NR18 / SPEARHEADING URBAN TRANSFORMATION WHILE NAVIGATING GENDER IN CONTEMPORARY TIMES: INTERSECTIONS OF BUSINESS PRACTICES AND SOCIETAL CHANGE IN GLOBAL SOUTH

Topic : Research

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GENERAL OBJECTIVES, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND SCIENTIFIC RELEVANCE

Abstract: What the law proposes and what it actually delivers, is at the centre of the public policy praxis. Law has a very significant role in regulating organizational behaviour, managerial practices, organizational structure to promote gender equality and inclusivity. As per ILO, in 2023, the global labour force participation rate was 48.7% for women. According to ILO (2025), women hold merely 30% of the managerial and higher positions globally. In the 1980s, Holmquist and Sundin (2020) observed that women entrepreneurs occupy a space between two realms: the “women’s world” and the “world of entrepreneurship.” This insight remains relevant today, highlighting how the study of gender and entrepreneurship has evolved into a distinct and vibrant field of research. Role Congruity Theory (Eagly & Karau, 2002) further elucidates this phenomenon, demonstrating that women leaders and entrepreneurs often encounter discrimination when their professional roles challenge established societal gender norms. Empirical research on Indian corporate boards indicates that congruence between gender roles and organizational positions significantly influences both organizational performance and societal legitimacy (Raina et al., 2018). To navigate these structural and cultural constraints, women entrepreneurs increasingly leverage digital platforms, cultivate strategic networks, and design flexible, adaptive business models, enabling them to establish successful ventures that operate beyond conventional gendered expectations.

Significance: It also aims to showcase how neoliberal reforms together with digital transformations and sustainability initiatives modify the gendered systems which affect workplace dynamics and leadership positions and entrepreneurial ventures.

Research Questions:

1.What are the long-term mental and physical health impacts of the disproportionate unpaid care burden on women in low-income vs. high-income settings?

2.How do different cultural contexts (e.g., patriarchal societies) influence men's involvement in routine care, and what are the policy implications?

3.How to locate the third gender identity of Hijras and transgender persons among the Indian urban workforce in the context of “Global South,”?

4.In what ways does the digital labour of rural migrant women in China reflect the 45intersection of feminized labour, digital inclusion, and urban exclusion within the broader political economy of platform capitalism?

Context: This proposal is situated in a rapidly changing global labour landscape where gendered disparities still exist despite an increase in the number of women in leadership, digital work, and entrepreneurship. Women's and gender-diverse people's access to economic opportunities is shaped by structural barriers, which range from unpaid care responsibilities and patriarchal norms to exclusion or discrimination based on gender identity.

Papers Expected: Theoretical /Empirical /Methodological

Potential Papers:

1. Digital Labor at the Intersection of Gender, Migration, and Care in China by Dr.Ila Joshi, Assistant Professor, JIIT,Noida

2.The Paradox of Third Gender Identity: The Challenges of Creating a Defined Space for hijras or

transgender persons among Indian workforce by Dr.Kaustav Padmapati, Assistant Professor, SOLS&M, UPES

3.Work-Life Integration, Care Economies, and Gendered Labor by Dr Tumpa Dey, Associate Professor, SOB, UPES

4. Review of Policies for Women Entrepreneurs in India: Promises and Challenges by Dr.Manika Kamthan, Assistant Professor, MNLU-CS9

CALL FOR PAPERS

Over the past few decades, the global labour landscape has been dramatically reshaped by legal reforms, digital technologies, migration, and shifts in socio-cultural values. However, despite these changes, deep-seated inequalities between genders persist across sectors and regions. The law, in the dual sense of an instrument of governance and a framework for public policy, should play a critical role in regulating the behaviors of organizations, managerial practices, and workplace structures. A concern that remains in the foreground for scholars, policymakers, and practitioners working at the intersection of gender, economy, and governance is the gap that exists between the promise of law and the delivery by it.

International Labour Organization global indicators show that women's labor force participation rates continue to lag behind those of men, standing at 48.7% globally for women in 2023, and only 30% hold managerial or senior leadership positions in 2025. Theoretical approaches, such as Role Congruity Theory by Eagly & Karau (2002), detail how prejudices arise when women's professional roles conflict with established gender expectations. Empirical research-from Holmquist & Sundin's 2020 work on women entrepreneurs to Raina et al.'s 2018 work relating to Indian corporate boards-highlights how gender norms continue to shape organizational outcomes, leadership legitimacy, and entrepreneurial opportunities.

At the same time, digital transformations have reshaped labour markets, creating new opportunities for participation while cementing precarity. For example, rural migrant women in China navigate a digital economy shaped by patriarchal structures, hukou-based exclusions, and platform capitalism-evidencing tensions between empowerment and vulnerability. In the Indian context, the relative marginality of Hijras and transgender people vis-à-vis formal labour markets underscores how gender identity intersects with caste, class, and urban exclusion in the Global South. Additionally, unpaid care work, borne differentially by women across the world, influences labour market involvement, health, and long-term economic insecurity.

This panel invites scholars across disciplines such as gender studies, law, management, public policy, digital labour studies, migration studies, and political science to interrogate how gender inequalities are produced, reproduced, and challenged within contemporary labour markets. We welcome especially contributions that investigate legal frameworks, organizational practices, policy interventions and socio-technical systems from feminist, intersectional, postcolonial, and political economy perspectives.5