

National Seminar
On
Women, Society and State
(9th – 10th February, 2012)

Organised by: Women's Studies Centre, Maharshi Dayanand University, Rohtak.

Sponsored by: Indian Council of Social Science Research (North- western Regional Centre) Chandigarh

Call for papers

Please send your abstract to: neerja_mdu@yahoo.com

Deadline for submission of abstracts (150–300 words): 25th January, 2012

In the last few decades, women's issues and concerns have been debated widely; the major issue being equality. Though their contribution in different economic, social and political activities is very well recognized, yet the idea of equality is still a distant dream. Women all over the world are overwhelmingly concerned with the issue of gender equality through women's empowerment. Status of women in Indian society is a reflection of unequal relationships sustained by patriarchy built on male superiority and female inferiority, sex stereotyped roles, expectations and economic, social and political predominance of men and dependency of women.

Women's movements have the credit of sharpening the issues confronting women and enabling them to participate in different spheres of life. Women's journey from survival to dignity and empowerment has not been an easy one. Though a lot of ground has been covered; from women in development to women and development, yet, a lot remains to be achieved.

The overall social and economic development along with dissemination of ideas and technologies and increasing reach of the media has made a big impact on society, social values and aspirations. The general assumption that education, growing opportunities for productive work, particularly for women, and a consequent higher status would lead to more equal and just society does not seem to be valid in India's case. Rather there is phenomenal increase in violence

against women during the last few years. Rape, eve-teasing, kidnapping, abduction, dowry deaths, torture, molestation, sexual harassment, importation of girls have frequent occurrences despite the legal provisions such as Immoral Traffic Act, 1956; Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961; Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1979, and Domestic violence Act, 2006. As more and more women are participating in public domain, they are back lashed. They are safe neither in their homes nor outside it. Violence against women takes many forms; traded in sex and labour; they are killed in womb. This is clearly reflected in the juvenile sex ratio for the country as a whole, dropped from 927 to 914 girls per 1000 boys from 2001 to 2011 censuses. Far from improving India's already abysmal gender inequality, statistics seem to have taken a turn for the worse. Data shows India's gender inequality index has further worsened between 2008-2011 and India ranks 129 out of 146 countries, better only than Afghanistan in South Asia. On Human Development Index (HDI 2011), India ranks 134 out of 187 countries. The development scenario in general and gender inequality in particular are posing complex challenges and need to deal with quite seriously.

There is a rapidly urbanising Haryana, with extensive consumerist culture and individualism, grappling with all sorts of issues of tradition and modernity. According to Human Development report, (2010) the economic development in Haryana has not paved way for social development. There is a paradoxical situation in the sense that on one hand, there are constitutional provisions and safeguards to protect the rights of the women by ensuring equality of opportunity and building gender just society. On the other hand, it is known as a state for rampant foeticide, honour killings, dictates by kangaroo panchayats, violence against women outside as well as in natal families on the choice of their marriage partners and property rights etc. There is resurgence of fundamentalist powers in the form of Khap Panchaayats who in the name of caste and gotra dictate their terms to great extent. Laws alone cannot bring about change – there is a need for determination and action at all levels and by the government as well as civil society organizations.

Keeping in view the present scenario confronting women in India in general and Haryana in particular, the two days' seminar proposes to address the following sub-themes:

Sub-Themes of the Seminar

- Development and Gender Inequality: Theoretical Issues
- Social, Economic, Psychological, Political Dimensions and Status of Women.
- Marriage, notion of Honour and Khaps.
- Customary versus Legal Rights of women
- Violence against women
- Regulation and Responsibility: Role of State.

Besides these sub-themes, Symposium will be held on 'Emerging issues confronting Women in North-West India'

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