



NIRANTAR ANNUAL REPORT

(APR 2016-MAR 2017)



nirantar trust
A Centre for Gender and Education



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INTRODUCTION

Nirantar, a non-profit, feminist organisation, is an integral part of the autonomous women's movement in India. We are an organisation firmly rooted in community-based work, and have a presence both at the national and international level in the areas of training, research, and advocacy on issues related to education, gender, and sexuality.

Our mandate lies in different work areas that we implement with or partner organisation and in our advocacy agenda which comes out of the experiences and learning from working with community and grassroots level organisations. This year, we have not just made progress in our projects and new initiatives, but have also been able to participate in many advocacy platforms, voicing our reflections at national and global levels and expanding the boundaries of discourses around gender and sexuality from the lens of equity and diversity.

This year was marked by an important initiative by Govt. of India, where they set up a committee to frame the new education policy and also invited suggestions and feedback from civil society organisations to provide as well as common citizen. Gender and education being Nirantar's core mandates we engaged with the process of providing inputs for the new education policy at various levels. Nirantar was invited by the Ministry of HRD, Dept. of Adult Education to be part of the committee that had given recommendations pertaining to adult education to the committee. There we played an important role in bringing focus on adult women's education and also were able to integrate gender concerns within adult education. We also provided our inputs on the online platform created for diverse news for education policy. A detailed feedback on the "inputs on draft education policy" was also prepared and submitted to the Ministry of Education. That process finally did not reach anywhere and now an education committee is reconstituted with new members and

we hope to engage with the new process with same rigour and zeal.

In addition to engaging with new education policy we also worked meticulously to bring back adult education on the development scene, which seems to have faded away with more focus on livelihoods and digital literacy for adults.

Nirantar organised a two-day **National Thematic Consultation on Adult Education and Women's Leadership in the Contemporary Context of Digitalisation and Skill Building** in the month of February 2017. The objective of this consultation was to bring together various actors from across the country, working in the field of adult literacy, livelihoods, skill building, and digitisation and providing momentum to the basic right to literacy. During this program, we concluded that literacy is indispensable while working on programmes of digitisation,



skill building, and livelihoods. In order to actualise the vision of gender justice and empowerment, and to create sustainable solutions, adult literacy with meaningful curricula grounded in building women's claims to citizenship must be seen as an essential component of programmes developed for alleviating poverty and strengthening social justice.

As an organisation, we are committed for bringing gender and sexuality as integral lens to our analysis to see its interlinkages and understand social structure more holistically. Extending this vision, we started engaging with gender based violence through sexuality lens as well. This gave us some very important insights not only to understand GBV more deeply but also engage with case work differently. We have been part of **Aman Network**, a network of organisations working on Violence Against Women (VAW) for many years now, and this year too we have been active on this platform, engaging with the discourses around Violence against Women and Gender-based Violence. We also attended the network's national Convention at Guwahati and were part of the planning and strategising process for the Delhi-level plan of action.

Rural Women's Social Education Centre- RUWSEC organised a two-day consultation during 28th and 29th May 2016 on '**Building new Constituencies for Women's Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights**' in Chennai. Different organisations from India, especially, NGOs, CBOs, and activists who have been working with adolescents and young people's sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) were invited for the consultation. Nirantar was also part of this process where we helped in developing a framework for gender and sexuality for young people.

Nirantar was also invited by ASPBAE to participate in their **General Assembly and Policy Forum** organised by DVV international, ICAE

and ASPBAE in Bangkok from 20th to 25th November 2016. It was a high-level meeting with presence of ASPBAE members from across the region, as well as other important civil society members from across the world. In the policy forum, we highlighted the role of gender and its intersections with adult education. In the general assembly, our focus was to bring a gender, sexuality focus to the overall goals of ASPBAE as an organisation, and include some of these issues within their strategies and governance structures (such as creating a constituency of civil society organisations working on women's literacy and adult education to engage with policy spaces within India from that perspective).

Building Capacities and Engendering Learning Process

Building capacities is a significant part of our work at Nirantar. We conduct variety of trainings on diverse issue all round the year for organisations looking to strengthen their programs and work on the ground.

In September 2016, we conducted **gender training with field-level *karyakartas (grassroots workers)*** of our literacy partner in Jharkhand. Since it was a mixed group of women and men – the discussions around gender, power and patriarchy were particularly complete and thought provoking. For example, the first experience of identifying with the assigned gender, where people, particularly men, talked about their personal experiences of not being allowed to dress a particular way, or the inability to get prospects for marriage due to the body structure and lack of a steady income. Gender realities doubled with ethnic identity brought many new areas of discussion in the training, which was quite insightful for the trainers team as well.

From August to November 2016, we held sessions on **Gender Sensitisation with Boys in Delhi Government Schools**. The idea of having sessions on gender sensitisation with boys came through the girls who participated in self-defence training organised by Delhi Police, as part of their gender sensitisation programme. Self Defence Unit, Delhi Police, Nanakpura contacted Nirantar to conduct short sessions in Delhi government schools with boys at the secondary and senior secondary level. One of the most crucial ideas discussed was on the continuum of feminine and masculine where all people transgress; and that during this transgression individuals are rewarded or punished depending on whether social expectations are fulfilled or not. We also discussed the idea of work, workspace, safety, security, etc. during these sessions with the boys.

We facilitated the **Gender and Sexuality Training for Terre des Hommes**, an international child rights organisation working towards stopping child exploitation in Bangalore, from 28th November to 1st December 2016. It was organised for senior-level coordinators from eight states on various themes like gender, gender transgression, transgender, power, socialisation, patriarchy, and masculinity.

As part of TARSHI's training programme with community radio practitioners in India, we facilitated a session based on our Sexuality Mapping report. The session was aimed at helping participants understand the ways in which sexuality is moulded by our caste and class locations, and used anecdotes from the report to enable participants draw these links in their personal lives.

Advocacy Efforts around Education and Gender

Nirantar engages and advocates on regional, national, and international

levels to further the research, experiences, and learning on education, literacy, and gender related issues. Through our participation on such platforms we aim to broaden the boundaries of existing discourses on these issues and take on new initiatives in our work.

Nirantar participated in **India National Consultation organised by ASPBAE** in the month of June with its partners, in Bombay. The purpose of the consultation was the election of the two voting representatives of ASPBAE members from India and providing a set of inputs and a new strategy and direction to ASPBAE. This consultation was significant because of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which were finalised and adopted by the member countries of UN in September 2015.



We also participated in the **UNESCO's 5th International Conference on Language and Education** at Bangkok from 19th to 21st October 2016. There we presented our work on *'Breaking the Barriers of Languages in India'*. The focus of the presentation was on critical pedagogy around literacy and languages with adult women and adolescent girls. It also founding *Khabar Lahariya*, a regional language newspaper run exclusively by women, to illustrate the ways in which regional languages can be strengthened the mainstreamed and to create a space and medium for the voices of marginalised communities especially women.



WOMEN'S LITERACY, EDUCATION, AND EMPOWERMENT



Adult education especially adult women's education is in heart of Nirantar's interventions on women's empowerment. We do not see literacy limited to the ability to read and write, but also an ability to build a critical understanding of social structure and their lives from the gender and equality perspective. Our gender and equality lens is inclusive of caste, class, religion & regional inequalities that leads to an unjust society and living experiences of women and men.

In the year 2016-17, the Women's Literacy team worked with 11 partner organisations in which 5 organisations were from the second-phase (2013-2016) whose advance phase of the literacy culminated in April 2016. The team worked intensively with third-phase partner organisations to help them complete of basic literacy program that ended in March 2017. As a resource organisation, we also provided technical support to other field-based organisations, along with direct field intervention program of Tata Trusts in eastern UP.

Our literacy programme has reach of **5000 women** through our partners, where approximate 50% women learners also entered the advance phase.

In the year 2016-17, we conducted a total of **11 trainings and workshops**, wherein 7 trainings were organised with second and third-phase partner organisations and 4 with other partner organisations. We also supported other field-based organisations working on literacy and women's empowerment issues.

Work with Second-Phase Partners

- **Review & Reflection, May 2016:** In order to consolidate the achievements, challenges and learning of the second phase, teachers, and learners, we held a review and reflection meeting

with all the partner organisations. In this meeting, we shared the data compiled through ongoing MIS done by partners. One of the significant achievement of this phase as come out from data was that the dropout rate was almost negligible for all the organisations.

Work with Third-Phase Partners

- **Teachers' Refresher Training, June 2016:** We conducted refresher training with 30 teachers, coordinators and supervisors of third phase partners. The objective of this training was to strengthen participants' understanding on pedagogical issues and build capacity for teaching advance concepts of Language and Mathematics. We also emphasized in this training on integrating issue based discussions within the pedagogy and not leave till



end, which was over observation during field visits.

- **Material Creation Workshop, September 2016:** Nirantar believes that the learning pace of the learners can be fastened by providing interesting reading material in their local language which is also relevant to their context. But there is dearth of material available for neo-literates in different regional languages like Santahali, Mundari, Bhojpuri, etc. Keeping this in mind, a four-day workshop was organised with partner organisations to build their perspective and skills for creating materials in local languages that can be used by neoliterates. 36 participants, including learners along with literacy staff from different organisations, participated in this workshop. During the workshop, around 20 reading materials were developed in the form of booklets, posters and pamphlets in Bundeli, Bhojpuri, Santhali, Mundari, Bengali and Hindi languages.
- **Monitoring Information System (MIS) Support:** Our Women's Literacy programme is backed by a robust MIS system which helps in tracking progress of the programme as well as progress of each learner. Organisations were oriented on Monitoring & Evaluation system which consists of various formats and the MIS module. We provided continuous support to these organisations in filling formats and analysing the module. In continuation, a **MIS Orientation Training** was held in the month of April 2016 with MIS coordinators and one supervisor from each partner organisation. The objective was to build their understanding around why MIS is part of the literacy program, what it entails, its structure and explaining the Baseline module, Supervisor format and the Data Management Module in detail.

- We also organised an **MIS Follow-up** in November 2016, to discuss the challenges in filling the data in Data management and Baseline Modules, and the basic understanding on the data analysis. In addition, we introduced and oriented these organisations regarding the qualitative M&E tools, so that quantitative data can be backed with qualitative data as well. The organisations were oriented for the end line format too as they were nearing the completion of the basic phase in February-March 2017. We consolidated the baseline-end line and did the quarterly MIS program level.
- **Review and Reflection:** We organised a midterm review and reflection meeting in the month of September 2016, to analyse and take stock of the program in the middle of the basic phase. In this, the learners' progress was evaluated from the competencies in baseline to the competencies achieved in test paper one. In March 2017, we held a Review & Reflection meeting for Basic Phase, wherein the progress of women from baseline to Test Paper 3 was compiled. The team discussed the achievements and challenges with the partner organisations, along with developing strategies for mobilising women to give more time in the centres.
- **Field Visits:** We conduct regular field visits to understand and address issues that programme staffs are facing as well as gauge competencies/progress of learners through direct observation. We visited all organisations twice in their 18 month cycle and provided onsite support and inputs to improve the quality of the work. Total 13 field visits (two visits to each partner organisation) were conducted in the year 2016-17.

Work with other Organisations

- **Tata Trusts Eastern UP Project:** Tata Trusts has initiated direct intervention on Women's literacy in Eastern UP (Bahraich). Nirantar supported Tata Trust initiative in establishing their program, from recruitment to training of Teachers to the monitoring for its quality. We conducted Teachers' training in two batches with 30-35 participants in each batch, including programme and block coordinators. The Tata Trust has initiated this along with their livelihoods intervention, where the emphasis of programme is to raise the living standard of community through an holistic approach. We are happy to acknowledge that Tata Trust recognizes adult women's education as an important component of sustainability and is ready to invest in it.
- **Programme Support to Pararth (Chindwara, MP):** Nirantar supported Pararth in developing a holistic understanding of women's literacy programme through a four-day teachers' training in Sahajni Shiksha Kendra, Lalitpur, in the month of July 2016. We also organised a **Refresher Teachers' Training** in the month of Nov. 2016 in Delhi, which included centre visits and a half day inputs for the staff members.
- **Workshop with learners' and literacy team members, January 2017:** We held a two-day workshop to document and record the impact of literacy on the lives of learners as well as how the programme impacted the staff who have been involved in the literacy programme. Its participants included 22 learners and 11 project staff members like teachers, supervisors and coordinator from 6 organisations of Jharkhand, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh.



The workshop was designed in such a way that it captured the varied experiences of women and staff members who have been part of literacy programme in the past. A short video, which was launched at the National Thematic Consultation on Adult Education and Women’s Leadership in the Contemporary Context of Digitalisation and Skill Building in February 2017., was also developed based on this workshop and shared by women on literacy in their lives.

- **Support role with Sahajani Shiksha Kendra:** During the period between April 2016 and March 2017, Nirantar assisted SSK in planning and monitoring their work by facilitating meetings every three months. Other activities conducted with the SSK team are:

- Designing MIS formats at the level of teachers, supervisors, block coordinators and overall at program level. The filling of teachers' and supervisors' formats helped in developing the data based quarterly reports.
- Organised four-day training for the staff of Literacy and Information Centres (LIC).
- Participated in the monthly meetings of teachers and staff. We also gave inputs on regularising activities and community participation at these centres.



PARVAZ ADOLESCENT CENTRE FOR
EDUCATION (PACE)



Under PACE, Nirantar has been working with girls, especially never enrolled and dropout girls, in partnership with community-based organisations in Delhi. Though this intervention, we have been able to build close relationship between girls, teachers and community members. For the young learners, the centres have emerged as a much needed, safe space to learn, build friendships, and develop new bonds. Diversity in the groups, in terms of age, educational background, language, marital status, regional background, religion and life experiences have enriched the classroom experiences and also provided insights in the process of developing resource materials. It has become mutual learning space for both learners and the facilitators.

Capacity Building of Teachers

- **Training of Teachers on Basic Theatre Techniques:** We conducted a three-day orientation of teachers to create their understanding of basic theatre skills. During this process, draft theme based learning materials developed last year were also analysed to prepare a list of theatre techniques that can be used during classroom teaching to talk about various themes and sessions.

PACE Centres

- **Identification of New Partners:** After completing the pilot phase of the project last year, we wanted to reach out to other areas in Delhi. In order to disseminate the learning and experiences of past year and take our program forward in terms of working with young girls on the issues of gender, violence, education, and health. We identified Action India as our third partner organisation and have started two new learning centres in resettlement colonies of

Welcome and Sanjay Camp. Thus currently we are working with three partners in Delhi, i.e. Josh, CCSSD and Action India.

- **Orientation and Basic Training of New Teachers:** We organised the training for building capacity of teachers and other team members of the partner organisation to enhance their understanding regarding teaching & learning pedagogy, project planning, and our approach to work with young girls. Teacher and mobiliser for the new centres were also identified during this process.
- **Mobilisation and Baseline Assessment:** We mobilised new girls for the centres with the help of the partner organisations. These mobilisation visits are aimed to build relationship with parents and community members. In Trilokpuri, Welcome, and Sanjay Camp centres, we enrolled new girls for the course, and conducted the baseline assessment to identify the learning levels of the girls in both Hindi and Numeracy. Even after the first round of mobilisation, regular community contacts are considered an important aspect of the teaching learning process, as it helps in understanding the context of the learners too.



➤ After this orientation PACE team members also participated in a seven-day theatre workshop to understand action research methodology and basic theatre skill tools to conduct activities with young girls in the centres, as a way to talk about issues gender, education, desires, body, etc.

➤ **Teaching-Learning Process in Centres:**

- After conducting baseline assessment; we divide learners in different groups for teaching purpose. Our program uses multi-level teaching methods with the girls, after conducting language and numeracy classes for two months, we introduced theme-based chapters to build their understanding on major concepts of science and social science. These thematic chapters have been built from the perspective of gender, caste, class, and sexuality. Different subjects are taught in an integrated approach, to build the comprehensive understanding of the learners and reflect upon their lived realities.
- **Historical Walks:** To add to the interactive teaching-



learning pedagogy, we partnered with Darwesh, a Delhi-based organisation that conducts historical walks across the city of Delhi. This year, we decided to focus on the themes of water, market and trade, agriculture, forests and farmer issues. These walks are designed in accordance with decided themes, incorporating activities and storytelling to make it a more interactive exercise for the girls. We conducted walks in Mehrauli to talk about water theme, and Chandini Chowk to talk about market and trade. Lodhi Garden walk was focused on issues of environment, trees, and engaging them to explore historical monuments. Apart from knowledge building, these walks have also helped in building their confidence, provide an opportunity to step out of their Bastis and know more about the city they cohabit.

- **Sports Day and Picnic:** After working with the girls for a few months, we started hosting sports day on a regular basis. In a context where girls are not allowed to move out of their houses and parks are predominantly occupied by boys, picnic and sports days. It provided girls freedom and mobility as well as games reclaim public spaces like parks.
- **Celebrating Various Days and Festivals:** We decided to mark and celebrate various festivals and important days at the centres with the young learners. It provides them an opportunity to discuss the importance dates their lives, and also encouraged them to critically analyse the impact of certain traditional and cultural practices on them. On 8th March girls from all the centres participated in International Women’s Day program at Jantar Mantar and met lot of other women’s groups.

- **Assessment of the Learning Progress:** We regularly analyse the learning progress of the girls through continuous assessment process. After baseline assessment in Hindi and Numeracy, we conducted first evaluation in all the centres through assessment tools based on the learning indicators. Classroom observations and participation in group discussions were also included as part of this assessment.
- **Broadsheets:** After working with girls for several months, the PACE team decided to prepare different theme-based broadsheets, to understand the perspective of the learners regarding various issues like friendship, education, and their idea of their Basti / colony.
- **Parents Meetings:** In all learning centres, the team hold quarterly parent meetings to share the progress and activities done with the girls. It has helped us in building relationship with parents and guardians, and also allowed them to build ownership and involvement in the learning process of these young girls.

Curriculum Development

- **Finalisation of the Thematic Curriculum:** We documented the feedback challenges and experiences of conducting the classes with girls in the first phase of the project. In the second phase we reviewed and analysed the curriculum chapters based on that feedback to make it more contextual and interesting for the learners, with the support of the team members, advisors, and the teachers.
- **In addition** to curriculum on Body, Resources, Science and civil and political science we also developed an English Curriculum.



MAINSTREAM EDUCATION

Mainstream education currently has two projects; one a review of SCERT language and social science textbooks from classes five to eight in collaboration with UNICEF and Patang (an Odisha based organization), and second a research in Sanjay Camp (Dakshinpuri) to understand the youth and how they perceive their lives vis-à-vis structures of gender, sexuality and class. Understanding education and the role it plays (amongst four other themes) in their lives will be an integral part of this research.

Textbook Review

Introduction:

With Nirantar's rich experience of having worked on textbook analysis of five States in India, UNICEF Odisha approached us to review the SCERT language and social science textbooks from class 5 to 8th. This is a year long project that entails review, gender training, publication of a paper and interviews and focused group discussions with the stakeholders – teachers and students.

The first objective of this study is to review the SCERT language and social science textbooks from class 5 to 8th from the lens of gender, inclusion, sexuality and development. A report of the same will be submitted in December. An integral component of this process was conducting gender training of Gender Coordinators and District Project Coordinators. The training included concepts of gender, masculinity and femininity, power, the process of socialization and its institutions, patriarchy, equity, marginalization, education of girls/women and how to incorporate these concepts in the current schooling system. The training helped the team to understand the context of Odisha and various issues relating to education, policies and its implementation at

the grass root level in the State. As part of advocacy we will also be publishing a paper based on the findings of the review.

This work required that we partner with an organization that is based in Odisha, since most of the textbooks are in Odiya it was important to bring some resource people in this study that could help us read and understand the script. We thus partnered with Patang, an organization working on education and language in Odisha and they have a nuanced understanding of the socio-political and cultural context of Odisha.

One core aspect of this work is structuring the framework of analyzes to review the texts. The rubrics were developed, keeping the broad themes of analysis that we wanted to bring to this study. The process of developing rubric started with a discussion on “why are we doing the textbook analysis and what is it that we want to achieve at the end of this process”. The framework has incorporated both broad themes like caste, class, gender and diversity along with more specific themes like regional identity and integration of local cultural context in the textbooks. The broad themes decided for the textbook analysis are:

- Region and Identity
- Body
- Labour
- Violence
- Gender

Following is an example to illustrate one such rubric for the theme of Region and identity:

Lesson no. and name	National /Regional/ Both/ none of these	When and where	Marker/ metaphor/ Symbols-icons, people and monuments, food, clothes
What is the source of love/ reasons used in establishing national/ regional identity/pride - how	Is there a gender element/ what aspects of gender covered - give quotes	which value/s are being promoted or reinforced	Illustration

Research

Introduction:

This research is an offshoot of our work done under PACE project. The work in Khanpur and Trilokpuri led us to questions around youth, both boys and girls, and the various kinds of conflicts, vis-à-vis education and the socio-political context they live in. Living in resettlement colonies poses its specific challenges where the role of the State becomes important to study. How do these young people understand themselves vis-à-vis these conflicts? What are the dynamics between the self and the structures of gender, sexuality and class? With these broad questions we started the research in Sanjay Camp (Dakshinpuri) as our field.

For this project, we have Sarada Balgopalan as our advisor. She is the Director of Graduate Studies, Associate Professor of Childhood Studies Department of Childhood Studies Rutgers, The State University of



New Jersey. Her work is centered on children's work and schooling as a key site where discourses of colonial modernity, the 'developmental' nation-state, late capitalism and current transnational efforts come together. The scope of the research and her work has many common threads and hence

she was decided to be our advisor. Her inputs have been very crucial in how we have structured our research, the themes, methodology and the readings for literature review.

We have a total of 20 participants, 10 girls and 10 boys, between the ages 15 to 22 years of age. The boys group consists of all Valmiki, Hindu. We have an experience of two years of working with girls in an urban context and have felt that we needed to understand their issues and conflicts from the 'other' perspective as well. We hence decided to work with boys as this would give a more holistic understanding of how the youth understand themselves vis-a-vis the structures of gender and sexuality.

Literature review has been a central element of this research. It enabled us to reflect on our field experiences and enhanced our knowledge regarding our population i.e. youth, and the themes we were engaging with; namely work, friendship love and marriage, education, state and citizenship and media. The readings on various policy papers related to youth helped us to define our population as 'youth' since they come in the age bracket of 15 to 29 years. We have read and analyzed a total of 12 readings and 2 books in this time period. These have been around – qualitative research done with youth in the *bastis* of India like Calcutta and Andhra Pradesh, work done with youth in other parts of the world like Vietnam Brazil etc., on the concepts of youth and conflict and choice, on gender and public space, and various youth policies.

These helped us to:

- To define our population/participants as 'youth'.
- Finalize our methodology: We are using two methodologies primarily – Focused Group Discussions and interviews. The FGDs will be done separately with girls and boys. The focus of these will be to understand the aforementioned themes conceptually, and of the interviews to do narrative analysis.
- Ethics of research like the necessity of consent forms and profiles of all the participants.
- Class (aspirations), family, gender, sexuality and violence will be themes running across all the themes.
- Understand feminist qualitative research. We will be also using a psychoanalytic framework to understand this complex interaction of the self with the structures of gender, sexuality and class.

We have done a total of 10 FGDs so far; 5 FGDs with boys and 5 with girls. Various sub themes emerged from the FGDs on work. For example the aspiration of class they hold, the distribution of work based on gender within homes and outside (in Dakshinpuri), the relationship between violence and humour, and the role of masculinity.

The first round of data collection is over and we will enter into the 2nd round of data collection which will be primarily done through individual interviews. We plan to complete this study by March 2018 and come up with a details report of the study, that can be used both for influencing the way work with young people is approached in urban areas and also inform our own understanding and material for young boys and girls.



EARLY MARRIAGE, YOUNG PEOPLE, AND
EMPOWERMENT

With the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals in 2015, the international development community witnessed wide-scale changes in priorities for funding allocation, interventions, and impact assessments. Of the 17 SDGs, goal 5 aims to “Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls”. Under this goal, a particular target is to “Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation”.

In 2013, prior to the adoption of these goals, Nirantar set out to map the discourses, approaches and strategies used around the ‘issue’ of early and child marriage in India, among the development community and grassroots organisations. Analysing the issue from a feminist lens, we found that gender, sexuality and related issues were underrepresented, with a heavier focus on “age-centric” discourses and strategies for intervention. This made it difficult for organisations to engage and address the structural issues that make marriage a disempowering institution for women regardless of their age and issues relating to consent, choice and the desires of young people.

The findings of this study are published in the ‘Landscape Analysis of Early and Child Marriage’ report in English and Hindi. This report and the findings have informed our strategies of working on the issue since 2015. Currently our work is across three broad categories – advocacy, capacity building, and action research.

Dissemination and Advocacy

Our dissemination and advocacy work focuses on bringing questions around gender, sexuality and young people’s desires and agency to diverse forums ranging from networks of grassroots organisations to international donors, development community, international

coalitions, and at the United Nations. Over the past year, we've been part of international, national, regional-level meetings convened by international organisations like ICRW, UNFPA, OXFAM and others to deliberate on priorities for policies and strategies for these agencies. In partnership with organisations like Pravah, we have also reached out to grassroots organisations working with young people to introduce some debates from the study for them to deliberate in context of their work in the field. We have also taken the findings of our study to various international forums, such as Commission for the Status of Women in New York, AWID conference in Brazil, Care International's event to launch their study from Nepal and Bangladesh in Dhaka.

In partnership with AJWS international, we also participated in advocacy around the UN Draft resolution on Child Early and Forced Marriage around the UN General Assembly in October 2016, meeting with various country UN missions and UN bodies like UNFPA in New York to highlight the 'root cause' approach of looking at the issue. We focused on the need to have language in the resolution that identifies the role of gender inequality and focuses more on empowerment of young people.

Action Research

The action research project is aimed at understanding the struggles and issues that young people encounter related to gender, sexuality and marriage, using theatre as a research methodology. The idea has been to explore the possibilities of enabling youth-centric, empowering initiatives where young people can build a shared understanding around issues of gender, sexuality, and marriage as it relates to structures of caste, class, religion etc.

The past year has been a learning experience and we have successfully completed the pilot phase of our action research in partnership with

three grassroots organisations- Vikalp, Vanangana and Muskaan. After an initial intensive week-long **workshop on the research methodology with the partners**, we visited each organisation to assist them in planning and implementing the theatre sessions.

The team worked closely with its partner organisations, experiencing the complexities of facilitating theatre sessions in different contexts at the field level, as well as unpacking various experiences of young people and karyakartas. Since June 2016, they have also partnered with Nirantar's field project, Parvaaz Centre for Adolescent Education (PACE) and facilitated theatre sessions with their learners at their centres in Trilokpuri and Khanpur, Delhi.

The experiences and stories from this work was presented in **there view and reflection meetings**, in February 2016 and September 2016 respectively. This was an opportunity for the team to engage in a collective conversation, analyse and understand issues around gender, sexuality, caste, religion as well as the structure of working through NGOs with young people.

We also organised a **two-day consultation in November 2016** where we shared the preliminary understanding emerging from the field with existing and potential partners, as well as plan fortaking the project forward. Here, the leadership of the three existing partners joined in the consultation alongside leadership of the four new organisations- Vidharbha Molkarin Sangathan, Kislay, Sahajani Shiksha Kendra (SSK) and Parvaaz Centre for Adolescent Education (PACE). Going forward, we will be working with 6 partners, namely Kislay, SSK, PACE, Vikalp, Vanangana, Muskaan.

The second phase started with a seven-day workshop on research methodology with participants from all the partner organisations,



and facilitated by our project advisors. This workshop was followed by separate five-day training on Forum Theatre with the karyakartas from the partner organisations. The aim of these workshops was to build capacities of the programme staff and karyakartas of the partners for using and implementing the theatre tools to initiate dialogues with youth on various issues in their respective fields.

AJWS Research Conclave

Along side advocacy based on our research, this year we also made our first presentation based on the findings of our action research project where we use theatre as a research methodology of working with young people. We made this presentation at the Research Conclave organised by Partners in Law and Development (PLD) and AJWS in New Delhi in February-March 2017.



Capacity Building

Following upon the first Yuva, Yaunikta aur Adhikar course 2016 we visited Bhumika and Voice4girls, Hyderabad and Vidharbha Molkarin Sangathan, taking forward the discussions from the course on the issues of gender and sexuality with the organisation's staff and volunteers. In the month of August, we organised the second round of Yuva, Yaunikta aur Adhikar course 2016, focussing on the issue of gender and sexuality as a lens, health, disability, mental health, young people and media, education, obscenity, and sex work. The course saw participation from around 30 participants from across different organisations working with young people in various parts of the country.

We also conducted a three-day workshop with the karyakartas of Rajsamand Mahila Vikas Sansthan at their office in Rajsamand, Rajasthan on the issues of gender and sexuality.



SEXUALITY AND GENDER

We believe that to critically understand and address lived realities, one needs an in-depth understanding of Gender and Sexuality. As a resource organisation, Nirantar conducts training and workshops on gender and sexuality and their intersections with caste, religion and dis/ability, for NGOs, government programmes and other agencies and organisations. We have a positive and political approach towards sexuality, enabling us to acknowledge desire and pleasure, while engaging with structural issues.

Advocacy on Issues of Gender based Violence (GBV) and Sexuality

Nirantar's report, titled 'Gender Based Violence and Sexuality–The Elephant in the Room', highlights the linkages between sexuality and GBV – underlining the importance of acknowledging sexuality as a cause for violence as opposed to only looking at it as a form of violence. These linkages were identified during the course of our capacity building work with organisations involved in case-based interventions to address instances of GBV across four states in India (Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Assam, and Uttar Pradesh).

In 2016-2017, we worked upon developing resource material to disseminate the learnings of the report and making the learnings more accessible, especially to caseworkers and young people. In this regard, Nirantar tied up with the School for Media and Cultural Studies to create **six short videos** that address the idea of normative sexuality and the violence meted out for transgressing the norms. In collaboration with the Institute of Development Studies (IDS), Nirantar has also developed a **pamphlet** which speaks to caseworkers dealing directly with survivors of gender based violence on questions to ask ourselves when dealing with cases of GBV and learning to recognise the role sexuality plays in gender based violence. Nirantar has also worked on and finalised a **Policy Paper** on the same, with financial support from IDS.

Report: 'A Critical Examination of Sexuality Discourses in India', a study conducted by Nirantar in the year 2013-2014, produced an elaborate and detailed report of its findings in early 2015. This report aims for a "coming together" of various conversations around sexuality in India towards a positive, political integration. After several rounds of editing and feedback process, this report was finalised in June 2016 for public dissemination.

- **National Consultation-A Critical Examination of Sexuality Discourses in India 2017:** The dissemination of the sexuality mapping report as well as deepening of the debate around issues raised through this mapping process happened in the National Consultation, organised on 16 and 17 June 2016 in Delhi. The consultation was an important way of raising issues with NGOs, activists and academicians, working or concerned about issues of sexuality in development discourse. From understanding how caste and class locations influence our sexuality, to understanding that consent can also not be seen only in a yes-no binary, to interrogating whether sexuality could be used as a lens to understand other subjects instead of the other way around. The two days of the consultation was an interactive experience that required all participants to draw upon their own experiences and respond to the questions raised by panellists during the sessions.
- **Presentation at IAWS Conference 2017:** In January this year, Nirantar presented a paper at the XV National Conference on Women's Studies in Chennai, based on our report 'A Critical Examination of Sexuality Discourses in India'. The paper based on the learnings from the Sexuality Mapping report and the following Consultation, sought to understand the construct of the centre and the margin with specific reference to sexuality and the idea of locationality, and its implications in the context of the sexuality discourses in India.



PUBLICATION AND COMMUNICATIONS



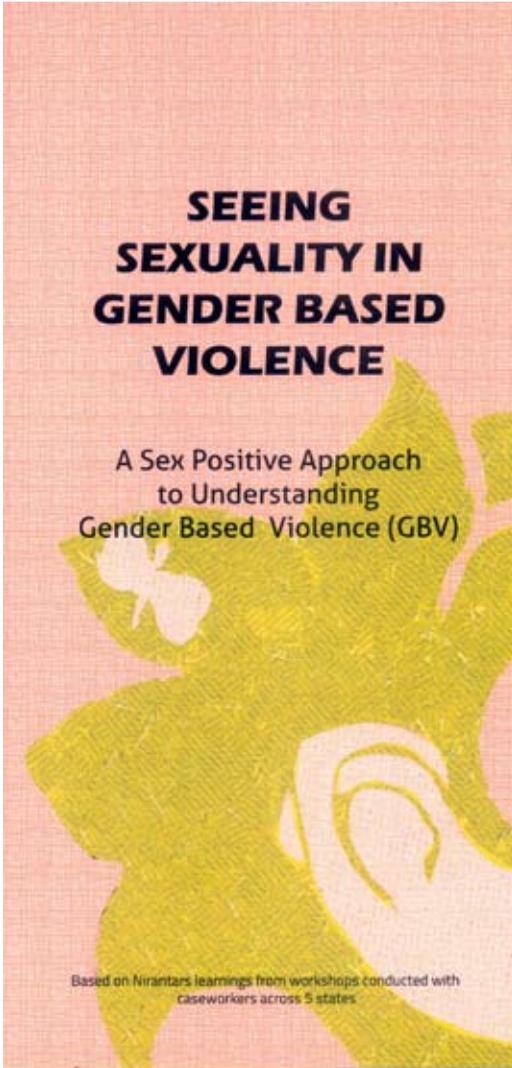
Nirantar develops and produces a range of gender-sensitive reading and teaching-learning material, including curricula, study reports, analytic documents, booklets, and books. Nirantar's publications are produced in a language that is simple, yet not simplistic. The style is entertaining and informative and the material produced is interactive and developed through sustained field engagement.

Pamphlet on Gender based Violence (GBV)

Nirantar has also designed an informative and interactive pamphlet to underline the linkages of sexuality and GBV, as per the findings in the policy brief with Institute of Development Studies (IDS). This pamphlet focuses on better informing policies and field interventions for addressing gendered forms of violence, by exploring the linkages between GBV and sexuality. It is scheduled to be launched at the Aman Network Meeting, which is a network of organisations and individuals working on the core issue of Violence against Women, in May 2017.

Nirantar Website

In the last one year, we have revamped and updated our website design, features, and content, and now it is live in both English and Hindi language. The design is quite user-friendly and easier to navigate around the content, which is divided into vision and mission, thematic areas, various aspects of our resource centre, reports, photos, and videos. Another feature is the blog button and the query form, for increasing the click rate and a quicker way of getting in touch with our teams. In addition, we have specially designed the functionality of the 'Meet the Team' page, for ease of access and categorising various teams more efficiently.



Youtube Channel

Nirantar's films and associated videos are now available on our Youtube channel. These films include Bioscope: Non-Binary Conversations of Gender and Education, Banda Ki Batiyaan: Stories of Women's Education from Bundelkhand, The Khabar Lahariya Story, and Pathshala Khula Do! A Film on Sahajani Shiksha Kendra (Lalitpur, U.P.). We will be uploading some more of our video resources and films on our channel soon. These videos are available for the individuals, organisations, teachers, researches, and trainers to see and use in their respective programs on literacy, gender, sexuality, and related issues.

Facebook and Twitter

We have been posting and sharing Hindi content on our Facebook page, our main social media portal, and Twitter account in the form of news, pictures, and videos. In the past one year, we have devised and implemented several new strategies for dissemination of relevant content on social media portals related to education, gender, sexuality,

policies, youth, women, etc.

To evaluate the views of our audience in terms of these strategies, we also conducted a Facebook Feedback process with selected people who interact with our page on a more regular basis. These people had an active presence on our Facebook page in terms of liking, sharing, and commenting on our posts. Through this feedback, we were able to understand that there is a dearth of media portals and content online which provides easy-to-understand information in Hindi on issues of gender, sexuality, and literacy. Hindi is also a language spoken by many in the country but still most of the resources and information created on such issues is in English, or still has a jargon-laden and academic tone. We received positive feedback on how our language and tone used in our blog, Facebook and Twitter posts is accessible and simple, but not simplistic.

➤ **Advocacy by Marking Important Days and Online Campaigns:**

We have seen that social media and online platforms have also gained momentum in the past many years for community mobilisation, creating awareness, and engaging in discourses. Our team has come up with a calendar which marks several awareness days, birth and death anniversaries of various important people, and crucial incidents in the feminist and other civil movements. Along with this, we organised several campaigns through our Facebook and Twitter accounts and blog on feminist issues that are also central to our work. Below is a listing of such campaigns and marked days of importance:

- **Ambedkar Jayanti:** We held a 3-day campaign in which we posted several picture quotes and links, building upon the words of Dr. Bheem Rao Ambedkar. We used a hashtag #Ambedkar



Answers to highlight several issues prevalent in current times and how one would be able to find an answer in his words from several decades ago, on human rights, religion, equal rights, caste, law, constitution, and freedom.

- **International Workers' Day:** We posted two blog entries on this occasion, to advocate for equal pay, uniform minimum wage, and reducing the gender pay gap in organized and unorganized sectors. These articles also built upon how the domestic or unpaid care work is not recognized as labor, leading to gender discrimination on the basis of norms and stereotypes.
- **National Consultation-A Critical Examination of Sexuality Discourses in India 2016:** The team shared 14 photos and quotes providing the various sessions in progress and sharing the learnings from the panels organised and following discussions of the participants. The quotes were crucial points of discourses



on sexuality, marginalisation, marriage, consent, caste, class, mental health, queer and LGBTIQ movement, VAW, and GBV, that were highlighted in the consultation.

- **50th International Literacy Day:** Nirantar believes that literacy and education processes should be made available to women, especially women from marginalised communities. For marking this day, we made several posts emphasising the need to work towards empowerment through literacy and education for women and girls, and the relationship of a learner with literacy in their everyday life.
- **Transgender Day of Remembrance:** Discrimination and facing violence on the basis of gender identity has cost us many lives, including countless transgender people's lives. This year, we talked about the issues faced by transgender individuals by posting related excerpts from our publications Nawab Se

Nandini, and Khulti Partein: Yaunikta aur Hum.

- **International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women:** “Violence against women and Gender-based Violence is a human rights violation, which plays upon gender norms and hierarchy to punish individuals who resist the structure of gender and sexuality, or refuse to conform to set norms. To mark this day and 16 Days Campaign against Gender Violence, we posted articles, blogs, and related news pieces from our publications, and collaborated with Prajnaya’s campaign for the same purpose.
- **Savitri Bai Phule’s 186th Birth Anniversary:** To commemorate this day, we held a 2-day campaign around the life of Savitri Bai Phule, a social reformer and poet, who fought for the rights of Dalits and women for their education, health, and equal rights. It was a trivia-based campaign, to raise awareness on the various important events in her life, not just her activism.
- **Campaign against Caste Discrimination in Educational Institutions:** Education as a structure and process can be exclusionary for people from marginalised communities and groups, especially in higher education system. This 17th January 2017, marked one year of the suicide of Rohith Vemula, a PhD student at University of Hyderabad who was suspended. To keep the discourses on issues like caste, education, structures that control lives and futures of students, we posted poetry, excerpts from Rohith’s letter, and related videos on our Facebook and Twitter.
- **National Consultation on Adult Education and Women’s Leadership in Contemporary Context of Digitalization**

and Skill-Building: Nirantar organised this consultation in early 2017, to understand where the issue of adult literacy can find space within programmes working on digitalisation, skill-building and livelihoods, in a context where state support is weaning off and focussing robustly on programmes that work on digitalisation and skill-building. Our team posted live updates on Facebook and Twitter through photos, quotes from panellists, and excerpts of discussions between participants from the sessions on citizenship, digitalisation, livelihood, and skill building in the context of literacy.

- **International Women’s Day:** Nirantar was a part of organising the march to mark this day, along with several women’s rights collectives and organisations. We also made various posts through photos, quotes, news, slogans, and blogs to raise awareness on issues highlighted in the pamphlet compiled for the march, such as feminism, gender pay gap, reservation, gender equality, etc.



ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT



Strengthening our organisational processes and building capacities of the team is an important part of our organisational functions. Various activities around the year which help us in reflecting at the work done in systematic manner which also help us with planning our future work strategies. These processes facilitate smooth functioning of teams, creating democratic values for the organisation's functioning and in building capacities of people working in Nirantar to be more effective in achieving various objectives.

Organisational Development Workshop (29th April to 1st May, 2016)

In April, we conducted this workshop for our entire team and staff members to reflect upon and strengthen the new organisational structure that we have been working with for two years now. This workshop also looked at team dynamics and processes of resolving conflicts on an organisational level. During this two-day workshop, we decided to form a committee to engage with organisational issues ranging from future initiatives, new ideas, partnerships and funding/financial health of the organisation and projects. Along with such structural discussions, the Nirantar team also participated in some team-building activities.

Six Monthly Review (3rd to 4th November 2016)

Six monthly reviews are part of the organisational process, where all the teams meet to present their work of the last six months and to plan for the upcoming six months. All the project teams presented the status of work and achievements of their work with everyone, and also talked about challenges faced by them in acting on given responsibilities. Several administrative decisions and rules were reviewed, which were brought into place in the Annual Review of 2015-16. Through the feedbacks and discussions on the teams' work, we collectively fine-

tuned the probable gaps and reflected on future course of action in the project work of the teams.

Annual Review (27th to 31st March 2017):

The Annual review is an organisational tool used to reflect back on the project work and its quality. This is also important to take stock, and lay out the work plan for the upcoming year. It is an important feature of our collective working and accountability.

The review in 2017 took place in Delhi and Orissa for five days. The framework for the annual review this year was focussed on evaluating each team member as a part of Nirantar, and in their respective roles here. The framework for this included set indicators and performance rankings which were submitted by project members, their team leaders, director, and colleagues anonymously. The entire process was divided into three parts, team review, project work review, and individual review, which included internal team meetings, project presentations, challenges faced, possible strategies, and work plan for the next six months. The teams also utilised this time to brainstorm strategies for making their work more effective and discussed new initiatives in their respective project areas.



nirantar trust
A Centre for Gender and Education



मीना मेश नाम है। गाँव का नाम गड़डा पुरवा
सेंटर का नाम मैं गंगी महिला साक्षरता केन्द्र
पहले हम लोग अंग्रेजी अंगूठा लगाते
जब से गाँव सेन्टर खुला तब से अपना नाम
लिखना जान गये पति का नाम बच्चे
का नाम और अक्षर पहचाने लगे
गिनती भी। से ~~हम~~ तक जानने लगे

