

Madhu Purnima Kishwar was till recently Professor at the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies and Director Indic Studies Project (CSDS). She has since been awarded Maulana Azad National Professorship of the Indian Council for Social Science Research.

She is also the founder editor of *Manushi - A Journal About Women and Society*, which was started in 1978. The print edition of *Manushi* gave way to online edition in 2008. (See www.manushi.in). The Journal has endeavoured to promote informed activism through research-based writing and critiques on various issues in a manner that integrates women's rights and concerns in each and every aspect of our national life and has steadfastly avoided the "ladies compartment" approach to women's issues.

She is also the Founder President of Manushi Sangathan, an organization working for democratic reforms to promote greater social justice and strengthen human rights for all, especially for women. Manushi is managed by a non-profit Trust. Kishwar describes her work with *Manushi* as a "labour of love" rather than a professional engagement.

Her work as an academic covers three broad categories:

- **Laws, Liberty and Livelihoods:** This is aimed at evolving a pro-poor agenda of economic reforms in India. It involves close investigation of various laws and regulation that trap perfectly legitimate occupations of people working in the unorganized sector of the economy in a web of illegality. Two major outcomes of this research based policy reform work have been far reaching changes in laws for cycle rickshaw pullers and street vendors. She has also worked closely with farmers movements dismantling of restrictive laws on agriculture and is currently doing a countrywide study of the livelihood battles of communities that represent India's traditional art forms..
- **Indic Studies Project** to promote the study of diverse cultures and faith traditions in the Indic universe. Apart from organizing major national and international conferences, Kishwar has organized several dialogues with concerned stakeholders on contentious issues with a view to finding consensual solutions. These include ethics and politics of conversions. Kashmir dispute, impact of Hydro projects on our sacred rivers and mountains, honour killings, religion and violence etc.
- **Gender Justice:** *Manushi* journal edited by Kishwar is widely acknowledged as having pioneered a new thinking on women's rights issues in the country. The Journal has endeavoured to promote informed activism through research-based writing and critiques on various issues in a manner that integrates women's rights and concerns in each and every aspect of our national life and has steadfastly avoided the "ladies compartment" approach to women's issues which tends to ghettoize women's concerns by overlooking the context in which women of diverse communities, regions, castes and class groups are situated.

An important aspect of Kishwar's work has been to understand why there is such a worrisome gap between governmental laws and the practices of civil society in India. Her critiques of these laws and the alternatives she has offered have helped change the terms of debate and perception regarding several of these laws.

She has authored and edited several books that include the following: □ *Modi, Muslims and Media--Voices from Narendra Modi's Gujarat Zealous Reformers* (2014) □ *Deadly Laws: The Potential and Limitations of Law as an Instrument of Social Reform in India*, Sage Publishers, (2008), □ *Deepening Democracy: Challenges of Governance and Globalization in India*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2005. □ *Off the Beaten Track: Rethinking Gender Justice for Indian Women*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1999. □ *Religion at the Service of Nationalism and Other Essays*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1998. □ (Ed) *The Dilemma and Other Stories* by Vijaydan Detha, *Manushi* Prakashan, 1997. □ □ *Gandhi and Women*, *Manushi* Prakashan, New Delhi, 1986. (Also published in Telugu). □ *In Search of Answers: Indian Women's Voices from Manushi*. (Co-edited with Ruth Vanita), Zed Books, London, 1984. □ *Women Bhakta Poets, Lives and Poetry of Women Mystics in India from 6th to 17th Century* (Co-edited with Ruth Vanita), *Manushi* Prakashan, New Delhi, 1989.

Kishwar has also made several documentary films & programmes for Doordarshan in addition to anchoring, researching, script writing and presenting NewsWatch—a weekly program that critiqued willful distortion of issues in mainstream media.