

ANNUAL REPORT

2011-2012

WOMEN'S STUDIES CENTRE
LADY BRABOURNE COLLEGE
P-1/2, SUHRAWARDY AVENUE
KOLKATA 700017

ANNEXURE-III
UNIVERSITY GRANTS COMMISSION
CENTRE FOR WOMEN'S STUDIES
BROAD FRAMEWORK: REPORT WRITING

1." GENERAL INFORMATION

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| 1.1 University | : University of Calcutta |
| 1.2 Centre | : Women's Studies Centre
Lady Brabourne College |
| 1.3 Address | : P-1/2, Suhrawardy Avenue,
Kolkata-700017
West Bengal |
| 1.4 Date of Establishment | : 8 March, 2010 |
| 1.5 Phase Assigned | : First Phase |
| 1.6 Name of Director/
Coordinator | : Coordinator—Dr.Baisali Sinha |

2." PROGRAMME

2.1"Objectives:

- " The primary objective of the Centre has been to generate interest and awareness among the teachers, students of the college and the society at large on women related themes and issues.
- " The Centre seeks to combine its social agenda with meaningful academic exercise by regularly organizing seminars and discussions on the historical, literary, political, economic and sociological dimensions of the field of women's studies.
- " The Centre envisages the creation of professionally competent women who will take forward the cause of women and ensure gender justice in the professional arena.
- " The Centre has made it its responsibility to reach out to the underprivileged women and address some of the problems that afflict their day-to-day existence like reproductive health, lack of education, child care, domestic violence etc.
- " The Centre seeks to sensitize the students of the college in particular regarding the gender inequality inherent in our society and also enhance their awareness of social maladies like female foeticide, discrimination against the girl child, sexual violence etc. It also seeks to train and equip them to study their respective disciplines from a gender-sensitive perspective.
- " The Centre aims to undertake research in the field of gender taking a multi-disciplinary approach.
- " The Centre seeks to build up a library and documentation centre.

2.2"Fulfillment:

With these objectives:

- " The Centre has organized several workshops and seminars, interactive sessions and talks on burning issues like discrimination against the girl child, violence against women, gender and mental health.

- " The academic enterprise of the Centre is reflected in the seminar titled 'Lampooned Images and Contested Identities in Colonial Bengal', a seminar that explores the changing trajectories of women's education in India and analyzes the sexual politics implicit in the representation of women in popular Bengali print literature in colonial Bengal.
- " It has organized a UGC sponsored Workshop on 'Sensitivity, Awareness and Motivation for Women Managers in Higher Education: Capacity Building of Women Managers in Higher Education, Sensitivity/ Motivation/ Awareness' from 15th January to 19th January 2011 to facilitate the creation of gender sensitive professional women.
- " The Centre also has organized an Outreach Programme for slum women on **Reproductive Body Parts and their Functions**, 24th February 2012.
- " The Centre has involved the students of the college in all seminars and workshops and has also ensured their enthusiastic participation in poster competitions organized for them from time to time.
- " 7 research projects have been undertaken by 5 departments under the aegis of the Centre.
- " A Library and Documentation Centre is being gradually built up. The Centre already has a collection of more than 1000 books and the number is expected to go up in the near future depending upon the funds at the Centre's disposal.

3." DETAILS

3.1"Teaching (specify participating faculty within and outside the University)

The members of Women's Studies Centre actively participate in teaching Women's Studies General paper for UG students of Lady Brabourne College. The names of the teachers are:

Department of Sociology

- " Dr.Baisali Sinha
- " Anita Mukherjee
- " Sikha Paul
- " Sumita Saha

Department of Political Science

- " Suriti Ray
- " Dr. Peu Ghosh
- " Trijita Gonsalves
- " Dr. Sukanya Ray

Department of History

- " Aparna Bandyopadhyay

Department of Economics

- " Ruby Pal
- " Gargi Sinha

Department of Philosophy

- " Krishna Dasgupta

Department of Bengali

- " Dr. Arpita Bhattacharya

Teaching outside the College:

Aparna Bandyopadhyay, Department of History, Lady Brabourne College

She taught 'Love, Romance and Gender/The Idea(I) of Love and Romance' in the Extra-Departmental Course on 'Women's Studies: Concepts and Contexts' offered by The School of Women's Studies, Jadavpur University, Kolkata in 2011.

She is also a guest faculty at the M.Phil programme of the School of Women's Studies, Jadavpur University. She taught the topic 'Literature and Gender with Special Reference to Women in Bengali High Literature' as a part of the Optional Course 'Cultural Constructions of Gender' in March 2012.

She has also supervised a term paper presented by Amrita Das as per the requirements of the M.Phil programme.

3.2"Training:

UGC sponsored 'Capacity Building of Women Managers in Higher Education, Sensitivity/ Motivation/ Awareness' Workshop organized by Library and Women's Studies Centre, Lady Brabourne College, 15th Jan-19th Jan 2011.

3.3" Research:

7 projects belonging to 5 departments have been completed under the Women's Studies Centre. [Details of Projects attached as Annexure-B]

3.4"Field Action:

Outreach Programme for slum women on **Reproductive Body Parts and their Functions**, 24th February 2012.

3.5"Information dissemination (Library, Print and Audio-Visual Documentation and Publication)

- " Organization of Library, cataloging and documentation done.
- " Newsletters 2010-2011 and 2011-2012

3.6"Advocacy:

Workshops, Seminars and Poster Competitions.(Details Enclosed as Annexure-A)

3.7"Success Stories

The Women's Studies Centre takes pride in completing 2 successful years since it came into existence in March 8, 2010. The College was approved by the University Grants Commission to establish a Women's Studies Centre during the period of XIth Plan (2009-2010 to 2011-2012). Unfortunately the first installment (Rs.3,00,000/- only) of the grant was received by the College only in April 2010.

Since its inception, the Centre has taken whole-hearted initiative to actively create awareness among students, teachers as well as in the wider society on women

related issues by organizing seminars and workshops. It has not only addressed burning social issues like violence against women and abuse of the girl child but can also boast of more academic and theoretical engagements like the changing trajectories of women's education in India and the representation of women in popular Bengali print literature. The Centre has also involved students in all its endeavours and the poster competitions organized by the Centre have been successful in generating tremendous interest and enthusiasm among them. The Centre has not limited its sphere of activities to the circle of academicians and students but has carried out its social responsibility by reaching out to the underprivileged slum women too. The Centre has organized an Outreach Programme for slum women on "Reproductive Body Parts and their Functions". The Centre wants to continue working with the same zeal in future too.

4." STRATEGIES

4.1"Partnership

4.2"Clustering

- " With other Department of the University
- " With non-UGC Women's Studies Centre
- " With other Universities
School of Women's Studies, Jadavpur University, Kolkata.
- " With colleges within the University and outside the University
- " With any other University

4.3"Networking/outreach:

The Centre has organized a Poster Competition and a Seminar under the sponsorship from State and Family Welfare Bureau, Government of West Bengal in the year 2010. The Centre has established links with Women's Groups like Sanhita: A Women's Rights Initiative and this group actively participates in various programmes organized by the Centre. Sanhita has conducted an Outreach Programme for slum women on "Reproductive Body Parts and their Functions" at the behest of the Women's Studies Centre in the year 2012. (Details Enclosed with Annexure-III).

4.4 Any other -----

5." RESOURCES

5.1"People (Details of Teaching/Research/Administrative staff structure, Permanent/temporary)

Teaching (Permanent)

Department of Sociology

- " Dr.Baisali Sinha
- " Anita Mukherjee
- " Sikha Paul
- " Sumita Saha

Department of Political Science

- " Suriti Ray

- " Dr.Peu Ghosh
- " Trijita Gonsalves
- " Dr.Sukanya Ray

Department of History

- " Aparna Bandyopadhyay

Department of Economics

- " Ruby Pal
- " Gargi Sinha

Department of Philosophy

- " Krishna Dasgupta

Department of Bengali

- " Dr.Arпита Bhattacharya

Temporary (Research Assistants)

Department of Sociology

- " Atindirya Dasgupta
- " Sujata Das
- " Damayanti Bhattacharya
- " Nilanjana Goswami
- " Anwita Ganguly
- " Debopriya Sorkhel
- " Amrta Sen
- " Debjani Basu

Department of Political Science

- " Ankita Gnaguly
- " Sangeeta Banerjee

Department of History

- " Jatoveda Guha Roy
- " Anusua Kar

Library and Documentation

- " Smita Chakraborty
- " Tinni Panda
- " Chayanika Das
- " Pampa Ghosh

Research Projects

- " Dr Mou Roy, Department of Economics
- " Kakoli Sinha Ray, Department of History
- " Sumita Saha, Department of Sociology
- " Baisali Sinha & Sikha Paul, Department of Sociology
- " Anita Mukherjee, Department of Sociology
- " Suriti Ray, Department of Political Science
- " Sujata Bhattacharya & Parna Ghose, Department of English

5.2"Material:

Desktop Computer set up(full set), DeskJet printer cum Scanner (one), Laser Printer cum Xerox (one), Laptop and Canon Digital Camera (one), Tape Recorder (One).

5.3"Documents: One Film CD—*Hemonter Pakhi* and readings of seminar proceedings (tapes).

5.4"Any Other: -----

Name and Signature of
Vice-Chancellor
Date:

Name and Signature of
Director/Coordinator

ANNEXURE-A

CONTENTS

Pages

- 1." UGC Allotment Letters
- 2." Audit Report & Utilization Certificates
- 3." Minutes of the Women's Studies Centre,
Advisory Committee Meeting
14 December, 2011
- 4." Minutes of the Women's Studies Centre,
Advisory Committee Meeting
16 March, 2012
- 5." Activity Report, 2011-2012

Minutes of the Women's Studies Centre, Advisory Committee Meeting **14 December, 2011**

Agenda:

1. Discussion related to the Fund Allocation and Distribution.
2. Any other matter with the approval of the Chair.

Resolution

Resolved that:

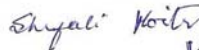
- ❖" Fund in Salary Head Rs. 1.2 lakhs may be spent in the needful appointment for the centre following Government stipulations. College sub-committee for Women's Studies Centre will take final resolution regarding this matter.
- ❖" Fund allotted in item 2 of the original sanction letter F.No 7-39/2009/(WS) dated 28 November, 2011, amounting to Rs. 90,000 may be spent in the following activities:
 - o" Workshop
 - o" 2 Seminars
 - o" Advisory Committee Meeting
 - o" Newsletter
 - o" Inter college poster /essay competition
 - o" Evaluation and publication of ongoing projects
 - o" Book Purchase for the Library.
- ❖" Tentative items to be purchased in equipment head:
 - o" Laser Printer
 - o" Laptop
 - o" Xerox machine
- ❖" A Workshop titled as "Awareness Programme on Domestic Violence Against Women" will be organized in collaboration with Jadavpur University, School of Women Studies, Kolkata tentatively on 16th/17th February, 2012. Sanhita: A Women's Rights Initiative will be invited to conduct the workshop in the second session.
- ❖" A Poster Competition on **Domestic Violence** will be organized in the college campus by February 2012.
- ❖" An Outreach Programme entitled Women's **Reproductive Health** will be organized, involving slum women from different parts of Kolkata by February 2012.
- ❖" Final reports of the ongoing projects to be submitted by February 2012. This will be included in the annual report with the note that the projects are completed.

Signature of the Advisory Committee members

1) Prof. Ishita Mukhopadhyay,
Director,
WSRC, C.U
Alipore Campus, Kolkata


14.12.11

2) Prof. Shefali Moitra,
Former Director,
School of Women's Studies, J.U.
Kolkata.


14.12.11

3) Prof. Siuli Jana,
Former Head of the Department,
Department of Economics,
Lady Brabourne College,
Kolkata-700017


14.12.11

4) Prof. Sanjukta Das
Department of English,
Lady Brabourne College,
P1/2, Suhrawardhy Avenue,
Kolkata- 700017.


14.12.11

5) Smt. Ruby Paul,
Department of Economics,
Lady Brabourne College,
P1/2, Suhrawardhy Avenue,
Kolkata- 700017.


14.12.11

Minutes of the Women's Studies Centre, Advisory Committee Meeting
16 March, 2012

Agenda:

- 1)" Preparation of Annual Report
- 2)" Publication of Newsletter (2010-11 & 2011-12)
- 3)" Discussion of the Budget
- 4)" Any other matter with the approval of the chair.

Minutes of the meeting

Resolved that:

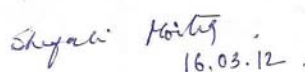
- ❖" The minutes of the last advisory committee has been confirmed.
- ❖" It was resolved that the draft of Annual Report (2011-2012) may be finalized with minor alterations and editing as recommended by the advisors It was noted by the Women's Studies Centre Editorial Board Members.
- ❖" It was resolved that along with the Annual Report the Centre will have to prepare the Report of XI Plan following the format provided by UGC in their respective website.
- ❖" It was resolved that draft of the Newsletter may be sent for publication with some editing as suggested by the Advisors. Such was noted by the Women's Studies Editorial Centre Board Members.
- ❖" The Budget Report (2011-2012) was placed before the Advisors and was approved.

Signature of the Advisory Committee members:

1) Prof. Ishita Mukhopadhyay,
Director,
WSRC, C.U
Alipore Campus, Kolkata


16.03.12

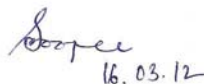
2) Prof. Shefali Moitra,
Former Director,
School of Women's Studies, J.U.
Kolkata.


16.03.12

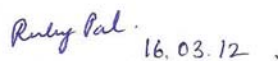
3) Prof. Siuli Jana,
Former Head of the Department,
Department of Economics,
Lady Brabourne College,
Kolkata-700017


16.03.12

4) Prof. Saswati Mukherjee
Department of Geography,
Lady Brabourne College,
P1/2, Suhrawardhy Avenue,
Kolkata- 700017.


16.03.12

5) Smt. Ruby Paul,
Department of Economics,
Lady Brabourne College,
P1/2, Suhrawardhy Avenue,
Kolkata- 700017.


16.03.12

Activity Report 2011-2012

Seminars and Workshops

Seminar

[1] **Mothers and Wives; Contested Identities and Lampooned Images in Colonial Bengal**, 26th August 2011.

On 26th August 2011, the Women's Studies Centre organized a seminar titled '**Mothers and Wives; Contested Identities and Lampooned Images in Colonial Bengal**'. The speakers were Prof. Samita Sen, Director, School of Women's Studies, Jadavpur University and Hardik Brata Biswas, Ph.D student, School of Women's Studies, Jadavpur University.

Ms. Aparna Bandyopadhyay, who anchored the programme, said that the Women's Studies Centre, since its inception, has organized a number of seminars and workshops, the present one being the latest in the series. She introduced the speakers to the audience, focusing on their areas of research and activities.

Professor Siuli Sarkar, the Principal, Lady Brabourne College, in her inaugural speech, drew attention to the pitiable condition of women in colonial Bengal. Women, she said, were bound within the inner quarters of the household, with limited access to education. They were confined to the roles of mothers and wives. Burdened with domestic chores, they had no independent economic role in society. Their health was also adversely affected in the process. Despite such constraints, a few outstanding women succeeded in availing the limited opportunities for education to make significant contributions to different spheres of life. They were not, of course, spared criticism for their refusal to conform to the restrictive norms of society. Prof. Sarkar concluded her speech by quoting a few lines from Rabindranath Tagore. She wished the seminar a grand success and expressed her conviction that the audience would be further informed and enlightened by the distinguished speakers.



Professor Siuli Sarkar, the Principal, Lady Brabourne College, delivering the inaugural address.

Professor Samita Sen Director, School of Women's Studies, Jadavpur University, spoke on **My Daughter's Mothers: Revisiting Debates on Women's Education: Bengal 1870-2000.** She attempted to trace the evolving contours of women's education in Bengal from the 1870s to the present day by mapping the changing trajectories of women's lives across generations. She focused on herself and her women predecessors– her great great grandmother, Indira Devi, her great grandmother, Sangya Devi, her grandmother, Jayasree Devi, her mother, Jayanti Sen and finally herself– to illustrate how education was a rising curve over generations of women and how enhanced education also affected the age of marriage as well as the ability to assert one's choice and agency in marriage.



Professor Samita Sen Director, School of Women's Studies, Jadavpur University, delivering her lecture on "My Daughter's Mothers: Revisiting Debates on Women's Education: Bengal 1870-2000."

A higher level of education also influenced a woman's career prospects as well her family plans. Prof. Sen said that every family had a similar story to tell and it was possible to write the history of women's education from family records. She proceeded to discuss the present scenario of women's education in Bengal. She drew attention to the loopholes in state policy as well the persistent gender bias in society that refused to acknowledge that education was meant for self-enhancement and not to buttress their identity as wives and mothers.

Hardik Brata Biswas, Research Fellow, SWC, Jadavpur University, spoke on **Social Reforms, Wanton Women and the Cheap Prints Market.** He focused on the representation of women, particularly educated women, in Battala literature– the burgeoning genre of popular and cheap print literature in colonial Bengal. He demonstrated, through an analysis of a number of Battala plays, how the educated woman, a product of the reformist enterprise of the Bengali intelligentsia, was lampooned and ridiculed in the popular plays and farces, betraying the wildest anxieties of female transgression and reversal of gender roles. He showed how the emergence of a Hindu revivalist nationalism reinforced the popular critique of reformism and aggravated the backlash against 'wanton' women.



***Hardik Brata Biswas, Research Fellow, SWC, Jadavpur University,
“Social Reforms, Wanton Women and the Cheap Prints Market.”***

Poster Competition

[1] Theme: Violence against Women, 15 February, 2012.

Like 2010, the Women's Studies Centre, Lady Brabourne College organized a Poster competition. The poster competition which was held on 8.9.2010 was on the theme "Save the Girl Child". The 2012 Poster competition was focussed on "Violence against Women". There was much enthusiasm among the students. Six teams participated. The participating departments were Political Science, Philosophy, History, Bengali and Sociology and students having Women's Studies as their General paper. The Students having Women's Studies (General) came out first among the six teams with Political Science as second and Philosophy as Third. Smt. Sanghamitra Lahiri, Former Faculty, Department of Political Science, Lady Brabourne College was the judge for this event. The posters drew appreciation from all quarters for their rendering of the problem of violence against women with a message to fight almost in every poster.



Poster Competition on Violence against Women

Workshop

[1] Violence against Women, 16 February, 2012

A Workshop on '**Violence against Women**' was organized by the Women's Studies Centre, Lady Brabourne College, Kolkata, in collaboration with the School of Women's Studies, Jadavpur University, on 16 February, 2012.

Dr. Peu Ghosh, Assistant Professor of Political Science conducted the programme. In her introductory speech, she referred to the 1993 UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women and emphasized the need for generating awareness among women on the issue of violence. She said that the WSC, LBC has a social mission and this seminar is a step towards fulfilling this mission. The workshop was inaugurated by Professor Siuli Sarkar, Principal, Lady Brabourne College and Professor Samita Sen, Director, School of Women's Studies, Jadavpur University.

Professor Siuli Sarkar underscored the importance of violence against women as an extremely pertinent theme of both academic research and awareness campaigns by activists. She pointed out that violence is intrinsic to a hierarchical social system and is perpetrated by those in power against the powerless.

Professor Samita Sen, Director, School of Women's Studies, Jadavpur University, pointed out that societal responses to the issue of violence against women are somewhat ambivalent. While women themselves are sometimes accused of perpetrating violence against other women, younger women tend to feel that the issue is exaggerated since they do not face violence and discrimination in their own lives. Prof. Sen emphasized that violence is an inescapable part of a woman's existence. Even if she does not actually experience it in her life, she is haunted by the threat of violence every moment of her life. This is true for every woman irrespective of her social location or regional identity. She pointed out that a workshop such as the present one is necessary to generate awareness among women in this regard.

Session 1 which commenced at 12 noon had two speakers, **Dr. Ranjita Biswas, Research Co-ordinator, School of Women's Studies, Jadavpur University** and **Ms. Madhurima Mukhopadhyay, Senior Research Assistant, School of Women's Studies, Jadavpur University**.

The first speaker, Dr. **Ranjita Biswas**, **Research Co-ordinator, School of Women's Studies, Jadavpur University**, spoke on **Sexual Violence, Family, Community and the State**. She began by referring to the recent incident of rape on Park Street and the reactions of the police in that regard. She proceeded to define sexual violence and outline its broad and variegated spectrum. She pointed out that an insulting word or a touch of hand is as much as an act of sexual violence as rape. She showed that while family is one site of violence, the community is another. The woman's body is considered the embodiment of the community's honour. Men have two roles in this respect. They protect the women of their own community and therefore the honour of their own community and enact violence against the women of other communities to divest them of honour. Thus the woman's body becomes the site of conflict between communities. Dr. Biswas further discussed the various institutions of the state which are entrusted with the duty to protect women against violence, pointing out at the same time that our protectors are also our violators. Dr. Biswas briefly outlined the legal provisions of the Indian state with regard to violence. Finally, she drew attention to the role of the women's movement in India in this respect. The women's movement, she pointed out, has intervened to press for the refashioning of laws concerning sexual violence, to make justice more accessible and to take steps for the gender-sensitization of the policy makers.



Dr. Ranjita Biswas, Research Co-ordinator, School of Women's Studies, Jadavpur University, delivering her lecture on "Sexual Violence, Family, Community and the State."

Ms. Madhurima Mukhopadhyay, **Senior Research Assistant, School of Women's Studies, Jadavpur University** addressed the problem of domestic violence. The title of her presentation was **Domestic Violence: Women Negotiating Violence-Case Studies from West Bengal**. Her

paper highlighted her findings of a survey she had conducted on 120 women of the age group 18-35 years. Her respondents were spread across Kolkata and the districts of Howrah, North 24 Parganas, South 24 Parganas, Hooghly and East and West Midnapore. The monthly income of these women ranged from Rs 1500 to 2 lakhs. Smt. Mukhopadhyay found that notwithstanding legal provisions intended to protect women from domestic violence, the latest being the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act of 2005, women suffering from such violence seldom approached a court of law for justice. Laws were complex, legal procedures were complicated and awareness regarding the various legal provisions was not adequate. Moreover, women were indoctrinated in the traditional ideology of conjugality that expected a woman to deify her husband irrespective of his merits or behaviour. Alternatively, women nurtured the vain expectation that their husbands would realize their mistakes one day and conjugal harmony would be restored. Besides, they did not wish to bring upon themselves the social stigma associated with separation or divorce. The support of their natal families was also lacking in many cases. Hence despite the existence of a legal support system, women continued to suffer violence at home. Session 1 ended with a question hour. Prof. Samita Sen and the other speakers quite diligently addressed the various questions raised by an enthusiastic audience.



Ms. Madhurima Mukhopadhyay, Senior Research Assistant, School of Women's Studies, Jadavpur University, delivering her lecture on "Domestic Violence: Women Negotiating Violence-Case Studies from West Bengal."

The **post-lunch session** was conducted by **Sanhita: a Women's Rights Initiative**. **Ms. Shalini Gupta and Ms. Amrita Rudra** of Sanhita interacted with the students to enhance their awareness of issues related to gender and violence and the legal provisions in this regard. This session complemented the previous one by adopting a more direct, informative and interactive approach towards issues of gender-based violence. Both conducted the programme in an interactive and informal way with the students. Ms. Gupta and Ms. Rudra began with discussion

of socialization and its role in creating violence in the form of foeticide, infanticide rape, child marriage etc. Then they highlighted the problems faced by women in their adolescence, youth and old age with special reference to eve teasing. Next Both Ms. Rudra and Ms.Gupta enlightened the students about the gender based violence and its different forms assuming the form of verbal/emotional to sexual and even economic and property abuse. They also highlighted child sexual abuse and different laws present in India to tackle such abuses.



Amrita Rudra of Sanhita: A Women's Rights initiative conducting the interactive session on "Violence against Women."



Shalini Gupta of Sanhita: A Women's Rights initiative conducting the interactive session on "Violence against Women"

The next part of the interactive session was dedicated to sensitize the students/audience about the entire legal regime present in India to address the problems of rape, pre-natal sex determination,

abortion, domestic violence, dowry (especially 498A) and the like. They also apprised the audience about the prominent Supreme Court judgements which are considered to be landmarks as far as gender justice is considered like the Vishakha Case and the consequent ruling of the apex Court in the form of Visakha guidelines to protect women from sexual abuses in work place. At the end of the session both Ms.Gupta and Ms.Rudra gave important information to the audience especially the students about the way they can approach respective authorities for help when they face such violence/abuses in their own lives. They also provided necessary contact numbers for such purposes. The programme was highly successful which became evident from the amount of interaction and responses it was able to generate among the audience, especially the students. Vote of thanks was presented by Dr. Baisali Sinha, Co-ordinator, WSC, Lady Brabourne College.



***Dr. Baisali Sinha, Co-ordinator, Womens's Studies Centre, Lady Brabourne College
delivering the vote of thanks.***

Outreach Programme

[1] Reproductive Body Parts and their Functions, 24th February 2012

On 24th February 2012, the Women's Studies Centre organized a community programme in collaboration with **Sanhita: a Women's Rights Initiative**. Ms. Shalini Gupta of Sanhita conducted the programme. 24 women from the nearby slums were invited to participate. The topic of discussion was **Reproductive Body Parts and their Functions**. Ms. Gupta provided the audience some basic information on reproductive body parts and their functions. There was a question answer session where Ms. Gupta wanted to find out the level of consciousness among the slum women on the topic. She particularly dealt with menstruation and contraception problems. This question answer session was followed by a session on:

- " Providing information on reproductive body parts, functions and menstruation
- " Addressing myths and misconceptions
- " Hygiene and personal care
- " Few diseases like Reproductive Tract Infection (RTI)
- " Special mention was made about Breast Cancer and Cervical Cancer
- " At the end of the session there was a discussion on practice of safe sex, use of condom etc



Shalini Gupta of Sanhita: A Women's Rights Initiative conducting the Outreach Programme on "Reproductive Body Parts and their Functions."



Participants of the Outreach Programme on “Reproductive Body Parts and their Functions.”

Ms. Gupta addressed the myths and misconceptions with regard to these. She also addressed issues of hygiene and healthcare. She sought to create awareness on diseases like Reproductive Tract Infection, Breast Cancer, Cervical Cancer and the like. Contraception and safe sex were also discussed. At the end of the discussion, Ms. Gupta addressed the questions of the participants. The programme concluded with the distribution of mosquito nets and food packets. Attached is the questionnaire and signature of the participants in the programme conducted by Ms. Shalini Gupta as a part of an Outreach programme of the Centre.

Publications

[1] Newsletters, 2010-2011 & 2011-2012

The Women's Studies Centre has brought out two **Newsletters** for the year 2010-2011 and 2011-2012. The two Newsletters contain an account of the year-long activities of the Centre like seminars, workshop, poster competition and outreach programmes. They also contain individual achievements of the members of the Centre in the form of research, publication, lecture/talk, teaching and others related to Women's issues. There is also reference to the projects completed under the Women's Studies Centre. The added point is that both newsletters contain contributions/articles from the members of the Centre.

Our Vision

The Women's Studies Centre takes pride in completing 3 successful years since its inception. The Centre has taken whole-hearted initiative to actively propagate women related issues by organizing seminars and workshops. The Centre has also involved students in all its endeavours and has been successful in generating interest among them by organizing poster competitions which aroused much enthusiasm among them. The Centre has not limited its sphere of activities to the circle of academicians and students but has carried out its social responsibility by reaching out to the underprivileged slum women too. The Centre has carried out Outreach Programme for slum women on "Reproductive body parts and their functions". The Centre has a vision to carry on its activities with the same zeal regarding documentation and publication of various research papers and a compilation of contributed articles in the form of a book on gender related issues. The Centre also envisages certain other activities like translation of works by women writers and documentation of national and international women movements (both privileged and under privileged) and women biographical sketches of women personalities to reckon with (both national and international). Our motto is to work towards sensitizing people about women and their problems in order to secure gender justice.

ANNEXURE-B

Abstracts of Completed Projects of

Women's Studies Centre

Department of Economics

1] Dr Mou Roy, Associate Professor, Lady Brabourne College

Economic Development and Gender (In)equality in the Labour Market in India

Women in our country have remained marginalised. This happened despite India's immense progress in the post independence era and emergence as a global competitive economy. For a long time economists and development theorists had ignored these gender dimensions. But a holistic vision of development is in direct conflict with marginalisation. Gender inequality and thus marginalisation of women is found in all spheres of life – economic, political and social and so on. Women face even a gendered labour market with women's job and pay levels at the lower end of the job hierarchy. This project based on secondary data (Census and NSSO) and a case study analyses the nature of women's work in India and thereby probes into the impact of the country's planned economic process on gender equality.

According to the Census data though the female work participation rate has gone up marginally over the decade (1991 – 2001), there has been, in fact, a decrease in the number of 'main workers' in the rural areas which gets reflected in the total figures as about 90 percent of women workers live and work in rural areas. Hence greater participation of women in the workforce is out of need to supplement family income and not a reflection of genuine increase in the demand for their labour. The Census as well as the NSS data on Employment and Unemployment in India show concentration of women workers in the traditional low wage activities like agriculture, forestry and fishing and this position has remained at almost the same level for the period 1993-

94 – 2004-05. Here again, the proportion of workers working as agricultural labour is much higher than those working as cultivators. Despite a large participation of women in agriculture, much qualitative change has not taken place of them as evident from the existence of differences between male and female wage rates for various agricultural tasks. In the non-agricultural activities, women workers are concentrated in the informal sector. Only a microscopic segment of women workers in our country (1.18 percent according to NSS 61st round) happen to be privileged with job security to some extent and for being covered under social security benefits. Case studies reveal discrimination in the labour market in the forms of inequality in the wage rates of male and female workers for identical tasks, relatively inferior status and market value of women's work in the market economy and less access of women to productive capital and tools. The country's planned economic development process implicitly appears to accept this subordination of women. The process of globalisation in India has pushed women workers to more disadvantageous position.

Department of History

[1] **Kakoli Sinha Ray, Associate Professor, Department of History**

Invading a Male Domain: Women and Shikar in Colonial India

When the English encountered the vast and virgin jungles of India, they were mesmerized but the initial exuberance gave way to a resolve to control the untamed and wild landscape. The hunt or shikar in colonial India needs to be viewed from this perspective. Shikar was not merely a sport providing succor to lonely English officials in an alien and often inhospitable land, it was also a means to assert the superior might of a 'super-ordinate' power. Hunting was a very masculine pursuit. John Mackenzie has pointed to the 'sexual sublimation of the hunt, the tensions induced by the great risk and the ecstasy of release when the hunter prevails and stands over his kill.' So, when hunting was pursued by women they were emphatically poaching on an exclusive male preserve and defying the accepted notions of femininity. They had to contend with disapproval; exemplified in Queen Victoria's dictum that 'only fast women shot.'

However by the end of the nineteenth century more and more women had joined the ranks of the big-game hunters and produced a stream of sporting accounts with such titles as 'How I Shot My Bears' by Mrs. R.H. Tyacke. Isabel Savory waxes eloquent about the freedom and escape from conventionalities hunting implies, as in the following passage: 'There is no feeling like it! To be in your oldest of old clothes, to feel you are going out of the reach of letters, telegrams and the faces of the civilized world; free to do exactly as the spirit of the moment moves you; only yourself to answer to: time is no object; you may wait or hurry, eat where you like, sleep where you like. It is the only life...'

But Isabel Savory evinces a sense of unease at the transgressive gender behaviour displayed by women hunters, self conscious about a hunting incident to a fellow huntress that 'unnecessarily ventilated M.'s and exposed a large amount of boot!' The woman is cautious, apprehensive that she doesn't appear 'unwomanly'. While Savory celebrates the freedom hunting offers women, she remains defensive about its implications for gender norms.

But it has to be borne in mind that serious sports was largely restricted to men in the colonial period and the general perception was that a woman was fragile and weak, she needed to be protected and lacked the courage and virility required to hunt ferocious and unpredictable beasts as the tiger or go on a wild boar chase. At best she could be a spectator in such 'masculine' sports

like hog hunting or revel at the great accomplishment of her male counterpart when he hunted big-game. Even when she went on a hunt she was mostly involved in 'howdah' shikar and always had innumerable natives to help her and one or more Englishmen to accompany and protect her. However it is undeniable that she was taking her first steps, small they may be, and silently making inroads into an exclusive male domain, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Department of Sociology

[1] Sumita Saha, Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology

Position of aged women among the Marwari community: A case study in South Kolkata

Introduction

Demographic changes—with increasing longevity, declining birth rate, and a greater proportion of the population over 65 in the world --- have stimulated both a moral panic and a new interest in the lives of the elderly.

The situation is alarming in the Indian context. In India life expectancy has gone up from 20 years in the beginning of the 20th century to 62 years today. Better medical care and low fertility have made the elderly the fastest growing section of society. In France, it took 120 years for the grey population to double from 7 % to 14 %. But in India, the grey population has doubled in 25 years!

Family has been the cradle of human civilizations. It is the family which is responsible for the caring of all its members, including children, women, disabled, destitute, the aged and the chronically ill. With the advent of small family norm in the second half of the 20th Century the membership of the family has started to decrease. The emergence of industrialization and urbanization has caused fragmentation of traditional joint families. Hence, caring for the aged has become a big concern. In most cases elders are losing their respect and importance within the family.

Now as against the general scenario, the present researcher has tried to focus on the patterns of respect and caring of the elders prevalent among the Marwari communities. The study has specifically attempted to assess the status and position of Marwari aged women within the family. Further, it reveals interesting clues leading to successful ageing.

Literature Review:

Studies further reveals that in the recent period, the population of widowed women has started to increase slowly, because of the longer life expectancy of women than men on an average. In the absence of clear social security policies for elderly women they have to face more difficulties

than men. From sociological perspective, elderly widows living separately is clearly in a disadvantaged position in a comparison to their married counterparts and the male aged members of the society. Economic factors seem to play the key role. (N.Audinarayana, 2006).

Sarah,(2006), in her study on rural aged women of Mangaldihi village of Purulia views that aged women specially the widows suffers from mental agony and lack of care due neglect from their sons and daughter-in-laws and poverty.

Critical gerontology is concerned with relations of domination and exploitation of older people as they age, and with the ways that hierarchy, inequality, and oppression underpin social patterns and relations in late life (Richardson, 2001). Critical theorists including Habermas (1976), as well as those from the Frankfurt school (e.g.) Horkheimer and Adorno, (1972), concur that a preeminent goal is helping older people to achieve an emancipatory ideal, that is, to identify and overcome the oppressive forces that are dominating them and/or preventing them from achieving autonomy, wisdom, and transcendence (Held, 1980; Moody 1988) Ovrebo and Minkler (1993) assert that “critical gerontology embraces a broad framework of political economy of aging and considers how political, socioeconomic, and related factors interact to shape and determine the experience of growing old” (p. 289). It is “ deeply concerned with the intersection of gender and aging and views gender, race, and class as pivotal variables influencing the trajectory of growing old by predetermining an individual’s location in the social order” (Ovrebo and Minkler, 1993, pp, 289-90). This perspective seeks emancipation from all forms of domination including prevailing ideologies and hidden interests (Moody 1993). People become freer when they analyze the dominant viewpoints and ideas and expose the covert oppressive influences.

The study of the position of the aged Marwari women is an investigation into the fact that whether they are dominated or they themselves are dominant in their family.

Objectives of the study:

- " To study the socio-economic profile of the respondents.
- " To look into the living conditions of the aged women of Marwari community (60 years and above).
- " To study the level of decision making power of the elders regarding the economic as well as social matters of the family.
- " To examine into the role and status of the aged women in the household and to study their inter-personal relations in family groups having one or more aged;

- " To study economic, socio-psychological problems of the aged women;
- " To study the health related problems of the elderly women.
- " To analyze the attitude of the aged women towards family and society;
- " To analyze the attitude of the family members towards the aged women;
- " To analyze the level of participation among the aged women in family's community's and welfare organizations.
- " To study the presence of the signs and symptoms of depression among aged women.

Research Setting:

The present is mostly limited to the following wards of south Kolkata: Ward 65,69 and 70.

Methodology

To conduct the above-mentioned study the researcher has applied both quantitative and qualitative methods. Although it is common in the social sciences to draw a distinction between qualitative and quantitative aspects of scientific investigation, it has been argued that the two may go hand in hand. Both survey and case study method has been used in order to conduct the research project. Further Harvard Depression Scale has been used in order to measure the levels of Depression of the elderly women. Respondents were selected on the basis of purposive sampling method. Total 146 respondents were included in order to complete the present study.

Main Findings:

The present research conducted among the elderly Marwari women reveals that 34.2% belongs to the age group of 60-65 and 39% belongs to the age group of 66-70 years. Though majority belongs to the age group of 60-70 years yet 16.4%, 8.2% and 2.1% belongs to the age group of 71-80, 81-90 and 91& above respectively. The marital status reveals that 16.6% are still married where as 32.9% belong to the status of widows. The percentage of women who were unmarried, separated/divorced is negligible. The religious composition of the respondents reveals that the majority were Jains (59.6%) who belongs to the category of non-idol worshippers. The rest were the Agarwalas, Maheshwaris and Oswals who were mostly idol worshippers. The monthly family income of the respondent was above Rs. 25,000 where 37.7% belonged to the income category of Rs. 100001-200000. Thus, the present study has been conducted among the affluent sections of the society. The educational profile of the respondents reveals that majority (33%) belongs to the

primary level and some are even graduates. However, some are also illiterate though their percentage is minimal.

The economic profile of the respondents reveals that though 81.5% respondents are fully dependent upon their husbands or sons because of their housewife status, yet the pocket money they enjoy from different sources is worth mentioning. Majority (53.4%) of them enjoy a pocket money ranging from Rs. 4000-8000 in a month. Detailed investigation reveals that some of the elderly women though were predominantly housewives, yet they had good say in family business policy decision and family budget issues. This went a long way to consolidate their authoritative position in their family and the community at large.

While investigating the respect profile of the respondent findings reveal that the Marwari aged women enjoy considerable compliance from the younger generation. The majorities (86.3%) of the young ones seek permission of the elderly women before stepping out of the house and 74% do not take any decision regarding house hold matters before consulting the respondent. Further, it is very interesting to note that religious gatherings, marriage ceremonies and other family functions are mostly organized under the supervision of the aged women of the family. Moreover, the decision related to the choice of partners of the grand children is taken by the respondents to a considerable extent. However, the out migration of the grand children for the sake of their career is not determined or restricted by the disagreement of the elderly. The study also reflected on the patterns of interaction existing between the elderly and their daughter-in-law and grand daughter-in-law in some cases. Findings reveal that in spite of few tussle and clashes the relationship is quite authoritative. Nearly 80% of the daughter-in-laws followed the similar pattern of worship and other house hold activities as instructed by their mother-in-laws. The latter also did not complain much about the nature of daily care provided by their mother-in-laws to them. Another very striking feature of the Marwari culture is the prevalence and use of 'Gayetri Mantra' among them. The common belief among the Marwaris is that the young ones must hear the 'Gayetri Mantra' from the elderly members of the family before undertaking any vital task viz. sitting for an examination, maturing a business deal, settling a marriage alliance etc. This also goes a long way in consolidating the authoritative and respectful position of the Marwari elderly within their family and the community.

The present researcher also measured the level of Depression of the respondents by using the Harvard Depression Scale. The findings reveal that majority (39%) suffer from mild depression,

34.9% from moderate depression, 20.5% from severe depression and 5.5% suffer from major depression. It has been found that most people who are suffering from moderate, severe and major depression are the ones who possess low authority over the family members and also experiences a low respect profile.

Conclusion:

The present study, entitled 'Position of aged women among the Marwari community: A Case Study in South Kolkata' summarizes striking analysis on the nature of authority and power wield by the Marwari elderly women within their family and community at large. Several facts reveal that even in this phase of rapid industrialization and globalization the Marwaris are still being able to maintain a joint family structure where the elders are fully enjoying an authoritative position. The intergenerational ties among the Marwaris are very strong and an elderly is never disrespected, ignored or considered to be a burden on the family and society. They are still actively participating in various activities and decision making process of the family and their opinions are valued. This signifies that the Marwari elderly are empowered to a great extent even though, being mostly housewives, they are not directly engaged in any income generation activities. Such interesting findings suggest us about ways how successful ageing can be achieved through intergenerational ties and respect. There are other factors behind their prevalence of authority over other family members but what is striking is that they are in many cases cultural rather than economic causes. The prevalence of religious beliefs and activities is one of those factors. Among many such religious activities almost every week 'Gosti Meeting' is organized and participated by the Jain elderly. The Marwaris Jains organize religious group prayers on a weekly basis where young as well as old women participate. After the prayer is over they have a religious kitty party with snacks and drinks. This type of religious group activities help in enhancing the social networks of the elderly and thus consolidates their authoritative position and respectable status not only in the family but also in the wider community. Thus apart from economic factors, socio-cultural ones may also go a long way in restoring the respectable status of the elderly within their family and society thereby facilitating successful ageing.

**[2] Baisali Sinha, Associate Professor , Department of Sociology and
Sikha Paul, Associate Professor, Department of Sociology**

Professional Commitment and Related Socio-Psychological and Health Hazards: A Sociological Analysis among Women in Teaching.

The topic has been selected on the problem of the professional commitment and related socio-psychological and health hazards among the school teachers and college teachers belonging to 25-50 and above age groups. The study has been conducted in Kolkata and Nadia district which has provided metropolitan urban setting on one hand and semi-urban localities on the other. This has helped in making a comparative analysis. A Semi-structured interview schedule has been set up comprising of both open-ended and closed-ended questions. Out of 120 respondents, 22 (18.33%) are primary school teachers, 54 (45%) teach in higher Secondary Level and 44 (36.66%) teach at the college level. The income category ranges from Rs. 20,000 to Rs. 60,000 and above. Majority of teachers 113(94.16%) including primary, secondary and college teachers have permanent jobs. This financial support indicates that these women are solely dependent on themselves and feel more secured in that.

Regarding the duration of working hours it is important to focus on the hours spent by these women in their workplace and in home. It is revealed in this study that among primary teachers 90.90% of them work 8 hours a day, 90.74% of the teachers from higher secondary school spent 5-7 hours and 74.16% of the college teachers spent 5-7 hours in a day. Along with this they are bound to perform their familial duties as per traditional expectations. The study on 120 working women (teachers) majority of them 102(85%) have to perform a bulk of household chores like cooking, washing, cleaning and dusting, and teaching and taking care of the children 52(43.33%) of them are also engaged in fulfilling external domestic work like grocery shopping and daily marketing, taking children to school etc. out of 120 teachers 41 (34.16%) spent 4-5 hours daily in performing these household chores. This we see that working women (in teaching and profession) have to perform a dual role both in the public and private domain. The study further reveals the double burden of the female teachers lead to various physical problems. Out of 120 respondents majority that is 110 (91.67%) of them suffer from physical problems like pain in shoulders, waist, back, limbs, spondylosis, muscular pain and respiratory problem. But due to lack of time as well as the lack of awareness, only 34 (55.74%) of them have their regular checkup under the supervision of doctors.

The physical disorders lead to mental problems. This results in sadness, loss of pressure, depression. Self evaluation is a positive quality which every individual must have, as it helps to rectify one's mistake and enhance oneself. But when such self evaluation crosses the limit and becomes self-critical, then it turns into a negative quality. Majority of the respondents (55.8%) suffer from excessive self-criticalness and experience emotional turmoil which has a negative impact on their health both physical and mental. Due to their over strain both at home and at workplace (47.4%) respondents feel restless and agitated. Majority of the respondent (96%) are very much energetic, enthusiastic which initiate them to take responsibilities in two different spheres. Tiredness and fatigue is related to physical and mental health of an individual. Majority of the respondents (68.4%) get easily tired. Long journey and dual role responsibilities at home and work place may be the reasons for such tiredness and fatigue.

[3] Anita Mukherjee, Associate Professor, Department of Sociology

Female-headed Household in Kolkata – A Sociological Study

The phenomenon of women who are becoming the head of the household is on the increase in the Indian society. The present study is a descriptive sociological study on female-headed households (FHHS) in Kolkata. Based on survey method, 150 respondents were personally interviewed following snowball sampling to select the respondents within Kolkata.

Findings:

Majority of the households are headed by widows followed by women whose husbands are migrants owing to employment in other parts of country as well as in other countries. The percentage of unmarried women among the female headed households (FHHS) is small. But it is a very significant trend where women want to remain single to avoid subordination or to support the family economically. The phenomenon of separation or divorce is increasing in our society. So a number of separated or divorced women were studied who became the head of the household after the incidence.

The present study indicates that FHHS are not only found among lower socio-economic classes, they are also found among the middle and upper socio-economic classes in a metropolitan city like Kolkata.

There is a sudden decline in the financial position of the household headed by widows, separated/divorced women for which they suffer from a sense of deprivation. These women face discriminatory behaviour in various spheres of life. Sometimes this discrimination is very subtle and difficult to identify. Such women also face social-economic-emotional and health-related and children-related problems. They suffer from loneliness, insecure future and mental pressure. They also have little social life as they have to play the dual role of earner and a nurturer. They are engaged all the time as they have to manage everything single-handedly.

These problems are handled in various ways depending on the socio-economic status of the women. The younger widows as well as separated or divorced women, especially those with minor children face more problems than others.

Department of Political Science

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Empowerment of Women in West Bengal: A Case Study (Howrah district)

The empowerment of women is one of the central issues in the process of development throughout the world. The constitutional rights, laws, policy programmes etc have been launched to empower women socially, economically and in political frontiers.. The study becomes relevant because it tries to capture the process within which women in West Bengal have responded to the challenges in their path of empowerment.

The study has been conducted in Howrah district which has provided both urban and rural settings. Howrah district has two subdivisions: Howrah Sadar and Uluberia. Howrah Sadar consists of Bally municipality and Howrah municipal corporation and five community development blocks (CD blocks): Bally–Jagacha, Domjur, Panchla, Sankrail and Jagatballavpur. Uluberia subdivision consists of Uluberia Municipality and nine CD blocks: Uluberia–I, Uluberia–II, Amta–I, Amta–II, Udaynarayanpur, Bagnan–I, Bagnan–II, Shyampur–I and Shyampur–II. Howrah district has 1 municipal corporation in Howrah, 2 municipalities in Bally and Uluberia. Rest of the area under this district is divided into 14 community development blocks. Each block consists of rural area divided into gram panchayats along with urban units.. The sample size taken up in this study is one hundred and twenty.

Objectives---

- *To trace women’s involvement and active participation in decision making and policy making processes and in areas of political participation.

- *The primary objective of the research will be to increase the general awareness regarding the value of the women.

- *To find out whether women have equal access to healthcare, education at all levels, etc.

The Constitution of India assures “to secure to all its citizens justice, social, economic and political” and “equality of status and of opportunity”. Despite the constitutional promulgation, women in the Indian subcontinent continued to be grossly under-represented in the legislatures, both at the national and the state levels. The participation of women and their engagement in electoral process is an important marker of the maturity and efficacy of democracy in any country. It can be defined not only in terms of equality and freedom with which they share

political power with men, but also in terms of liberty and space provided for women in the democratic framework of electoral politics.

The demand for greater representation of women in political institutions in India was given priority after the Committee on the Status of Women in India (CSWI) published its report in 1976. The CSWI report suggested that female representation in political institutions especially at the grass-root level needed to be increased through a policy of reservation of seats for women.

In 1988, the National Perspective Plan for Women also suggested that a 30% quota for women be introduced at all levels of elective bodies. Women's groups and gender politics strictly insisted that reservation be restricted to the panchayat level to encourage grass-root participation of women in electoral politics. The national consensus around this demand resulted in the adoption of the 73rd and 74th amendments to the Constitution in 1993 that introduced 33% reservation for women in institutions of local governance.

Women members of the gram panchayat, panchayat samiti and zila parishad were interviewed. Political participation encompasses a wide range of activity. It includes voting, education about the voting process, and lending support to candidates who uphold the women's empowerment agent for learning independently. Campaigning against discrimination and committed violence against women, freedom and power to act, to strive for the inclusion of women rights agenda into the political platform of different parties.

Among women members of the gram panchayat, panchayat samiti and zilla parishad, it was found that all of them had equal access to, education, but education was discontinued due to marriage, economic constraints, domestic chores and housework. Among them 56% had completed madhyamik, 30% H.S. and 14% graduates.

If the state exists to safeguard the right of its citizens to the fundamental prerequisites of survival, then it follows that the state has a primary responsibility to protect the citizens from ill health and premature mortality. Findings showed that although health care is available, 87% of the respondents visit private doctors in case of sickness. 13% only reported to have availed of public health services.

Women's representation in this district helped to articulate women's interest especially through SHG (self help groups) at the panchayat level. Local women are recruited in the self help groups to make a living for economically disadvantaged women. They are also encouraging small scale

savings and give all facilities to women, specially widows and senior citizens. Health awareness camps are often arranged for women between 18 and 65.

Political empowerment of women is thus a positive step towards their social empowerment. Empowerment is not just opening up access to decision making in the economic and political field, but also must be perceived as a process that make people to perceive themselves as able and entitled to occupy that decision making space. Since gender is socially constructed, hence empowerment must endeavour to deconstruct such negative social constructions, thereby enabling women to realize that they have the capacity and the inherent right to act and influence.

Department of English

[1] Sujata Bhattacharya, Associate Professor, Department of English and Parna Ghose, Associate Professor, Department of English

Common Themes, Uncommon Trajectories

The 18th and 19th centuries, heard the first voices of concern for and protest against the subjugation of women. Consequently, education, particularly women's education, became one of the primary concerns of early feminists like Mary Wollstonecraft in England, and Pandita Ramabai and Krishnabhabini Das in India, as they realised that education is a pre-requisite to women's liberation and empowerment.

A keen and vital concern with education, especially the education of girls and women, runs throughout Mary Wollstonecraft's writing and remains a dominant theme throughout her career. The title of her first book, *Thoughts on the education of Daughters*, speaks for itself; her single most important work, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, begins as a plea for the equal education of women and includes an ambitious and farsighted proposal for a national schools system. Both her novels, *Mary* and the unfinished *Maria*, centrally address the self-education the self-education of their heroines while seeking to fill a pedagogical role in relation to their female readers,

Far removed in time and space and subjected to 'double colonisation', Ramabai and Krishnabhabini, give vent to their thoughts and desire to see fellow Indian women educated, empowered and emancipated. Works like Ramabai's *The Peoples of the United States* and Krishnabhabini Das-*England-e Bangamahila*, try to make the voice of the subaltern be heard, addressing the condition of women and emphasising the role of education and learning that India needed to emulate from the West.

An intense intratextual and intertextual qualified study of these feminist thinkers of England and India shows interesting points of convergence and divergence.