



DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

THE DELHI SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS, UNIVERSITY OF DELHI

SOCIOLOGICAL RESEARCH COLLOQUIUM

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Feminist Street Theatre: Performing The Movement



Speaker Dr. Deepti Priya Mehrotra

Dr. Dr. Deepti Priya Mehrotra is a political scientist, writer and feminist researcher. She currently teaches Philosophical Perspectives on Education at IAAT, Gurugram, and works on gender, education and human rights.

Abstract

An energetic era of feminist street theatre unfolded across India, 1979 onwards, in sync with the autonomous women's movement. Countless plays such as Om Swaha, Ehsaas, Mulgi Zali Ho, Intezaar and Teen Behenon kiAtmahatya wove social critique with intimate felt experience. Fiction merged with documentary, articulating complex politics in familiar idiom. Plays exposed violence, embodied resistance, and offered alternative imaginaries. They brought nuanced discourse on gender into the public arena, even as women from diverse locations reclaimed voice and agency, nurtured oppositional politics and counter-cultures.

Dr Mehrotra's research on the theme incorporates oral history, scripts, visuals, auto-ethnography and multi-layered analysis, resulting in the book *Walking Out, Speaking Up: Feminist Street Theatre in India* (Zubaan, 2025). It also prompts us to enquire into the possible relevance of such theatre, today.