

REPORT

SAMVAD
CONVERSATION

UNLEARNING
PATRIARCHY:
EXPANDING
IMPACTS OF
GENDER TRAINING

28 SEPTEMBER 2021

3:30 – 5:30 PM

PRIA@40
SHAPING OUR TOMORROWS, TODAY



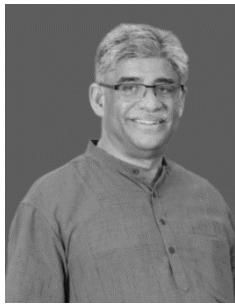
Making the gender leap



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- ❖ ***Need to move from training to mentoring*** – Training often gets restricted with time and can be an incomplete tool without planning and strategising the resources. We need mechanisms to monitor training and provide hand-holding support to the participants.
- ❖ ***Use feminist methodology and popular culture*** – Gender trainings must move beyond the binary and include conversations on sexuality with the help of popular culture and feminist learnings.
- ❖ ***Build a cadre of trainers*** – A mixed group of trainers including the younger generation can bring innovative perspectives and make gender trainings transformative.
- ❖ ***Investment in trainings*** –As short-term trainings do not yield desired results, there is a need to invest time and research in the programme design. This will ensure practical changes through repeated reflection and internalisation.
- ❖ ***Provide safe spaces*** –The training must provide safe spaces to participants and survivors of violence so that they can collectivise and co-learn.
- ❖ ***Know the social context and the realities surrounding gender*** – The training content must be mindful of gender realities and the social context pertaining to it so that field actions can be practical.



Shri Jagadananda is Mentor and Co-Founder of Centre for Youth and Social Development (CYSD), Bhubaneswar. He was the State Information Commissioner and a Member of the State Planning Board of Odisha. He has worked on the issues of Legitimacy, Transparency and Accountability within Civil Society at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, Cambridge, USA. Presently, he is a Member of the Standing Committee (CSOs) and an expert in the drafting of the National Vision 2035 document at the NITI Aayog.

Ms. Uppali Mohanty is the Programme Manager and the focal point leading gender programmes at CYSD. With over 13 years of experience in the social development sector, Uppali is experienced in budget analysis, gender budgeting and governance accountability tools.



Ms. Nani Zulminarni, President of ASPBAE (Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education) holds many more positions like South East Asia Regional Leader, ASHOKA, Founder and Chair, PEKKA (Women-Headed Family Empowerment, etc. She has more than 33 years of experience in women empowerment for poverty eradication and overcoming discrimination using a different form of entry point including social economic and political empowerment. Her passion is for community organising and the economic and political empowerment of grass root women

Ms. Anita Mathur, Program Director, Azad Foundation has worked in the field of Women's Empowerment for more than 4 decades. She is one of the Founder-Members of Astha Sansthan, Udaipur that works for the empowerment of tribal and poor communities in Rajasthan. She has also been involved with women empowerment work in the tribal as well in the slum areas. Her expertise lies in the field of capacity building, women empowerment, and livelihoods.





Dr. Yogesh Kumar is the Executive Director and Founder, Samarthan Centre for Development Support and his work has been over a wide variety of themes to strengthen the capacities and institutional mechanisms of voluntary development organisations, development management and training of trainers in participatory planning, monitoring, and process documentation on development issues. He has written several papers on the issues of local governance, accountability, and transparency.

Ms. Shioko Momose, Senior Consultant, IC Net Limited, Japan and is presently leading a research team on the impact of COVID-19 on women and girls in Thailand, India and Bangladesh. Shioko has 26 years of international working experience on “Gender and Development” in more than 10 countries mainly working with rural women in the field of livelihoods and gender-based violence.



Ms. Fauzia Viqar, CEO, Rah-Center for Management and Development is a social activist and thought leader on women's rights and empowerment. Fauzia led policy and legislative reform to eliminate discrimination and violence against women and succeeded in placing gender equality and female empowerment at the core of government processes. Fauzia has succeeded in developing a culture of gender-disaggregated data collection for evidence-informed policymaking in Pakistan.

Ms. Sunita Menon, Senior Director – Strategic partnerships & scale-up, Breakthrough spearheads national and global partnerships for Breakthrough’s impact-oriented work to end violence against women and girls. Sunita designs and implements programmes inspiring people to act within their homes, institutions and communities to address issues like domestic violence, gender-biased sex selection, early marriage. She was instrumental in conceptualising and designing “Taaro Ki Toli” a gender equity curriculum that is empowering over 400,000 adolescents in India.





Ms. Paromita Vohra, Founder, Creative Director, Agents of Ishq is a pioneering voice in the conversations on feminism, desire and culture in India. She is an award-winning documentary filmmaker, whose films include the landmark documentaries Unlimited Girls, Q2P, Where's Sandra? and Partners in Crime, among others. Agents of Ishq is now a conversation leader in the field of sexuality, and Indian's best-loved site on all things sex, love, and desire – recognised the world over for their music videos on consent, their playful, irreverent sex-education content, and the incredibly sensitive personal narratives on their website.

Ms. Hemlata Verma, Senior Technical Specialist, ICRW has nearly 10 years of experience in the field of gender and development with particular expertise in gender mainstreaming, primary prevention of gender-based violence, and sexual and reproductive health rights of adolescent boys and girls. She has experience in planning and implementing research and evaluations of programs and has led these processes for many of ICRW's research projects.



Ms. Mona Sherpa, Assistant Country Director, CARE, Nepal is a development and feminist activist and is responsible for providing strategic, management and technical support to all the programme teams. She is a core member of SANGAT (South Asian Feminist Network) and has been part of the women's movement in Nepal and globally. She also has expertise in strategically working with various government agencies and donors. She has worked with people's organisations being part of social movements mainly on the issue of women's rights, freed Kamaiya and land rights.

Ms. Ritambhara Mehta, Co-Founder, Nazariya is responsible for overall organisational development and conducts training sessions with school, university students and development sector organisations on gender, sexuality, and sexual harassment at the workplace. Identified as a queer feminist, she engages in conversations around organisational processes that are people-centric, fair, and constructive.





Ms. Sarojini Ganju Thakur is the Chairperson of the Institute of Social Studies Trust. Her principal interests and work are in the field of gender, livelihoods and environment Thakur is the Chairperson of the Institute of Social Studies Trust. Her principal interests and work are in the field of gender, livelihoods and environment and education. She undertakes consultancy work on various aspects of gender and environment for various bilateral and multilateral organisations including UN WOMEN, UNICEF, and DFID. She has also been involved for many years with many institutions as a training resource person

Ms. Abhilasha Sood, Gender Responsive Budgeting Coordinator-MWCD, has been with the UN Women India country office since 2017. Prior to this, she was the embedded technical expert on behalf of UN Women to the state government of Rajasthan on ending violence against women & girls. This entailed advocacy for gender-responsive policies, strengthening implementation of relevant laws and schemes, developing mechanisms and institutional capacities to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls



Ms. Nandita Pradhan Bhatt is the Director of Martha Farrell Foundation, where she's responsible for programme delivery and management of the Foundation. She also heads the gender programmes in PRIA (Society for Participatory Research in Asia). Nandita has trained over 20,000 employees across more than 40 national and international organisations and has been working with women domestic workers to train and support their advocacy efforts to strengthen institutional responses to tackle the issue of sexual harassment in their world of work.

Dr. Rajesh Tandon, Founder President, Participatory Research in Asia, India, is currently a UNESCO Co-Chair on Community Based Research and Social Responsibilities in Higher Education. He serves as chairperson of the Global Alliance on Community-Engaged Research (GACER) network, which facilitates the sharing of knowledge and information worldwide to further community-based research



Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA) completes its 40 years of its impactful journey in 2022. Ahead of this milestone event, the organisation is reinforcing its commitment to continue institutional strengthening and capacity development support to civil society and non-profits, with a special focus on new-generation civil society and non-profit groups. Between August and December 2021, PRIA will be convening [PRIA@40 Conversations](#) with communities, partners, associates, supporters, experts, investors and colleagues, drawn from civil society, government, business, media and academia, to share ideas and experiences that can help 're-imagine' PRIA, its interventions and the world in the coming period.

In this context, PRIA convened a **Conversation (Samvad)** on [Unlearning Patriarchy: Expanding Impacts of Gender Training](#) on 28th September 2021 in collaboration with [Martha Farrell Foundation](#), [UN Women](#) and [CYSD \(Centre for Youth and Social Development\)](#). The virtual conversation was attended by 72 participants, was moderated by **Ms. Nandita Bhatt** (Director, Martha Farrell Foundation).

The conversation (Samvad) explored the following questions:

- What lessons can be drawn from past approaches to gender training?
- How can larger efforts be coalesced to broaden the impacts of gender training towards equality?

PRIA's history of gender training is rooted in its Participatory Training Methodology (PTM), which springs from the principle that all individuals have the capacity to learn from and reflect on their experiences. The experiential understanding of gender in their everyday lives, therefore, has helped develop women's knowledge of the issue and system. The training focused on stimulating action through the realization of participants' own power to influence change.

PRIA's effort in mainstreaming gender in institutions and development programmes began in the '90s and has since continued to promote a gender-just organisation culture be it in policy or practice. PRIA's gender training, shaped by larger national, regional and global trends, has always focused on involving men and boys in the conversation and underlined the role of each gender in creating a gender empowered culture.

Over the years, PRIA's work with gender training has spanned across several sectors, including government, civil society, activists, and informal workers. Youth-led initiatives have been at the forefront of efforts through a range of programmes. To know more about PRIA's work on making the gender leap, [click here](#).

The Samvad aimed to take forward this rich history and tradition of keeping Gender on the Agenda and foster collective learning and develop pathways to amplify the impacts of gender training, at this crucial juncture of the organisation's fortieth anniversary.

The conversation opened with two speakers (and event partners), **Mr. Jagadananda** (Member Secretary, CYSD) and **Ms. Uppali Mohanty** (Program Manager and Gender Focal Point, CYSD) who traced the journey of gender training by civil society in the Indian context over the last few decades, its challenges and achievements.

Mr. Jagadananda highlighted that gender training has historically worked at two levels - programmatic and organisation. He observed that inward-looking training was as critical as outward-looking training, at a time when patriarchal mindsets and unequal access to resources dominated the discourse and set up a resistance to change. While these challenges

continue to exist even today, Mr. Jagadananda emphasised on newer challenges that have been thrown up in recent years that act as impediments to gender training - digital access and literacy among women being the primary issue. Another challenge he highlighted was that gender training is widely considered to be a 'women's issue', which unfairly places the burden of effecting change on one gender alone.

“men and boys must be active participants for the process of gender mainstreaming to be effective”

Ms. Uppali Mohanty brought a fresh focus to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and its impacts on the work done by gender trainers. A key element that she noted was the rising violence against women and girls. Ms. Mohanty emphasised that gender-based violence is not a new issue but said that the fact that it rose to such alarming proportions during the lockdown laid bare the mammoth work that still needs to be done by gender trainers. Gender trainings, she said, need to incorporate counselling and mentoring support for survivors of gender-based violence.

“gender training must be accompanied by counselling, mentoring and handholding support”

Bringing perspectives vast experience of working with gender in the South Asian region, **Ms. Nani Zulminarni**, President - ASPBAE, highlighted that even though gender training work has been going for years, data on labour force participation and leadership and decision making by women shows that there's hardly any progress. Civil society, she said, must develop an understanding of why the gap between training and outcomes is so stark. She underscored the need for organisations to develop new frameworks that can incorporate diverse perspectives and impact tangible change in the existing value systems.

“in Asia, where family influence is high, gender training must focus on interdependent relations to challenge the patriarchy”

Ms. Anita Mathur (Program Director, Azad Foundation) drawing from Azad Foundation's gender mainstreaming programmes and initiatives, underscored the limitations of only providing technical information to participants. She emphasised the need for training to be holistic in its pedagogy and focus simultaneously on self-development and growth of participants, provide counselling support for survivors of gender-based violence, and offer information on legal rights and awareness on sexual and reproductive health and wellness. An intersectional and collaborative approach will transform gender training and help address unequal relations of power, she said.

“a model that enables continuous reflection and learning is key to changing mindsets”

Dr. Yogesh Kumar (Executive Director and Founder, Samarthan– Centre for Development Support), began by stating that the largest challenge to building women's capacities at an institutional level is the lack of gender sensitivity in governance structures. He highlighted the need for a cadre of gender-sensitive trainers, across the board, not just for gender training alone. A mixed group of trainers at all levels, including Panchayat representatives, civil society members, NGO workers, and women elected representatives, he said, would enable changes in power structures at all levels simultaneously.

“we need a cadre of gender-sensitive trainers for all kinds of training to bring about a behavioural change”

Ms. Shioko Momose (Senior Consultant, IC Net Limited), drawing from her own experience of working across multiple countries in the Asian region, highlighted that while gender training is effective in enhancing the agency of participants, it may not be effective in bringing out structural changes directly. With a practical training approach that has tailored content according to participants' contexts and lived realities, she said, training can become transformative. She also cautioned against one-time interventions and said repeated reflection is essential to unlearn patriarchy.

“training content needs to be tailored and contextualised to be truly transformative”

Ms. Sunita Menon (Senior Director – Strategic partnerships & scale-up, Breakthrough) reiterated the need to counter context-specific issues such as skewed sex ratio in schools, trafficking of girls and violence against women, by adopting an intersectional approach to training, especially when it comes to training adolescents. She emphasised the need for sustained investment in research, monitoring and evaluation, and including the development of psychosocial and interpersonal relations of participants in the pedagogy, to enable the participants to negotiate with gender-based discrimination and gain access to available resources. Above all, she emphasised the need for training models to be adaptable to be able to measure outcomes effectively.

“providing skills to adolescents to negotiate in the familial space during gender training is crucial to meeting long-term objectives”

Ms. Hemlata Verma (Senior Technical Specialist, ICRW) highlighted the need to address and prevent rising gender-based violence, using a sensitive training model. She highlighted the need for training to include men and boys in the conversation. She emphasised that training programmes must understand and acknowledge that men and boys face social pressures and expectations of being men and boys, which govern their behaviour. The training approach, therefore, needs to be empathetic in its approach to be effective.

“the first step while engaging with men and boys during training, is to understand their reality and create a dissonance with that reality”

Meet our panellists



[From top left to right: Ms. Nandita Bhatt, Mr. Jagadananda, Dr. Rajesh Tandon, Ms. Nani Zulminarni, Ms. Fauzia Viqar, Dr. Yogesh Kumar, Ms. Shioko Momose, Ms. Sunita Menon, Ms. Hemlata Verma, Ms. Mona Sherpa, Ms. Sarojini Ganju Thakur, Ms. Paromita Vohra, Ms. Ritambhara Mehta, Ms. Abhilasha Sood and Ms. Uppali Mohanty]

Ms. Mona Sherpa (Assistant Country Director, CARE Nepal) brought out the fact that in recent years, gender training sessions have become more sanitised and have lost the political element that they started with during the women's movement in the South Asian region.

To counter this challenge, she highlighted that the increasingly complex language of gender training needs to be simplified and the focus must shift from defining *concepts related to gender* to the *practical everyday experiences of women and building skills to prompt action seeking to dismantle existing structural discrimination and gender hierarchies*. She emphasised the need for gender training in every context to have a direct connection with larger socio-political movements, and focus on knowledge-building on legal rights, leadership and practice of feminist principles. For this, Ms. Sherpa said, trainers must continually reflect, internalise and transform their training approach, and move forward using an intersectional lens.

“gender training must have an activist approach that attacks the system of patriarchy”

Ms. Fauzia Viqar (CEO, Rah-Center for Management and Development) highlighted the fact that there are not enough development schemes to help achieve gender equality. Past approaches have failed to mainstream gender in government and non-government organisations and have considered women and NGOs responsible for taking action. Drawing from her experience in policymaking, she said that knowing one's audience is the only way to develop evidence, methods and interactive tools for successful training. An overall strategy that includes planning, budgeting and monitoring, and takes up the Women and Development (WAD) approach in training initiatives can shift this responsibility to the state and thus influence policy and decision making. She emphasised on the 3 A's – Authority, Acceptance and Ability as principles to operationalise gender-related concepts which are not possible to achieve from a stand-alone initiative.

“it is very important for gender trainers to understand tools, methodologies and pedagogies that will work with different participant groups and their contexts”

Ms. Sarojini Ganju Thakur (Chairperson, Institute of Social Studies Trust) brought forth an important question – who do we choose to conduct gender training? To align with the objectives of gender training, she emphasised the need for skilled trainers, who have the capacity and experience to adopt a feminist approach. The training design in itself, she said, must be able to identify innovators among participants and build their capacities further, to build a cascading model to perpetuate gender sensitivity and empowerment.

“trainers need to identify participants who will be the real agents of change”

Drawing from her experience of heading India's only digital platform that focuses on gender empowerment through the creation of content on love, sex and desire, **Ms. Paromita Vohra** (Founder and Creative Director, Agents of Ishq) highlighted the potential for digital-first platforms in expanding the impacts of gender training. She underscored the need for non-traditional learning spaces, including new media and illustrated how Agents of Ishq talks about gender from a pleasure-first approach, leaving no room for polarising conversations. Personal stories and narratives, she said, have helped individuals consuming the content to address their understanding and experience of gender at a deeper level.

“integrating the self through shared storytelling can effectively build on the consciousness-raising model of gender training”

Ms. Ritambhara Mehta (Co-Founder, Nazariya) spoke about the need for gender training to adopt a queer feminist lens. She highlighted that while there is a sound understanding of

gender as a construct, training also needs to address that sex is a construct as well. To develop this perspective and move beyond the traditional binary of male and female, it is crucial for trainers to be up to date and constantly learn, unlearn and relearn. Besides addressing gender norms, she highlighted that training models must address gender expression, gender identity and sexuality to bring an intersectional understanding of how patriarchy impacts society.

“gender trainings must adopt a queer feminist lens and be sensitive to different gender identities to be truly inclusive”

To conclude the conversation, **Ms. Abhilasha Sood** (Gender Responsive Budgeting Coordinator- MWCD, UN Women India) and **Dr. Rajesh Tandon** (Founder President, Participatory Research in Asia, India) summarised the key take-aways from the discussion.

Ms. Abhilasha Sood reiterated the need to use feminist pedagogy during gender training, as it is central to gender transformation. She also highlighted that in the context of the pandemic as well as otherwise, gender trainers must be mindful of the digital gender divide, in terms of access as well as methodologies of training. She brought out the need to have a cadre of trainers that includes the younger generations to multiply the impact and said that training can never be a stand-alone initiative if it needs to link with learning outcomes. She also emphasised that patriarchy doesn't exist alone in the system of oppression; therefore, gender training must be intersectional.

“trainers need to be mindful of the digital divide and develop tools to deal with it”

Dr. Rajesh Tandon expressed that while our understanding of gender training has become more nuanced, enriched and therefore more reflective of the reality on the ground; the trajectory of gender training has become more sensitised, limited and classroom based. While we need to transform the unequal power relations between genders, we also need to provide safe spaces for these conversations whether online or offline. The link between resistance in everyday life to oppressive forms of gender relations and structured learnings and rallies on the street has been lost. Dr. Tandon concluded by saying that these stages need to be reconnected and brought back.

“understanding gender and becoming an agent of change is everyday business for everyone”

The conversation (samvad) ended with a vote of thanks by **Ms. Darvi Joneja** (Program Officer, Martha Farrell Foundation).

3:30 pm to 3:45 pm

Welcome and Introduction to PRIA@40 Programmes and Conversation

Moderator: Ms. Nandita Pradhan Bhatt, Director, Martha Farrell Foundation India

3:45 pm to 4:45 pm

What lessons can be drawn from past approaches to gender training?

- Mr. Jagadananda, CYSD
- Ms. Uppali Mohanty, CYSD
- Ms. Nani Zulminarni, ASPBAE
- Ms. Anita Mathur, Azad Foundation
- Dr. Yogesh Kumar, SAMARTHAN
- Ms. Shioko Momose, IC Net Limited, Japan
- Ms. Fauzia Viqar, Rah-Center for Management and Development
- Ms. Sunita Menon, Breakthrough
- Ms. Paromita Vohra, Agents of Ishq

4.45 pm to 5:15 pm

How can larger efforts be coalesced to broaden impacts of gender training towards equality?

- Ms. Hemlata Verma, ICRW
- Ms. Mona Sherpa, CARE, Nepal
- Ms. Ritambhara Mehta, Nazariya
- Ms. Sarojini Ganju Thakur, Institute of Social Studies Trust

5.15 pm to 5:28 pm

Key Takeaways and closing comments

- Ms. Abhilasha Sood, MWCD
- Dr. Rajesh Tandon, PRIA, India

6.55 pm to 7.00 pm

Vote of Thanks and Closure

Ms. Darvi Joneja, Martha Farrell Foundation, India

| DATE | TITLE | THEME |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 12 August 2021 | Youth Participation and Active Citizenship | Citizen Participation |
| 20 August 2021 | Planning for Urban Informalities | Sustainable Urban Future |
| 31 August 2021 | Accelerating Capacities in Civil Society and Non-Profits | Empowering Civil Society |
| 2 September 2021 | Nurturing Civil Society Partnerships in Uncertain Times | Empowering Civil Society |
| 15 September 2021 | Redesigning Civil Society Ecosystem: From Local to Global | Empowering Civil Society |
| 28 September 2021 | Unlearning Patriarchy: Expanding Impacts on Gender Training | Making the Gender Leap |