

Announcement

Centre for Women's Studies, AMU

International Seminar

on

'Women and Modern Political System

25 - 27 February 2012

The Centre invites scholars to participate in the seminar and present a paper on any topic related to the theme of the seminar.

The Theme Outline

The French revolution led to the development of a new political system, one that has, since the revolution, inspired the growth of democracy the world over. The development of modern political systems, based in the capitalist mode of production, has been extensively studied by scholars, but what is less known is the nature of their relations with women. It is well-known that the expansion of the capitalist forces has been all through history supported by the state, and forms of capitalism, in particular monopoly and finance capitalism, have grown under specific political formations. One of the objectives of the proposed seminar is to examine the implications of these political formations for women and gender. We hope to study the extent of women's participation in the political structure under different political systems. And, more importantly, we also hope to assess the potentials in these political systems for providing to women access to justice and equality.

The growth of socialism led to the growth of different political systems. In the Soviet Union, China, Eastern Europe and Latin America the political systems were largely informed by the ideology of socialism. Based on the ideology of social justice, these states had to take into account the question of gender inequality and the marginalisation of women from political and socio-economic lives. This seminar would study the position of women in socialist states, and the policies of these states for women. It is an important fact that in most socialist states there was a higher representation of women in economic activities than is the case in capitalist states. Yet, it is also true that women's groups played a crucial role in the movements against socialism and helped bring about the demise of the socialist political systems in many of these erstwhile socialist countries.

The post-colonial world has thrown up a wide variety of political systems in the third world countries, some democratic, others dictatorial, and yet others, still monarchical. The influence and domination of the western powers, in particular, USA, also has deep political consequences for these countries, and their political set up. Their treatment of women and their policies for women are also hugely different from each other. This seminar would hopefully address the capacity of the political systems in the third world in relation to the uplift of women.

There will be a Special Session

on

Women in Indian Political Systems – Historical Perspectives

1. Women appear in our culture from earlier times. We have political texts like the *Arthasastra* and Barani's *Fatawa-i-Jahandari*, where women from classes of subject who must be treated in particular manner. In histories like Bana's *Harshacharita*, Kalhana's *Rajatarangini* and medieval Indo-Persian histories we have actual depiction of women as rulers and ruled. We here set aside the legal prescriptions whether in the *Dharmasastra* or Shari' a texts as to how the state should act towards them, through it remains an open question how far the prescriptions were followed in practice.
2. For the period of colonialism questions such as women's rights and the law courts; changes in personal laws regarding women; the National Movement and women's rights; and the degree of political participation of women under the colonial 'constitutions'.
3. Finally, there would be the theme of legislation in Free India concerning the political empowerment of women from the Constitution as came originally into effect onwards, and the actual consequences of the legal effort. The degree of difference between the nominal and real empowerment needs also to be studied.

This list is only suggestive, not all-inclusive. Ultimately, the object is to receive papers which after due processing and refereed selection, can be published.

There will be no registration Charges, and the Centre would be happy to provide local hospitality. We would, subject to the availability of funds also be able to meet the travel expenses (AC-II / Taxi / Apex Air Fare) within India to the, invited scholars.

The Dead Lines:

For receipt of the title of the paper alongwith an abstract (app.150-300 words) 15 November, 2011.

For submission of full paper for pre-circulation 10 January, 2012.

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