



Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur
Dept. of Humanities and Social Sciences

Department of Humanities and Social Sciences

invites you to the

Dr. Rajyashree Khushu-Lahiri Annual Memorial Lecture, 2023



How Should We Think about Gender and Empowerment?

by

Prof. Mary E. John

6-8 pm, Wednesday February 15, 2023
Lecture Hall 8



Late Dr. Khushu-Lahiri, an illustrious alumna of IIT Kanpur, obtained her PhD in English under the supervision of Professor R. K. Gupta. Her brilliant academic career is marked by a number of awards and recognitions including the Fulbright Doctoral Fellowship at the University of Minnesota, USA, UGC Postdoctoral Fellowship, Associateship at the Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla and the British Council Grant at Oxford University. Dr Khushu-Lahiri started her teaching career in St. Xavier's College, Ahmedabad. In 2006, she joined the department of Humanities and Social Sciences at IIT Roorkee, and later in 2011, she moved to IIT Ropar where she headed the department of Humanities and Social Sciences.

Prof. Somdeb Lahiri instituted *Dr. Rajyashree Khushu Lahiri Memorial Lecture Series* that is conducted by the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences.



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Abstract: This presentation will open up questions of women's empowerment in relation to men in contemporary India. It focusses in particular on the younger generation and their futures. India presents us with more than the usual paradoxes and challenges, which have not received the attention they deserve. I will dwell on three spheres for thinking about gender – that of higher education, questions of violence, and women's work. We have witnessed extraordinary levels of expansion in higher education in recent years – women's presence outstripping other hitherto marginalized groups. Violence has achieved considerable public attention, but in what forms? Finally, women's work remains one of the least issues to gain public acknowledgement, where national data reveals low and declining levels of women's employment. For a younger generation investing in hopes for a better future what lessons can we learn to make us better prepared for the years ahead?

Prof. Mary E John was formerly Professor at the Centre for Women's Development Studies, New Delhi. She was Director of the Centre from 2006-2012 and before that the Deputy Director of the Women's Studies Programme at the Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi from 2001-2006. Her major publications include *Discrepant Dislocations: Feminism, Theory and Postcolonial Histories* (reprinted 2021), *A Question of Silence? The Sexual Economies of Modern India* (reprinted 2021) and *Women's Studies in India: A Reader* (2008). In 2021 the co-edited volume *Women in the Worlds of Labour: Interdisciplinary and Intersectional Perspectives* and the monograph *Child Marriage in an International Frame: A Feminist Review from India* were published. She was the co-chair of a Task Force set up by the University Grants Commission to look into sexual harassment on Indian campuses and brought out the report *Saksham: Measures for Ensuring Safety of Women and Programmes for Gender Sensitization on Campuses* (2013). Her areas of interest span the fields of women's studies and feminism within the social sciences, with particular interest in studies pertaining to marriage and family, education and labour, as well as the concepts and frameworks of feminist theoretical analysis.