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Knowledge Production and Dissemination in
Development**

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Executive Summary

This conference aimed to interrogate the kinds of gender knowledge being produced and used in the contemporary South Asia context, and the effects these are having. The region has witnessed successive generations of women's movements since decolonisation, and in the last fifteen years has also seen rapid growth in the gender and development community and the commitments of research and development institutions to incorporating gender perspectives in their work. However, the radical and transformatory appeal of South Asian feminist demands for justice and equality appears to have been diluted and changed in the context of development practice such that the agenda for women's empowerment has been made to 'fit' a mainstream that does not support women's emancipation. The conference aimed to explore participants' insights into this process. It was designed to create a space for critical reflection in order to produce insights to improve future practice in social change for gender equality.

The conference was organised into three main themes: gender(ed) knowledge; gender researchers, trainers and advocates; and building capacity on gender – ways forward. This report attempts to collect together and highlight recurrent issues that were raised, discussed, and re-raised in relation to these themes. It is divided into three main sections. The first section discusses the challenges and opportunities offered by current social and political contexts in the region. The second elaborates on strategies for linking actors and sites of gender knowledge production and communication work. The third investigates some 'new' areas which may be brought to bear on the process of making gender knowledge work for gender equality objectives.

Although some real gains have been made towards gender equality in the last twenty years, a range of challenges were discussed to the effective translation of gender knowledge into change of the structures which maintain unequal gender and other social relations. One of these is that development institutions tend to take on the rhetoric of gender without achieving gender equality – instead, what is understood by gender is made to 'fit' with existing hierarchies in institutions, and the radical social change message of gender knowledge is muted. This is achieved partly by permitting 'women' or 'gender issues' to enter the frame of reference only in terms that do not challenge prevailing conceptions of both: women attract development resources as mothers; sexuality is addressed only when it has major health ramifications; women's care work is drawn on in development strategies but is not assessed in economic accounting. One technique by which perspectives or issues which might challenge the broader agenda are kept out of the picture is by demanding a set of processes for planning, implementation and monitoring which limit the terms of development intervention, and by propagating formats for reporting on research which suggest boundaries on what content is relevant.

States have also been very significant in defining the terms on which feminists engage. In part, representations of women that underpin government policies are powerful in maintaining the social categories – such as those of mothers and wives – which limit women's agency. Liberal democratic states also construct women as an interest group and thus achieving equality as a question of some redistribution of resources rather than a fundamental change in practices and structures. But in addition to this minimal conception of the changes required, states have also been active in producing the governmental – and sometimes political – categories which fragment women as a group, such as groupings according to caste or tribe, religion-based or ethnicity-based groupings. Constitutional conceptions of citizenship as a fixed category with

clear definitions also inhibit attempts to understand the meanings of women's citizenship in practice, as it is negotiated and gradually won.

Some states in the region have also witnessed a shrinking of democratic space recently. In Sri Lanka, the state has suppressed discussion of peace building and taken control of the media; in Pakistan it has taken virtually no action to reduce the violent power of religion-based interest groups; India has seen increasing state repression including where the political left is still powerful. Conflict and militarism have been accompanied by a normalisation of violence, and all of these have profound effects on prospects for gender equality. In part this is because conflict often embeds macho values in masculinities, mitigates against collective work on women's rights, and absorbs resources away from social spending. At the same time, religious groups in the region are increasingly succeeding in occupying political spaces in a process in which secular states have become complicit and made clear compromises, often at the expense of women's rights.

Despite this outlook, some spaces also offer opportunities for the deepening of women's rights, including the constitutional process in Nepal and the new government in Bangladesh. The conference was also rich in ideas and strategies for tackling the challenges identified. These included strategies for linking actors in feminist knowledge production and communication processes to work collectively. An essential step in linking processes is making spaces for the articulation and acknowledgement of differences across women's positions and experiences caused by a range of structures of inequality, on the basis of which common ground can then be constructed in the context of political engagement.

Other strategies focused on the project of linking domains of feminist action which demands that feminist research, advocacy and feminist knowledge communication address each other more clearly and make explicit attempts to respond to the requirements of each domain. This may, for example, suggest building communities of practice with practitioners from each domain, or constructing individual work trajectories that draw on and refer to each type of action.

Deepening the change agenda of feminist knowledge in fields and institutional sites where gender knowledge is currently available involves engaging with the cultures of those fields, such as work cultures in organisations and bureaucracies; the political cultures of parties and governments; and men both as bearers of problematic privilege and as potential allies in an agenda for social justice. Working at these sites involves continuing to find ways to communicate gender knowledge which avoid jargon but can still translate theoretical feminist insights into each different context in accessible and effective ways.

Working towards gender equality involves tackling power hierarchies of many different kinds. These include those implicit in the knowledge production relationships of research, in which the researcher has interpretive power over the information gained in the field, and to some extent control over how it is used and who has access to it. Feminist research methodologies require that information collected at field level is made transparent – as well as intelligible and useful – to the subjects of research. Peer to peer training and research were offered as methods which challenge the conventional research and education hierarchies to some extent: facilitating researchers from within the researched community has the potential to change the subjects of research into agents of change.

New terrains discussed which would benefit from concerted feminist engagement include mainstream school education which has been relatively

neglected by feminist researchers, but which is an important site at which children are socialised into gender ideologies and at which knowledge hierarchies are built. Analysis of cultural representations of women, and of how particular representations of women become dominant and can be subverted, may offer fertile ground for challenging gender-related 'development' outcomes such as violence against women. Sexuality receives attention in development discourse only insofar it relates to health, but needs to be brought into development frameworks more clearly as a fundamental aspect of how gender relations are constructed.

The final section of the report sets out specific recommendations emerging from the conference, around the themes of building communities of practice in gender knowledge production and communication; addressing the tensions implied by research frameworks and methods; and finding new ways to address both potentially responsive and deeply challenging aspects of contemporary civil society.

1 Introduction

This conference aimed to interrogate the kinds of gender knowledge being produced and used in the contemporary South Asia context. It set out to

The conference was designed to facilitate 'knowledge in the making'

understand and analyse how gender knowledge is being disseminated in research and advocacy around development, how it is being communicated in training, and with what effects. The conference was designed to facilitate 'knowledge in the making' – that is, it aimed not only to gather and analyse information, but also to create a space for critical reflection and review in order to produce insights to improve future practice. It brought together participants from Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka – individuals working in a wide range of institutional contexts, and with a variety of approaches to work on gender equality. The group included people working in women's organisations, social movements, grassroots development organisations,

international and national NGOs, universities and research institutes, the media, advocacy organisations and with women's national machineries within the state. This variety brought insights and experiences from many sites to discussion, and a diversity of perspectives that was pertinent, challenging and enriching.

What participants had in common was personal histories of committed engagement for gender equality in South Asia. The region has witnessed successive generations of women's movements since decolonisation over 50 years ago, and in the last 15 years has also seen rapid growth in the gender and development community and the commitments of research and development institutions to incorporating gender perspectives in their work. However, the radical and transformatory appeal of South Asian feminist demands for justice and equality has been diluted and changed in the context of development practice to the point where an agenda for women's empowerment has been made to 'fit' a mainstream that does not support women's emancipation. The conference aimed to explore participants' insights into this process, and to develop strategies to give new life to the agenda for women's empowerment.



The conference was organised in collaboration between the Royal Tropical Institute (KIT), Sahayog, and the International Development Research Centre (IDRC). KIT, which has a small gender team located within a bigger development department, has a long history of engagement with gender knowledge production and training. Sahayog is an Indian organisation working on gender equality and women's health from a human rights perspective, and is particularly engaged with exploring multiple intersections of power and the institutional underpinnings of these. IDRC began a gender mainstreaming strategy in the 1990s, but began to rethink this approach in 2002 to focus on women's rights and issues of justice. This initiative therefore represents a collaboration of organisations with varied approaches and experience in gender knowledge production and communication, but with a common interest in reinvigorating the discussion and articulating new strategies.

The conference formed one part of a broader review of trajectories of gender knowledge internationally. It followed an international conference in Amsterdam in

May 2007 "Revisiting studies and training in gender and development – the making and remaking of gender knowledge"¹ which included in its recommendations that spaces should be made for regional review processes in order to bring more contextualised understandings into play, and produce more context specific strategies for moving forward. A second step in the series was an Africa-wide consultation meeting held in Johannesburg in October 2008 focusing on gender and access to justice². Together these meetings form part of an initiative by the Royal Tropical Institute (KIT), Netherlands, to engage with processes facing gender knowledge production and communication in contemporary contexts, which began with a lively electronic discussion forum in 2006 and include the publication of Maitrayee Mukhopadhyay and Franz Wong's edited volume in 2007, 'Revisiting Gender Training: The Making and Re-making of Gender Knowledge'

The conference was organised into three main themes: gender(ed) knowledge; gender researchers, trainers and advocates; and building capacity on gender – ways forward. For each theme, a broad range of panel presentations were offered for discussion, and key issues arising from this process were extracted and re-articulated for further discussion in smaller groups. This report broadly follows the flavour of these themes, but attempts to collect together and highlight recurrent issues that were raised, discussed, and re-raised in relation to different themes. In doing so, it is hoped the report will contribute to sustaining the region-wide 'conversation' that was initiated so fruitfully in Kathmandu.



¹ Report available at <http://www.kit.nl/smartsite.shtml?id=11599>

² Report available at <http://www.kit.nl/smartsite.shtml?id=SINGLEPUBLICATION&ItemID=2652>

2 Challenges to the production and communication of gender knowledge

2.1 The limits to development as a framework for feminist knowledge production and dissemination

Demands for gender equality have made waves in development institutions and policy forums across South Asia. Gender is now fairly consistently referred to in policy guidelines and programme evaluations, and frequently acknowledged as an important axis of analysis for research and planning. Much more gender-focused



information is available now, and some real gains have been made. As Maitrayee Mukhopadhyay pointed out, for instance, in India two decades ago, reporting incidences of domestic violence to the police was generally seen as taking a stand against family values, whereas now domestic violence is recognised as a valid arena for police intervention. Feminist knowledge and activism has also had an impact in areas that for many years had seemed impregnable – such as on women’s political participation and representation which has seen significant increases partly as a result of an increasing use of quotas for women in the region at local or national government levels, or both. The broad national and international networks that have been built mean that gender knowledge is more accessible and collaborative work on specific issues a clearer possibility.

Without diminishing the significance of such gains, it was widely agreed that development institutions, along with the models, structures, and priorities they have propagated and reproduced, present challenges to feminist knowledge production and communication. These challenges may ultimately constitute limits to the potential for social change via these institutions. While the discourse or ‘rhetoric’ of gender has in general been taken on board within them in processes of gender mainstreaming, gender inequality has nevertheless been retained fairly consistently. Instead of achieving gender equality, in the process of absorbing gender knowledge, what is understood by ‘gender’ has been reconstituted to present a ‘fit’ with patriarchal articulation of man-woman relationships strengthening thereby patriarchal authority which constitute the foundations of the state and international institutions. The radical message of social change which underpinned feminist knowledge has been successfully muted in this process.

The unwillingness to take on issues which do not ‘fit’ ... “leads us to bridging gender gaps instead of targeting structures”

Part of the problem is that the development mainstream generates blindness to issues which might threaten the hierarchies on which it is itself built; to issues which challenge the structures of inequality. So for example, as Lakshmi Lingam commented, demands for substantive work beyond legislation on domestic violence – an issue which brings unequal gender relations into sharp focus - are overshadowed by programmatic attention to maternal mortality in ways which frame women unthreateningly within motherhood. While maternal mortality may be a very significant indicator of women's inequality, the issue tends to be taken on board and attract resources (albeit still inadequate) on the basis of women's instrumental role in reproduction and not in terms of the underlying structures of gender inequality that high maternal mortality is a manifestation of. Similarly, sexuality is only permitted to enter the equation insofar as it relates to health issues; and, as Devika Jayakumari elaborated, the economic and social value of women's care work, is drawn on unapologetically in development programmes such as those promoting public support to the elderly in Kerala and in *anganwadis* more generally in India, but is steadfastly ignored in formal economic assessments of the value of women's labour contributions. On the other hand, as Darini Rajasingham Senanayake put forward, development privileges the promotion of women as economic agents in relation to markets because it is here that their labour can serve the purposes of the current development paradigm of economic growth. It is partly this limited vision of women in their economic capacities, Aleyamma Vijayan pointed out, that has enabled the crucial feminist project of women's empowerment to be seen in terms of individual empowerment instead of as a collective process which addresses and changes social relationships.



As Farzana Bari, put it, this unwillingness to take on issues which do not 'fit' the broader agenda can pose a real constraint to the work of gender advocates within development institutions as it 'leads us to bridging or narrowing gender gaps instead of targeting structures'.

One technique by which development institutions protect themselves from taking on uncomfortable issues is by requiring a certain set of processes and methods which frame – and so place limits on - the terms of intervention. Aliya Sethi spoke of how project planning and implementation protocols, as well as monitoring and appraisal frameworks, generally limit the scope for raising new issues or bringing in threatening information and perspectives. Similarly,



Paromita Chakravati pointed out that practices promoted for reporting on development related research imply and propagate formats for writing which suggest limits on what content is relevant. These can easily obscure or sideline information important to feminist research, such as the details of methodology or

researcher-researched relationships. These imperatives can in effect change the nature of information gathered at field level so that it 'fits' reporting packages.

2.2 The nature of states and political processes



In South Asia, discourses of development are not separable from state processes. As in development practice, states which once seemed to hold the promise of delivering women from patriarchy have in fact only allowed limited spaces for change, and have done little to dismantle the structures of social hierarchy on which they,

and their bureaucracies, are built. Although processes of structural adjustment and liberalisation since the early 1990s have somewhat diminished the role of states in the region, their historically strong roles in defining the terms and meanings of women's citizenship remain powerful. Feminists in the region have historically defined themselves in relation to the state – either as autonomous women's organisations, and/or by lobbying the state for reform, and/or by positioning themselves as liberal statist feminists. Thus recognising that states have largely failed to seriously engage with gender inequality demands a fundamental rethinking of strategies and sites for engagement.

2.2.1 *The politics of government categories*

Feminist orientation towards the state has meant that States have been hugely significant in defining the terms on which feminists engage. This means that the categories of citizens which states have defined, and the political constituencies that are created out of these categories are the same ones with which feminist political activism is obliged to engage. The representations of women that underpin government policies are also powerful in maintaining the social categories which put limits on women's agency. So for instance, the categories of women as mothers and wives that limit the scope of the development framework are also evidently produced and reproduced in state policy and programmes such that it remains a struggle to emancipate women as autonomous citizens from their location as embedded in social relations.

In line with notions of the liberal democratic state on which, for instance, the Indian state is modelled, liberal feminism has become increasingly pervasive as the version of feminism whose message has been partly taken up by development agencies and governments. This has contributed to producing women as an interest group concerned to claim a share of resources and space which, once distributed, is anticipated to solve the problem of inequality. However, even on these terms, there has been little acknowledgement of women's claims as a collective interest group. Rather, the further categories into which they are cast proscribe solutions which demand little in terms of structural

Currently attention is focused on 'poor women' and the solution is 'good livelihoods', leaving ... the middle class out of the picture.

change at the same time as foregrounding identities which divide women from each other.

Government development programmes have thus been active in producing a range of identities / interest groups which suggest minimal redistribution and no further change at the same time as precluding other identity formations. Thus, as Devika described, currently attention is focused on 'poor women' and the solution is 'good livelihoods', leaving little but perhaps their incomes in focus, and the middle class out of the picture. Lakshmi Lingam made a similar point that while focus on the poor and marginalized is important, any unitary focus amounts to an understanding that gender is a problem among the poor only. As a result, patriarchal institutional practices and individual privileges can go unchallenged.



Other category groupings, such as self help groups (SHGs) in India and elsewhere general microfinance programmes targeting women posit women as taking care of themselves and as such they absolve any further role for the state. Sri Lankan participants and those from Kerala and parts of North East India further noted that categories of socio-economic indicators produced and used by the state, such as those regarding education, health, and the workforce are similarly problematic when they cast equality as having been achieved and obscure other indicators – such as around domestic or sexual violence, or – in Sri Lanka, levels of women's political representation, through which other aspects of structural inequalities might become visible.

A few such categories created in the name of the distribution of developmental or welfare resources have been able to organise as political groupings to make claims on the state beyond what is offered by the development framework - such as widows in Kerala who demanded to be recognised by the government as a special interest group for the purposes of reservations along the lines of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe categories. But in general these category formations obscure other groupings and fragment 'women' as an interest group. In India, the 'BPL' (below poverty line) category, for example, has become an instrument of targeting which specifically excludes other groups



from accessing welfare resources. Often, these are categories that only have meaning in relation to the state: defining markers of difference between groups which may have little resonance or actual material implications at community or inter-community levels. K. Lalitha and Deepa Dhanraj observed, for example, with reference to their research on citizenship with autonomous women's organisations in southern India that the significance of these women being *Muslim* women only became apparent in their interactions with state authorities. In their more regular activities in their communities, their issues and struggles appeared to have much in common with those of women in other categories, but this common ground has been made effectively irrelevant by

government demarcations.

Similarly in Nepal, as Basundhara commented, current processes of organising reservation systems in the new state are institutionalising ethnic groupings and weakening the possibility of a common platform for women. At the same time, as Rita Manchanda pointed out, women's contributions are still failing to be recognised in Nepal in some categories in which they have become key actors. This is true, for example of their labour contributions in agriculture which has recently become increasingly feminised as men left villages and their agricultural roles to participate in the conflict.



2.2.2 Challenges for citizenship

In the context of these state-driven categories, several participants raised the problematic nature of constitutional categories of citizenship and the need to interrogate its state definitions. Paromita described research on homeless women, for example, which highlighted how far notions of identity and rights are for the state close bound up with permanent residence as a basis for citizenship. This is clearly problematic for the homeless, and reveals how the *terminology* of citizenship is itself limited when it is understood as a fixed category with clear definitions, as proposed by the state.

To understand and foreground the meanings citizenship in practice, it needs to be contextualised in the lives of women and in relation to their agency. Lalitha and Firdous Azim both argued that it is important to focus on the processes through which women negotiate on the one hand institutions, and on the other hand representations of women, and in the process of negotiation constitute and reconstitute the institutions and themselves. Citizenship is, in effect, negotiated at multiple levels and arises out of process of claiming it.

2.2.3 The shrinking of democracy



At the same time that mechanisms of governmental categories limit the spaces for advancing feminist agendas, it is clear that in India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka democratic space in general is shrinking and that which remains is constantly under threat. In Sri Lanka, on the verge of a military 'victory' over the LTTE and the unresolved conflict that this

represents, an increasingly repressive state has suppressed discussion of peace building and taken control of the media. In Pakistan, the state has taken virtually no action to reduce the violent power of religion-based interest groups. India has recently seen increasing state repression all over, and

including where the left is powerful and where democratic interactions have until recently been dense. Meanwhile, some parts of civil society have become gradually more supportive of state authoritarianism and blind to the violence committed by state and non-state actors against communities such as Dalits and tribals expressing discontent at structural inequalities.

Two aspects to the shrinking of democratic space drew attention across the themes of the conference for the profound effects they have on women and on the possibility of feminist engagement: increasing militarism and the normalisation of violence; and the increasingly successful claiming of political space by fundamentalist religious groups.



The rise of militarism and the normalisation of violence

Conflict and militarism affect the prospects of feminist agendas in several ways, and Rita emphasised that the violence they legitimise extends for long periods into post-conflict situations in a “continuum of violence”. As Monisha Behal discussed regarding Assam, India, militancy has profound effects on gender ideologies and gendered practices. In particular military processes draw on and build masculinity as represented by aggressive ‘protectors’, thus embedding macho values in the vision driving violence. Rita commented that the effects of these ideologies on domestic violence is often unknown, and where research does exist, such as in work in different countries by UNIFEM it is not acted upon not least because it is usually carried out by relatively small players in peace-building exercises.

Militarism and militancy are also contexts in which it is common to instrumentalise women. This can happen either in response to women’s protests against violence, or regarding the violence inflicted on them. Sepali Kottegoda, for instance, warned of the difficulties of a Sri Lankan women’s organisation in negotiating with other social movements to collaborate in protests at the recent killing of Lasantha Wickramatunga, the editor of a national newspaper who had often raised his voice against the state. Vijaylaxmi Brara also spoke of how the issue of Manorama Devi’s sexual torture and killing by armed forces in Manipur in 2004 was diverted into discussion of reform of the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA), leaving behind and out of discussion the individual and the personal circumstances of her rape.



Conflict is known to mitigate against collective work on women’s rights, and this has been very significant in NE India as identity politics has sought to monopolise personal allegiance, and therefore override issues that women from

different groups might have in common with each other. As Monisha described, the North East Network (NEN) has sometimes failed in mobilization efforts because of ethnic divisions which mitigate against a notion of collective women’s rights. Where the organisation has succeeded in getting communities



and male dominated civil rights groups to recognise feminist concerns it has been because these were addressed as more general human rights issues.

Participants from Sri Lanka also stressed that the financial costs of military engagement

has taken money directly out of social spending, and hence from services and initiatives supporting women and gender equality. They warned that attention is required to responses to these withdrawals, such as decreasing women's enrolment at various levels of education, which will eventually show up as slippages in social indicators.

In Pakistan, women's militancy as part of movements led by religious fundamentalist groups has also been on the rise, and Saima Saleem noted that these women often use the same language as their male counterparts. Engagement is needed with these processes in order to gauge meanings for gender relations and ideologies, as well as implications for feminist knowledge.

However, this backdrop of militancy does not fully explain the general normalisation of violence in civil society and the state apparatus. Examples offered of violence which have come to be viewed as acceptable in India include the judicial hanging of a rape accused in Kolkata; the murder of an acid thrower in Andhra Pradesh which was greeted with jubilation by the media and civil society; and the open public talk of female foeticide as a reasonable family strategy in Uttarkhand. While incidents of state and civil violence in themselves are not new, the rising civil society support for them warrants concern.

Politicised religion and challenges to secular states

In Bangladesh, India and Pakistan there have been visible contests over the last decade concerning the role of religion in the state. While religious fundamentalisms and especially religion as politics have been present in South Asia has been present in some forms for many decades, what is new is their growing power and in Pakistan they have acquired considerable unofficial state power. How religion is being used as a political tool needs to be better understood, and this understanding should be much more widely circulated and appreciated. Over the last decades in Indian and Pakistan in particular, the state has become increasingly complicit in the politics of religion and gradually moving away from a secular vision. Some of the compromises this process has involved have to do particularly with women's position: as Saima commented, appeals of religion



to morality where control over women's bodies is the foundation of this have very serious implications for women and need to be clearly critiqued.



Right wing groups in India have been in some ways more successful than left wing groups at mobilizing large numbers of women, particularly the Hindu right. Women have, for example, been active participants in recent anti-Christian violence in Orissa. It is important to understand how and why these mobilizations have

been possible. As Firdous observed, religion is for the majority an everyday lived culture and practice, and by appealing to it these organisations are succeeding in occupying political space, and thereby excluding other voices. Yet secular feminists have not yet developed a language with which to engage with these processes, nor methods and messages which appeal to these groups of women to bring about different kinds of mobilisations.

2.3 Opportunities offered by current contexts

While many of the region's recent political developments paint a grim picture for women's rights, it was emphasised that it is also important to be aware of and to engage with opportunities.

The constitution building process in Nepal is a good example, and the opening up of the democratic process in the wake of conflict is cause for some optimism. While the UN led peace process has included an active gender unit, the unit's mandate and leverage have, like many, been limited. Nevertheless, the process has so far offered some real gains, such as reservations for 33 percent representation of women in the new parliament, and as Rita pointed out, where women have collectively pushed they have also been able to gain authority as members of the constitutional sub-committees. These gains sit alongside a tendency to tokenism, and a lack of response to the withdrawal of women from certain spaces occupied by them during the conflict. This includes the withdrawal of women from the military, where they had been present in quite large numbers, and from 'male' roles in homestead farming in the villages which many women had taken on in the absence of men in the villages. While as Rita observed it is likely that both public and private violence is being used to drive them out of these spaces, there is no available research.

The landslide victory of the Awami League in Bangladesh's recent general election also offers some cause for cautious optimism. As Shireen Huq explained, there is a refreshing feel to the relatively young cabinet which includes some first time members. Four women hold the key ministries of agriculture, labour, foreign affairs and home affairs. This new profile offers





the possibility of some reduction in 'normalised' violence: an end to extrajudicial killings, 'encounters' - or planned police killings set up to appear accidental or occurring in self defence - and other police atrocities, and perhaps an end to impunity for the police and other state agents, if not for parliamentarians.

How the new government will use their big majority is nevertheless a cause for some worry: while it offers the chance to strengthen democracy, it is also possible that the country will see a slide back into the tyrannies of recent years, and the appointment of bureaucrats to some positions of ministerial power is an area of concern. Although the fundamentalist party Jamaat did not lose significant numbers of votes, it only won two seats in a big reduction of their power. Nevertheless, religious extremism is still a resurgent force and it remains to be seen the extent to which the government will play into extremists' hands in the name of popular politics. Meanwhile, the 'professionalisation' of the space occupied by the women's movement has squeezed out most of its 'movement' credentials as it is being taken over by professional NGOs and in this process by men.

Opportunities for (re)gaining democratic space within the state in which to advocate for women's rights thus appear to be sometimes present but always fragile. While these opportunities must be vigorously protected, it is also important to look beyond the state for coherent strategies for forwarding a gender equality agenda.



Challenges to using gender knowledge for change in contemporary contexts

- Development institutions present limits to feminist knowledge production and communication because they obscure issues and representations of women that challenge established hierarchies. These limits are partly enshrined in institutional protocols regulating implementation and monitoring, and in reporting practices which suggest limits on what content is relevant.
- States have also been a powerful actors in limiting the impact of feminist knowledge. Government development programmes have been active in producing identities and interest groups which suggest minimal distribution while also precluding other identity formations, such as around issues which different groups of women have in common.
- Citizenship is conceived by the liberal state as a fixed category with clear definitions, mitigating against an understanding of citizenship as negotiated at multiple levels and arising out of a process of claiming it.
- The shrinking of democratic space is a growing issue in the region, with rising levels of militarisation and normalised violence in several places, often in tandem with identity politics, sometimes endorsed by women's militancy, which obscures common ground between women.
- Religious groups are increasingly succeeding in occupying political space in a process in which secular states have become complicit and made clear compromises, often at the expense of women's rights.
- Despite this outlook, some spaces also offer opportunities, including the constitution building process in Nepal and the new government in Bangladesh both of which offer possibilities of deepening democracy and engagement in women's interests.

3 Linking for Breadth and Depth in Feminist Knowledge Production and Dissemination

The range of significant challenges to using feminist knowledge to create change raises an important question of what strategies are available to tackle these and of how feminist actors in this process can or should position themselves within them. Maitrayee commented early in the conference that development work has a tendency towards compartmentalisation of different issues or sectors, often with weak or ineffective linkages between them. This is also reflected in women's movements and organisations which – sometimes driven by the logic of processes of politicisation – tend to build up around specific issues such as child marriage, sex-selective abortion, or women's political participation, such that these are treated as stand-alone issues.

'What sort of fabric gets created when the three roles of researcher, advocate and trainer weave in and out? What is the communication between them? What is generated in this process?'

A central message that was developed in the course of the conference was of a strong need to work on linking both actors/agents in gender knowledge production, communication and dissemination processes, as well as the 'territories' or spheres in which they operate. Lakshmi, for example, argued that each of the roles of gender advocate, gender researcher and gender trainer can be played best only if you also have a foothold in the other locations, and asserted that "If we are to see these roles as antagonistic or conflictual we would be missing the 'woods for the trees'". Darini further observed that much critical work continues to take place beyond the discourse of development, suggesting that rather than only struggling with its limitations, it may be fruitful simply to recognise them and work towards bringing other bodies of research and activism, and other constituencies, to bear on processes of social change. In part, linking actors in feminist knowledge processes is a step towards strengthening the feminist community on the basis of solidarity. Actors in gender equality are often particularly isolated in their work, within



institutions or communities that remain hostile or blind to (aspects of) the agenda for gender equality. Several participants reflected on the fact that in much of their work they interact with people for whom gender equality is absent from aspirations, or at best a subsidiary agenda.

Many operate with little recourse to discussion or common strategising. So linking actors has an important primary role in renewal and energising which cannot be trivialised. But as Kausar Khan brought out in the session on different roles and actors which she chaired, linking actors also has the broader and important purpose of exchanging and deepening understanding of different

standpoints across a terrain which includes a wide variety of levels and contexts, and bringing the insights gained in this process to deepen our own work as agents and actors across sites.



In many ways, the conference itself was one aspect of this process, offering an opportunity for reflection and review, and also for opening up to a wide variety of different experiences and their meanings³. The meeting offered an opportunity to explore the interfaces of different levels and approaches of work in the belief that it is often at these interfaces that strategic insights can be found. It also offered an opportunity to articulate the experiences and meanings of acting across sites such as research, advocacy and dissemination of gender knowledge. As Kausar asked, 'What sort of fabric gets created when the three roles of researcher, advocate and trainer weave in and out? What is the communication between them? What is generated in this process?' Thus the meeting was

designed as part of a knowledge production process with particular emphasis on crossing boundaries both between sectors and between actors.

3.1 Working with difference across actors

Working across actors continues to present the challenges of difference that women working collectively have always faced: women are divided by a range of structures of inequality including caste, class, race, ethnicity and age which mediate access to material and social resources, as well as experiences and standpoints. Women are located in many other social relations besides gender and may experience multiple or intersecting oppressions. The tension between understanding, acknowledging and reflecting this understanding in our work, and the need to articulate common ground around specific issues is a significant and constant presence which needs to be engaged with. Several participants were grappling with the concern that women as a group are easily fragmented into different categories, thereby diminishing their capacity for collective action.

Development often exacerbates this tension because it appears to present a choice between working only or mainly on 'gender' or working on multiple marginalisations under the umbrella of social justice or perhaps poverty, rather than foregrounding the presence of difference and power amongst its agents. As reported from group discussions, development also tends to operate with a limited set of analytic categories describing difference such that others, like differences related to geographical regions, culture or language, are either romanticised or ignored.



³ The conference was conceived of and designed in part as a tool for knowledge production by setting out to create spaces for active engagement. It attempted to avoid aspects of more conventional formats in which it becomes possible, as Maitrayee said, to "talk past each other". For reflections on this methodology, see Annex 1.

At the same time, as previously observed, institutions themselves create and reproduce categories such that differences start unfolding primarily in relation to those institutions. Government and development categories have been particularly important sources of fragmentation, with the politicisation of, amongst others, religion-based, caste-based and income group based categories. Furthermore, Basundhara suggested that in political institutions, such as those currently being re-structured in Nepal, these categories can become the subjects of politics not as a source of perspectives, but as units of token representation, making it difficult to build issues-based constituencies.

A further source of difference discussed was that the actors in gender knowledge production and dissemination – researchers, advocates, trainers, and communicators – arrive in those roles through very different processes which can result in different standpoints, knowledge gaps, and emphasis on different approaches. While several participants commented on the need to seek common ground for strategic collective action, the diversity of local level gender knowledge experiences makes that a big challenge. For practitioners working at local levels, the language of academic research – which is a major source of gender knowledge – can be off-putting and very challenging to translate into workable concepts or to relate to local experiences.



As Lalitha commented, the limitations of our perceptions today have some roots in the limitations on our understanding three decades ago, when the tendency was to homogenize women. However, the drive to look at the experience of women from different caste and class groups emerged out of a real desire and need to know, to produce material, to learn – the driving force for research was the politics of the women’s movement rather than being a set requirement to ‘produce a module for the rest of the world’. It also brought into focus the need to be located at the micro level, in order to understand and deal with power and to be able to critique our own assumptions.

Currently, as Kausar emphasised, the domains of researcher – advocate – trainer / communicator – are often not adequately addressing each other, and this remains a source of some tensions between actors located in different spheres. But the conference was also very rich in forward looking initiatives and examples of strategies for bridging these gaps that have worked in particular circumstances at particular moments. It was also suggested, by Lakshmi amongst others, that where a process is underway in which spaces for the explicit foregrounding of differences exist, it is possible to perceive this central tension as a healthy one which needs to be fostered rather than wished away, and to frame different perspectives and standpoints in terms of the richness they offer to the terrain rather than as obstacles to mutual work. In small group discussions,



participants spoke of 'recognising difference and building on it', and of different standpoints as 'different kinds of flowers coming up in a field' which add diversity, not only difficulties. As Nandinee Bandyopadhyay suggested, if we are politically engaged for gender equality, then this tension can be an asset, stimulating engagement, animation, and a variety of ideas and strategies, rather than being simply a problem.

3.2 Negotiating the terms of common ground

Common ground across divisions is not so much there for the claiming, but rather needs to be constructed. In order for this to happen, it was widely agreed that we need issues, experiences and the meaning of these to be articulated from all standpoints and locations. This process is needed as much to map out different perspectives as to identify points of divergent or common interests between women, and where strategic 'compromises' or agreements might be reached around specific issues. We need actively to create spaces for these articulations to happen – this is an essential step preceding the forging of common or converging interests, which is a function of politics. There was a strong perception that women need to be able to claim the right to share common cause, to be able to speak on behalf of each other despite their differences. Nandinee brought up the issue that during periods of communal religion-based tension in India, non-Muslim women ought not to be prevented from speaking up for or on behalf of Muslim women simply on the basis that they do not belong to the same religious category. On the other hand, when the right to speak on behalf of other women is claimed from a position of structural power it is very problematic: instead, it must be claimed from a position of earned legitimacy. How such legitimacy is earned, however, was a latent question not directly addressed, which may warrant further direct elaboration.



It is clear that linking with other social movements under an umbrella of broadly conceptualised social justice carries the constant risk of sidelining gender issues, or seeing them swept into issues which 'fit' current aspects of identity politics. Basundhara expressed concern that in Nepal identity politics under the rubric of social justice is currently making 'women' virtually invisible as a group as well as obscuring the social relations of gender in the process of foregrounding others. Nevertheless, several suggestions were offered to mitigate this risk, including making mutual work on particular issues a subject



of negotiation between different groups from the beginning. For example, referring to protests around media repression in Sri Lanka, including the killing of the Sunday Leader editor previously mentioned, Sepali discussed the possibility of making the support of large women's organisations to others conditional on an agreement to visibilise the gender aspects of specific issues. She also emphasised a need to

build women's caucuses within other movements, and to communicate with those that already exist.

3.3 Engaging at specific sites

3.3.1 Political ideologies and cultures

Engaging with a range of different fields and actors, aside from negotiation however also requires taking specific steps to understand and respond to the cultures in which space for gender knowledge dissemination is sought –

whether these are work cultures of organisations; the political cultures of parties and governments; or the cultures of specific communities at which local level change is being explored. Several participants discussed the fact that real engagement requires efforts to take these contexts on board and respond to them with gender knowledge which speaks directly to the ideologies embedded in them. This is both part of a process of gaining legitimacy for gender knowledge as well as a tool for identifying potential spaces for change. Aleyamma, for example, emphasised that in Kerala it has been important to engage with the Marxist framework of the political left and ruling party. Finding ways to describe how gender issues are located within Marxism has been a way of getting men to understand gender as a category of analysis and gender equality as a political project and a way of persuading them to begin to take these seriously. This has been especially difficult in a state where common indicators for gender equality show few gender disparities with the result that the 'gender paradoxes' are not clearly investigated or understood.



Similarly, Chulani Kodikara put forward that in order to address women's political representation, it may be necessary to engage more directly in the political cultures that are in place. Supporting women in political positions in Sri Lanka has generally been focused on building women's capacities to 'do politics' through training programmes, and some of these trainings do result in nominations, but these nominated women often do not have the resources or backing of the party to win seats. Men aspiring to enter political careers, on the



other hand, are never the subjects of training – their prospects for success are understood to depend on a quite different set of criteria, including sometimes a willingness to engage in semi legal or illegal activity. Chulani argued that there is a considerable gap between what women's organisations think are the training requirements for political leadership and the reality of competing in the rough and tumble of party political competition. Political leadership in Sri Lanka is currently not dependent on knowledge of gender, good governance or human rights, but on money, muscle and patronage links. In this context, where women's representation in political institutions is the lowest in Asia not least due to the absence of

women's quotas, a more constructive approach than training women for roles as representatives may be to work more closely with women already in politics and on strengthening women's wings of political parties.

3.3.2 Bureaucracies

Talking to bureaucracies can be particularly challenging because, as Aliya emphasised, the public sector is built on a particularly rigid hierarchical culture. This culture strongly influences the framework for working on gender knowledge, implicitly putting boundaries around what can or cannot be brought into the frame of reference. It is a constant challenge to persuade bureaucrats

to take on gender issues at a deeper level than simply in their rhetoric, and this lack of seriousness is endorsed by bureaucratic culture.

One strategy for addressing this disjuncture, Aleyamma suggested, is to keep on expanding the tools for gender analysis, contextualise them, and describe them in a language which is accessible so that more people like these are able to apply them and use them in their everyday contexts and lives. This is no straightforward task. There is a clear tension between making gender knowledge accessible to bureaucrats as well as actors in many other different positions, and retaining its complexities and nuances. Many different manifestations of this tension were discussed over the course of the conference, - discussed further below - and no single clear solution was articulated. Nevertheless, continuing to engage at key sites such as bureaucracies, using creativity as well as a clear analysis of the contexts of bureaucrats' work, remains an important strategy.



As Khawar Mumtaz pointed out, a particular skill set is required to address and engage with public sector officials, which can be built up with information and analysis – on good knowledge of the institutional structures. Bureaucrats are also obstructed in various ways in their work; we need to know where these blockages are and assess whether they are potential spaces for negotiation and change.

3.3.3 Men

Engaging with men more generally remains necessary at many different levels. As Ahbijit Das commented, within a framework of social injustice which visibilises intersectionalities it is possible to create common struggles for equality rather than a struggle which privileges women regardless of their further social locations. This common struggle is one which men stand to gain from participation in, and they can be valuable political allies.



From another perspective, since men are part of the problem, men also need to be addressed – and this includes both finding tools to analyse their privilege as well as creating spaces to 'surface' their oppressions and the meanings of these in the lives of both men and women. Men can be oppressed both by socially privileged

women or gendered circumstances which limit their opportunities as well as by ideologies of masculinity which shape and restrict male behaviour. Cultures of

masculinity accompanying rising militarism, as discussed, may be an especially pertinent site for analysis in the current contexts in parts of South Asia.

3.4 Levelling the platforms for knowledge production and exchange.

3.4.1 Closing gaps: theory, jargonization and language

Over the course of the conference several related areas were discussed in which there are disconnects between different actors and constituencies working at different levels with gender knowledge. These gaps remain an



important focus for further work; some flag longstanding problems within feminist research and practice.

The first concerns the tensions between the need for theoretical strength and analytical usefulness and the desire for practical ways of doing things. Where practical ways of 'doing gender' are not available

to gender advocates within organisations, gender knowledge can easily be sidelined by other organisational imperatives. As Chulani commented, donors are often not interested in or concerned about disconnects between theory and practice; often the primary driver of action is simply to distribute resources, and this might be to all kinds of groups who have no agenda for equality of any kind, as the post-tsunami scenario in Sri Lanka exemplifies. On the other hand, it is often in the process of producing the practical – in terms of checklists and manuals, for example – that the transformatory edge of gender knowledge is lost. As one small group discussed, an absence of theory or conceptualisation, which is often implied by the desire for practical strategies, can fragment and disperse knowledge into separate spaces which then no longer relate to the broader picture of overall social change objectives. This is one process through which gender knowledge communication comes to be about the 'circulation of management tools'.

There is a strong need to translate theory into a range of different contexts in intelligible and effective ways – a task which requires considerable imaginative effort. Difficulties with translating knowledge produced and communicated in an academic setting into other locations are not confined to articulating theory in plain language, but also relate to a tendency to 'jargonize' in general. Knowledge communication to wider constituencies implies the communication of information designed for simplicity but without losing the nuance that makes the knowledge valuable.

'We need bi-lingualism if we don't want to just feed the state with research knowledge'.

The problem of language is partly about particular kinds of English – academic English, jargon which can be used to denote knowledge of trends or development fashions, or context-based English which may be inaccessible to those unfamiliar with the context. But it is also importantly about *different* languages and translation. In South Asia it is abundantly evident that communication in English reaches only a particular section of the population: as Devika

emphasised 'We need bi-lingualism if we don't want to just feed the state with research knowledge'. Simply on practical grounds, reaching out to new actors in gender knowledge communication crucially involves language translations; Dipta Bhog reminded us that huge numbers of people are excluded from the discussion if this is not done.

However, these concerns also extend beyond the practical and back to the theoretical, for they also directly relate to an ongoing set of debates around feminist epistemologies. Feminist epistemologies attempt to set out critical frameworks to investigate the methods with which researchers go about producing knowledge, essentially questioning what counts as reliable or valuable knowledge, and how far the knowledge produced is affected by the ways in which – and particularly the relationships through which – it is collected. But as Paromita argued, in the practice of feminist research there are strong tensions at the level of translation from the vernacular of field work into development theorizing. Researchers, in effect, undertake an act of interpretation when presenting knowledge from one context – and language – from which it has been collected into another quite different context in which it can be used to influence policy or develop theory. There are profound ethical tensions in this movement from what is actually said to how it is used. An important component of feminist research is the reflexivity which acknowledges these tensions and particularly the agency and power of the researcher in this act of interpretation between fields. A second critical feature is the imperative to make research transparent and translatable for those who the research is on. Often this makes translation – or re-translation – a necessary part of the research process. Dipta offered the idea of the 'transcreation' of research at field level, so that information gathered is both intelligible and useful to the subjects of research. This concept captures the problem that 'translation', which appears to be a neutral or objective task, is in fact partly an act of interpretation and is thus vested with power.



3.4.2 Peer to peer work



Research and knowledge dissemination are acts which take place within power hierarchies; where we are not actively taking measures to acknowledge and reduce these, we take part in reproducing them in ways that can be counterproductive to the social transformation we seek. The experience of facilitating peer to peer capacity

building in the context of sexual and reproductive health interventions around HIV/AIDS was offered by Amitrajit Saha as a tool which addresses these hierarchies to some extent, and with the potential to stimulate social change at different levels. Peer to peer work has an instrumental side in that it is an effective method for reaching large numbers of people with information, and

for circulating ideas and discussion, but more importantly it is a 'horizontal' teaching and learning method that fundamentally challenges top-down knowledge hierarchies, and thus is part of a pedagogy which can challenge the structures of inequality. Through the work Amitrajit described, researchers and trainers were recruited from within the community and were given assistance to work as experts and trainers inside established government and private health institutions, as well as in community settings on HIV prevention. This approach is in itself transformative, since it changes the self-perception of the agents, as well as others' perceptions of them. The analytical skills learned as trainers/researchers are used in contexts beyond the work/projects for which they were learned, thus offering the potential for wider political engagement and action.

In challenging local level structures of inequality, this process was similar to the process that Madhu Sarin described in the context of natural resources management (NRM). She described a mis-match between gender trainings for

Facilitating researchers who come from within the researched community 'was itself transformative – both for the researchers and for their "subjects"'.

bureaucrats and other development actors and community based work on social change which painstakingly challenges structures. Such trainings rarely mention natural resources despite the fact that gender plays a key role in determining access to critical livelihood resources – and when they do, have no mechanisms to ensure gender sensitivity in practice in NRM interventions. In community based work, on the other hand, it has sometimes been possible to change norms and rules so that women become visible and active participants in the management of resources. This involves deconstructing communities and slowly rebuilding some structures. In some projects, for example, this has involved changing the requirement that one household member be involved

as an intervention stakeholder, to requiring at least two representatives from each household so that one of these is likely to be a woman.

3.4.3 Community based research

Like peer to peer training, community level research which develops researchers from within the community being researched has the potential to change the subjects of research into agents in struggles against wider structural barriers. This approach also has the potential to address and engage with some of the methodological dilemmas facing researchers producing gender knowledge, because structural divisions between researcher and research are less intense, and hence there is less tension between standpoints. The projects Amitrajit described used the peer-to-peer model not only to communicate information in the form of training, but also to produce knowledge in the form of research. Having community researchers, he said, 'was itself transformative – both for the researchers and for their "subjects"'. Researchers gained technical skills in designing research questions, data collection, analysis and dissemination to their peers as well as national and



international audiences; and hence the research process was not about extracting information but fundamentally about using learning collectively to promote change, including building capabilities amongst researchers and researched to look at their own lives analytically.



Linking people, linking ideas

- Linking actors in feminist knowledge production and communication processes is a step towards strengthening the feminist community on the basis of solidarity and has the important primary role of renewing and energising agents and debates. Insights gained in exchanging perspectives and experiences are key to deepening our own work as actors across different sites.
- Working collectively has always been a challenge for women because we are located in many other social relations besides gender and may experience multiple, intersecting oppressions. Government categories, development practices, and identity politics all mitigate against women's collective action.
- Common ground across difference is not 'out there' waiting to be found, but rather needs to be constructed and negotiated. Where a process is underway in which spaces for the foregrounding of differences exist, different perspectives can be framed in terms of the richness they offer rather than merely as obstacles to mutual work – as long as this process takes place with an awareness of structural power and in the context of political engagement.
- Linking into different fields and actors also involves responding to the cultures of different fields, such as work cultures in organisations and bureaucracies, political cultures of parties and governments, and context specific community cultures.
- Linking into different fields also involves finding ways of communicating which challenge the hierarchies of knowledge production. Important aspects of this are avoiding jargon, and working at translating theory into a range of different contexts in intelligible and effective ways.
- The challenge of communication is partly about multilingualism and language translation so that much wider audiences have access to gender knowledge, and partly about acknowledging that literal or figurative 'translation' of knowledge into different contexts for different purposes has important power – and therefore ethical – implications.
- Reducing hierarchies in knowledge production can also be achieved by using peer to peer approaches in both training or public awareness exercises as well as in research processes. Facilitating researchers from within the researched community has the potential to change the subjects of research into agents of change.

4 Exploring new terrains



A clear agenda emerged over the course of the conference around getting feminist knowledge more firmly and deeply located within sectors and sites – such as bureaucracies, project cycles, and community based work – in which some (limited) progress has been made over the last two decades. However, attention was also drawn to sites of development intervention where few

consistent or systematic attempts have been made to formulate a gender analysis or feminist approach and where concerted feminist engagement needs to be initiated. There are also several bodies of knowledge in which feminist input has been a significant driver of research and theory, and these need to be brought more clearly into focus in development discourse.

4.1 School education

Schools and school education, in particular mainstream education, is an area which has suffered relative neglect by feminist researchers. One reason for this may be that analysing school level education is a task that may attract little status in the higher education institutions in which feminist researchers in women's studies departments already struggle to gain credibility. A second may be that working directly in areas where children are the main focus risks reinforcing and reproducing the strong association between women and children which frequently presents itself as a major obstacle to women achieving full citizenship as independent human beings. As Dipta made clear, one result of this relative neglect is that we still do not know what a feminist education or a feminist pedagogy might look like.

One result of the relative neglect of education is that we still do not know what a feminist education or a feminist pedagogy might look like.

Ways forward into developing feminist education, as Dipta elaborated, include an analysis of existing text books used in schools to assess how gender and other identities are constructed through them. Schools are a central site of socialisation, both in the cultures of interactions amongst children and between teachers and children, and through the content of their learning.

As Nirantar's text book analysis in India revealed, children are not encouraged to analyse structures of power and inequality in their text book learning. At the same time, text books clearly build and communicate the idea of 'nation' and bring social categories and groupings to bear on this project.

Text book analysis, the development of gender sensitive curricula – including for gender sensitive citizenship education as well as for the syllabus used in

B.Ed colleges - and training teachers in gender awareness are key tasks in a project of feminist education. Each of these tasks demands a creative process.

But they are only building blocks towards articulating a feminist pedagogy which involves stepping back from the instrumentalist engagement with the *content* of learning to review processes and methodologies for learning which can offer children and young people pathways to critical awareness and agency engaged for social justice.



4.2 Representation and culture

Analysis of the meanings and effects of cultural representations of women is an area of study in which feminist approaches are fairly well established, but which remains generally beyond the focus of development studies and practice. As Saima commented, understanding of how cultural representations of women work to reproduce or change gender relations is required in development practice because these contribute to building and maintaining the structures which result in concrete manifestations of inequality. She gave the example of 'honour' killings in Pakistan and elsewhere, a form of violence which is justified through cultural portrayals of women as sexually chaste and of this virtue as an essential foundation of family (and national) 'honour'.

Firdous elaborated that while cultural representation is a very amorphous and fluid area, images of women do get taken up in different arenas to mean different things, and there is a need to explore and visibilise how different groups of women deal with dominant representations. Images and representation of women in texts influence the way we see ourselves, and the ways we learn to think about ourselves. However, she also emphasised that how images are taken up is very variegated, and this means that there is space for negotiation in how they are interpreted and taken on board. This field then offers spaces for change, especially where we have an



understanding of how particular representations become dominant and how they can be subverted. Understanding these mechanisms opens up the possibility for feminist activism needs to create its own images – of women in action, on the move, in struggle. More focused attention to how gender is taught, discussed and circulated in conversation may give us better tools for maintaining those interpretations that carry forward a social change agenda.



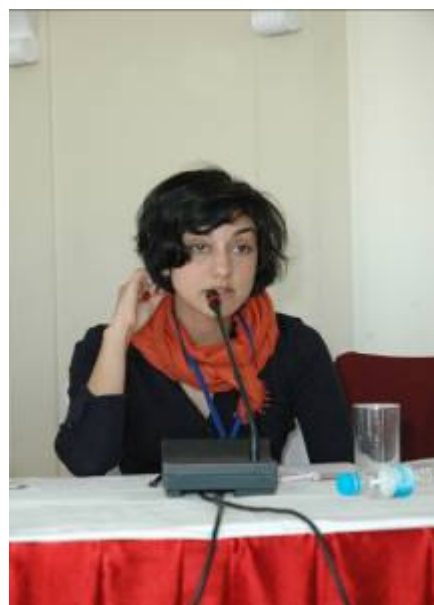
Part of this project includes what Devika referred to as excavating the archaeologies of terms and categories as a way to resist the normalisation of certain representations, such as the association of 'Muslim' with 'terrorist' and of 'women's empowerment' with 'self help groups and credit'. Devika also emphasised the need to be careful with terminology because of the histories terms carry with them, warning especially that building 'capacity' is a term with historical roots in the missionary projects of the last century. She suggested that it is perhaps no coincidence that the term has returned to currency during the 1990s globalization agenda, and that it might be more appropriate to use the term 'capabilities' which has stronger associations with the human development agenda and Amartya Sen's linking of 'development' with 'freedom'.

Potential allies in contestations over representations of women and the meaning of gender include the media in general and individual journalists in particular. Manori Wijesekera, advocating for better communication with media representatives by gender advocates, suggested the need to avoid treating journalists simply as part of the publicity machinery for women's organisations and organisations working on gender equality. Instead, a strategy is needed to build capabilities amongst media representatives for work on social change around gender inequality.

4.3 Sexuality

Several participants brought forward sexuality as an area for further work, not least because people working on sexual identity have recently found spaces in which to 'talk back' to constructed categories such as that of the 'good woman' prevalent in much government policy prescription.

Beyond this, however, as Firdous clarified, sexuality is a fundamental aspect of how gender relations are built up and represented, and as Khawar put it, is at the bottom of the patriarchal need to control women. Saima talked of women's bodies as the sites on which morality is constructed. Despite the foundational nature of sexuality on women's experience and lives, this issue tends to be pushed into the corner except insofar as it impacts on more accepted development issues such as health. Firdous offered that although feminism more generally



has found it difficult to develop vocabularies to talk about sexuality – except to some extent through literature – tasks with potential to facilitate those vocabularies include investigating how sexuality influences how we learn to ‘desire and feel and be’, as well as developing alertness to how cultural images open up spaces for different ways of experiencing romance and love.



5 Recommendations



A range of recommendations arose throughout the conference process, as well as in the final session which explicitly sought to draw them out, because much of the previous discussion was focused not only on articulating challenges but also on strategies to address them. There is an urgent need for feminists to position themselves effectively in the

context of these many challenges to the social change objectives of gender knowledge production and communication. A central objective is to re-insert the radical message of social change into sites in which gender knowledge is used. For some, this means building a more effective collective process and a stronger constituency for changing gender relations; for others this means continuing to explore and evaluate methods which can carry forward a feminist praxis in research and education; for some this means finding new ways to engage at sites which offer special resistance to feminist change objectives. In South Asia, it is particularly important to recognise and respond to the failure of the developmental state to dismantle patriarchies and to identify spaces and sites at which steps towards gender equality can be sought and gained.

5.1 Building communities of practice for gender knowledge production and communication

As Farzana suggested, one way forward to re-inject critical feminist politics in gender discourse is through building a strong organized feminist community that should create emancipatory gender knowledge, disseminate it through teaching and training, and monitor governments in order to hold them to account. The process of building this community will need to:



- Establish ways for ensuring the continuity of the dialogue generated at this conference at country levels and in smaller groups at sub-country levels to identify what knowledge is needed and to identify new methods and tools.
- Use these feminist communities at sub-country level to establish a collective voice at national levels and exert some control over feminist knowledge production.
- Within this dialogue process, build bridges for learning between feminists and gender practitioners in the cases where these communities are not the same.
- Ensure spaces in this dialogue for identifying minority initiatives and perspectives, and for foregrounding a diversity of standpoints as part of a process of constructing common ground for political engagement.
- Work in innovative ways in these communities to include creative work and pleasure as methods and approaches for breaking new boundaries.
- Put the knowledge generated by this dialogue and others together in one resource centre in the region, perhaps in the form of a community of practice within the proposed SAARC University.
- Continue the regional level conversation, possibly in the form of a SAARC wide virtual university with physical meetings every two years.



Addressing the ethics of research

A strong concern was articulated during the conference that knowledge generation for development purposes is vulnerable to coming loose from moorings in feminist research methodologies, which are themselves grounded in feminist epistemologies. To counter this trend it is necessary to:

- Reflect more carefully on ourselves and the manner in which we do research and at the outset of research clarify our political positions, frameworks and alliances.
- Engage in critical analysis of how knowledge is generated, and make spaces to build this analysis.
- Consciously use research to destabilise hierarchical binaries of "formal"/ "academic" and "local"/ "activist" knowledge.
- Revisit conceptually how gender is embedded in class, caste, regions and ethnicities so that information on intersectionality will emerge.
- Take steps to elaborate modes of interpreting women's experiences from the field and adequately represent local level knowledge including how women perceive themselves relationally in society – and take explicit steps to return this knowledge to those women.
- Support women in science and technology and build positions on women's relationship to science knowledge. This involves critiquing the dominance of established research methods which invalidate feminist methods, and the dismissal of some knowledge on the grounds that it is produced by women's groups or NGOs.
- Take peer to peer training and research and other horizontal research and dissemination methods much more widely on board



5.2 Engaging in new ways with civil and uncivil society

Feminists need to seek out new ways to address issues and constituencies that they have previously avoided or where engagement has been weak. We also need to be aware of and engage with opportunities where democratic space has opened up or, for example, where conflict resolution or peace building may offer the possibility of building new structures likely to be more accountable to gender equality.

Areas identified where new strategies and energy are required include:

- Finding ways to engage with militarisation, including revisiting masculinities and how they are affected by militarism and violence.
- Developing strategies to counter the increasing willingness of states to engage with right wing religion-based demands. This might include engaging with women theologians who are articulating feminist interpretations of religious texts.
- Developing a better understanding of why mobilisations of women for example by the Hindu right have been possible, and how and why women have become involved in religion based violence.
- Developing a language to engage with these processes and messages which appeal to these groups of women to bring about different kinds of mobilizations.
- Building alliances with progressive movements and other stakeholders including men and including transnational alliances against arms production – but making the foregrounding of gender concerns the subject of conditionality in building alliances.
- Continuing to build up good knowledge of institutional structures and bureaucracies that might reveal spaces for change.
- Continuing to translate theory into a range of contexts in effective ways, expand the tools for gender analysis, contextualize them and describe them in accessible language.
- Developing work, research and action around school education and developing a feminist pedagogy which challenges power hierarchies and develops critical awareness in young people.



Annex 1: Notes on the conference methodology

The conference was organised into three themes, with a short fourth session to generate concluding remarks and recommendations, as shown in the Conference Agenda, Annex 2. Each thematic session began with a plenary in which several (7-10) short presentations were made by panellists followed by a brief opportunity for plenary discussion and panellists' responses. The plenary sessions were conceived of as spaces to generate ideas and issues which were then followed through in more depth in the small group sessions associated with each plenary. The small group sessions focused on three questions arising from the plenary presentations and discussion, and were intended to be an opportunity to bring other peoples' experiences and research to bear on the issues raised.

This approach was intended to produce a collective 'knowledge in the making'. It set out to create learning spaces in which participants with very different experiences, levels and sites of work, and no consistent formats or views on social change could interact, exchange, and produce an 'engaged conversation'. The expectation was that all participants would gain insights and ideas to deepen and enrich our own future work.

The format was partially adapted on the second day in response to an expressed need for more opportunity to interact in country specific groups and clarify country and area-specific issues, challenges and opportunities in gender knowledge production, dissemination and communication. This produced a very dynamic small group session (the India group not especially small), which was brought back into plenary to feed into the session designed to articulate and present recommendations.

Tensions produced by the methodology included:

- Squeezing large bodies and years of research and ideas into seven minute panel presentations was a big challenge. Some participants felt that this was inadequate to communicate even a distilled version of significant experience. Some panellists may have experienced it as trivialising.
- Some participants expressed a need for opportunities to gain more depth in particular areas or issues bearing on their own work most directly.
- Some participants preferred the plenary form because some ideas discussed in small group discussions were lost to other participants.

Annex 2: Agenda for the South Asia region conference on gender knowledge production and dissemination in development

30-31 January 2009, Kathmandu, Nepal

Overall aim of the gender conferences –

The overall aim is to generate a holistic understanding and interrogation of the kinds of gender knowledge being used and the way this is produced, communicated and disseminated in research, development practice and advocacy for development

Agenda –

29 January 2009 –

Participants' arrival and check-in to the Hotel Himalaya, Kathmandu, Nepal

30 January 2009: Day One, Opening	
9:00 - 9:30	Registration
9:30 - 10:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome • Objectives and Agenda • Introduction
10:30 - 11:00	Tea/coffee
<p>Theme: Gender(ed) knowledge Building gender knowledge among researchers and practitioners, building capacity to use gender analytical frameworks in research and development practice has been on-going for more than a decade. While these efforts have popularized gender concepts and their applicability in development sectors, the results are far from satisfactory. Popularisation of the concepts has led to mechanistic use of concepts. This in turn has resulted in research and practice agendas and frameworks remaining the same while including gender as a marginal and add-on issue. There is also depoliticization and instrumentalization of the gender agenda in that the dominant, positivist frameworks animating development research and practice that override critical feminist epistemologies which are at the heart of gender theory. This theme will explore the tensions between how gender knowledge is communicated and feminist epistemologies and the implications.</p>	
11:00 -12:30	Panel presentations and Plenary Discussion
	Chair – Shirin Panellists – <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lalitha 2. Devika 3. Firdous 4. Darini 5. Paromita 6. Farzana 7. Rita Manchanda
12:30 - 1:30	Lunch Break
1:30 - 2:30	Small Group Discussions

2:30 - 3:00	Feedback
3.00 – 3.30	Tea/coffee break
<p>Theme: Gender researchers, trainers and advocates In this theme we refer to those charged with the responsibility for 'doing' gender in research and development practice and those who often have to train others to use gender analytical frameworks in their work. There is widespread recognition that gender trainers and advocates have different perspectives, approaches and motivations. This is often not scrutinized. There is little reflection on researchers, trainers and advocates as gendered individuals operating within particular spatial, historical and institutional contexts with implications for the way in which they think about gender and communicate about it. This theme explores researchers, trainers and advocates as a diverse group of technicians, professionals, advocates with variable and knowledge and understanding and situated in different gendered, spatial and temporal contexts that give rise to both strengths as a collective but also tensions and contradictions.</p>	
3:30 - 5:00	Presentations and Plenary Discussion Chair – Kausar Panellists <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Abhijit 2. Deepa Dhanraj 3. Aliya Sethi 4. Lakshmi Lingam 5. Sepali 6. Monisha Behal 7. Subhas 8. Saima 9. Vasundhara
5.00	Break, close for the day
7.30	Welcome Dinner at Thamel (Nepali Chulo)
<p>31 January 2009: Day Two</p>	
9.00- 9.30	Reflections in plenary
9:30 - 10:30	Small Group Discussions on Theme 2
10:30 - 11:00	Feedback
11:00 - 11:30	Tea/coffee
<p>Theme: Building capacity on gender- ways forward This theme will explore what needs to be done differently in building capacity on gender in different institutional contexts to give new life to the gender equality agenda. Whereas several initiatives for enhancing capacity are underway in South Asia there is a need to learn from these and other experiences.</p>	
11:30 -1:00	Presentations and Plenary Discussion Chair - Nandinee Panellists – <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Chulani 2. Amitrajit 3. Aleyamma 4. Anchal Kapur 5. Khawar

	6. Sana Gul 7. Manori 8. Warisha
1:00 - 2:00	Lunch
2:00 - 3:00	Small Group Discussions
3.00 - 3.30	Feedback
3.30 - 4.00	Tea/coffee break
4.00 - 5.00	Final session - recommendations, report
5:00	Close of conference, farewell drinks
9.00	Farewell dinner in hotel

Annex 3: List of participants

	Name	Location	Email ID	Contact No.
INDIA				
1	Paromita Chakravati	Jadavpur University, Kolkata	chakravarti6@gmail.com	+91 9830944361
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7	Devika Jayakumari	CDS, Trivandrum	devika@cds.ac.in	+919847943517
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9	Aleyamma Vijayan	SAKHI, Trivandrum	sakhi@asianetindia.com	+91 2462251 /9847563506
10	Monisha Behal	NEN, Guwahati	monishabehal@gmail.com , nendelhi@vsnl.net	+919435197151
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18	Rita Manchanda	SAFHR, New Delhi	rita@safhr.org	+91 9810478833
19	Gail Cockburn	CIDA New Delhi	Gail.cockburn@international.gc.ca	
20	Katherine Hay	IDRC, New Delhi	khay@idrc.org.in	
PAKISTAN				
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BANGLADESH				
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		Dhaka		
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NEPAL				
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35	Rina Rai	Kathmandu	rina@canadanepal.org	- Do-
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39	Sudha Pant	UNFPA, Kathmandu	pant@unfpa.org	9851003976
ORGANISERS				
40	Jashodhara Dasgupta	SAHAYOG, New Delhi	jashodhara@sahayogindia.org	+91 9910203477
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44	Maitrayee Mukhopadhyay	KIT, Amsterdam	m.mukhopadhyay@kit.nl	
45	Chris Hunter	KIT, Amsterdam	c.hunter@kit.nl	
46	Noortje Verhart	KIT, Amsterdam	n.verhart@kit.nl	

Annex 4: Participants' biodata

Sl. No	Name	Bio
2	Ms Rajashri Dasgupta	Currently an independent journalist and contributing editor with Himal Southasian. Have researched on issues such as trafficking of women, HIV/AIDS and migration; reproductive health and unethical clinical drug trials. Have contributed articles, <i>Quick-fix Medical Ethics</i> and <i>Criminalising Love, Punishing Desire</i> etc to edited volumes. Work with several women's rights and peace groups.
3	Ms. Monisha Behal	Set up NEN in 1995 and also a young group of development activists in Assam and Nagaland. NEN is now a full fledged rights based organisation with a new and young Director in place since April 2008. My work continues as before – mobilising women's organisation to join our efforts in bringing about social justice and security for women.
4	Ms Devika Jayakumari	J.Devika teaches and researches at Centre for Development Studies, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, India. Her work has been mainly around the history of gender, modernity, development, and politics, in Kerala. She writes in Malayalam, her native tongue, and English, and translates extensively from Malayalam to English. Her publications in English include <i>Her-Self: Early Writings on Gender by Malayalee Women</i> (Kolkata: Stree, 2005) and <i>En-Gendering Individuals: The Language of Re-form in Early Modern Keralam</i> (Hyderabad: Orient Longman, 2007), and <i>Individuals, Householders, Citizens: Malayalees and Family Planning 1930s-1970</i> (Zubaan, New Delhi, 2007). Her recent work includes a report of research on gender and emergent opportunities for women to enter politics and the public in Kerala, titled 'Gendering Governance or Governing Women? Politics, Patriarchy, and Democratic Decentralization in Kerala State, India', funded by IDRC, Canada.
5	Mrs Basundhara Bhattarai	Ms Bhattarai has over 12 years of working experience in research, training and development actions especially in gender and social inclusion dimensions of natural resource management and development. Currently she is working as a 'Gender Specialist' in International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD). Her current work includes documenting gender issues, building capacities of the organization (s) in mainstreaming gender equity and promoting gender equity for Hindu-Kush-Himalayan mountain development and environmental sustainability. Earlier before joining ICIMOD she used to lead the theme on 'gender and social inclusion' in ForestAction Nepal. She has been one of the researchers on gender and decentralization in the four decentralized sectors in Nepal during 2006-2008. In addition, she has working experience with community based organizations, non-governmental organizations, bilateral project, college and international organizations. She has been associated with several networks and association from Nepal and international as well. She has also been co- authored of a book on small scale forestry innovations from Nepal and Communities, Forests and Governance; co-authored journal articles in <i>International Forestry Review</i> ; <i>Forest, Tree and People</i> and <i>Forest and Livelihood</i> .
6	Mrs. Aleyamma Vijayan	I am now coordinating the activities of Sakhi which is a women's resource centre .The major activities are Information collection and

		dissemination; capacity building programmes; gender and governance; work with young people; action research; violence prevention and intervention programmes. Sakhi has a library and documentation centre and has a number of publications mainly in local language
7	Dr (Mr) Amitrajit Saha	"Dr. Amitrajit Saha is Associate Director, Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH), India at PATH. He currently manages the PATH Convergence Project in India – a research-cum-demonstration project that is working to increase access to sexual and reproductive health services for HIV-positive people and female sex workers in three districts across two states in the country. With a diploma in OB-GYN (DGO) and MD in preventive and social medicine, he has worked as a public health physician for more than 15 years in a number of resource-constrained settings both in government and non-government sectors. Dr. Saha has worked as a rural medical officer in West Bengal, taught Preventive & Social Medicine in Calcutta, and has worked for polio eradication as a WHO medical officer in Bihar. He has worked with the Sonagachi Project and DMSC (a sex workers' organization in West Bengal, India) and was the Project Manager for a research and advocacy project titled the DMSC-TAAH Project that examined the role of community mobilization activities in reducing HIV vulnerabilities of female sex workers in the Sonagachi Project areas. His interests include rights-based programming and advocacy for marginalized communities at risk of or suffering from HIV, participatory research and health systems strengthening. Outside of work, Dr. Saha reads fiction, watches films, cooks, and enjoys good food and drink."
8	Ms Farzana Bari	Currently working as an acting director of the Centre of Excellence in Gender Studies at QAU
9	Rita Manchanda	Rita Manchanda is currently Research Director of SAFHR (Nepal) project of auditing Partitions as a Method of Conflict Resolution. Recently, she returned from an assignment as the Gender Expert, Commonwealth Technical Fund in Sri Lanka. Before that at SAFHR she founded and developed the programmes – 'Women Conflict and Peace-building' and 'Media and Conflict'. She is a writer, researcher and a journalist and has written extensively on security and human rights issues. In particular she has intellectually contributed to the discourse on feminizing security. Among her many publications is an edited volume entitled <i>Women War and Peace in South Asia: beyond Victimhood to Agency</i> which has been a pioneering study on feminist theorizing and praxis on conflict and peace building. Her research study on "Naga Women in the Peace Process" is a benchmark contribution in field studies of gendered war narratives. She also co-edited the book " <i>States Citizens and Outsiders: Uprooted Peoples of South Asia</i> " and edited " <i>Media Crossing Borders</i> ". Her forthcoming publication is <i>The No Nonsense Guide to Minority Rights in South Asia</i> which is being brought out by Sage Publishers. She has been involved in developing a regional human rights and peace studies curriculum to influencing the existing university syllabus and is on the board of the new Peace Education Journal of NCERT. Her professional experience in India's Defence Ministry think tank, Institute for Defence Studies & Analysis has motivated her to explore alternate ways of looking at a people centric security approach. Drawing upon nearly two decades of her involvement in the print and electronic media she has a special interest in critical analysis of media reporting conflicts. This is

		reflected in the essay, <i>Mass Media and Militarized Hindu Nationalism</i> (in <i>Hindu Nationalism and Governance</i> eds McGuire & Copeland OUP 2007)
10	Dr. K. Lalita	Dr. K. Lalita, is also a co-founder of the ThinkSoft group. She is well known as co-author and editor of classics in women's studies, such as "We were making History," "Women Writing in India from 600 BC to the 20th Century," and "Taking Charge of our bodies. She was founder-president of India's first women's activist group, the Progressive Organisation of Women, and founder-coordinator and currently the Vice-President of Anveshi Research Centre for Women's Studies. She is also Director of Yugantar, a Hyderabad based NGO, where she works on issues of gender, women's health and education.
11	Ms Kausar S Khan	Teacher : undergraduate medical students; graduate students of AKU; NGOs; involved in community based programme development; special areas: gender, social determinants of health; equity; participatory approaches; qualitative research, specially action research. Currently part of 4 country study on Women's Empowerment in Muslim Contexts – democratization from inside out.
12	Ms Jashodhara Dasgupta	I am Coordinator of SAHAYOG, an NGO working on gender equality and women's health using human rights frameworks. SAHAYOG works through capacity building and documentation to bring in voices of marginalized groups, such as rural women and youth into decision-making spaces. I am most engaged in rights based approaches to maternal health, doing research and advocacy activities at national and global levels, including facilitating coalitions around maternal health and SRHR.
13	Ms Firdous Azim	I am a professor of English, and Chairperson of the Department of English and Humanities at BRAC University. I am also part of a research team entitled "Pathways of Women's Empowerment" housed in the BRAC Development Institute of BRAC University. I am an executive member of Naripokkho, a woman's activists' group. My research interests include post-colonial theory, as well as feminist activism and theory.
14	Ms Dipta Bhog	At present I am co-director of Nirantar, A Centre for Gender and education. In the last twenty years of my work i have focussed on women's education, literacy, pedagogy, curriculum development for rural women and girls. In the last decade or so i have been involved in developing textbooks for middle school learners in political Science both for Delhi Government and NCERT. i have been particularly interested in how understandings emerging from feminist research and practice can become part of mainstream curricula/syllabi. I have also coordinated a five state study on analysing language, social science and life skills education textbooks from a feminist perspective. The study attempts to look at the construction of nation, caste, class and gender within the textbook. Questions on the construction of knowledge have been critical to the study. The study is in its final stages of analysis and will go into print next month.
15	Ms Devika Jayakumari	J.Devika teaches and researches at Centre for Development Studies, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, India. Her work has been mainly around the history of gender, modernity, development, and politics, in Kerala. She writes in Malayalam, her native tongue, and English, and translates extensively from Malayalam to English. Her

		publications in English include <i>Her-Self: Early Writings on Gender by Malayalee Women</i> (Kolkata: Stree, 2005) and <i>En-Gendering Individuals: The Language of Re-form in Early Modern Keralam</i> (Hyderabad: Orient Longman, 2007), and <i>Individuals, Householders, Citizens: Malayalees and Family Planning 1930s-1970</i> (Zubaan, New Delhi, 2007). Her recent work includes a report of research on gender and emergent opportunities for women to enter politics and the public in Kerala, titled 'Gendering Governance or Governing Women? Politics, Patriarchy, and Democratic Decentralization in Kerala State, India', funded by IDRC, Canada.
16	Dr. Darini Rajasingham	Dr. Darini Rajasingham is an anthropologist and Visiting Fellow at the Institute of South Asian Studies, National University of Singapore and Senior Fellow at the Social Scientists Association, Colombo, Sri Lanka. She has written and published on multiculturalism, identity politics and gender transformations in development and conflict in South and South east Asia. Her recent research is on developmentalism, the political economy of reconstruction and development knowledge production. She has worked as an expert and evaluator for a number of UN Agencies, the Asian Development Bank, World Bank and several INGOs. She was a member of the International Steering Group for the North South Institute project: "Southern Perspectives on Reform of the International Development Architecture". Her Ph.D. is from Princeton University.
17	Ms. Chulani Kodikara	I am currently working as an independent researcher on women's rights / gender issues. Current research focus include women and peacebuilding in Sri Lanka, Women and political representation and Muslim women's land rights in the Eastern province in Sri Lanka.
18	Ms. Aliya Sethi	<p>Ms. Aliya Sethi works as a National Technical Expert of GTZ Project for Capacity Building of the Ministry of Women's Development – Pakistan. The Project supports the national women's machinery in fulfilling its mandate of mainstreaming gender equality perspective into policies, plans & projects of the government of Pakistan through policy advice and human resource development measures. Ms. Aliya contributes to the process of planning, advising, implementing & following up the Project initiatives to enhance Ministry's human, knowledge & organisational gender resource base. As a gender practitioner, since 1996 her occupational focus has been on promoting gender equality perspective in organisational & programme processes, primarily of the Rural Support Programme & Aga Khan Foundation, through gender awareness raising, gender analysis capacity building, policy/strategy development & practice, programme analysis, process implementation, and evaluation & consulting with a few other international development agencies.</p> <p>Given the (little) experience, she considers moving forward in building & practicing gender knowledge essential for Change, however believes that it also brings with it a set of Challenges to deal with & Opportunities to capitalise on.</p>
19	Mrs. Aleyamma Vijayan	I am now coordinating the activities of Sakhi which is a women's resource centre .The major activities are Information collection and dissemination; capacity building programmes; gender and governance; work with young people; action research; violence prevention and intervention programmes. Sakhi has a library and documentation centre and has a number of

		publications mainly in local language
20	Mrs Palasri Roy Das	Working as Asst. Coordinator (Admin) in SAHAYOG.. Presently managing administrative coordination of SAHAYOG Lucknow office.
21	Mr. Manish Kumar Teckchandani	Working as Accounts Officer in Sahayog. Presently looking after all Financial Requirements of the organisation
22	Dr. Paromita Chakravarti	Currently working as Joint-Director, School of Women's Studies, Jadavpur University, Kolkata. Also teaching English in the Department of English, Jadavpur University. I have worked and published on sexuality issues and gender and education. I started a course in Queer Studies in the Department of English and I teach a course on Gender and Culture at the School of Women's Studies. My current work is on gender and HIV and AIDS which includes areas like sexuality education, violence against women, masculinities studies and queer and alternative sexualities. I have also worked on gendering educational policy, curriculum and textbooks.
23	Ms Nandinee Bandyopadhyay	Nandinee Bandyopadhyay is an Associate Director at PATH India for HIV, where she designs, coordinates and monitors implementation of different programs including Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and DFID funded projects for capacity strengthening of NGO partners on Interpersonal Communication and mid-media for HIV/STI risk reduction with key populations. She has 317 years experience in development with technical expertise in: participatory assessment of vulnerabilities and impact of class, gender and sexuality based inequalities, designing and conducting training and capacity building activities, sexual minority issues, HIV/AIDS, social mobilization of marginalized groups, reproductive choice, sexual health, micro credit, community health, and non-formal education. Before joining PATH in January 2005, she worked as an independent consultant for both international aid agencies and local grassroots organizations. She received postgraduate degree in Gender and Development from the University of Sussex, UK. She speaks English, Bengali and some Hindi.
24	Ms. Monisha Behal	Set up NEN in 1995 and also a young group of development activists in Assam and Nagaland. NEN is now a full fledged rights based organisation with a new and young Director in place since April 2008. My work continues as before – mobilising women's organisation to join our efforts in bringing about social justice and security for women.
25	Ms. Manori Wijesekera	Manori Wijesekera is Regional Programme Manager of TVE Asia Pacific (TVEAP, www.tveap.org). Trained as a writer and journalist, she worked for an English language daily, a business magazine and travel publications. She later worked in the development sector editing an Asian Regional Journal on coastal resource management before joining TVEAP in 1998. Manori heads the regional media foundation's content development and distribution teams, working with dozens of broadcast, civil society and educational organisations across the Asia Pacific. She has served as production manager, series producer and also directed some of the location filming in all recent TV series from TVEAP: <i>Children of Tsunami</i> (2005), <i>Digits4Change</i> (2006), <i>The Greenbelt Reports</i> (2006), <i>Living Labs</i> (2007) and <i>Saving the Planet</i> (in

		production). Manori has also been a member of TVEAP's international Board of Directors since 2002.
26	Dr. Manjari Mehta	I am a social anthropologist with a background in university-level teaching, a year spent at ICIMOD (Kathmandu) working on gender issues, and presently working as an independent researcher. My areas of interest include community managed water management, livelihood improvement in the Hindu Kush-Himalaya, social vulnerability and gender issues in natural disasters. I have begun working on a book exploring two decades of rapid socio-economic change on the lives of villagers in a valley in the outer hills of Tehri Garhwal (Uttarakhand).
27	Ms Madhu Sarin	I have worked for many years at examining how to engender community institutions concerned with natural resource management. Within this, I coordinated a national network on gender and equity concerns in joint forest management which managed to have some impact on influencing central and state government orders related to JFM. More recently I have been involved with the campaign which successfully got the new forest rights act enacted by Parliament which has clear provision for ensuring that women's rights are also recognised.
28	Dr. Lakshmi Lingam	I am currently the Dean, Research & Development at the Tata Institute, Mumbai. In this position I am in-charge of the Doctoral program as well as overall research activities of all Faculty and students at the Institute. I have been on the Faculty of the Centre for Women's Studies for the past 20 years. I teach courses on 'gender, health and rights', 'women, development practice and politics' 'India's gender and development trajectory' for Masters students and Study Abroad students at the Institute. I have undertaken several research projects and published extensively on gender, health, development, structural adjustment and public policies. I was a Fulbright New Century Scholar during the period 2004-5. I was the General Secretary of the Indian Association for Women's Studies from 2000 - 2002. I was a member of the Organizing Committee that hosted the International Women's Health Meeting in 2005 in New Delhi. I have conducted several training programs and have participated internationally as a resource person in trainings on reproductive health and gender issues. I work as a Consultant with several Indian states on gender and social development issues. I am also actively engaged with several NGOs and social movements in India.
29	Ms Kirsty Milward	I have been working for the last decade on community development with gender equality objectives where I live in rural West Bengal, India. I also work on primary education methods and approaches for first generation literacy with marginalised adivasi populations. As a freelance consultant, I provide research support, writing and editing services in social and rural development and gender issues to a range of research institutions and development organisations.
30	Subhash Mendhapurkar	Executive Director, SUTRA, since 1977 Worked as Gender Resource person for various NGOs and UN Agencies. Board member of Centre for Health & Social Justice Member Women Power Connect Country Representative for AFRESH – A network of NGOs working in HIndukush mountain ranges

		has written various papers for various seminars, Workshops Has recently written Gender Kunji for Health Workers
31	Ms Shireen Pervin Huq	Member of Naripokkho, at present voluntary coordinator of Women's Health Rights and Advocacy Partnership project coordinated by ARROW, Malaysia. Member of the International Advisory Committee of IRAW Asia Pacific. Have worked for many years on developing and supporting programmes/projects on gender, rights and development in Bangladesh. Have also worked as a trainer on gender, human rights and development in Bangladesh and elsewhere.
32	Ms Saima Jasam Saleem	At present working as head of the programs for Pakistan/ Afghanistan office of Heinrich- Boll- Foundation. I am responsible for the following thematic areas: like Peace and Security, Traditional societies and Democracy and Political Participation of Women. Overall, working with HBF has professionalized my capacity of organising and participating in numerous discussions, debates and campaigns on human rights issues in the working region. My work also included advocacy and lobbying for the discriminatory laws. Working with HBF over the last fifteen years, I got the chance in facilitating the development process of various institutions and organisations working in the fields of women rights, gender and human rights. Furthermore, I could actively participate in the development of HBF as a politically affiliated institution, which let me understand the comprehensive issues and relations of international Development. I was also in-charge of the Democracy Dialogue project for South Asia Publication Honour Shame and Resistance, (Honour Killing) ASR Publications, Lahore, Pakistan Area of research and interest is legal Pluralism cultural violence and women rights
33	(Mrs). Dr.N.Vijaylakshmi Brara	I am the Gender and NGO Coordinator, which comes in the category of the senior professional. I look after the capacity building of the Institutions at the village level, at cluster level and at the district level keeping besides other things, the Gender equity, Gendered participation and gendered development into account. My research includes a books, articles and papers on culture, gender and grass-root political Institutions.
34	Ms. Khawar Mumtaz	Director Research Unit, Shirkat Gah; experience in: SRHR policy and advocacy; women's political participation; gender and poverty; women and sustainable development; women's rights activist; author of several publications re women in Pakistan.
35	Abhijit Das	*Abhijit Das* is Director of Centre for Health and Social Justice (CHSJ) a policy research and advocacy institution, in India. CHSJ is involved in coordinating various social audit and community monitoring processes in different states of the county which are aimed at strengthening community leadership and voice around public health issues. He has a degree in medicine and has training in obstetrics,

		<p>gynecology and public health. Abhijit has worked for over fifteen years as a grassroots based community health practitioner in North India. Abhijit is founder member of an alliance on men and gender equality called MASVAW, and a reproductive health and rights network Health watch Forum. He is also Clinical Assistant Professor at the Department of Global Health at the School of Public Health and Community Medicine at the University of Washington, Seattle, USA.</p>