

Sexuality Gender and other intersections in Feminist Research

Meena Gopal
Advanced Centre for Women's Studies
Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai
FDP BDU 10 June 2020

Brief history of concepts

- **Sexuality** (not linear, but useful to proceed thus)
 - 1970s-80s - Feminists in the women's movement brought focus through struggles against violence – Discrimination within a patriarchal society that harmed women – victimized them – use of law
 - A politics of sexuality – from 'honour' to violence – through intersections
 - Sexual assault – spaces of violence – mass rapes
 - Sexual violence – child sexual abuse – marital rape
 - Sexual harassment to #MeToo
 - 1990s – structured desire – heteronormativity - Feminists and Queer movements
 - Sexual expression – natural desiring subjects – Fire film rallying point
 - Sexual identity – through movements
 - Sexual repression – laws, science/psychiatry, religion, marriage, labour,

- Gender

- Feminism theorized gender within a patriarchal society – with the binary genders
- Gender identity – male –female
- Fit with heterosexual practices, institutions
- In our analysis – we equated gender with women – which women?
- Gender was unstable – men and women did not fit
- Other genders were around this binary
- Struggles around gender – by communities of marginalized gender who are present by are non-citizens, criminalized
- NALSA judgement 2014 – and transgender identity
- Legislations to recognize transgender communities – self-determination of gender
- Beyond Binary Gender

Biological determinism and the construction of gender

- Transgressions ...



- exceptions ...



- Phelps's performance in the Rio Olympics was unique in "winning multiple gold medals at 31 years old, well beyond the typical peak for male swimmers" – for Dutee Chand and Caster Semenya it was scientific verification of gender and the racial intrusion into the female body
- Biological sex = gender identity = gender roles = sexuality
- Activists are challenging and proposing lived genders as natural, socially constructed