations emanating from the corridors of power today proclaim that there is only one way to go.

23. Joy Deshmukh-Ranadive, *Women, Work, Employment Theoretical Inputs*

This paper draws out the theoretical issues connected to women, work and employment. These theoretical constructs are intimately linked to empirical and field level experience. The purpose of the paper is to contextualise the debates in the current macro scenario of globalisation, withdrawal of the state from service provision in social sectors and the reign of the free market. A conceptual framework is suggested which allows students, teachers and researchers to draw linkages, horizontal, vertical and diagonal between theory and experience. It provides a tool for both analysing existing data as also for structuring fresh research designed to generate new data.

24. Malathi Subramanian, *State & Patriarchy: Institution & Process*

The stated opinion in this paper examines the impact of the deeply entrenched institutionalized nature of gender inequalities in India on the women's public, political presence and engagement. It looks at the extent and effectiveness of their participation and representation in Indian politics in the General Elections from 1952 to the recently concluded elections in 2004. Gender inequalities resulting in the absence of women from the public political space reflect power relations which are articulated through institutions and processes and are therefore relevant to the policy domain. Such situatedness needs to be addressed. Women's participation in mainstream political activity and exercise of power in and through decision making has important linkages with the broader arena of democratic governance. It impacts upon the legitimacy of the political institutions and processes. This paper also explores the role of Feminist politics in changing institutions and processes. It calls for a critique of the structure that defines oppressive forms of gendered conduct as rational or meaningful. The feminist challenge is to ensure more inclusive and democratic conditions for the just representation of women

25. Sudhir Varma, *Women in Politics: Assimilation of Field Experience for Indian Feminist Theory*

Tracing women's struggle for enfranchisement, the essay discusses their lack of access to the electoral rolls and the ballot box as enormous impediments to political power. Already men hold on tenaciously to patriarchal politics and rule of money and muscle power. Such strategies are unavailable to women. From Nehru's time, entry of women into the political system has been paid lip service to, only by men. Very few women have been elected to the parliament and the state assemblies. The "critical mass" theory of Drude Dahlerup has been applied only partly at the *panchayat* level without the critical support of the women's movement. May be it is too early to develop a feminist theory to bring Indian feminism face to face with *realpolitik*.

27. Rakesh Chandra, *Negotiating Spaces: Gender in classrooms for girls in UP*

The paper focuses on a regional perspective on questions of gender and women. It asks whether the conflicts which underlie the foundations of Feminist Theory all over the globe are similar or so heterogeneous as to make generalization impossible. To those individuals who foreground different reference group identities on different occasions, does gender have the privilege of always being the most significant and cross cutting? The author illustrates his theories through recounting his experience with girls' education in Barabanki. This is a story of struggle and achievement which helped the team to interrogate issues of access to basic numeracy and literacy. Curriculum, through its texts and pedagogy, when it reinforces the gender stereotype, enslaves more than it liberates or empowers the girl child.

22. LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS: (ALPHABETICAL)

- 1. Agnihotri, Indu**, is a Senior Fellow, Centre for Women's Development Studies, New Delhi. She was teaching History at Vivekananda College, University of Delhi. She has been actively engaged in women's movement in India for more than a decade. Her special interest areas are Women's Movement, and Issues of Labour. She has written extensively on the history of the women's movement, issues of globalization and liberal economy. Her publications include "Rereading Histories" *Seminar*, Issue: 505 (2001).
- 2. Arya, Sadhna**, is Reader in the Department of Political Science at Satyawati College (E) in University of Delhi. She is presently working with the Centre for Women's Development Studies, New Delhi. She is an active member of SAHEL, an autonomous women's group based in Delhi, which is involved with women's rights issues. Among her publications is a text book in Hindi on women and the political process.

3. **Bande, Usha**, former Fellow, Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla was till recently on the faculty of English at Government College for Women, Shimla and Principal of Government College, Arki under the Himachal Pradesh University. Dr. Bande worked for her doctorate on the “Novels of Anita Desai”, interpreting Desai’s characters from the angle of Third Force Psychology. She recently completed a major UGC project on Indian Short Stories and is now working in the field of Women’s Studies. She visited the USA and Canada under academic exchange programmes.
4. **Bhatia, Manjeet**, is a full time academic at Women’s Studies and Development Centre, University of Delhi. Her area of specialization is social and political philosophy. Holding degrees in Philosophy as well as in Political Science, she has worked extensively with projects on aspects of Feminist theory and practice. She is currently working as co-editor for a book, *Perspectives On Women In South Asia*, and her manuscript *Freedom and The Individual* has been accepted for publication. As coordinator for several projects at WSDC, Dr Bhatia has wide experience linking women’s movement with women studies in India.
5. **Bhatty, Zarina**, has combined research and activism in her career. After studying Sociology at the London School of Economics, she taught Sociology in a Delhi University College. She has worked as a gender specialist in a number of International organizations. Her research has concentrated on the issues of Indian Muslim women and women in the unorganized sector. She is a staunch secularist and her work on Muslim Indian women bears the marks of her liberal attitudes. Mrs. Bhatty has published and delivered lectures extensively, both nationally and internationally on the above subjects. She is a former President of the Indian Association for Women’s Studies and of the Y.W.C.A. of Delhi and a proud mother of three equally liberal and professional daughters.
6. **Chakravarty, Radha**, teaches English at Gargi College, University of Delhi. Her doctoral thesis is a cross-cultural study of contemporary women writers. She

has published numerous essays and review articles on feminist theory and practice. Her books, *Crossings*, *Chokher Bali*, *In the Name of the Mother* and *Farewell Song: Shesher Kobita* are English translations of the works of major Bengali writers, including Tagore, Mahasweta Devi, Sunil Gangopadhyay and Selina Hossain.

7. **Chandra, Rakesh**, has recently taken charge as the Director of the Centre for Women's Studies at Lucknow University. As a teacher in the Department of Philosophy in the same university, he combines interest in pedagogy and theoretical work with field experience in several districts of Uttar Pradesh. Known for his specialization in educational curriculum for girl children, Dr. Chandra has undertaken major projects with UNICEF and ACTION AID, and conducted Teacher Training Programme for Government and NGOs.
8. **Chopra Radhika**, is a Reader in the Department of Sociology, University of Delhi. She has been teaching the gender course for some years in the Department. She also introduced a new course called "Theorizing Masculinity" at the M.Phil. level. Her most recent publication is Chopra et.al (edited) *South Asian Masculinities*, (2004, Kali for Women and Women Unlimited). Her other publications include "From Violence to Supportive Practices: Family, Gender and Masculinity in India", *EPW*, (2003), *Rethinking Pro-feminism*, (UN Publication, December 2004). She is currently co-editing a volume with Patricia Jeffrey *Educational Regime in Contemporary India* (forthcoming by Sage). She is the guest editor of the special issue of the Journal *Men and Masculinity* on the theme of "Muted Masculinity" (forthcoming in 2005).
9. **De, Esha Niyogi**, teaches Women's Studies, Asian American Studies, and English at the University of California, Los Angeles, and she is the Co-Director of the UCLA Center for the Study of Women Research Group on "*Migrating Epistemologies: Feminist, Postcolonial, Transnational*." She teaches graduate and undergraduate courses on Feminist Theory, Postcolonial Theory, and South

and South Asian Women with an emphasis on globalization. She has published on Indian, British, and Singaporean literature and film in a variety of journals including *Screen*, *Genders*, *Diacritics*, and *Signs*. She is the co-editor of *Trans-Status Subjects: Gender in the Globalization of South and Southeast Asia* (Duke University Press, 2002).

10. **Deshmukh-Ranadive, Joy**, is a Senior Fellow at the Centre for Women's Development Studies (CWDS), New Delhi. She has been working on the theme of power relations since her doctoral thesis *Power in Economics* (1980). She incorporates a multi-disciplinary approach to theorizing issues in gender studies and her book *Space for Power, Women's Work and Family Strategies* (Rainbow, New Delhi 2002), presents a conceptual framework to analyse empowerment in the context of gender hierarchies. Her other areas of interest are economic, social and cultural human rights. She has researched on the Right to Food and the Right to Housing . Dr. Deshmukh-Ranadive has also worked on issues in structural adjustment, globalization, micro credit and self-help groups in India. She earlier taught economics at the postgraduate Department of Economics, University of Mumbai.

11. **Gabriel, Karen**, teaches literature at St. Stephen's College, University of Delhi. She has been writing and researching on issues of gender and sexuality for the past several years. She was awarded The Netherlands government's DGIS-DPO Doctoral Research Fellowship to do her doctoral research at the Institute of Social Studies, The Hague, and the Leverhulme Fellowship to research at the Universities of Keele and Leeds, the UK. Her research has been on the social organization of gender and sexuality and on the relation between this and representation in the Bombay commercial cinema. She has several publications on these areas of research including a book titled *Imaging a Nation: The Sexual Economies of the Contemporary Mainstream Bombay Cinema* (1970–2000). Among other books, she is currently working on an anthology on gender in India.

12. **Jain, Jasbir**, is Professor and Fellow Emerita at the Department of English, University of Rajasthan. She has worked extensively on Indian literature across languages, on drama and on postcolonial theories. Among the books edited by her are *Film and Feminism: Essays in Indian Cinema* (2002), *Indian Feminisms* (2001), *Creating Theory: Writers on Writing* (2000) and *Contesting Postcolonialisms* (2000). She is the founder Director of IRIS an institution devoted to interdisciplinary research. She is currently engaged working on “Indigenous theories of Feminism”. Her latest publications are *Gendered Realities: Human Spaces* and *Women in Patriarchy*.
13. **Johri, Rachana**, is a Reader in Psychology at Lady Shri Ram College, University of Delhi. Her Ph.D. was on the social construction of motherhood. She is currently engaged in research on female foeticide. Dr. Johri’s special interest areas are gender, mental health and developmental psychology. She has also been active in organizing workshops and seminars in these areas. Dr. Johri has several publications which include *The Freedom of Choices: A Discursive Analysis of Mothers’ Narratives*, (Psychological Studies 2001).
14. **Kumar, Hajira**, is the founder Director of the Sarojini Naidu Centre for Women’s Studies and the current Head of the Department of Social Work, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi. Her extensive work on Muslim women has led to policy advice on girl child education and reproductive health of women. Under her guidance, the Women’s Studies Centre conducted in-depth research on minority issues in areas in the vicinity of Jamia.
15. **Lal, Malashri**, teaches at the Department of English, University of Delhi and she simultaneously holds the post of Director, Women’s Studies and Development Centre, University of Delhi. As a Fulbright Scholar at Harvard and an International Fellow of the American Association of University Women and as recipient of Shastri Indo-Canadian grants, she has spent several years on extensive research in Women’s Literature. Her publications include *Feminist Spaces*

- (1997), *The Law of the Threshold: Women Writers in Indian English* (1995, rpt.2000). She is also the co-editor of *Signifying the Self: Women and Literature* (2004) and *At Home and the World* (2005). She was Chairperson, Commonwealth Writers Prize and served on the jury on several literary awards.
16. **Majumdar, Malabika**, is a Reader at the Department of Philosophy, Kamla Nehru College, University of Delhi. She completed her PhD. on “The Problem of Revolution” in 1984 from the University of Delhi. She has been working on women’s issues both at the grassroots and conceptual levels and has been associated with different women’s organizations such as Purogami Mahila Sangathana, National Alliance of Women. Dr. Majumdar has also completed a course on Women and Law conducted by Sunanda Bhandare Foundation. Her publications include *Economic Rights of Women: An Overview* in S. Visalakshi (ed.), *Economic Empowerment of Women*, NISTADS, Delhi (2003), ‘*Why Be Moral*’ and *Buddhist Social Ethics* (March 2004) by the Project of Indian Science Philosophy and Culture Series of the CONSAVY Project.
 17. **Mohanty, Manoranjan**, was the founder Director of the Developing Countries Research Centre, University of Delhi. He has published extensively and has authored several books, the most recent being *Class, Caste and Gender*, Sage: 2004. Traveled widely, he takes a particular interest in China as a site of study. Manoranjan Mohanty retired recently as Professor in the Department of Political Science at the University of Delhi. He has been the guiding force for the innovative restructured B.A. programme.
 18. **Parashar, Archana**, teaches in the Division of Law at Macquarie University, Australia Archana Parashar is an Associate Professor in Law, at Macquarie University, Australia. She has an abiding interest in the Western Feminist theory, its presence in contemporary legal theory, and its relevance for women in third world and immigrant women in Australia. She has published many articles on the subject of women’s position under the personal laws and has consistently argued

for gender justice in the Indian Family laws. She is the author of *Women And Family Law Reform In India* and has co-edited the book *Engendring Law: Essays In Honour of Lotika Sarkar*.

19. **Panja, Shormishtha** is Professor and Head, Department of English, University of Delhi. She received her PhD from Brown University and has taught at Stanford University. She is the editor of *Many Indias, Many Literatures: New Critical Essays* (1999,2000, 2004) and *Critical Theory, Textual Application* (2002) and the co-editor of *Signifying the Self: Women and Literature* (2004). She has published numerous articles on gender studies, Indian Literature and Renaissance Literature in journals such as *English Literary Renaissance*, *Journal of Narrative Technique*, *Yearly Review*.
20. **Peach, Lucinda Joy**, is Associate Professor in the Department of Philosophy and Religion at American University (Ph.D. in Religious Studies from Indiana University; J.D. degree from New York University School of Law). Her areas of research and teaching include moral philosophy, applied ethics (including bioethics, feminist ethics, and legal ethics), religion and politics, and gender and religion. Her publications include *Legislating Morality: Religious Identity and Moral Pluralism* (Oxford, 2002), two edited collections of essays in women's studies and a number of articles on gender and religion, the ethics of war and violence, corporate social responsibility, and women's human rights, including the trafficking of women for the sex trade as a human rights violation.
21. **Poonacha, Veena**, is the Director of Research Centre for Women's Studies, S.N.D.T. Women's University. Dr. Poonacha has been associated with this Centre for the last 20 years. She completed her PhD. under a UGC fellowship on *Women in the Coorg Society: A Study of Status and Experience through the use of Proverbs, Folk Songs and Oral Histories*. She has worked and published extensively on women's issues. Her current research interests are in methodologies of feminist research and gender in human rights discourse.

22. **Sachdeva, Mann Harveen** teaches in the Department of English at Loyola University Chicago. She is currently the Director of Undergraduate Programmes in English. Her areas of specialization are Postcolonial Studies, South Asian Studies and Third World Feminism. Among her publications are the essays, “South Asian Partition Literature and the Gendered Rape and Silence of the National Body”, *South Asian Review* (2001), “Religious Fundamentalism and the Twice-Fragmented Narrative of Gender in Contemporary Punjab”, *Jouvert: A Journal of Postcolonial Studies* 4 (2000), “ ‘ The Magic Idyll of antiquated India’: Patriarchal Nationalism in R.K. Narayana’s Fiction,” *ARIEL: A Review of International Literature* 31 (2000). She is working on a book, *In pursuit of Equality: Feminism and Nationalism in Contemporary South Asian Women’s Literature in English*.
23. **Sarkar, Tanika Sarkar**, is Professor, Modern History, at Jawaharlal Nehru University. Currently she holds the Rockefeller Fellowship, and is attached to the Simpson Center for the Humanities at Washington University, Seattle, USA. Her earlier work was on popular and nationalist politics in Bengal in the 1920s and the 1930s. Since then she has been working on the interface between laws and religious norms in late 19th century Bengal, on women’s writings, and on contemporary rightwing politics in India. She is also engaged in a CWDS project on women’s organisations in 20th century Bengal
24. **Sethi, Rajmohini**, retired from the Department of Sociology at Punjab University Chandigarh. Her special areas of research are gender, development and socio-legal issues. She has publications on women in agricultural economies, and the land reform movements in Punjab.
25. **Subramanian, Malathi**, is the Principal of Daulat Ram College, University of Delhi, where she also teaches Political Science. Her research interests are in the area of Indian politics and Women Studies. She teaches the course on Women and

Political Process to the undergraduate students of Political Science (Honours) in the college and is supervising research work of some postgraduate and Ph.D. students. She is Chair of the Committee overseeing the implementation of the new foundational course on “Human Rights, Gender and Development.”

26. **Tanwar, Reicha**, is the Director, Centre for Women’s Studies and Research, Kurukshetra University, Haryana. She has been organizing major training programmes in Women’s Studies sponsored by the UNESCO, National Commission for Women and the University Grants Commission. Under her guidance the Centre has conducted in-depth studies in female feoticide in Haryana and other aspects of conditions relating to women in the region.

27. **Varma, Sudhir**, retired from the Indian Administrative Service in the Rajasthan Cadre is now the Director, Social Policy Research Institute. During his tenure in the IAS, Dr. Varma set up a separate Department of Women and Child Development in Rajasthan in 1985. As Chief Electoral Officer, Rajasthan, he initiated a number of training programmes for women voters to raise their awareness about the electoral process. The National Commission for Women has made him their Research Advisor for Rajasthan. Dr. Varma has been invited by the Gender Studies Centres at the George Washington University, Washington DC and the George Mason University, Virginia for interaction with their faculties. Sudhir Varma’s publications include *Women’s Struggle for Political Space: From Enfranchisement to Participation* (1997), *A Situational Analysis of Women and Girls in Rajasthan*, National Commission for Women (2004).

23. **DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED**

- Due to the entire funding not being available as the second installment for the project, the second National Seminar could not be held.
- There should have been a grant provision for book purchase.

- There should have been an equipment grant for one computer.

24. PROJECT FINDINGS

Academic implications of the Project: “Developing Indian Perspectives on Feminist Theory and Methodology”

- Feminist Theory is a tool for contemporary intellectual enquiry. Its Indian perspectives have not been developed so far though many scholars have expressed their dissatisfaction with available analytical tools which have originated in other cultures. The major gap is in academic reading material on Women’s Studies in India and on interpretations of Feminism.
- The present project attempts to create a new knowledge base by placing at hand theoretical parameters and urging practitioners of feminist discourse in India to re-interpret received banks of learning. The result is this proposed anthology of essays. Beginning with a presentation of conceptual frameworks, the book moves towards an interrogation of gender positions in the context of mainstream disciplines. It simultaneously inducts interdisciplinary approaches thereby dismantling traditional pedagogic systems. Transitions between theory and praxis are smoothly negotiated for any talk of feminism must engage with practical implications and particular examples.
- Hence the coverage in this anthology is substantial and impressive: Questions of power, agency, voice, choice and economic freedom, oral and scripted literature, cinema and sexuality, political status relate to the national frame. Regional emphasis is found in studies of Panchayat in Haryana and Rajasthan, a village school in UP, folk lore in Himachal and Madhya Pradesh. This project attempted a huge task in trying to catch the needs of various subjects, specially those which are taught in humanities and social sciences. However, Law was seen to be necessary to the discourse of women’s studies and was included. On the subject of Health, the project did not attempt a coverage but was glad of a submission which looks upon the HIV/ AIDs situation.

- Issues of ethnicity and identity surface at many levels. Religion and customary practice jostle with Indian versions of modernity. Dalit, Hindu, Muslim identities cross reference with Gender. The old question arises with new implications: “Are you a woman first, or last”? The answer resides in the politics of reading.

25. ORGANISATIONAL STATUS OF WOMEN’S STUDIES

1. Extract from UGC Guidelines, X Plan : Organizational Aspects, Major Functions & Staff Structure, Status, Activities, Roles and Functions of the Women’s Studies

Centre:

The Centre/Department for Women’s Studies in the Universities/ Institutions will have character of an academic statutory Department of the university. It will have multi-disciplinary areas and work accordingly. It will have core faculty similar to other University departments....However, Centres/ Department having similar areas of activities, common programs and common areas of research interests in a University must ensure avoiding duplication of works so as to make optimum use of financial and human resources.

The major activities of the Centres will be to fulfill and cover the aims and objectives of the scheme on Women’s Studies and implement action plan of activities and programs finalized for the centre/department in tune with the guidelines covered under the scheme for teaching and training, research, continuing education, extension; documentation, publication and dissemination; collaboration, coordination and net working; seminars and workshops; advocacy; monitoring and review etc

2. WSDC Observations on basis of DWCD Project:

- The Women’s Studies scenario in India is vibrant and productive

- In terms of programme and funding support, The University Grants Commission has expanded rapidly and has almost 60 Centres in the X Plan. This is substantial increase from the 33 Centres at the end on the IX Plan. In particular, new centres have been awarded to Colleges, whereas the earlier ones were located at Universities. Effort has also been made to reach out to non- metropolitan areas such as Banashtali, Bilaspur and Yamunanagar.
- Several older centres are now able to offer Certificate and Diploma courses or short term courses in Women's Studies, and they have a popular intake.
- Women's Studies has been integrated in the syllabi of many institutions of higher learning. At Delhi University 72 components of courses at the Undergraduate and post graduate levels have direct links with women or gender issues. A recent breakthrough has been the Foundational Course on "Human Rights Gender and Environment" which links critical areas together. It is one of four courses compulsory for all students at BA level. In terms of numbers this will translate to thousands of takers for this course which began teaching in July 2005.
- Very few Centres offer independent degree programmes in Women's Studies. SNTD, Pune, Jadavpur are among the few. We could not obtain detailed information about Centres in South India. The problem most centres reported were with faculty and staff requirements. The nature of appointments according to UGC Guidelines is contractual. With this condition and the likelihood of gaps in grant receipt and the recruitment cycle, it is difficult to ensure unbroken attention to the demands of an academic calendar year.
- The link between university and college Women's Studies programme and the wider community is fast improving. Many institutions have forged links with NGOs, adopted an interactive model of participation, take students on field visits, invited NGOs to seminars in College and initiated other such contact forums.

- International agencies and Government of India are supportive of Women's Studies and willing to give suitable projects. The National Commission for Women and State Commissions for Women also involve Women's Studies Centres in their collaborative programmes.
- Women's Studies Networks, sometimes formal, sometimes informal or project based, have brought more Directors and practitioners to a shared platform. Inter regional knowledge has been exchanged to benefit.

26. WAY FORWARD

This project represents a first time effort in India to compile a set of essays which may constitute a *Reader for Women's Studies*. It targets university faculty and students who desire to work towards an understanding of theoretical principles that place disparate field experience within a framework. As such it interrelates academia and activism in a unique statement with pedagogical strength. The 18 month effort has enhanced our theoretical outlook and empirical outreach. We hope to go beyond the experience of this project and make a mark in the field of gender research in India and abroad.

PROPOSED CHAPTERISATION

Title: FEMINIST THEORY: INDIAN PERSPECTIVES

Section 1: *Towards a Feminist Theory and Methodology for India*

1. Jasbir Jain, "*Ladki Ki Jaat*" : *Theorizing The Woman Question*
2. Manoranjan Mohanty, *Women's Rights and Theoretical Perspectives*
3. Sadhna Arya, *Interrogating Development: Indian Feminist Perspectives*
4. Archana Parashar, *Women and the Law*
5. Veena Poonacha, *Women's Studies in Indian Universities: The Changing Parameters of Struggle*

Section 2: Interrogating History, Philosophy and Identity

6. Tanika Sarkar, *Women's Histories, Feminist Writings*
7. Malabika Majumdar, *Rules That Govern the Estate and Status of Hindu Women*
8. Lucinda Peach, *Women and Religion: Inputs For Feminist Theory*
9. Manjeet Bhatia, *Development and Agency: Philosophical Reflections*
10. Rachana Johri, *Gender Socialization and The Question of Identity*

Section 3: Re-forming Social Construction

10. Rajmohini Sethi, *Theoretical Perspectives and Cultural Practice: Family, Marriage and Kinship*
11. Zarina Bhatti, *Ethnography of Gender Among North Indian Muslim*
12. Reicha Tanwar, *Women in Haryana: Role And Identity*
13. Hajira Kumar, *Indian Muslim Women: The Process of their Empowerment*
14. Usha Bande, *A Space of Their Own – The Female World of two Folk-Games*

Section 4: Literature, Culture and Sexuality:

15. Radhika Chopra, *Profiles of Change: Men and Gender in Contemporary India*
16. Karen Gabriel, *Seeing the Sexual: Mainstream Bombay Cinema and the Organization of Sexuality*
17. Shormishtha Panja and Malashri Lal, *Indian Literature: Theoretical Formulations*
18. Radha Chakravarty, *Forms of Marginality: Class, Caste and Gender in the Fiction of Mahasweta Devi*
19. Esha Niyogi De, *“The Humanness of Woman”: Rabindranath Tagore’s Feminist Imagination*
20. Harveen Mann, *“The Undiscovered Country”: Diasporic Sexuality in Suniti Namjoshi’s Because of India and The Mothers of Maya Diip*

Section 5 : The Politics of Being and Becoming

21. Indu Agnihotri, *Globalisation, Resistance and Change: Reflections on Indian Women’s Experience*

22. Joy Deshmukh, *Women, Work and Employment: Theoretical Issues*
23. Malathi Subramanian, *State and Patriarchy: Institution and Process*
24. Sudhir Varma, *Women's Political Participation: Assimilation of Field Experience for Indian Feminist Theory*
25. Rakesh Chandra, *Negotiating Spaces: Gender in classrooms for girls in Uttar Pradesh*

27. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- Department of Women and Child Development, Ministry of Human Resource Development Government of India
- Advisory Committee, Women's Studies and Development Centre, Univ. of Delhi
- All scholars listed above who have contributed articles, expert opinion and occasional papers, and offered consultancy advice
- Partner Universities in Delhi (Jamia), Lucknow, Kurukshetra, Shimla and Jaipur.
- Library, Centre for Women's Development Studies (CWDS)
- Participants at Workshops and National Seminar
- Hosts in Shimla, Kurukshetra and Uttaranchal for our field trips
- Women's Studies Network, The British Council, New Delhi
- WSDC team of co-ordinators and office staff

28. ANNEXURES

1. Executive Summary of Final Report
2. CD of Project Process
3. WSDC, *Annual Report, 2004-2005*
4. WSDC *Newsletter 13*