

Introductory note: Padma Prakash



My entry into sociology was through physics and journalism. My basic degree is in Physics and Mathematics and I was accepted into the MA programme of the Sociology Department largely on the basis of my a study on the working and living conditions women living in Mumbai's chawls, which at that time housed textile labour, and a research monograph on women and sports in India commissioned by the Women's Studies unit of SNDT University. Subsequently I worked on a number of other areas through my post graduation and the following years: media analysis on science reporting in the media during and before the Emergency period; the context and consequence of appropriate technologies in India; the changing cultural role and content of classical dance; gender in the people's science movement; the science question in the women's movement, and others. I completed doctoral work on the sociological analysis of medical research in India, using a sociology of science perspective to look at the social, economic and political contexts that drove the trajectories of medical research, its connections to health policy and programmes, and its relative neglect in the first 40 years after independence. My subsequent research has been in the areas of sociology of science and medicine, sports studies and gender.

After several years heading the research team for the ICSSR-ICMR Health for All report and project and the Maharashtra Leprosy report, I chose to move away from research to academic writing and editing, joining the EPW in 1985. With EPW my focus was on ensuring that research output in the social sciences in India was well presented and disseminated through means like the EPW. I was with the EPW for 18 and a half years, rising to Associate editor/Acting Editor.

Recognising the need for enlarging the space for social science dissemination a few of us designed and developed eSocialSciences (www.esocialsciences.org) a social sciences portal with a robust repository of social science research in and on India., and a publication space. It is also an incubator for new, authentic peer reviewed journals. Over these years, recognizing the paucity of training that our scholars receive in the art of writing and and in writing skills, I have designed, planned , organized and conducted academic writing workshops. I have also been an associate professor at TISS for a short period, and a visiting faculty at MS University Vadodara and the International Management Institute, Kolkatta.

My years in the EPW have convinced me that the social sciences in India, especially Sociology, that has had a glorious and vibrant past need s to grow much more than it has in recent years. Bodies like the INSOSO will need to play a major role in ensuring that sociology acquires a commanding role in the new development process underway. Moreover, the Society also plays a role in grounding sociology as a profession. As member of Managing Committee I hope can contribute to its work and assist it in its project .