

Parivartan – the Gender Forum, Kirori Mal College, continued its endeavour of enabling students and others in the college community to deepen their understanding of gender and its nuances throughout the year 2020-21. Given the circumstances, all the events and discussions took place over an online platform, following the Covid-19 protocols. The efforts of the society were geared towards engaging with the working of gender in our public and private lives. Besides the events conducted (listed below), Parivartan had regular discussions and reading groups organised for its members.

A brief description of the events that took place in the academic year 2020- 2021 follows:

August Carnival (13th to 31st August 2020):

The student members of Parivartan, the Gender Forum of the college held their first event of the academic year, named ‘THE AUGUST CARNIVAL’, in the month of August 2020. The event with the themes ‘Desire’ and ‘Identity & Freedom’ was an attempt to invite all the budding artists by providing them a space for exhibiting their creativity and views on gender freely by portraying their ideas, manifest opinions and stir up the reflective conversations around gender through their expression of creativity. It was categorized into 3 categories.

- Abhivyakti - for poetry such as ballad, sonnet, free verse, ode, haiku, etc.
- Meraki- for write-ups such as story, essay, article, etc.
- Kalakriti- for artworks such as painting, sketching, photography, etc.

The event received a tremendous response and the distinguished entries in the respective events got due recognition over the official social media handle of the forum.

1. Songs of Freedom (19th August 2020):

The student members of Parivartan, The Gender Forum of Kirori Mal College conducted an online poetry reading session - ‘Songs of Freedom’ on 19th of August 2020 celebrating 73 years of India’s Independence. All participants hailing from different corners of the country enthusiastically took part in the event and expressed what ‘freedom’ means to them, acknowledging the long struggle we have had, and the struggles that lie ahead.

2. Workshop on Challenges in Underlining Gender Issues and Understanding Gender Dynamics (17th September 2020):

An internal Workshop and discussion on the “Challenges in Underlining Gender Issues and Understanding Gender Dynamics: Then and now in the context of DU” was held on 17th September, 2020. Our guests were renowned scholars - Dr. Jinee Lokaneeta and Dr. Janaki Abraham, who have been associated with Parivartan since its inception (Dr. Jinee is one of the founding members of the forum). The workshop focused on the journey of the forum. It threw light on the prospective paths around social justice which the society needs to embark upon and the ways we can function during the pandemic.

3. Film Discussion and Orientation (27th September 2020):

A Discussion on a short documentary film- Nirnay by Pushpa Rawat was held, aiming to analyse the various aspects of gender, agency, class, caste and family structure. The discussion was also an Orientation Programme for newly joined student members from different departments in the Gender Forum.

4. **Gender and Labour - Surrogacy and Egg Donation as Reproductive Labour (7th October 2020):**

A Discussion on “Gender and Labour- Surrogacy and Egg Donation as Reproductive Labour” was held with Dr. Amrita Pande (Sociology professor, Dept. of Sociology, University of Cape Town, South Africa), the guest speaker and our associate Staff Advisor, Saumyajit Bhattacharya (Associate Professor in Economics, KMC, University of Delhi) as the session chair. The discussion revolved around Surrogacy as a Labour Practice and the challenges faced by surrogate women with the changes in the law around the practice in India. Dr. Pande shared the experiences of her fascinating and meaningful research into the working of reproductive technologies and the experience of women who worked as surrogates, and shed light on the various stigmas and gendered aspects of the industry.

5. **Discussion: Gender Based Violence (29th October 2020):**

An interactive Group Discussion on “Gender based Violence” was organised by the Student members of the forum which discussed the forms of violence directed towards a person on the basis of their gender identity. The participants put forward their views upon this topic. It sought to understand how violence is used as a tool to subdue women and marginalised genders.

6. **The Ambiguity of Female Labour-Class, Caste and Female Sexuality in Paid Domestic Labour in India (7th November 2020):**

The gender forum conducted its second Panel Discussion on Gender and Labour focusing on “Ambiguity of Female Labour- Class, Caste and Female Sexuality in Paid Domestic Labour in India”. The session with guest speaker Sonal Sharma, PhD candidate at Dept. of Sociology, Johns Hopkins University (Baltimore, USA) was also chaired by our Associate Staff Advisor. The discussion gave an insight about the prevalent situation and stigma attached with paid domestic labour in India and also addressed the crucial aspects of the correlation between labour and gender.

7. **Orientation Programme (9th January 2021):**

Parivartan organised its annual Orientation for the academic session 2020-2021 for the first-year students, who had got admitted just over a month previously. The potential new members were introduced to the aim- exploring the nuances of gender in the society; and objective- to help understand the concept of gender and its perceptions in the society. The gender forum’s attempt to develop a solution-oriented approach to tackle gender related issues in everyday life was shared. An online registration form was circulated for the students to record the number of participants. It was held successfully and received a massive amount of response from the students.

8. **Discussion: Gender and Family (14th January 2021):**

A student body led Discussion was held on the theme of “Gender and Family”. Following a short introduction and presentation made by a team of students, all participants in the session discussed the functioning of family as a unit and how families become a site of socialisation, and inculcation of gendered and patriarchal norms, while also being primary support structures for members. The interactive discussion raised ways in which participants had personally negotiated and experienced families, the troubling and comforting aspects of these, and also some changes that have taken place over time. It enabled a deeper and practically grounded and complex understanding of gender and social structures that was found to be very useful.

9. **Discussion: Matrimonial sites and Dating Apps (28th January 2021):**

A student body Discussion on the topic “Matrimonial Sites and Dating Apps” was held where the participants discussed the various nuances of gender, caste and class through the lens of various Matrimonial sites and Dating apps regarding how these online platforms regulate gender stereotypical attitude in the society. The discussion followed a presentation made by a team of students.

10. **Discussion: Love (11th February 2021):**

A student body Discussion centred on “Love” was organised in which the participants explored this subject. the socio-political understanding of love in our society. The discussion began with a presentation made by a team of students.

11. **Discussion: Sexism and Bollywood (25th February 2021):**

A Discussion on the topic “Sexism and Bollywood” was organised by the student body of the forum. It unfolded along the lines of gender manifestations in mainstream Bollywood films which is conveniently reflected in the portrayal of stories/scenes, characters, lyrics and dialogues and how it promotes gender inequality on a casual basis.

12. **Film Discussion-Lipstick under my Burkha (1st March 2021):**

The forum organised a **Film discussion** on the movie “Lipstick under my Burkha” by Alankrita Srivastava. It sought to analyse gender norms through the events in the film. The conversation revolved around sexuality, bodily autonomy, caste and religion.

13. **Play Screening- Voh Bol Uthi (8th March 2021):**

On the occasion of International Women’s Day, Parivartan organised a **Play Screening** of “Voh Bol Uthi” followed by a discussion afterwards. The event was a tribute to the historical legacy of Women’s Day. It was followed by celebratory poems and songs.

Parivartan will continue to engage in its work and build upon the new things the members have learned over the past year. We had planned a major event to discuss the Trans-Gender Act and issues affecting transgendered persons and other minor events in April-May 2021 but had to postpone them owing to the onslaught of the second wave of the pandemic.

We hope to be able to resume other regular activities of the forum that have been restricted with the pandemic soon, even as we will continue to do our best to pursue our aim to deepen and widen the understanding of gender, with all its nuances and complexities, within the college community through varied means in the online medium.