THINKING GENDER, DOING GENDER

Feminist Scholarship and Practice Today

edited by

UMA CHAKRAVARTI
For Sharmila
A dear friend, a passionate teacher, and a mentor to all
Contents

Preface
Introduction – Revisiting Gender: Pedagogies, Histories, Practices xi

SECTION I  FEMINIST PEDAGOGIES

1. Education as Trutiya Ratna: Towards Phule–Ambedkarite Feminist Pedagogical Practice
   Sharmila Rege 3

2. Women, Men and Others in the Class and in the Past: The Challenges of Mainstreaming Gender in History
   Kumkum Roy 32

3. Reading Gender in School Textbooks: The Tussle between Tradition and Modernity
   Dipta Bhog, Disha Mullick and Purwa Bharadwaj 47

4. Chhatra Prabhodhan: Tacking Modern Education to Tradition
   Swati Dyahadroy 76

5. Feminist Activism in the Pedagogy and Practice of Science: An Interactionist Approach
   Chayanika Shah 94

SECTION II  HISTORY AND MEMORY

6. Feminist Epistemology and Oral History as Method
   Mahua Sarkar 113

7. The ‘Man-made’ Famine and Women’s Responses to Hunger: The Pivotal Dynamics of Food in the Tebhaga Movement
   Kavita Panjabi 132

8. Memory as Ritual, Memory as Renewal: Some Thoughts on Feminist History-writing
   V. Geetha 144
SECTION III  ALONG THE BYLANES:
READING CULTURE, DOING CULTURE

9. Devadasi and/or ‘Prostitute’? : Analysing ‘Jogin Prostitute’ in Post-colonial Rural Maharashtra  165
   Anagha Tambe
10. 'Mitro Marjani': Recasting Women and Subversion  190
    Shubhra Nagalia
11. Gender and Commodity Aesthetics in Tamilnadu  209
    1950–70
    Anandhi S.
12. Reimagining Nation and Redefining Regional and Gender Identities in the Cinema of the 1950s  233
    Vaishali Diwakar
13. Women in Theatre: Journey from ‘Respectability’ to Agency  256
    Lata Singh
14. Staging Feminist Theatre  274
    A. Mangai
15. Building Blocks: Casting a Woman’s Eye on the Built Environment  294
    Vani Subramanian

About the Editor and Contributors  320
Index  323
Preface

This book is a celebration of the spirit of Sharmila Rege and the wide range of interests that she had in the fields of pedagogy, history and cultural practices. In many ways, she represented the interesting turn in feminist scholarship which a second generation of feminists brought into women's studies, because the practice of feminist scholarship was for them as important as the analytical work that the first generation of feminist scholars had brought into thinking about gender. The range of fields explored in this volume is the outcome of the very generous support that Peter Ronald D'Souza gave us as Director of the Indian Institute of Advanced Study (IIAS) at Shimla in June 2010 to organise a free-ranging workshop over a five-day period. The warm hospitality and congenial atmosphere in the premises of the Institute in cool Shimla, while a hot summer blazed in the plains below, ensured that the presentations were spirited and rich, and the discussions passionate and engaging. There was so much goodwill at the workshop that it was not difficult to persuade the group of women assembled there that what we needed now was to turn the draft presentations into a book. Although the process has taken a while, we are delighted that the book will soon reach the audience that it deserves.

The process has, however, also been painful. Sharmila was with us when we began the journey, and now she is no longer with us. All of us remember the mentoring she did for the younger scholars, spending long hours into the night listening to their presentations, so that they could feel validated in the arguments they were making. This book is dedicated to her. To her we say, ‘rest assured dear friend, teacher and mentor, we will take your work forward in whatever way we can’.

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