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Introduction

This volume owes its origin to dual panels honoring the legacy of Professors Barbara Ramusack and Geraldine Forbes at the Annual South Asia Conference in Madison, Wisconsin, in October 2013. Ramusack and Forbes are two of the leading scholars in charting the field of Indian women's history for a global audience.They were part of a feminist community that connected over inequalities and injustices faced by women globally. According to some leading women activists, these synergies resulted in a "rebirth of the women's movement" between 1960s and 1980s.[1] Vina Mazumdar, a trail blazer and affectionately referred to as the "grandmother of Women's Studies in South Asia,"[2] has captured the ambience of that heady era, explaining that she referred to it as a "rebirth" fully aware of the earlier women's activism which went hand in hand with the mainstream nationalist movement in the early half of the twentieth century. Mazumdar recognized both the raised expectations in the post-independence period and its disappointments wherein she says the "women's movement had lost its strength and vision" in the 1950s and 1960s.[3] The lost "strength and vision" of the women's movement was restored no less by the deep involvement of international women scholars in these decades. Mazumdar narrated how in the First International Conference on Women's Studies held in Anand, Gujarat, in 1983, Florence Howe, (founder of the *Feminist Press*, New York), present there, had made entries in her notebooks of the enthusiastic support provided by Indian and Western academics and champions of women's rights. They produced masses of data on inequities that Indian women faced in terms of legal rights, living conditions, health care, and right to a profession, adding that "even… the lowliest of workers" were included in their searching quantitative surveys.[4] Vina Mazumdar recalls that the interactions with women from different spaces and culturesdeveloped into lifelong friendships and empathy with one another. Western scholars interested in Women's Studies came to India from various walks of life—from disciplines as diverse as sociology, anthropology, indology, economics, and history. But even before women like Florence Howe visited India, Ramusack and Forbes launched their research and made field trips to India in the late years of the 1960s. This volume hopes to mine the forgotten histories of

these global connections from the 1960s onwards and restore lost knowledge of international networks and alliances along with struggles of this generation of women scholar-activists from both hemispheres.[5] The volume explores these transnational connections anchored in the life and times of Professors Geraldine Forbes and Barbara Ramusack—two outstanding historians, Women's Studies' scholars, and mentors.

As products of the American second-wave feminism, Ramusack and Forbes are strongly associated with the emergence of a women's history of India from the 1970s onwards just as much as they taught and interacted with American women who were pioneers in forming the National Women's Studies Association in the USA and in developing feminist philosophy. In the course of their research trips to India, they were influenced by and impressed with activists such as Renuka Ray, Manibehn Kara, Godavari Parulekar, Kulsum Sayani , Lakshmi Swaminathan Sahgal, Latika Ghosh, Dr Sushila Nayar, Santi Das Kabir, Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya, Usha Mehta as much as they were bonding friendships with Women's Studies' scholars of whom the following must be mentioned: Vina Mazumdar, C.S. Lakshmi, Neera Desai, Ela Bhatt, Devika Jain, Aparna Basu, amongst others. If Vina Mazumdar has recorded the help of male mentors, Professor Forbes mentions the support provided by male visionary academics such as Professors Gautam Chattopadhyay, Pradip Sinha, Barun De, and Tapan Raychaudhuri. As Kumari Jayawardena explained, feminism in the "Third World" was fostered as much through alliances with men as with women.[6]

Restoring women to history and recuperating their voices was a challenging task for feminist historians of the earlier generations. When women still inhabited the "seams of history"[7] in both India and the West, Forbes and Ramusack joined the early champions to reclaim the history of Indian women. It was not just gender blindness in the Academy that placed obstacles to Western women scholars, but there were also difficulties due to official constraints in accessing the archives. Professor Ramusack recalled: "When I was doing my research from 1964 onwards, the British had a 40 or 50 year rule (block) on access to material at the India Office.... Thus the availability of archival primary sources limited my temporal spread."[8] Perhaps these restrictions fueled both Ramusack and Forbes to look for alternate sources and redefine the notion of archives for women's history. Their tireless efforts to uncover Indian women's stories laid the foundation and opened the floodgate for researchers to launch investigations in uncharted territories.In the process of interacting with scholars passionate about women's

struggles they trained, inspired, mentored students who came their way. This volume presents works of scholars and their peers from UK, USA, and India who have been influenced and motivated by Ramusack and Forbes.

The arc of Ramusack's and Forbes' scholarship is wide although it pivots primarily around women. Ramusack's early explorations into the role of Indian princes in the "twilight" of empire culminated into her contribution in The New Cambridge History of India series, *The Indian Princes and Their States* (2004).[9] In the words of a young scholar based in the US, Ramusack's "monumental" volume brilliantly explored "the intricacies of indirect imperium as it existed on the subcontinent" and it still remains "the most innovative and complete exposition of the system of subsidiary subordination" in India.[10] Forbes started out in the field of intellectual history and analyzed the influence of positivist philosophy in nineteenth-century Bengal in her acclaimed monograph *Positivism in Bengal* (1975).[11] The preeminence of the book was duly recognized as it won the Rabindra Purashkar, the highest literary award from the state of West Bengal. After their initial forays into political and intellectual history, Forbes' and Ramusack's own life experiences steered them towards investigating women's lives from the past. The twin agendas of retrieving voices of women and deploying an analytical lens on questions of women's autonomy and appeasement as well as restoration of women's writings and visual collections in archives have been the forte of Geraldine Forbes. Barbara Ramusack, on the other hand, transcended national boundaries and amassed records of European women, social activists, and workers to trace their imperial connection with women in the colonies. Ramusack was the first scholar to question the "sisterhood" that British women proclaimed in their relationships with Indian women within the specific historical context of imperialism. Motivated partly by the UN Conference of Women held in Mexico in 1975 and partly by her familiarity with archives in India and Great Britain, Ramusack went to India to explore records of women's organizations and meet the Indian women who had worked side-by-side with British women.[12] The ensuing works of Ramusack's, "Embattled Advocates: the Debate over Birth Control in India, 1920-1940," *Journal of Women's History* (1989), and "Cultural Missionaries, Maternal Imperialists, Feminist Allies: British Women Activists in India," *Western Women and Imperialism* (1992), and her co-edited special issue of *Women's History Review* on *Feminism, Imperialism and Race*, are pioneering works in the field.

Women's history has always had a close connection to emotions in rethinking the gender order. If we understand women's emancipation as a claim to happiness and self-fulfillment, and the absence of happiness as a sign of suffering and oppression, then histories of emotion need to be incorporated.[13] Using emotions as their terrain, from anger to candor and empathy to hostility, feminists from Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain to Tarabai Shinde have issued potent gender critiques. In keeping with this powerful concept of emotions as a tool for empowerment,[14] we have included in the volume the personal narratives of Ramusack and Forbes and reminiscences of other scholars that wander down memory lane and record valuable experiences of these crucial decades. Wherever possible, the volume highlights the struggles of women over generations in a bid to blend historical narratives told in well-beaten paths of scholarly idioms, incorporating those lesser-known stories that talk in unabashed ways of the pain and pleasures of becoming feminists. Warmth, friendship, giving and sharing, trust, and desire form important vectors of feminist change. These personal journeys of women's experiences, we hope, will also convince the coming generations of feminists the importance of not forgetting their foremothers and their hard-won battles for an equitable world. With the rising tempo of right-wing movements coupled with growing violence against women and mushrooming of new forms of patriarchies, it is fair to say that there is no room for complacency. Together, the works are located within the three significant strands of Indian women's history: recovery and restoration; feminism and its relevance for Indian women; agency and activism.[15]

Recovery and Restoration

A woman philosopher of history has argued that "women who are deprived of their histories can be compared to people who have lost their memories."[16] Personal identities and shared memories of collective actions require retrieving and building on inherited traditions of struggles fought, won, or lost. A retrieval of such lost or forgotten histories saw energetic action in the 1970s and 1980s. As early practitioners in a nascent field, Ramusack and Forbes along with their Indian counterparts Jasodhara Bagchi, Maitreyi Chatterjee, Neera Desai, Aparna Basu, C.S. Lakshmi, Devaki Jain, Bharati Ray, and others were engaged in a two-pronged process of salvaging stories of Indian women and rehabilitating them to the pages of history. When records on women, especially those from South Asia who were under the double bind of colonial regimes and staunch patriarchal systems, were scarce and hard to trace, Forbes and Ramusack created their

own archives. Forbes single-handedly gathered materials produced by women to debunk the myth that Indian women were docile and silent, as Western female commentators such as Miriam Schneir and Mary Daly would make us believe. Schneir wrote in the "Introduction" to her book *Feminism: the Essential Historical Writings*, "No feminist works emerged from behind the Hindu purdah or out of the Moslem harems; centuries of slavery do not provide a fertile soil for intellectual development or expression."[17] Long before literary critics and feminist theorists cautioned the depiction of "Third World Women" under the gaze of Western eyes,[18] Forbes and Ramusack in their essays confronted the stereotypes of the powerlessness of Hindu, Muslim, and the Third World women. Working through archival and visual sources (photographs) and personal narratives, several of which Forbes edited herself, she demonstrated in numerous essays and finally in her outstanding monograph, *Women in Modern India,* that not all Indian women were behind veils.[19] They neither lacked agency nor remained silent.

Ramusack, with her deep commitment to bring gender equity in department programs and administration, was active in making Indian women's history visible by expanding her university curriculum and organizing panels in major international conferences such as the Berkshire Conference on the History of Women (1978). Whereas Forbes delved into local and national history, Ramusack's canvas was often transnational and transcultural. She probed the relationship between British/European women activists and Indian women. Her deep archival research brought to the fore the roles of eminent British women such as Margaret Cousins, Annette Ackroyd Beveridge, Margaret Nobel, and others whose works and legacy are still awaiting adequate historical attention. Ramusack soon branched out into the question of maternal health and the burgeoning movement of birth control and reproductive rights for Indian women.

Together, Ramusack and Forbes bequeathed a treasure trove of documents and research for future generations of scholars going beyond soft print copies to include digital collections. In 1984, Ramusack joined several other prominent women scholars in a project entitled: *Restoring Women to History*. Funded by various organizations including National Endowments of Humanities, Fund for Improvement of Post-Secondary Education (FIPSE), and the Organization of American Historians, these scholars embarked on a project to change the nature of history as it is taught in the USA. Their task was to synthesize historical information and interpretation of women from Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East in a form that could be used by historians teaching about these areas of the world, World History, or Women's History. The first

publication from this group was "Restoring Women to History: Teaching Packets for Integrating Women's History into Courses on Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean, and the Middle East" (1988). It is especially significant that this work fostered the development of a course on women in international perspective and helped a significant number of US professors to integrate gender into their courses. Professor Geraldine Forbes, on the other hand, worked more directly with Indian scholars in various projects. She bequeathed part of her precious special collections on women's history to the British Library in London.In 1999 and 2001, she developed programs with Sound and Picture Archive for Research on Women (SPARROW) in Mumbai: a series of summer courses for North American university students were organized in India.[20] Between 2010 and 2014, Forbes conducted yearly workshops with Calcutta University's Women's Studies Research Centre. She extended her activism to include a global support network for the founders of NGOs that work with adolescent girls and young women.[21] Forbes along with her Indian colleagues have recently completed a report on NGOs during Covid-19 to be presented at CSW65 (UN committee on Status of Women -65th session) an online platform in March 2021.[22]

The recovery and restoration of women's history was a multi-faceted and dynamic process. The expansion in the horizon of women's history for which Forbes and Ramusack were instrumental went in tandem with interdisciplinary research attempting to retrieve women as subjects, their lives unfolding at the cross-roads of caste, class, religion, ethnicities, and sexualities.[23] The most robust effort was to restore Muslim women into the pages of history. The field that started with the pioneering works of Hanna Papanek,[24] Gail Minault,[25] Rounak Jahan,[26] Sylvia Vatuk,[27] Barbara Metcalf,[28] Sonia Amin,[29] Uttara Chakraborty, et al.,[30] gained further momentum with the recent works of Siobhan Lambert-Hurley,[31] Mahua Sarkar,[32] Reza M. Pirbhai,[33] Asiya Alam,[34] Fayeza Hasanat,[35] among others. It was not just bringing Muslim women into focus; but the fact that communal identity was central to analyzing women's lives as revealed by works of Tanika Sarkar, Zoya Hasan, and Urvashi Butalia.[36]

Putting women back into the folds of history also demanded the expansion of the spatial, temporal, and analytical dimension of research. Challenging the binary between the home and the world, households and private lives received special attention as Janaki Nair "uncovered" the zenana by scrutinizing the "visions of Indian womanhood" and the politics of their representation in European writings.[37] The familial and the domestic as a locus of power and struggle are further demonstrated in the works of Indrani Chatterjee,[38]Samita Sen,[39] and Swapna Banerjee.

The co-editor of this volume Banerjee, whose work foregrounds gender, family, and subaltern history, posited "domesticity" as a motor of change in late colonial India.[40] To salvage history of women on the margins, scholarship illustrating the intersection of gender, law, and sexuality documented systemic violence perpetrated by multiple patriarchies, communities, and the state.[41]

Animated by Ramusack's and Forbes' efforts in reclaiming women's history their mentees went on to explore new areas of research. Paula Banerjee wrote one of the first essays on women's efforts to mediate in the ongoing conflict in Nagaland and Assam.[42] The situation of women in Northeast India portrays that in times of crisis women are controlled/victimized not merely by power structures from outside but also by elites of their own communities. In such a situation, these women are marked as alien by the authoritarian state power that marginalizes them. The women do not pliantly comply with such marginalizations but create movements to get out of such situations. Furthermore, Geraldine Forbes and Paula Banerjee now started mentoring researchers from Northeast India. Mary Vanlalthanpuii, one of their students, wrote an excellent thesis on women's role in conflict-mediation in Mizoram.[43] Concurrent to recovering and restoring women's history, it was the question of feminism that propelled the field across generations.

Feminism and Its Relevance for Women in India

Women's history, irrespective of caste, class, race, ethnicity, sect or religion, is intertwined with questions of feminism and agency. Since the nineteenth century, Indian women's history is characterized by its vexed relationship with the term feminism. The terms "feminism" and "feminist" began life in the context of the French revolution and during the suffrage struggles was subsequently seized upon by British women's rights activists making its way into the English language vocabulary by 1900. Whether or not we can apply these terms to women from previous centuries in whose contexts the terms were not available or known is an ongoing debate.[44] In the early half of the twentieth century, Indian women nationalist leaders, especially Sarojini Naidu, in a strategic bid to hold Indian male nationalists to the women's cause, declared that they were not "feminists." By the 1970s, in the early post-independent decades, Madhu Kishwar, for various complex reasons, had also declared that she was not a "feminist."[45]

Spirited Indian women of the 1970s and1980s found themselves in a conundrum. On the one hand, Western feminists, governed by dominant Western paradigms and Eurocentric

stereotypes of the "other," had denied Asian and African women's rights activists the privilege of being called "feminists;" and on the other, they were faced with an older generation of Indian women nationalist activists who had shaken off the label along with the rule of the alien Raj. The historiographical concerns of the early social history of modern India saw Indian women as "beneficiaries" of the awakening experienced by their menfolk in the social reform period. In many ways the picture, which emerges of Indian women as "passive recipients" in these processes, argues PadmaAnagol, a mentee of Forbes and one of the editors of this volume, were predetermined by the approaches, which Western scholars had adopted. She explains:

> In the "Western impact–Indian response" paradigm that informs their work, there is little room for women as conscious agents. Instead, Indian women are projected as a monolithic and oppressed entity and reduced to mere beneficiaries of the "awakening" experienced by their men folk because of contact with Western influences. [46]

These processes, Anagol analyzes were compounded by an absence of an alternative approach to define the experiences unique to women in their diverse historical contexts of colonialism resulting in "the most sympathetic of scholars of women hesitating to call even the most radical Indian women of the past as 'feminists'."[47] In this controversy-ridden field, Anagol outlines the exceptional entry of Geraldine Forbes and Barbara Ramusack who were the earliest pioneers of women's history of modern India alongside Neera Desai, Pratima Asthana, Vina Mazumdar, Kumari Jayawardena, amongst others.[48]

Forbes and Ramusack, not only did not hesitate to call deserving Indian women's rights activists as "feminists," they celebrated their lives and deeds with aplomb and conviction. Forbes consistently used "feminism" as an inclusive term that "supports equal rights for women and sees patriarchal society as responsible for their oppression."[49] More importantly, she introduced the term social feminism to Indian women's movements borrowed from William L. O'Neill (1969). In analyzing American women's social involvement in civic and labor reform movements, O'Neill had argued that "women's rights was not an end in itself" as opposed to the hardcore feminists whose main objective was winning women's suffrage.[50] This struck vital chords in Forbes, who found parallels in women's lives in nineteenth-century India. Forbes argued that the ideology of social feminism helped Indian women to "connect their rights, such as participation

in social-political movements, to women's obligation to perform traditional roles and serve the needs of the family."[51]

For future generations of Indian women scholars and activists, an important contribution of Forbes was reclaiming the problematic but valuable lineage of Indian feminist thought embedded in the early women nationalists' rhetoric and actions.A case in point was a woman like Sarojini Naidu who said "I am not a feminist," but wanted women to be politically active and was genuinely interested in improving women's lives. Based on the natural rights theory of division of labor between men and women, Naidu posited that women could bring something important to discussions on issues that concerned women's welfare, happiness, and safety. It is important to understand that whilst Naidu's generation had reclaimed the arena of politics for women, they wished to participate within the broader political determination movements by enveloping the women's cause into it. Accordingly, Forbes explains that Naidu's generation of early women's activism worked towards more autonomy for women, education, political involvement, and an end to abusive customs, but they did not seriously question woman=nurturer/ man=breadwinner.[52]

Forbes' articulation of social feminism offered a new tool of analysis by bringing to the fore women's role in social reproduction and the question of their reproductive labor. Marxists feminists have long grappled with social reproduction underscoring the notion that the renewal of human life and human labor power daily and generationally are crucial for the continuation of inequality, and of capitalism.[53] Women's reproductive labor constitutes intimate labors that are performed in the context of heterosexual relationships in family and marriage providing a range of goods and services through biologically, emotionally, socially, and culturally sustaining and reproducing members of the household.[54] As "an active participant in the discovery and preservation of women's records,"[55] Forbes' meticulous rendition of women's intimate labors by deliberately drawing on their own words made women the "agents of their own destinies"[56] and their critical role in the process of social reproduction.As a historian she was mindful of the context as well, alerting the readers of the constraints these women faced. The retrieval of women's voices and actions revealed the way they constituted themselves as subjects by carefully navigating and fulfilling their domestic and social responsibilities.

Following Forbes' footsteps, this volume traces Indian feminisms through women's writings, performativity, location, and negotiation within the existing patriarchal and political-

economic systems. Forbes' emphasis on women's own words and a close analysis of the context, that Mrinalini Sinha also urged, are crucial to understand feminist history.[57] Such practices are evident in the works of scholars such as co-editor Swapna Banerjee who, inspired by Forbes, engaged in a historical and a feminist reading of a subaltern woman's life narrative, *A Life Less Ordinary* (2004) authored by the domestic worker Baby Halder.[58] Banerjee argued that Halder's account is a feminist testimony that revealed the ways she empowered herself by negotiating with and appropriating the colonial "cult of domesticity" as she struggled to control her own life and destiny in a postcolonial milieu.

Feminist studies have blossomed and continue to evolve in today's India. Some heartening features common to many of these studies are an eagerness to overcome exclusions,blind spots, complicities, and silences that we have witnessed in early Western feminist literature—the very constraints that made Naidu and Kishwar reject feminist labels.[59] The new readings of feminist thought and practice in India recognize the heterogeneity of feminisms as a plural and mobile concept which has and continues to evolve in highly specific historical contexts straddling diverse conditions of women that include caste, class, sexualities, religion, race, and ethnicity. We have taken feminist inspiration from our foremothers who chose to work on Indian women, but we also hope that the collection of chapters here by different contributors influenced by Professors Ramusack and Forbes also take the local, national, and global concerns of feminists further.[60]

Activism and Agency

How did women from developing societies resist and protest within the four walls of a home? How did this resistance manifest itself within their private worlds and spill over in the public? In the exciting decades of the 1970s and 1980s, Forbes and Ramusack asked profound questions and found answers in their subsequent field trips to India. In their half-a-centurycontact with Indian women—in the archive, activism, personal friendships, and scholarships, they followed the heritage and legacy of Indian women's resistance in text and context which then spilled over in their diverse portrayals of Indian women's historical lives and works.

Apart from their research, Ramusack and Forbes also engaged in pedagogy of what has often been overlooked when teaching Indian history and that is the activism of many Indian women that preceded modern times by quite a few centuries. As the 2016 anthology *Unbound* by

Annie Zaidi[61] reminds us, the tradition of activism goes way back to Buddhist nuns of the Therigatha. Such early written records, what might aptly be termed narratives, breaking away causing a rupture or a disjuncture with patriarchal prevalent ideologies, were composed as early as the sixth century BCE. Any reasonable history book dealing with the Bhakti movement,[62] moreover, will cover Andal (seventh or eighth century CE), Akka Mahadevi (twelfth century CE), Lal Ded (fourteenth century CE), and Meerabai (sixteenth century CE), who were women who resisted a society insistently demanding conventional obedience from them in showing a very definite ability to challenge established norms even if it meant appropriating devotion to male gods.

The known history of Indian women's resistance commenced perhaps when women began to question patriarchal paradigms of family, society, and state. They tried to shore up demands for women's social and political rights beginning with claims for women's education. This is another area where we witness Ramusack's intervention. Ramusack delineated feminist history writing on Indian women[63] and captured women's activism and agency on different geopoloitical locales.[64] She, along with a generation of contemporary and younger feminist historians, offered a rebuttal to the aspersions cast on women's/feminist history by scholars like Ronald Hyam and their lop-sided and biased view of women's history.[65] Hyam had argued that women's history and feminist studies had limited value, if any, as a conceptual framework to understand empire and its connections to sex and sexuality.[66] Neither Forbes nor Ramusack were shy of making honest critiques, even if it was controversial, in pushing forward and expanding the parameters of enhancing studies of empire and Indian women's history. In her book *Women in Asia*, Ramusack asserted that even though both British and educated Indian women zealously tried to be champions of Indian women, they did not consult "Indian women about how they perceived their own need."[67] There were critiques by women historians like Nupur Chaudhuri who were quick to show how British men, and not just Indian men delivered directives on women's issues. However, such censure did not deter Ramusack or Forbes for that matter, and rightly so, as without candid and forthright studies, the historiography would never have moved forward.[68]

Writing against linear narratives, overcoming male-centered analyses of cause and effect of great events which inevitably talk of men and make women disappear, integrating women's experiences by listening to their voices or simply writing women's histories from the women's

perspectives, was "worth the risk and the effort"[69] as Ramusack and Sievers boldly proclaimed in the Preface to the volume *Women in Asia: Restoring Women to History*. Younger generations of scholars who followed the footsteps of Forbes and Ramusack imbibed the lessons of "taking risks" in order to move away from revered traditions of historical research that talked about men's histories as though they were global histories encompassing all, especially women.[70] Padma Anagol, working through Marathi language sources in her book *Emergence of Feminism in India 1850–1920* (2005), has mined hidden traditions of Maharashtrian women's agency, protest, and activism. She analyses women's words and deeds as a tripartite interaction between the colonial state, Indian men (conservatives and reformists) and women themselves.

Ramusack's contribution to Indian women's history writing must begin with her convictions that Indian women's activism was often centered on women's claims of rights over their body. Working closely with Ramusack, scholars such as Antoinette Burton, expanded their archives and probed the tangled histories of Indian women and the empire.[71] Pushing further, the distinction between "private" matters and state regulations, Ramusack broached questions of birth control movement and reproductive health where Indian women and men, aligning with Western advocates like Margaret Sanger, were active agents of change.These questions were further extended in an outstanding study by Sanjam Ahluwalia, Ramusack's student.[72] Ramusack, with her host of research scholars, made a paradigmatic shift in pedagogy and research of nineteenth and twentieth-century Indian women's story of resistance, subversion, and activism. The footprints of Ramusack's scholarship in agency and activism, in maternal health and reproductive rights, and in engagement with state politics are traceable in the dissertations she supervised.

Women's activism after 1947 was reflected in the flowering of writings on different resistance movements that appeared across South Asia. Woman writers such as Ismat Chughtai, Amrita Pritam, Krishna Sobti, Kamala Das, Mahashweta Devi, and Kamala Markandaya wrote fiction dancing on the edge of boundaries, bodies, borders, and sexuality.[73] These authors were interacting and negotiating with a nation still licking at the gaping wound of Partition and reeling in its shadows. These women were outrageously defiant and progressive, inevitably drawing criticism because they placed selfhood above nationhood and conventional modes of obeisance and piety. While some of these authors resisted violence through the words and characters of their novels, others chose the path of narratives that allowed them to be witnesses and speak the

precise state of Indian women. Some crucial books in terms of resistant/activist writing that Ramusack and Forbes used in their pedagogy need to be mentioned. These include Krishna Sobti's *MitroMarjani* (1966), Amrita Pritam's *Pinjar* (1950), Kamala Das's autobiography *My Life* (1973), Mahashweta Devi's *Breast Stories* (1997), and Kamala Markandaya's *Nectar in a Sieve* (1955).

The 1970s witnessed a paradigmatic shift in Indian women's history. This was the beginning of the International Women's Decade when the Indian state appointed a committee to study and probe the condition of women, which led to the publication of the landmark report *Towards Equality* (1974)[74] by feminist scholars and activists such as Phulrenu Guha and Lotika Sarkar. Later, it was published with an introduction by Vina Mazumdar and edited by Kumud Sharma and C.P. Sujaya.[75] This report was catalytic for Indian women's movement as it pointed to the deteriorating situation of Indian women after independence. It provided serious impetus for research on Indian women's health, education, political participation, and violence against them. Both Forbes and Ramusack met and became friendly with Phulrenu Guha, Vina Mazumdar, and Kumud Sharma.

While *Towards Equality* marked a watershed moment, Forbes and Ramusack increasingly confronted movements that were more radical and less dominated by middle-class leadership. These were the times when Ela Bhatt helped to create SEWA (Self-Employed Women's Association) in 1972, which had a major impact on the lives of women textile workers. In 1973, the Chipko movement began under the aegis of Sundarlal Bahuguna, a noted Gandhian Garhwali environmentalist, who inspired women such as Gaura Devi to take on the mighty logging companies in Reni forest area. Gaura Devi was neither middle class nor a part of the educated new women of India but she successfully inspired rural Garhwali women to stop the felling of trees giving impetus to the nascent environmentalist women in India. These were the decades in which Forbes and Ramusack came to familiarize themselves with the pulse of India. It was India that jolted them to an understanding of class issues that seemed to be disappearing from their spectrum in the global north.

In the last two decades, Indian women activists were again in the center stage of politics. The scene erupted in 1985 with a Muslim woman, Shah Bano, winning an extremely controversial lawsuit on maintenance. She was not an activist but merely an old woman trying to have a life of dignity and her situation galvanized women activists all over India. But the

conservative elements of both Muslim and Hindu communities transformed this question of women's personal rights into a battle over control of Muslims in India. Women's rights lost out and Rajiv Gandhi's government passed the Muslim Women's (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Act of 1986. But this activated many progressive Indian women across class and religion that proved crucial for autonomous women's movement in India.[76]

The 1990s was caught up with the passing of the 73rd and 74th amendments to the Indian constitution instituting the three-tier Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) privileging the role of women in local governance. Around the same time erupted the controversial Bhanwari Devi rape case in 1992 when Bhanwari Devi, a social worker, was trying to stop a child marriage. She was of potter caste and the upper caste Gujjar men gang raped her. This snow balled when Bhanwari Devi did not get justice from the High Court in Rajasthan and her rapists went free. A women's rights group called Visakha filed a public interest litigation and they won the case bringing forth the Visakha Judgement and Guidelines in 1997. These were guidelines against sexual harassment in the workplace, which was a first for India.

While the Bhanwari Devi case was still unfolding another woman was creating her own waves in the Indian world of activism and that was Ruth Manorama, a dalit leader from Bangalore. Manorama's protest against Operation Demolition in the 1980s and 1990s, when the state government of Karanataka forced an eviction programme against slum dwellers, brought her national recognition. Her organization of public hearings on the oppression of dalit women in 1993 led to the formation of the National Federation of Dalit Women in 1995. This brought in many young dalit activists who lent their voices in protest against oppression on the basis of class, caste and gender. These decades saw women, students, LGBTQ activists, human rights workers all out in the roads claiming the public space with slogans like "the private is public," and "women's rights is human rights", in trying to combat right-wing activism that brought the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) to power in 1996.

These were the years when Forbes and Ramusack were visiting India frequently and enriching their own pedagogy with knowledge culled from women's activism in India. The courses that they taught were ripe with these protest and controversies. They were not the first women to teach these courses but their familiarity with Indian feminist activism made them open their hearts and homes to Indian students most of whom remember them with enormous love and respect. An overwhelming majority of research scholars whom they mentored were young Indian

women and the three editors of this volume are prominent members of that group. No wonder then that Forbes and Ramusack fit in perfectly with Indian feminists across the spectrum such as Vina Mazumdar, Neera Desai, Aparna Basu, C.S. Lakshmi, Tanika Sarkar, Jasodhara Bagchi, Bharati Ray, Nirmala Banerjee, among many others and students/mentees who made resistance and activism the leitmotif.

Paula Banerjee, one of the mentees and an editor of this volume, opened another vista of feminist activist research in India by focusing on women in borderlands, women and forced migration and women in peace movements.[77] Furthermore, Banerjee's collaborations with Forbes resulted in an important issue of *Economic and Political Weekly* on multiple trajectories of trafficking and women across India. Banerjee portrayed how spatial borders are constructed through multiple institutions including the state, the people, the media and the interactions of men and women in multiple planes.[78] Meanwhile, Swapna Banerjee expanded the reach of the scholarship by emphasizing the centrality of domestic workers in articulation of Bengali middle-class identity and brought to the fore the household as a domain of productive and reproductive labor.[79] Salvaging records from disparate and diverse sources, Banerjee brought elites and subalterns into the same framework of analysis and argued that the caste-class formation of the Bengali middle class depended on its relationships with women, children, and other subordinate groups.

Chapters in the Volume

The contributors to the volume represent three generations: Professors Ramusack and Forbes as lead mentors are followed by peers, such as Professor Gail Minault from the American academy, who worked alongside with them and mid-career and younger academics who engage in conversations, scholarship, reminiscences, and activism through their research in different fields of women's history. The essays map the wide terrain of the field by both looking back and looking ahead. The volume is divided into three sections that engage with the key themes and temporal moments in South Asian feminisms. Its contents are intentionally inter-disciplinary, hence, will appeal to a range of scholars in sociology, history, psychology, law, political science, and women's and gender studies. Each contributor in this volume connects uniquely with the works of Professors Forbes and Ramusack. Furthermore, the volume breaks new ground by historicizing the emergence of Indian women's history, especially in the US academia.

In a foundational piece, autobiographical in nature, one of Forbes' and Ramusack's contemporaries, Gail Minault, one of the pioneers in the field of Muslim women's history in the subcontinent, traces the early years of unearthing women's history. As a post-doctoral student in the 1960s, sharing similar experiences with her friends Barbara Ramusack and Geraldine Forbes, Minault reveals the trials and tribulations but also the joys of unraveling women's history which she terms as a "decade of upheaval and activism" (Chapter 1: …). The significance of Professor Minault's journey down memory lane shines a torch on how theoretical models for studying women's lives in anthropology and history by Western women scholars often seemed to homogenize their experiences and impose them on to women of non-Western societies. Equally, the personal narrative reveals the cross-fertilization of ideas between American and Indian women historians and how activism and scholarship reinforced each other in both countries. The chapter gives a fascinating account of how women as "subjects" evolved, largely associated with the study of the "family" in the 1960s and 1970s, but were soon studied widely as part of religion, culture, and politics. She also recounts the evolution of ideas that led her and Hanna Papanek to interact with Indian scholars leading to the publication of the groundbreaking work, *Separate Worlds: Studies of Purdah in South Asia* (1982).

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Commented [SB2]: This quotation comes from Gail's chapter in this volume.

A generation apart, Durba Ghosh, pays her tribute by writing about the archive and the research collection that Forbes bestowed to the British Library, creating new resources for current scholars. Ghosh, chronicling her search for records for women revolutionaries, offers rare insights into Forbes' meticulous collection and preservation of sources. Ghosh's serendipitous encounter with Forbes' collection provided her with a missing clue for her research—a clue that was otherwise not traceable to the existing archival records. Forbes' record-keeping is a testament to the process of creating new resources for writing women's history; hence, the need to "historicize" the archive that Ghosh rightly stresses in her piece. Besides, Ghosh's chapter underscores how privileged we are to have the activism of Professor Forbes, who has bequeathed to posterity rare glimpses into the lives of Indian women-communists. Forbes exemplifies the rigour and tenacity in paying attention to details in and out of the archives.

Following the footsteps of Forbes and Ramusack in restoring women to history and recovering their agency, Elena Borghi recuperates the neglected experiences of "Nehru women" and puts them at the core of historical narration. Drawing upon letters exchanged within the Nehru family, this work highlights the journey that two women who are the subjects of this

essay, Rameshwari Nehru and Uma Nehru, embarked on, within the sphere of feminist activism as the nationalist agitation reached its peak.[80] The piece makes the argument that the viewpoints, worldviews, and attitudinal perspectives of the two figures may be read as differing instances on a pole of relational feminism. Rameshwari represents a more strategically compliant or complicit aspect of feminism, whereas her sister-in-law Uma is a much more "radical feminist" figure and embodies the uncompromising side of the engagements that early feminism had made. Rameshwari epitomizes the "first wave" of Indian feminism, within which arguments centered on the family often took importance over demands for individual autonomy or dismissals of roles as defined by society. Uma's thinking, while not entirely rejecting these ideals and therefore building on sexual dimorphism, contained elements of subversion that were prefiguring ideas of modernity. This essay adds a rich dimension to existing scholarship in the area, by continuing the work of Geraldine Forbes and Padma Anagol for tracking the lineages of complex Indian feminisms of the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Borghi's study demonstrates that contrary to the existing popular perception that it was Gandhi who brought forth Indian women into the Habermasian"public sphere," Indian women's engagement with the arena of the political had its inceptions, in fact, before the national mobilizations of the 1920s and 1930s.

Shifting focus to Western India, Padma Anagol analyzes the educational politics of colonial India by taking the case studies of the Female High School (popularly known as "Huzur Paga" School) and other educational institutions of the Deccan region under the umbrella organization of Maharashtra Female Education Society. She interrogates how and why an elitist education for middle-class girls and women emerged in colonial Maharashtra and how that higher education for women became a hegemonic tool, not in the hands of colonial authorities but for Indian men. The social landscape of Maharashtra in the 1880s, she argues, was experiencing a veritable war of the sexes with the rise of a strident *navinstri* (new woman), confident, ambitious, and who showed an insatiable thirst for questioning women's position within Hinduism and the caste system. Women's assertion and resistance seen in law courts, the women's press, and women's collectives became a loathsome spectacle for conservative groups of Hindus and a worrisome one for male reformers. In the 1880s, Anagol describes how Maharashtrian male reformers acted quickly to contain the subversive new women by seizing the higher educational movement for women from the government. By taking control of the admission policies, curriculum content, and management of female schools and training colleges,

they moulded the new women, giving rise to new generations of pliant elite women who serviced the growing nationalist movements.

Further, engaging with the question of women's agency, Siobhan Lambert-Hurley inquires to what extent personal, geographical, historical, linguistic, and literary milieus, rather than just individual agencies, shape the stories that South Asian women write about their lives. To underscore the importance of context to construction of personal narratives, she focuses on the autobiographical writings of actress and "new woman", Begum Khurshid Mirza (1918–89). Lambert-Hurley emphasizes the salience of contexts in reading [women's] autobiography. The particular examples chosen for the case study were selected because it was possible to access four different versions of a single life story. The four "manifestations" as it were of one single story of one life, produced over a period of three decades in two countries and further strengthened by conversations with the author's family and different contributors therefrom (such as the typed manuscript in the original having editorial markings by Lubna Kazim), combine to lead to a startling possibility of being able to look at the importance of contributory factors such as editorial influence, literary medium, audience, and processes of production on the construction of a written life. Altogether, this enables an attempt at an answer to the questions of how a personal, geographic, socio-economic, historical, cultural, linguistic, or literary milieu or these milieus in conjunction may shape one story that a South Asian woman writes about her life, over and above her individual agency.

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Women's activism that Forbes and Ramusack explored in national, organizational, and local politics is brought forward in three essays exploring very different contexts. Sanjam Ahluwalia's essay attempts an exploration of the official debates of Indian women reformers and nationalist leaders on the population question in the early twentieth century, focusing on contraceptive usage. It looks at the writings and activities of women such as Rameshwari Nehru, Muthulakshmi Reddi, Margaret Cousins, Rani Laxmibai Rajwade, Begum Hamid Ali, and Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya, who all belonged to upper caste and classes. Thus, as the essay notes, although these women claimed to speak for all women, it is arguable how far their viewpoints represented the perspective of subaltern women of the period. Overall, it seems these women nationalist leaders did not understand sex to be a private act, without corresponding consequences to the moral well-being and vitality of the national body. The essay unearths some distinct cross-competing trends to the voices on either side: a corroboration of the Gandhian

argument for self-control and discipline of one's body rather than contraceptives as a means for birth control. The All India Women's Conference, however, passed resolutions supporting contraceptive usage with women reformers and nationalist feminists such as Laxmibai Rajwade and Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya precisely using the patriarchal notion of "motherhood." Having committed to the traditional roles of an Indian woman, they proceeded with rationalizations that in many cases the resources of poor Indians could not support their families at that time, and the potential of indiscriminate procreation added neither to racial betterment nor to national futurity, but instead compromised the nation's vitality and well-being.

If Ahluwalia's essay reflected on elite women leaders exclusively, Priyanka Srivastava's study highlights the effects of early industrial India's effects on working-class women. The essay attempts an examination of the accomplishments and the limitations of the liberal feminist discourse on working class women's rights as concerned with labor. It highlights the fact that the question of women workers' rights was perennially framed around the nationalist ideals concerned with the notion of "motherhood" by certain champions, Indian male legislators, local administrators, and social activists. However, the essay questions, taking the case of Bombay women mill workers as a study, that the liberal proponents of working-class women's rights did not ever definitively construct paid work and motherhood as different poles, and did not ever advocate the removal of women from the workforce.The essay points out that the champions of women's rights failed to articulate and deploy an alternate, liberal vocabulary of women's rights, but instead drew uncritically from the existing national discourse on gender. Srivastava's study startlingly illumines a hypothesis of Forbes who analyzed in the late 1970s, how working class women, concerned with survival issues, often felt alienated from elite women's movements thus pointing not only to the tensions between women straddling different classes but in explaining the failures of the early women's movement by mixing women-specific problems with the nationalist cause.[81]

Paula Banerjee in her essay debates questions of resistance, activism, ethnicities, nationalities, state, and sexuality. Banerjee discusses the complex case of women's agency in Tripura, a hilly Northeast region which gained full statehood in 1972. The demographic mix largely consists of indigenous people officially recognized as Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes indicating long roots of dissent and protest traditions. Banerjee concludes that the left government of Tripura, though applauded as practicing good governance, based on certain

indicators, was responsible for reducing women's autonomy by subsuming their politics within the political agenda of the state. As a result, women overwhelmingly voted against the left-leaning Tripura CPI(M) state government and brought in the far-right BJP government. Banerjee's work feeds urgently into other contemporary women's questions. Clearly, one of the most vexed questions for contemporary Indian women's movements is understanding the widespread support that women provide for right-wing political parties. Banerjee's study gives us valuable peeks into how women's autonomy is played out in the larger field of politics and state governance.

The volume is particularly distinctive as Ramusack and Forbes recount their lived experiences as scholars-teachers. Their autobiographical reflections trace their journey, struggle, joy, and fulfilment in pursuing Indian women's history from its days of infancy to the matured present. There are also personal musings by Professors Antoinette Burton and Mrinalini Sinha that delve into bonds of friendship, solace, and sisterhood underlining the global links and opens up the volume to a wider intellectual readership.

History was a powerful means of connecting to past feminist struggles for women scholars engaged in women's movements of the 1960s to the 1980s. Ramusack and Forbes were able to pay rich tributes to pioneers for gender and racial justice and also to differentiate their concerns from those of their foresisters: in their scholarly outputs, Ramusack and Forbes paid heed to voices from other contexts and societies. In offering this volume to readers, we would like to remind our audience of what Natalie Zemon Davis humbly said about her illustrious predecessors, "some of our present-day production in women's history still does not match them in methodology and analysis."[82]But we have aspired to come close to our foremothers in rectifying the deep and persistent bias of the historical record and in trying to make the relations between the sexes more equitable by applying a keen lens to our pasts and in indicating trends for the future. We have also endeavored to point out the intergenerational and inter-spatial connection that women often forge. We hope that the lessons learnt and the stories told will continue to inspire new generations of feminist scholars of India.

Notes < Subheading A>

[1] Vina Mazumdar, *Memories of a Rolling Stone* (Delhi: Zubaan, 2010): 103.

[2] Pamela Philipose, *Vina Mazumdar's Rolling Story*, https://www.boloji.com/articles/9784/vina-mazumdars-rolling-story, accessed on January 24, 2021.

[3] Mazumdar: 103.

[4] Ibid.:108.

[5] The connection between feminisms and internationalism has already been already been established in scholarship. See Mrinalini Sinha, Donna Guy, and Angela Wollacott eds, *Feminisms and Internationalism* (Oxford: UK: Blackwell Publishers, 1999).

[6] Kumari Jayawardena, *Feminism and Nationalism in the Third World* (New York: Zed Press, 1986).

[7] Bharati Ray, ed., *From the Seams of History: Essays on Indian Women* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1995).

[8] Ramusack's email to Dr Padma Anagol, dated April 22, 2018.

[9] Ramusack, *The Princes of India in the Twilight of Empire 1914-1939* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1977).

[10] Nicolas Mak-Wasek, graduate student, City University of New York, Brooklyn College,

[11] Geraldine Forbes, *Positivism in Bengal* (Calcutta: Minerva Associates, 1975).

[12] Co-editor Padma Anagol's conversations and correspondence with Professor Geraldine Forbes.

[13] For an example from the West, see Audre Lorde, *The Uses of Anger, Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches* (Berkeley: Crossing 2007); for an illustration closer home, see Naisargi N. Dave, "To Render Real the Imagined: an Ethnographic History of Lesbian Community in India," *Signs*, 25, 3 (2010): 595–619; G. Arunima; "Friends and Lovers: Towards a History of Emotions in 19th and 20th century Kerala," in Bharati Ray (ed.), *Women of India: Colonial and Post Colonial Period*, as part of the Indian Council for Philosophical Research series on Indian Science, Philosophy and Culture (New Delhi: Sage, 2005): 139–158.

[14] Margrit Pernau, et al., *Civilising Emotions: Concepts in Nineteenth-Century Asia and Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015); Susan Matt and Peter Stearns, eds, *Doing Emotions History* (Urbana: Illinois University Press, 2014).

[15] The volume uses the term "women" as opposed to gender while the contributions underscore that every aspect of reality is gendered. The process of gendering involves creating distinctions and hierarchies based on "perceived differences" between sexes and subjective identities; religions; sects; ethnicities; castes; classes; ideologies and age. Our focus on women of different strata, time, and space illustrates how gender norms were produced through political and social institutions and multiple structural inequalities, regulations and rules.

[16] Ruth E. Hagengruber, "The Stolen History—Retrieving the History of Women Philosophers and its Methodical Implications," in S. Thorgeirsdottir and R. Hagengruber (eds), *Methodological Reflections on Women's Contribution and Influence in the History of Philosophy*, 3 (Switzerland: Springer, 2020). https://www.springer.com/gp/book/9783030444204, accessed on December 1, 2020.

[17] G. Forbes, "Caged Tigers: 'First Wave' Feminists in India," in *Women's Studies International Forum,* 5, 6 (1982): 525–536.

[18] Chandra Talpade Mohanty, "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses", *boundary 2*, 12, 3–13 (Spring-Autumn, 1984): 333–358.

[19] Geraldine H. Forbes, *Women in Modern India* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1996): 4–5.

[20] The title of the summer course was "Living as a Woman: An Introduction to Women in Indian History and Culture" in correspondence with co-editor, Padma Anagol.

[21] https://www.womenfounderscollective.org/, accessed on December 15, 2020.

[22] https://www.unwomen.org/en/csw/csw65-2021, accessed on December 16, 2020.

[23] A theme that was addressed earlier by Nita Kumar, *Women as Subjects: South Asian Histories (Feminist Issues: Practice, Politics, Theory)* (Kolkata: Stree, 1994).

[24] Hanna Papanek and Gail Minault, eds, *Separate Worlds: Studies of Purdah in South Asia.* (NJ: Humanities Press, 1982); Hanna Papanek, "The Ideal Woman and the Ideal Society: Control and Autonomy in the Construction of Identity", in Valentine M. Moghadam (ed.), *Identity Politics and Women* (New York: Routledge, 1994).

[25] Gail Minault, *Secluded Scholars: Women's Education and Muslim Social Reform in Colonial India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998);*Gender, Language, Learning* (Delhi: Permanent Black, 2009).

[26] Rounak Jahan, *The Elusive Agenda: Mainstreaming Women in Development* (Dhaka: University Press, 1980).

[27] Sylvia Vatuk, *Marriage and Its Discontents: Women, Islam and the Law in India* (New Delhi: Women Unlimited, 2017). "Islamic Feminism in India: Indian Muslim Women Activists and the Reform of Muslim Personal Law", in F. Osella and C. Osella (eds),*Islam in India*, Special Double Issue, *Modern Asian Studies*, 42/2–3 (2008): 489–518.

[28] Barbara Metcalf, *Perfecting Women: Maulana Ashraf 'AlīThanawi's Bihishti Zewar: a Partial Translation with Commentary* (University of California Press, 1992).

[29] Sonia Nishat Amin, *The World of Muslim Women in Colonial Bengal, 1876*-1939 (Leiden: Brill, 1996).

[30] Uttara Chakraborty and Banimanjari Das eds, *In the Footsteps of Chandramukhi* (Kolkata: Bethune College, 2004).

[31] Siobhan Lambert-Hurley, *Elusive Lives: Gender, Autobiography, and the Self in Muslim South Asia* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2018); Siobhan Lambert-Hurley and Sunil Sharma, *Atiya's Journeys: A Muslim Woman from Colonial Bombay to Edwardian Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

[32] Mahua Sarkar, *Visible Histories, Disappearing Women: Producing Muslim Womanhood in Late Colonial Bengal* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008).

[33] Reza M. Pirbhai, *Fatima Jinnah: Mother of the Nation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

[34] Asiya Alam, *Women, Islam and Familial Intimacy in Colonial South Asia* (Brill, forthcoming).

[35] Fayeza Hasanat, *Nawab Fayezunnesa's Rup Jalal* (Leiden: Brill University, 2009).

[36]Tanika Sarkar, *Hindu Wife, Hindu Nation: Community, Religion, and Cultural Nationalism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press; First Edition (January 1, 2002); Zoya Hasan, *Unequal Citizens: A Study of Muslim Women in India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2006); Urvashi Butalia, *The Other Side of Silence* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000).

[37] Janaki Nair, "Uncovering the Zenana: Visions of Indian Womanhood in Englishwomen's Writings, 1813–1940," *Journal of Women's History*, 2, 1 (1990): 8–34.

[38]Indrani Chatterjee, *Gender, Slavery, and Law in Colonial India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2002); Indrani Chatterjee (ed.), *Unfamiliar Relations* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2004).

[39]Samita Sen, "Offences against Marriage: Negotiating Custom in Colonial Bengal," in Janaki Nair and Mary John (eds), *A Question of Silence? The Sexual Economies of Modern India* (New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1999); "Unsettling the Household: Act VI (of 1901) and the Regulation of Women Migrants in Colonial Bengal", in Shahid Amin and Marcel van der Linden (eds), "Peripheral" Labour? Studies in the History of Partial Proletarianisation," *International Review of Social History, Supplement* 41, S4 (1996).

[40] Swapna Banerjee, "Debates on Domesticity and position of Women in Late Colonial India",*History Compass Journal* 8, 6 (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2010): 455–473.

[41] Janaki Nair, *Women and Law in Colonial India: A Social History* (New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1996); Flavia Agnes, *Family Laws and Constitutional Claims* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2011); Kumari Jayawardane and Malathi de Alwis (eds), *Embodied Violence: Communalising Women's Sexuality in South Asia* (New York: Zed Books and New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1996).

[42] Paula Banerjee, "Peace Initiatives of Naga Women," Canadian Women's Studies, 19 (Winter, 2000): 30; "Between Two Armed Patriarchies: Women in Assam and Nagaland," in Rita Manchanda (ed.), *Beyond Victimhood to Agency: Women War and Peace in South Asia* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2001).

[43] Mary Vanlalthanpuii, "The Changing Roles of Mizo Women Since 1987," PhD. Thesis, Joint Degree from Women's Studies and Political Science, University of Calcutta, 2020.

[44] Karen Offen, "Was Mary Wollstonecraft a Feminist? A Comparative Re-reading of *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman, 1792–1992*," in K. Offen (ed.), *Globalizing Feminism 1789-1945: Rewriting Histories* (London: Routledge, 2010): 5–17.

[45] Mary E. John, "Feminism in India and the West: Recasting a Relationship," *Cultural Dynamics*, 10, 2 (1998). John's essay traces the history of the conflictual relationship between feminism in India and the West.

[46] Padma Anagol, "Women's Agency and Resistance in Colonial India: An Introduction," in Padma Anagol (ed.), *Emergence of Feminism in India, 1850-1920* (London: Routledge, 2006): 1–18.

[47] Ibid.: 3–4.

[48] Ibid.: 3.

[49] G. Forbes, *Women in Modern India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996): 6.

[50] W. L. O'Neill, *Everyone was Brave: The Rise and Fall of Feminism in America*(Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1969).

[51] Forbes, *Women in Modern India*: 7.

[52] Prof. Forbes e-mail exchange with Padma Anagol, June 29, 2017.

[53] For more on Social Reproduction Feminists (SRF), see Susan Ferguson, "Social Reproduction: What's the Big Idea?" https://www.plutobooks.com/blog/social-reproduction-theory-ferguson/, accessed September 13, 2020.

[54] For extensive discussion of women's reproductive labor in the Indian context, see Prabha Kotiswaran, "The Laws of Social Reproduction: A Lesson in Appropriation," *Northern Ireland Legal Quaterly*, 64, 3: 317–333.

[55] Forbes, *Women in Modern India*: 5.

[56]Ibid.: 6.

[57] Mrinalini Sinha, "A Global Perspective on Gender: What's South Asia Got To Do with it?" in Loomba and RittyLukose (eds), *South Asian Feminisms* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012): 356–373.

[58] Swapna Banerjee, "Baby Halder's *A Life Less Ordinary: a Transition from India's Colonial Past?*", in Victoria Haskins and Claire Lowrie (eds), *Colonization and Domestic Service* (New York: Routledge 2014): 239–255.

[59] Neera Desai and Maithreyi Krishnaraj, *Women and Society in India* (Delhi: Ajanta, 1987); MaithreyiKrishnaraj, "Writing Women's History or Writing Women into History?," in Kirit K. Shah (ed.), "Introduction," *History and Gender: Some Explorations* (Jaipur: Rawat, 2005); K. Sangari and S. Vaid, *Recasting Women: Essays in Indian Colonial History* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1990); Mary John, *Discrepant Dislocations: Feminism, Theory, and Postcolonial Histories* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1996); S. Ahluwalia, "Rethinking Boundaries: Feminism and (Inter) Nationalism in Early Twentieth-Century India," *Journal of Women's History*, 14, 4 (Winter, 2003): 188–195. Among some of the recent works on Indian and South Asian feminisms are N. Menon, *Seeing Like a Feminist* (New Delhi: Zubaan and Penguin Books, 2012); Loomba and Lukose(eds), *South Asian Feminisms* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012); Srila Roy(ed.), *New South Asian Feminisms: Paradoxes and Possibilities* (New York: Zed Press, 2012).

[60] The multiple valences of feminisms—the Marxist-inspired liberal, radical, and cultural feminisms followed by the intervention of Third World and women-of-color feminists advocating "transnational feminism," "feminism without borders," and "relational and multicultural feminism" have strong resonances for India but they never gained full traction.

[61] Annie Zaidi, *Unbound: 2,000 Years of Indian Women's Writings* (Kolkata: Rupa, 2016).

[62] The Bhakti movement is the theistic devotional movement among different Hindu sects that originated in eighth-century South India and flourished subsequently in northern India in the fifteenth century, reaching its zenith in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

[63] B. Ramusack, "From Symbol to Diversity: the Historical Literature on Women in India," *South Asia Research*, 10, 2 (November 1990): 139–157.

[64] Barbara N. Ramusack and Antoinette Burton, "Feminism, Imperialism and Race: a Dialogue between India and Britain," *Women's History Review*, 3: 4, 469–481, DOI: 10.1080/09612029400200065

[65] See Ronald Hyam, *Empire and Sexuality: the British Experience* (UK: Manchester University Press, 1990).

[66] Hyam, *Empire and Sexuality*: 16–19.

[67] Ramusack and Sievers, *Women in Asia: Restoring Women to History*(Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1999): 42.

[68] Nupur Chaudhuri, Review of *Women in Asia: Restoring Women to History*, *Journal of World History*, 12, 2 (January 2001): 457–459.

[69] *Women in Asia: Restoring Women to History*: xv.

[70] For an insightful review of Ramusack and Sievers' s work see Judith P. Zinsser, "Women's History, World History and the Construction of New Narratives," *Journal of Women's History*, 12, 3 (2000):196–206.

[71] Antoinette Burton, *At the Heart of the Empire: Indians and the Colonial Encounter in Late Victorian Britain* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998); *Dwelling in the Archive: Women Writing House, Home, and History in Late Colonial India* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003).

[72] Sanjam Ahluwalia, *Reproductive Restraints: Birth Control in India, 1877-1947* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2008).

[73] For more on women's works as sources of history see Barbara Ramusack, "Women in South and Southeast Asia", in Ramusack(ed.), *Women in Asia: Restoring Women to History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999).

[74] *Towards Equality: Report of the Committee on the Status of Women* (New Delhi: Government of India, Ministry of Education and Social Welfare, Department of Education, 1974).

[75] Kumud Sharma and C.P. Sujaya, *Towards Equality: Report on the Committee of the Status of Women in India* (Delhi and Chennai: Pearson, 2011).

[76] For more details see Radha Kumar, *History of Doing* (London: Verso; New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1993).

[77] Paula Banerjee, *Borders Histories, Existences: Gender and Beyond* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2010); Paula Banerjee(ed.), *Women in Peace Politics* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2008).

[78] Paula Banerjee and AnusuaBasu Ray Chaudhury, *Women in Indian Borderlands* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2011).

[79] Swapna M. Banerjee, *Men, Women and Domestics: Articulating Middle-Class Identity in Colonial Bengal* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2004).

[80] Although "activism" as a feminist term came into vogue in the 1960s-based feminist lexicon, the pursuits, events, undertakings that surround woman-centred crusades and lobbying for political and social action date back to the late nineteenth century, especially observable in the Age of Consent debates when major women's organizations in western India, for example, the

Arya MahilaSamaj and Poona Native Ladies Association lobbied with the help of British-based suffrage and American-based philanthropic organizations to give fillip to male legislators to push the agenda of women's welfare forward. In the early twentieth century, we find burgeoning feminist activism in labor movements, maternal and childcare movements and elite women in nationalist-based feminist organizations. Many of the contributors to this volume discuss the rich traditions of feminist activism in their various chapters.

[81] Geraldine Forbes, "The Indian Women's Movement: A Struggle for Women's Rights or National Liberation?," in G. Minault (ed.), *The Extended Family: Women and Political Participation in India and Pakistan* (Delhi: Chanakya, 1981):49–82.

[82] Natalie Zemon Davis, "'Women's History' in Transition: The European Case," *Feminist Studies* 3, 3/4 (1976): 86, https://doi.org/10.2307/3177729.