

An Indian-Australian research partnership

Project Title:

Gender and Public Sphere

Project Number

HSS0505

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IITB Department:

Humanities and Social Sciences

Research Academy Themes:**Highlight which of the Academy's Theme(s) this project will address?**

(Feel free to nominate more than one. For more information, see www.iitbmonash.org)

1. Advanced computational engineering, simulation and manufacture
2. Infrastructure Engineering
3. Clean Energy
4. Water
5. Nanotechnology
6. Biotechnology and Stem Cell Research
- 7. Humanities and Social Sciences**

The research problem

Define the problem

Public sphere is understood as a discursive space in the social arena where public opinion is solicited, debated and shaped, typically in service of political participation. Private sphere is seen as the domain of human life that enjoys individual (not governmental) autonomy, albeit ruled by the dictates of societal laws. The distinction between public and private spheres emerges as a distinct ideology during the Industrial Revolution, though the separation of spaces delineated on the basis of gender is older and culturally/temporally determined. In the case of South Asia and other former colonies, the emergence of the concept of a public sphere is imbricated in specific histories of social reform movements, the rise of nationalisms, and negotiations with colonial modernity from mid- to late nineteenth century. The twinning of property and propriety as a way of acquiring control over the means of production (of material/capital goods or over reproductive systems) has the dual effect of circumscribing women's roles in the public sphere on the one hand, and emancipating their role in the labour market force on the other. The resultant tension has had a profound influence on women's lives at all levels of social attitudes, behaviours and practices in the last three centuries. This project is interested in excavating the ways in which the

public-private divide shapes women's participation the political arena in the era of advanced capital in diverse geo/socio-political sites and contexts in South Asia.

Project aims

Define the aims of the project

The project intends to undertake the study of Public Space and Gender in relation to the following focus points, but is not limited to, one or more of the following threads:

Women's Movement and histories of activism

Women and reading: histories, habits, spaces

Women in politics

Women's writing

Women thinkers

Feminisms and class/caste

Women and education

Public Intellectuals

Gendered identities

Alternative sexualities

Expected outcomes

Highlight the expected outcomes of the project

This project will follow the trajectory of the public-private separation from the Industrial Revolution onwards to the current era of advanced capital to contribute to the discussion of women's role in the political arena in diverse contexts and spaces in South Asia. It will deepen the discussion of the gendered ways on which the public-private divide is imbricated in ongoing structures of discrimination and disadvantage.

How will the project address the Goals of the above Themes?

Describe how the project will address the goals of one or more of the 6 Themes listed above.

The project addresses the 7th theme that has been added – Humanities and Social Sciences. It will be an interdisciplinary project bringing together feminist theory and cultural studies, literary analysis and philosophical thought, social and historical movements, political science and human geographies, sexualities and gendered practices.

Capabilities and Degrees Required

List the ideal set of capabilities that a student should have for this project. Feel free to be as specific or as general as you like. These capabilities will be input into the online application form and students who opt for this project will be required to show that they can demonstrate these capabilities.

Students should have a Masters in English, Women's Studies, Comparative Literature, or an allied discipline in Humanities and Social Sciences. MPhil not mandatory but strongly preferred. A proposal, no longer than 1000 words, with a specific topic and indicating research questions, is to be submitted.

Potential Collaborators

Please visit the IITB website www.iitb.ac.in OR Monash Website www.monash.edu to highlight some potential collaborators that would be best suited for the area of research you are intending to float.

Professor Sue Kossew: sue.kossew@monash.edu

Dr Ratheesh Radhakrishnan: ratheesh@hss.iitb.ac.in

Please provide a few key words relating to this project to make it easier for the students to apply.

Gender/Class/Caste, Studies in Public-Personal-Private Space, Geographies of the City