

**Heritage Matters**



The Pioneer Women's Hut in rural Glenroy near Tumarumba in NSW, Australia, is the first women's museum in Australia established by the NSW Country Women's Association under the inspirational leadership of the late Wendy Hucker. This museum helped me with practical classes for Indigenous museum and heritage studies students. I also used it as a training space for prisoners/inmates in the second oldest prison in Australia establishing the first museum in the world entirely built and run by prisoners under the resonant leadership of the Les Strzelecki.



Elsie Sheppard explains that even a small museum run by volunteers could have a niche role. Here she proudly explains the role of the Pioneer Women's Hut, in documenting and safeguarding the national quilt register of Australia in partnership with the Power House Museum in Sydney. The American Quilt Association regards it as an amazing international showcase project.



The Women's Museum in Montreal, Quebec, Canada, founded and run by women lawyers propose a metamorphosis through empathy. That of opening a door with the most intimate part of another human being to make sense, take advantage of the large capacity of relationship and emotional flexibility of women. Director Lydie Olga Ntap uses objects to tell stories through everyday life. She says sympathy is ephemeral and does nothing for anyone. "Empathy is not only an instrument of knowledge of other people's emotions; it is also an instrument of self-construction as a social being caught in a network of norms. In the experience and self-construction, the biography is the first form of Women's History in museums."

# GENDER PARITY AND GENDER MAINSTREAMING

**G**ender Parity is a statistical goal. Gender Mainstreaming is the processes of achieving that outcome. Men must be equally, if not more, responsive to sharing authority as they are the architects of the hegemonic and legacy of gender discrimination. A woman in a leadership position might help but does not necessarily equate to gender mainstreaming nor her understanding gender issues. Tokenism does more to disempower women. Critical mass of engaged and empathetic women in decision making brings about gender mainstreaming and its outcome of gender parity. Gender, women's disadvantage and corrective actions are cultural concerns.

Women's health and wellbeing as part of gender mainstreaming is an integral part of social, economic, cultural and environmental sustainability in the UN 2030 Agenda. Vietnam is using culture as the fourth pillar in its approach. China is using its unique ecological civilisation platform. Both prioritise gender concerns and provide good illustrations for Andhra Pradesh that could be a leader in Asia for culture and gender in development. The new Board of Tourism, Culture and Heritage can provide for national best practice policy and praxis as its Chairperson. The Hon Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu, is an ardent advocate for women's empowerment in the mainstream Andhra culture and society.

In this context it is critical to interrogate the embeddedness of the intersectionality of gender, class and power in the hegemonic discourses that continue to dominate cultural and heritage domains. There are a plurality of perspectives and multiplicity of meanings that emerge promising to enriching sustainable heritage development. The fundamental question that needs to be adequately addressed is as to why do we have to gender mainstream?

If we continue the manifesto 'cultural diversity is the common heritage of humanity' then the equity between all genders is imperative. But how do we value a basic human right concern such as gender and especially the agency of women? Valuing culture has been addressed in several contexts. Heritage is a project of modernity. It has become a universalistic theme, like the ideas of rights, citizenship, civil society, governance and sustainability. However, the translation of the agency of women and gender remains to be discussed and understood in Andhra and India.

Gender inequities are being addressed and quite rightly focused on welfare contributing to the wellbeing of women, children and families. But more needs to be done demonstrating evidence-based benefits and power sharing with gender breakdown taking into consideration intersectionality of other cultural borders that we constantly negotiate in everyday life - race, ethnicity, colour, sex, faith, age, physical ability, economic status, urban-rural, nature-culture, sexual orientation and so on. Disaggregation of data along gender and cultural diversity lines would enable the development of measures for locating gender as a strategic priority.

Vietnam takes the policy position that gender equity is not oppositional between men and women, but rather a space for sharing authority, power and quality of life. Nations should use laws to expand the life choices and human capacity of their people. We need to unleash the creative agency of women who can contribute substantially to every aspect of social progress. Vietnam



Vietnam Women's Museum has permanent displays on the history and heritage of women and their families. It has vibrant exhibition projects with stakeholder community groups. When the Hanoi Administration tried to ban street vendors endangering the livelihoods of women and their families, and the quintessential Hanoi tourist experience, the Museum's exhibition on Street Vendors resulted in the government reversing its decision. Museum used its heritage collections from the past and stories from the present to advocate social justice.



Dang Trieu, Quang Ninh Province in Vietnam, was one of the poorest villages in which I worked anywhere in the world. We used Ecomuseology as a methodology to revitalize the great late medieval ceramic heritage of the village through Public Private Partnerships. It is now one of the most livable villages in Vietnam with an annual turnover of over \$ 7 million. Women are the artists in both the traditional and contemporary design and other plastic arts. Men are the potters.



**PROF. DR. AMARESWAR GALLA**  
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Professor Dr. Amareswar Gallá, an unhyphenated Indo Danish Australian, worked with UNESCO Paris on the Gender Policy of the UN body. He trained and established a network of senior Women Museum Directors in Vietnam. He now lives in the ancient Amaravati Heritage Town.

**The systemic reach of women's agency continues to be a neglected area in heritage matters. Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen underlines women's role "in the political economy of development as an adequate recognition of political, economic and social participation and leadership of women. This is indeed a crucial aspect of "development as freedom".**

**Next week** Heritage Matters will look at Buddhism and Bamiyan Valley in Afghanistan. Remember the giant Buddha statues blown up by the Taliban.

bility could be effective for promoting gender balance and mainstreaming in India.

China has adopted Ecosites, Ecomuseums and Ecotourism as the vehicles for community engagement and benefits across the country, with bio-sphere reserves, national parks and World Heritage sites providing catalytic projects. China like India is experiencing large scale rural urban migration of men. Given the emphasis on culture by the State as a national priority in the 'ecological civilisation' agenda and with the rapid growth of tourism, women are now gaining productive employment in rural areas at different levels. Jiuzhaigou Valley Scenic and Historic Interest Area is a best practice where the Tourist Corporation promotes benefits from the region for both men and women through employment for the diversity of ethnic groups.

Vietnam is one of the first countries in Asia to address women's wellbeing through participatory democracy. The focus has been on the Mother as the central image, from war and famine to rebuilding one of the most dynamic societies in the world that was the first to achieve most of the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. In this endeavour the Vietnam Women's Union established a membership led Vietnam Museum of Women, the leading national museum that inspired the establishment of a global network of women's museums.

Given the time lag in transformations, the ultimate question is what is a critical mass of women in gender balanced approaches. National Women's Parliament in Vijayawada promoted the modus operandi to achieve gender equity, grounded in participatory decision making for power sharing and authority. The agency of women is a critical enabler and indicator of effective outcomes in AP. The youthful leadership of Hon Minister for AP Culture and Tourism Ms. Bhuma Akhila Priya is welcome and timely. The much-awaited metamorphosis is with us now, benefiting posterity.

provides good illustrations for culture in development. In the 21st Century gender equity is a target that public and private sector agencies need to comply or explain. It is about gender analysis across various sectors and different localities and incorporating a gendered perspective in all policies, programs and projects and their implementation and evaluation.

Gender needs to be systemically both hard wired through compliance and reporting mechanisms and soft wired through aspirational goals among all the stakeholders of tourism, culture and heritage. Workplace official procedures should be in place to prevent any impediments to career progression and retention for women. Some of the initiatives include addressing bias in language and capacity building, mentoring, leave and flexible working facilities.

Inadequate gender data at all levels has been an impediment for the development of appropriate policies and strategies especially in advocating the cultural dimension of development. World Economic Forum, and the source methods and frameworks that informed the Global Gender Gap index, the first ever in an all-powerful Economic Forum, is useful. In interpreting the data and developing strategic targets countries such as Norway could share their experiences. Since the introduction in 2006 mandatory gender quotas the country demonstrated phenomenal success in both the public and private sectors including the cultural domain. Other countries in Europe with similar experiences are Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Spain, Italy and the Netherlands. A comply or explain approach with responsi-