



Two-day National Seminar

on

Gender-Based Violence in South Asia

Literature, Culture and Media



Dates

October 30 and 31, 2026

Organized by

Department of English

Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Gorakhpur University, Gorakhpur

Concept Note

Gender-based violence remains one of the most persistent and troubling realities of South Asian societies, and it continues to demand sustained scholarly attention from the humanities. While legal and sociological approaches have documented its scale, literature, culture and media reveal how violence is normalised, remembered, silenced and contested in everyday life. Further, gender-based violence in South Asia has been a representational and cultural problem, asking not only what violence does to gendered bodies but also how it is narrated, witnessed and made thinkable. Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble* (1990) demonstrates that gender is not a natural essence but a "performative" repetition of norms, which means that violence against women, queer and trans persons is often an enforcement of those norms rather than a deviation from them. Butler's later exposition of it in works like *Precarious Life* (2004) and *Frames of War* (2009) extends this insight by asking why some lives are publicly grieved while others remain "ungrievable," a question that resonates powerfully with the differential visibility of violence against women in South Asian media. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's essay 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' (1988) remains foundational here, reminding us that the gendered subaltern is frequently spoken for rather than heard, whether in colonial archives or in contemporary television debates. Gender based violence cannot be understood under a singular category of caste, class, religion, disability, nation and location, therefore, intersectionality of violence, body and gender emerges as a site of academic and cultural debate. The catastrophic violence, such as the Partition of 1947, for example, does not remain in the past but "descends into the ordinary" (Veena Das, *Life and Words*, 2007), shaping domestic life, kinship and speech long after the event in South Asia. Literature, culture and media trace how gender based violence becomes central to such narratives of citizenship and belonging. Today, digital media have created new arenas of gender based harm, including trolling, doxxing (the public exposure of private information) and image-based abuse, even as movements such as #MeToo have used the same platforms to break long-held silences. Chandra Talpade Mohanty's caution against the analytical and political dangers of constructing a singular, monolithic category called the "third world woman" in 'Under Western Eye' (1984) as a singular victim remains urgent here, so is Hannah Arendt's characteristic irony of "rule by Nobody" (*The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 1951), a bureaucratic system, where decisions are made by an anonymous, faceless apparatus in which no single official can be identified as responsible for violence, since global media coverage of South Asian violence often paradoxically fails to represent. The seminar, therefore, encourages papers that read gender-based violence across literary texts, films, web series, journalism, folk and oral traditions, and social media, in English and in South Asian languages (in English translation), and that attend to resistance, survival, care and repair rather than victimhood alone.

The seminar particularly welcomes intersectional and interdisciplinary abstracts on the following related but not limited sub-themes:

- Partition, Communal Violence and Gendered Bodies in Fiction, Memoir and Cinema
- Trauma, Memory and Silence: Narrating Sexual Violence in Literature and Oral History
- Disability, Vulnerability and Gendered Violence in Life Writing and Visual Culture
- Castes, Gender and Violence: Dalit Feminist Writings, Testimonios and Anti-caste Critiques
- Queer and Trans Lives: Sexualities, Law and Violence Texts and Media
- Religions, Communities and Honour: Violence, Faith, Family and Nation
- Classes, Labour and Violence: Domestic workers, Precarious Women's Labour
- Gender, the Elderly and Problem(e)t(h)ics of Care
- Spatiality of Violence: the Home, the Street, the Border and the Camp as Gendered Spaces
- Bodies and Sexualities: Normativities and Frames of Violence
- Gender, Gig-economy and the Calculus of Structural Violence
- Urban and Rural Geographies of Safety, Surveillance and Mobility
- Migration, Violence, Gender, Precarity and the Collapse of State Machinery
- Ecologies and Gendered Vulnerability: Displacement, Disaster and Resource Conflict
- Literatures, Media and Culture and Normalization/Invisibilisation of Gender-based Violence
- Digital Cultures: Online Abuse, #MeToo and Feminist Counter-publics
- Violence, Gender, Protests and the Public Unrest
- Media Ethics and Representation: Journalism, 'True' Crime and the Spectacle of Violence
- Folk, Oral and Performance Traditions as Archives of Resistance and Mourning
- Translation and the Circulation of Narratives of Violence across South Asian Languages
- Masculinities, Militarisation and Conflict Zones in Literature and Film
- Law, Testimony and the Limits of Justice in Literary and Cultural Texts
- Posthuman Subjectivities, Technological Mediations and Gender Questions
- Gender and Gastronomy: Aesthetics and Politics of Food
- Gender and 'New Media': YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and others

About the University

Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Gorakhpur University, established in 1950, is a premier state university in Eastern Uttar Pradesh and has emerged as a major centre of higher learning after Independence. Accredited with an A++ grade by NAAC, and the Category -I status by the UGC, the University is guided by its motto, "Let the noble thoughts come to us from all directions," reflecting its commitment to academic

excellence, inclusivity, and value-based education. Comprising of eight faculties and forty departments it imparts quality education to over 12,000 students, more than half of whom are women. With advanced research facilities, ICT-enabled infrastructure, a vibrant residential campus, and a strong record in teaching, research, outreach, and placements, the University continues to contribute significantly to the educational and socio-cultural development of mainly Eastern Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and the neighbouring country of Nepal. The University is located within 1 km range from the Gorakhpur Junction railway station and Gorakhpur Bus Stand, and only 9 kms from the Gorakhpur Airport.

About Gorakhpur

Gorakhpur, a historic city in eastern Uttar Pradesh, stands on the Rapti River and serves as the district and divisional headquarters. Renowned for its deep religious and cultural legacy, it is closely associated with the Nath sect, Buddhism, and Jainism, and is home to the revered Gorakhnath Temple and the iconic Gita Press. A gateway to Nepal and a major railway hub housing the North Eastern Railway headquarters, the city blends spiritual heritage with educational prominence through institutions such as Deen Dayal Upadhyay Gorakhpur University and Madan Mohan Malaviya University of Technology. With roots in ancient Koshal, links to the freedom struggle, and a vibrant trade and agricultural economy, Gorakhpur offers a compelling confluence of history, faith, and modern development. The city is a tourism hub for its proximity to Kushinagar, the place where the Buddha breathed his last, and Maghar, the final resting place of Sant Kabir. The city experiences a humid subtropical climate, similar to the rest of the Indo-Gangetic plain, with hot summers and cold winters.

Registration Fees

Faculty Members and Independent Researchers	INR 2000 (100 USD/GBP for non-Indian residents)
Research Scholars	INR 1500 (70 USD/GBP for non-Indian residents)

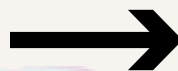
Note 1: The registration fee shall cover the Seminar kit, breakfast and lunch for the two days of the Seminar. (Limited accommodation can be made available in the University Guest House on payment of the guest house charges.)

Submission Details

Abstracts and personal details can be posted at the following google form:

<https://forms.gle/QPekCyqPFsY6tj1n6>

OR Scan this QR Code



Important dates of the Seminar

Deadline for the Abstract Submission	September 20, 2026
Deadline for the full paper submission	October 20, 2026

Publication

Selected papers will be considered for publication in both an edited volume with an internationally renowned publisher (**Routledge/Bloomsbury**) or a special issue of a **Scopus Indexed journal**.

Accommodation

Accommodation at the University Guest House will be allotted strictly on a first-come, first-served basis while female participants will be given priority for guest house room allocations. Delegates are advised to finalize their travel plans and request lodging early.

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