



**BEING AN HONOURABLE
HINDU GIRL:
UNDERSTANDING SEXUALITY,
AGENCY, AND THE CITY IN HINDU
NATIONALIST DISCOURSES**
PRESENTATION BY AASTHA TYAGI

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Being an honourable Hindu girl: Understanding sexuality, agency, and the city in Hindu nationalist discourses

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The current ruling government in India belongs to the largest Hindu nationalist coalition in the country. Rashtra Sevika Samiti (hereon, Samiti) is the parallel women's organisation to the ideological head of Hindu nationalism in India, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS). Together, along with affiliate organisations, they believe in the idea of the Hindu nation (Akhand Bharat/Hindu Rashtra) devoid of the undesirable 'other'. This project seeks to understand how young women are sought to be socialised into a particular idea of nationhood. Based on participant observation in the organisations' camps in 2013 and 2017, this paper uses the pedagogic narratives used by the Samiti authorities that create the aura of threat rooted in the city and the body of the 'other' (male, Muslim). The paper argues that by collapsing and combining the threat of sexual violence into the space embodied by the 'other' and vice-versa, Samiti creates a cautionary ideology against mobility and choice. Secondly, such a discourse enables the mobilisation and creation of a desired form of 'Hindu masculinity'. Additionally, through in-depth interviews with young women attending the camp, it has emerged that young women actively negotiate and respond to such narratives, and devise strategic methods to navigate the everyday of the public sphere.

Discussants:

Lalit Vachani, filmmaker (CeMIS)

Dr. Nandagopal R. Menon, anthropologist (CeMIS)