



University of Mumbai

SAMBHASHAN



CALL FOR PAPERS

**GENDER
IDENTITY,
EQUALITY,
AND
JUSTICE**

Sex is biological, and gender is sociological. Transforming a male and a female -the 'natural' binaries into the gendered binaries of a man and a woman has been fundamental to the process of socialisation worldwide. Very recently, there has been a shift from such binary articulation of gender to accommodate 'third gender'. The recent gender discourse allows discussions around multiplicities of gender along the lines of gender identities, gender roles, sexual identities, sexual orientations, and the like. The gender discourse is further diversified with the expanding horizons of Feminism to include various ideological subsets and the literature produced through them. The same has allowed gender discourse to diversify from the pretext of 'men exploit women' to 'patriarchy exploits men, women, and third gender'. As Kamala Bhasin suggests, "feminism has never been anti-men. It has been anti-patriarchy". Various theoretical underpinnings vis-à-vis gender, the counter theorisations, and appropriated meanings and forms of what gender is culturally, politically and finally leading to specific gender practices further expanded the scope of gender studies.

The contemporary gender discourse, thus, propound to include a variety of researches across socio-economic, politico-cultural, and psychological dimensions of gender, gender identities, orientations, practices, advocacy, activism, rights and the like. Sexuality has emerged as a recent research trend in gender with the third gender getting socially recognised. The interlinking of gender with various cross-cutting research and intersectionalities have further enhanced the gender discourses.

The space that has been created by the academia in research is definitely a reflection of social transformations that the contemporary society is going through with the reference to gender. Though there have been many positive gender practices promoted by the progressive and liberal fronts, the gender practices are yet to relieve them from the traditional gender praxis. The diversifying, and intensifying violence against all the genders has its own intersectionality – say a Scheduled Caste women getting raped against an upper caste women getting raped, lynching of a man, rapes and molestation of bodies, and the like.

The gender equal society is probably a distant dream. What could be a gender-equal society? As Gloria Steinem (open citation) recalls it, 'A gender-equal society would be one where the word 'gender' does not exist: where everyone can be themselves'. Our journey has begun but there are multiple challenges.

The study of Gender and literature are closely associated as writers are expressing gender issues and its portrayal through literature since time immemorial. Literature familiarises the world with the notion of gender, its operation in the society, stereotypical representations of men and women, a system of power relations between women and men in the context of socio-cultural definitions of masculinity and femininity. Through literature one can understand the relationship between gender and language and explore various interpretative methods that allow literature to be recognized as an integral part of a larger family of art disciplines (film, music, video) by fusing philosophical principles with literary theory and contemporary interdisciplinary approaches. With this edition, we will try to gather some reflections on the manifold identity positions in the society and how gender power/ relation affects it. It also highlights the interrelation of gender representations in literature, psychology, sociology, health sector and many more sectors with a multicultural perspective and the social exclusion of marginalized groups of people. The concept of the "Other" can be interpreted for any gender who faced exclusion in one or the other way.

Gender identity in contemporary societies is shaped by traditional values, cultural norms, religious beliefs, and modern influences. Contemporary discussions critique the binary understanding of male and female, embracing more fluid identities that defy traditional categories. Gender philosophy explores how gender is understood, constructed, and lived, engaging with questions of what it means to be male, female, transgender, non-binary, or other identities. It challenges traditional notions of sex and gender, critiquing essentialist approaches that historically dominated knowledge systems.

Feminist theorists like Simone de Beauvoir emphasized gender as a social construct beyond biological determinism. Judith Butler's gender performativity theory argues that gender is not an inherent trait but is continually constituted through social practices. John Searle and Erving Goffman propose that gender is collectively created through social interactions rather than biologically fixed. Philosophers such as Michel Foucault and Elizabeth Grosz argue that gender identity is fluid and shaped by historical, cultural, and political forces. Feminists like Andrea Dworkin and Catharine MacKinnon critique patriarchal structures that perpetuate women's subordination. Bell Hooks and Kimberlé Crenshaw advocate for intersectionality, recognizing that gender identity intersects with race, class, sexuality, caste, and colonial contexts, shaping individual experiences differently.

Gender justice focuses on creating equitable conditions for all gender identities. Ethical debates center on transgender and non-binary rights, legal recognition, healthcare, and protection from discrimination. Martha Nussbaum's capabilities approach ensures individuals can lead fulfilling, self-determined lives. Decolonizing gender is crucial, as colonialism imposed binary models that disrupted indigenous understandings of gender, which were often more fluid. Hindu mythology features gender-fluid figures like Ardhanarishvara and Shikhandi, while Sufism and the Bhakti tradition challenge rigid gender norms through spiritual narratives. Figures like Rumi, Mirabai, and Lal Ded embody fluid understandings of gender and identity.

India's feminist movement is complex, shaped by colonial rule, post-independence issues, and global feminist ideologies. It is not monolithic but comprises diverse voices advocating for gender equality, social justice, and empowerment. Early reformers like Savitribai Phule, Sarojini Naidu, and Fatima Sheikh fought for women's rights in education and marriage, while contemporary feminists like Kamla Bhasin and Nivedita Menon continue pushing for autonomy and equity. Gender equality is enshrined in the Indian Constitution, with Article 15 prohibiting sex-based discrimination and Article 39 ensuring equal pay. Laws like the Hindu Marriage Act (1955) and Dowry Prohibition Act (1961) aim to improve women's status.

The 1970s and 1980s saw grassroots activism addressing issues like sexual violence, with cases like the Mathura Rape Case (1972) leading to legal reforms. The anti-dowry movement intensified in the 1980s, and the Vishaka Guidelines (1997) addressed workplace sexual

harassment. Economic liberalization in the 1990s brought both opportunities and challenges for women, increasing their workforce participation but also exploitation. Feminists in this period advocated for reproductive rights and LGBTQ+ recognition. The #MeToo movement (2018) amplified awareness of gender-based violence, while contemporary debates on the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) reflect ongoing tensions between gender equality and cultural autonomy.

Media representation significantly influences gender perceptions. LGBTQ+ characters have often been stereotyped, reinforcing societal biases. While representation has grown, activists push for more authentic portrayals of gender-nonconforming individuals. The discourse on gender identity, equality, and justice continues to evolve, shaping policies, legal frameworks, and societal attitudes towards a more inclusive world.

Papers are invited for following sub themes (though not restricted to the same)

1. Intersectionality and Gender Identity
2. Legal and Policy Frameworks for Gender Justice
3. Feminism and Gender Identity
4. Health and Well-being of Gender Minorities
5. Gender Identity and Education
6. Media, Representation, and Gender Identity
7. Global Perspectives on Gender Identity Equality
8. Gender Identity and Social Movements
9. Workplace Inclusion and Gender Identity
10. Religious and Cultural Perspectives on Gender Identity
11. Religious reforms and the quest for gender justice within traditional communities.
12. Gender Identity and Family Dynamics
13. Digital Activism and Gender Identity
14. Gender Identity, Economic Rights, and Social Justice
15. Art, Literature, and Gender Identity
16. Exploring gender identity in contemporary art and literary movements.
17. Gender Identity and Youth Empowerment
18. Migration and Gender equality
19. Gender equity and equality at workplace
20. Global and Transnational Gender Issues

Guidelines to follow for writing a research paper in Sambhashan:

Original, scholarly, creative and critical papers with adequate references and empirical work (if applicable).

All references to the author should be removed from the submission to enable the anonymous review process.

There should be a limit from 4000-6000 words (for papers), 1500-2000 words (for commentaries) and 1000 words (for book reviews).

Essays should follow the Times New Roman font in size 12 with double space and be submitted as a word document.

All contributions should follow the author-date referencing system detailed in chapter 15 of The Chicago Manual of Style (17th Edition). The style guidelines can be consulted on the journal webpages for quick reference.

Authors should submit a statement that their contribution is original without any plagiarism. They can also, in addition, submit a plagiarism check certificate.

Last date for the submission of the article is **30th June 2025**. The style of Writing the article is given on the website: <https://mu.ac.in/sambhashan> Kindly follow the instructions given on the website. Submit your article through a Word file on the following email id: coeditor.sambhashan@mu.ac.in