



WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT CELL  
MOTILAL NEHRU COLLEGE, DELHI UNIVERSITY



# Astitva

## — 2022 —

*Naye Daur Ki Nayi Kranti*



*For Feminists By Feminists*

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# Word from the Convenor



Dr. Deepti Singh

Convenor

Women's Development Cell, MLNC

Dear Readers,

With immense pleasure we bring the first edition of **Astitva**, the annual magazine of Women's Development Cell of Motilal Nehru College. We bring this magazine to express and shed light onto those aspects of life which need a continuous thought and debate for our development into a pluralistic society. As we walk into the 75th year of independence, issues pertaining to gender identities must be addressed. We, at WDC strive to provide a platform to our students to inculcate gender sensitivity and express their thoughts into the society and learn about aspects that are generally brushed under the carpet in a patriarchal set up. Through our various activities during the year, WDC has tried to sensitise the students about consent, body positivity, and sex education in a constructive manner.

We seek 'not gender equality' but a respectful co-existence and balance as no two people can ever be equal leave apart genders. It is mutual respect and acceptance amongst genders that can develop into a more sensitive and nurturing society for our future generations to grow up as adults, liberated from any kind of gender bias. I wish, in future also, WDC continues to provides an environment to students to discuss and express their thoughts on gender issues.

Thanks.

# Word from the Principal



Prof. Shrivats Shastri

Principal  
Motilal Nehru College

It is indeed a blessing to be a part of the institution whose vision is to provide higher education to all sections of the society and to offer education as an enabler to all young minds of the nation. Beginning with a humble setting of a government school building in 1964 to its current premises in 1989, the college now has an enrolment of over 4000 students coming from all parts of India and from abroad. We are also privileged to have inspiring faculty members in our college who seek to motivate and impart quality education to all students alike.

Women's Development Cell is an integral part of our college functioning under the leadership of some of our esteemed colleagues. We are proud to have these committees run by elected student bodies in a democratic set up. I congratulate Team WDC on releasing their first annual magazine **Astitva**. My best wishes be with you and good luck to all the students and teachers for their future endeavours.

# Word from the Editorial Desk



Ms. Ruchita Machal

Faculty Member  
Women's Development Cell

It is a matter of great pleasure that the Women's Development Cell of Motilal Nehru College has released its first annual magazine **Astitva**. We, at WDC believe in empowering not just women but all lives irrespective of their genders. This magazine is our first collective step towards giving voice and representation to anyone who wishes to be heard.

This present publication is not merely a catalogue of scholarly pieces but it also unfolds a saga of young feminist voices writing for a better future. All the articles included in this publication bear a hint of rebellion, like echoes in silence, they strive for an inclusive egalitarian society. They are the songs of our *astitva*.

This magazine would be incomplete without the constant support and love given to us by our Convenor, Dr. Deepti Singh. With astonishing reserves of energy, she proved to be the best of us, pushing the Cell members to be the best version of themselves. The faculty members at WDC bonded like a team of wonder-women on a mission, to annihilate patriarchy. The enthusiasm at WDC has been sustained by the young, bright, and intelligent students - Subarna, Palak, Sarthak, Ishita, and many more. Without their dedication this magazine would not be possible. And lastly, our Principal, Prof. Shrivats Shastri who has been the pillar of strength. We thank Sir for creating a wholesome learning and teaching experience at Motilal Nehru College.

As we head towards the digital era, this edition of **Astitva** is also released in a digital form which can be accessed with ease on any device. I hope the students, academicians, scholars, and all other users will enjoy this magazine as much we did.

# Word from the Executive Board



Subarna Banerjee

President

Women's Development Cell, MLNC

"You are the best version of yourself, nobody can be a better you than you" This is what WDC has made me believe. When I joined the Cell as a fresher I met a bunch of people who were so passionate about the cell and our cause which is gender sensitization. It was then in the lawns of MLNC that we came up with the idea of starting our magazine to spread awareness. The golden hour sun casted a glow on my senior's face along with the glow of making an impact and adding value in people's lives. We were totally unaware of what was waiting for us - COVID 19 and the lockdown. With uncertainties crowded our minds and we were on the verge of giving up the last strand of hope. That was when I was blessed with the amazing team of fellow members and the guidance of our faculty. We began working with all that we have and here we are today with the first edition of - ASTITVA, naye daur ki nayi kranti. A magazine written by feminists for feminists.

The Women's Development Cell and all its members have stood strong and faced all the challenges thrown our way. We thrive to learn, unlearn and grow together. Our aim is to establish a better society within the campus and continue doing it even after we graduate. Members of WDC don't consider it a cell rather a family which will always have our back.

WDC has achieved new heights in the past years and will continue reaching above and beyond. Words cannot express the immense gratitude I have for the faculty members who have supported us and encouraged us to do even better. The members who have held the cell together, been there for each other, learnt something and taught something are the ones I will be forever grateful to.

WDC has always been a safe space for me to express myself without fear of being judged. It was the place where I learned and unlearned a lot of things in my life, as well as formed some extremely meaningful relationships. It helped me in breaking out of my shell by becoming a better, more confident person. The memories I've made here are precious to me, and I'll never forget them.

Astitva is one of the cell's most valuable possessions. Because of the pandemic, we had to work online, but with the help and support of our members and faculty, we were able to pull off the magazine, which we now present to you.



Palak Rawat

Vice President  
Women's Development Cell, MLNC

WDC with all the challenges and pushbacks came ahead and became a place where everyone can speak their mind, share their stories, grow, learn and unlearn together. Gender sensitisation and breaking away from the shell of a patriarchal society has always been the aim of WDC, and every member has worked towards that with all of their heart. WDC with all its glory, is one of the most precious things I've ever had in my life. I remember being an introverted kid who stumbled upon some beautiful people with similar inclinations than mine. It made me speak up, it made me who I am today. When I first started here, I didn't know I'd be leaving it from the post of General Secretary. WDC gave me a safe space, a home and a family. A family that I can always come back to at the end of the day.

Astitva is like a pet project to us, each one of us worked really hard for it to come to this point. Seeing it finally come to life is just an indescribable feeling.



Sarthak Virmani

General Secretary  
Women's Development Cell, MLNC

They say home is not a place but a feeling; WDC is home to me in that sense. It has given me warmth and comfort when I needed it and it has made me the person I'm today.

While WDC has given me a platform to express my views, it has altered them as well. I've learnt and unlearned here. As the Media Secretary, I've interacted with many different people and got to know about how one's right could be another's wrong. People are different and are to be understood differently. I've experienced moments I'll never forget and made friends who've given me different perspectives on life.

Astitva is something that we've been working on for a long time and it has not been easy for us. But now that it's here, I couldn't be more proud of the team. Here are the issues we connect to, wish to share with the world and aspire to bring revolution with!



Ishita Mehra

Media Secretary  
Women's Development Cell, MLNC

# Let's Agree to Disagree

To quote Aristotle, “It is the mark of an educated mind to be able to entertain a thought without accepting it.”

From here, stems the English phrase – ‘agree to disagree’ or ‘agreeing to disagree’ which refers to the resolution of a conflict (usually a debate or a quarrel) whereby all parties tolerate but do not accept the opposing positions. It generally occurs when all sides recognize that further conflict would be unnecessary, ineffective, or otherwise undesirable. They may also remain on amicable terms while continuing to disagree about the unresolved issues.

We being social animals cannot survive without socializing and therefore, we interact with a lot of people in our day-to-day lives, intentionally or unintentionally. Our opinions are shaped by our knowledge, experiences, upbringing, surrounding environment and underlying value systems. Provided that these factors vary for different people, resulting opinions too differ giving way to disagreements which are as normal as agreements, both being tools to bring to conclusion a debate. Disagreements, however, test the listener’s tolerance and patience.

It deserves a special mention that being able to disagree is a privilege not everybody is blessed with. Be it any sphere – political, economic or social, the weak and the vulnerable are made to agree to what the ‘resourceful’ has to say. Though, two people on the same pedestal can agree to disagree but, women and LGBTQIA+ in a patriarchal society, the so called ‘lower castes’ in a casteist society and the poor in a State are more often than not, not in a position to disagree, which is in violation of one’s fundamental right to freedom of opinion and expression, guaranteed under Article 19 of our Constitution. Here, it must be noted that in romantic/sexual relationships, it is generally seen that the partner disagreeing is thought of as disinterestedness and is later blamed for bringing the relationship to its lowest. It also needs to be understood that where there is neither space nor opportunity for one to disagree, there cannot dwell happiness and love, let alone equality and justice.

For any individual, it is of utmost importance to be able to find a safe platform, where they can be vocal about their opinions without the fear of being judged or disrespected; failing which they feel unloved and uncared for. Not being ‘allowed’ to disagree creates a sense of inferiority and poses a threat to one’s self-respect as well. There’s a need for us to unlearn that disagreeing is equivalent to disrespecting, when it just refers to the difference in opinion. Embracing divergent views and opinions serve to improve and strengthen the idea. Ultimately, it’s this exposure to different ideas and perspectives that is life-affirming & fills us with optimism.

It's time that we arrest our ascendancy so that others do not feel subjugated, when with us. For any conversation to be healthy, there's a need that we be a little more patient & understand that good listeners too desire for good listeners. By providing others their rightful space & opportunity to disagree, we take one step ahead towards establishing a society that 'agrees to disagree'.

– Ekta Bishnoi and Gracy Singh



## A View of the Rainbow: 3 Years Since Decriminalization of Homosexuality

People from the LGBTQ+ community have always been here. Their rights however, are a different story. Section 377, introduced during the British rule in 1861, criminalized sexual acts between people of the same gender deeming them “unnatural”. On September 6, 2018, the Supreme Court of India decriminalized homosexuality saying that it violated the constitutional right to equality & dignity, the right to lead a dignified life, and other consequential rights like privacy. While the law no longer sees homosexuality as a crime, has it also made an impact on the society’s perception of the LGBTQ+ community? To understand that we interviewed people about the changes they have seen in recent years.

“At first it was more like a muted talk, something to whisper about,” said Dhawni/Dan (16) talking about lack of visibility and discussion about the LGBTQ+ community before 2018. “I figured myself out after all of this happened, so I had a more positive response from my peers.” Expressing their fear of coming out to their family they said, “I’m very close to my mother but she won’t appreciate who I am then, and it’ll result in a gap between us.”

Aditya (19) came out as gay in 2016. While their mother was always supportive of them, they still had to deal with bullying throughout high school. “I don’t think some words on paper really change people’s mentality” they said, talking about how the bullying got worse the very day after section 377 was scrapped. “I am not a criminal in the eyes of the law but I am still a sinner in the eyes of the general population.” They believe that things are slowly changing as they talked about some of their old bullies apologising for their past behaviour.

Ayush\* knew very little about the community before the judgement came. They've seen a positive shift in their views but their family's perspective hasn't changed. They struggle to be themselves around their family. "It's been a very confining and cage-like experience. I am not allowed to say anything about myself, I am not allowed to be who I want to be." They have found comfort and safety in online spaces. "I have two separate versions of myself. One being offline, one being online and I can't talk about it offline because nobody is ready to accept that." They see exposure to diverse media as the key to awareness. "Don't limit yourself to one particular kind of content, try to be open and see that there's a spectrum of identities and sexualities you can be exposed to."

The LGBTQ+ events across the country and the increased representation in Indian media would not have been possible without the decriminalisation. There was also discomfort, mockery and laughter when the topic was brought up. Three years since the 2018 judgement and while we have awareness and acceptance to an extent, we still have a long way to go. The fight for legal rights of the LGBTQ+ community continues and so does the fight for acceptance.

– Rajshree Agarwal and Niharika Pandey

*\*Names have been changed.*

# शब्दकोष

## *Dictionary of a Feminist*

**Manspreading-** When men take up excess space by sitting with their legs far apart. This is such an actual thing that in 2014 New York's Metropolitan Transportation Authority launched a campaign to get guys to close their legs to make more room on the subway.

**Kyriarchy-** Kyriarchy is a concept that was first created by Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza in 1992. She used the word to describe her theory of "interconnected, interacting and self-extending systems of domination and submission, in which a single individual might be oppressed in some relationships and privileged in others," according to Belle Brita, a feminist lifestyle blog.

**Herstory-** Herstory refers to the feminist efforts to rewrite "history" with often-neglected women's voices so that it includes women and their importance in the narrative.

**Bodily Autonomy-** Bodily autonomy is the right to governance over our own bodies. Specifically, for women, nonbinary, and trans-people, this means making decisions about one's physical self. It also means the freedom to take up space in the world.

**Gender-neutral Pronouns** - These are words that we use to refer to someone that don't specify whether the subject is female or male. For instance, 'they' is a third-person pronoun that is gender-neutral. Other gender-neutral pronouns include - 'them' 'Ze', 'Hir', etc. If one isn't sure which pronoun to use because they aren't prevalent yet due to lack of awareness, we can also use the person's name or simply ask them for a preferred pronoun.

**Gender Roles**- Expectations assigned to each gender. Gender roles refer to the stereotypes of typically male or female characteristics, behaviors or actions

**Misogynoir**- Misogyny against black women

**Phallocentrism**- It is a theory given by Ernest Jones, that phallus or male genitalia is the central element in the organization of the social world.

**Manterrupting**- This expression refers to occurrences when men interrupt women while they're talking and don't let them finish what they're saying. While you might be tempted to say that all people can be interrupted while speaking (which is true), there's actually a significant body of research that confirms women are interrupted considerably more than their male colleagues.

**Mansplain**- A man explaining something to someone, typically a woman, in a manner regarded as condescending or patronising. Mansplaining is part of a set of cultural assumptions that place men's opinions above women's experience. It occurs when men assume that women don't understand something and feel the need to explain it to them.

**Bropropriating-** The word “bro” is used in this context simply to refer to a male figure – but not in a positive way. Bropropriating happens when a man appropriates an idea that supposedly a woman came up with and acts as if it were his, taking the credit for himself.

**Slut-shaming** - This expression refers to people’s judgement on women by telling them that they’re “acting like a slut.” It is most commonly used to degrade a woman who is confident enough to express her sexuality and her body freely

**Male Gaze-** The male gaze is the act of depicting women in mass media as sexual objects for the pleasure of male viewers.

**SWERF-** Sex Worker Exclusionary Radical Feminist. This term was coined during the third wave of feminism as the movement moved towards intersectionality and inclusivity. The term is commonly used on social media to describe people who claim to be feminist but harass and discriminate against sex workers online. SWERFs believe that anyone working in the sex industry should be excluded by feminism, suggesting that they are contributing to the objectification of women. This belief denounces women’s right to have control over their bodies, actions and sexuality.

# Types of Feminism

**Intersectional feminism-** If feminism is advocating for women's rights and equality between the sexes, intersectional feminism is the understanding of how women's overlapping identities — including race, class, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation and disability status — impact the way they experience oppression and discrimination.

**TransFeminism-** Defined as "a movement by and for trans-women who view their liberation to be intrinsically linked to the liberation of all women and beyond." It is a form of feminism that includes all self-identified women, regardless of assigned sex, and challenges cisgender privilege. A central tenet is that individuals have the right to define who they are.

**Women of Colour Feminism-** A form of feminism that seeks to clarify and combat the unique struggles of women of colour. It's a feminism that struggles against intersecting forms of oppression

**Womanism-** A social and ecological change perspective that emerged out of African women's culture and women of colour around the world.

**Empowerment Feminism-** Empowerment feminism puts the emphasis on "feeling". Though some feminists argue that feeling amazing is not a great gauge of how society is actually supporting self-expression and representation. Sheryl Sandberg's perpetually controversial Lean In, which focuses on how women can make changes to achieve greater success in the workplace, is another example of empowerment feminism.

## Equity Feminism (Conservative Feminism)-


*Christina Hoff Sommers, a resident scholar at the conservative American Enterprise Institute, is a champion of what she calls "equity feminism." In her view, "equity feminism" is focused on legal equality between men and women, while "gender feminism" focuses on dis-empowering women by portraying them as perpetual victims of the patriarchy.*

– Nida Alam and Gracy Singh

# **Women in Public Sphere**

Women of the 21st century are all set to take off to soar high in the sky. The wings that were once held hostages have begun to meltdown. Scriptures and traditions have sanctioned the idealisation of women in regard to home, child care, and complete devotion to men which eventually led to the withdrawal of women from active participation in the political and economic sphere of society.

The ratio of power held by any group or class is directly proportional to its economic and political strength. In the eye of the Indian constitution both men and women stood equal, the gender ceased to exist as a barrier for economic, equal, and political empowerment. But the women in both sectors still lag behind. Although over a period of time when compared to other countries, women's representation in politics and economic participation seem to have increased. Women in India participate in voting, run for public offices and political parties. Women's turnout during India's parliamentary general elections was 65.63%, compared to 67.09% turnout of men. According to World Economic Forum's annual global gender gap index studies, India ranked in the Top 20 countries worldwide for many years.



To remedy the low participation of female electors, India in 1994 established quotas (reservations) in Constitutional Amendments (73rd and 74th) to reserve 33% of seats in local governments for women. But despite this, discrimination continues to be a widespread barrier to women's political participation. A 2012 study of 3,000 Indian women found the barriers in participation, specifically in running for political office, in the form of illiteracy, work burdens within the household, and discriminatory attitudes towards women as leaders.

Women from educated families have shown a higher participation rate in economic and wealth building in comparison to women from weaker and marginalised sections of the society. But such women who have the capacity to ace in professional fields face discrimination against their male counterparts in their respective jobs. According to LinkedIn Opportunity Index 2021, 37% of India's working women got fewer opportunities and lower payments for equal labor than men. A major factor according to the survey revealed that lack of time and family care stopped 7 in 10 Indian women from advancing their careers where nearly 63 percent working women and 69 percent working mothers said they faced discrimination at work because of familial and household responsibilities.

Today, when women's access to the public sphere is being liberated, they still face gender-specific exploitation and oppression to truly reach out to their aspirations. Sexual harassment at the workplace stands out to be another significant challenge against women.

## **The Vishaka Guidelines and the 2013 Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal)**

**Act** ensure protection to women from sexual harassment and the right to work with dignity. However, they failed to explicitly address the sexual harassment faced by women every day. A 2017 survey by the Indian National Bar Association of over 6,000 employees in India—found that sexual harassment was pervasive in different job sectors, ranging from lewd comments to an outright demand for sexual favours. Most women chose not to report sexual harassment to management because of stigma, fear of retribution, embarrassment, lack of awareness of reporting policies, or lack of confidence in the complaints mechanism. Almost 95% of India's working women in the informal sector still find it difficult to access legal mechanisms to report sexual harassment at the workplace.

Thus the Indian government should take urgent action—in collaboration with state governments, civil society organisations, women's rights activists, trade unions, private sector, and national and state commissions for women—to raise awareness about and ensure implementation of laws and policies to address all the challenges faced by a woman in India from accessing and exercising their rights in a fundamental way.

– Gracy Singh and Arushi Singh

# ***Patriarchy Oppressing Men in India***

It is a no-less fact that patriarchy oppresses men in India too. This can be inferred from the figures that show women, as a gender, are at a disadvantage when it comes to work and public spaces. The gender dynamics of patriarchy is such that it imposes restrictions on the freedom and autonomy of women. But what is not often acknowledged is how the same forces also restrict men's freedom and autonomy too.

Men in India are constantly oppressed by patriarchy. Indian society has always been patriarchal and this is seen in various forms of discrimination that happen against men on a regular basis. One of the most common is that these people are denied their rights to property, inheritance, and land rights due to the fact that they are male. Men also have an extremely low access to education in India. They, too, are discriminated against when it comes to marriage because of the idea that they cannot provide for their wives and subsequent children financially.

Women in India also have various restrictions on what they can wear when it comes to cultural customs which also oppresses men because women typically dress according to these customs whereas men do not need to adhere to them at all times. If we judge patriarchy by its outcomes, it is a system that oppresses men:

◆ Patriarchal cultures privilege the reproductive function of the female body, making wives and mothers primary residents in the private sphere and leaving men to compete for scarce resources in the public sphere.

◆ Men are less likely than women to be able to opt out of their gender roles because they are more likely to lack long-term caregiving potential due to low wages and lack of access to family-friendly policies such as paid parental leave, flexible work hours, and quality childcare.

◆ Patriarchy discriminates against all women—including those who have no interest in motherhood—simply because they are women.

◆ Patriarchy's binary conception of gender is rigid and heteronormative.

Patriarchy is a system of society or government in which men hold the power and women are largely excluded from it. The patriarchy oppresses men in India, because they are not able to express their feelings and emotions. They feel like they have to take on the role of the breadwinner and could not speak about their feelings. As a result, males in India live with mental health issues such as depression and anxiety disorders at higher rates than females do. Patriarchy oppresses males in India by forcing them to conform to certain stereotypes such as being tough and aggressive, which makes them more likely to develop emotional disorders such as depression.

– Yash and Supriya Patel

# Dialogues

## Periods Taboo

*Just because vaginas are not on a woman's face, and also as vaginas are considered as a private part so people think that all the stuff related to it are supposed to be kept private.*

**Kiara**

Oh! Papa has bought the brand that I never use

*(goes to her father)*

**Kiara**

(irritated) Papa! Which brand of pads have you ordered!

**Mom**

Kiara! Shhh! Don't talk about this with him.

**Dad**

No, no...let her speak! It's a natural and biological process and what's there to hide about it. If I can watch the gory scenes in the movie, I can talk about menstrual blood too!

*(Kiara and her mother smile at each other)*

## Gender Roles

We let women play with fire, unaware of how it's going to destroy them by limiting their worth to the kitchen and household stuff.[From Rescued By A Feminist by Saloni Chopra] We let men dream high but later expect them to sacrifice it for their family.

**Mom**

Kiara, call your brother! He has to help me cook tonight's dinner.

**Brother**

Ye khana banana ladkiyon ke hi kaam hote hain, warna aage jakar sasural wale kahenge ki mayke walon ne kuch nahi sikhaya. Ask Kiara to do it!

**Mom**

Wouldn't you get married too?! Beta, marriage is about partnership. Every man should look for a partner in their wife and not a cook or caretaker! Cooking and cleaning are basic skills that should be known by all.

*(Kiara hugs her mother)*

## बेटी पराया धन होती है

*Jis ghar mein apne janam liya, pale-bade, wahan ke logon ko ek minute nahi lagta aap ko paraya karne mein. This phrase, “beti paraya dhan hoti hai” breaks apart each and every woman.*

**Mom** What happened, beta?

*(A sad Kiara comes in after taking a walk)*

**Kiara** (hugging her mom tightly) One Aunty outside said that, “All girls have to get married one day and leave their father’s house to go to their true home. Kyunki betiyaan toh paraya dhan hoti hain. Apne ghar jaana hi padta hai.” Is this true?

**Mom** (angry) How dare she!

**Dad** That’s her internalized patriarchy speaking.

**Mom** Beta, neither are girls ‘dhan’ nor are they ‘paraya’. Women are humans and not objects.

*(Kiara hugs her mother)*

# सालों से चलती आ रही पितृसत्ता

“ कुदरत भेद बनाती है, भेदभाव नहीं।  
समाज कुदरत के बनाए भेद के आधार पर  
भेदभाव करने लगता है।

- कमला भसीन, नारीवाद

पितृसत्ता समाज में गहरी जड़ें जमा चुकी है जिसका अब तक कोई स्थायी इलाज नहीं है। पितृसत्ता सामाजिक संरचनाओं और प्रथाओं की एक प्रणाली है जिसमें पुरुष महिलाओं पर हावी होते हैं, उनका उत्पीड़न करते हैं और उनका शोषण करते हैं। यह अस्तित्व के लगभग हर मानव क्षेत्र में नियंत्रण और वर्चस्व के मूल्य को बढ़ावा और पोषण दे रहा है। भारतीय समाज में, पितृसत्तात्मक विचारधारा को औपचारिक रूप दिया जाता है और रीति-रिवाजों के माध्यम से लागू किया जाता है जिसे घरों के भीतर सत्ता संबंधों द्वारा प्रमाणित किया जा सकता है। भारतीय पुरुषत्व का पता लगाने में महिला अधीनता को जोड़ा जा सकता है।

भारतीय पुरुषत्व का निर्माण प्राचीन काल में शुरू होता है। कामसूत्र, मनुस्मृति और मृचकट्टिका जैसे तीन ग्रंथों में पुरुष विषयों को भौतिक और शारीरिक रूप से सामाजिक प्रगति के मुख्य भाग में लिखा गया है। भारत पर आक्रमणों ने भविष्य में पुरुषत्व को कैसे माना जाना चाहिए, इस पर एक अमिट प्रभाव डाला। जूदेव-ईसाई पृष्ठभूमि से आने वाले, मुगलों आदि ने इसे अनुचित पाया

कि भारतीय गर्म जलवायु के बावजूद पुरुष और महिलाएं नंगे पीठ या टॉपलेस 'घूमते' थे। इसलिए व्यवस्थाये बनी और भारतीयों ने अब "छिपाना" शुरू कर दिया। हालांकि यह पर्दा केवल शरीर का नहीं था। इसमें उन सभी परंपराओं को भूलना शामिल था जिन्हें अब अपवित्र माना जाता था। इनमें देवदासी प्रथा, नग्न मूर्तिकला विद्यालय, आदि शामिल थे।

अपने निबंध 'महिला और राजनीति' में नीरजा चौधरी राष्ट्रवादी आंदोलन में अधिकांश महिलाओं की भूमिका ज्यादातर कर्तव्य के रूप में देखती है ना की विकल्प के रूप में। वह कहती हैं कि गांधी सभी महिलाओं की राजनीतिक भागीदारी को समर्थ करते थे पर वे सत्ता के खेल में उनके प्रवेश के विचार से सहज नहीं थे। उन्होंने महिलाओं की भूमिका को अपना आंदोलन शुरू करने के बजाय साफ-सुथरी राजनीति के रूप में देखा। सामाजिक सुधार से राजनीतिक सत्ता के अलग होने के कारण राजनीति में शामिल होने वाली अधिकांश महिलाओं को सामाजिक सुधार की सामुदायिक भूमिकाओं में बहाल किया गया। इसने राजनीति के उच्च पदों को सामान्य महिला राजनेताओं की पहुंच से दूर रखा।

नारी की अधीनता केवल लैंगिक असमानता का मुद्दा नहीं है बल्कि यह समाज के विभिन्न वर्गों की महिलाओं को अलग-अलग तरह से प्रभावित करती रही है चाहे जाति हो या धर्म। समस्या ये है कि समाजीकरण के माध्यम से पितृसत्ता को संचारित एवं सामान्य किया जा रहा है। जैसे की आमतौर पर जब कोई लड़का रोता है तो उसे ये कहा जाता की क्यों लड़कियों की तरह रो रहे हो। आइए विभिन्न पीढ़ियों की पितृसत्ता को लेकर क्या सोच है ये जानते हैं। जब हमने 40 वर्ष और 70 वर्ष की उम्र की महिलाओं से पितृसत्ता को लेकर कुछ बुनियादी सवाल पूछे तब उन दोनों गृहिणियां का मानना था कि अगर वे अपनी शादी के बजाय अपनी शिक्षा को चुनती तो वे कुछ बेहतर कर सकती थी। इतना ही नहीं, उन दोनों का मानना था कि महिलाएं शादी के बाद शिक्षा और नौकरी हासिल कर सकती हैं जो उनकी आत्मनिर्भरता और समाज की बेहतरी के लिए बहुत जरूरी है। दूसरी ओर, जब तीन पीढ़ियों के पुरुषों से यही सवाल पूछा गया तो उनका मानना था कि वे यहाँ महिलाओं की रक्षा के लिए हैं और अगर महिलाओं पर कुछ प्रतिबंध लगाए भी जाए तो वो जायज़ है। इस तरह हमें पुरुषों और

महिलाओं के बीच की सोच में विभाजन देखने को मिलता है। साथ ही यहाँ पुरुषों की प्रभुत्व सोच का एक पीढ़ी से दूसरी पीढ़ी में संचरण दिखा रहा है।

कई कारणों की वजह से महिलाओं को अपनी इच्छाओं को त्यागना पड़ता है। अब समय आ गया है कि हम इस बेड़ियों से महिलाओं को मुक्त करे और उन्हें अपनी मर्जी से जीने दे। लोगों को लिंग की नजरों से ना देख कर उनकी कार्यक्षमता से देखे। पितृसत्ता ने कई लड़कियों की कला और प्रतिभा का गला घोट दिया है। अब हमें अपने पुराने लैंगिक पाबंदों से आज़ाद कर नयी सोच अपनानी चाहिए। और याद रखे -

**फूल रहे ना धरती पर, फल तुम कैसे पाओगे ।  
अंश काट कर अपना, वंश तुम कैसे बढ़ाओगे।।**

– Priyanka Kumari and Sheehan Oshnik

# Competition Winners

## PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION

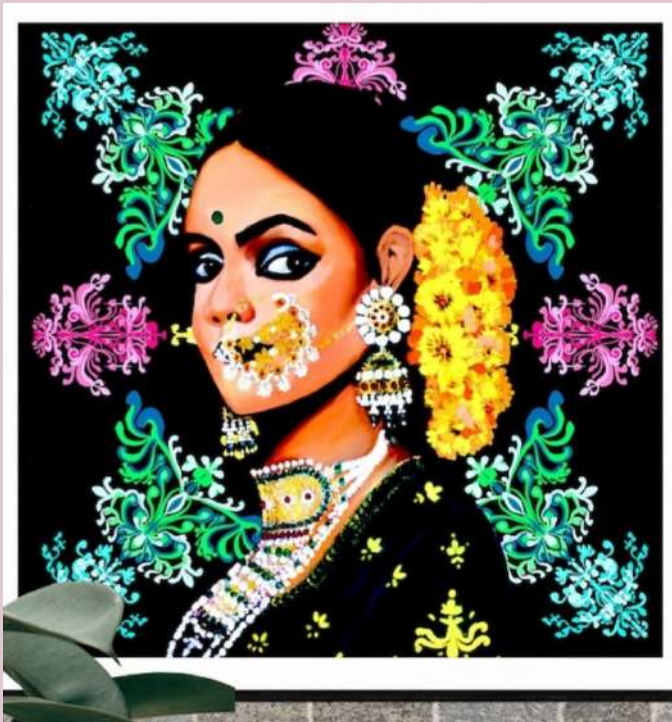


Shreyansh Dubey

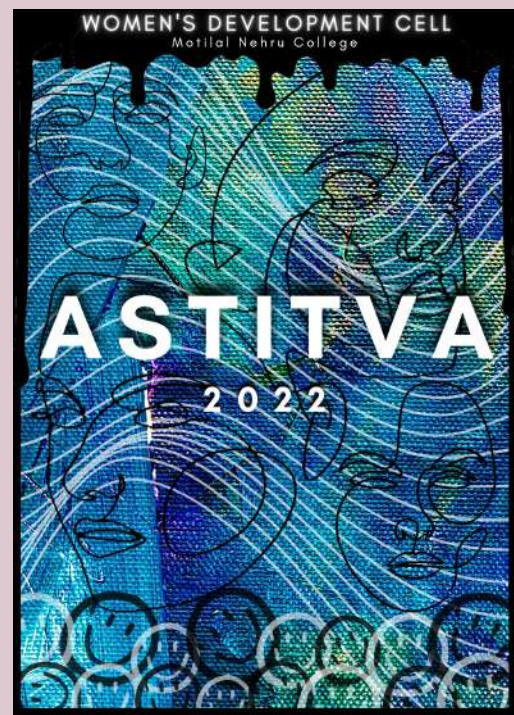


Vishal Kumar

## COVER PAGE COMPETITION



Sagar Thakral



Sidharth

# What I Unlearned in WDC

I unlearned so many stereotypes and fake beauty standards.

–Bhawna

I unlearned to be grateful for the bare minimum gestures people make that should really be considered common

–Kangana Mittal

I unlearned the old school meaning of gender equality and learnt the actual meaning of gender equality.

–Rupali Kumari

I got to correct my perception regarding few terms and concepts prevailing in society about the LGBTQ community

–Diksha

Shame around sex education

–Aarishi Shukla

I unlearned that there are certain obligations of women that they have to follow irrespective of their conditions and personal choice.

–Rohan Dahiya

I unlearned that self-love doesn't mean being selfish, also my wrong perception about LGBTQ community.

–Anjali Pal

In a world where you can be anything, be kind.

–Palak Rawat

Bring assertive is being arrogant.

–Ekta Bishnoi

Pre-judging someone on the basis of their ideologies and believes.

–Prajwal

# What I Unlearnt in WDC

For the longest time I felt it was my responsibility to cover up my body because men can't control themselves or behave. WDC help me to unlearn this and to be comfortable in my own body and clothing, while remaining aware of my environment.

Also, going temple during menstrual cycle is normal

–Manya Goel

That arguing to prove a point is necessary.

–Sarthak Virmani

Misleading information regarding sexual concerns, myths surrounding periods.

–Ruhani Verma

I unlearned that I'm always right

–Shirley Khare

Judging others.

–Gunjan Setia

I used to think that whatever I say is correct and the opinions of others don't matter, but WDC helped me unlearn that and made me realise where I was wrong. WDC also taught me about a lot of stuff I didn't already know.

–Uma Tiwari

I unlearned my hesitation of speaking in front of many people in WDC

–Divya

Journey with WDC has helped me learn a lot. Here's nothing like unlearning. It teaches life lessons and motivates me to do new things that leads to further growth and development in an individual as well as the society.

–Palak Rawat

I have unlearned to judge people and to be judged by others

–Shaily

# What I Unlearnt in WDC

That it's not always about competition but learning

–Sachi Tewatia

Being a member since the last 5 months, the journey has been filled with learning and unlearning a lot of things. The most important thing that I unlearned here is that you cannot always change how people think and what their ideologies are. Ideologies and ideas are something very integral to somebody's identity and it takes time for anybody to change. There is no need to be harsh on somebody about that and also you don't have to be harsh on yourselves that you could not make it change. You are making a difference on a bigger level but expecting everyone to be as strong or as idealistic you are is definitely not right. Everybody has their own battles to fight!

–Copal Jain

I unlearned the association of male genitals with having courage and female genitals with cowardice in my vocabulary. It implies that the female sex is inferior which isn't true at all and such associations are yet another glaring reminder of patriarchal oppression and how deeply ingrained this is that we don't even realise.

–Subarna Banerjee

You have to do everything perfectly!

–Harshita Rupani

Speaking up for yourself

–Shreya Negi

I learned to respect the opinions and views of others, instead of being offended.

–Aastha Budhiraja

It's okay to be not okay sometimes.

–Gracy

# What I Unlearnt in WDC

I have learned a lot of things  
and Thank you for giving me  
opportunities to learn more

–Tisha Jain

I unlearned that self love is selfish . I  
learned to remove the people who  
may have problematic opinions out  
of your life without even trying to  
make them understand their  
mistake.

–Rudranshi Gupta

Journey with WDC has  
helped me learn a lot.  
Here's nothing like  
unlearning. It teaches life  
lessons and motivates me  
to do new things that leads  
to further growth and  
development in an  
individual as well as the  
society.

–Jyoti Yadav

Judging people of different sexual  
orientations

–Shivam Gupta

We should not judge people in first  
place, instead should try to know  
about them a bit.

–Tanishka Chaudhary

I unlearnt that when a dress doesn't fit it's your body's  
fault. WDC taught me that if a dress doesn't fit me it's  
the dress that needs to be altered not my body.

–Niharika

WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT CELL

MOTILAL NEHRU COLLEGE

# Annual Report

2021-2022

JUNE 2021

**5 JUNE** – FIRST SESSION OF THE EB 2021-22

**12 JUNE** – I.S. on PLIGHT OF TRANSGENDERS AMIDST COVID 19  
Marginalized communities are more vulnerable to any kind of adversity, so this session focused on trying to be more informed about the condition of our fellow human beings and becoming a better version of ourselves with every passing day.

**19 JUNE** – #THEYTALK SESSION

"Be gentle to yourself you are doing the best you can"

With that thought in mind we had a #theytalk session. At times we need someone to just pour our hearts out and this session was that safe space where we talked about similar topics.

**26 JUNE** – I.S. on MEN'S HEALTH WEEK

In this session, we talked about men's mental health. We discussed how patriarchy oppresses men and they too are expected to act in manner and are frowned upon when they are not 'masculine' enough.

## JULY 2021

### **3 July** - Beauty Standards

We discussed how certain societal beauty standards have been set and how they might affect us.

### **10 July** - They talk

During They talks, our members speak their hearts out. At WDC, we've created a safe place for everyone and it's great to see people sharing their happiness and sorrows with us.

### **17 July** - Feminism - The Past and the Present)

Basic explanation of Patriarchy's impact on body autonomy and the three waves of the feminist movement.

### **24 July** - Women in the Corporate Sector.

### **31 July** - Session on apex court's landmark judgements.

## AUGUST 2021

### **7 August** - They talk

During They talks, our members speak their hearts out. At WDC, we've created a safe place for everyone and it's great to see people sharing their happiness and sorrows with us.

### **14 August** - Gender stereotypes in professions

Discussion of how some professions are perceived to be the domain of one gender and how the other gender is discriminated against.

**21 August** - Stereotypes we witness in Pop culture

**28 August** - Movie Screening

Screening of two short films from Netflix's Zindagi shorts followed by discussions.

## SEPTEMBER 2021

**4 September** - Patriarchy and Vocabulary

We discussed how years of deeply engraved patriarchy has affected our vocabulary and how we often overlook words demeaning women.

**11 September** - Book reading (We should all be feminists)

Discussion on different excerpts from the book which displayed how people used to treat feminist when the author was a kid while comparing it with current day scenario.

**18 September** - Mental Health in the Pandemic (Webinar)

The pandemic has affected everyone mentally and physically. WDC, MLNC organized a webinar on the topic - "Mental Health in the Pandemic" as an initiative to help deal with stress and anxiety in COVID-19 times on 18 September 2021. The speakers Dr. Chumki Bose, the Counseling Psychologist at Mindtribe and Dr. Anuna Bordoloi, the Consultant Clinical Psychologist in the Department of Mental Health and Behavioral Science at Fortis Healthcare shared a lot of helpful advice.

**22 September** - Recruitment Process started

## OCTOBER 2021

### **9 October** - Ice breaking session

A session for all the new recruits to introduce themselves and get to know the cell better and to feel comfortable.

### **16 October** - Intersectional Feminism

The session helped members understand what intersectional feminism is and how a person's overlapping personalities including caste, race, gender, etc. can impact the way they face oppression and discrimination.

### **30 October** - Implications of Pornography

We discussed and tried to understand how pornography affects us and other people on emotional, physical and legal level.

## NOVEMBER 2021

### **13 November** - Toxic Positivity

We discussed how toxic optimism may harm us, our relationships, and those around us, as well as how to avoid it.

## DECEMBER 2021

### **20 December**- Recruitment Process began

# JANUARY 2022

**5 January-** Recruitment Process ended

**8 January-** Orientation

As the freshers were recruited, we organised an orientation with them where we gave them an overview of the workings of WDC and discussed about Consent.

**15 January-** Ice Breaking session

A session for all the new recruits to introduce themselves and get to know the cell better and to feel comfortable.

**22 January-** Documentary Screening

We planned a documentary screening and the documentary highlighted social taboos women face in rural India. The documentary was followed by a discussion.

**29 January-** Sex and Gender Debate

To help people understand various gender identities and reflect upon the pre-existing notions of society, we organised this session. Many view points were discussed and experiences were shared throughout the session.

# FEBRUARY 2022

**5 February-** Open Mic

**15 to 17 February-** Rehnuma (Webinar Series)

- The Women's Development Cell of Motilal Nehru College organised a series named "Rehnuma", from 15th to 17th February 2022, during which the speakers named Advocate Meenu Padha (Advocate, High Court, Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh), Aishwarya S Iyer (Senior Reporter at Scroll.in), and Captain Ritu Mehla (Retired Army Officer), shared their wisdom of their fields and enlightened the attendees about the difficulties they faced in achieving the level of success.
- On 15th February, Advocate Meenu Padha addressed the students and teachers and answered various questions like, how to tackle gender bias in her field, is marital rape law prejudiced against men, how to secure ourselves from cyber crimes, etc.
- On 16th February, Aishwarya S Iyer, addressed the students and teachers and answered various questions like, what Journalism is to her, what case has stayed with her the longest, websites she thinks are a reliable source of information, what problems has she faced being a women, while covering a story, etc.
- On 17th February, addressed the students and teachers and answered various questions like, why did she choose army as a profession, what was her most memorable moment, why did she choose to leave the army and switch to the corporate sector, what would have been different if she was a man, etc.

# MARCH 2022

## 8 March- Women's Day

- The women's Development Cell of Motilal Nehru College, organised an ICC Awareness March, to enlighten and address the consequences and punishments of sexual harassment.
- The march was followed by a webinar on the same which was addressed by Punita Maheshwari, Consultant, Gender and Sexuality at Jhatkaa.org and Ishani, Campaigns Manager, Gender and Sexuality, Jhatkaa.org. They discussed Campus Safety and the steps that the students can take if someone harasses them, they also spread awareness about the Internal Complaints Committee and how it works.

# APRIL 2022

## 5 and 6 April- Bebakh 2022

- The Women's Development Cell of Motilal Nehru College organised its annual fest BEBAKH on the Fifth and Sixth April 2022. The theme for this year's fest was **Ignorance Isn't Bliss: Importance of Sex Education** and **Pride not Prejudice: Introduction to Body Autonomy**.
- On 5th April, we began with a **Panel Discussion**. Our speakers included Pallavi Baranwal, Certified Sexuality and Intimacy coach, Vani Vishwanathan from Tarshi, Ms Yogyata from Pratisandhi and Sania from Sex Education for India. The

- speakers talked about sex education in India and the taboos associated with the same. The session ended with a q/a session where students asked questions from our speakers.
- After the panel discussion, we had a **Conventional debate competition** and a Doodling competition: **Doodle it out!** going on. The theme of the doodling competition was same as that of our fest and the motions for our debate were:
  1. **This house believes that antagonizing cosmetic surgery goes against the notion of bodily autonomy.**
  2. **This house believes that sex education that is imparted by medical professionals is better than that provided by academic curriculum and family relations.**
- On 6th April, we had an extempore competition: **Khul Ke Bol**, where each participant was given a topic on the spot. Each participant was given two minutes to prepare and has to speak for one minute
- Our extempore competition was followed by a **Consent March**. The march began at the college gate and we walked towards the quadrangle while singing songs and saying slogans. We stopped at the quadrangle and talked about consent. We then moved towards the canteen and repeated the same process.
- Bebakh ended with an Open mic: **Baatein Kuch Ankahi Si**. Many students came and performed.

# PHOTO DUMP



# PHOTO DUMP





# Astitva

## — 2022 —

