

**Two-day Regional Seminar – Men and Boys for Gender Justice,  
held in Mahatma Gandhi Kashi Vidyapith University (MGKVP),  
Varanasi, September 13-14**

This regional symposium brought together students and professors from different universities and colleges from various cities and districts of Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh, and representatives of civil society organizations working on women's issues and gender related issues in Varanasi and surrounding areas. Others who participated in the symposium included Satish Singh, National Convener MASVAW and FEM and a mentor for the peer groups working towards gender justice and male involvement, Prof Sanjay Srivastava from JNU, New Delhi, working on masculinity, Prof Laxmi Dubey, Dean, Faculty of Social Work, MGKVP, and Dr Madhu Khuswaha, Faculty of Education, BHU.



The focus was on the need to work on issues of gender and sexuality, with the youth needing to take it forward. In technical sessions, eminent presenters and chairpersons like Dr Madhu Khushwaha and Dr Raju Manjhi of BHU, Rajesh Pal of MGKVP, D Rupesh Kumar, Shakuntala Mishra University, Lucknow, and Dr Ajay Trivedi of Rohilkhand University discussed constitutional and legal provisions for women, a roadmap to gender equality, deconstructing the

Indian political psyche, the role of husbands and fathers in bringing about gender justice, issues of domestic violence and vulnerability of women in contracting HIV. It was discussed that community stakeholders should be involved in gender justice issues.

Men's role in maternal and new born care which can increase the father-child bond was debated, as well as the fact that men should discuss contraceptive choices with their partners. Participants spoke on construction of nationalism and masculinity. They particularly focused on the role of text books in developing the nationalist masculinist discourse, pointing out that schools were active sites for gendering and text books presented nationalism and masculinity as one and the same with brutal and aggressive masculinity disguised under the cover of patriotism and bravery.

Papers were presented on a wide range of topics such as gender based discrimination and socialization, gender inequality in education and health, violence and other issues against trans\genders, men's participation in women's health and family planning services, concept and strategies for gender mainstreaming, examination of men and social norms and relationships of the father with the adolescent child, among others.



Two films on masculinity- 'Zor Se Bol' and 'Soch Sahi Mard Wahi' were screened followed by a review discussion. In a cultural session in the evening, students of the Department of Performing Arts, MGKV presented a drama on

Issues related to skewed sex ratio, marriage and trans-genders. The dance was performed by people belonging to the gay community of Varanasi city.