

Sustaining women's studies

Volume - 1, Issue - 1 March 2019

*Celebrating 30 years*

***Women's Studies  
Goa University  
1988-2018***

**RETROSPECTIONS &  
PERSPECTIVES**

**MEAR**

**Making Equality A Reality**



**Department of Women's Studies,  
Goa University**







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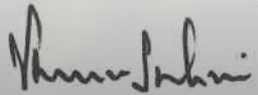
## MESSAGE

I am delighted to learn that the Department of Women's Studies has completed three decades in its pursuit to create an academic space to drive critical thinking and enrich the discourse on women's development in the country. The last three decades have given the Department momentous occasions for celebration achieved by conducting numerous extension activities and research oriented studies. The Department has entered into new arenas of knowledge production with the start of academic programmes like Ph.D. and M.A. in Women's Studies. The Department of Women's Studies has also extended its wings by successfully setting up the State Resource Centre for Women within the Campus.

I am also pleased to learn that the Department of Women's Studies has organised a Two Day Film Festival on 13 & 14 December, 2018 as a part of anniversary celebrations.

I congratulate the Department of Women's Studies and the entire team for their dedication towards their work during the course of these 30 years and wish the Department success in all its academic, research and extension activities in the years ahead.



  
(Varun Sahni)



Staring at the whiteness of the docx file opened on my laptop, preparing to write this piece for the Magazine my mind takes me back and forth in time to moments both good and bad. My heart overflows with emotion, and I ask myself... are these tears that roll down my cheeks, tears of joy or those of sadness?! As my eyes move from the blank screen in front of me to the picturesque ocean I see beyond, I imagine us surfing, riding the waves, smiling, having fun, celebrating the 30 year long journey. I know then, that this is happiness. The ocean is unpredictable. It can be a tranquil emerald body of water or can be churned into fiery anger, concealing ebbs and tides and forceful currents. When you have chosen to take a plunge into that ocean, you can run out onto the shore before you get in too deep, or you can brave the rough sea or you can just give up the fight against the tide and let the ocean swallow you up. The Department of Women's Studies chose to hang in there and brave the tide. Yes the journey over the past 30 years has not been an easy one for us – yet, we have survived efforts to shut the department down, limit funding, patriarchal 'denials', all which now in retrospect seem like challenges that have only made us stronger, the obstacles - our driving force, building in us the determination to overcome! So then let's not dwell on any sorrows of the past and celebrate the present and expand on our vision for the future.

It is a proud moment!

As we celebrate this 30 year long journey, I remember fondly all those who have been supportive and helped build this department piece by piece with love, cooperation, dedication, commitment and with a dream for a better world where we are all equal. I cannot list all the people who have walked this road with us in the creation and development of the Department of Women's Studies as it stands today. But if you are one of them and you are reading this, I want you to know that this Department would not be able to be where it is today if it were not for your support, your ideas, your words of advice, your participation, your generosity, your time, your love and your smiles. If you have not yet shared in our journey, we would love to have you on board to make equality a reality.

Teaching, research, extension ... who knows  
What all we can do as this Department grows.  
We strive for empowerment, we build critical minds,  
We hear different points of view from people of all kinds.  
Purple Campaigns, film festivals, field trips and MEAR  
GSIC, Fieldwork, book-reading clubs are all equally dear.  
Creating opportunity, exposure, experience and practice  
Building partnerships and collaborations, our strength, our lattice.  
Student's ideas are innovative, creative and unique  
And our methods encourage those earlier too shy to speak.  
We've had our share of hiccups but are always ready to learn  
From even the moments that have given us great heartburn.  
Thank you for your part in the last 30 years at Goa University  
Please continue your support in even times of adversity.  
We have a vision to grow and excel in what we do  
But surely cannot reach there without YOU.



**Prof. Shaila Desouza**  
Head, Department of Women's Studies

From the bottom of my heart,  
**Shaila**

# Celebrating the Journey of Women's Studies at Goa University: 30 years and counting



Three decades after being thrown into the deep end of the pool with the gargantuan task of turning a research centre into a fully-fledged Department, the Department of Women's Studies at Goa University has done much more than just stay afloat. Tracing the journey of the Department of Women's Studies through 30 years is no mean task, and it is made all the more intensive by the multitude of initiatives that have been spear-headed to solidify the existence of the Department.

While looking through boxes upon boxes of meticulously-kept documentation and photographs, slipping into nostalgia is all but inevitable when you consider that this journey has been a labour of love, above all else. Fostering what she calls a culture of sisterhood in hindsight, Shaila Desouza remembers sitting on the floor of the erstwhile Centre of Women's Studies office room discussing women's issues highlighted in the journal 'Manushi' with other women scholars and university professors – armed with deep compassion, sharp intellect, and a dari from home, who was to know that these informal discussions would light a lifetime's worth of flames.

The Towards Equality report of 1974 drew the country's attention to the dire condition of women in

the areas of employment, status in society, health, and politics. The findings of the report gave the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR) the impetus needed to set up and fund university research projects. As a result, the very first research centre focusing on women was set up in SNDT University at Mumbai in 1974. In 1985, this unit formally became a centre of women's studies. 1986 saw the University Grants Commission (UGC) release guidelines for the Development of Women's Studies in Indian Universities and Colleges. Along with producing new academic knowledge on women-centric issues and bringing a critical perspective to the social sciences, these centres were also charged with conducting extension and outreach activities, teaching, and playing the role of a much-needed catalyst in Indian society.

The Centre for Women's Studies at Goa University was set up in 1988. Following the recommendations of a UGC review team in 1992, Desouza who had joined the university as a Research Officer spent a week in SNDT to see the first centre in action. With a background in social work and fine arts, she transitioned from the well-defined hierarchy of her previous job at Goa Medical College to a nascent centre that had still to find its feet. From squirreling away literature that she thought would help in establishing the centre to painstakingly collating a directory of services for women, this lone core faculty member forged ahead to meet the criteria of research, teaching, advocacy, and extension, as prescribed by the UGC.

Though the centre was initially under the Sociology Department, the UGC team recommendations gave it a new standing directly under the Dean of the Social Sciences. Organised in collaboration with the founder of Mumbai's anti-dowry movement

Mamasaheb B.B. Kulkarni, the first formal discussion by the centre focused on atrocities faced by women.

'Manushi' opened up the arena of alternative writing on women – breaking barriers by shining light on the stories of women attending conferences and making a difference instead of sharing banal beauty tips and recipes. The journal's influence on Desouza and her supportive sisterhood led to Madhu Kishwar's presence at the Women and Law seminar organised by the Goa University Women's Studies centre early in 1993. Not only did this seminar garner a lot of press coverage, but it also helped solidify a support group for the Centre and further the culture of sisterhood. Pursuing the targets of teaching, curriculum development, outreach, research, and extension activities with one core faculty member on board necessitated networking with women's groups from outside the university.

One of the local Goan organisations that the centre developed deep ties with is Bailancho Saad. From discussing women's issues at weekly meetings held at the astronomy hall in Junta building to hand-crafting paper folders for fundraising at the Saad's international women's week celebrations, this relationship runs deep both ways. This collaboration also piqued Desouza's interest in the non-hierarchical working of women's organisations – an interest that she fleshed out in her Ph.D. Thesis.

In 1993, the Indian Association of Women's Studies (IAWS) held their annual conference at Mysore. Spending time amidst thousands of like-minded

women brought with it a number of benefits such as an energising influx of new ideas to better the Centre, the sheer relief of not having to explain what 'Women's Studies' entailed, and the warmth of knowing that the journey of women's studies was not one of solitude but of solidarity.

Three decades since its initiation, the Department of Women's Studies maintains the strong interdisciplinary roots that the then-Centre had laid down. In 1992, the Equations research project that focused on Goan tourism and its impact on women was perhaps the first interdisciplinary project undertaken by the Centre.

Following the resounding success of the Women and Law seminar, Desouza represented the Centre as a trainer in a program organised by the Women Entrepreneurs Group (WEG) in Ponda.

Though she lacked a background in entrepreneurial training, Desouza took this opportunity to learn new skills that would become indispensable to the successful pursuits of the Centre for Women's Studies. Furthermore, being charged with the job of being a specialist in all things 'woman' has ensured the continuous expansion of expertise areas and a broadened perspective.

The conspicuous absence of women awardees at 1992's Goa Liberation Day felicitation of freedom fighters led the Centre to organise an International Women's Day felicitation for them, as a way to give credit where credit is due, and make a small attempt



35th National Conference of Indian Association for Women's Studies 'Sovereignty, Citizenship and Gender' organized by the Centre for Women's Studies in Goa May 3-6 2005.



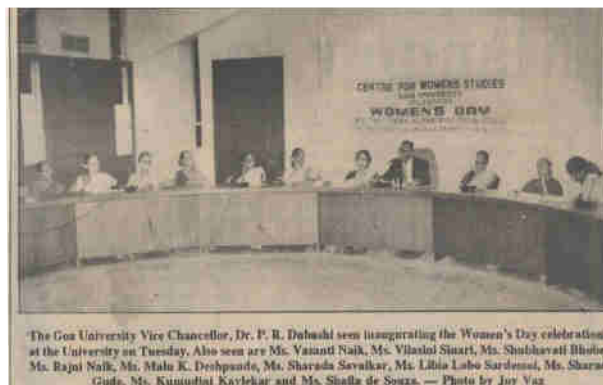
to alter mainstream patriarchy in the history of Goa.

Invited to the establishment celebration of the National Commission for Women (NCW) in 1993, Goa University's Centre of Women's Studies gained national-level recognition and acceptance. Though the Centre/Department received no funding from the UGC for a decade from 1997 to 2007, it is a testament to its commitment to women's studies and the bolstering sisterhood created in its early years that some of the most important programs were successfully held during this time. This included single-handedly organising the IAWS annual conference in 2005 which gained the centre national recognition in women's studies communities, and collaborations with NGOs and civil organisations as well as government-run organisations.

While research paper presentations such as 'Beyond Academics, Towards Action' at the NCW conference in Delhi, and collaborations with many local and national-level organisations were helping the Centre gain a firm footing, the process of forming a Board of Studies and transforming the Centre into the Department of Women's Studies was anything but smooth sailing. Along with being a non-teaching arm within the hierarchical and academic University system, the Centre also faced specific issues related to funding. Tasks of extension, research, and advocacy are largely collective in nature, but under the Centre, it all came down to a single core faculty member. Though teaching was always a part of the UGC guidelines, the 8th plan made specific provisions for it. Not having a Board of Studies meant establishing a Department of Women's Studies was not possible, and setting up the Department required a Board of Studies. This chicken-or-egg dilemma led to a long process of petitions and denials.

Even after clearing the NET and qualifying for JRF, it was a long time before Desouza was allowed to transition from Research Officer to Assistant

Professor at the Department of Women's Studies. While these battles were being waged, she met her primary goal of spending quality time with students by collaborating with them in every non-academic way possible via poster-making and wall painting activities, street play groups, etc.



Other than giving her the opportunity to pursue her heartfelt goal of connecting with students, it also enabled the Department to create a support community amongst students. Meeting the aims of extension, outreach, and social responsibility would have been a tall order for a single faculty member, but student support has always been central to the success of the Department. "I hope that irrespective of who the teachers are, the Department of Women's Studies maintains a student-centric approach. The Department cannot sustain its success, and conduct outreach programs with just teachers – focusing on the students ensures that as they do well, they add to the repertoire of the University's victories. The doors of the Women's Studies Department will always remain open for students – closing the door creates a point of disconnect and goes against the culture of this Department," says Desouza. Perhaps, this open door policy is why the Head of the Department of Women's Studies was less than happy with the installation of air conditioners that would necessitate closed doors in faculty office areas.

A special advisory committee was set up to create a Board of Studies and courses under the Department of Women's Studies. The establishment of a Ph.D. program in 2013 brought the first ray of hope to the

Department, and currently, five scholars are registered to earn their doctorates in Women's Studies. After the 9th plan, the Master's in Women's Studies program was initiated by the Department. Seminars such as 'Gender Agenda in the Taught Curriculum' (2003) and 'Teaching Gender: Contemporary Debates in 2010' acted as stepping stones to the successful initiation of the Master's program in the Women's Studies Department.

Noticing that most Women's Studies program curricula and pedagogy falls short on the application aspects of women's empowerment, Desouza added tools and experiential learning methods such as Gender Sensitive Intervention for Change (GSIC) to create a unique and effective curriculum for Goa University's Women's Studies Department. With UGC funding in 2011, the Department of Women's Studies added two staff members to the team in 2011.



Marking the 30th anniversary of the Department of Women's Studies at Goa University, 'Looking through Women's Eyes' was a two-day film festival held in December 2018. With more than 150 students milling around the classrooms where the movies were being screened, sitting on floors carpeted with daris, nostalgia calls those initial discussion meetings to mind – only now, the Department of Women's Studies team is a robust multitude.

Irrespective of the number of people in the Women's Studies team, the Department has kept up momentum by maintaining its presence in the

women's studies communities via attending and organising multiple seminars, guest lecturing, and presenting research papers under the marquee of the Department.



Positive press coverage has brought both the spotlight and some shade to the Department because balancing research and teaching components with extension and outreach is no mean feat. In the early years, maintaining this balance as a lone faculty member was a difficult task that brought down administrative pressure. Today, the Department is appreciated for stellar balance between academic rigour and applied components such as extension and outreach activities. Uncertainty with regards to funding and the fear of losing temporary teachers are other omnipresent challenges. However, Desouza is nothing if not persistent, prepared, and undeniably hopeful.

Setting up a Department is only the beginning. She believes that the state of Goa is primed to have one of the very best Women's Studies Departments in the country with its positive gender indicators, high literacy rates, a high number of female students, and a relatively equitable legal system – all of which lend themselves well to academic excellence. With no dearth of rigour in the curriculum, she hopes that the current and future students of the Master's program of Women's Studies at Goa University will continue to scale academic peaks by researching and adding new knowledge to the body of Women's Studies via critical thinking in areas of feminist theory and application.





Set up in 2018, the State Resource Centre for Women at Goa University is going from strength to strength. Other than the curriculum designed specifically for the Women's Studies program at Goa University, Desouza values the ability to impact policy and bring about grassroots-level changes through the program as the Department's most significant achievements. Although, truth be told, her first response is and has been the joy of expanding and adding more people to the Department of Women's Studies.

Encapsulating 30 years of work, she says, "In retrospect, it is not my achievement, but that of the administration of Goa University which has become more gender-friendly and intuitive. The support of the Government of Goa, the Directorate of Women and Child Development, the Directorate of Higher Education, and that of colleagues from other Departments of Goa University has been indispensable to the success of the Department of Women's Studies. The current and previous Vice-Chancellors of the University have been particularly

Increasing number of leadership positions that are held by women which automatically impacts how all levels of the hierarchy view gender equality. With an influx of more students, the Department feels assured that the University administration will continue offering support concerning teaching positions. Collaborative partnership and gender balance have a positive impact on NAAC accreditation, and so perhaps, this is just the right time for Women's Studies to get a boost – the time is now."

*Interviewed & written by  
Stephanie D'sa  
Dr. Manita Kumari*

# Extending Our Wings: Collaborations with Local, National and International Organisations

## Local Organisations

- Bailancho Saad
- Arz
- Human Touch
- Saad Angan
- Sangath
- International Centre Goa
- WEG
- INSAF
- Goa Science Centre
- Colleges in Goa
- ACDIL
- Dempo Charity Trust
- Eco Femme
- Konkani Bhasha Mandal
- State Protective Home
- Konkani Development Society
- Goa State AIDS Control Society
- COOJ Mental Health Foundation
- Keshav Seva Sadhana
- Goa Education Development Corporation
- Sneha Mandir
- Lok Seva Trust Mahila Ashram
- GIRDA
- Mineral Foundation
- Sahas
- Navodaya Leadership Institute
- Sethu
- Bailancho Ekvott
- Children Rights Goa
- Voluntary Health Association of India
- Institute Mater Dei
- SEQC
- Goa University Academic Staff College and HRDC
- Goa State Commission for Women
- Positive People
- Apna Ghar
- Department of Child Development, Goa
- Directorate of Health Services
- Nirmala Institute of Education
- Video Volunteers
- Department of Youth and Sports Affairs
- Jamaat-e-islami Hind
- Don Bosco

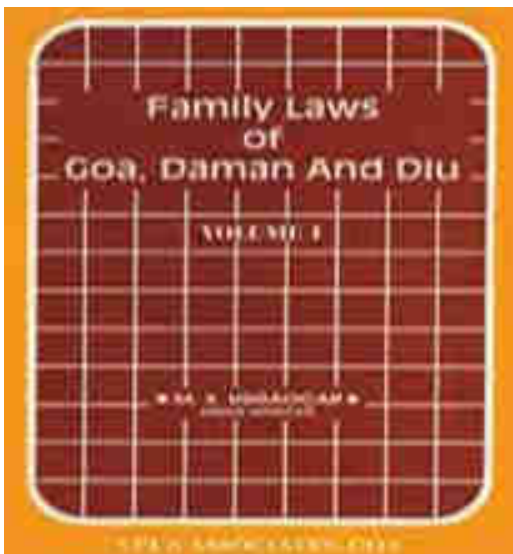
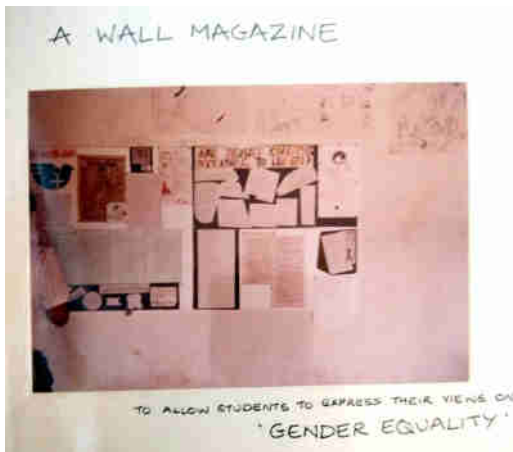
## National Organisations

- ★ National Commission for Women, New Delhi
- ★ UGC, New Delhi
- ★ Indian Council of Social Science Research, New Delhi
- ★ New Delhi BAIF (Development Research Foundation), Pune
- ★ EQUATIONS, Bangalore
- ★ British Council ( Mumbai )
- ★ Zubaan, New Delhi
- ★ Indian Associations for Women's Studies
- ★ National Institute of Education Planning and Commission, New Delhi
- ★ Collaboration with Centre for Women's Studies at other Indian Universities



# International Outreach

- ✱ **Women & Development Award 2000 – 2001**, Shastri Indo-Canadian Institute  
Simone De Beauvoir Institute, Concordia University, **Montreal, Canada**
- ✱ **Fellow, Salzburg Seminar 2006**  
*Session 433: Women, Political Power & Next Generation Leadership.*  
Schloss Leopoldskron, **Salzburg, Austria**Schloss Leopoldskron, Salzburg, Austria
- ✱ **Fellow Cornell University, USA**
- ✱ **Oxford University, UK**
- ✱ **University of British Columbia, Vancouver**
- ✱ **UPPSALA University, Sweden**
- ✱ **Congress of Asian Association of Women's Studies, Malaysia**
- ✱ **International South Asian Women's Conference, California**



**Joining the hands with Women's Organisations**

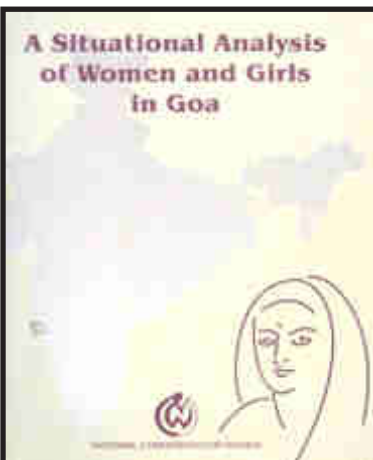
# Women's Studies is the Academic Arm of Women's Movements

One of the major responsibilities of Women's Studies Centres has been to produce knowledge from feminist perspectives and conducting research. In order to fulfil this criteria, Centre for Women's Studies has conducted substantive research to understand women's status in Goan society. Following are some important studies and publications by the Centre/Department. The Centre/Department has conducted numerous major and minor research projects over the years. Some of them have had impact at policy level as well.

## Important Studies/ Research

S.N	Title	Year	Funded by
1	Sanghmitra: State Coalition for Adolescent Health and Rights	2014-2016	NMEW
2	Teaching Gender: Contemporary Debates	2010	ICSSR
3	Development, Tourism and Nutrition in Goa	2007-2009	UGC
4	Situational Analysis of Women and Girls in Goa	2004-5	National Commission for Women, New Delhi
5	A Holistic Approach to Women's Health in Goa	2003	State Commission for Women, Goa
6	Gender Agenda in Taught Curriculum	2003	ICSSR
7	Women's Status and Mining in Goa	2002-2003	State Commission for Women, Goa
8	Demographic Transitions and Declining Sex Ratio	2000	Not Funded
9	Study on Non Hierarchical Organisations	1998-2010	Not Funded
10	Construction, Malaria and Health Policy	1997	Not Funded
11	Traditional Health Practices	1993-94	Not Funded
12	Women and Law	1993	UGC
13	Tourism Critique and Anti Tourism Movement	1993	Equations
14	Women and Law	1988	Not Funded

### A Situational Analysis of Women and Girls in Goa



## Policy Impact

### Situational Analysis of Women and Girls in Goa

At a meeting between the Deputy Chairperson Planning Commission and Chief Minister, Goa, held on August 1 2005 in Yojana Bhavan to finalise the annual Plan 2005 prepared by the Centre for Women's Studies, Goa University for National Commission for Women were highlighted by Dr Syeda Hameed as issues to be addressed by Government of Goa.



# Important Publications

Year	Title	Publication
2018	Sanghmitra Resource Book for Adolescents on Health and Rights(Second Edition)	MWCD, GOI
2018	Fielding One's Own: Prospects and Dilemmas in Researching Women's Collective Organising from Within: Knowing the Social World: Perspectives And Possibilities	Orient Blackswan
2016	The Politics of Beauty: What's not looking good about 'beauty	Nivedini, Journal of Gender Studies . 21; 65-84. (Sri Lanka)
2013	Tourism and Mining in Goa	IAWS Newsletter 2 (10) 1921
2012	Tourism, Nutrition and Women's Health in Goa	Review of Development and Change, Vol XVII, No.1, JanuaryJune 2012, 7594. ISSN 0972 2661(Madras Inst. of Development Studies)
2012	Economic Growth and Women's Empowerment: Evaluating Two Lead Sectors in Goa Tourism and Mining	Social Change and Development, Vol IX, July, 6485. ISSN 0975-4016 (OKD Inst. of Social Change and Development)
2008	How Vulnerable are Women in Goa?	Atharva Vol III, No 5, May 1 (pp32). ISSN 0973-9475.
2006	Edited Book: Women's Health in Goa: A Holistic Approach	Concept Publishers, New Delhi.
2004	Razing Baina, Goa: In Whose Interest?	Economic and Political Weekly, Vol 39, 30 July 24
2003	Tradition, Colonialism and Modernity: Women's Health in Goa, India.	Gender, Technology and Development. 7 (2) 2003: 18-9208. Sage Publications.(International Journal)
2001	Tourism and Health in Goa	State of Goa's Health: A Report, 2001, Vikram Patel (ed.) Voluntary Health Association of India, New Delhi and Sangath, Goa(co-author)
2000	Health Practices and People's Identity: ReLocating Identity.	Lusotopie 2000 (Lisbonne) Paris Karthala, 2000, 764p., ISBN :-284586-146 -X. (International Journal)
1998	Third World Dilemmas of Development	Foreign Affairs Reports, Volume XLVII No.1, January. Indian Council of World Affairs.(co-author)
1997	Development, Malaria and Public Health Policy: A Case Study in Goa	Economic and Political WeeklyDecember 6 – 12. (co-author)

# Ph.D. at Department of Women's Studies

A Ph.D. in Women's Studies is designed to produce new and inclusive methods of knowledge. The Department of Women's Studies is reputed for scholarly expertise in marginality and grassroots-level feminisms. This thrust area is reflected in the choice of doctoral areas of study such as the livelihood and rights of tribal women in Goa, culture and imaging of Gawda women, studies on customs, transitions, and interventions when it comes to the female body and sexuality of young girls, and the identity of Kudd women from Goa.



## Proud Ph.D. Scholars



Students & faculty attending and presenting papers at National & International Conferences

# Beyond Academics: Towards Action

Institutionalisation of Women's Studies in Indian Universities was demanded by the women's movements of 1970s and 80s. One reason for this demand was to help integrate issues of systematic oppression of women into the existing knowledge system. The relationship of the discipline with the movement makes it unique. The prime objectives behind the institutionalisation of Women's Studies was to challenge the androcentric bias inherent in the existing knowledge system, and to alter the traditional mode of knowledge creation and exchange. Learning by doing is an essential component of the pedagogy which is applied not only in the classroom but also extended to the field, with the purpose of developing better understanding of the life realities of women and other marginalised communities. The Department of Women's Studies at Goa University adopts the same philosophical approach. Students of the department are facilitated with tremendous opportunities of 'Learning by Doing' where they can execute their ideas in the form of workshops, campaigns, surveys, discussions, festivals, etc.

Students of the Department are engaged in various extension activities which give them the holistic understanding of the reality from the field.  
Glimpses of Learning by Doing

- 1) **Field Trips** - The Department conducts Field Trips which helps students to connect theory to practice. They also get to understand the connection between social location and the discrimination which marginalised communities face in their daily life.
- 2) **Field Placements** - Having field placements in the Department of Women's Studies caters to the all-round development of students. From teaching research skills and their application to getting exposure to a multitude of issues, fieldwork offers many benefits for Master's level students. It also helps them develop and test their standpoint by giving them access to required platforms where they come face-to-face with various issues and strata of society. By learning how to network with partner NGOs and governmental organisations, students become better equipped to bring about a positive change in their worldview, and eventually, the world.

**One Solution** is a self-owned project, started in the month of August in 2016, by Steffi Maria Cardoz, as part of the Gender Sensitive Intervention for Change paper in the Department of Women's Studies, Goa University, under the guidance of Dr. Shaila Desouza. The project was aimed at creating employment with a gendered perspective, with special focus on women's lives, their health and necessities. The project was designed in an eco-friendly way, wherein people had to collect plastic and give it for recycling, and in return, they were given ration supplies for that particular month. The ration was donated by the people of Goa. No cash was accepted. The project was designed for slum-dwellers. Since slum-dwellers have the least amount of government-provided facilities, and about 80% of them are illiterate, a need for greater sensitization about their condition was recognised. One Solution was implemented across 28 slums in Goa. Other students of the Department of Women's Studies also provided assistance in the implementation of the project.

Steffi Cardoz



### Organisations where students have been placed:

- Human Touch, Panjim
- Apna Ghar, Mercedes
- Bailancho Saad
- State Protective Homes
- Arz, Vasco
- Mineral Foundation
- Lok Seva Mahila Ashram

### 3) GSIC – Gender Sensitive Intervention for Change

Introducing students to participatory reflection and action, this course encourages students to design and use games, tools, campaigns, and projects to bring about change via gender sensitive intervention.

Workshops on 'Role of Media in Gender Equality' were conducted at St. Xavier's College, Mapusa. The aim was to sensitize people as they are mostly unaware that media has a strong impact on how we see the world and how we perceive our surrounding. Students were shown videos and pictures that showed how the media portrays gender stereotypes and increases gender inequality, followed by discussions.

Under GSIC, the Installation of Sanitary Pads Dispenser and Incinerator was conducted at Goa University. The focus on this project was on the importance of finding an alternative for disposing sanitary pads and reducing environmental pollution within the University. The Sanitary Pad Dispenser and Incinerator were provided by the Rotary Club, Panjim. Sanitary Pads and Incinerators have been installed in different faculties at Goa University to ensure that maximum number of women reap the benefits.

The chance to design and execute a project under the unique Gender Sensitisation Intervention for Change paper in the Masters of Women's Studies program was a thrilling prospect for As'ad Shah. The project he worked on was the creation and execution of Gender Sensitisation workshops for students of the 9th and 10th standards at government high schools in Goa. The workshops covered the meaning of sex and gender, gender stereotypes, and the impact of aggressive masculinity in our lives.

4) **MEAR – Making Equality A Reality** (MEAR) is the annual inter-collegiate festival organised on International Women's Day (8<sup>th</sup> of March) by the Department of Women's Studies. Students from different colleges compete in a number of women-centric events and activities.

5) **Purple Campaign for Gender Equality –** Donning purple clothes, the Department of Women's Studies team conducts a number of interactive workshops at colleges across the state. These campaigns encourage students to critically analyse gender inequality issues with the help of games, quizzes, discussions, and media.

6) **Book Reading Club –** In 2019, the Department initiated a weekly Reading Club in order to inculcate the habit of reading and critical thinking, and hone the skills of group discussion. Every week, a selected article is circulated to all the teachers, students, and SRCW team. After a healthy discussion, the best discussant is awarded a prize.

7) **Dissertation -** Along with theoretical courses and application, students are given the opportunity to collect case studies from marginalised communities and analyse the using qualitative research methodology. In the past, students have conducted studies analysing aspects of the transgendered community, people with disabilities, HIV positive girls, domestic workers, single women, trends of higher education enrollment amongst girls, women in theatre, understanding rituals and traditional practices of marginalised communities, agency of Muslim women, women construction workers, women's political participation, women and media, plight of widows, and women's health.



**Field Trip to Vavurla 2018**



**Field Trip to Lateri and Ponda 2018**



**Understanding masculinity**



**Social mapping workshop**



**Coping with menopause**



**Prevention of sexual harassment**





**Privacy Issues when using Internet**



**Purple Campaigns (Govt. College of Quepem, MES College, Carmel**







**Film Festival**



**Reading Club**



**Extension Activities : MHM (Menstrual Hygiene Management) Workshops**



# State Resource Centre for Women

Following an MOU signed between Goa University and the Department of Women and Child Development, the State Resource Centre for Women-Goa was established in the Department of Women's Studies Goa University. SRCW- Goa will provide systematic support to the State Governments to enable effective implementation of women-centric programmes, schemes and laws, by enabling



coordination between experts, organizations and stakeholders working within the state. SRCW conducts research and documentation, policy analysis, and executes training and capacity building workshops on women-centric issues. SRCW also gives a focused attention to intersectional challenges affecting women, to ensure greater understanding on women's issues and to bring discourses on women belonging to marginalized communities to the forefront.

## **I. Inaugural Event with Symposium on “Working with Women in Goa: Avenues and Challenges”**

The State Resource Centre for Women Inaugural Event with Symposium on 'Working with Women in Goa: Avenues and Challenges' took place on the 08th

of September 2018 at Conference Hall, Administrative Block, Goa University. The rationale behind this event was:

1. To inaugurate the SRCW office on GU campus and launch the official logo
2. To engage and network with various professionals and stakeholders working for women's rights and welfare in Goa
3. To understand women centric issues in the state
4. To identify avenues for further research and practice

The event was attended by Vice Chancellor of Goa University- Prof. Varun Sahni, Director, Department of Women & Child Development, Govt. of Goa- Shri Dipak Desai, Registrar of Goa University- Prof. Y. V. Reddy, and the Head, Department of Women's Studies Prof. Shaila Desouza. It also witnessed the presence of Academicians, faculty of various departments, students and many Women NGOs & stakeholders such as Bailancho Saad, Asha Sadan, Lifeline Foundation, Nirmala Institute of Education, Positive People, Kiran Niketan, ARZ, Jamaat E Islami Hind, Saad Angan and many others.

In the second half of the program a Symposium was held with the following panelists: Mr. Devidas Gaonkar, Adv. Albertina Almeida, Adv. Vijayashree Morajkar, Ms. Diana Dias and Dr. Ida Mukherjee. The panel discussion was moderated by Ms. Asawari Nayak, State Project Coordinator, SRCW- Goa. Devidas Gaonkar, journalist and activist, brought to the fore issues faced by rural and tribal women in the state. While Albertina Almeida, lawyer and human rights activist, discussed the importance of accountability and transparency in provision of welfare for women; Dr Ida Mukherjee highlighted





the importance of focusing on mental health aspects. Diana Dias and Adv. Vijayashree Moraskar reported the situation of sexual minorities and sex trafficked victims in the state and suggested appropriate interventions.

## II. Awareness Campaign on 'Beti Bachao- Beti Padhao'

To commemorate 11th of October 2018 as International day of the Girl Child Day, as declared by the United Nations, SRCW - Goa organized an awareness-generation campaign on themes of 'Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao' through the medium of street plays in the city of Panaji. This venture was supported and executed by student volunteers from Goa University (especially from the Department of Konkani and English) who performed in three locations namely Miramar,

Panjim Market Complex and KTC Bus Stand attracting the attention of crowd to BBBP themes such as female infanticide and discrimination of girl children in educational and health considerations.

The UN recommends observing this day to enhance awareness on gender inequality faced by girls across the globe and to facilitate creation of opportunity for girls. This celebration also propagated the importance of involving girls and young women in considerations of development policy, programming, campaigning and research. SRCW – Goa also recognizes that student involvement in awareness activities of a governmental scheme and gender issues is pivotal and also recommended within the larger MSK scheme and further wish to facilitate the student community to be agents of change for the



upliftment of the society.



To spearhead this campaign further, SRCW also started a social media campaign wherein people from the posed with placards with messages along BBBP themes and posted the photos on social media for benefit of tech-savvy young crowd.

SRCW thus reached out to the general masses emphasizing on issues concerning the girl child and advocating their basic rights and freedom. This made an impact on SRCW's outreach plans and has given a suitable base in



the city of Panjim for its activities in future. With this SRCW also gained a handful of student volunteers from Goa University and has successfully laid down the platform for more student volunteers.

### III. Relationship Well-Being Workshops

The State Resource Centre for Women of the Department of Women's Studies, Goa University held its Inaugural Relationship Well-being Workshops on the 30th November 2018 at Goa University. The programme was inaugurated by Chief Guest: Honourable Governor and



- b. Advice on reproductive and sexual health
- c. Interpersonal skills (including gender sensitization and training on inculcating mutual respect, non-violent communication, among others)



Chancellor of Goa University Dr. Smt. Mridula Sinha Ji and Guest of Honour: Hon. Minister for Women and Child Development, Govt. of Goa: Shri. Vishwajit Rane.

The need for such workshops was raised by the Hon. Governor and Chancellor of Goa University Dr. Smt. Mridula Sinha during the Goa University Convocation of July 2018 based on her study on 'The Practice and Effects of the Civil Code in Goa'. The State Resource Centre for Women was identified as the executive body for these workshops. SRCW conducts these workshops for young adults on a monthly basis wherein the following three elements are included:

- A. Legal guidance (to understand rights, acts, legislation)

Till now, the following Relationship Well-being Workshops have been conducted:

- 1) Inaugural Workshop on 30-11-2019
- 2) 'Focusing on a Self in a Relationship' by Ms. Vaishnavi Hegde on 21-12-2019
- 3) 'Building Healthy Relationships' by Ms. Prachi Khandeparkar on 16-01-2019
- 4) 'Legal Rights in a Relationship' by Adv. Caroline Collasso on 18-01-2019

All the workshops received fairly good response from students. While workshops

(1), (2), and (4) took place on the campus of Goa University, SRCW Team collaborated with DMC College, Assagao-Goa to conduct workshop

(3) there. The upcoming workshops are as follows:

- 5) 'Sexual and Reproductive Health' by Dr. Sheela Gupte on 25th February 2019.
- 6) 'Fostering Connections in a Relationship' by Ms. Gayathri Rao Konkar on 1st March 2019.

### IV. Inter-Sectoral Consultation Meeting and Research on 'Position and Role of Women in the Society'

One of the expert-suggestions that arose from SRCW symposium on 'Working with Women in Goa: Avenues and Challenges' held on 8th of

October, 2018 was that SRCW should engage in data collection and documentation on the status and position of Women in Goa and their role in the society. In order to put this suggestion into practice, SRCW – Goa has decided to launch a state-wide investigation on the topic – 'Position and Role of Women in the Goan Society'. This study will differ from large-scale census collection, as it would combine an in-depth qualitative (case-study) approach with a quantitative one (collection of demographic data).

For this purpose, an Inter-Sectoral Consultation Meeting was organised on 11th of January 2019 wherein grass-root level welfare providers such as Block Development Officers, Gram Sevaks, Anganwadi Workers from five regions of all the talukas of North Goa were invited to share their knowledge of the status and challenges faced by women in their areas. Secretary, Education-Government of Goa, Smt. Nila Mohanan was the chief guest of the meeting and the Department of Women and Child Development and the Directorate of Panchayats, Govt. of Goa assisted in mobilizing the participants. Apart from this, panel discussions were organized along three themes: (1) Discussion on 'Women and Crime' chaired by Police Inspector, Women's Police Station- Panjim, Smt. Sudiksha Naik (2) Discussion on 'Women and Health' chaired by Health Officer, Panjim Urban Health Centre, Dr. Pritam Naik (3) Discussion on 'Implementation of Schemes for Women in Goa' chaired by Social Welfare Officer, Department of Women and Child Development, Ms. Linnette Viegas.

The launch of the Inter-Sectoral Consultation Meeting signified the launch of SRCW's state-wide research study on the 'Position and Role of Women in Goa'. It will be followed up by field visits in the selected five areas, across all Talukas of North Goa. The further phases of the research will focus on South Goa.

#### **V. Gender Sensitization for 181 Women's Helpline Employees and Police Officials**

One of the mandates of SRCW - Goa is to conduct training and capacity building programmes on issues concerning empowerment of women in the state of Goa. Gender sensitization, gender mainstreaming and focusing on the training needs of women in the state is a priority. As the incidents of violence and crime against women constitute an area of concern in Goa (as in other parts of India, professionals who engage with such issues on a daily basis would benefit from being sensitized to women-centric concerns. SRCW hence plans to organise a 'Gender Sensitisation Programme' for the 181 Women's Helpline Employees and Goa Police Officials on the 25th and 26th of February, 2019.

The rationale behind this programme would be:

1. To instill a wider understanding on the subject of gender related issues concerning crime.
2. To promote equal participation of men and women in the service dealing with women and crime.
3. To mainstream gender issues into these services.
4. To introduce Feminist Criminology as an important perspective.

Training Programme will be conducted by well experienced resource persons who will discuss about gender stereotypes, gender advocacy and the different dynamics of gender-related crimes:

1. Dr. Meeran Chadha Borwankar: author, public speaker, trainer and retired IPS Officer who was the recipient of President of India Police Medal for Distinguished Services 2006 and Police Medal for Meritorious Services 1997
2. Dr. Mamta Kumari: Assistant Professor at the Department of Women's Studies, Goa University who obtained her Ph.D. in Feminist Criminology from Mahatma Gandhi Antarrashtriya Hindi Vishwavidhyalaya, Wardha

# Dr. Meeran Chadha Borwankar

*In conversation with Susparsha Gaikwad (Some excerpts)*

## **What motivated you to join the Indian Police Service (IPS)?**

My family has been very supportive of my opinions and decisions since my childhood, but as I grew up and decided to join the IPS, my father was of the opinion that it is a very tough job and I should reconsider my decision. I was very much charmed by the uniform. Equipped with awareness about the UPSC, my determination and some encouragement from my parents I landed in the IPS.

## **When you were in the Police Academy I learnt that you were the only woman amongst your 70 batch mates. How do you see your journey from then to now?**

I realized that there will be less women, but did not know that I would be the only one. When I switched from Indian Audits and Accounts, the boys started telling me to go back. I was not huge and hefty looking. I was a very lean girl. Some would genuinely tell me that I should go back and some were just uncomfortable with me. They were of the opinion that if there were 5-10 girls it would be different but because of this one woman their freedom would be curtailed.

When we are young, we have so much determination. I found that I was not at the top in physical fitness but I was not at the bottom as well. I was in the middle. As a child I was very fond of horses so I had done a lot of



horse riding. I was also a part of Punjab's state cricket team. So I knew that I am not that bad at physical fitness.

I had the determination to do whatever it takes to survive the training. But I felt emotionally starved for that one year. I would mark each passing day on my calendar. IPS training is very tough. Our day would start with yoga, then PT, followed by parade, and then swimming, horse riding, shooting, rock climbing and unarmed combat. This would make me feel very exhausted. But my age – my youth – helped me handle the emotional starvation for that year.

I would also like to share that when the boys at the academy would try to demoralize me, they would make fun of my English. I had studied in Hindi medium so I was not fluent in English. They would say “Meeran tu to English Punjabi mein bolti hai!” I used to feel hurt but decided to ignore them.

## **You mentioned an incident that happened when you were dealing with a gambling den in Kolhapur. Could you please tell us about this incident?**

I will share some gendered experience that I had. I was being trained in Bhadrakali Police Station in Nashik. They would train me in taking down a FIR, investigating a case, they also taught me Marathi because I am a Punjabi. But in the evening when they would go to raid the bars, gambling dens, and





brothels. They would never take me. I wanted to learn that part as well. Otherwise I thought I would be a bookish officer. Later on I realized that they thought that the PI of that police station will have to take a back seat in the police jeep and since I was an IPS officer my place was on the front seat. Then as politely as possible, I encouraged them to take me and I learnt all the ropes.

From Nashik I was transferred to Kolhapur. The staff would invariably come and say “Your work is good madam but we dare you to demolish the gambling den in Chandgad.” Chandgad was 100 kms away from Kolhapur. By the time the raiding party could reach, the den would be closed. This meant that information was leaked. So, I began to think of strategies to deal with the gambling den. I had two constables in my staff. They said “ma'am if you permit we could take a private vehicle to go there.” I said okay. We went to Chandgad travelling in a private vehicle. After reaching there, I thought being the team leader I should go ahead. I went ahead and knocked the door. As soon as I knocked the door, a guy opened the door; he broke a glass bottle and charged towards me with full force. I was fresh from the training so my reflexes were very quick. As he charged towards me, I moved aside and he came crashing down. That day we counted cash till late evening. We seized 57,000 rupees from there. In those days 57,000 was a huge amount. The next day, the news headlines read “Lady IPS officer raids a gambling den and seizes 57,000 rupees. Male officers raiding the same place were not able to seize even 57 rupees.” Then I realized that the information of the raid would get leaked because the officers had to inform the motor section for taking the police vehicle – because the constables realized this, we could successfully accomplish the mission.

**As a woman can you share your experience of supervising the hanging of Ajmal Kasab?**

When I joined the police force, I thought that I am brave and tough and that I can manage any situation. I never thought in my wildest dreams that I will witness

a hanging.

According to the Maharashtra Prison Manual the Prison Superintendent has to supervise the hanging. I had my own gender issues here. I thought that if I did not go people might think, “Because she is a woman she did not show up for his hanging. Maybe she was scared.” I thought that my not going for the hanging will reinforce the belief that women are weaker. So I decided that I will go. Later when everyone came to know about his hanging, people including women asked me, “You didn't faint?” I thought that by going and standing there to witness his hanging I had been able to convey the point that women are professionally as strong as men.

**How did you handle menstrual problems being the only woman in your batch?**

It was really, really, tough especially because for Yoga-PT you have to wear whites. I used to feel terribly scared and overly conscious. Now I feel I should not have been so conscious. You know what I did to handle the situation? – I did not take a single day off thinking boys will guess (that I have my period). Can you imagine?!

**After your retirement you have been doing a lot of gender sensitization programs for the police. What inspired you to do this?**

The treatment that a single lady gets when she goes to the police station has not changed over the period of time that I have served as an IPS officer. Recently, I wrote an article that was published in The Indian Express in response to remarks made by General Bipin Rawat from the Indian Army about recruiting women in combat positions. According to him they will ask for maternity leave when they get pregnant and will create a ruckus if denied leave. Secondly, he said that women need privacy and will accuse men of peeping when they change their clothes. I thought the General should tackle the men who peep and not object to a woman joining. I see these kind of responses as gender obstacles. If my potential is to

achieve 100 as a woman, I should be able to achieve that 100. But various agencies like the police and the family create obstacles so that my potential of 100 is reduced to 40. If we gain our full potential we will be happier and society will improve as well.

**When you started your training, did you face any problems at infrastructural level?**

Yes. You can imagine in the 80s police stations never had women's toilets. So I had to use the same toilets as the men. I did a study for the Centre for Police Research about women police in Maharashtra where 33 per cent reservation for women was introduced in 1993. The study has a sample of about 600 respondents. 28% women constables were highly dissatisfied with the washrooms, restrooms and toilets. Things have improved for IPS officers and for lady DYSPs and Sub Inspectors. But the same things have not yet improved for constables.

I was once advised to cut my hair short because men have short hair. During our training days, our day would begin with yoga, PT, and parade. For yoga and PT we could tie our hair in a pony tail. But to wear the cap for the parade you had to tie your hair up. They said that I would not be able to tie my hair so I had better cut it short. But if women are determined they will do what they want to do. I asked them, "Tell me a single day when I have been late for the parade and I will cut my hair short." They could not, so I still have my long hair!

We know of you for your investigation of the Jalgaon Sex Scandal. Could you share some of your gendered experiences as a woman police officer and what especially you brought to that investigation?

I was actually in Mumbai Crime Branch but I had asked for a soft posting because I had my second child at that time. I read in the newspapers that many girls are complaining of sexual exploitation. I got a call from our DG saying "Meeran go to Jalgaon." I was based in Pune in the CID. But I agreed to go. I ended up staying there for more than one year because about

100 girls had come out saying that three municipal councilors had sexually exploited them. We then understood how the municipal councilors were exploiting the girls, but we could convince only 12 girls to complain. Among the 12 girls only 6 spoke in the court and the rest turned hostile. The Maharashtra Government set up special courts for these cases and within a year these men were penalized. Later on they were acquitted by the High Court because there was a gap of 6 months between the reporting of rape and the medical examination and registration of the cases took 6 months to 3 years. The court took a view that the cases might be false, arguing that if they were really raped, they would have immediately reported.

**What types of investigations did you find interesting?**

As Joint Commissioner Crime I dealt with organized crime – Chota Rajan gang, Dawood Ibrahim, Poojari gang etc. In these gangs, I found they were very clever and had full legal support. It was a battle of wits. Cases of organized crime involving knowledge of law, procedure and police versus organized gangs, I found very interesting.

**What are your thoughts on the Sabarimala issue?**

I feel that women of all ages should be permitted to go (to the temple) – whoever wants to go. I am very clear about this. I don't think that any God has ever said, "No, this particular woman should not go." It is a matter of devotion. They should be permitted to go.

**Do you have any message for us students?**

I would like to conclude by saying that all of you should consider the services as a career option. I would also like to say just one thing – that if you want to be healthy and sleep well, you need to be honest towards your duty. No compromise on honesty!

**Susparsha Gaikwad & Namrata Madhu**  
(Department of Women's Studies,  
Goa University)

## New Me

I was born with a fire inside  
I walk the path that I decide

I am brave  
I am bold  
But I am also bruised  
And the saga is very old

I have fought a thousand battles  
And still standing  
I have cried a million tears  
And still smiling

I am a woman  
Who knows her worth  
And someone demeaning her  
Shall face the wrath.

Every morning  
I greet myself in the mirror  
Feeling proud  
That I am a Warrior.

**Susparsha Gaikwad**

(Department of Women's Studies,  
Goa University)

## Dare not to die

She lies awake at night  
As they both sleep tight  
Promises made, keep her awake  
The pain can't go away  
Time can't make the change  
Her children lie awake  
Praying for God's sake

She fights every single day  
Not for her own but her children's sake  
Thoughts don't go away  
As the world surrounds in shame  
She bleeds, she fights, she dies,  
But dare not to die  
But dare not to die

The lips that said I do  
The hands that made love, too  
Were the ones that had abused  
While the world stood quiet in gloom  
Seasons never change  
It pours when there's no rain  
She always lights a smile  
And the laughter never dies

She does, she dreams, she believes  
And she always will.

**Aldrich Rodriguez**

(Department of History,  
Goa University)





# Have You Switched to Sustainable Menstrual Products?

The issue of garbage pollution is not new for us. The pollution we create affects our natural resources, thus affecting Mother Earth. We talk about plastic, chemical, and other non-biodegradable waste as major contributors to garbage pollution. But do you know that sanitary pads that women use for managing periods contribute largely to this garbage issue? According to a report cited in the Clean India Journal, approximately 9000 tonnes of sanitary waste (432 million pads) is being generated annually in India.

Sanitary waste disposal is another major issue in India as 80% of the used sanitary pads are either flushed down the toilet or dumped in dustbins. Sanitary waste disposal is a waste management issue, as well as a health and human rights issue that affects the entire country.

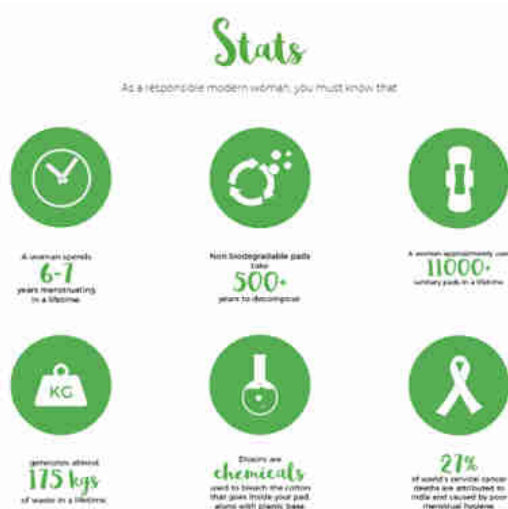


Fig 1: Source: <http://www.mycoperiodkit.com/>

But what do we do now to curb pollution - stop using pads? We have been told by commercially-made disposable sanitary napkin companies that cloth is not good for our health. If we use their product we can jump, do sports and what not. Their portrayal indicates that menstrual blood is so odorous that fragrant pads are needed. Hmmm!! Did you also know that sanitary pads are made using bleach and dye to make it look super white? Do you know that

the manufacture of sanitary pads uses a lot of non-biodegradable plastic? The fragrance used in pads has chemicals in it. So, if such a pad is used for prolonged time, it can lead to infections.

## Environment-friendly Menstrual Absorbent

Without compromising on health, it's now time to opt for environment-friendly sustainable menstrual products. What are the alternatives? The answer lies in **menstrual cups and reusable stitched cloth pads**.

A) Reusable stitched cloth pads NGOs like Eco Femme are making and promoting reusable stitched cloth pads which are made of organic cloth. They are leak-proof and can be used about 75 times which makes it cost-effective as well as eco-friendly. For details you can visit EcoFemme website: [www.ecofemme.org](http://www.ecofemme.org).



Fig 2: Stitched cloth pads (Source: [ecofemme.org](http://ecofemme.org))

B) Menstrual cupA menstrual cup is a soft, reusable cup that is to be placed inside the vagina during menstruation to collect menstrual fluid. They are shaped like an upside-down bell as shown in the image below. The cup has four holes near the rim to avoid suction while removing it. Ridges and a stem on the cup help the user to locate it and grip the cup while removing it.



**Fig 2: Menstrual cup and cleaning case (Source: Personal album)**

#### **Menstrual cups are:**

- ✱ **Cost-effective:** Women spend around Rs. 1500 to Rs. 2000 per year on disposable sanitary pads. On an average, if a woman menstruates for 30 years, then she spends around Rs. 60,000 on pads. Whereas, menstrual cups can be used for ten years to a lifetime of menstruation. A menstrual cup costs around Rs. 500 to Rs. 1000 - a one time expense.
- ✱ **Accessible:** Menstrual cups are available online for sale by multiple companies. One needs to confirm quality of the product before buying.
- ✱ **Comfortable:** When inserted properly, a menstrual cup is leakproof and easy to use. There is no worry about staining.

More details about how to use the cup, a video can be accessed on <https://myevercup.com/> along with other information to help you use a menstrual cup in a better way. You can also write to me with your queries and concerns on [kajalk1786@gmail.com](mailto:kajalk1786@gmail.com).

Personally, I use both the cloth pad and menstrual cup to manage my periods. A cloth pad serves the purpose on days when the menstrual flow is not as much. For days of heavier flow, the menstrual cup is the answer. Towards the end of the menstrual cycle when the flow reduces, you can switch to the cloth pad. I have switched to sustainable menstruation for healthy and eco-friendly periods.

This small step towards choosing a healthy alternative during menstruation can help women as well as the environment in an impactful way.

**Kajal Kerkar Rivankar**

## **Feedback from Students**

Being part of the Women's Studies department at Goa University has brought about a revolution in my understanding of women's issues in our country. While it is easy to watch the various struggles of women shown on television or other social platforms, this paper allowed to get involved in the discussions, debates, and arguments on ongoing events as well as events from the past. The paper brings in facts and discoveries at a different level of experience and application which helped me gain an in-depth understanding of the matter. Also, the Department has challenging faculty members who do indeed challenge the status quo and try to bring about the change we want to see in our society.

**(Calvin Monteiro  
Political Science)**

My experience in the department has been very good. Most students assume that only women's issues are taught through this department. Actually, students get to learn much more than that from the gender perspective. I also liked all the interesting projects, assignments like ISAs that include practicals and field work where students can use their intelligence and initiative to create original work. This is my second semester wherein I've opted for a paper from the Department of Women's Studies. The faculty is very nice and helpful to students at all points in time. I enjoyed the opportunity to learn many new things.

**(Rajswi,  
Political Science)**

# Plight of Domestic Workers in Goa

A research titled “**A Study of the Female Domestic Workers in Gogol, Margao, Goa**” was aimed at understanding the lifestyle and struggles of women domestic workers. Patriarchal norms, cultural taboos, traditions and society subordinates and deprives this section of the society of their rights. The National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganized Sector (NCEUS), in April 2009, showed figures constituting more than 93 percent of workers in the informal or unorganised sectors. This research deals with the problems of women in the unorganized sector of India. The women workers from the unorganized sectors require great consideration because they do not have job and income security, which makes them extremely vulnerable.

## Historical Division of Labour

Society for years has woven cultural expectations around men and women, ascribing status universally within a stratification system of 'sex and age.' Social attributes of nurturing, patience, empathy, support, etc. are said to belong to women. On the other hand, impatience, critical, strong, etc. are assigned attributes of men. This social scaling of attributes results in what we see today as 'women's work' and 'men's work.' Thus, sex roles represent sexual identity, which includes division of labour, rights and responsibilities according to sex.

Division of labour arose due to the perceived sexual and gendered differences in the society. Hence, men were seen performing roles identified within the public sphere, whereas women performed roles that were recognised in the private sphere. Men were highlighted as 'bread earners' of the family and women got themselves engaged with the household chores as well as nurturing of the family. The current deficit of women's participation in economic activities is due to spatial immobility, poor

education, and social norms which denies women growth in the society. Women are seen engaging in submissive roles that are stereotyped, low paid, less challenging, and insecure jobs.

Thus, women's empowerment is only possible by opening up access to economic security. Women belonging to the poorer sections of the society seek employment to financially support the family and distribute the burden equally. Patriarchal norms and societal conditioning have endowed women with knowledge on building a perfect home. Therefore, domestic work is seen as a replica of this endowed knowledge.

'Domestic work' was seen to be the best job a woman could ever do as cultural norms would not allow women to venture out and explore other areas of interest in the public sphere. Women have worked at their homes as well as other houses to earn extra income to sustain their lives. These jobs vary from cooking, cleaning the furniture, gardening, cleaning clothes, etc. A domestic worker, under the Prevention Prohibition, and Redressal of Sexual Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act 2013, is defined as “a woman who is employed to do the household work in any household for remuneration whether in cash or kind, either directly or through any agency on a temporary, permanent, part time or full time basis, but does not include any member of the family of the employer”

## Research Conclusions

The study on female domestic workers included case studies of the women domestic workers from a selected geographical location. The policies and programmes of the Government to address these problems were also highlighted in the research. This study was aimed at finding out the correlation



between basic inherent poverty and violation of human rights. To begin with, the workers who were interviewed as respondents were questioned on the following aspects; the socio economic status of the families of domestic workers, the facilities or rights they have at their workplace and at home, whether they feel happy doing a job that mainstream society dislikes, existence of any form of violation at the workplace and lastly, their knowledge about the laws that would safeguard their rights at their workplace.

It is evident from the research that, domestic workers come from vulnerable communities and are largely migrants. The non-availability of jobs in rural or tribal areas enables the continuous supply of workers to cities that have job opportunities.

All the respondents were mainly migrants from Hubli and Karwar in Karnataka, parts of Bihar and Jharkhand, and also from Nepal. The workers who were interviewed for the research belonged to the age group of 20 to 60 years, and they resided in the geographical area of Gogol, Margao, Salcette, and other areas in South-Goa. This study revealed elements of harassment at the workplace faced by female domestic workers. This process of migration showed that there are risks, particularly because of deceptive recruitment practices or abuse at the hands of employers. This includes fixation of wages and other conditions of work, resolution of disputes and protection of employment besides provision of social security, childcare facilities, housing, training, and skill formation. The findings of the study revealed that a majority of workers worked for more than 5 hours and thus stayed away from their homes to provide for basic requirements like food, shelter, and clothing.

Women who worked in multiple households did not have the agency of decision making at their workplace with respect to what work they do, nor were they able to freely take days off or take their children to their workplace. They worked for their families' survival and thus did not let what society

thought about their work stop them. Domestic workers belong to the deprived section of the society, thus, the work they engage in is seen relatively of less importance by others. From the findings, it is clear that domestic work is a sound source of income for women because the per capita income is high in Goa, as compared to other states in the country.

Illiteracy and lack of awareness on institutional help and legal provisions made by the state are major causes of crimes against domestic workers. Thus, women are seen taking up jobs that they have no knowledge of which makes them highly vulnerable to violation and abuse. Their voice is not taken into consideration at the workplace, leaving them at the mercy of their employers.

Media has played a huge role in bringing about awareness on different laws to safeguard the rights of the deprived sections of the society. It is very important for media in the form of television, radio, paper advertisements in regional languages, etc. to reach all the corners of the country, so that the marginalized sections of the society understand their rights and how to fight for them.

**Kimberley Dias**  
Specialist Gender,  
SRCW Goa University

# (Not) A Working Woman

I am not a working woman,  
my husband tells me so.  
I do wake up before them –  
my man and my smart boys,  
I have three young ones, you know.

The eldest is all of six;  
the twins have just turned four.  
I start with home-cooked food –  
the youngest refuse to eat chapatis,  
unless they are warm off the stove.

Hot water for bathing,  
cleaning up after breakfast for four,  
packing lunch boxes, filling bottles,  
bags to be kept ready,  
before I bid them adieu at the door.

Soiled sheets to wash,  
And plants to care for.  
Yes, I eat, too. I eat after they go.  
The house is silent then, so  
there's enough time for that chore.

I talk to my lonely mother –  
the apple of her eye works offshore.  
We trade stories of domestic bliss.  
Mother frequently reminds me that  
she always did just a little bit more.

My afternoons are mine alone.  
I watch some TV and try to ignore  
the persistent nagging voice  
in my head that tells me  
to get to the work I abhor.

You see, I hate keeping accounts.  
I would rather be stranded in a downpour!  
But, the man must know

where his money is going  
so, he can peacefully snore.

I collect bills from every corner.  
I have money other than his to account for.  
I weave and sell door hangings  
and mats – See? I do productive work,  
I just do it on this side of the door.

Once the kids are back home,  
fed and out of the clothes they wore,  
I sit them down to study.  
Books and brains open –  
they are joined by two more.

Evening creeps up on me.  
I cannot sit at home anymore.  
I take brisk walks in the garden.  
After three kids,  
if I don't, it will show!

Night-time finds me in the kitchen again.  
I cannot feed them what I had cooked before.  
So, I put on a chef's hat to make  
fresh curry, rice, and vegetables,  
and some fried fish so dinner won't be a bore.

I'm so tired now, the day is done.  
My back's breaking, and body's sore.  
I clean up once everyone's in bed.  
Tomorrow is a new day,  
and I'll be ready for an encore.

It takes a village to raise children,  
I'm the village and so much more.  
These 'jobs' I do don't pay me,  
but I wonder how much value they hold.  
What I do, I do with love – I have never kept score.

Note: According to estimates by UN Women, the total value of time spent on unpaid care and domestic work by women in India is equal to 39% of the country's GDP. The National Sample Survey Office of India is currently undertaking time-use surveys to put a monetary value on the unpaid work done by women, and is slated to release the findings in 2020 (and then, at intervals of three years).

**Stephanie D'sa**

(Student, Department of Women's Studies)

## Feedback from Students

Media is considered the fourth pillar of Indian democracy. And a democracy without media is like a vehicle without wheels. But then, there strikes a question, whether these wheels are good enough for the vehicle? There are other parts in a vehicle, too. And even they should be maintained properly. It is the same thing with media. Does the media perform its duty well? Being considered as one of the pillar of Indian democracy, are there any loopholes in it? Do the real facts reach the common people? Or do we believe blindly in what is being portrayed to us? Well, media has turned into a multitude of business houses that just do what is in the interest of the company. And thus, knowingly or unknowingly, we are often shown biased news.

In my third semester, I opted for the paper 'Gender and Media' offered by the Department of Women's Studies, and this paper helped me to deconstruct what media portrays, not only with regards to the news, but also in films, serials and even advertisements. Earlier, I believed blindly in whatever was depicted and portrayed in media channels. But this paper helped me start to question and to go beyond what is being portrayed and how media tries to

exaggerate differences. And thus, I moved from believing to questioning!

People tend to believe what they see on and with time, they begin to take it as the normal way of life, the way things should be. But we should ensure that we question whether or not that is appropriate. The way the gender is represented in media, for example, the way males are always represented as strong and powerful both intellectually and physically, whereas women are represented as soft, emotional, caring, and inferior to the male. Most media portals show women as the weaker sex. In case the women depicted are considered valuable, it is when they are in their youth and based on how they exhibit their beauty and sexuality. Females are presented in a demeaning manner when it comes to their clothes. Their sexuality is shown as their greatest asset and the limit of their potential. Even now in the 21st century, the traditional portrayal of gender is prevalent and this is what upsets me the most. At this juncture, I feel that just questioning is not enough, we need to take concrete steps to change this portrayal.

(Sayesh Satyawar Parab)



# Down the drain, it goes: Unsanitary Living Conditions in Azadnagar Slum

Poorly planned or unplanned urbanization patterns represent a major public health challenge. This is most vividly represented by the persistence of urban slums which are home to around one third of the world's urban population.

UN-HABITAT defines a slum as lacking at least one of these factors:

- 1) Access to safe water
- 2) Access to sanitation
- 3) Safe and secure tenure, or
- 4) Durable housing structures.

The rise of such housing slums owes much to the waves of industrialization and urbanization that swept throughout the world after its advent in Europe. And just as a coin has 2 sides, a tremendous development such as industrialization had its banes, too. On the one hand, it led to modernization of economy and society, while on the other, it also led to innumerable problems such as overcrowding and substandard housing which in turn facilitates the spread of infectious diseases such as tuberculosis, hepatitis, dengue fever, pneumonia, cholera and malaria. These slums have poor sanitation facilities and lack of access to safe food and water which contributes to high prevalence of diarrhoea within slums.

## Sanitation: A Basic Necessity

The term 'sanitation' has been defined by the Oxford Dictionary as 'conditions relating to public health, especially the provision of clean drinking water and adequate sewage disposal'. Being a basic necessity, it is a harsh reality that millions all over the world still have no access or poor access to sanitation.

In slums, people live in miserable conditions. Many live without running water in shanty towns with clogged gutters full of rubbish which causes foul smell. An example of such conditions can be seen at Azadnagar located in Navelim, Goa. The railway station is just a step away from this slum which is home to people of different ages, men, women and children.

Azadnagar slum has many houses, and each house has a tap supply of water at the entrance. These are used by the inhabitants of the slum to the fullest, be it for drinking, washing clothes, cooking, or other household work. The waste water of each house goes into the drainage pipes which are clogged and rarely cleaned, leaving these people exposed to a all-pervasive filthy smell.



Furthermore, there is only one sulabh toilet that serves as the sole option for the large number of inhabitants of the slums. Within this structure, there are a few separate toilets for ladies and gents. Although they exist, the toilets are in ruins - damaged and dirty. The slum-dwellers often complain that the municipality doesn't put in any efforts to maintain the toilets and only visit during

the time of elections.

Though it is a common problem faced by all, the women of the slums are more vulnerable to the effects of poor sanitation. The people of Azadnagar slum speak about how life was 10-15 years back when there was no toilet at this place at all. Everyone, including women had to walk far from their home, even in the middle of the night, to defecate in the open. The women were often humiliated and exposed to dangers and some were even exploited by men. Now, even though there are common toilets, they are in a pathetic condition

which exposes the users to infectious diseases. The risk of women becoming a victim of these diseases is more because the job of cleaning these extremely dirty toilets is dumped solely on the women.

It does not matter whether industrialization or neglectful authorities are to be blamed for these terrible conditions. It is important to stop passing the buck and get beyond the red tape to actually cater to the needs of slum-dwellers who have to live like rodents in filth.

**Fritzell Almeida**  
Student, Department of History

## Feedback from Students

Women's studies - a topic I initially thought would deal only with women in social and political arenas (I was not a student of Women's Studies then). But when we became part of the course and the classes began, we realised that it has much more to offer than just theories. My personal experience is that it provided me with knowledge of how women at the grassroots level, who were once restricted to the four walls of the house, are now coming to the forefront and participating in decision-making, and about how women who were no lesser than their counterparts, given the opportunity. And in the class, I noticed that even those who had taken the paper casually realised the flaws in understanding women's issues. Overall it made me realise that we must move forward and that I'm not lesser than any other gender.

**Pradnya**  
Student, Department of History

I can write an essay on this department! But let me highlight a few of my experiences while doing a Women's Studies paper. Firstly, the paper is a combination that brings about the overall development of a person. Not only were the lectures innovative, but the teachers also introduced many outstanding methods to promote creative learning. The teaching aids used are just excellent, and not something I have seen in any other department. Practical field work is encouraged rather than rote learning. Practical work helps a student's mind to grow and broaden. We have learned about a variety of women's issues which we had no clue about earlier. I had no idea I was brought up with so much gender inequality, and this paper has helped me change my perspective on different aspects of society. Doing an MA in this department is a worthwhile choice as they impart education in its real sense.

**Pranita Tari**  
Student, Department of History

# Women and Decision-Making at Grassroots-level: Miles to go

The participation of citizens in the democratic sphere leads to a culmination of their aspirations, needs and thereby, strengthens democracy. It also leads to decentralization of power at local level and gives impetus to positive participation.

The Constitutional (73rd Amendment) Act was passed on 20th April, 1993, and it attempted to lay a strong foundation for 'democratic decentralization' and pave the way for activating the planning process from the grassroots. It was under this act that 1/3rd of seats in the Panchayats were reserved for women. Through the reservation of seats for women in Panchayat and through political encouragement, it is hoped that women will get actively involved in decision-making as it pertains to their village.

As such, reservation of seats for women in Panchayats has been seen as empowering tool for women. It is a common misconception that women who become Sarpanch act as mere proxies to the male members in their household as well as in Panchayats, and that they are always dominated by higher authorities. As Sarpanch, women face many barriers while juggling between work and family.

A case study conducted with seven women Sarpanch at Bardez Taluka revealed that all the selected women Sarpanch were married housewives. All seven women Sarpanch contested election because their ward was reserved for women candidate. 13% of these women did not have any political background, while 87% came from families where their husband, father or father in law had previously held the post of Sarpanch. All the women Sarpanch were supported by their families and villagers which enabled their election as Sarpanch.

When it comes to expectations from a Sarpanch,

there is no stark difference between what is expected out of men and women. 86% of the women Sarpanch were able to collaborate with higher authorities regarding any development plan, while 14% reported that political influence of the ruling party made it impossible for them to undertake any work for their village even after collaborating with higher authorities.

During the study, it was found that decisions were taken collectively after having meetings with other ward members on any matter related to progress of the village. 30% of the women Sarpanch had little say in this decision-making.

To decide anything regarding the Panchayat or village, a Sarpanch requires knowledge about working in politics and she should also be educated enough to read and write. 43% of women Sarpanch had completed their education till standard 10, 29% completed their education till standard 12, and 28% of the women Sarpanch had only completed standard fifth or eighth. Due to limited knowledge of reading and writing, some women Sarpanch was accompanied by their sons who communicate with B.D.O. Officers.

After becoming a Sarpanch, women have the burden of dual responsibilities of managing housework as well as Panchayat work. While conducting the research, it was found that all women faced problems while balancing their public and private life, but received some support from their family.

Even after becoming the Sarpanch of their village, the position of the women at home barely changed. Most of the women said that they had to act as the wife and daughter-in-law and continue managing their home affairs as before. It is not only society



which thinks that women are not made for politics, women themselves have been socially conditioned to believe that a woman's first and proper role is a domestic one. Most of the women are not aware about their political roles. It was obvious for them that their male partners were taking decisions for the Panchayat. In other words, it can be said that they were relegated to passive roles while enjoying the social recognition that comes with being a Sarpanch. The study findings show that women managed their domestic life and political life simultaneously. Educated women Sarpanch find it easy to collaborate with higher authorities for any developmental works, but illiterate candidates faced problems and needed familial support. Being recognised and respected as the Sarpanch empowered women, and enabled them to help in the process of local development. With enough grassroots level intervention when it comes to education for girls, the notion that women are not suited for politics can be truly changed.

**Gauri Aroskar**

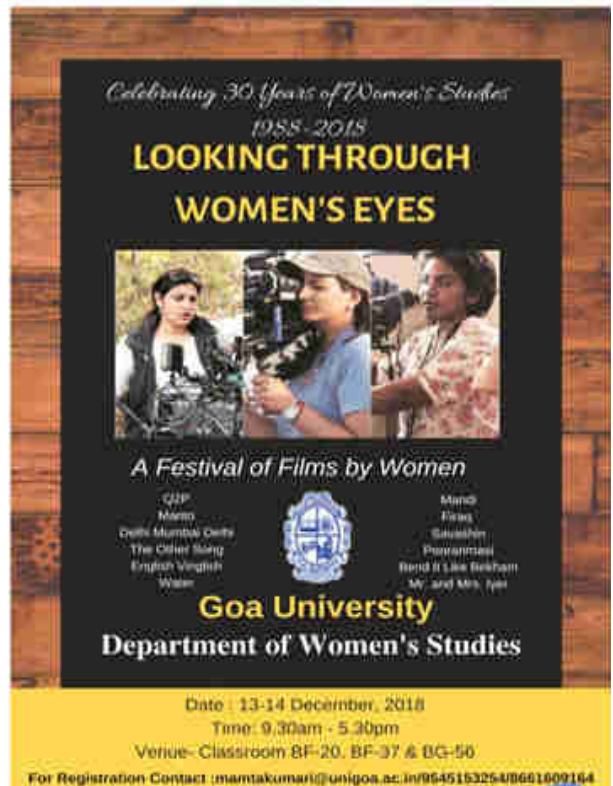
Former Student

Department of Women's Studies, Goa University

## Feedback from Students

**My journey of two years as a Master's student in the Department of Women's Studies was full of excitement and adventure. I got to learn new things and enjoy new experiences with each passing day. The course focuses not only on women but also on various issues faced by marginalised communities. This Department was a ray of light in my life that helped me develop my personality. Each member of the faculty has helped me in all aspects of my life - from studies to emotional issues. Saying 'thank you' wouldn't convey enough!**

**(Niky Yende  
Women's Studies)**



**Difficult Dialogues 2018**



**Guest Lecture**

# Tribal Women's Movement in India: Orissa

The common assumption that only economically-strong/upper caste women have the wherewithal to start a movement and mobilise the masses is incorrect. To stand in solidarity with the mass movement after the Nirbhaya rape, there are tribal women's movements such as the Chipko movement which was started by Sunderlal Bahugana and that of Pushpa Devi who took initiative to protect the forests around her village in Uttarakhand.

## **Orissa's Kashipur Block: Standing Up Against Exploitation One Broom at a Time**

The major livelihood for the tribal women in Orissa's Kashipur block was the selling of handmade brooms. This created a situation wherein they were being exploited by the middlemen who were supposed to help them sell these brooms.

Even with the men labouring in their lands, sustaining a life had become increasingly difficult for the tribal women of Orissa. This was the main reason why the women decided to make brooms and sell them. A confident tribal leader Salpal Majhi revealed that tribal women started making brooms out of grass in the forest and selling them to the local people at a very young age. However, things started changing when middlemen became involved and started buying brooms at a meagre price. Soon, these valiant tribal women became tired of this exploitation and decided to take things in their own hands. They fought hard for recognition with the help of Ama Sangathan.

## **Creating the Ama Sangathan**

These women had to walk up steep paths and go a long distance before they could get enough grass to make brooms. Broom making involves a lot of hard work as they had to first gather enough grass, then

stack it properly, clean the strands, and fashion brooms from it. Earlier, the tribal women sold their products to the Tribal Development Cooperative Corporation (TDCC). However, soon the TDCC hired middlemen to do this work for them, even though the TDCC is charged with working for the development of tribal people. In addition, the forest officials also started demanding a share out of the collection. While taking away the profits, the rights of these tribal women were repeatedly violated, and they were handed a meagre salary for all of their hard work. The women decided to rebel against this injustice.

Anragamee NGO has been working to empower these tribal communities for over 30 years. First, Mahila Mandals were formed, and these institutions discussed the women's problems with them, and told them about their rights and entitlements. Armed with this knowledge, the tribal women found a voice, and as a group, they decided to challenge the authorities. Ultimately, the Mahila Mandals joined hands to form a block level organization called Ama Sangathan. This organisation aimed to break the trader-TDCC nexus and claim the tribal women's rights to collect, process and market the grass brooms.

It was not an easy road for them as they campaigned persistently for three long years with endless rounds of writing petitions. There were threats of arrests on false charges regarding stocking of brooms that had been declared illegal by the Forest Department. Some women also had their entire stock seized. Finally, they had had enough of this and decided to take the matter to a higher authority i.e. the Chief Minister. On April 1, 2000, a major landmark decision was made for them when the then-Chief Minister announced the de-nationalisation of 60



items on the NTFP's list, including the brooms. One of the leaders of Ama Sangathan, Naik believed that there was no need to be afraid of the petty traders or middlemen who used to threaten to take away the brooms. The NTFP's policy change had a positive impact on the tribal women, and helped end the domination of the middlemen over trade in the area while increasing the people's bargaining power. In fact, Angramee stepped in to show them how they could improve the quality of their brooms by cleaning the stock properly and binding them to create a finished product.

The Ama Sangathan had turned from an organization into an enterprise where they divided the profits among themselves. The organisation is now working

to meet more challenges like the building of a government school with permanent teachers to educate the students. They are also working on ensuring that the women enter the Panchayat, and educating them about their political rights.

Tribal women ensure the well-being of their own community – their fight is seldom for themselves alone. They started a movement about brooms, and ensured their livelihood in spite of many challenges that came their way. This movement could set an example for generations to come.

**Namrata Madhu**  
(Student, Department of  
Women's Studies)

## Women's Studies connecting with other movements



**Campaign against Menstrual Exclusion**



**Yellow Ribbon Campaign  
against Youth Suicides**





# सीता अबला नहीं, क्षत्राणी थी

बचपन से सुनी थी कहानियाँ,  
वीर राम की, और देवी सीता की,  
वीर राम ने छुड़ाया, पत्नी को राक्षसों से,  
फिर छोड़ दिया जंगल में, जब थी वह गर्भवती।  
कहानी ने सिखाया औरत है अबला, और असहाय,  
धर्म है उसका पतिव्रत, त्याग,  
बलिदान और सहनशक्ति ।।

पति राम की वीरता की गाथायें बढ़-चढ़ कर सुनीं,  
और राजा राम के प्रजाधर्म की भी।  
अब ज़रा सीता का जीवन देखें,  
एक राजकुमारी जो महलों का सुख छोड़,  
पति राम के कदम से कदम मिला,  
वन में रही, कांटों पे चली।  
अगवा होकर रावण की लंका में,  
अपनी जान और मान के संकट तले रही।  
फिर जब समय आया रानी बनने का,  
वन को जाना पड़ा गर्भ में दो शिशुओं को त  
ज़रा सोचें, क्या सम्भव है यह एक असहाय  
लिए,  
रावण छू ना पाया उस स्वाभिमान की स्  
एक रानी ने निभायी प्रजाधर्म में अपनी ः  
और स्वीकारा वन में रहना।

एक साहसी और  
अकेली माँ ने, सम्भाले गर्भ में पल रहे शिशु,  
प्रसव की पीड़ा को बनाया, उसने अपना शस्त्र।  
एक देवी ने वन की कुटिया में, फूस के बिस्तर पर,  
दिया जन्म दो नन्हें राजकुमारों को।  
एक वीरांगना माँ ने दिया अपने बच्चों को,  
आत्मसम्मान, शिक्षा, और अपना नाम।।

क्या एक अबला नारी कर सकती है ऐसा?

यह

साहस और वीरता किसी असहाय के बस की बात नहीं

हे समाज, अपनी परिभाषाओं पर गौर करो,  
अपनी व्याख्याओं पर गौर करो।  
रावण का अहंकार जिसे डिगा ना सका,  
वन का अंधकार जिसे मिटा ना सका,

जीवन का कोई संघर्ष जिसे झुका न सका।  
वह साहसी, अप्रतिम, अचल, दृढ़ जीवन,  
अनुकरण करना भी चाहो, तो कर न पाओगे।  
समाज, वह निर्बल नहीं, वीरांगना थी,  
सीता को अबला कहना बंद करो,  
सीता अबला नहीं, क्षत्राणी थी।।

-जागृति शंकर

# Where are the Gully Girls?

Long after leaving the theatre, the rhythms from Gully Boy reverberate in one's mind – the energy-filled performances of Apna Time Ayega and Mere Gully Mein almost make one feel young again! But a question that takes root in one's mind is: Where are the 'Gully Girls'? Gully Boy eloquently shows that rap lends itself well to self-expression; it is a medium though which feminist thought could be powerfully articulated. In Gully Boy there are no lead rappers who are women. At best they give back-up to the male lead rappers.

In the course of making the film Zoya Akhtar narrates how she was amazed by the hip-hop scenario in Mumbai. She had not realised how vibrant it was and how much talent the young rappers possessed. Before Gully Boy's release her company made videos of seven rappers from different parts of India to give the rap artists a platform to talk about their craft and to publicise the work of hip-hop artists in India. Interestingly, of the seven artists only one was a woman - Deepa Unnikrishnan, better known as MC Dee.

MC Dee, in her early 20s, based in Kalyan, a distant suburb of Mumbai, sheds some light on the challenges faced by women who aspire to be rappers. According to her she didn't face challenges as a 'female rapper'. She felt that fellow rappers had been helpful, but "being a female in this country" posed numerous problems. For example, rap performances are usually at night and being able to travel safely is a concern for women rappers. Aside from this she felt that women faced the brunt of hypocrisy in society, a subject that she addresses in her Chaar Logo ki Batein. This year she collaborated with noted dancer, Simi Talsania to perform the Rise Up anthem for the Mahindra Group's #LadkiHaathSeNikalJaayegi campaign launched on National Girl Child Day. This

is a peppy performance that gives a different meaning to the phrase "ladki haath se nikal jaayegi":

*Bharosa khudpe kar*

*Lagega chota darr*

*Jitni bhi zimmedari chahiye lele khudke sirr*

*Naye daur ki suno yeh baat nayi*

*Ladki ke haath*

*kamyabi tab aayegi*

*Jab ladki haath se nikal jaayegi*

There are other Indian women rappers who have made an impact. But it appears that unlike Divine and Naezy, most of the girls who have become rappers have not actually come from the gullies of the Indian cities. It is probably more of a taboo for girls from lower income groups to take up this art form. This should not take away from the fact that some of them have written outstanding lyrics and rendered powerful performances. Nor should it undermine the type of struggle that they have had to undergo to gain acceptance and recognition.

Hard Kaur is generally referred to as India's first woman rapper. She was born in Kanpur in 1979 but moved with her mother to Birmingham, UK, starting her rap career around 1995 soon after she finished her schooling. She moved to Mumbai "to climb the ladder of success". In an interview with The Telegraph she states, "My real name is Taran Kaur but Hard Kaur reflects aggression and power. It gives a warning to others not to mess with me." In 2007 she came out with her first album, Supawoman, a 15-track-CD. In the opening track, The Legend, she introduces herself saying "Welcome to a new place... understand, I am revolution." Hard Kaur comes across as an empowered and feisty woman. She also performs in Bollywood films and has made a commercially viable career for herself.

The most remarkable woman rapper one came across is Sofia Ashraf . Born in a conservative Malayali, Muslim household in Chennai, Tamil Nadu she started grappling with identity issues post 9/11. She became known as the “Burkha Rapper” as she articulated her anguish about the distrust that Muslims were viewed with. While in college, she ran an Islamic youth group that hosted discussions on world religion. However, later on she became an atheist. Her rap performances Don't Work for Dow, about the Union Carbide disaster and Kodaikanal Won't on mercury contamination in Kodaikanal by Unilever are hard-hitting and have been used in campaigns to secure justice for the victims of these environmental calamities. Even without the energetic performance, the lyrics of Kodaikanal Won't vividly describes Unilever's role in subjecting Kodaikanal to mercury contamination:

*Unilever has been hiding behind  
Their fake PSAs and Pepsodent smiles  
They washed their hands off Kodai with Lifebuoy  
There's nothing fair or lovely about this trial  
But this is real  
Prolonged exposure got many men killed  
There's children born being seriously ill  
The environment is polluted still  
Now that's some toxic shit  
Kodaikanal won't  
Kodaikanal won't  
Kodaikanal won't step down until you make amends  
now*

Sofia Ashraf consciously uses music and rap as an art form to reach out to people on issues that she strongly believes in. However, she has also recorded songs for commercial films. This is probably a compulsion for most artists to enable them to make a viable living. In this context Gully Boy is significant for Indian rappers as it has showcased rap as an art form that is accessible to all, with its simple lyrics.

M C Dee has welcomed Gully Boy believing that it will give an impetus to the genre of rap in India. According to her, “Because of the movie, Gully Boy, our hustle has now gone on a pedestal and now there's a full-time hustle”. Perhaps more women rappers will also emerge in the years to come...

**Nishtha Desai**



## Launch of M.A. Programme





# Women in Konkani Natak: Women's Studies Dissertation

Konkani natak is a drama form that predates the popular Goan tiatr. At the post-graduate level, Steffi Cardoz did her dissertation on 'Women in Konkani Natak in Goa.' Her dissertation included surveys conducted with a sample of people associated with this drama form. Through her work, Cardoz found that the stigma associated with the sobriquet 'nati' has affected the number of women or actresses who choose to act on stage. While the word 'nati' simply means 'female actress,' there is another meaning associated with it. Cardoz's research concluded that, over the years, the word has become associated with prostitution. Popular folklore says that many groups hire actresses from metropolitan cities to stay in Goa for a prolonged period of time during which they act in theatre performances, and partake in a physical relationship with those who have hired them. Therefore, many young actresses prefer to not be part of Konkani natak, and their parents are reluctant to have them join this profession.

In some cases, Cardoz found that women who worked in Konkani natak were not accepted into other households, and found it difficult to get married. Many were heckled and spoken to in a derogatory manner routinely. Issues of menstrual exclusion and tough beauty standards were also reported by respondents. While natak is performed by both married and unmarried women, in some cases, men performed dressed as women. In such an all-male setting, the scripts were often indecent and insulting both to women and the transgender community. Once women started acting in natak, scripts were changed to reflect more sensitivity and decency.

Today, the world of Konkani natak in Goa boasts women writers, producers, directors, actors, light-setters, music operators, make up professionals, etc.

Cardoz herself is a professional actress and has won a number of accolades over the years.

- Consolation Best Actress award at Ravindra Bhavan, Churchorem, for the natak 'Na te Na,' Kala Chetna Volvo, 2017
- Bestowed with the title of Rangsamradhni or Queen of Drama by Goan journalist Shri. Nivrutti Shirodkar – Cardoz's life story has been published in a book called 'Rangsamradhni.'
- Presented with a token of appreciation and award by Nisabda Mime Academy, Assam.
- Multiple best actress certificates won at various competitions
- Cardoz has travelled to places across India such as Rajasthan, Mumbai, Kankavli, Assam, Kolkata, Delhi, and Madhya Pradesh for various theatre performances.
- She has acted in short films, and worked as costume manager for award-winning short films like "Plastic Dhoti" by Rajesh Karekar.
- Cardoz was also associated with the television program 'Rahasya' inside Goa and 'Bhay' by Goan Entertainment Syndicate.
- Cardoz currently works as a drama teacher, and as a personality development trainer at Vidya Vruddhi High School, Ponda.

With 11 years in the field of drama, Cardoz was deeply connected to her dissertation topic as she had worked as a commercial Konkani stage actress. Her dissertation reflects the realities of life for women in Konkani natak.

# The Purple Morning Glory



*Scalding hot dry earth beneath  
Trampled on by macho feet  
Heart shaped leaves stretch out like arms open wide  
Concealing survival struggles deep down inside  
Creeping slowly to provide green cover  
Every purple flower adds fair colour  
A mirror of our Department's journey  
Women's Studies' unique trajectory.*

***Shaila Desouza***

# M.A Women's Studies

Women's Studies is an interdisciplinary field of scholarship which aims to develop the critical perspective for building up a new social order by creating a Gender Just Society.

The Department of Women's Studies at Goa University offers programmes that lead to both M.A. and Ph.D. in Women's Studies. The Women's Studies M.A. Programme is designed to facilitate critical thinking and develop new knowledge, to help students understand the creation and perpetuation of inequalities with the intention to develop in students the capacity and skills to bring about change, create new areas of service and to ultimately impact policy and the discourse on women's development in the country. The Department is committed to social change from a gendered perspective as we strive to use new and inclusive methods of knowledge production in our efforts to bridge theory and practice. The programme also aims at creating research capacities for students to engage with the academic discipline of Women's Studies. The faculty is actively engaged in extension, training, research, documentation, advocacy and field action in the wider community, while networking with organizations committed to women's empowerment at the state, national and international arenas.

## Key Features

- Developing Critical Thinking
- Creating New Knowledge
- Understanding Society
- Building Capacity and Skills
- Field Work
- Learning Through Doing
- Group Activities
- Group Activities Impacting Policy

## This Course prepares students to work with

- Different Government Agencies
- Non Government Sectors
- Media and Journalism
- Academia and Research
- International Agencies
- Self Employment
- CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility)
- Human Resource Development

## Study themes of M.A. Women's Studies

- Core Concepts in Gender
- Feminist Thought
- Gender Issues in Goa
- Women's Movement
- Media, Culture and Education
- Marginality
- Re- Interpretation of History
- Women's Health
- Violence Against Women and Other Marginalized Sections
- Feminist Research
- Political Processes
- Interventions for Change
- Human Rights and Law
- Demography and Labour
- Welfare and Empowerment
- Environment and Ecology
- Fieldwork Skills and Practices
- A Gender Review of Literature

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