

Women Beyond the Doorstep

A collection of Research Papers



Editors :

Leena Borah Kalita
Dr. Sajmina Akhtar

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Sexuality, Gender and the Body:

A speculation on the everyday life of women beyond the doorstep (in the Indian context)

Kakoli Bonya Gogoi

Abstract

The aim of this paper is to study the politics of sexuality, gender and the body in the everyday life of women beyond the doorstep in the context of Indian society at large. It is seen that the gendered subject cannot escape her femininity in each and every aspect of her life - be it within the four walls of her household or in her venture outside it. The life of an average Indian female is bound to get acquainted with rituals associated with her bodily functions, like menstrual taboos, pregnancy myths, childbirth and the entailing child rearing, which act as restraints in her performance compared to her male counterparts. The concern of the present study is to show that the gendered subject is not a biological or psychological construct, but a social construct favoured by the patriarchal system.

Key words: *gender, female body, social constructs, everyday life*

The female body has been a matter of speculation and debate in our social life as well in academic discourse. The women's body is viewed as being sensuous, mysterious, exotic and always a desirable object, as portrayed in discourses ranging from classical literature to advertisements, women's magazines and popular