

Parwaaz

The academic journal of the Gender Research Cell

Volume XIII | April 2024



From the Editor's Desk

Dear Readers,

It brings us immense pleasure to present to you the 13th edition of Parwaaz-The Journal of the Gender Research Cell.

The Gender Research Cell believes that everything that surrounds us has a gendered aspect which often remains hidden. As a non-commercial, open source academic forum which brings together young scholars from various disciplines to question the segregation between 'gender' and 'non gender issues'; the Gender Research Cell promotes research which does not merely attempt to find the gender aspect that lies underneath and pull it from the margins of academia to its very centre, but attempts to retell the story with gender as the focus. Parwaaz is intended to be the vehicle which would take this journey ahead. We are extremely elated to see that this spirit is very well honoured by the authors of the current edition.

In the insightful paper "Citizenship Unveiled: Gendered Narratives in Literature and Society", Iqra Ansari highlights how discourses around citizenship exclude gender considerations and lends support to marginalised groups, particularly women, in their struggle for rights and equal participation in politics.

Through her commentary "Do not Tresspass: Female Bodies are not the People's Property", Delzine Wankadia builds a case for women's rights and agency over their bodies through an excellent analysis of ban on abortion in the US.

By reviewing Richa Kaul Padte's book 'Cyber Sexy: Rethinking Pornography', Shashwat Shukla initiates a thought-provoking discussion on issues such as sex, consent and intimacy which continue to be stigmatised despite their relevance from a sociological perspective.

In her fascinating commentary "Defying defining Daughters", Divyaa Moharana raises important questions surrounding gender dynamics within the family that often go hidden. Tanisha Kar's riveting study "Slums and the Dynamics of Leisure: A Study on the lives of the Slum Dwellers" looks at the evolution of the concept of leisure and how it reflects societal values, technology and cultural norms. By asking the question "What Leisure means to women living in slums?", Kar's study highlights the intermingling of class and gender.

Mahima Roy and Sambhavya Ghosh Chowdhury present a valuable contribution to this edition by looking at the gendered impact of war through an analysis of the Russia-Ukraine War.

In yet another engrossing study, Sahil Pradhan looks into the lives of women idol makers of Kumartuli, highlighting their economic struggles and gender discrimination in the industry.

The seven papers that compose this edition bring in a huge diversity of issues, ideas and regions that truly represent the ideals that Parwaaz seeks to espouse. We are extremely grateful to the authors for enriching the discourse with their valuable contribution.

We also take this opportunity to update our much valued readers on the publishing status of Parwaaz. Due to certain unforeseen circumstances, we are regrettably going on a hiatus and will halt publication for some time post the release of the 14th edition. Words fall short of describing our gratefulness to your continued support to the initiative. We hope your love and encouragement for Parwaaz would grow and help us achieve new heights.

Warm regards,

Gagan Hitkari

Cherry Hitkari

TABLE OF CONTENTS

From the Editor's Desk	2
Citizenship Unveiled: Gendered Narratives in Literature and Society - Iqra Ansari	5
Do not Trespass: Female Bodies are not the People's Property - Delzine Wankadia	23
Book Review of Richa Kaul Padte's 'Cyber Sexy: Rethinking Pornography'(Padte, 2018) - Shashwat Shukla	28
Defying defining daughters - Divyaa Moharana	35
Slums and the Dynamics of Leisure: A Study on the Lives of the Slum Dwellers - Tanisha Kar	41
The Vicious Paradox of War: The Kaleidoscopic Impact of the Russia-Ukraine Crisis on the Women of Ukraine - Mahima Roy and Sambhavya Ghosh Chowdhury	54
The Goddess in the Lanes: Gender Discrimination and Economic Struggles of Women Idol Makers in Kumartuli - Sahil Pradhan	60

Citizenship Unveiled: Gendered Narratives in Literature and Society

Iqra Ansari

Abstract

Citizenship entails belonging to a community that grants rights and duties based on this membership. It represents both a status and a practice, involving the exercise of rights and the fulfillment of obligations in society. Citizenship theory, rooted in Western political thought, centers on the "*universal citizen*" – an individual with rights engaging in political discourse in the public arena. A significant transformation in the concept of citizenship has arisen through the introduction of a *gender perspective* by feminists and gender equality advocates, leading to notable shifts in interpretations of both citizenship's status and practice. This paper is a literature analysis that critically examines the intersection of gender and citizenship within the context of development theory and practice. Delving into pivotal debates, the study explores the transformative potential of reframing citizenship through a gender perspective, emphasizing the need to expand rights and enhance political participation as fundamental developmental objectives.

The paper includes summaries of essential texts, case studies, and tools related to gender and citizenship, advocating for an approach prioritising individual citizens. The study emphasizes supporting marginalized groups, particularly women, in their pursuit of rights and active involvement in policy and institutional spheres. The highlights challenges arising from the exclusion of gender considerations in citizenship discussions, revealing significant differences in feminist theories regarding the public-private dynamics. The paper argues that women's political citizenship disrupts private patriarchy and family structures, signifying a shift from it with a comprehensive understanding of citizenship requires a dynamic gender relations theory.

Keywords: Citizenship, Gender, Women.

Introduction

Citizenship can be defined as the “*status of a person recognized under the law of a country of belonging*” and denotes an individual’s membership of a sovereign state under international law.¹

Citizenship entails being a part of a community that grants both rights and responsibilities based on this membership. It represents a combination of status and the practice of engaging with the social world by exercising rights and fulfilling obligations (Meer and Sever, 2004: 2).

Over various historical eras, the concept of 'citizenship' has gradually expanded to include more individuals and groups, aiming for equal membership. However, the ideal of equality often conceals the underlying structures of exclusion based on caste hierarchies, gender disparities, and religious divisions, influencing the actual experiences of citizenship.

Throughout history, citizenship evolved through exclusions, marginalizing large segments of society such as colonized communities, slaves, women, and workers. While citizenship encompasses multiple boundaries, it also gives rise to new empowering ideas and practices. Inclusive citizenship should encompass the interests and requirements of all citizens. When viewed from a gender perspective, it emphasizes the equal rights of all women and men, a principle that should be embedded in constitutions, laws, and legal processes. While applying equal standards to all citizens is crucial, it might be insufficient if specific groups face unique challenges and have distinct needs. Different groups of women and men, as well as women of varying ages, classes, or ethnicities, may have specific needs that demand focused attention. Therefore, the emphasis on rights necessitates recognizing the difference between formal and substantive equality. It involves highlighting the outcomes for various groups of women and tailoring the construction of rights to address the specific needs of women who are most adversely affected by the lack of rights targeted by particular reforms (Mukhopadhyay, 2007).

Looking at citizenship from a gender perspective, it surpasses the connection between an individual and the state. It encompasses a wide array of additional social structures, including family units, households, traditional systems, civil society organizations, economic entities, and various other institutions that impact the lives and opportunities of both women and men. While being a citizen grants women the ability to assert their rights independently, the societal identity often still links them to a man, whether as a daughter, sister, or wife. Therefore, it is essential to address not only the formal institutional arrangements at the state level but also informal institutions to enhance and secure women's entitlements as citizens.

¹ IPU. 2005, Nationality and Statelessness: A Handbook for Parliamentarians, http://archive.ipu.org/PDF/publications/nationality_en.pdf

While citizenship is often viewed as a universal right available to everyone, it is deeply influenced by gender. Feminist analyses have questioned conventional ideas of citizenship, highlighting its gender-specific nature and the historical exclusion of individuals who do not conform to cisgender heterosexual norms. Given these complexities and the growing body of work critiquing the state as a singular entity, feminists have been examining feminist interpretations of citizenship that are more encompassing and freer from discrimination.

Gendered Perspectives on Citizenship

In "**Citizenship from a Feminist Lens**" Vaishnavi Pallapothu has critically examined the gendered aspects of citizenship. The article challenges the universal notion of citizenship, highlighting historical exclusions of non-cis men and the associated gender biases. Drawing on various authors, including Sweetman et al., the work explores forces like patriarchal norms and market biases undermining traditional citizenship ideals. The feminist perspective advocates for a broader understanding of citizenship, encompassing legal aspects and agency, promoting cosmopolitan models centered on universal personhood rather than national affiliations.

Traditionally, citizenship has been defined in the context of an individual's civil, political, and social rights and obligations concerning the nation-state. However, upon closer examination, it becomes evident that these expectations are profoundly influenced by gender. The sociological, political, and international relations discourses on citizenship have often overlooked the fact that women continue to be treated as inferior citizens, even in established states. Women's rights lack adequate protection, their contributions to the national economy in both public and private spheres often go unrecognized, and constitutional rights for women are systematically neglected, relegating them to a status of '*second-class citizenship*'. One crucial aspect of citizenship is the right to vote, a right historically denied to women in many countries, often granted much later than men. Additionally, military service, a key duty of citizenship, is frequently viewed as a masculine domain in many nations, limiting or barring non-male individuals from participation. For instance, in countries like South Korea and Singapore, men are obliged to enlist, and fulfilling the role of a soldier-citizen is considered the highest form of patriotic duty.²

The gendered concept of citizenship is influenced by the distinction *between private and public spheres*. Feminist scholars like **Carole Pateman** argue that citizenship is often contingent upon participation in the public sphere, where individuals are expected to be rational and unemotional. This perspective disadvantages women, LGBTQIA community members, and disabled individuals, as they are perceived as bodies associated with the private realm and not fulfilling their public citizen role. Historically, marginalized groups have been excluded from public spaces, leading to the denial of benefits such as a minimum

² Munday, Jennie. 2009, Gendered Citizenship, Sociology Compass 3/2, 249-266

standard of living, access to welfare, health services, bodily integrity, and freedom from violence. Immigrants, refugees, and asylum-seekers are also evaluated based on their economic potential and contribution to the host country's public realm.

Global South feminists start with the premise that "*citizenship needs to be an active concept - not only a status but a practice and process of relating to the social world through the exercise of rights/protections and the fulfillment of obligations*".³ While citizenship is predicated on the concept of universality, Sweetman, Rowlands, and Abou-Habib argue that its operationalization and the lived experiences of citizenship are not. It is insufficient for citizenship to be limited to an active and developing process; it must also incorporate the needs and interests of all parties involved in politics. "This requires an emphasis on equality of outcome, rather than an assumption that everyone starts from a position of equality," as Sweetman et al. succinctly put it. An intersectional feminist perspective on citizenship would consider how a person's gender, sexual orientation, race, class, caste, religion, immigration status, and disability affect their ability to engage in political and civic life and be an "*active citizen*." A feminist understanding of citizenship would be bottom-up and based on an examination of the realities of many marginalized groups' lives because these lived experiences are highly context-specific.

According to Sweetman et al., "a range of different forces, ranging from global markets and businesses that circumvent labor rights, seeing women's work as of secondary importance to men's, undermine the idea of a state which can protect and support human rights for all." These forces "contextualize men as full citizens and women as their dependents." The prevalent state-centric ideas about citizenship, which see it as only a relationship between the individual citizen and the state, would be challenged by a feminist perspective on citizenship. By looking beyond the state and at other social and political institutions like the family, the legal and economic system, and civil society organizations, we can see that there are spaces outside the state where marginalized people can engage as "*engaged citizens*." This would result in the definition of citizenship being expanded to include agency in addition to legal and rights-based provisions. The possibilities of post-state concepts like cosmopolitan or denationalized citizenship, "where citizenship is seen as being predicated on a more universal notion of personhood rather than national belonging," would also be considered in a feminist reconstruction of citizenship (*Citizenship from a Feminist Lens*, 2021).

Gender and Citizenship: Literature Analysis

In their paper on "**Gender and Citizenship**," Diana Owen, and Zerilli explore the gendered aspects of political membership and agency. They critique political science language, revealing hidden assumptions about women. The study emphasizes the need for political science to engage with feminist theory and challenges established frameworks. The

³ Mukhopadhyay Maitrayee and Singh Navsharan, 2007, Gender Justice, Citizenship and Development, Zubaan

discussion sheds light on the complex interplay between suffrage, societal roles, and morality in politics.

The fear that "women's suffrage implied that women and men could be equal privately," as stated by Barbara Nelson, significantly influenced the perspectives of political scientists on crucial political matters. More conservative thinkers, such as *John W. Burgess*, believed that granting women the right to vote would divert them from their traditional roles in voluntary organizations and the family, creating a void in the social fabric. According to Burgess, there were distinct gendered patterns of communal activity that mirrored the natural roles of men and women within the private sphere. He argued that the division of labor in the family served as a model for the division of civic labor. Men, he asserted, were meant for "politics and government," while women's roles were centered around establishing charitable and religious networks in their communities.

Another paper titled "**Gender and Citizenship**" was authored by *Dr. Punita Pathak* Vasant College Rajghat Varanasi. According to her work, the feminist critique challenges traditional liberal, republican, and social-democratic citizenship models, highlighting their exclusionary tendencies related to motherhood, everyday life, and gender roles. Carole Pateman's analysis of women's citizenship focuses on the public/private divide and influences feminist democratic theory. Feminist theories propose inclusive models emphasizing social inclusion, recognition of caregiving rights, and political participation through both institutional presence (gender quotas) and grassroots efforts (politics of difference). The debate centers on equality, difference, work, care, participation, and power, reflecting diverse visions of gender and citizenship.

Feminist scholarship critiques traditional approaches to citizenship – liberalism, republicanism, and social democracy – for excluding women and caregiving roles. **Liberalism's** focus on individual rights neglects motherhood and care work. **Republicanism** emphasizes public virtues but sidelines women and everyday issues. **Social democracy's** universal citizen-worker model separates caregiving from citizenship. Feminist theories propose models for inclusion: one emphasizes the social integration of women and family issues, while another promotes the right to care for and be cared for. In political inclusion, feminists advocate for presence in institutions through quotas and difference through grassroots associations. The discussion centers on equality vs. difference, work vs. care, and participation vs. power.

The challenge faced is to acknowledge women's influence in discussions about the common good without imposing fixed definitions of their interests. Carole Pateman's analysis of women's second-class citizenship, rooted in the public/private divide, has shaped feminist democratic citizenship theory. The French debate on gender parity highlights the complexity of recognizing biological sex in citizenship while overlooking differences based on ethnicity and race. The key question is whether institutionalizing gender differences can occur without essentialist viewpoints. One approach, the materialist-communitarian perspective, focuses on valuing women's caregiving roles in the family within democratic frameworks. This view assumes that women's obligations to care for dependents represent

their substantive interests. Another approach, the pluralist feminist perspective, advocates for women's active participation in politics either through equal representation in the political elite or by organizing oppressed groups in civil society. This pluralist approach aims for a diverse citizenship that incorporates differences in gender, ethnicity, and class within democracy.

Citizenship must be inclusive and cater to the needs of all individuals, emphasizing equal treatment for both women and men. This perspective focuses on recognizing the difference between formal and substantive equality, ensuring tailored rights for women most affected by the lack of rights targeted by specific reforms. Citizenship should be viewed as an active concept, promoting participation and agency. This means encouraging marginalized groups, especially women, to claim their rights and drive social change through dialogue, association, and collective action. Looking through a gender lens, citizenship expands beyond the individual's relationship with the state to encompass various social institutions like family, traditional systems, civil society organizations, and economic institutions. While women can assert their rights as citizens, their identity is often tied to men in various roles. Therefore, it is crucial to address not only formal state-level institutions but also informal ones to secure women's entitlements as citizens.

True citizenship goes beyond formal rights, involving a profound comprehension of democracy's quality. It entails building a society that prioritizes people's interests, eliminates discrimination rooted in stereotypes, and bridges gaps based on economic, social, cultural, or territorial differences.

Literary work by Indian writers:

Repeatedly, it has been observed that even in liberal democracies where the constitution grants equal rights to all citizens, such legal provisions do not guarantee protection against discrimination and political marginalization. This paradox is evident in India, where despite the country's constitution advocating for an inclusive democracy and gender and caste equality, there is pervasive gender-based discrimination, exclusion, and violence. Natasha Behl, in her work "**Gendered Citizenship**," delves into Indian citizenship by analyzing sexual violence laws and conducting an in-depth ethnography of the Sikh community. This research explores the contradictory nature of Indian democracy, which severely impacts its institutions and endangers its citizens. Behl's study challenges established academic notions about democracy, citizenship, religion, and gender. Through this analysis, it becomes evident that religious spaces can serve as arenas for redefining democratic participation. Additionally, the study uncovers how some women employ unexpected methods within religious communities to connect gender equality and religious freedom as shared objectives. "Gendered Citizenship" offers a groundbreaking exploration, shedding light on the unfulfilled promise of democratic equality and

identifying potential avenues and practices that could foster more egalitarian relationships.⁴

This updated edition of "**Gendered Citizenship**," first published in 2005, explores the gender aspects of citizenship. It analyzes the language of citizenship that emerged during resistance against colonial rule in late colonial India, emphasizing the gendered notion of community, both national and political. The book discusses how the Indian Constitution transformed citizenship, highlighting the diverse forms of citizenship existing at that time and examining how these concepts persist in contemporary society. It particularly explores the evolving landscapes of citizenship, including flexible citizenship with varying entitlements, in contrast to stable citizenship spaces. The book advocates for fostering interactive public spaces to strengthen shared citizenship bonds.

Gendered Identities and the Dynamics of Nationality and Naturalization

Throughout history and in many societies today, women have been systematically excluded from the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. In the early days of the United States, married women were not recognized as independent entities under the law; they were considered under the protection of their husbands. This meant they couldn't own property, make contracts, or have custody of their children (Kabeer 2002). Even in contemporary times, challenges like insufficient childcare and economic disparities continue to hinder full citizenship for numerous women in the US.

Since the late 1800s, legal experts have been working to resolve conflicts of laws in matters of nationality. Initially, this was done through international conferences at The Hague and later through the League of Nations. Feminist groups such as the *International Council of Women*, *Women's International League for Peace and Freedom*, and the *International Woman's Suffrage Alliance*, put an end to the "unitary" system in favor of the "dualist" system, which means that marriage does not affect nationality. Despite this considerable mobilization, the Hague Convention of 1930 on the conflict of laws in matters of nationality maintained the discrimination. Under pressure from international women's organizations, an advisory committee was established within the League of Nations in 1931 to make equality between the sexes in matters of nationality a principle, through cooperation between states. Nevertheless, it was only in 1957 that a convention on the nationality of married women was adopted by the United Nations, affirming the principle that men and women are equal before the law in the acquisition, modification, or conservation of their nationality.

Gendered Citizenship and Women's Movement

The gendering of citizenship lies in the creation of a public-private divide, wherein male domination and female subordination are structured by the strict separation of hierarchical spheres with males belonging to the public and females to the private (Turbin 2003).

⁴ (Library Genesis: Natasha Behl - Gendered Citizenship: Understanding Gendered Violence in Democratic India, n.d.)

Feminist critique of citizenship hinges on two issues; *one, the need to challenge the notion of community, and two, the need to break the binaries of private and public which have structured the theorization of citizenship rights.*

The idea that women and the family belong to the private domain has led to the belief that they are not politically relevant. This belief has influenced citizenship theories over time. Grant (1991) argues that the foundation theories of both Hobbes and Rousseau portray the transition from the imagined state of nature into orderly societies exclusively in terms of what they both assume to be natural male characteristics - the aggressive nature of men (in Hobbes) and the capacity for reason in men (in Rousseau). Women are not part of this process and are therefore excluded from the social and remain close to “nature”. Later citizenship theories accepted these assumptions.

Gendered citizenship has three aspects of understanding rights for women. *Firstly*, it involves questioning the way the public is associated with material and private with culture. It argues that the private, which includes family, involves the distribution of resources and is as much a material part of defining the public as is cultural. Gendered citizenship is concerned with the gendered access to infrastructure, housing, and livelihoods. *Secondly*, the citizenship rights of women are framed within the social structures of caste, class, and ethnicity, which make women experience rights differently. *Thirdly*, gendered citizenship involves the conceptualization of this differentiation through the theorization of multiple patriarchies. As feminists have argued, there is no one “patriarchy”. There are “**multiple patriarchies**” based on the structures of caste, class, and ethnicity. In India, where the uneven distribution of poverty and resources is related to regional unevenness, citizenship rights have a spatial dimension and are differentially experienced.

Additionally, in India, political citizenship is understood as having a right to vote. However, it is important to consider whether this makes women citizens and to what extent their formal rights give them substantive rights as citizens. Also, though women have found space in formal politics, it is important to consider which class and caste they belong to. These are some of the questions that need to be addressed within the discussion of gendered citizenship.

It should be noted that **Marshall's** analysis appears to be most applicable to the British context. Studies have demonstrated that Marshall's framework does not apply to other nations like Germany, France, and the Netherlands. In these countries, citizenship rights have evolved uniquely based on distinct national political contexts and historical backgrounds. Marshall has faced criticism for overlooking the significance of social movements in shaping citizenship rights (Giddens, 1982; Turner, 1993). Notably, women actively participated and often held pivotal roles in these social struggles.

Article 9 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) asserts that laws and practices treating women differently than men based on nationality are considered discrimination against women automatically. This provision, echoing the principles outlined in the 1957 Convention on the Nationality of

Married Women regarding women's equal rights to their nationality, specifically focuses on preventing women from losing their nationality due to marriage with a foreign spouse. It states:

*States parties shall grant women equal rights with men to acquire, change or retain their nationality. They shall ensure that neither marriage to an alien nor change of nationality by the husband during marriage shall automatically change the nationality of the wife, render her stateless, or force upon her the nationality of the husband.*⁵

CEDAW further recognizes women's equal right to bestow their nationality onto children, by indicating:

*States parties shall grant women equal rights with men concerning the nationality of their children.*⁶

In addition to violating anti-discrimination obligations, the unequal treatment of women's nationality in law and practice hinders the realization of other rights, including the right to a nationality and freedom from statelessness, the right to equality in the family, the ability to participate equally in public and political life, freedom of movement, access to public services and the rights to housing, health, and education, among other economic, social and cultural rights.

Women's Demand for Citizenship Rights

In the 19th century, the social reform movement informed the construction of anti-colonial nationalism. Kumar (1993) and Sen (2004) suggest that in this phase there was an emphasis on women's questions rather than on gendered relations. Specifically, Kumar (1993) notes that the early 19th-century movements stressed the need for reform and did not challenge the areas of male control and oppression.

Rights were articulated in the social reform phase at two levels. Firstly, it focused on the atrocities practiced on women, such as sati (burning alive a widow on the funeral pyre of her husband), female infanticide, child marriage, enforced celibacy, and ascetic widowhood. The provocation for intervention came from the criticism of the colonial authorities and missionaries about the low position of Indian women in contemporary society. Secondly, the reformers saw women's education as a way to ameliorate their status, but this was to adapt women of the rising middle class to a Western milieu (Kumar 1993). The exception to this was the initiative taken by Jyotiba Phule in Poona to open up schools for girls and then for Dalits.

Before the 1970s, the nationalist movement played a crucial role in advocating for political rights, as noted by scholars like Sen (2004) and Kumar (1993). Women actively participated in political activities, leading to the formation of women's political associations. These associations served a dual purpose: facilitating women's access to education and political

⁵ Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), art. 9 (1).

⁶ CEDAW, art. 9 (2).

training while also giving rise to three types of women's organizations. First, there were nationalist organizations like Bharat Stree-Mahamandal in 1908, the Women's Indian Association in 1917, and the National Council of Indian Women in 1925. Secondly, mainstream political parties established women's wings and engaged women in politics, exemplified by the All-India Women's Conference in 1926 affiliated with the Indian National Congress and the National Federation of Indian Women (NFIW), the women's wing of the Communist Party of India (CPI), established in 1954. The third category comprised voluntary associations inspired by Gandhian principles of welfare and service, such as the Jyoti Sangh formed in 1934. These diverse organizations represented distinct models of women's participation in the public sphere.

Faulks (2005) identifies four factors that explain the nature of citizenship rights. *Firstly*, social movements have struggled to extend citizenship rights to various groups, including women, ethnic minorities, disabled individuals, and sexual minorities. *Secondly*, the nature of ideology plays a role. For example, in countries where socialism has been influential, such as Germany, Sweden, and Britain, social rights in the form of publicly funded services have been more extensive than in countries such as the US, where socialism has had minimal influence. *Thirdly*, economic factors are crucial to understanding citizenship. The constraints of the market economy have limited the nature of citizenship. *Fourthly*, the nature of the liberal state is essential to understanding citizenship in contemporary society. The nature of citizenship rights is framed within the structures of the ideology of the state, the economy, and the intervention by social movements.

Bridge Report Analysis on Gender and Citizenship

"Citizenship can empower some individuals, validating their status and facilitating positive transformations. Conversely, it can alienate and exclude others, reinforcing divisions based on gender, class, or race. This resource pack offers practical approaches to harness citizenship positively. It comprises **an Overview Report** discussing key points related to citizenship, gender, and development, along with a **Supporting Resources Collection** summarizing case studies and tools. Additionally, **the Gender and Development in Brief newsletter** explores relevant topics." (*Gender and Citizenship* | BRIDGE, n.d.)

"In this **Overview Report**, the redefinition of citizenship from a gender standpoint by feminists and women's rights activists is examined. It underscores the importance of perceiving women's rights struggles as societal challenges, not just minority issues. The report showcases examples of collective endeavors to secure rights and influence, demonstrating their potential to create more inclusive citizenship for marginalized groups."

Recommendations of the Report:

- Address issues left out of citizenship rights, such as women's safety at home, childcare, and sexuality, with public or institutional solutions.

- Incorporate a gender perspective into all areas of activity by practicing gender mainstreaming in policy-making, even in supposedly "gender-neutral" domains.
- Implement affirmative action to increase women's representation in formal political and decision-making bodies to advance gender equality.
- Conduct needs assessments to base development initiatives on real people's experiences and promote gender-specific needs in policymaking.
- Provide policymakers with training in gender analysis and planning.
- Support social movements, including human rights and gender equality NGOs, through resources and capacity-building in advocacy and lobbying skills.
- Create and utilize spaces for dialogue between civil society organizations and government.
- Foster networks among organizations working on similar issues to encourage dialogue, information sharing, and effective strategies

Supporting Resources Collection:

Citizenship is a complex concept with practical implications for development interventions and policy. Development projects that empower marginalized groups to participate in decision-making implicitly engage with citizenship concepts. Citizenship involves concrete institutions, policies, and structures that people can shape using ideas of rights and participation. This collection of resources is intended to guide development policymakers and practitioners in promoting gender equality through rights and participation. These resources demonstrate how development projects can consider the roles of men and women, and their gendered citizenship, and work toward positive changes in these roles.

Gender and Development in Brief - 'Gender and Citizenship' - Edition 14:

In Brief is a concise newsletter focused on a priority gender theme. This edition explores the theme of gender and citizenship, starting with an overview and recommendations. It includes two case studies that highlight practical responses to key issues. The first case study examines Naripokkho in Bangladesh, which redefines citizenship rights and responsibilities to include women's needs and ensure their access to policy and institutions. The second case study explores cross-border anti-violence efforts in the US and Mexico, demonstrating how membership and belonging concepts are renegotiated as new alliances form based on shared interests.⁷

⁷ Gender and Citizenship | BRIDGE. (n.d.). <https://archive.ids.ac.uk/bridge/bridge-publications/cutting-edge-packs/gender-and-citizenship.html>

Feminist Approach to Citizenship

The concept of citizenship and its significance for women have been subjects of ongoing debate and disagreement. Carole Pateman's influential work served as the starting point for the feminist reevaluation of citizenship, primarily critiquing the distinction between the public and private domains (1985, 1988, 1989). Over the past decade, feminist discussions on citizenship have brought to light the contradictions between the core principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity/solidarity in the public and political realms, and the persistent presence of gender-based inequality. Feminist scholars argue that women's exclusion from the public and political spheres is, in part, a result of structural inequalities within the family and the labor market. Disagreements within feminist scholarship extend to definitions of power, the boundaries between the public and private spheres, and the visions for achieving complete citizenship for women.

The feminist discourse on "equality and difference" is closely linked to citizenship as both concepts touch upon notions of justice, political participation, power, and equal rights (Bussemaker and Voet 1998: 283). Within feminist scholarship, there exists a tension between perspectives centered on gender equality and those focused on recognizing sexual differences. Feminist approaches to citizenship draw inspiration from established philosophical traditions while simultaneously expanding beyond them. The diversity within feminism is substantial, as it encompasses a wide range of major philosophical viewpoints (Kymlicka 1990: 238).⁸

Grassroot Citizenship

A significant portion of the literature addressing the intersection of gender and citizenship tends to focus on the structural barriers that hinder women from fully exercising their citizenship rights. These barriers primarily involve laws, policies, and formal public institutions. Nonetheless, active citizenship can also manifest itself at the grassroots level through micro-level, informal community engagement. Effective initiatives led by civil society actors can empower individuals to claim their rights and contribute to the development of active citizenship in local communities. The formation of associations, in particular, has proven to be successful in fostering individual agency. In some cases, women have played a key role in helping community members access essential services and have assumed leadership positions within religious and kin-based organizations. Nevertheless, the persistence of male social privilege in more formalized public spheres indicates that continued efforts are required to challenge exclusionary networks.

Other Important Studies on Gendered Citizenship

1. **Caiazza's Study on Women's Political Activism:** Caiazza's report explores the experiences and leadership development of women engaged in religious and

⁸ Gender and Citizenship Politics and Agency in France, Britain and Denmark, pp. 31 – 43

interfaith social justice organizing. The study aims to understand the intersection of women's religious activism and social organizing, highlighting six strategies: providing role models, addressing fears and anger, building connections across race and class, gently pushing women into political leadership, developing mentoring programs, and meeting women where they are.

2. **Oxfam's 'Raising Her Voice' Program:** Oxfam's global initiative, 'Raising Her Voice,' empowers impoverished women to participate effectively in governance. The program focuses on amplifying women's voices, increasing their influence, and holding decision-making institutions accountable. The article discusses a case study from Bolivia, exploring the achievements and challenges faced by the Cochabamba Platform of Women for Citizenship under the RHV project.
3. **F. Jahan's Perspective on Bangladeshi Immigrant Women:** Focusing on Bangladeshi immigrant women in the UK, Jahan challenges stereotypes about these women being victims of patriarchal ideologies or hindered by Bangladeshi culture. The article argues that it is not their cultural background or religion that limits their agency but their identity as immigrants, caught between conflicting cultural elements.
4. In her influential 1986 work, "**Feminism and Nationalism in the Third World**," *Kumari Jayawardena* delved into the involvement of women in nationalist movements across Asia, South Asia, and the Middle East during the late 19th and early 20th centuries (Jayawardena 1986). She highlighted the active participation of women from various backgrounds, including the middle and working classes, in the struggle for national self-determination and the end of colonial rule. Jayawardena's research revealed the complex interplay of class, capitalism, and the diverse experiences of women and men within these societies (Jayawardena 1986). According to Jayawardena, women's responses to these movements were diverse. Some women advocated for equal rights within the existing capitalist and post-colonial frameworks, while others joined revolutionary movements, seeking broader social and economic changes, and infusing these struggles with a feminist perspective (Jayawardena 1986). In her exploration of women's roles in nationalist movements, Jayawardena noted the leaders' recognition of women's emancipation as a significant objective. However, she also identified conservative elements within the reformist factions, which upheld traditional family structures and relegated women to subordinate positions. Despite women's active involvement, their emancipation often took a backseat to the broader goals of nationalist liberation. Following the attainment of independence, many newly formed states expected women to revert to traditional gender roles, reinforcing their subordinate status (Jayawardena 1986). This phenomenon, where women were pushed back into the private sphere after the revolution, has been corroborated by other

scholars examining nationalism and nationalist movements (Werbner and Yuval-Davis 1999; Blom et al. 2000; Ranchod-Nilsson and Tetreault 2000b).

Recommendations:

Some recommendations made by *Shamim Meer with Charlie Sever* in their Gender and Citizenship Overview Report:⁹

- Policymakers should integrate women's concerns into development policies, addressing issues like safety, childcare, and sexuality as essential citizenship rights.
- Recognize and respect women's diverse roles in all aspects of life, challenging cultural norms, and promoting gender mainstreaming across policies.
- Implement targeted interventions and affirmative action to empower women, providing access to resources and opportunities where they face discrimination.
- Conduct needs assessments through participatory methods, incorporating gender analysis, and utilizing local gender expertise for effective policy planning and implementation.
- Allocate resources to enhance women's participation in civil society organizations, providing training in advocacy and lobbying skills to amplify their impact.
- Foster dialogue and collaboration between civil society groups and government institutions, valuing their expertise in shaping gender-sensitive policies.
- Encourage the formation of networks among organizations, researchers, and policymakers, promoting inclusive, non-donor-driven agendas.
- Empower civil society organizations to launch campaigns addressing exclusion and advocating for women's rights, utilizing available entry points into decision-making processes.
- Invest in skills training, focusing on advocacy and networking, to effectively engage with policymakers and amplify organizational voices.

Conclusion

Citizenship goes beyond mere social positioning; it entails active engagement in the community's life, progress, and decision-making. The changes in the interpretations and application of citizenship, as mentioned earlier, suggest an enhanced and more vibrant collaboration among individuals, citizen groups, and governing bodies. Fostering active and equal citizenship rooted in social responsibility is not just a goal but a necessity.

⁹ GENDER and CITIZENSHIP Overview Report: https://www.kit.nl/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/463_Citizenship-report.pdf

Addressing gender-based stereotypes and promoting equal political representation are essential steps in this direction. By emphasizing comprehensive education, encouraging civic participation, and supporting NGOs and civil society, we can create a society where every individual is empowered and engaged. When women and men participate equally in decision-making processes, it not only enhances social cohesion but also strengthens political life, leading to a higher quality of life for all. Embracing these principles, we can build a society where everyone's voice is heard, rights are respected, and social inclusion becomes a reality for everyone.

Thus, the only way forward to this is educating girls from diverse backgrounds which holds the potential to bring democracy closer, provided that educational institutions construct a flexible, contestable, and adaptable model of the '**citizen**.' With global shifts in gender relations and changes within social class, cultures, and communities, educational institutions play a vital role in aligning citizenship identities with contemporary transformations and the principles of human rights and social justice. By imparting knowledge, respect, and confidence to girls, and empowering them as individuals and community members, education grants them democratic pedagogic rights.¹⁰ When girls develop political literacy, a strong sense of civic responsibility, and a commitment to active citizenship, they are better positioned as adults to advocate for egalitarian reforms essential for human rights and social justice. To ensure this empowerment, it is crucial to guarantee women's 'privacy, protection, and autonomy' both within and outside the educational system, as highlighted by scholars like Yuval-Davies and Werbner (1999).¹¹ Embracing the principle of gender equality and recognizing diversity within the educational framework, supported by civic curricula, signifies the first step toward acknowledging women's legitimate place as citizens in a democratic society.

¹⁰ Bernstein, B. (1996) *Pedagogy, Symbolic Control, and Identity: theory, research, critique* Basil Bernstein, London: Taylor and Francis

¹¹ Yuval-Davis and Werbner, P (eds) (1999) *Women, Citizenship and Difference*, London: Zed Books

References

- Bussemaker, J., & Voet, R. (1998). Citizenship and gender: theoretical approaches and historical legacies. *Critical Social Policy*, 18(56), 277-307. <https://doi.org/10.1177/026101839801805602>
- G. (2015, October 18). *Gender and citizenship - GSDRC*. GSDRC - Governance, Social Development, Conflict and Humanitarian Knowledge Services. <https://gsdrc.org/topic-guides/gender/gender-and-citizenship/>
- Gender and Citizenship: [https://epgp.inflibnet.ac.in/epgpdata/uploads/epgp_content/S000456WS/P000861/M021025/ET/1500015995QUAD-1-Gender and Citizen .pdf](https://epgp.inflibnet.ac.in/epgpdata/uploads/epgp_content/S000456WS/P000861/M021025/ET/1500015995QUAD-1-Gender_and_Citizen_.pdf)
- Gender and citizenship, Participatory methods: <https://www.participatorymethods.org/resource/gender-and-citizenship>
- *Gender and Citizenship: Politics and Agency in France, Britain and Denmark* (pp. 31-43). Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139106672.005> <https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/abs/gender-and-citizenship/feminist-approaches-to-citizenship/36E6B5621EA68A4E0B02F2E8183A09F6>
- *Gendered Citizenship and Women's Movement*. (2009, April 25). Economic and Political Weekly. <https://www.epw.in/journal/2009/17/review-womens-studies-review-issues-specials/gendered-citizenship-and-womens>
- Guerry, L. (2020, June 22). Gender, nationality, and naturalization. Encyclopédie d'histoire numérique de l'Europe. Retrieved from <https://ehne.fr/en/encyclopedia/themes/gender-and-europe/gender-citizenship-in-europe/gender-nationality-and-naturalization>
- Kaufman, J., & Williams, K. (2017, November 30). Nationalism, Citizenship, and Gender. *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of International Studies*. Retrieved 8 Nov. 2023, from <https://oxfordre.com/internationalstudies/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190846626.01.0001/acrefore-9780190846626-e-58>
- Library Genesis: Natasha Behl - Gendered Citizenship: Understanding Gendered Violence in Democratic India. (n.d.). <https://www.libgen.is/book/index.php?md5=E3F7FC1D5E37E6801F286424FEF4B90D#>
- Madeleine Arnot. (2003) Gender, education, and citizenship <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000146734>
- Mahmud, S. and Musembi, C. N. (2011). 'Gender and Citizenship at the Grassroots: Assessing the Effect of NGO Initiatives in Social Mobilization and Political Empowerment in Kenya and Bangladesh', Citizenship, Participation and Accountability – Development Research Centers
- Meer, S., Sever, C., & Mukhopadhyay, M. (2004). *Gender and Citizenship Overview Report*. Institute of Development Studies. ISBN 1 85864 467 4. Retrieved from

https://www.kit.nl/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/463_Citizenship-report.pdf
<https://archive.ids.ac.uk/bridge/bridge-publications/cutting-edge-packs/gender-and-citizenship.html>

- Meer, S. and Sever, C. (2004). 'Gender and Citizenship: Overview Report', BRIDGE Development Gender, Institute of Development Studies, Brighton Gender and Citizenship | BRIDGE. (n.d.).
- Mukhopadhyay, M. (2007). 'Situating Gender and Citizenship in Development Debates: Towards a Strategy' in Gender Justice, Citizenship and Development, eds. M. Mukhopadhyay and N. Singh, International Development Research Centre, Ottawa, pp. 263-314
- Owen, D., & Zerilli, L. (1991). Gender and citizenship. *Society*, 28, 27-34.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02695685>
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/225849222_Gender_and_citizenship
- Pallapothu Vaishnavi, (2021, April 5). *Citizenship from a Feminist Lens*. GSP.
<https://www.gendersecurityproject.com/post/citizenship-from-a-feminist-lens>
- Roy, A. (2013). *Gendered Citizenship*. Orient Blackswan.
<https://www.orientblackswan.com/details?id=9788125052845>
- United Nations Human Rights, Discrimination against women in nationality Working Group on discrimination against women and girls
<https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/Women/WG/DiscriminationAgainstWomenNationality.pdf>
- Walby, S. (1994). IS CITIZENSHIP GENDERED? *Sociology*, 28(2), 379-395.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/42857698>

Author Bio

Iqra Ansari is a master's student pursuing her postgraduate degree in Social Exclusion and Inclusive Policy from Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi. She is a writer at heart but has a rich background and experience in diverse fields such as consulting, HR, teaching, content writing, and community engagement. She got her first article published by Kindle Publications as part of an anthology.

Do not Trespass: Female Bodies are not the People's Property

Delzine Wankadia

The Law. The Constitution. They are the 'man'-made intangible entities that differentiate right from wrong, moral from immoral, acceptable from unacceptable, and just from unjust. It is a guidebook to be an 'ideal' citizen, and in return to honour your commitment to pursue this confounding, yet appealing idealism, you are rewarded protection and, regardless of your commitment, certain rights as well. Justice instigates the notion of all being equal before the law, which is perfectly captured when one sees the scales of justice being aligned and balanced. However, does that accurately reflect the reality of today? How would one feel when personal choices about something as intimate as one's body are subjected to the scrutiny of the law and viewed as something that needs to be 'regulated' and 'corrected' to accommodate society's standards?

Abortion, the right to have one, has been and continues to be one of the most contentious topics over decades. Abortion is the act of voluntarily terminating one's pregnancy, the reason for which is embedded in her choices that are mainly social and economic. Anyone who seeks to avail of abortion, a human right waiting in abandonment to be explored, must have complete agency to do so. With history as a witness, women have been held back from exercising, let alone entertaining the thought of their bodily autonomy. Interestingly, that has not always been the case for abortion. Up until the mid-19th century, abortion was not a victim of legal or religious scrutiny as profoundly as it is today. Women could freely seek these services whenever they desired (Winny, 2022). Mid-wives often provided such services. Considering the increasing demand for these services during that time, mid-wives posed a social and economic threat to the male-dominated profession of doctors. The doctors, to protect their status and eliminate the mid-wives, rallied against the cause of abortion. All it took for females to lose their bodily autonomy today was an imbalance for the better and possibly a hint of envy that occurred centuries ago. In India, however, abortion was a sin, perhaps a sinister act, because its consequences were equivalent to that of kidnapping today (Berer, 2017)(Bhujel, 2022). It is hard to imagine, let alone boast about justice and equality when someone is put through such a horrendous experience when she makes *her own* choice about *her own* body and *her own* life. Her choice which affects nobody but herself.

Every abortion story is unique. Some females are part of toxic relationships, while some are not emotionally mature and charged to go through pregnancy. And that is okay. Would it be correct to subject a newborn to profanity and an emotionally stressed environment, the consequences of which could have dire impacts on the child's future? Would it be suitable for a newborn to be left in the care of someone who does not understand the extent of care and responsibility needed to nurture the child? It is necessary to comprehend that women are not limited to being earmarked for storing a foetus. They lead a life too. Above all, the presence of any restrictions, stringent or not, would disproportionately affect the most marginalised, discriminated and forgotten. Pregnancy tends to hamper the ability of many women to achieve their full potential in their careers or education. This is because the females, after giving birth, assume all the responsibilities of the newborn, especially in a highly gender-imbalanced society such as India. This is more pronounced in the cluster of an informal labour force, accounting for the majority of the women, which not only does not account for their economic contribution but also fails to factor in the limited flexibility a female can access to return to this labour force post birth. Hence, an absence of abortion could be a likely fuel to enforce the female stereotype for as long as possible.

Opponents of abortion often label themselves to be 'pro-life,' suggesting advocating for the unborn. The notion of what is inside a woman's body breathes life is the foundation of their argument. Or that is what they think. The question - at what point of foetal development can the foetus claim to possess human life? - is an enigma that remains unexplained by science or philosophy. Therefore, to not bruise one's conscience, the time of aborting a foetus is preferred to be kept to a minimum by law. Recently, legislation introduced and passed in Texas, USA called the Heartbeat Bill states that abortion after six weeks of impregnation would be illegal, regardless of the cause. Medical experts argue the lack of a scientific basis for such legislation. Many are in the dark about their pregnancy at the end of six weeks. What they claim to be a 'heartbeat' is scientifically proven to be an electrical activity of cells. This does not connote life. 'Heartbeat' is merely a play of words to instigate an emotional response, not a pragmatic one. Such legislation snatches away from women one thing they can call their own: their body, their identity. With such legislation, fundamental rights such as the right to freedom are stripped. Propelling the unwilling to birth the unwanted is injustice enough since it diminishes the quality of life for both.

Unsafe abortion is one of the leading causes of mortality among women of childbearing age. The extent of abortion safety can be determined based on the restrictions prescribed by the law and the availability and access to safe abortion. This is possible with trained doctors, the public's perspective, facilities and funding. Though India has achieved remarkable strides by framing the laws around abortion to be less restrictive, it has failed to expand the provision of safe abortion methods. Therefore, regardless of the extent or existence of restrictions and regulations for abortion, people would opt for abortion if they wanted to. Be it legal or not, expensive or not, fatal or not, if there is an iota of possibility that she can lead a life she desires by, for once, being in charge and control, she will. No law could 'restrict' her from embracing and hoping for that kernel of possibility to be a reality. It is

up to the government to remain unconcerned by staggering deaths due to unsafe abortion or to safeguard preventable deaths and set an example for other nations.

Lastly, opponents rightly point out that one should not engage in sexual activity when the foreseeable consequences of pregnancy are known, in which case accountability for the outcome needs to be taken. There are often times when the couple uses one or more contraceptives to minimise the very outcome that defines her life. However, in that case, can it not be implied that the female then holds no moral or philosophical obligation to give life to something she invested so much effort in preventing? Aren't her wants and needs accounted for? There are some nations, such as the Dominican Republic, that ban abortion even in cases of rape and incest. Does the government expect an 11-year-old rape victim to bear a child when she can barely fathom the gravity of changes in her body? Have they no idea the emotional and mental toll, this can have on the rest of her life? Stooping thus far to make oneself feel pride about what they did being right and believing they were on the right side of history when all they did was smash a breathing life before them to smithereens. Abortion must not be a privilege and, like any basic healthcare procedure, must be ubiquitous.

What is justice when the female body in many parts of the world is practically owned by the government, given that there exists a set of instructions of what one can and cannot do with it? Ironically, such rampant unfairness and inequality continue to breed in the name of law and justice, where Goddess Themis, a personification of justice, happens to be a woman. One can often see her statue blinded by the scarf, which denotes fairness to all, but, presently, it might ironically seem that she is, after all, evidently blinded by the idea of impartiality. What's one's own by birth cannot be used as an asset to serve and balance the cause and conscience of others. It is entirely her own, and what should be done with it will be at her discretion. What the government can do is merely give her the opportunity and the choice to practice her right to be human.

References

- Berer, M. (2017). Abortion law and policy around the world: In search of decriminalization. *Health and Human Rights Journal*, 19(1), 13–27.
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5473035/pdf/hhr-19-013.pdf>
- Bhujel, P. (2022). RIGHT TO ABORTION UNDER ANCIENT INDIAN JURISPRUDENCE AND CONTEMPORARY LEGAL SYSTEM: A COMPARATIVE STUDY. *Education and Society*.
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/363638839_RIGHT_TO_ABORTION_UNDER_ANCIENT_INDIAN_JURISPRUDENCE_AND_CONTEMPORARY_LEGAL_SYSTEM_A_COMPARATIVE_STUDY#:~:text=Under%20the%20present%20Legal%20system,the%20Constitution%20of%20India%2C%201950.
- Winny, A. (2022, October 26). *A Brief History of Abortion in the U.S.* | Hopkins Bloomberg Public Health Magazine. Hopkins Bloomberg Public Health.
<https://magazine.publichealth.jhu.edu/2022/brief-history-abortion-us>

Author Bio

Delzine is a graduate of Symbiosis School of Economics in Pune. She has been part of the 2022-23 cohort of The Gender Lab Fellowship which gave her space to explore and understand the lived realities of adolescent girls in schools across Mumbai with the intention to build awareness amongst girls about self, their potential and the gender stereotypes that surround them. The fellowship was a pivotal period for Delzine, enabling her to question the existing narratives in her own life. She is a cinephile and is almost always in awe with anything and everything new that crosses her path.

Book Review of Richa Kaul Padte's 'Cyber Sexy: Rethinking Pornography' (Padte, 2018)

Shashwat Shukla

The first section (Chapters 1 and 2) of the book builds a social and individual historical account of pornography and sexual encounters – it looks at what has been called 'pornographic' in society in recent history and how personal sexual encounters have been shaped by the 'digital era'. The second section (Chapters 3, 4 and 5) look at various demographics which may be considered marginalised or sub-altern in their exploration of sex and sexuality through the internet. The third section (Chapters 6, 7 and 8) looks at what we want from our sexual encounters and how that faces up against 'reality'. In the digital era, desire can find various anonymous forms of expression and communication. However, opposition in the form of prohibitionist laws complicated by the lack of understanding of what 'consent' is, creates complex issues for the 'cyber' as well as real profiles involved. The final section (Chapters 9 and 10) establishes the 'emergence' of a community of intimacy and connection on the internet. It also asks for a shift beyond dichotomous judgement of good or bad, legal or illegal, in our order to establish a freedom of sexual expression as a corollary to the freedom of expression that we value as a society.

Intersectionality as a tool for learning and observing the cultural diffusion of traits (Rigoni, 2012) remains the core driver of the book 'Cyber Sexy'. Richa Kaul Padte, as an Indian immigrant to the United Kingdom, uses her intersectional social positioning as an Indian migrant to Britain with a significant experience of both societies as a female to complicate well-held notions - both theoretical and practical - on pornography, but manages to reach a larger ontological pursuit. That is the pursuit of complicating the understanding of what counts as 'sexual pleasure', and how it is both produced and consumed in the digital world in her book.

She begins the book by creating a brief historical outline about the attempts at erasing any historical outline of the human expressions of sexuality and sexual activities that we have engaged in over time. She shows how in the Victorian era, the discovery of the openly 'sexual' art and architecture within the excavated ruins of the city of Pompeii began a

century long effort by the aristocracy, clergy and the elite classes to keep them 'under lock and key'. She then traces such efforts down to the latest anti-porn laws and bans enacted by various societies to regulate what they term as pornography. She also traces the subaltern artistic expression which has remained as the vanguard exposing such elite attempts at policing morality and desire, while also remaining avenues for expression. Padte then adds intersectional layers to different terms and subjective ideas associated with pornography. Objectification, Experience, Culture, Desire, Freedom, Intimacy, and the most important of them all - Consent.

Here, a theoretical examination of the text reveals that what Padte attempts brings to light the 'cultural diffusion' that causes, as with all other forms of globalisation, the cross-pollination of ideas and expressive interactions of desire, sexuality, and modes of pleasure. Pornographic magazines, video production sites, and sexual fan fiction, all 'emerge' (to use Padte's derived terminology) as forms of shared expression of intimacy and desire.

Padte questions our biased view of bodily objectification, purity and defilement, imagery and empowerment, which guide our prohibitory philosophy towards it. She aims to describe how sex, defying our biased expectations from it, remains a common and mundane human trait. She then shows how a distinct colonial (also read Christian) moral cage that affects most of the worldview in colonial societies has led to our laws, pedagogy, and ontology, in general, to attach a 'punitive' and 'disgusted' outlook to all things sexual.

And this is where we witness the centrepiece of her investigation of the topic - that of Consent. It runs as a central theme throughout the book's chapters and her ultimate aim is a literary examination of practical complications of a theoretically uncomplicated notion. Its effects on and absence from different stages of production, sharing, and consumption of sexual content in the digital world remain the central lever affecting our notions about sexuality and desire in general.

Padte does not indulge in the 'Sex wars' debates that raged in feminist circles for the past few decades on whether atypical sexual acts and pornography, in general, were empowering or derogatory to the status of women in society (Showden, 2016). She moves the debate to relational equities of consent. The equity of concerns of consent between men and women, private individuals and large corporations creating sexual content, and between sexual communities and their stigmatising societies and governments.

Furthermore, the investigation of the consent paradigm across different social categories, political opinions, age groups, and economic strata is not an attempt at looking at a functionalist lens towards pornography which establishes value judgement to it as a 'good or bad' social fact based on the 'uses' it finds in society. The aim is the reorientation of our mechanism of understanding of sexual content.

She does not indulge in a functional analysis of sexual representation and its use/effects on social dynamics (Döring & Miller, 2021; Gurevich et al., 2017). She instead indulges in a realist understanding (McGlynn & Ward, 2009) of sexual interaction by looking beyond the act and into the social manifestations of impact, governance, understanding, and representation that make sex and its experience as '*gross, messy, sweaty, unique, chaotic and unpredictable*' as humanity itself.

A critique of the views given by Padte's view that just an 'imagination' of humiliation or fantasies of porn consumers does not result in any real harm can be made from contrary literature that looks at the 'messaging' from humiliation and fantasy which passes on into real-world behaviour (Whisnant, 2016). However, Padte herself counters this belief by pointing to how multiple respondents to her study stressed that ad films or other forms of media perform much higher damage by permeating real-world sexist behaviours and tendencies rather than porn alone.

The main object of her writing also manages to take her beyond the questions of harm, humiliation, or sexism in pornography. The realist and humanist argument of looking at pornography as yet another human pursuit that needs relational and culture-sensitive curation, education, and care, makes the reader focus that it is not the fact of flawlessness of porn that Padte is arguing for. It is the fact of 'carelessness' and morality and projection-centric ideation of pornography governance in society that she argues against.

She conveys that our method of using the wrong levers of understanding a human experience may ruin yet another human endeavour. It is the exceptionalism attached to the digital over the physical experience that she challenges.

The work asks us to complicate our understanding and sense-making of the digital world as different but attached to the physical sense of self (Veer & Golf Papez, 2018). By doing so she can overcome the critique of harm (ibid) and move the pointer of future attempts

at regulation and intervention in the direction of looking at the harm caused by a pornographic space unmediated by a feminist and care lens.

Padte's work has potential to become a foundational reference for not just academic or casual readers, but for policymakers, in developing contextually relevant sex education (Leung et al., 2019; Chakraborty & Mishra, 2021). The work draws its strength from her deep understanding and exploration of literature on pornography and its precursors. Nuance is also provided her interviews with a diverse and intersectional group of respondents. However, where the work might have suffered is the lack of diversity of its respondents in their economic or geographical positions – most respondents may have come from urban or socio-economically privileged backgrounds so as to be able to participate in the surveys and interviews Padte took. However, this does not take away from the vast depth and complexity that Padte has managed to the discussion of sex, consent, and intimacy through her exploration of pornography. In 'rethinking pornography', she has also managed to ask the reader to rethink their socialisation of sexuality as a whole.

References

- Chakraborty, P., & Mishra, A. (2021). Lack of Sex Education in India and its Growing Importance in the Digital Era. *International Journal of Policy Sciences and Law*, 1(4). https://ijpsl.in/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Lack-of-Sex-Education-in-India-and-its-Growing-Importance-in-the-Digital-Era_Palak-Chakraborty-Avantika-Mishra.pdf
- Döring, N., & Miller, D. J. (2021). Sex Acts (Portrayals of Sexuality in Pornography). *DOCA - Database of Variables for Content Analysis*. <https://doi.org/10.34778/5n>
- Gurevich, M., Brown-Bowers, A., Cosma, S., Vasilovsky, A. T., Leedham, U., & Cormier, N. (2017). Sexually progressive and proficient: Pornographic syntax and postfeminist fantasies. *Sexualities*, 20(5-6), 558-584. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1363460716665785>
- Leung, H., Shek, D. T. L., Leung, E., & Shek, E. Y. W. (2019). Development of Contextually-relevant Sexuality Education: Lessons from a Comprehensive Review of Adolescent Sexuality Education Across Cultures. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health/International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 16(4), 621. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph16040621>
- McGlynn, C., & Ward, I. (2009). Pornography, Pragmatism, and Proscription. *Journal of Law and Society*, 36(3), 327-351. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6478.2009.00470.x>
- Padte, R. (2018). *Cyber Sexy*. Penguin. <https://champaca.in/products/cyber-sexy>
- Rigoni, I. (2012). Intersectionality and mediated cultural production in a globalized post-colonial world. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 35(5), 834-849. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2011.628035>
- Showden, C. R. (2016). Feminist Sex Wars. In *The Wiley Blackwell Encyclopedia of Gender and Sexuality Studies* (pp. 1-3). John Wiley & Sons, Ltd. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118663219.wbegss434>

- Veer, E., & Golf Papez, M. (2018). *Physically freeing: Breaking taboos through online displays of the sexual self*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0267257X.2018.1484381>]
- Whisnant, R. (2016). Pornography, Humiliation, and Consent. *Sexualization, Media, & Society*, 2(3), 2374623816662876.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/2374623816662876>

Author Bio

Shashwat (He/They) is a confused being who likes to study other confused beings as a qualitative researcher. He was a Mechanical Engineer and a UPSC aspirant once upon a time before stumbling across Anthropology and Development Studies at TISS in his MA. He has interests in the fields of education, healthcare, agriculture, and legislative research for public policy.

Defying defining daughters

Divyaa Moharana

Macmillan Dictionary defines a daughter as, a woman who comes from a particular place or grew up in a particular period of time that influenced the way she develops as a person. The word “daughter” is derived from a Sanskrit word, duhitṛ, dogri which refers to someone else's wealth. A daughter is believed to be a perfect fusion of the many roles and relationships that she shares in society like a sister, wife, sister-in-law, and mother, among others. Daughters have been associated with doing traditional domestic and caregiving duties within the household. A famous saying goes, ‘You raise your daughter for another's family, but you raise your son for yourself.’ If a son does any wrong it would not hamper the family but if a daughter does, it would surely be considered as 'shameful'. We've been associating uncertain terms like “honour” and “shame” as merely regressive thought processes, targeting the vulnerability of daughters in our society. The society imposes unrealistic expectations on women and daughters, constrains them within narrow behavioural aspects of perceived notion of their worth being tied to virginity and purity to restrict their autonomy and agency. In the course of life, the time they start menstruating, they are told by others, what and on which conditions they should lead their lives once they are as yet conceived and then are prepared to be ‘good’ wives and mothers.

The definition of daughters given by WB Yeats and Jamaica Kincaid's noticeable theme of disempowerment of women in society, revolves around a similar plan. Yeats definition can be assessed on the conditions of patriarchal notions which targets developing a controlled status for women in the camouflage of an ideal order for themselves. While Yeats pens down his qualifications for an ‘ideal’ daughter in his poem 'A prayer for my daughter', he specifically mentions the necessity for his daughter to be 'courteous and submissive'. *Nor*

or but in merriment begin a chase, nor but in merriment quarrel, oh may she live some green laurel rooted in one perpetual place.' He simply wishes to have a 'tame', 'docile' daughter for whom serious issues of the society are unnecessary since it does not fall in her domain, regardless of whether she has the audacity to freely express herself. Yeats emphasises the importance of his daughter developing virtues like gentleness, beauty, rather than succumbing to the "rage" and "disorder" of the world. Jamaica Kincaid's girl is inspired by Western Caribbean practices of families where, the mother is seen adhering to a list of topics such as household chores, manners, social conduct, and relationships; to find happiness in domesticity. Her beliefs on the necessity of serving a husband and remaining sexually conservative are the focus. The mother has exceptionally strong views on conduct and gives numerous warnings such as '*on Sundays try and walk like a lady and not like the slut you are so bent on becoming.*' This statement provides us with an idea of the mother's values regarding female sexuality as well as a reflection of the values around them. The daughter figure becomes a lens through which we can examine broader themes of gender and identity through a nuanced understanding of complexities found in their experiences.

To bring forth the rights of the women enshrined in our constitution, being inclusive or conclusive like, Article 14 which guarantees equality to every woman of India, Article 15(1) which talks about no discrimination by the state, Article 16 in which equality of opportunity is mentioned or be it rights given under Directive Principles of State Policy i.e., Article 39(d) and Article 42 in which equal pay for equal work has been discussed. Despite these multiple rights and laws, we do not see their adequate implementation in actuality. There are various schemes for the education of daughters like Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana, but still as we come across the statistics we couldn't see such results in implementation. While the country promises to set up FTCs (Fast Track Courts) like in cases of sexual assault across the country, the moot question is, will a mere increase in the number of judges or just naming it 'fast-track' lead to a direct reduction and solve the pendency of cases?

Sons have been valued from ages and still are, this continues as the daughter is just expected to look after her family when married. The laws did not recognise space for women in economic, political, or civic matters in Anglo-American society of the eighteenth century, women did not receive the Right to Vote until 1920. Daughters aren't allowed to take up their space, the constitution to date excludes marital rape. The Hindu Succession (Amendment) Act, 2005 allows daughters to inherit the property but not many of them, we see, are in the position to access the space due to legal impediments, family pressure etc.. In about 37 countries abortion is still illegal unless it saves the mother's life. We need to look upon how laws against abortion are focused on the rights of the foetus, entirely being ignorant of the reproductive rights of the women, regulating their bodies. For a daughter, it then becomes a question of her life and death when she has to exercise her choices. Intentional abortion of female foetuses and infanticides are common practices in East and South Asian countries where sons are strongly preferred. India and China have a significant sex-ratio imbalance in their populations. As per a 2017 study by HR experts, women in corporate India earn 20 percent less than what men earn over their entire career (Business Standard). The concept of private space and the space of four walls have been associated with daughters for ages and we have almost assumed and defined it as symbiotic by normalising rigid gender roles. As the nation marches towards various scientific and economic achievements, half of its population writhes under the fear of rape, trafficking, domestic violence, honour killing, acid attacks, and sexual harassments. This clearly states that apart from doing all of the household chores, she has to double the work to earn equal pay. Deprived of any social control, equality and decision- making power, she is permitted to attend only to activities of nurturing and caring, typically associated with 'femininity' as approved by patriarchal power, first for their father then for their husband.

It is a hyper-toxic patriarchy which defines what a daughter should be. If we believe movements happening around the world are implemented, then they can bring a major change, i.e. Marriage Without Risk Network in Yemen, links several NGOs that educate communities and advocates to curb child marriage, hence certain strict norms need to be

followed to improve the status of daughters and eliminate their exploitation in our society. The constitution should strictly include non-discrimination, protection from harm and abuse, and full participation in family, social, and cultural life for daughters as similarly mentioned in 1995 Beijing Platform for Action; girls' rights are codified within the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child and Barriers to realizing these rights include practices such as female genital mutilation, sex-selective abortions, and child marriage.

Priorities straight, each one of us should be taught the correct ways of bringing up the youngsters. The Educational Sector has been a silent spectator and witnessed this grave inequality between male and female children from their foundational years, as we all know it all starts from the segregation of 'pink' and 'blue'. We should reconsider what we feed our kids and how we dress them. Schools should be encouraged to make their educational program gender- friendly and abstain from showing texts which brazenly promote patriarchal values and practices like portrayal of only women/ mothers working in the kitchen in textbooks and movies, etc. In this framework, school is the environment which forms and shapes a child's character, henceforth it should be healthy and free from discriminatory values. There should be no differentiation in wages for the same job on grounds of gender. In the manner we parent them, one must be aware of the narratives that are discussed at home which shouldn't indicate any gender bias. Trying to teach the happily-ever-after heteronormative princess stories which have the goal of an 'ideal' man protecting the 'damsel in distress'. This simply conditions them to think of a daughter whose ultimate goal is to marry someone to settle and survive. We should say no to gender specification of colours, roles, sentiments and the way one behaves. Daughters are much more than the mere conventional roles they are put in to serve or nurture their families, in a box for the rest of their lives.

References

- Macmillan Dictionary
- Constitution of India
- Yeats, William Butler. *A Prayer for My Daughter*, The Collected Poems of W.B. Yeats. Macmillan, 1989.
- Kincaid, Jamaica. *Girl*. The New Yorker, 1978.
- Menon, Niveditha. *Seeing like a Feminist*. Zubaan and Penguin Book, 2012.
- Business Standard, March 07 2018.

Author Bio

Born in Cuttack, Odisha, pursuing Masters in Gender Studies from Ambedkar University, Delhi alongwith Masters in English from Indira Gandhi National Open University, Delhi. A 2023 English Honours graduate from Ramjas College, Delhi University. Her passion for the arts from 2009 extends to Odissi Classical Dance and Hindustani Vocals Music.

SLUMS AND THE DYNAMICS OF LEISURE: A STUDY ON THE LIVES OF THE SLUM DWELLERS

Tanisha Kar

Leisure has evolved, reflecting societal values, technology, and cultural norms. Ancient civilisations intertwined leisure with religious and communal practices, while medieval times were determined by social class. The Renaissance period saw individual pursuits of leisure, while the Industrial Revolution led to structured leisure time. The 20th century saw the democratization of leisure with mass media and technological advancements, bringing entertainment to households globally. Contemporary leisure is characterized by a diverse array of choices, catering to individual preferences and lifestyles. Leisure is a subjective concept influenced by cultural background, personal preferences, and experiences. Socioeconomic status, environment, and geographic location also impact leisure choices. Urban marginalized women, particularly women slum-dwellers, often view leisure as an alien concept and prioritize family responsibilities over leisure. Technological advances have created opportunities for women to escape daily toil and focus on status and taste. Social media has become a crucial part of modern society, shaping how people connect, communicate, and consume information. Influencers and ephemeral content have become prevalent forms of expression, creating a gap in society where people feel distinct from themselves and others.

INTRODUCTION

The line between leisure and labour is tenuous and shifting. Nevertheless, from the rise of the earliest great civilisations of the East and West to the nineteenth century, there was a certain stability in that leisure was always the prerogative of a small free fraction of society (T. Woody, 1957). Leisure is the pursuit of activities for relaxation and enjoyment and has evolved significantly throughout history, reflecting changes in societal values, technology, and cultural norms. In ancient civilisations, leisure was often intertwined with religious and communal practices, with festivals, feasts, and games serving as expressions of collective identity and celebration. During mediaeval times, leisure activities were often determined by social class. The nobility engaged in hunting, jousting, and elaborate feasts, while the common people participated in simpler forms of recreation, such as folk dancing

and communal festivities. The Renaissance period witnessed a shift towards individual pursuits of leisure, with the emergence of private gardens, artistic endeavours, and intellectual discussions in salons.

The Industrial Revolution marked a significant turning point in the history of leisure. As urbanisation and industrialization progressed, the working class faced long hours in factories, leading to a need for structured leisure time. The concept of weekends and holidays gained traction, allowing individuals to engage in recreational activities. The rise of public parks, theatres, and organised sports provided accessible forms of entertainment for people of various social classes. The 20th century saw a democratisation of leisure with the advent of mass media and technological advancements. Radio, television, and later, the internet, brought entertainment into households on a global scale. The digital age, particularly in the late 20th century and beyond, brought a paradigm shift in leisure activities. Video games, social media, and online streaming platforms provided new avenues for entertainment and socialization. People could now connect with others globally, transcending geographical boundaries. The proliferation of smartphones further transformed the nature of leisure, allowing individuals to carry their sources of entertainment and connection in their pockets.

Contemporary leisure is characterised by a diverse array of choices, catering to individual preferences and lifestyles. Traditional forms of recreation, such as sports and cultural events, coexist with digital leisure, including online gaming, social media interactions, and virtual experiences. The boundary between work and leisure has become increasingly blurred, with remote work and flexible schedules enabling individuals to integrate leisure into their daily lives. Leisure in contemporary times has become a popular culture. Globalisation has helped leisure become the most discussed topic in recent times. It has created the hegemonic notion of the term, mainly promoted by the capitalists of the world. Globalisation paved the way for the understanding of leisure. Leisure and its different forms as experienced by other class groups is a notion of high value and importance, and bragging, which is different in other sections of society, is something that should be understood. The idea in itself is a capitalist notion that has been consumed by people in society over the years. To understand this and how the other sections of society who are devoid or excluded from the idea of leisure are interested and their perception of what leisure really is. Urban marginalised, especially the women marginalised, and their ideas of leisure and leisure experiences are the main focus of the study.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Marginality is a complex condition of disadvantage that individuals and communities may experience because of vulnerabilities arising from unequal or inequitable environmental, ethnic, cultural, social, political, and economic factors. A typology of marginality is based on two primary and two derivative forms. The primary forms are contingent and systemic.

The derivative forms are collateral and leveraged. Contingent marginality is a condition that results from competitive inequality, in which individuals and communities are put at a disadvantage because of the dynamics of the free market, whose uncertain and stochastic outcomes affect them adversely. Systemic marginality is a socioeconomic condition of disadvantage created by socially constructed inequitable non-market forces of bias (A. Mehretu et. al., 2000). In contemporary times, urban marginality has become an area of concern, along with aspects of its rise and factors.

Urban is a term with different layers and understandings that are subject to varying interpretations (Parrillo, 2007). Ever since 2500 BC, urban places have played an important role in the evolution of India's cultural, political, economic, and social life. Throughout this long period (4500 years), the proportion of the country's total population living in urban areas has fluctuated (Ramachandran, 1989). Urbanisation is a process that has existed for many years and is an impressive fact of modern times that has changed many aspects of social life. The word urban is related to cities and modernization, and the experience of modern cities is fascinating and compelling. Though modern cities are a beguiling mixture of great buildings, libraries, theatres, streets, lights, and many emotions of different people, they also have a negative side, which is prominent in developing countries. The negative side is composed of the disadvantaged and marginalised sections of society, who are neglected by the bright lights and astonishing infrastructures of modern cities. The marginalised section of the urban population comprises the slum-dwellers and the poor.

The poor and the slum-dwellers are more or less the same people in an urban setting. In India, slums are found in all urban settlements, large or small, old or new, unplanned or planned. The slum problem is ubiquitous in cities all over the world, although with variable dimensions. Does it then mean that slums are a necessary concomitant of urbanisation? But the mere prevalence of slums, no matter how wide a scale, does not signify that they are inevitable in all urban communities unless it can be shown that their causes are inevitably related to some general aspect of urbanisation (Victor S. D'souza: 1979). While discussing the marginalised section of society, often individuals ignore their lives and how they spend them; instead, the main focus is always on the difficulties and wrongdoings of society towards them. There are different aspects to observing the lives of the poor and slum dwellers. One of the aspects that can be taken into consideration is their social life and how they spend their spare time in a society that can be at times cruel and unjust to them and different from the capitalist point of view.

Leisure is notoriously difficult to define. Some sociologists treat it as a portion of one's time. Others regard it as a quality of experience unconfined to a particular time. The technological advances of post-industrial society have created unprecedented opportunities to escape the necessities of daily life. Concomitant cultural changes have shifted attention away from work and achievement towards status and taste and have engendered a new ethos dominated by consumption for pleasure rather than production for utility (J. Wilson, 1980). Leisure and free time, and ideas about them among different groups in society, are vital. Like almost every other scarce resource, free time is distributed

unequally among the population. Those under thirty have more free time, apparently because they spend less time on housework and shopping. Being married diminishes free time for both partners; children further reduce a couple's free time, albeit more for the woman than for the man. "Getting a job naturally increases obligations; the unemployed, students and the retired have, by Robinson's definition, more free time. The rich seem to have no more free time than the poor, but free time does increase with years of schooling, probably because better-educated people budget their time more efficiently" (J. Wilson, 1980).

Leisure has become an important point of research in contemporary times, as clearly explained by S. Parker in 1975. "There are no doubt good reasons why the sociology of leisure has been slow to develop concerning other 'special' sociologies such as those of work, education, the family, and so on. But there is also evidence that the situation is changing and that an increasing concern with planning, educating, and generally catering for leisure needs has led to a growing interest among social scientists. It may be that, as the Rapoports have recently suggested, we can expect a renaissance of the field of individual and society, with new attention being given to the balance of work, family, and leisure."

Leisure can be defined as a field that is at once fascinating and treacherous. Its Lorelei quality has beguiled many of the deepest sociological thinkers; those who have settled for less than penetrating thought about its complexities have often emerged with tedious work and, to use Asa Briggs' recent observation about the field, ruminative. "Friedmann, in 1961, indicated that the term 'required to be used with all sorts of reservations' and that it arouses mistrust. Dumazedier, in 1967, noted its essential ambiguity, having elements of its etymological meaning in the concept of 'freedom' of choice and elements of substantive meaning in its definition of residual time. The field as a whole has been plagued by an inadequate distinction between concept and content, so that as it grows, both as a phenomenon and as a field of study, so does confusion. Young and Willmott have compared the attempt to define the concept to try to grasp a jellyfish" (R. Rapoport et al., 1974).

However, the above literature scarcely shows the relationship between leisure and marginal groups, especially the urban marginal groups of society. Hence, it is an area that has yet to be explored, and the present study is an attempt to fill that gap in our knowledge. The study will focus on the relationship between marginal groups in society and leisure.

METHODOLOGY

This study is being conducted through qualitative research, where the people of the slums of Pune were studied. Pune city had a population of 3.1 million, and there were 477 slums, where a total population of 1.2 million people resided, according to the Indian Government census of 2011. At present, there are 564 total slums in Pune, according to the Pune

Municipal Corporation. In this research, Aundh is a location in Pune where there are a total of 34 slums. According to ownership, there are 2 government slums, that is, slums that are residential areas under state or national ownership, typically providing housing for low-income or marginalized communities. 3 railway-owned slums, that is, informal settlements or housing units located on land owned or controlled by railway authorities. 3 Central government slums, that is, informal settlements or housing units located on land owned or controlled by the central government, and 26 private slums which means that informal settlements or housing units located on privately owned land. (Mundhe, 2019, p. 61).

In this study, a semi-structured interview schedule was prepared to interview the women between the ages of 18 and 40 in the slums. Mostly open-ended questions were in the interview schedule.

OBJECTIVE

1. To analyse the relationship between leisure and urban marginalisation in Pune city.
2. To examine the dynamics of leisure concerning the urban marginalised, specifically with the slum-dwellers of Pune city.

UNIT OF ANALYSIS

Four slums were taken into consideration for the survey. The slums were Indira Vasahat, Kasturba Vasahat, Ambedkar Vasahat, and Sanjay Nagar Vasahat in Aundh, Pune. From Kasturba Vasahat, 10 women were interviewed; from Ambedkar Vasahat, 10 women were also interviewed: 6 from Indira Vasahat and 6 from Sanjay Nagar Vasahat.

Sample size: approximately 30-35.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What is the idea of leisure for the slum-dwellers?
2. What are the transitions from traditional to technological leisure experiences among the urban marginalised?
3. What are the dynamics of leisure experiences among the slum dwellers?
4. How are the different dynamics of leisure related to the urban marginalised?

TOOLS USED IN DATA COLLECTION METHOD

The survey method has been used for the collection of data. The survey method is where an individual is asked to answer several identical questions. The interview schedule is prepared by the researcher to ask questions of the individuals. The interview schedule is where the face-to-face interview is conducted by the researcher. During the interview, the data and the whole interview are also recorded by the interviewer with the permission of

the respondents. The researcher has prepared a questionnaire, keeping in mind the place and the people to be interviewed. The questionnaire had open-ended questions.

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

- **Work Hours versus Leisure**

The last quarter of the twentieth century has witnessed fundamental changes in the relationship between work and leisure and, in particular, has seen the progressive release of more and more people from the time constraints of the workplace. Changes in the organisation of work have implications for leisure. Some of these implications are obvious. Less time spent at work means more time available for other things, but the work-leisure relationship is not simple. Other activities, chores, obligations, and necessary functions, such as sleep, make demands on non-work time. Leisure itself is best seen as time over which the individual exercises choice and undertakes activities in a free, voluntary way. Stockdale (1985) "identifies three essential uses of the term leisure. The first of these regards' leisure as a period, activity, or state of mind in which choice is the dominant feature; leisure time is 'free time' in which voluntary or chosen activities occur. The objective view of leisure treats it as the antithesis of work, in which residual time after work and commitments can be regarded as time for leisure. Subjective definitions of leisure emphasise the qualitative meanings of an activity for the individual. People define leisure in terms of its meaning for themselves, and it can, as such, occur at any time in any setting" (D.T. Herbert: 1988).

Balancing work hours and leisure time is crucial for maintaining a healthy and fulfilling lifestyle. Striking the right equilibrium between professional responsibilities and personal well-being is essential for physical and mental health. Achieving a proper work-life balance is essential for overall well-being. Work hours and leisure are both terms commonly wielded to define the middle-class, upper-middle class, and others, but they tend to forget to define the working class and marginalised sections of society. The study explores the urban marginalised section of society, especially women's work hours and leisure. Urban women's marginalised section of society is huge, and that is what builds society. The women section of the urban marginalised are the ones mostly seen in every household as residential aides. They spend 2-3 hours of their lives in others' houses, making others' lives trouble-free—not in one house but many like that. Balancing work life and leisure is indeed difficult for them while trying to do some extra to support the family in this highly capitalist era, where the prices of different essential commodities are rising by degrees.

- **What Do They Mean By Leisure?**

Leisure is a word that is perceived in different ways by different people, class categories, and so forth. Leisure is a subjective concept, and people may have different perceptions of

what constitutes leisure based on their cultural background, personal preferences, and individual experiences. Cultural influences play a significant role in shaping perceptions of leisure. What is considered a leisure activity in one culture may not be viewed the same way in another. Along with cultural preferences, personal interests also play a significant role in influencing how individuals perceive leisure. Some people may find relaxation in outdoor activities such as hiking or gardening, while others may prefer indoor activities like reading or playing video games. The diversity of individual preferences contributes to a wide range of perceptions regarding leisure. The most important signifier of the perception of leisure is socioeconomic status, which impacts how individuals approach leisure. People with higher disposable income may have access to a broader range of leisure activities, such as travel, fine dining, or cultural events. On the other hand, those with limited financial resources may engage in more cost-effective or local leisure pursuits. Perceptions of leisure can also change with age and life stage. Young adults may view socialising, nightlife, or adventure activities as leisure, while parents with young children might find relaxation in family-oriented activities. Older individuals may value more serene and contemplative leisure pursuits. The environment and geographic location can impact leisure choices as well. Those living in urban areas may have access to cultural events and entertainment, while those in rural areas may engage in nature-based activities.

Like almost every other scarce resource, free time is distributed unequally among the population. Those under thirty have more free time, apparently because they spend less time on housework and shopping. Being married diminishes free time for both partners; children further reduce a couple's free time, albeit more for the woman than for the man (J. Wilson, 1980). While there are different indicators to perceive leisure, there is a section of society that does not even know what leisure is. The urban marginalised section of society, and especially the women slum-dwellers. Leisure is an alien term for them. The women of the slums, like many other women in different class strata, spend their whole day doing house chores and do not know or understand the term leisure. Most of the women slum dwellers wake up at 5 or 6 in the morning, work the whole day, and sleep around 11 or midnight. Doing house chores and child-rearing is what they prefer to do in their daily lives besides earning for the family. To explain critically, for the women in society, especially in the marginalised section, working for the whole day and living for others is the reality, and they do not even count it as work most of the time. They consider looking after the house, the children, and the men of the family as their leisure experiences. Enjoying music and watching movies, or going out with their male counterparts and families on special occasions, is a high level of leisure for them at most.

- **Traditional vs. New Modes of Leisure**

In urban marginalised sections, the leisure activities available to women have undergone a significant transformation over time. Traditional modes of leisure, deeply rooted in cultural and societal norms, have coexisted with newer, more progressive forms of recreation. The dynamics between traditional and modern leisure activities can be seen adeptly in contemporary times. Historically, women in urban marginalised sections have engaged in

leisure activities deeply embedded in community values and cultural practices. Community gatherings, cultural celebrations, and religious events have provided a sense of belonging and social cohesion. These traditional activities have played a crucial role in preserving cultural heritage and fostering interpersonal relationships within close-knit communities. Family-oriented activities have been another cornerstone of traditional leisure for women in marginalised urban settings. These activities, while strengthening familial bonds, have sometimes been criticised for limiting individual autonomy and personal growth. Despite these limitations, they continue to serve as foundational components of leisure in many marginalised communities, as seen in the areas taken into consideration for the study of the paper. Up to the present, family and familial bonds and duties have become the highest form of leisure for the women in the urban marginalised.

The technological advances of post-industrial society have created unexpected opportunities to escape the necessities of daily life. Concomitant cultural changes have shifted attention away from work and achievement towards status and taste and have engendered a new ethos dominated by consumption for pleasure rather than production for utility (J. Wilson, 1980). The emergence of modern technology and changing societal norms has given rise to a plethora of new leisure options for women in urban marginalised sections. Digital and social media engagement have become powerful tools for information access, social connection, and entertainment. The leisure landscape for women in urban marginalised sections is evolving, with a dynamic interplay between traditional and modern modes of recreation. Other than familial bonds and family time, activities like 'scrubbing feet', 'bhajan', 'finding stones from cereal grains like rice and wheat', and 'sewing' are the most common traditional forms of leisure for marginalised urban women. New modes include watching reels on Instagram, YouTube, and so on.

- **Leisure and Social Participation**

Leisure and social participation play integral roles in enhancing individuals' overall quality of life and fostering vibrant communities. Leisure activities, ranging from hobbies and sports to cultural pursuits and entertainment, provide avenues for relaxation, personal fulfilment, and self-expression. Social interaction is a fundamental human need that contributes to the development of meaningful relationships and a sense of belonging. Whether through casual conversations, shared experiences, or organised events, it strengthens the fabric of society by promoting understanding, empathy, and cooperation. Both leisure and social interaction complement each other, creating a balanced and enriching lifestyle that contributes to individual happiness and societal cohesion. Engagement of urban marginalised women in social relationships and interactions is a means of escape and recreation. Going around the 'mandirs' i.e., Hindu temples with friends and families on particular days of the week or special occasions, sitting with friends outside the house in the evenings, and sharing tales are means of pleasure and leisure for the women slum-dwellers. Day offs are mainly for family time and sometimes visiting nearby malls with family or friends.

- **Social Media**

Social media has become an integral part of contemporary society, shaping the way people connect, communicate, and consume information. Major platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, Snapchat, and YouTube dominate the social media landscape. Each platform served a distinct purpose, catering to diverse user needs and preferences. Initially conceived as a platform for connecting friends and family, Facebook evolved into a multifaceted platform hosting a wide range of content, from personal updates to news articles and branded content. Instagram, known for its visual-centric approach, became a hub for influencers and businesses, leveraging striking visuals to engage audiences. Twitter maintained its role as a real-time information hub, facilitating concise and immediate communication. LinkedIn continued to be the professional networking platform of choice, connecting individuals across industries. The social media landscape also witnessed the rise of new players. Individuals with significant followings, known as influencers, continued to shape trends, opinions, and consumer behaviour. Brands increasingly collaborated with influencers to reach target audiences authentically, leveraging the trust and rapport these influencers had built with their followers. Ephemeral content, such as stories on Instagram and Snapchat, became a prevalent form of expression. Users embraced the idea of sharing temporary snippets of their lives, creating a sense of urgency and immediacy—this format allowed for more candid and spontaneous content, resonating with audiences seeking authenticity. The evolving landscape of social media has brought forth new challenges and opportunities.

The influence of social media has not left any section of society untouched. The influence of social media influencers has reached every household in society. Creating a place of presentation of oneself in attractive ways has been the motive and hegemony of social media in recent times, creating a gap in a society where people feel distinct from themselves and others in society. However, social media previously played a role in bringing the world closer, and with its new forms and hegemonies, loneliness and individualism have seen their peak. Platforms like Instagram have created a new world where everything is fine, happy, and luxurious. New features like reels and stories from different social media platforms have made it easier for people to escape reality. Using Instagram and the popularity of Instagram among women slum-dwellers, especially for reels, is an important insight into this notion. Viewing a life and dreaming of something they may not have due to economic disparity is the hegemony on which capitalism is working.

CONCLUSION

Leisure has evolved significantly throughout history, reflecting changes in societal values, technology, and cultural norms. Ancient civilisations often intertwined leisure with religious and communal practices, while mediaeval times were determined by social class.

The Renaissance period saw individual pursuits of leisure, with private gardens, artistic endeavours, and intellectual discussions. The Industrial Revolution led to structured leisure time, with weekends and holidays becoming popular. The 20th century saw the democratisation of leisure with mass media and technological advancements, bringing entertainment to households globally. The digital age, particularly in the late 20th century and beyond, brought new avenues for entertainment and socialization. Contemporary leisure is characterised by a diverse array of choices, catering to individual preferences and lifestyles.

Leisure is a subjective concept that varies based on cultural background, personal preferences, and experiences. Socioeconomic status is a significant factor in shaping leisure perceptions, with individuals with higher disposable income having access to a wider range of activities. The environment and geographic location also impact leisure choices, with urban areas offering cultural events and rural areas focusing on nature-based activities. Free time is distributed unequally among the population, with those under thirty having more free time. The urban marginalised, particularly women slum dwellers, often view leisure as an alien term, as they work full-time and prioritise family responsibilities over leisure. They consider music, watching movies, and going out with family on special occasions as their primary leisure experiences.

Marginality is a complex condition of disadvantage experienced by individuals and communities due to vulnerabilities arising from unequal environmental, ethnic, cultural, social, political, and economic factors. It can be categorised into contingent and systemic forms, with collateral and leveraged forms. Urban marginality has become a concern in contemporary times, with urbanisation playing a significant role in India's cultural, political, economic, and social life since 2500 BC. Modern cities, with their impressive infrastructures, have both positive and negative aspects. The negative side is primarily characterised by the disadvantaged and marginalised sections of society, such as slum-dwellers and the poor. The marginalised section of society is often overlooked, with the focus often on the difficulties and wrongdoings of society towards them.

Urban marginalised women's leisure activities have evolved, blending traditional and modern forms. Historically, women engaged in community-based activities like cultural gatherings and religious events, preserving cultural heritage and fostering interpersonal relationships. Family-oriented activities, while criticised for limiting autonomy, continue to be foundational for many marginalised communities. Technological advances have created opportunities for women to escape daily toil and focus on status and taste. Digital and social media engagement have become powerful tools for information access, social connection, and entertainment. Traditional leisure activities include family time, while newer modes include watching reels on Instagram and YouTube. The leisure landscape for these women is evolving, blending traditional and modern leisure activities. Leisure and social participation are crucial for enhancing quality of life and fostering communities. Activities like hobbies, sports, and cultural pursuits provide relaxation and self-expression. Social interaction strengthens the societal fabric, promoting understanding, empathy, and

cooperation. Urban marginalised women engage in social relationships for escape and recreation, such as visiting Hindu temples, spending time with friends, and visiting nearby malls.

Social media has become a crucial part of modern society, shaping how people connect, communicate, and consume information. Major platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, Snapchat, and YouTube dominate the landscape, catering to diverse user needs and preferences. Influencers with significant followings continue to shape trends, opinions, and consumer behaviour. Brands collaborate with influencers to reach target audiences authentically, leveraging trust and rapport. Ephemeral content, such as Stories on Instagram and Snapchat, has become a prevalent form of expression, resonating with audiences seeking authenticity. The influence of social media has reached every household, creating a gap in society where people feel distinct from themselves and others. Platforms like Instagram have created a new world where everything is fine, happier, and luxurious, with reels and stories providing a place for people to escape reality.

References

- Bapat, M. (2009). Poverty lines and lives of the poor Underestimate of Urban Poverty – the case of India. *Poverty Reduction in Urban Areas Series*, 2-51. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.com/stable/resrep01261.5>
- D'souza, V. S. (1979, March and September). Socio-Culture Marginality: A Theory of Urban Slums and Poverty in India. *Sociological Bulletin*, 28, 9-24. Retrieved from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23619350>
- Gupta, R. P. (2016, May-June). Problems and Prospects of Slums in India. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Approach and Studies*, 03, 67-78.
- Herbert. T.D. (1988). Work and Leisure: Exploring a Relationship. *The Royal Geographical Society (with the Institute of British Geographers. Vol. 20. No. 3. Pp. 241-252.*
- Lundberg, G. A. (1972). Leisure. In D. L. Sills (Ed.), *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* (Vol. 9, pp. 248-253). London: Collier-Macmillan Publishers.
- Mike Savage, A. W. (2003). *Urban Sociology, Capitalism and Modernity* (Second ed.). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Mundhe, N. (2019). Identifying and Mapping Slums in Pune City using Geospatial Techniques. *The International Archives of the Photogrammetry, Remote Sensing and Spatial Information Sciences, Volume XLII-5/W3, 2019 Capacity Building and Education Outreach in Advanced Geospatial Technologies and Land Management, Volume XLII- 5/W3, 57-63. doi:https://doi.org/10.5194/isprs-archives-XLII-5-W3-57-2019*
- Parrillo, V. N. (2007). Urban. In G. Ritzer, *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Sociology* (pp. 5109-5111). Blackwell Publishing.
- Ramachandran, R. (1989). *Urbanization and Urban Systems in India*. Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Rapoport, R. R. (1974). Four Themes in the Sociology of Leisure. *The British Journal of Sociology*, 25, 215-229. Retrieved from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/589313>
- Scraton, S. (2007). Leisure. In G. Ritzer, *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Sociology* (pp. 2588-2592). Blackwell Publishing.
- Wirth, . (1938). Urbanism as a Way of Life. *The American Journal of Sociology*, 2-24.

Author Bio

Tanisha Kar attends Savitribai Phule Pune University, where she is pursuing her Master's degree in Sociology and is currently in her fourth semester. Born in Kolkata, West Bengal. She is known for her responsible nature, analytical mindset, and imaginative approach. Tanisha enjoys challenging herself to explore new experiences and possesses a keen eye for critically observing society and her surroundings.

THE VICIOUS PARADOX OF WAR: THE KALEIDOSCOPIC IMPACT OF THE RUSSIA-UKRAINE CRISIS ON THE WOMEN OF UKRAINE

Mahima Roy and Sambhavya Ghosh Chowdhury

“If I don’t value your care when I’m at the peak of glory
At the dead end let me get struck with a pike.”

The song “Mother Stefania” by the Ukrainian Kalush Orchestra, which won the 2022 Eurovision contest was shot in all towns of Ukraine which bore the horrendous consequences of the Russian invasion. Linking war and femininity in highly innovative ways, it narrates the heroic stance the Ukrainian female soldiers took to defend their motherland.

War is seen as a man’s world. The military is always considered a macho occupation, whereas women are always viewed as primary caregivers and only as reserved personnel in times of paucity. But we must realise wars have a multi-dimensional effect on women’s lives. They are not merely ravaged by a war on their land but also on their bodies. On one hand, it acts as an opportunity in disguise by allowing women to come up to the forefront and on the other hand, it puts them on the receiving end of war violence. The Russia-Ukraine war which was incepted in 2014, evolved into a full-scale invasion of Ukraine by Russia in February 2022. As the war has entered a grim third year, Ukrainian society has witnessed a transformation in gender roles.

Previously during the times of war, women were bound by the walls of domesticity and were expected to pick up “seamstress” roles. After the Russian invasion, the scenario transitioned as the number of women in the Armed Forces of Ukraine (AFU) increased significantly, popularizing the term “women veterans.” A total of 62,000 women are currently working in AFU. Among them, 45,000 are working as military personnel and 5,000 are present on the frontline, working on combat tasks. However, a decade ago these figures were 3 times smaller and women used to take up non-combat roles. In 2014, after the invasion of Donbas, women for the first time went to fight in volunteer battalions. It was only after 2022, that bureaucratic attention was paid to legalize the position of women

in the military. Women are now operating in combat positions- operating snipers, tuners, grenade launchers, drivers, etc. It was not only a fight to defend their motherland, but for women, it was a fight for the recognition of their capabilities. The prevalence of sexism makes it difficult for women to be in commanding positions in a male-dominated unit. Women soldiers perform a lot of duties at par with men, but frequently their designations are lower in ranks.

Production of military uniforms for women was one of the leading challenges. Women were issued men's military sets which included their underwear, oversized shoes and body armour. There was no provision for the supply of thermals, pads or tampons for women. Women soldiers had to buy their own uniforms or ask from the charities to fund them. It is only recently that they have received sets of summer field suits designed for female dimensions.

Apart from women participating in the military, they have also contributed to defend their motherland in unconventional ways. "Digital espionage" has been one such case. Some Ukrainian women have utilized dating apps like Tinder to gather information and triangulate the exact location coordinates of the men in the Russian military. They have created email and telegram accounts to circulate the information found.

Coming to the flipside of the impact of war on women, gender-based violence has been a traditional weapon of war which is used to damage the family fabric and shatter the spirit of the victims. It must be noted that women are one of the most affected sections in conflict areas. According to a UNHRC report, 58.56% of Internally Displaced People were women. They were subjected to rape and other types of sexual violence. They were even urged to exchange sex for shelter. In a lot of cases, they had no clue whether the perpetrators were Russians or their own people. There was an evident gap between the international resolutions that aimed to prevent sexual violence in conflict areas and the ground reality. Women were also in dire need of medical assistance as they were at higher risk of contracting STDs, getting pregnant and suffering from other physical injuries. However, the adverse destruction of the health services compromised delivery of health care services to approximately 2,65,000 pregnant women and special assistance to gender-based violence survivors. Moreover, according to Ukraine's Human Rights Ombudsman, Liudmyla Denisova who has been recording the rape cases noted that it is impossible to calculate the number of such sexual crimes at the moment because not everyone is willing to talk about it to them.

According to the Ministry of Reintegration of Temporarily Occupied Territories of Ukraine, 126 Ukrainian women remain in Russian captivity as of August 2023. The horrific torture,

abuse and intimidation that they are subjected to in the prisons may result in them never returning home or becoming disabled. All of the prisoners released since the first prisoners' swap in October 2022, have serious health problems, with the most vulnerable being the civilian women as they are not provided with the rehabilitation measures after returning home.

The displaced women have attested to sexual harassment and abuse on their journey through Ukraine, as well as disappearance, robbery, rape, and trafficking while escaping to Poland and even after arriving there. The traffickers forcibly engaged these women to dispense labor in various sectors like construction, manufacturing, agriculture, rehabilitation centers, street begging, illegal production of tobacco products and other illegal activities abroad.

The psychological impact of the war, too, cannot be neglected. Women have shown the symptoms of severe mental health deterioration owing to the war outside as well as the increasing domestic violence. Despite such conditions, women are expected to comfort male warriors, but what if she herself is a warrior? Hence, the toll of war on women is always kaleidoscopic and its repercussions are undeniable.

References

- BBC News. “Stories of Sexual Violence Against Ukrainian Women From Russian Forces - BBC News.” *YouTube*, 11 Apr. 2022, www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZgtXV9VBxEE.
- Ellyatt, Holly. “Ukraine’s Female Soldiers Are Fighting on Two Fronts — Against Russians, and Sexism Within Their Ranks.” *CNBC*, 8 Mar. 2024, www.cnn.com/2024/03/08/ukraines-female-soldiers-are-battling-against-russians-and-sexism.html.
- Guardian News. “More Than 100 Ukrainian Women Freed From Russian Captivity After Prisoner Swap.” *YouTube*, 18 Oct. 2022, www.youtube.com/watch?v=dq84o_iDjdM.
- “How Tinder Became a Weapon in the Russia-Ukraine War.” *Huck*, 7 Dec. 2023, www.huckmag.com/article/how-tinder-became-a-weapon-in-the-russia-ukraine-war.
- Ians. “100 Ukrainian Captives Released in Prisoner Swap With Russia: Authorities.” www.business-standard.com, 11 Apr. 2023, www.business-standard.com/world-news/100-ukrainian-captives-released-in-prisoner-swap-with-russia-authorities-123041100099_1.html.
- *KALUSH - STEFANIA Lyrics + English Translation*. lyricstranslate.com/en/stefania-mama-stefania.html.

- Kratochvíl, Petr, and Míla O’Sullivan. “A War Like No Other: Russia’s Invasion of Ukraine as a War on Gender Order.” *European Security*, vol. 32, no. 3, July 2023, pp. 347–66, doi:10.1080/09662839.2023.2236951.
- Nastya, and Nastya. “Three Stories About the Abuse and Inhumane Conditions for Ukrainian Women Prisoners → ZMINA.” *ZMINA*, 4 Aug. 2023, zmina.info/en/articles-en/three-stories-about-the-abuse-and-inhumane-conditions-for-ukrainian-women-prisoners.
- “‘Not a Single Safe Place’: The Ukrainian Refugees at Risk of Violence, Trafficking and Exploitation - Findings From Poland and Ukraine - Ukraine.” *ReliefWeb*, 30 Mar. 2023, reliefweb.int/report/ukraine/not-single-safe-place-ukrainian-refugees-risk-violence-trafficking-and-exploitation-findings-poland-and-ukraine.
- The Telegraph. “‘War Doesn’t Have a Gender’: The Evolving Role of Women in Ukraine’s Armed Forces | Ukraine Podcast.” *YouTube*, 8 Mar. 2024, www.youtube.com/watch?v=V3bZi3iSafQ.
- “Ukraine - United States Department of State.” *United States Department of State*, 7 Dec. 2023, www.state.gov/reports/2023-trafficking-in-persons-report/ukraine.
- “War’s Gendered Costs: The Story of Ukraine’s Women.” *orfonline.org*, www.orfonline.org/research/wars-gendered-costs.
- *Yahoo Is Part of the Yahoo Family of Brands*. ca.news.yahoo.com/heading-platoons-repairing-machines-doing-050137951.html.

Author Bio

Sambhavya Ghosh Chowdhury is currently pursuing a master's degree in Political Science with International Relations from Jadavpur University, Kolkata. Her areas of interest include gender, social justice, climate change and policy studies. She is also associated with the Loreto Rainbow Homes Foundation, Kolkata as a teacher.

Mahima Roy is currently pursuing her Masters in Political Science with International Relations from Jadavpur University, Kolkata. She has completed an online degree course on "Introduction to environmental law and policy" from University of North Carolina. Her areas of interests include gender, diaspora politics and humanitarian diplomacy.

The Goddess in the Lanes: Gender Discrimination and Economic Struggles of Women Idol Makers in Kumartuli

Sahil Pradhan

In the alleys of Kumartuli, where the goddess manifests amidst mud and odors, skilled artisans meticulously craft thousands of idols for Kolkata's grand festivities. Despite employing over 300,000 workers annually, only 20-25 are women, perpetuating gender discrimination rooted in societal norms. Interviews with artisans, including the Pal quartet, reveal worsening economic challenges stemming from climate uncertainties, labor disputes, and meager compensation. This article exposes the hidden economic crisis fueled by gender disparity, hindering progress amidst the abundance of the festive season.

The Festive Boom and its Artisans

Kumartuli's status as the fountainhead of West Bengal's unique cultural and artistic expression stretches back over three centuries. Its origins trace back to the late 18th century when the British East India Company consciously designated the riverside potters' colony to cater to the growing demand for exquisitely crafted Hindu idols. Under the royal patronage of wealthy zamindars and affluent Bengali households, the artisan hub started giving physical form to the gods and goddesses revered across the region.

The potters initially drew inspiration from European classical sculptures before eventually developing indigenous styles reflecting traditional Bengali aesthetics. Iconic feminine idols like the supremely powerful Mahisasura Mardini depicting Devi Durga's victory became inseparable emblems of the annual Durga Puja festivities. As the movement for Indian independence intensified, the grand community pujas emerged as empowering symbols of nationalist pride and identity. Post-1947, the carnival-like Durga celebrations further

reinforced Kumartuli's idols as ambassadors of unified Bengali heritage transcending religion.

Even today, no 'Pujo' in the state remains complete without consecrating the artisan colony's uniquely crafted idols personifying the sacred feminine divine. The sublime emotion of 'Shakti' they evoke connects every Bengali's soul to their rich civilizational ethos. Kumartuli's clay sculptures have thus become timeless iconic centerpieces upholding the spiritual and cultural soul of an entire population across generations. Their preservation remains a societal imperative to nurture the region's authentic identity forever.

During Kolkata's vibrant Durga Puja festivities, over 400 registered workshops in Kumartuli employ 3000 artisans, with an estimated total of 5000. They craft over 4000 idols, celebrated nationwide. The frenzied season engaged around 300,000 workers in allied services. Amidst challenging conditions, artisans innovate with sustainable materials, preserving tradition while embracing contemporary themes. Durga Puja epitomizes their passion and devotion, igniting joyful celebrations citywide.

Surprisingly though as per samity's membership records, only 22-25 of the over 3000 registered artisans are women. (Telegraph Online, 2023) Thus, Kumartuli thrives on a heavily gendered workforce centered around men as primary earners and women relegated to supporting capacities like painting assistants or construction helpers. Even for the 'Mother Goddess', societal discrimination severely curtails economic and skilling opportunities for women artisans.

Understanding the Pal Quartet

The Pal family as an etymology heretics hail from the Murshidabad district, with their ancestral home in Nabagram village. Mala's father was the first to move to Kolkata and join the Kumartuli artisan community, working under celebrated idol maker Banamali Sarkar. After his untimely demise, Mala took over the family's workshop, driven by sheer determination to provide for her children. Breaking entrenched gender norms, she trained her daughters in the sacred sculptural arts from a young age. This passed on an enduring baton of artistic brilliance and fortitude across generations of Pal women.

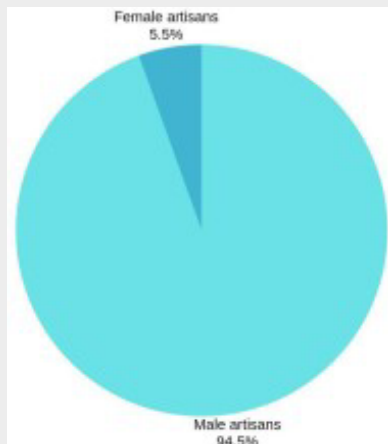


Fig 1.1: The gender divide in artisans of Kumartuli

At the heart of Kumartuli, Mala Pal, buoyed by familial support, established herself as an acclaimed artist, striving to uplift other women in the craft. Despite initial familial pressures, she pursued recognition, envisioning a school exclusively for women sculptors, while juggling multiple responsibilities, including caring for her Ailing mother. Specializing in miniature idols, her craftsmanship garnered international acclaim, reflecting her determination amidst financial hardships and skepticism. (Femina, 2016)

In contrast, Kakoli Pal's journey into idol-making stemmed from necessity after her husband's demise. With no formal training, she overcame challenges, expanding her business beyond Kolkata despite ongoing struggles, including safety concerns and worker poaching. Despite sculpting idols in narrow lanes without a studio, Kakoli perseveres, aiming to broaden her clientele beyond Bengal.

Similarly, China Pal's story epitomizes resilience, as she inherited her father's studio and mastered the craft despite initial skepticism. Managing a team of 12, China's dedication to her profession outweighs personal challenges, emphasizing the demanding nature of idol-making in Kumartuli. In contrast, Kanchi Pal represents a new generation of artists, seamlessly managing her workshop and challenging gender norms in the industry, inspired by her mother's legacy. (Femina, 2016)

While Mala and Kakoli envision growth and expansion, China and Kanchi navigate modern

challenges, from social media attention to bureaucratic neglect. Despite financial struggles and the lack of institutional support, these women artists embody hope for the future, inspiring others to join the craft through their creativity and dedication. (Femina, 2016)

Amidst a changing landscape, Kumartuli's women artists continue to carve their place in history, symbolizing resilience, creativity, and determination against all odds. Their stories illuminate the gender-specific challenges faced by women in the industry, yet their unwavering spirit underscores the transformative power of art in shaping communities and inspiring generations to come.

The Insidious Creep of Gender Discrimination

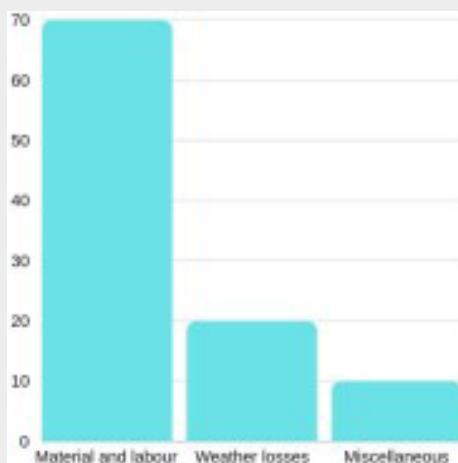


Fig 1.2: Expenses and losses of the artisans in percentage

In recent years, Kumartuli's community has suffered tremendously from climate vagaries, labor shortages, and concerning compensation trends. Their experiences reveal a creaking economy centered around inherent gender bias.

The increasingly erratic monsoonal rainfall over the past decade has severely disrupted idol production schedules, confirming climate researchers' predictions. Work usually commences by June-July once rainfall reduces but has often extended through September now. The artisans are compelled to cover structures with temporary shades while seizing any sunny interval for drying the clay. However such adjustments hike infrastructure costs and do not fully prevent damage from persistent humidity. As per organizers estimates, over 20% of orders now face weather-related delays or last-minute fixes. (Femina, 2016)

Labour availability has also dipped drastically due to poor compensation and a lack of contracts. Per capita idol artisan incomes as per Union surveys have remained stagnant around ₹6000-8000 monthly despite inflationary pressures. (Femina, 2016) But the strenuous work requires being on one's feet for 14-16 hours daily amid extreme heat, humidity, and dust. (Times of India, 2023) Workers now prefer flexible construction jobs under rural employment schemes that assure minimum daily wages without intensive labor or health impacts. (Telegraph India, 2017)

With expanding production, organizers also aggressively negotiate pricing to control budgets. Competition from cheaper fiberglass idol makers has strained workshops' shaky finances further. Material and labor now account for 60-70% of the artisans' expenses as they refuse to compromise on quality. Reducing profit margins leaves a minimal buffer for external uncertainties. (Times of India, 2023)

For the artisan families of Kumartuli, maintaining uncompromising quality standards goes beyond financial considerations. It represents an unwavering commitment to upholding the sanctity of their divine artistic traditions. The idols they painstakingly sculpt embody the very spirit of the Mother Goddess, an embodiment of supreme feminine divinity revered for centuries. Any shortcut or compromise would be tantamount to disrespecting the sacred cultural legacy they have inherited. This reverence compels them to channel their deepest creative energies into crafting idols that exude unparalleled elegance and spiritually evocative aesthetics. Preserving such timeless heritage remains their paramount driving force, an essence they endeavor to breathe into every immortal sculpture.

While all artisans face such hardships now, the issues get particularly exacerbated for women due to prevalent gender bias. They constantly battle the entrenched notion that idol-making is a 'male' domain with doubts about their design and sculpting prowess. Organizers and even laborers resist taking orders from women supervisors. Contract negotiations focused primarily on the lowest cost completely dismiss their extensive expertise.

Compounding the economic and societal pressures, the female idol makers of Kumartuli must also endure harsh physical working conditions that undermine their health and safety daily. The small, cramped workshops operate in poor infrastructure with little ventilation, basic amenities or safety provisions. The tin-roofed spaces become sweltering furnaces in

Kolkata's scorching summers when temperatures routinely cross 40°C. The dusty air laden with clay particles leads to frequent respiratory issues. During the intense pre-Puja rushes, artisans often work over 16-hour marathons without breaks, sustaining themselves on simple meals.

For women juggling domestic responsibilities, the grueling schedules necessitate sacrificing personal care and family time completely for months at a stretch. Ruma recounts neglecting her diabetic condition and menstrual health frequently due to a lack of workplace facilities. Ergonomic hazards like heavy lifting, prolonged crouching over idols and inhaling toxic paint fumes increase risks of skeletal disorders, allergies and chronic illnesses. With no insurance coverage, medical emergencies push artisans into debt traps. The unhygienic, primitive working environments laden with infrastructural woes cruelly amplify the professional challenges female artisans combat relentlessly.

As sole breadwinners, they cannot compete with workshops with more artisans churning out more cost-effective fiberglass idols. Abandonment by their husbands denies them both spousal income and legitimacy within the local community. Constant barbs like “women lack creative visions” or “can't handle production responsibilities” hurt more than their calloused hands that bear witness to years of excellence., even after years of proving their excellence. Such misogynistic notions prevail due to ingrained patriarchal biases viewing women as inferior, irrational beings unfit for professions demanding higher cognitive abilities. Menstrual taboos around impurity also persist, hampering the acceptance of women in spiritually-revered sculptural arts like idol-making.

China articulates this discrimination candidly, “We carry the same sacks of clay, sculpt similar figures. But our hourly wages or schedule flexibility remain secondary considerations, if at all.” (Pal, 2024)

The societal stigma and erosion of compensation directly throttles the women's economic progress and career growth of these women. Unfortunately, there exists no platform that acknowledges their artistic talents or unique feminine perspectives on idol conceptualization. For them, the frenzied festive season does not signify increasing prosperity but rather represents a deepening abyss of uncertainty and despair.

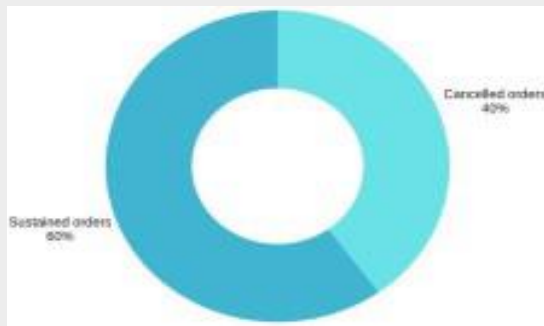


Fig 1.3: New client outreach orders canceled for the Pal Quartet

As the quotes suggest, all artisans face such disruptive trends impairing Kumartuli's economy currently. However, the issues get particularly heightened for women due to prevalent gender bias bordering on discrimination.

Societal mindsets that cast doubt upon the competencies of women artisans persist unabated, dismissing their extensive expertise as trivial or inferior. As per the Union's member survey, over 40% of new client outreach ends unsuccessfully due to inherent skepticism from organizers who hesitate to entrust major projects to women-led teams. Tech-savvy young women artisans aspiring to modernize the craft using digital sculpting or online branding also report facing prejudice while pitching their ideas to traditional community stakeholders.

Contract negotiations predominantly focus on the lowest production cost neglecting the finesse, quality assurance, and rich experience that characterize the work of women-led teams. Their status as single earners supporting their families deprives them of the flexibility of workshops with multiple income streams that can underbid rates. The Pals highlight how even after providing expertise over the years, they still fight notions that idol-making remains a 'male' domain.

The erosion of earnings and respect directly throttles their career advancement. The absence of adequate formal skilling support focused on harnessing women's unique perspectives deepens further their challenges. The limited funding or incubation avenues lead promising young talents including their daughters or others in the community to consider abandoning their ancestral craft. For most women then, the frenzied festive season represents deepening uncertainty rather than increasing prosperity.

Reasons for Persistent Discrimination

India's current labor statistics portray a worsening gender disparity in workforce participation and job vulnerability over the past decade, partly attributed to persisting stigma. As per 2022 surveys by the Centre for Monitoring the Indian Economy (CMIE), India's overall unemployment rate hovered around 7-8%. But while male joblessness fluctuated between 5-7% with cyclical variations, women faced double-digit unemployment throughout, peaking at 47% during COVID lockdowns. (George et al., 2023) Currently, only around 20% of working-age urban women actively engage in the workforce.

Moreover, existing gender gaps in entrepreneurship ecosystems severely disadvantage women-led enterprises, as evident among Kumartuli's artisans. A survey report studying Indian women entrepreneurs divulged that a mere 2% of all venture funding over 2014-19 got allocated to all-female founding teams while mixed-gender leadership startups received 79% of funding. Inadequate access to capital, incubation, networks, and role models denies women entrepreneurs the support systems necessary for sustainable scaling. (Statista, 2024)

Structural Challenges Around Women's Work

Drawing insights from Claudia Goldin's analyses underscores how stark gender divides often stem from 'structural' barriers within professions that impose significant trade-offs for women between careers and family duties. (Harvard University, Department of Economics, 2023)

Her research traced the emergence of the US gender wage gap during the 20th century to differences in male and female labor force participation. Women tended to exit from inflexible yet highest-paying occupations the most as their domestic responsibilities increased after marriage. But male incomes kept rising due to experience gains without career breaks. (Harvard University, Department of Economics, 2023)

Goldin thus differentiates between labour divided by gender versus those divided merely along skill lines. (Harvard University, Department of Economics, 2023) Eliminating the former even within skilled sectors can promote merit-based equitable participation. However cultural definitions and evaluation of 'high skill' act as man-made barriers impeding women's opportunities.

Kumartuli similarly demonstrates a highly skilled domain with stringent demands on labor time and mobility that disproportionately disadvantages women due to societal stigma. Rampant skepticism over female artisan capabilities often limits their access to large patronage contracts, training, and mentor networks perpetuating unequal success divides. The constant battle against doubts around professionalism and the struggle to overcome family obligations imposed mental labor, draining motivation levels.

Structural Support - The Sustainable Solution

Goldin optimistically contends that such ‘structural’ divides limiting women’s workforce participation signal focus areas for policy reforms. (Harvard University, Department of Economics, 2023) Solutions promoting labor flexibility, remote work, access to capital, skill training, and leadership representation can effectively transform changes in gender gaps across domains.

Kumartuli similarly necessitates a structural revamp in its patronage, training, and financing models, centered on merit and craft sustainability. Innovative institutional support through digital platforming, co-working spaces, skill incubators, and microfinance access exclusively for its women artisans can foster enterprise stability. Sensitizing all ecosystem stakeholders and elevating successful women role models to the forefront would also contribute to tackling discrimination.

Goldin views the rapid narrowing of medical career gaps through innovative flexibility policies as a model for structured transformations achievable within a generation. (Harvard University, Department of Economics, 2023) Kumartuli likewise can transition into an equitable, globally renowned crafts hub if its structural flows receive prompt policy redressal. Failing this, the enduring forces of stigma risk draining the hub of all its abundant feminine talent and energy.

The Road Ahead

Kumartuli’s present turmoil thus mirrors the broader challenges faced by women in the Indian and global workforce in achieving equitable representation. Addressing these issues

requires immediate collaborative efforts between the private and public sectors to effect structured changes that support sustainable livelihood for women.

Targeted initiatives such as Skill-building programs, access to finance, formal contracts and social security must be designed specifically for women to counteract existing disparities. Progressive labor regulations, along with incubation support, and results-based financing can serve as incentives for their active and productive participation. Establishing platforms for collective voice and representation is essentially for shaping policy dialogues in accordance with women's priorities.

However, such external structural shifts need to align with internal mindset changes to sustain progress. Sensitization drives and measurable progress tracking must engage entire communities towards equitable opportunity unshackling women's potential. True prosperity shall only emerge once feminine creativity and leadership are accorded equal prestige as male counterparts.

The Pal quartet's example illustrates that with adequate nurturing support despite societal barriers, women artisans can ascend to glorious heights even in traditionally masculine spaces. (Chowdhury & Ghosh, 2023) They persistently chip away at glass ceilings, quietly transforming karmic cycles of discrimination. The final idol to be dismantled now is that of regressive public attitudes doubting women's capabilities. For India's goddesses shall bloom fully only when the feminine spirit flies free of man-made shackles!

Academic researchers have extensively studied the Kumartuli gender dynamics, to shed light on the key reasons why societal stigma and discrimination persist despite rapid urbanization and legal safeguards.

The religious outlook viewing the goddess Durga and other female deities as the universal mother and protector promotes conceptions of women primarily as homemakers rather than career professionals. Dr Sayantani Banerjee, a gender studies professor notes, "Resistance persists against women entering non-traditional roles like hands-on idol making which gets labeled masculine work. Women artisans thus constantly battle doubts about their serious vocational abilities. As exemplified in Hindi films like "Pink", our society still accords women's conditional legitimacy." (Chowdhury & Ghosh, 2023)

Moreover, women rely greatly on familial support to balance long artisan hours with domestic duties. However, the intergenerational craft traditionally got passed down among male family members only. Reema Das, PhD Scholar researching artisan women highlights, “Daughters or wives assisting actively in workshops is a recent trend over 2-3 decades only. The current elder generation remains unable to reconcile.” (Pal, 2024)

The Future Beckons with Hope and Despair

While the urgent need for structural reforms supporting Kumartuli’s women artisans is glaringly evident, any top-down rapid implementation risks backlash. The artisan colony’s centuries-old traditions are deeply ingrained, shaped by religious sentiments and cultural legacies. Abrupt disruptions could foster resentment among the predominantly conservative, elder male artisans still entrenched in patriarchal mindsets regarding women's conventional roles.

As revealed through the Pal quartet’s lived experiences, even trailblazing achievements often get overshadowed by prevailing skepticism questioning women's creative vision or management capabilities. Dismantling such regressive notions requires patient, sustained efforts at grassroots awareness and mentorship programs. Promoting greater representation of accomplished women sculptors as role models while sensitizing the community on gender inequities could initiate progressive attitude shifts.

Simultaneously, any structural initiatives like upskilling academies, digital platforms or finance access schemes must consciously align with traditional artistic philosophies. Embracing innovative solutions perceived as potentially dilutive Kumartuli’s divine sculptural heritage could face resistance from artisans deeply committed to preserving sanctity. Participatory governance models giving current practitioners agency in redesigning ecosystems could foster trust and natural adoption. The state government's continuing patronage through consistent orders and infrastructure upgrade projects also remains critical. With massive transitional strain from climate change and economic headwinds, abrupt policy overhauls risk destabilizing Kumartuli when it remains most vulnerable. A phased roadmap providing interim sustenance support while gradually uplifting women's skilling and entrepreneurial potential appears optimal.

By advocating an inclusive, organic approach synchronizing progressive ideals with Kumartuli's intrinsic spiritual-cultural ethos, lasting reformatations uplifting its women's economic empowerment could be achieved. The road ahead remains arduous, but strengthening the feminine force has actualized divinity across Bengal's history before. The awoken 'Shakti' shall undoubtedly illuminate the path to equitable glory again.

The Pal quartet stands as a symbol of women artisans overcoming male-dominated barriers, yet facing uncertainty. Government and private efforts are underway to train more women, combat discrimination, and promote sustainability. However, Challenges including declining patrons, attracting youth, and fiberglass dominance continue to persist. Initiatives focused on compensation and stability aim to improve conditions. Mala's optimism fuels hope, envisioning a future where more women contribute to shaping the Goddess. Despite ongoing struggles, the resilience of Kumartuli's artisans shines through. However, without swift action against discrimination and economic challenges, darkness looms over these historic lanes, particularly for women artisans, making their battle urgent.

References

- Chowdhury, S. Ghosh, S. (2023, September 18). At Kumartuli, a handful of women idol-makers break tradition, taboo as they leave an imprint. The Indian Express. <https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/kolkata/at-kumartuli-handful-of-women-idol-maker-s-break-tradition-taboo-as-they-leave-an-imprint-8944559/>
- De, H. (2016, October 7). A tale of 4 Kumartuli women idol makers. Femina. <https://www.femina.in/achievers/a-tale-of-4-kumortuli-women-idol-makers-25024.html#ip=1>
- George, A. Gupta, S. Huang, Y. (2023, May 6). Gendered Impact on Unemployment: A Case Study of India during the COVID-19 Pandemic. EPW, 58(18). <https://www.epw.in/engage/article/gendered-impact-unemployment-case-study-india>
- Harvard University, Department of Economics. (2023, November 10). Why Women Won. Department of Economics, Harvard University. <https://scholar.harvard.edu/goldin/publications/why-women-won>
- Pal, C. (2024). Excerpts from Interview (S. Pradhan, Trans.; 1, 1st ed.) [Offline]. Kumartuli, West Bengal, India.
- Statista. (2024, March 5). Unemployment rate in India in 2022, by gender [Infographic]. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1306898/india-unemployment-rate-by-gender/>
- The Editorial Board. (2017, November 9). Letters to the Editor: Climate change hurdle for Kumartuli artisans ahead of Durga Puja. Telegraph India. <https://www.telegraphindia.com/amp/opinion/letters-to-the-editor-climate-change-hurdle-for-kumartuli-artisans-ahead-of-durga-puja/cid/1956894>
- Mukherjee, U. (2023, October 15). In thy likeness, their unlikeness, darlings: Trials of Kumartuli's women artisans. Telegraph Online.

<https://www.telegraphindia.com/culture/in-thy-likeness-their-unlikeness-darlings-challenges-of-kumartulis-women-workers/cid/1973466>

- Javed, Z. (2023, August 27). Kumartuli: Kolkata: Rain spells trouble for Kumartuli idol-makers ahead of festive season | Kolkata News. Times of India. <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/kolkata/rain-spells-trouble-for-kumartuli-idol-makers-ahead-of-festive-season/articleshow/103096959.cms>

Author Bio

An undergraduate student in economics at Delhi University and a youth advocate at UNICEF, Sahil is a Laadli Media Awardee '23. They are also the winners of prestigious fellowships, including Global Citizen Year Academy '22 and Young Researchers for Social Impact '22. Sahil regularly writes for Thred Media. They are passionate about queer rights, advocacy, and climate change and the intersection between these.

We regret to inform that Parwaaz is going on a hiatus. The upcoming 14th edition is set to be the last edition of Parwaaz for some time in the near future. We are deeply indebted to your constant support and affection.

Follow us on LinkedIn and Instagram for updates.

DM for any queries or reach out to us at
grc.gender@gmail.com

