MALE SEXUALITY AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF MALE IDENTITY

Report of a Workshop (III)

convened by Tathapi

Thrusday to Sunday
9–12 August 2001

at the Manibhai Desai Management
Training Centre (BAIF), Pune (India)

Reporters: Manimala, Pradeep Sharma

About 'Tathapi',
and this Workshop Series...

Tathapi (meaning 'and even so' or 'but still...') was started in September 1999 while the team was serving as Documentation Unit of the Maharashtra WAH! (Women and Health) Programme, 1998-2000. Based in Pune, the Trust is dedicated to resource development in the broad area of 'women and health', including access to information and the building of skills at grassroots level, particularly throughout the Maharashtra region. A core area of Tathapi's work is 'Body Literacy'. By this is basically meant...

> ...persons' learned ability to perceive subtle changes in their bodies and to 'read' and respond appropriately to the signs that the body gives all the time about these changes.

Sexuality and fertility awareness is an important part of body literacy. This awareness – with a conscious linking of mind and body – is crucial for girls and young women as part of their education. Equally, boys and young men need this kind of education for the building of safe and satisfying relations in society, not only between men and women, but indeed with other men, too. Only then will women and men together be able to develop a humane and sustainable society.

The series of three workshops on 'Male Sexuality and Identity' arose in the context of Tathapi's effort towards promoting 'body literacy' among the people – children and adults. Through the process, Tathapi has aimed towards increasing the number of men who are prepared to work directly with men and boys, and also towards building up a training resource base for this.
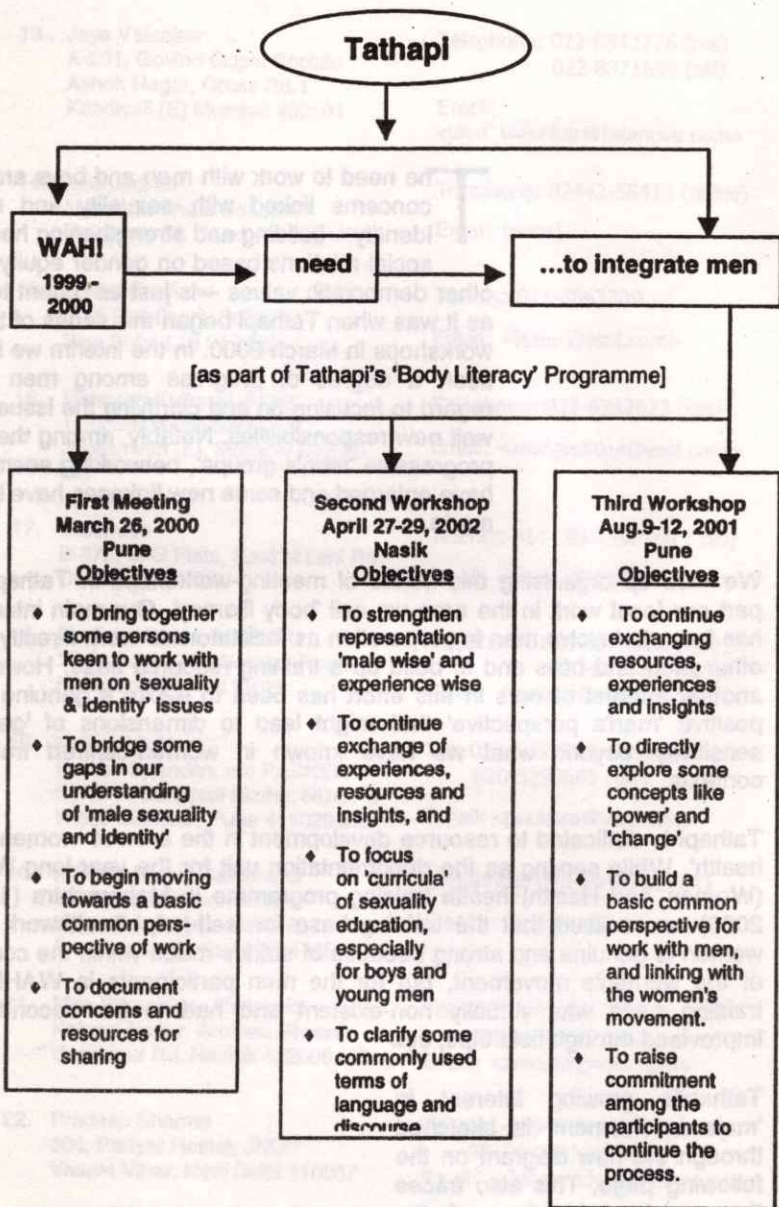
Contents

The need to work with men and boys around concerns linked with sexuality and male identity – building and strengthening healthy social relations based on gender equity and other democratic values – is just as urgent today as it was when Tathapi began this series of three workshops in March 2000. In the interim we have seen a degree of progress among men with regard to focusing on and clarifying the issues as well new responsibilities. Notably, among the few progressive 'men's groups', networking seems to have enlarged and some new linkages have been made.

We took up organising this series of meeting-workshops in Tathapi as part our focal work in the area we call 'body literacy'. Our main intention has been to involve men in preparation as facilitators to work directly with other men and boys and to build up a training resource base. However, another interest of ours in this effort has been to evoke a genuine and positive 'men's perspective' that might lead to dimensions of 'gender sensitivity' beyond what we have known in women-centred training contexts.

Tathapi is dedicated to resource development in the area of 'women and health'. While serving as the documentation unit for the year-long WAH! (Women And Health) health training programme in Maharashtra (1999-2000) we realised that the training base for 'self-help' healthwork with women is genuine and strong because of strides made within the context of the women's movement, but for the men participants in WAH! the training base was virtually non-existent and had to be 'secondarily' improvised through field trips, etc.

Tathapi's growing interest in 'male involvement' is sketched through the flow diagram on the following page. This also traces the evolving objectives of the three meeting-workshops.

Tathapi

| WAHI 1999-2000 | → | need | → | ...to integrate men |

[as part of Tathapi's 'Body Literacy' Programme]

First Meeting
March 26, 2000
Pune
Objectives

- To bring together some persons keen to work with men on 'sexuality & identity' issues
- To bridge some gaps in our understanding of 'male sexuality and identity'
- To begin moving towards a basic common perspective of work
- To document concerns and resources for sharing

Second Workshop
April 27-29, 2002
Nasik
Objectives

- To strengthen representation 'male wise' and experience wise
- To continue exchange of experiences, resources and insights, and
- To focus on 'curricula' of sexuality education, especially for boys and young men
- To clarify some commonly used terms of language and discourse

Third Workshop
Aug.9-12, 2001
Pune
Objectives

- To continue exchanging resources, experiences and insights
- To directly explore some concepts like 'power' and 'change'
- To build a basic common perspective for work with men, and linking with the women's movement.
- To raise commitment among the participants to continue the process.

First Meeting – March 2000

Tathapi called the first meeting on the theme of 'Male Sexuality and the Construction of Male Identity' even before the WAH! Programme concluded. It was arranged for only one day at the Indian Institute of Education, Pune on March 26, 2000. The twenty-seven participants (15 women and 12 men) came from a variety of fields including medicine, psychology and sexuality counselling, and community development, as well as from backgrounds of small-scale business and parenthood.

Eight major issues got special emphasis in discussion: male sexuality and construct of identity, lack of information and media's role, gender equity and attitudes, violence as power, men sharing and overcoming, male involvement in reproductive health, sexual orientations and rights, and educational and training contexts. Discussion was frank and positive, making this meeting a step towards creating a 'space' for evolving contribution of men along with women in cultivating healthy sexuality to play a rightful, joyous and sustainable part in society.

The sharing and deliberations encouraged Tathapi to agree to organise a second two-day Workshop, and Abhivyakti of Nashik offered to host it.

Second Workshop – April 2001

Organised by Tathapi and hosted by Abhivyakti Media for Development in Nashik, this two-day workshop was held at the Leslie Sawhney Centre at Deolali, 27-29 April 2001. The thirty participants (17 men and 13 women) – about half of whom had participated in the first meeting – came from several parts of Maharashtra State as well as from Tamilnadu, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Delhi. They represented diverse occupations like education, medicine, social science, film, media, counselling, social work and activism. Focus was brought onto some relevant issues, including masculinity and the possibility of diverse 'masculinities' in Indian culture, the intertwining of power and powerlessness, terms like matrilineality, patriarchy and so on. Special time was spent reviewing curricula that touch upon 'sexuality education'.

The proceedings of these two workshops are compiled in separate reports in English and in Marathi translation, available from Tathapi.

The Third Workshop – August 2001

The third gathering, a full three-day residential Workshop, was organised by the Tathapi team at the Manibhai Desai Management Training Centre (BAIF) in Pune, 9-12 August 2001, starting in the evening of the 9th and extending through the afternoon of the 12th.

The specific objectives of the Workshop were:

- To clarify some concepts like gender, power, patriarchy, sexuality, masculinities, etc.

- To develop a more holistic and inclusive perspective on gender and masculinities

- To help participants to adopt self-reflective, gender-sensitive approaches in daily life

- To seek out new strategies for intervention in the participants' working contexts

By the end of the Workshop, it was expected that…

- There would have been frank exchange of resources, experiences and insights

- A basic common perspective would have begun to evolve for work with men, linking with the women's movement.

- Commitment among the participants would have arisen to continue the process.

This time, there were 37 participants, including development workers and activists in voluntary organisations, social workers, medical doctors, academicians, researchers, media persons, all having a sustained concern with gender and sexuality issues. Most had taken part in either or both of the previous two workshops. Again, they came from Maharashtra and a few other States – Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Delhi and Uttar Pradesh. The main language used was Hindi, and the primary reporting was done in Hindi this time.

On August 9th evening by seven o'clock, around 25 participants had arrived. Within a hall in the BAIF hostel itself, everyone assembled informally. After a brief welcome by the Tathapi team, facilitators Rahul Roy and Ram Lal set in motion two ice-breaking games involving all the participants. This helped to 'mix up' and create a relaxed and friendly atmosphere for the next days. During the post-dinner session the video film *'Majma'* by Rahul Roy was screened for some participants who had not seen it at the Second Workshop in Nasik.

Day 1: Friday, August 10

In her welcome address to the participants on behalf of Tathapi (as a Trustee), Renu Khanna elaborated the rationale and design of this Workshop, the expected outcomes, and briefly reviewed the two earlier workshops. Further, Mira Sadgopal clarified that – since this was to be the last of three workshops in the current series on 'Male Sexuality and Identity' – there were two special hopes that...

...participants would not defer expressing desires or doubts for the "next" time, but would let all these out during these very days, and

...some participants, particularly the "guys", would commit to continue and help see how to get this process onto its own feet.

1: Participant Introductions

Each participant spoke of his or her background, work, concerns and expectations of the workshop. The range of experience and concerns encompassed reflections from the women's movement in India, from work linked with violence against women, experience of two 'men's groups', marriage counselling, work with HIV positive persons, academic and research issues, education of pre-teen and teenage boys and girls, sexology and sex education, the role and relevance of the media, conscious parenthood, and various personal issues some of which were linked with professional life and struggles. As this involved thoughtful sharing from more than 30 persons, once again it extended into the afternoon session. The time devoted to it helped everyone to know of each other's work as well as their personal experiences, insights and questions related to the workshop theme.

II: Some Concepts – Clarity and Complexity

Facilitators: Rahul Roy and Ram Lal

This session aimed at clarifying concepts like gender and sex, gender roles, sexual division of labour, access and control of resources, power, masculinities and others. Rahul began with free listing on two sets of paper charts for 'gender' and 'sex', and for 'man' and 'woman'. The participants offered various words and phrases that they associated with these concepts.

Man	Woman
mard strong *paalak maalak chaalak chaalaak* moustache muscles tension pants bald ego father-son poet *mukhiya* provider addict silent aggressive sensitive cynical impotent (*napunsak*) fool *parmeshwar* coward possessive protector responsible *badmash* independent dominance hero privileged warrior	*stree premika dayan mamta lajja* mother *jhagadaalu pavitra* blackmailer emotional manipulator *dost chanchal saraswati* mystery *cheez* sister intelligent nurse *saas* housewife *kanya gudia* slim crone queen *daasi bahu* pregnant boobs womb machine prostitute burden home-breaker tolerant nurturer *maya* glamorous sweetheart

Sex	Gender
Penis vagina erection emotion male/female taboos instinct AIDS! procreation relations hormones potency mystery identity 'love' desire violence jealousy demand abuse politics rape trafficking satisfaction chaste inequality normal/abnormal mask	bias bender roles justice power stereotypes change vocations heterosexuality masculine-feminine equality equity diversity support myth sensitization relation access attributes boundaries funding (!) training 'women's studies' politics transgression empowerment

In the discussion, participants saw that most of the words and phrases reflect prevalent social notions and images that influence the construction of gender of either men or women. This led to the discernment of 'empowerment' and 'disempowerment' associated with the notions, values or images linked with the words. For instance, the word sets 'protector', 'provider', 'responsible', 'independent', 'dominance', 'privileged',

'possessive' maintained notions associated with 'man', whereas the words 'mother', 'tolerant', 'nurturer', 'oppressed', 'glamorous' and 'sweetheart' held notions associated with 'woman'. To both facilitators and participants it became clear that notions and behaviours linked with gender and sex are more complex than expected, and need more serious exploring. The concept of 'man' is 'empowered' both in notion and practice, whereby conceptually 'woman' becomes 'disempowered' and 'underprivileged'.

III: The Social Construction of Sexuality

Facilitator: Manisha Gupte

In this interactive session, Manisha interwove free listing with discussion. Picking up terms generated in the preceding session, she moved towards evolving the perspective on sexuality as well as on gender and patriarchy. Through a group process she was able to elucidate the social controls over sexuality and their impacts on male sexuality, and suggest the possibility of reconstructing male sexuality.

Inviting participants' associations on 'good' (or acceptable) and 'bad' (or unacceptable) sexuality, the consensus emerged that expression of sexuality involving honesty, mutual consent, equal responsibility, transparency and so on is OK, while violence, irresponsibility, compulsory heterosexuality, using force, pornography and so on is not. (The session chart is replicated on the next page.) It was generally concluded that there are certain 'non-negotiable' and 'negotiable' principles that should guide sexual behaviour. People *should* adopt a set of basic sexual ethics, taking a stand against rape and child abuse, for example, and for equality, dignity and responsibility in mutual relationships.

It is just as important to comprehend the complexity of possible power relations that mould how sexuality is both expressed and experienced by men and by women. Manisha cautioned that 'acceptable' and 'unacceptable' sexuality are not absolute concepts. They are, to a large extent, relative to and dependent on the social, political and economic structures within society. Sometimes these labels can stigmatise people who may then be unjustly victimised. We have to be careful in seeing that we don't become moralistic or judgmental about people's sexual choices and behaviour.

Sexuality is acceptable when it is...	Sexuality is unacceptable when it is...
• based on mutual consent and involve equal responsibility	• violent or forced (~ power)
• transparent, honest and not exploitative	• irresponsible
	• dishonest or deceptive
• (preferably) with one person	• pornographic
• if sexual fantasy is involved, shared with partner	• compulsorily heterosexual
• open to celibacy.	• compulsorily monogamous.

The words 'gentleness' *(komalta)* and 'inconsistency' *(chanchalta)* drew special attention. Initially, some felt these terms are associated with women, but as discussion progressed societal norms and values were identified that make them 'women specific'. Far from operating in isolation we carry forward predetermined perceptions that attach specific values within our language. Vinay pointed out that men can also be gentle and romantic (in the sense of being inconsistent). Rahul felt these are common human traits with nothing in them that is either 'women or men specific'. Society does condition men to be aggressive and violent in sexual relations. Women are supposed to be 'asexual' even in their married lives, Manisha pointed out.

'Fantasising' evoked intense discussion. The main question was whether indulging in sexual fantasies without the other person's knowing is good or bad, or under what conditions is it acceptable or not. Participants identified types of fantasies, such as those based on real experiences, subversive fantasies, perverted fantasies and pleasurable fantasies. Some believed that pleasurable fantasies are acceptable and could even lead to healthy sexual behaviour. This acceptability is operable at individual level without any real problem, but in an intimate relationship with another, fantasising requires adherence to mutual honesty and ethics. Differences on this issue led deeper into the domains of honesty, personal ethics and socially ascribed morality. It was commonly felt that honesty and ethics is important in an intimate relationship for a responsible and mutually enjoyable sexual life.

Discussion on sexual ethics led to probing the social controls that guide sexual behaviour. Socio-politico-economic and cultural factors including religion, marriage and family, caste and class, law and governance come

into play. Patriarchy figures prominently, and tied to it, the right to property especially to land is crucial. It is not only a feminist but also a human rights issue. The inequity affects sexual behaviour due to contributing to the inherent power tilt in favour of men within patriarchy. The group considered the matrilineality that still exists in some parts (Kerala and North East) and how it has been transformed into a patriarchal structure. While property is transferred to the youngest daughter, she is traditionally married to her maternal uncle to keep the property 'within one house'. If a woman is unmarried, the brother becomes the manager of his sister's property. This kind of manipulation weakens a matrilineal structure and sometimes makes it ineffective, particularly in terms of right to property.

All agreed on the grave need for structural social changes to make human dignity, equality and responsibility the basis of all relationships. Space and opportunity needs to be provided for all to renegotiate power relations, even and especially in the economical sphere. Creation of space in society for sexual minorities such as gay, lesbian and transgender people is needed, too. Healthy expression of sexuality in both sexes needs to be encouraged, for women cannot achieve liberation unless and until men are liberated, and vice versa.

Social Controls on Sexuality →	Impact on Male Sexuality →	Reconstructing Male Sexuality
Economic Status Religion, Law, Politics Morality (judgmental) Family, Marriage (institution) Class Status, Caste System Gender & Male Domination Personal Condition, Power Education, or Lack of It Commercial or 'bought' sex Values, Taboos (incest, etc.) Lack of space for Talking Lack of space for discovery Media & Censorship Myths and Prejudices Body Image, Age (man/woman) Homophobia/Transphobia Pregnancy (acceptable/not) Diseases	Aggression, Violence Pressures, Tension, Anxiety Instability, Insecurity Ego inflation Attempt to take control Addiction Risk-taking Rape Irresponsibility Fear of rejection Denial of weakness, vulnerability Inability to express Vulnerable emotions Inhibitions Performance anxiety (including towards sexuality) False Body Image Fixed roles	Become conscious of social pressures – aggression, power, violence, vulnerability See need for structural change. Adopt basic sexual ethics. Equality, dignity, responsibility as basis of all relations, from economic to sexual. Understand negative aspects of present male sexuality, that change is for male liberation. Give space and opportunity for all. Re-negotiate the power relations in our lives (ownership of home, land, etc.) ...Etc. etc.

IV: The Biological Aspects of Sexuality

Slide Presentation: Dr. Vithal Prabhu

Dr. Prabhu elaborated on the biological differences between male and female and need for sexuality education in schools, colleges and universities. He argued that sexuality education would tremendously help in encouraging healthy interpersonal and sexual relationships and pave the way for matured association between the two sexes leading towards gender equality. He presented a list of twelve aims and benefits of sexuality education, which are as follows:

- Positive attitude towards sexuality and relationship
- Freedom from sexual inhibitions
- Freedom from STD / AIDS / other sex-related diseases
- Freedom from fear, guilt and shame
- Avoidance of unmarried motherhood
- Awareness about sexual abuse and rape
- Freedom from sexual dysfunction
- Responsible and planned parenthood
- Population control
- Freedom from myths and misconceptions
- Freedom from quackery, and
- Happy family life.

Dr. Prabhu told of how, when he started practising sexology some twenty years back in Mumbai, things were completely different than they are today. Society was not at all open to such issues and people were not frank in sharing sex-related problems. Lacking confidence himself during those days, he used to keep two kinds of visiting cards: one as a general medical practitioner and the other as a sexologist. It was pragmatic to avoid inconvenience and controversy on both sides.

Of late, things have changed drastically. Now people come and consult him very vocally and openly. Among his clients numerous young people come seeking advice for methods of gaining sexual pleasure and to avoid

unwanted pregnancies and sexual diseases. Only one of the factors in this change, although a very important one, is the appearance of HIV infection over the last decade. With increased awareness on all these subjects, there has arisen a general recognition and acceptability of sexology as an established professional stream.

Dr. Prabhu stressed the continuing importance of appropriate 'sexuality education' (including the social aspects) at all ages, stating that,

"It can never be too early, but only too late!"

He felt that now the most urgent need is in colleges and universities. This presentation sparked off intense discussion that continued even after dinner, up until midnight.

Day 2: Saturday, August 11

I: Panel Discussion on 'Masculinities'

Anchor: Rahul Roy
Panelists: Lester Coutinho, Mukund S.N.,
                  Sandeep Suryavanshi, Mangesh Kulkarni

At the outset of this session, Rahul posed two questions:

Is the experience of masculinity just one of power?

How will the politics of "masculinities" differ from feminism?

He said that the objective was to critically explore concepts associated with 'masculinity'. Mentioning the previous day's activities, he pointed towards several layers of meaning. In fact, there are numerous 'masculinities', and these differing male identities vary with influences of caste, class, culture, region, age and so on. Before seeking to arrive at a common understanding, one would have to probe deeper into all aspects. With this brief introductory remark, he invited each panelist to make his presentation. The four panelists addressed aspects of 'masculinity' from their personal life and work experience.

Plurality of Masculinity: Gujarat Experience

Lester Coutinho

Lester spoke from his background as a young Jesuit and anthropology researcher in rural southwestern Gujarat in the early '90s. There, he had encountered a 'fluidity' of sexuality among males, and saw that male desire and pleasure were not constrained by the politics of sexual identity. Sexual desire outside the context of marriage, he observed, was articulated not only through fantasising about women's bodies, but also through practices of visiting either women sex workers or *hijras* (male transexuals) in the nearby city. Deriving from evidences gathered during his rural fieldwork, Lester explained that masculinity encompasses power structures prevalent in our society, especially in the caste-ridden social structure. It often reflects 'vertical emulation' by the lower castes, which in this context he called *'Rajputisation'*. Lower caste men desire to imitate upper caste men – their notions, practices and behavioural traits – in expression of 'maleness'. Women from the lower castes also want their men to behave that way, and so they become an integral part of men realising their ideas of masculinity.

He felt 'domestic violence' was an insufficient framework for the study of 'violence against women'. He wondered about the study and scope of such violence in public places. He suggested that expansion of the framework should include both the public and private domains. This expansion would naturally lead to the study of prevalent notions of masculinities.

Highlighting the significant contribution made by the feminist movement in India, Lester pointed out that it has helped us to break down the divide between 'personal' and 'public' by recognising that 'personal is political'. This kind of theoretical understanding underlines the need for expansion of framework for the study of masculinities, and would certainly help to reach important insights. In the current field of 'masculinities' research, he noted a poverty of cross-cultural concepts and language. Further, the subjectivity of social researchers involved in 'men's studies' research needs to be explored.

In summary, Lester noted a plurality of masculinities that lacks a monolithic structure and is formed through various processes guided by socio-economic, political and cultural factors.

A Cross-Cultural Historical View

Sandip Suryavanshi

A computer professional, Sandip spoke from more than a decade's involvement with Pune's *Purush Uvach* group. Basing his presentation on historical references from both western and Indian sources, he began by stating that the modern analytical discourse on 'masculinity' is indebted to but not confined within feminist discourse.

While there were men who supported the feminist movement in the 1960s and '70s, since the '80s, men have started to form separate groupings. Some of these initiatives have created positive spaces for men who appreciate and grasp the compatible feminist values, but other groupings have come about as part of a backlash to feminism. Some trends have elements of both, such as the 'mytho-poetic' cult in the west. Today in western India, examples of positive group formations are *Purush Uvach* of Pune and MAVA (Men Against Violence and Abuse) of Mumbai, whereas in organisations like Nashik's *Purush Sanrakshan Sangharsha Samiti* ('committee to fight for the protection of men') the backlash is evident.

Within the structure of feminist thought there is a unique place for inward-looking analysis that also throws light on how male identity is constructed. In addition, the Gay-Lesbian movement has contributed, especially in challenging what is natural and not natural and in positing the fluidity of sexual roles.

Sandip identified two types of masculinity in European literature:

1. Warrior Masculinity (in the context of the First World War): This required a strong physical body to wreak violence against enemies and also the capacity to bear maximum pain or torture while glorifying the cause of 'nationalism'.

2. Aggressive Masculinity (in daily life): This is an offshoot of the first – the construction of an 'extra violent' masculinity that does not depend on the need for aggression against enemies during war, but displays general aggressiveness as part of prevalent social behaviour of men.

Coming to Indian and particularly Hindu notions of masculinity, Sandip elaborated on Swami Vivekanand's view of purity of a man's body, where denial of sexual desire was seen as important for focusing on and winning the Nationalist cause in the first half of the twentieth century. Attacking the

masculinity of colonised peoples was part of British colonial tactics. As part of this, the British contrasted their own heroic self-image with 'effeminate Bengali' natives. Vivekanand's response was to project a spiritual Indian (Hindu) masculinity as against the materialist male posturing from the West.

At present, in the name of *'Hindutva'* we are seeing an attempt at globalisation of nationalism linked with masculinity. The male body needs to be made strong and powerful for protection of *Bharat Mata* (Mother India) symbolising the Nation. Sandip compared this with the glorification of ideal maleness during the war times in the Western nations.

Masculinity and Power

Mukund S N

Mukund presented his own personal experiences related to the changing perceptions, notions and practices of masculinities. Also, he spoke from his background as a member of *Purush Uvach*. He runs a small-scale manufacturing business.

He began by stating his conviction that 'masculinity' as a constructed notion has immense fluidity and elaborated that it is influenced by contemporary power structures, gender relations, performance and distribution of resources. Cultural norms are very important in any society that determines specific roles for both men and women. The contemporary feminist movement has questioned pre-determined gender roles, created an atmosphere for redefining them and also challenged the traditional concept of masculinity. He said,

"The impact of the feminist movement has highlighted the hollowness of the conventional notion of masculinity. Whenever there is a discussion on gender, it is generally understood as 'women's issue'. It is true that traditional gender roles have ascribed a weak position to women and made men powerful. In addition, the increasingly consumerist approach in our society adversely affects man-woman relations. Hence, it is urgently required to redefine femininity and masculinity in the public mind."

Mukund identified some 'masculine models' among men like...

- Gandhiji (who is seen as a reformer-preacher),
- Rama (who is seen as an 'Ideal Man' among Hindus),
- Shahrukh Khan (film star, who idealises overcoming fear, as in the film *Darr*), and
- Amitabh Bacchan (film star, seen as a 'complete man' playing varying roles).

In each of these men masculinity is not a 'thing' but consists of notions and counter-notions displayed time and again. In the same way, Bal Thackeray's tiger symbol, his gestures, language all posit a particular notion of sexual masculinity to manipulate the people. Gentleness (*komalta*) he considered as a 'humane value' rather than merely a 'gender-specific' attribute associated largely with women. He gave the example of Sane Guruji as 'a gentle man' whose soft nature was not regarded as a weakness but rather as a strong humane 'quality' of his. Thus, it is important to redefine the whole gamut of possible manifestations of masculinity.

Accordingly, the prevalent notion of 'beauty' or handsomeness in men relates with a man's muscle power and strong body build, whereas beauty in women relates with gentleness and softness. This traditional sense of beauty glorifies men's powerfulness and women's relative helplessness. It is clubbed with the notion of sexual purity in women, an in-built component of traditional beauty that makes women weak and helpless even in self-defence and men powerful, expected to protect women everywhere. This mindset helps men to maintain their control over women.

To make it explicit how deeply masculinity is associated with power, Mukund gave some examples from daily life. When a housemaid attends a telephone call from her employer, she may habitually cover her head with her *'pallu'*, even though the man is not physically present. When a married woman comes to stay at her mother's house, she may hesitate to go outside and keep waiting for a call from her husband. This is out of the fear that, if he calls and she doesn't personally attend the telephone, he may misunderstand. Further, he referred to the story of a Marathi play *'Kamlabai'* where a journalist purchased a woman to uncover the flesh trade. This act earns him credit and fame as a socially conscious journalist. But one must not forget that he was able to purchase the woman because he was a man. These are indirect manifestations of powerfulness of masculinity, linked with male-dominated social structures and economic relations.

Mukund hoped that sensitive men would learn and change through this discourse and would work together and with women to establish a society that cherishes equality, liberty and healthy relationships. He appealed for self-introspection by men who are sensitive towards the problems of men and women. The question is one of spiritual enrichment, yet of facing a deep sense of personal emptiness. Why do we men need equality? It gives us a feeling of creativity, freshness... the possibility of better relations. But it takes working hard with one's own inner power. In this light, Mukund briefly spoke of the activities of the men's group called *'Purush Uvach'*, which questions the traditional notion of masculinity and works for gender-equity and equal relationships among men and women.

Fluid Masculinity: Appeal for 'Men's Studies'

Mangesh Kulkarni

A faculty member in Political Science in SNDT Women's University in Mumbai, Mangesh spoke from his personal and academic concern with feminism and masculinities, giving credit to feminist scholars for opening up the area of 'gender' studies. He distinguished between two perspectives on gender, namely...

- the view of gender as 'performance'
- the view of 'eco-feminism'.

The former view posits gender as socially 'constructed' and therefore changeable, making masculinity and femininity mutually accessible. On the other hand, eco-feminists tend to see and stress essential differences in the nature of women and of men, and these are not easy for men to cross, he asserted.

Mangesh criticized the tendency to view gender relations as either totally monolithic or completely fluid. He pointed out that masculinity and femininity could be mutually available in some instances. He quoted from the book *'Maazha Pravaas'* ['My Journey'] by Vishnubhat Godse that mentions *Jhansi ki Rani* acting like a man, whereas her husband behaved effeminately. But the sexed body creates constraints that cannot be ignored. Gandhi, for example, had with considerable success imbibed and enacted certain aspects of femininity. Yet, in conducting his controversial

experiment of sleeping with young girls, Gandhi had sought to test his self-restraint through the strategic deployment of his masculinity.

Working in an institution dominated by women had made him more reflexive about his masculine role and identity, Mangesh said. This was one of the factors that had triggered his interest in 'men's studies'. He felt it was unfortunate that in certain feminist quarters there was a reaction against 'men's studies'.

"Why do some feminists view 'men's studies' with doubt? Why do they not accommodate it within the larger gender studies agenda?"

Speaking up for a nuanced understanding of masculinity and of 'many interacting masculinities', he suggested that men's studies could help us to develop a healthy discourse on gender and sexuality.

Discussion on the Four Presentations

From all the four presentations it was evident that masculinity is not a monolithic construct, but rather has the nature of plurality. Pradeep noted that primarily there are two kinds of masculinities - 'hegemonic' (using power to control) masculinity and 'subordinated' masculinity. With reference to Sandip's presentation on Vivekananda's concept, he asserted that one must interpret it amidst the contemporary socio-political developments taking place in our country now. Clubbing masculinity with Hindu nationalism renders it chauvinistic, and correspondingly Vivekananda's notion becomes masochistic. Interpreting like this leads masculinity towards strengthening patriarchy, male domination and inequitable power relations. He pointed to numerous other manifestations in world history. The Greeks had a completely different notion of masculinity, and the European Renaissance not only re-interpreted the concept of Man but also re-invented the qualities and capacities of Man. Hence, one needs to view interpretations from literature with utmost care, keeping in mind the complex, fluid and plural nature of masculinity.

It was impossible not to enter the domain of sentiments. There was an appeal that no one should 'insult and attack' those sentiments which are culturally upheld by either the majority or the minority of people. This view sparked off a controversial debate on sentiments while interpreting the concept of masculinity. Abhay Kanta said Vivekananda's definition of

masculinity excludes Muslims and advocates a particular kind of Hindu masculinity with nationalism.

Objecting to these remarks, Prasad expressed his acute reservations. He asserted that learned sages (*Rishis* and *Munis*) have led Hindu society since ages. He felt it wouldn't be proper to question their integrity and, if it happens so, it would amount to "insulting and hurting sentiments of the community". He also objected to criticism of the notion of 'Mother India' (*Bharat Mata*) with reference to masculinity. He considered this notion 'unchallengable and unquestionable' and said,

"There is no question of gender in this notion: Mother is Mother – she is neither married, unmarried nor widow! At the same time, she is neither heterosexual nor homosexual. We must respect her pious sacred nature and should not speak against Hindu philosophy while discussing the concept of masculinity."

This view further energised the discussion on sentiments! Lala Jadhav said he felt that easily hurt feelings reflect the politicisation of religion, which threatens harmonious social existence. Satish affirmed that, here at least, the hurting of sentiments is not intentional at all. In fact, involving sentiments is an integral part of healthy mutual discussion. Mangesh felt that excessive sentimentality needed to be avoided in intellectual discourse. Intervening, Mira acknowledged the importance of respecting dissent but also highlighted the need for encouraging frank exchanges to reach mutual understanding. Nitin requested "respect for subjective feelings". In this way, the issue of sentiments received focus, with an amicable resolution of the tension that suddenly arose.

Recapping, Rahul summed up that masculinity involves complex processes combining plurality, contextual fluidity, gender structuring and power dynamics. Both men and women have sets of privileges and disprivileges, which empower or disempower either gender, but the balance is definitely tilted in favour of men and against women.

II: Exploring Power through a Game

Facilitators: Rahul Roy and Ram Lal

In this workshop, two simple exercises were conducted to facilitate a practical exploration of 'power' in human relations. Props like a table and a chair were used. The first game (below) focused on power as reflected in comfort levels, and the second (played the next day with a chair) looked at power relations through linkage of structure and associations.

Sitting on an Edge

Groups of participants were asked to sit together in a limited space on the edge of a table. While the group members sat in the provided space, the others observed them closely, particularly their body movements, facial gestures and comfort level. Then, the observers reported what they had noticed and the ones sitting revealed what they had felt during the game. Discussion brought out a taste of the subtle politics in our subconscious gestures and stances in our relations with others in daily life. Some of the specific feelings revealed by the participants were:

- *I felt odd, and was surprised to hear someone say he perceived me as powerful. (Mira)*

- *I was tense, and being a man I was conscious of sitting among women. (Pradeep)*

- *I tried to create space for myself as well as for others. (Satish)*

- *I didn't want to have women sitting on both sides of me. (Vithal Prabhu)*

- *Mira pulled me onto her lap, I relaxed and there were no boundaries. (Rupali)*

- *Nothing specific – I was comfortable and enjoyed it. (Audrey)*

- *I was not feeling comfortable. There were so many people in such a small space. (Praveena)*

- *There was no space on the stage, so I didn't try for it. I sat on the ground – it hardly matters. (Lala Jadhav)*

The game demonstrated the multi-dimensional nature of power that varies between one's experiences and with one's location and identity in society. Power...

...does not remain constant; its fluid nature also makes it relative.

...is actual and perceptual, visible and invisible, tangible and intangible.

...dominates and subordinates individuals and sectors in society

...it affects the whole texture of our lives.

In order to find effective and sustainable ways of working towards an equitable social order, the concept 'power' needs a careful and critical analysis.

III: Exploring Power through Groupwork

Four groups of six to seven persons each were formed, each with a moderator, to intensively discuss the issue of power among the members. To evoke focused individual experience, the groups were given a set of questions for personal exploration:

1. What have you wanted to do in your life, but could not achieve?

2. What have you achieved in your life despite obstacles?

3. When and how have you ever hurt another person?

4. When and how have you been hurt by someone?

5. From these reflections, can you conceptualise or define 'power'?

For presentation, each group was to sum up by attributing each member's experiences under one of five categories of influences (sexuality, caste or class, physical or emotional, family or social, age or experience, and gender role).

The exercise took longer than planned, and the presentation had to be kept on the next day in the morning.

(Move to Day 3, Session II on page 30 for the details of presentation.)

IV: Panel on 'Feminism, and Work with Men'

Anchors: Pradeep Sharma, Harish Sadani

Panellists: Jaya Velankar, Satish Kumar, Nirmala Sathe, Mukund S N

This panel brought together four activists – two men and two women – to explore possibilities of working together on issues of common concern. The two women panelists, Jaya and Nirmala, had long experience in the feminist and women's health movements. Mukund (also in the earlier panel on Masculinities) is Editor of the magazine *Purush Spandan* brought out by two men's groups, *Purush Uvach* of Pune and Men Against Violence and Abuse (MAVA)of Mumbai). Satish has a background of both the Gandhian socialist movement and involvement as a supporter of the Women's Movement in North India, and now is a member of the Kriti Resource Centre in Lucknow.

Feminism, Patriarchy and Need for Men

Jaya Velankar

In her powerful presentation, Jaya asserted that, barring radical feminism, none of the feminist streams has ever blamed 'men' in themselves and refused to work with them. She categorically elaborated that it is the patriarchal social structure that has been challenged and that must be demolished. Patriarchy is not a monolithic structure from top to bottom but has a very complicated nature affecting the institutions of family, education and the judicial system, as well as society's expectations about sexuality and it's related myths and misconceptions. The caste system in India makes it more complex, she found. This kind of social structure impacts each and every aspect of our life and needs structural changes to reach gender equity. While 'gender neutrality' becomes an ideal, it is also a contentious area that needs to be grasped comprehensively.

Pointing to differing views on patriarchy, Jaya said that none of these views can deny its essentially exploitative nature that makes women its first victim. Looking in the direction of structural change, the women's movement does require introspection to facilitate an effective attack on patriarchy. While many women's organisations emerged from the other movements when they realised that priority needed to be given to the

women's issues, it still remains to pin down the issue of second rate status assigned to women working in political parties and organisations.

Moving on to the question of working with men, Jaya made it very clear that the first priority of women's movement is to work with women so that they can fight independently against exploitation. In no way does this mean that it is against all men. But it is also true that men are placed at an advantageous point just by virtue of being men. When men do come forward, it is important to properly understand whether they are "genuine supporters of women's movement". Jaya found that the feminist movement had always welcomed "progressive men supporters". At the same time, however, "It is not the work of the feminist movement to reach men. This is the work of progressive men. When they decide to do this we can have a better friendship with them." She identified the following areas to work in common with men:

- ♦ Opposing oppressive structures
- ♦ Sharing of household work
- ♦ Responsible sexual behaviour
- ♦ Use of contraception and information dissemination
- ♦ Opposing population control
- ♦ Stopping violence against women, and
- ♦ Opposing commodification and dehumanisation of women.

Sensitisation of Men

Satish Kumar Singh

Satish considered that it is the positive impact of the feminist movement that brings us together to discuss so frankly on the issue of sexuality and male identity. While realising the importance of making men sensitive towards gender equity, he found this aim very difficult to materialise. He illustrated this with a Delhi Government Order that asked for conducting a 'Gender Sensitisation' Programme for schoolteachers. When this programme took place, only 20% men as against 80% women teachers participated. Then whose sensitisation happened? Male teachers, Satish noted, did not consider it important and opted not to attend.

Therefore, we have to change the very socialisation process through which men are brought up and conditioned. Men have to be brought to introspect so that they can identify problems and work for changing mindsets. Furthermore, Satish stressed the great urgency to work together with women for overall development and to challenge patriarchal structures. At the same time, feminists should also not generalise the instances where men are oppressive. There is need to decide on common areas of concern and mobilise on common grounds.

Satish also highlighted the problem of co-ordination between the women's movement with various other social movements, like the Dalit and Labour movements. Sometimes, it is blamed that the women's movement is weakening these social movements or vice versa. Activists of the women's movement argue that other social movements are not keeping women's issues on their priority list, whereas advocates of other social movements consider women's movements divisive. But it is not true, especially with women's movements. Satish pointed out that women's movements do not get proper solidarity from the other movements and this has to change.

Analysing the nature of exploitation within the family institution and interpersonal relationships, Satish pointed to the special privileges enjoyed by men. Men have a prerogative of whether to do household work or not, while women are "destined to do this work". Men can also doubt women's loyalties (especially sexual loyalty), but women have to consider their men as "infallible". This systemic institutionalisation has tilted gender relations in favour of men and Satish strongly argued for its change. He found that land rights, gender justice and mutually responsible sexual behaviour are important issues that could be identified for working together.

The Struggle for Women's Empowerment

Nirmala Sathe

Nirmala also argued that fighting against patriarchy is the combined responsibility of men and women. Women started the struggle, but if pro-feminist men are also thinking along these lines, they should come forward and share their vision with women. Certainly there can be common areas of work in fighting various oppressions that would lead to the empowerment of women and all other marginalised people.

Sharing her personal experiences, Nirmala said that she had not started her activism as a 'ready-made feminist', but it had evolved in the course of time. She used to work with Dalits and Tribals and she found that women's issues were not being addressed there. Women were without decision-making powers. Even on the issue of rape, men were the decision-makers. These experiences led women to start independent women's organisations. The 'autonomous women's movement' dates from 1975 onwards.

The course of the women's movement, Nirmala pointed out, has "forced men to think on these issues, and now many of them have started changing themselves." Thirty-three percent reservation of seats to women in local self-governing bodies (Panchayats) was possible due to the long and consistent struggle for political empowerment waged by the women's movement. Even this was initially opposed by some of the men, who asked questions like, *"Who will make the chapaatis?* (who would do household work now). But with the successful local self-governance by women throughout the country, they have proved apprehensions – particularly about their leadership capabilities – baseless.

A frank exchange of ideas and experiences with pro-feminist men is immediately required to identify common grounds for working together. This kind of sincere effort would lead us to evolve a feasible common programme. Endeavours towards further political empowerment of women and other marginalised groups should also be vigorously and effectively implemented so that these could lead to maximum participation and subsequently for structural changes.

Need for Changing Men's Mindsets

Mukund S N

Stressing the need to challenge subordination in all walks of life, both private and public, Mukund focused on the redefining of power relations between men and women. He said that his men friends in the *Purush Uvach* group have travelled a long journey in the direction of gender equity, but they still find it very difficult to clearly chalk out their priorities.

"As a group of sensitive men, we attempted to point out and address the historical mistakes committed through patriarchy and male-domination."

But these efforts proved ineffective in challenging prevalent social mindsets. Men are unwilling to question the privileges they have been enjoying for centuries. They are not ready to give space to the women' movement and its issues.

It is important to recognise the diversity within the women's movement and among women's organisations. A few organisations working for women's rights do incorporate men in their membership. Even in these situations it is difficult for men to leave their mindset of privileged position. Yet, he insisted that working together with women and positive association with the women's movement is needed for men to develop their vision of a gender equitable society. Men have to change their mindsets, their role models and their approach.

Discussion

Beginning with questions, a lively discussion ensued. Nirmala, replying to Rahul about whether when she identifies with a Dalit woman, said she did, in fact. Although there are different levels of victimisation and privileges for women of different castes, still all women are victims of patriarchy. For example, a widow of any caste cannot appear before the Shankaracharya. Vithal Prabhu asked about it making a difference if women go for political governance. Affirming the importance of political empowerment itself, Nirmala also stressed the methods and usage of power. To make a difference in that, there is need for structural changes. She expected this to happen with increased level of political participation of women and their success.

Jaya emphasised the importance of women's progress towards political empowerment. In this light, she said it is not possible for the women's movement to halt its efforts and start working among men. Women's issues are of prime importance to address, particularly when other social movements are not paying attention to them. She also appealed for...

"...a human liberation movement that may have different fields, problems and solutions but has one combined goal – equality, democracy, sustainable development and a social system free of exploitation."

Responding to Shirish's question about 'gender neutrality' being possible in our society, Jaya said it is not fair to talk about this unless and until there is equality between both the sexes. Reflecting on the need to

struggle jointly against exploitation and inequality, Ram Lal felt this is crucial to move towards a humane way of life.

Towards the end, Harish Sadani brought up the paper entitled 'Men's Issue vis-à-vis Women's Movement' by Ravindra R P of Mumbai. Provided to the participants earlier, the paper appeals for self-critique and raises the following issues, which "are applicable to all progressive movements in India – whether related to caste, class or gender":

- Are empowerment of the oppressed and sensitisation of the powerful mutually exclusive agendas?

- Does a person of the 'oppressor' class, caste, or gender have a role in struggle? What type of role might she or he have?

- In societies where caste/class/gender and other forms of dominance overlap, how does one define one's own identity? Can it transcend these social constructions?

- What do these movements aim at – replacement of the ruling section or fundamental restructuring? If replacement is not the aim, why do we internalise the values we oppose the most?

- Can't these movements see their own contradictions and confusion, which are quite apparent even to outsiders?

- Why have all progressive movements stagnated or neutralised and fragmented, while patriarchy, capitalism and brahmanism grow, join hands and grow further?

- Is there something fundamentally lacking in our approach? Is our movement really democratic, providing each person one's own pace and space to grow?

- How strong are bonds of comradeship/sisterhood? Do we consider our colleagues partners or rivals?

Harish shared some responses received from various sources including over the Internet.

The participants also responded to this paper. Rahul felt it is confusing and did not convey a clear message or take a stand. He also felt there is a tone of complaint in the paper to which he objected. Manimala said she found it difficult to grasp the purpose of this paper and considered it pessimistic. In this context when Sandip said he feared for the very sustainability of the feminist movement, Chatura rallied with her view that

the women's movement has given direction to several other movements in the country. The lesbians' movement is one example, which even lends support and solidarity to the gay men's movement. It is wrong and irrelevant to raise doubts about the continuity of women's movement, she asserted. Rather some sort of unity is essential to aggregate all progressive movements toward gender equality.

In summing up, Pradeep underscored the need for change of mindsets by men. The issue of sexual exploitation in terms of molestation and rape should be viewed in a holistic way, more than in just a technical or legal manner. Its effects on victims' lives are immense – it changes a woman's entire world. It is the first responsibility of men to get sensitised to these issues so as to check this menace. Yet, it is equally urgent to jointly work with women for deeper structural changes in our system to ensure equality and freedom. Hence, sensitisation and democratisation of men is very important to develop a healthy social and personal relationship cherishing dignity for human life, humane values and mutual self-respect.

V: Masculinity and Violence: a Study

Presentation by Pradeep Sharma

Through transparencies, Pradeep presented some findings from a research project currently undertaken by him with the Naz Foundation (India) Trust in Delhi, focusing on sexuality, identity and community-building among a participant population of male homosexuals. It touched upon the constituents of sexuality in a particular socio-cultural domain, and whether there can be some common cardinal component that informs one's notion of sexuality across sites. During this session, Pradeep also summed up the previous night's post-dinner discussion on homosexuality (reported on page 11).

The presentation was based on findings from 36 interviews conducted among male homosexuals in Delhi that investigated their notions of man, woman, sex, sexuality and identity. From his review of literature on sexuality, Pradeep had found four major constituents that comprise the concept:

A. Sexual orientation, behaviour and act

B. Gender construction, structure and relations

C. Adherence to cultural and social norms

D. Desire (not urge) for pleasure (not always sexual pleasure)

The prevalence of these constituents makes sexuality delicate and sensitive to explore. Utmost care is needed while interpreting it, particularly when adapting to the practice of homosexuality, whether among men or women.

Elaborating on his study, Pradeep told about the community of MSM (a term for 'men having sex with men') in Delhi city. Broadly, it falls into three sub-categories:

- *Koti* (of feminine construction and effeminate nature, who plays a 'passive' role during sex).

- *Giriya* (seen as a 'real man' by *Koti*, who performs an 'active' role during sex as a sexual partner of *Kotis*), and

- Gay (a political identity – the person rejects 'male' or 'female' stereotyping and chooses an independent gender position).

Homosexuality is practiced in a secretive and discreet manner. Only a small section of the community is used to meeting often. The *Koti* community has its own language called *'Phaarasi'* – a colloquial mixture of Urdu, Hindi and Persian. This group faces a lot of violence, both self-inflicted and perpetrated by *Giriyas*, the police and others.

Among the MSM Community, the notion of 'masculinity' as applied to *Giriyas* is largely guided by the contemporary norms ascribed by culture and society. Masculinity needs to be proved, defended and protected and in this sense, it sometimes leads to violence.

Day 3: Sunday, 12 August

I: Exploring Power through a Game (II)

Facilitator: Ram Lal

The day started with the second game to explore 'power'. Through it, an attempt was made to define power, a power-holder (boss) and subordination. Symbolically, a chair was used to evoke definitional perspectives. The responses could be categoried in two sets, as follows:

Structural Features of Chair	Associational Attributes
It is a material thing (vastu).	It is powerful (taakatwar).
It is made of wood or metal.	It is comfortable.
It is strong (mazboot).	It is not meant for everybody.
It has a cushion.	In it one is made a fool.
It has an arm and backrest.	It can break/will break.

To these responses, Ram Lal added that the chair signifies someone's labour and the wood brought out of the forest. When wood is used to make a chair, it may contribute to impoverishing the tribals who survive on the jungle. This exercise led to discussing the different dimensions related to power and subordination.

From the exercise, the participants could see that there are numerous perspectives towards an understanding of the concept of power, which make it relative. All of us do not view power in only one way. It varies from person to person, and one's comprehension and location in society. Certain hidden or indirect factors shape our understanding. It is important to identify and analyse all these various factors while striving for a common understanding of power.

II: Group Presentations on 'Power'

Four Groups (from the previous day)

The first session progressed into the group-work presentations that had spilled over from the day before (see page 20). Each group conveyed to the others the crux of their discussion, as summarised below.

'Power' Group 1

Members	Issues that came up in the Group
Gokul Rahul Mani Satish Vrunda Gurudas Lala Nirmala	*Sexual abuse – not being able to speak out against it* *Failure to reach desired profession* *Exploitation by employer* *Profound effect on life from sexual demands by men* *Economic pressure to support one's family* *Pressure of social traditions* *Peer group pressure and social isolation* *Forcing sister to learn* *Imposing decisions on wife*
Definition of Power:	*Power is the control of a person over any other person's behaviour, decision and action.*

Power' Group 2

| Members	Issues that Came up in the Group
Ram Lal Mangesh A G Sathe Shanta Audrey V Prabhu	*Caste constraints* *Social pressure to marry* *Opposition by boss* *Pressure of friends* *Restrictions on movement* *Privileged position*
Definition:	*Power is the ability to control others.*

'Power' Group 3

Members	Issues that Came up in the Group
Pradeep Dinesh Prasad Pravina Renu Nitin Rupali	*Urban-rural disparity* *Pressure for marriage* *Pressure from elders* *Joint family pressure* *Pressure of corruption (in profession)* *Failure to really benefit others*
Definition of Power:	*Power is control over financial and non-financial resources. It is perpetuated through state, law, religion, family, caste and class institutions.*

'Power' Group 4

Members	Issues that Came up in the Group
Lester Mukund Harish Mira Shirish Chatura	<u>*Ascribed Dimensions of Power:*</u> *Sex, Caste, Class, Gender, Family,* *Religious Order, Law, Sexuality* <u>*Achieved Dimensions of Power:*</u> *Relationships, Education, Employment,* *Research Authorship, Elected Position*
Definition of Power:	*Power derives from the status of a person or a group, either ascribed or achieved. It operates in a matrix of control and empowerment of both self and others.*

Group 4 diagrammed their concept of power dynamics (see next page). This showed that power deriving from both ascribed and achieved status has to be maintained by efforts through playing roles. Sometimes individuals or groups *resist* conformity with a certain status norms, for example, professional women resisting 'male' working standards, or gays and lesbians resisting heterosexual norms. Or they may *meet with resistance*, such as social discrimination against persons of a minority community. Resistance makes them vulnerable.
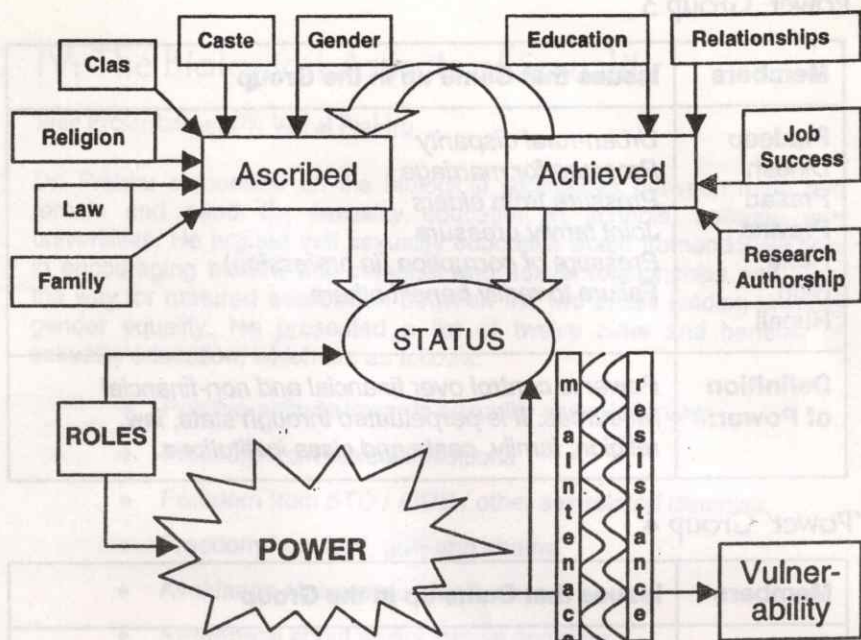
After all the four groups' presentations, Rahul summed up that 'power' – either ascribed or achieved' – is multi-dimensional, authoritative, hierarchical, institutionalised and may be invisible. It is usually both hegemonic (dominating) and suppressive. It manifests through various ways and perpetuates its hegemony through a complex network of patriarchy, state and social values. He further reasoned that there is a dialectical relationship between individual and institutions.

The trenchant factors in the prevailing concept of power are oppression, subordination and deprivation. Serious deliberation, strategy and commitment are needed to challenge them. Movement in society needs to be towards realising positive, responsible and shared use of power.

III: Personal Relations and Change

Work in Three Groups

The following questions were addressed in each of three groups:

1. As a man or woman, what, when and where have you changed?

2. What changes have you not been able to make?

3. Which unequal relationship have you been able to change?

4. Which unequal relationship have you not been able to change?

The group members kept in mind how each decided for a change, what were the personal strategies, and to whom did each give credit for the change.

'Change' Group 1

Members	Influences and Manifestations
Pradeep Ram Lal Sandeep Manimala Renu AG Sathe	Feeling of deprivation
	Being dependent
	Maintaining a level of status
	Failure to escape hypocrisy
	Feeling of vulnerability and insecurity
	Emotional pressure from spouse
	Capacity to influence others

'Change' Group 2

Members	Influences and Manifestations
Satish Vrunda Mangesh Mira Chinmoy Shanta Mukund V Prabhu	*Satisfied at learning to cook food*
	Failed to change traditions (in upholding sister's right to property or to choose her own partner)
	Not able to do household work inspite of liking it...
	Frustrated at not being able to resist corruption at work
	Compromise with pressures of livelihood
	Willingly accepted change in lifestyle with parenthood
	Increased his personal capacity after a male friend introduced him to feminism
	Awkwardness with daughters of his wife's first marriage
	Could alter his gender role towards his wife
	Failed to stop unnecessarily criticising others
	Failed to reach cordial divorce with husband

'Change' Group 3

The third group (chart missing for reporting) also made a similar presentation, collectively finding that due to societal pressures, traditions, patriarchal values and male domination, they had met obstacles to personal change. They noted that men *usually* try to maintain the status quo, particularly with regard to power and gender advantages, whereas women attempt to redefine and restructure gender relations.

In spite of various shortcomings faced by most participants, nearly everyone could recollect some experience of success in bringing about change at personal level. The experience sharing in each group was quite personal and introspective.

IV: Moving towards Change...

Facilitator: Satish Kumar Singh

In a moving and sensitive initial presentation, Satish advocated self-introspection and soul-searching particularly by the men to identify the common areas of work with women and to help them move towards full women's empowerment. He pointed out that continuous attempts towards change by both men and women are necessary. He underlined the importance of constructive criticism of self as well as of others. He identified four sites where change is immediately required:

→ in Self

→ in Others

→ in Contexts (creating new social and political spaces)

→ in Groups.

The process of change should start from the self and move towards others – neighbours, friends, relatives and so on. Formation of 'support groups' could lead towards generation of cordial environments for various endeavours. In this regard, the concept of equality demands utmost importance, especially equality in roles, behaviour and relationships. This must be consistently advocated and practised with one's partners (personal or professional) and fellow human beings. He also suggested that each one could prepare his or her own 'Change Plan' and implement it with immediate effect.

As a concluding gesture, Satish requested all the men participants to think of something – a 'gift' of any kind – that each would like to give to women, and he asked all the women participants to give a gift to the men. They were to write the name of the gift on a slip of paper, and while handing over the slip to him, to tell the group. A variety of gifts came forth, including 'equality', 'friendship', 'togetherness, 'a green growing plant' and 'commitment to work together for gender equality'.

V. Evaluation, and Conclusion...

Facilitator: Renu Khanna

After briefly recalling highlights of the three days' proceedings, Renu asked the participants to frankly share their opinions about what had or had not been achieved, and about what should be done next. Almost every participant shared his or her views.

♦ *I have never seen society in this way before. I feel my resources were inadequate. It helped me understand the issues. (Prasad)*

♦ *I am thrilled. It brought clarity to several concepts. Exercises through games and group work were very good and beneficial. (Praveena)*

♦ *Learnt a lot about feminism. I would support and guide others after going back, and work to form a support group. (Chinmoy)*

♦ *It has helped me to recognise myself. I will use whatever I learned wherever I can. We must join and form support groups that will always be responsive. (Gurudas)*

♦ *Thanks, I have learnt how feminism and masculinities are inseparable. (Shirish)*

♦ *It was very useful and proved to be like a mirror, evolving a participatory process. (Satish)*

♦ *The workshop helped many towards self-acceptance of limitations – a great success. The interdisciplinary panels, facilitators, anchors and presenters enhanced discussion quality and brought out a variety of issues before all of us. (Mukund)*

♦ *I learned, both personally and professionally. (Rahul)*

♦ *Again I felt in touch with feminism and the urgent need to work together. (Ram Lal)*

♦ *There was honest and frank exchange of views with mutual respect for dissent. I would carry on the process wherever I am. (Pradeep)*

Many appreciated Tathapi's initiative in creating the space for dialogue on such an important issue. Several committed to continue the process in their own areas. The Tathapi team concluded the proceedings with words of thanks to all and assurance of follow-up.

Looking Forward...

This third workshop was organised to bring to fruition a dialogue process initiated by the Tathapi team at the beginning of 2000. We hoped for a frank exchange of diverse ideas, views, experiences and insights so that a basic common perspective could emerge to be utilised successively along with the commitment among the participants to continue the process in their various spheres of work.

There was a remarkable receptivity among the participants and eagerness to revise, learn and change even their own 'mindsets' on difficult issues. Deep reflection on prevalent social notions and images that influence and construct the gender relations of men and women helped the group to compose a list of basic sexual ethics.

The discussion brought out the multi-dimensional and fluid nature of 'masculinities' and highlighted the hegemonic and subordinating nature of 'power' in today's socio-political and cultural context. The possibility of both men and women social activists working together on specific common concerns in view of patriarchy was also fruitfully explored. The enthusiasm and excitement to discuss critical issues even past midnight, and subsequently to convert this clarity into commitments, was heartening to observe. While individual viewpoints naturally varied, on the basic issues a basic common view did appear to emerge. This perspective would be refined through the continuing practical process.

The workshop also proved a learning opportunity for the Tathapi team – both in terms of gaining expertise in the theme area and in designing and organising such a sensitive group interaction for three days.

Tathapi's follow-up efforts would be directed towards keeping up with relevant new initiatives by the group members and others, towards making use of the insights in practical activities involving children and adults, producing new resource materials, and towards arranging some workshops with a focus on building specific facilitation skills.   ♥

List of Materials Distributed
in Workshop III, 9-12 August 2001

1. *Reconstructing Indian Masculinities*, by Mangesh Kulkarni (Political Scientist, SNDT Women's University, Mumbai), in *Gentleman*, Mumbai, May 2001 (3 pages);

    Translation: Bharatiya Purushatva ka Naya Dhancha.

2. *Love and Fear: Male Empowerment – from thinking to feeling*, by Vijay Nagaswami (Chennai based psychiatrist, counselor), in *Gentleman*, Mumbai, May 2001 (7 pages);

    Hindi Translation: *Purushon ka Sakshamikaran: sochne se mehsoos karne tak* (4 pages).

3. *Men's Issues vis-à-vis the Women's Movement*, by Ravindra R P, translated with a note, from Marathi ('Purush' Prashna va Stree Chalwal) in *Purush Spandan*, Diwali issue, 2000

    (Marathi 4pages, English 6 pages).

4. *Men, Masculinities and Development: broadening our work towards gender equality*, by A Greig, M Kimmel and J Lang, UNDP/GIDP Monograph No.10, May 2000 (30 pages)

    (Hindi Translation, abridged to nearly one third).

5. *Defining violence*, and response to Kimmel, from Michael Schwalbe posted by email on 29 July 2001 over EMVNet (emvnet@un-instraw.org) forwarded by Rahul Roy over egroup: <southasianmasculinities@yahoogroups.com> (4 pages).

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Note: English materials were translated into Hindi and distributed to participants who needed them. R P Ravindra's Marathi article was translated into English.

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Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations

Dalit — Oppressed (literally 'crushed', from Marathi); a political category for the most disadvantaged members in society, particularly the lowest castes.

fantasy — Imagination or day-dreaming; here, especially with regard to sexuality.

Gay / Lesbian — A political identity where a person rejects 'male' or 'female' stereotyping and chooses an independent gender position (gay men, lesbian women).

gender — The social construction of attributes for persons of male or female sex.

Girlya — Sub-category in the MSM community, of 'masculine' gender construction' seen as a 'real man' by *Koti;* performs an 'active' role during sex.

hegemony — Use of authoritative power as a dominating instrument.

HIV/AIDS — Human Immuno-Deficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome.

homosexuality — Same sex behaviour (male-male or female-female); see 'MSM' and 'gay'.

Koti — A sub-category of persons in the MSM community, of effeminate nature and 'feminine' gender construction, who plays a 'passive' role during sex.

maacho — Super-male behaviour – 'Hero', Rambo', etc. (originally Mexican)

Mardangi — Manliness, masculinity (sense: bravery); from *mard* = man (Hindustani)

masculinity — The socially constructed gender characteristics attributed to most males.

matriarchy — Social system of 'rule' by women over society (rare in history).

matrilineality — The system of inheritance through women, as opposed to patrilineality.

MAVA — Men Against Violence and Abuse, Mumbai.

MPW — Multi-Purpose (Health) Worker attached to a Government Health Centre.

MSM — A term meaning 'men having sex with men'.

Panchayat — The statutory body of local self-governance in the rural areas of India.

patriarchy — System of dominance of males in society, oppressive to females.

purushaarth — Manliness, masculinity [sense: honour], from *purush* = man (Sanskrit)

Purush Spandan — 'Men's Vibrations' (an annual magazine brought out jointly by MAVA of Mumbai and *Purush Uvach* of Pune.

Purush Uvach — Literally, 'men speak' – a men's group in Pune.

RCH — Reproductive & Child Health (Govt of India Policy and Programme).

sex — The biological attribute of a person (male or female) that pertains to ability to procreate as opposed to 'gender' which is 'socially constructed'.

sexuality — A matrix of sex, gender & sensuality beyond mere procreation of species.

WCHP — Women Centred Health Project (of Bombay Municipal Corporation)