

EMPOWERING YOUNG WOMEN BY RAISING AWARENESS ON FEMINISM

The primary aim of these comprehensive programs is to equip young women with knowledge about feminism, encouraging them to reshape their perspectives and attitudes, while laying the foundation for building a gender-equal society. In Sri Lanka, feminism remains limited to a small segment of society, as the country continues to operate within a patriarchal framework. It is crucial for Sri Lanka to cultivate a strong feminist movement to address these challenges. These programs serve as a key step in fulfilling that need by bringing together and educating young women aged 18 to 25, focusing on feminist theory and nurturing future leaders.

Viola Perera

Senior Program Manager

Women and media collective

FEMINISM FOR A BETTER TOMMOROW

For aspiring young individuals interested in
studying feminism

This synopsis covers the Feminism Studies
Program organized by the
Women and Media Collective
from November 2021 to the end of 2023. The
program aimed to empower
young feminists through educational
initiatives while fostering the growth of a new
generation of leadership.

Organised By



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Women and Media Collective
Established 1984

**Women and Media Collective,
No. 56/1, Sarasavi Lane, Castle Street, Colombo 08, Sri Lanka.**

Phone: 94-11-2690453/457

Fax: +94-11-2690192

Email: wmcslanka@womenandmedia.org

Web: www.womwnandmedia.org

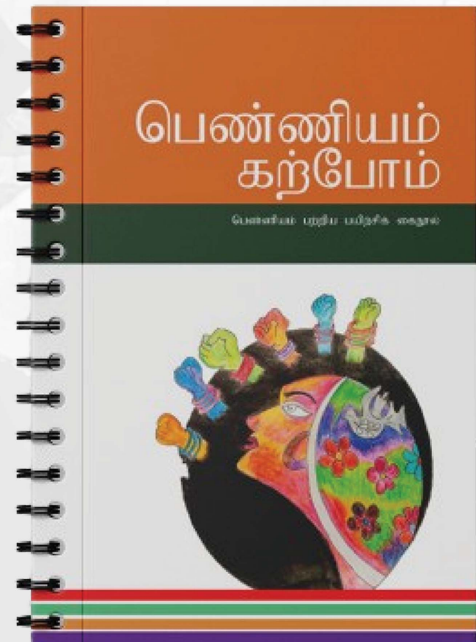
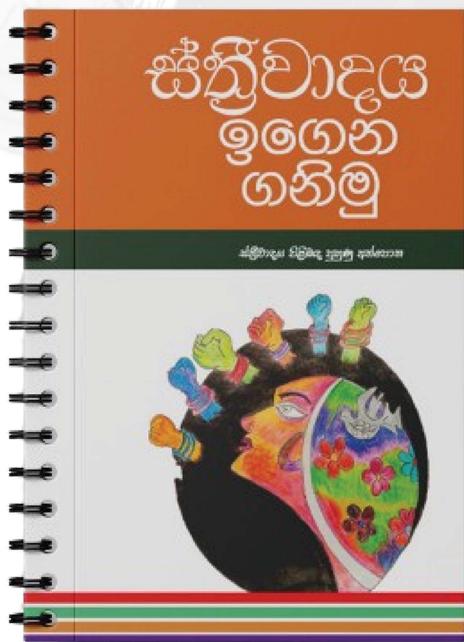
Facebook: facebook.com/womenandmediacolle

Youtube: [women and media collective](https://youtube.com/womenandmediacollective)

Twitter: twitter.com/womenandmedia

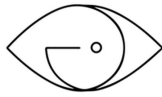
Feminism Module

Understanding feminism and its vision requires exploring its historical evolution and progression over time. It is equally important to grasp key concepts such as patriarchy, equality, equity, gender, and the division of labor. The primary goal of this initiative is to empower young women to pursue social justice, responsibility, and active participation by enhancing their critical thinking skills and openness to feminist principles. This training manual consists of seven main sessions, with additional sub-sessions structured within each.



A translated publication on Feminism

Professor Nivedita Menon serves as Professor of Political Thought at Jawaharlal Nehru University in India. With the author's consent, we have translated the influential feminist book *Seeing Like a Feminist* into Sinhala and Tamil. We selected this work for translation due to its ability to convey complex feminist theory and practice in an elegantly clear and cohesive writing style. The author's insights have sparked important discussions, deepening the understanding of the socio-political inequalities faced by women.



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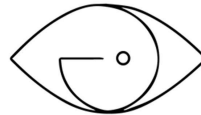
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Seeing Like A Feminist

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ஒரு

இன்றையதேயுட்பட்ட பதிப்பு

பெண்ணியவாதியின்

"வியத்தல வண்ணம் எம்மை ஒத்திரப்பது நிரையானதே. ஒன்றாகவேயுள்ள"
தனிக்கா சர்க்கார்

பார்வையில்

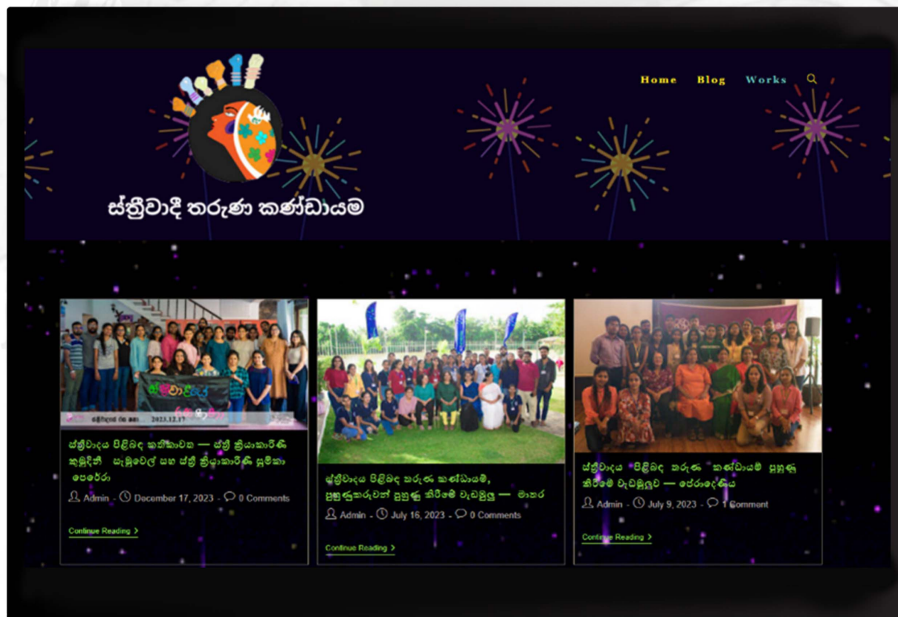
நிவேதித்தா மேனன்

Blog for the Feminism

This blog offers a wide range of comprehensive resources on feminism. Our aim is to curate a collection of visual elements, essays, films, and digital copies of feminist works, all focused on feminist issues.

BLOG

<https://learn-feminism.rf.gd>



Programs Aimed at Raising Awareness Among Youth About Feminism.

The selected youth groups comprised university undergraduates, young women employed in various fields, and members of women's organizations who applied through Google Forms, expressing their eagerness to learn about feminism. The participants included students from the universities of Kelaniya, Colombo, Peradeniya, Ruhuna, and Sri Palee Campus.



Training for Trainers Workshop - Colombo



Training for Trainers Workshop - Gampaha



Training for Trainers Workshop - Kurunegala



Training for Trainers Workshop - Peradeniya



Training for Trainers Workshop - Mathara

Awareness Programme Outline

Ms. Viola Perera, Senior Program Manager at the Women and Media Collective, gave a comprehensive overview of the goals and objectives of the organization's training programs, as outlined in the Feminism training manual. She emphasized the importance of fostering a society that upholds gender equality and ensuring that these young participants are involved in decision-making processes, while equipping them with the skills to approach decisions from a feminist perspective.

In the second session, Ms. Sanjeevani Rupasinghe, Senior Lecturer at the University of Kelaniya, provided an in-depth analysis of feminism, examining its core concepts and the diverse societal challenges faced by women. She explored the complex array of issues confronting women in Sri Lanka, spanning social, economic, political, and cultural spheres, all of which are deeply rooted in patriarchal structures.

In the third session, Ms. Sumika Perera, Executive Director of the Women's Resource Centre and a prominent advocate for women's rights, provided a comprehensive overview of the historical context and challenges faced by the feminist movement. She drew upon both theoretical knowledge and personal anecdotes to illustrate her points. Additionally, she emphasized that this discussion was conducted with careful consideration of the literature on feminism. She recommended several books to develop understanding of the subject.

In the fourth session, Dr Prabha Manuratne, a Senior Lecturer at the University of Kelaniya, conducted activities to raise awareness about equality and equity. She discussed a variety of issues including the portrayal of women in the media, nonviolent resistance in the feminist movement's historical context and the categorization of gender in the

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WATCH US ON  **YouTube**

COLOMBO

<https://youtu.be/C1kACm6xLzc?si=gYuk8fsu3mqV6i3W>

GAMAPAHA

<https://youtu.be/wCtlH7CNbv8?si=Tg80ustgzwn2SEg>

KURUNEGALA

<https://youtu.be/kEWrVEEnJfc?si=RvU0rcnkFMd2kccJ>

PERADENIYA

<https://youtu.be/tocDsLE9l58?si=Jwb94chqCe3fu1-h>

MATHARA

<https://youtu.be/95ohz37bnxg?si=SGJJxAzDcD-TMiy0>

Discussion on Feminism

01. Online Discussion of Feminism in the Covid-19 era

1. What is Feminism? :

Women activist Sumika Perera

2. Gender socialization as the basis for equality :

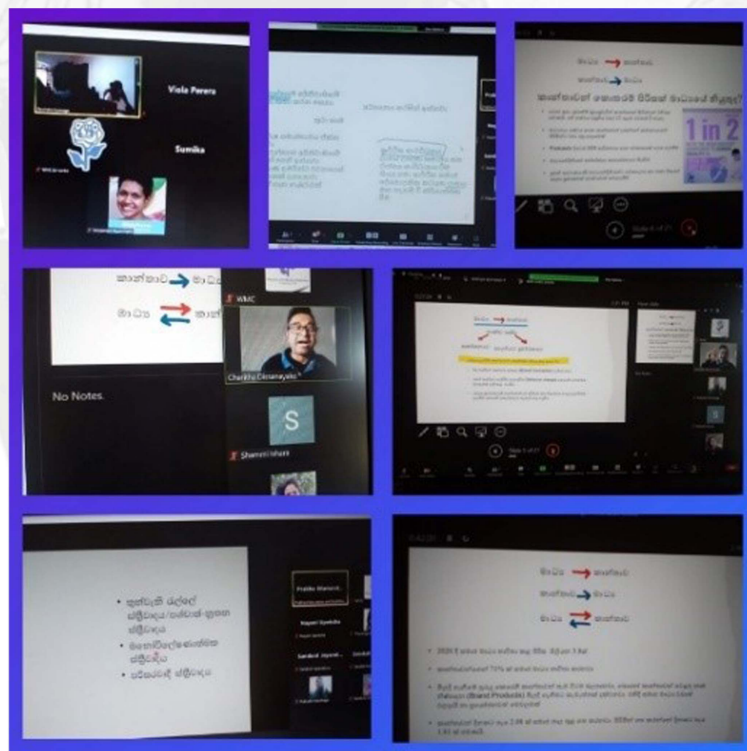
Senior Lecturer Sanjeevani Rupasingha

3. Non - violent Struggles :

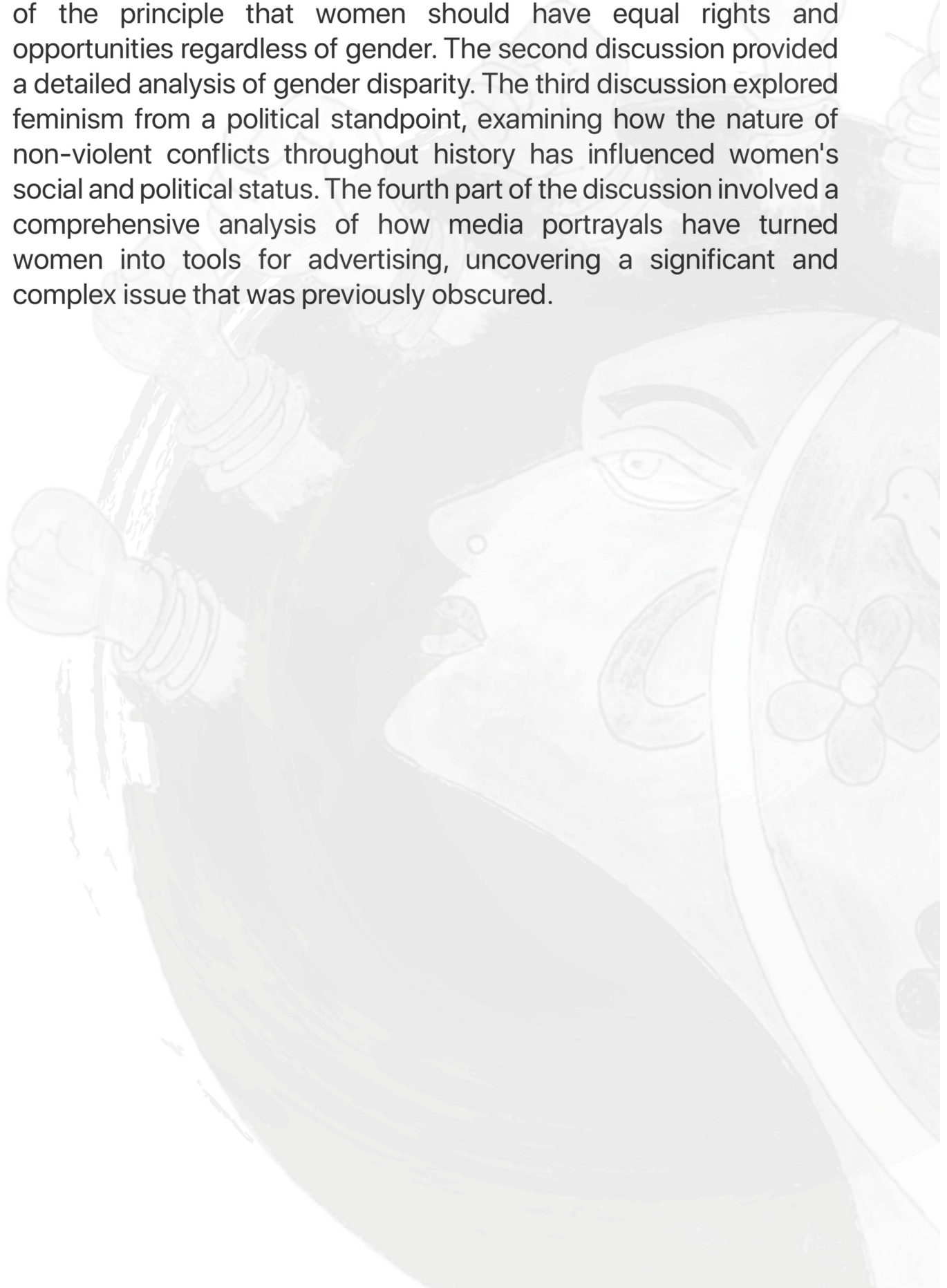
Senior Lecturer Dr. Prabha Manuratne

4. Women portrayed in media :

Dr. Charitha Dissanayake - Senior Journalist



These discussions were conducted through online throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. The first lesson offered a deep understanding of the principle that women should have equal rights and opportunities regardless of gender. The second discussion provided a detailed analysis of gender disparity. The third discussion explored feminism from a political standpoint, examining how the nature of non-violent conflicts throughout history has influenced women's social and political status. The fourth part of the discussion involved a comprehensive analysis of how media portrayals have turned women into tools for advertising, uncovering a significant and complex issue that was previously obscured.



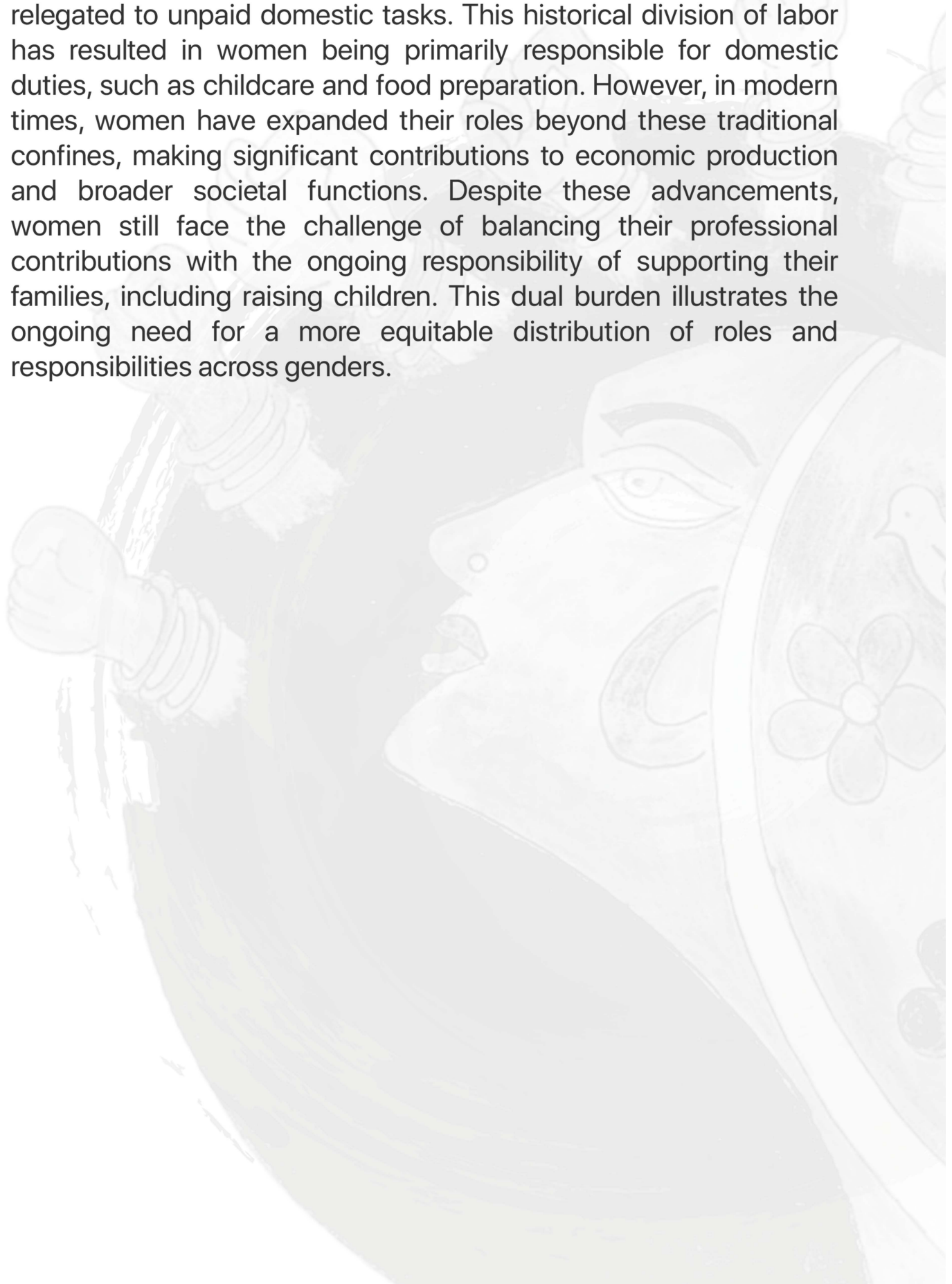
Discussion on Feminism

02. What is Feminism and the History of Feminism?



She provided a detailed explanation of the origins and historical evolution of feminism, underscoring the critical need to achieve justice for women through a gender-egalitarian perspective. Her analysis highlighted the persistent and extensive gender-based discrimination that remains prevalent in contemporary society. By examining the socio-cultural factors underpinning this discrimination, she presented concrete evidence and examples that illustrate the biological differences between women and men, as well as the social inequalities associated with gender. She emphasized that the roles and responsibilities assigned to women vary greatly across different societies and cultures, reflecting deep-seated social norms and expectations.

Furthermore, she discussed how traditionally, men have been assigned paid work outside the home, while women have been relegated to unpaid domestic tasks. This historical division of labor has resulted in women being primarily responsible for domestic duties, such as childcare and food preparation. However, in modern times, women have expanded their roles beyond these traditional confines, making significant contributions to economic production and broader societal functions. Despite these advancements, women still face the challenge of balancing their professional contributions with the ongoing responsibility of supporting their families, including raising children. This dual burden illustrates the ongoing need for a more equitable distribution of roles and responsibilities across genders.



Discussion on Feminism

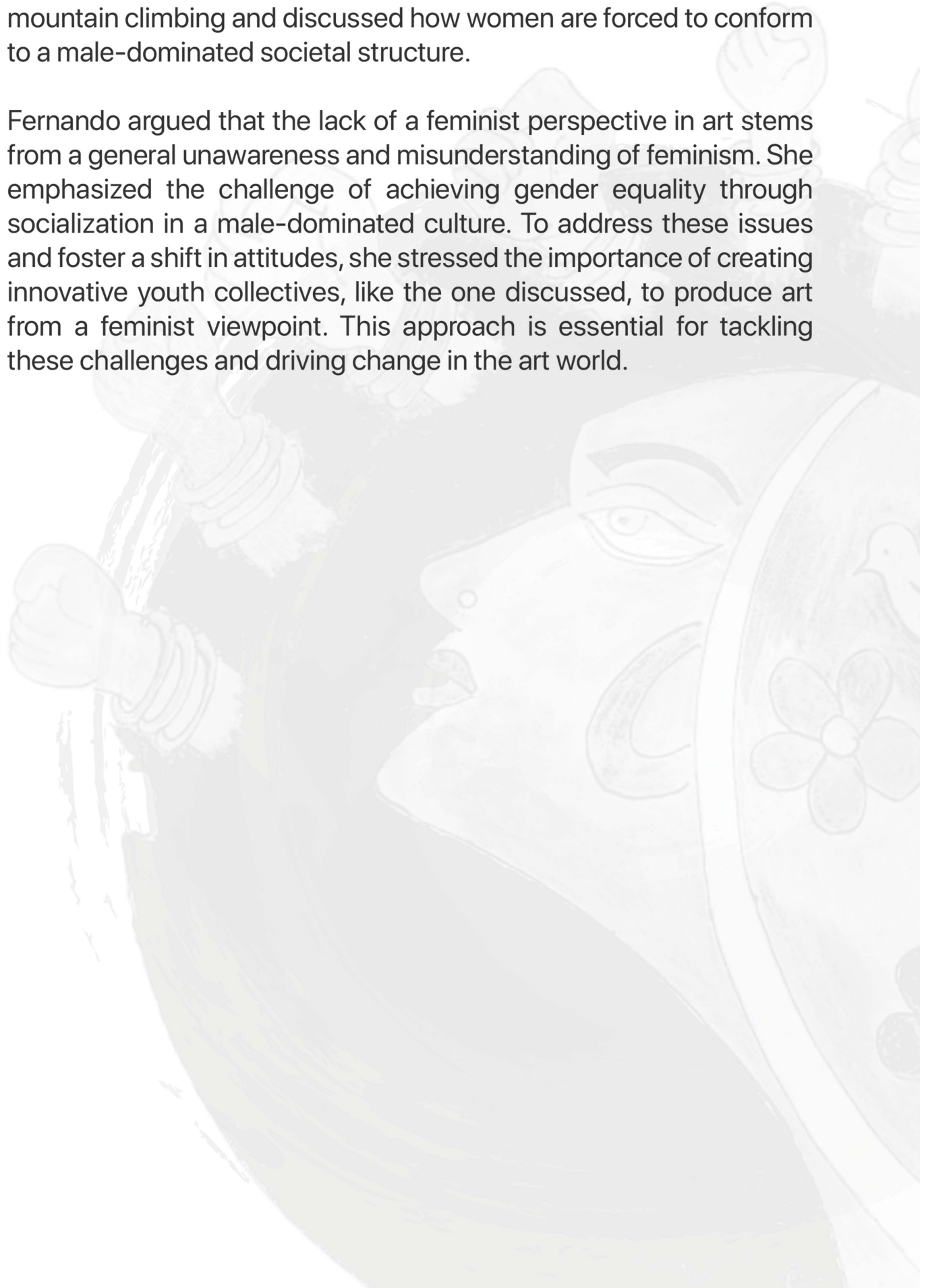
03. Feminism and Sexuality



This discussion, organized by the Women and Media Collective on April 29, 2023, featured Ms. Jayanthi Kuruthumpala as the resource person. A feminist and women's rights activist, Ms. Kuruthumpala advocates for issues such as violence related to virginity, sexuality, masculinity, and women's human rights. Notably, she became the first Sri Lankan to summit Mount Everest in 2016. During her talk, she shared personal experiences where women have been underestimated and subjected to unfair treatment. She highlighted the limited opportunities for pursuing hobbies like mountain climbing in Sri Lanka, noting that women often struggle to access the necessary training.

She explained that men typically control the essential aspects of mountain climbing and discussed how women are forced to conform to a male-dominated societal structure.

Fernando argued that the lack of a feminist perspective in art stems from a general unawareness and misunderstanding of feminism. She emphasized the challenge of achieving gender equality through socialization in a male-dominated culture. To address these issues and foster a shift in attitudes, she stressed the importance of creating innovative youth collectives, like the one discussed, to produce art from a feminist viewpoint. This approach is essential for tackling these challenges and driving change in the art world.



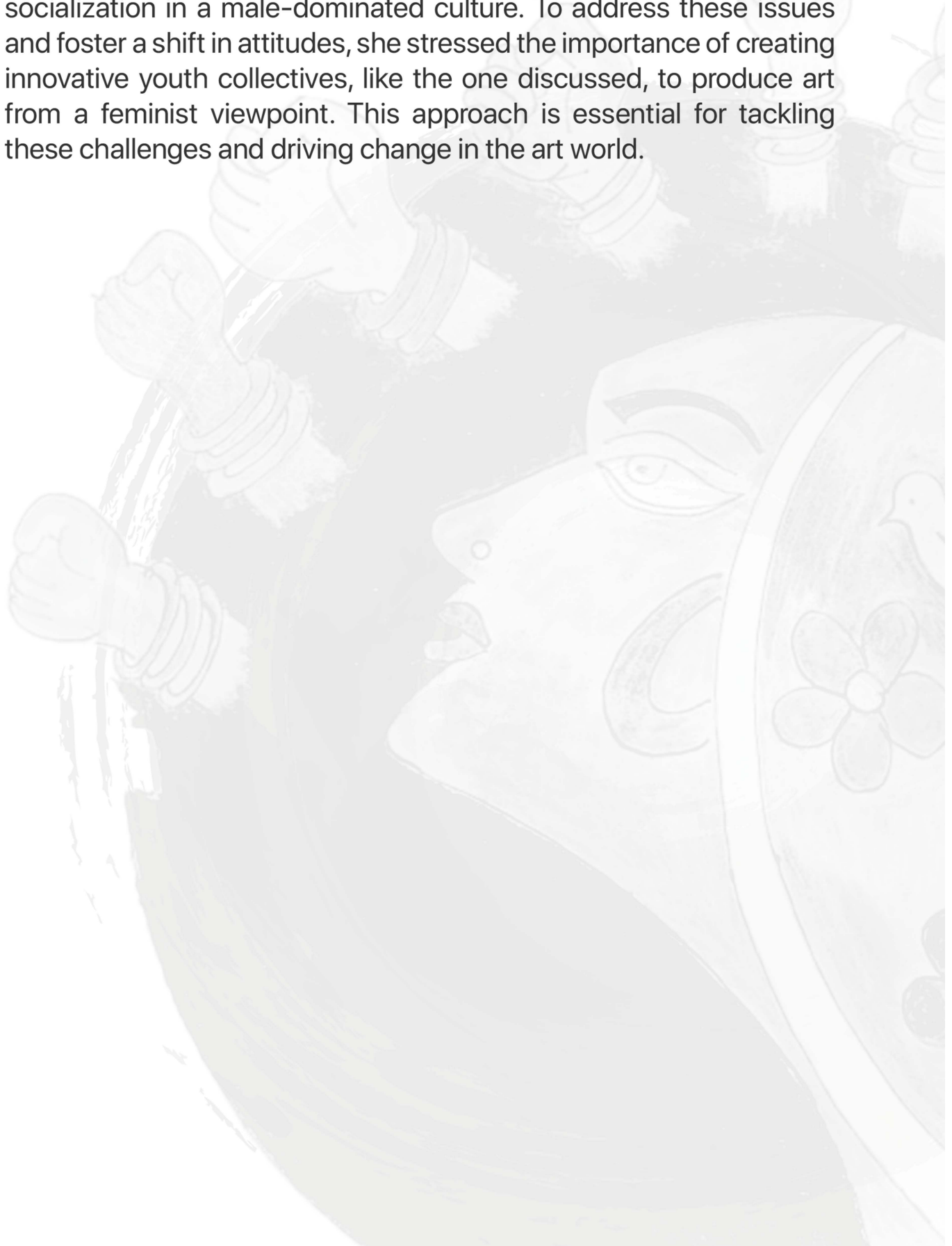
Discussion on Feminism

04. Feminism and Art



The primary contributor to this topic was Kaushalya Fernando, a renowned artist in Sri Lanka, on June 24, 2023. Drawing from her own experiences, she highlighted the necessity of adopting a feminist perspective within the art world. She pointed out that failing to grant women personal autonomy, neglecting their worth, and undermining their independence are evident issues within the artistic sphere. A controversy also arose regarding the film "Boradiya Pokuna," in which she acted, exploring the implications of sexuality within a patriarchal context.

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Discussion on Feminism

05. Flavors of Feminist History

LOREM IPSUM



The discussion held on December 17, 2023, at the Women and Media Collective premises, featured prominent women activists Kumudini Samuel and Sumika Perera. These activists, who have been dedicated to advocating for women's rights in Sri Lanka from the mid-20th century to the present, shared insightful stories about the evolution of feminism. Their discussion covered various political ideologies, movements, and organizations, highlighting the changes within the feminist movement and Sri Lankan politics from 1930 to 2023. They also explored the shifts in global politics during this period.

By examining the historical significance of feminism in Sri Lanka, it becomes evident that the feminist movement of the 20th century addressed issues beyond just women's concerns. The movement recognized that women's issues were deeply intertwined with the broader political economy. As a result, activists strategically engaged in political struggles by addressing these overarching concerns, rather than treating them as isolated issues.




Radio Discussion of Feminism



On July 5, 2023, four members from the Feminist Youth Group took part in the "Prabhathaya" program, which was hosted by Ms. Ashoka Balasuriya, Assistant Director of the Sinhala Division of Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation's Swadeshiya Sewaya, to discuss feminism.

Upcoming Events

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**TRAINING OF TRAINERS (TOT)
 YOUNG WOMEN FEMINIST GROUP**

9th JUNE 2024

@ Hotel Janaki

Organized by  **WMC**
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 Women and Media Collective

**AWARENESS TRAINING PROGRAM
 YOUNG WOMEN FEMINIST GROUP**

11th AUGUST 2024

@ GREEN GARDEN HOTEL
 BATTICALOA

ORGANIZED BY  **WMC**
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 Women and Media Collective

The actions we initiated to acquire knowledge about feminism are still in progress.

"WHILE ACKNOWLEDGING ITS INCOMPLETENESS,
THIS NOTE WILL MAKE A MODEST
CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS A MORE
COMPREHENSIVE AND METICULOUS ANALYSIS
OF THE SUBJECT IN SUBSEQUENT STUDIES."

Excerpted from the preface of the book
"Aragalaye Sthreehu"
By **Sunila Abeysekera**

Coordination: Viola Perera
Women and Media Collective

Assistant Coordination: Dinithi Nuwandi Nisansa
on behalf of the Young Feminist Group

Video and Photography: Rumesh Fernando
on behalf of the Young Feminist Group

Translation: Sanduni Jayarathne
on behalf of the Young Feminist Group

Contact Us:
Email: feminism4bt@gmail.com

