

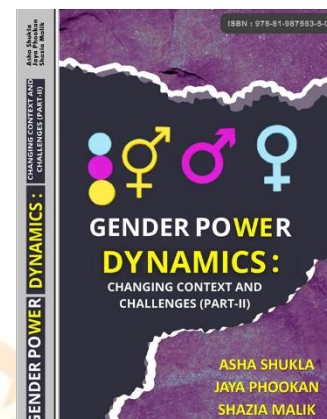
Book Review

Gender Power Dynamics: Changing Context and Challenges (Part 2)

Editors – Asha Shukla, Jaya Phookan, Shazia Malik

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Reviewer- Prof. Shobha Padmakar Shinde, Former Director and Head, KBC North Maharashtra University, Jalgaon, MH



The team of editors have successfully brought out a compelling and timely volume that interrogates the intersection of gender and power in society as a sequel to the first volume published on the same subject.

The book emerges from the foundational understanding that gender not only shapes individuals' lived experiences but also deeply influences the structures, expressions and operations of power itself. The asymmetrical power hierarchies are reinforced by gender norms. The book highlights that at the root of persisting gender inequalities is the abuse and monopolisation of a power system that limits women's agency within both formal institutions and informal structures.

In the extensively written editorial, it is highlighted that gender power dynamics are complex, multifaceted and shaped by various factors including religion, caste, health and socio-economic status. Intersectionality is a critical framework for understanding the experiences of girls and women and how to develop more effective strategies to address the challenges.

The book is an outstanding compilation of ten well documented research papers ranging geographically on relevant issues of gender power dynamics from Kashmir to the tribal women of Madhya Pradesh, to Tamil Nadu and also the North East. The book brings together different perspectives, committed field work, explorations, findings, observations, analysis and recommendations to resolve the problems of gender power dynamics.

Writers Adil Hussain Bhat and Yattoo Mateema suggest effective strategies to foster empowerment of women in conflict affected rural regions of Kashmir. This study is carried out in four districts of South Kashmir namely Anantnag, Pulwama, Kulgaon and Shopian and emphasises on a cultural shift towards gender equality and justice across all facets of Kashmiri society.

Debashish Debnath draws on extensive field research and policy analysis to show how structural inequalities, patriarchal norms and development interventions have shaped women's agency across diverse tribal communities of Madhya Pradesh. Case studies of

successful tribalwomen, their traditional knowledge, the processes of resistance, adaptation and gradual transformation makes for a positive picture of changing societal norms through everyday negotiations.

The article Exploring a More Inclusive Domestic Legal Regime related to Maternity Benefit in India "explores serious issues like surrogacy, adoption, mental well being of working mother Sand and points out the lacuna that there are no statutory provisions for mothers in unorganized sector.

Farzeen Khan and Sabiha Hussain point to the perennial issue of women and unpaid care-work. They draw attention to the phenomenon of migrating labour and the socio-economic hardships of wives who are left behind. The burdens such women bear leads to social isolation, stigma and mental health concerns.

N.Murugeswari uses a combination of surveys, interviews and observational data, collected over a three-month period from five cities-Chennai, Tiruchirapalli, Coimbatore, Madurai and Teruneval to highlight gendered expectations, biases, transformative strategies and inclusivity trends.

"Public Space, Private Lives: Gendered Boundaries and the Politics of Belonging" is a research article which traces gender inequalities in household tasks and also occupational gender segregation. Priyaranjan Trivedi in his paper explores the roots of gender power dynamics as deeply historical and systemic.

Dr. Ratna Mulay traces malnutrition in women and children, its social consequences since 2015. Chronic hunger is the situation of more than 800 million people in the world today. One in every nine people goes hungry every day. Malnutrition is a major obstacle in women empowerment. Shobha Shinde in her article "Gender and Media" argues tha tgender power dynamics are fluid, contextual and influenced by historical legacies, cultural contexts and socio-economic structures.

Kashmir comes forward in the book once again in the last chapter, formulated through the combined effort of a number of writers. It tells about the Madre Meherban Women and Child Welfare Institute founded by Begum Akbar Jehan Abdullah in 1975,to foster empowerment among marginalised women in Kashmir, especially conflict affected widows by offering shelter, skills, wages and dignity.

The book gives us an impression of a changing world order in which women`s agency is working to bring about a constructive transformation in the society of our times. I commend the painstaking efforts taken by the team of editors to bring out diverse experiences, strategies and recommendations to address the multifaceted challenges of gender power dynamics.