

Stepping In, Stepping Out – Reframing the debate on masculinities

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15 February 2017

Masculinity and more specifically hegemonic masculinity has emerged as an important conceptual tool for research as well as development intervention. Across educational institutions and development agencies the concept is utilised to generate more knowledge on what constitutes gender in mens lives. Hegemonic masculinity seems to have entrenched itself as a political project rather than a tentative idea of the mechanism through which plurality of mens lives could be disentangled and dominance interpreted. The classificatory objectives of the concept and its widespread utilisation for setting up an oppositional category seems to obfuscate the fluidity of gender expressions and practices that do not necessarily contest with each other but remain embedded within patriarchal as well as other forms of inequalities. The importance provided to the concept seems to be driven by an anxiety to locate and create an oppositional category and simultaneously identify categories that could be utilised to express possibilities of change as far as men and gender is concerned. The talk will attempt to question the assumptions within the widespread use of the concept of hegemonic masculinity and pose limitations that it presents to understanding as well as politicising masculinities.

Short Bio note Rahul Roy is an independent documentary film maker based in Delhi. He did his masters in film making from the Mass Communication Research Centre at Jamia Millia Islamia in 1987 and has been making documentaries since. His work stands at the cross section of the city, labour and mens lives. Some of his early films were on communal violence. His latest film is on the ongoing Maruti Case where 150 workers have been charged with murder after a conflict between the union and the management at the Manesar plant. He is the coordinator and director of the Justice Project a multi country research and film project.