

Dr Meenakshi Gopinath

Dr. Meenakshi Gopinath is currently Principal, **Lady Shri Ram College** rated among the best institutions of higher learning in India. She has held this position since 1988 and has worked to mould it as a centre of excellence, which seeks to educate women to assume positions of leadership in society. The institution which today draws to its fold some of the best students and finest faculty strives to fashion best practices in democratic governance, the celebration of diversity, inclusivity and gender sensitivity. After graduating with Honours in Political Science from Lady Shri Ram College, New Delhi, she took her Masters degree from the University of Massachusetts, USA and her doctorate from the University of Delhi. Her post doctoral work, as a Fulbright scholar was at Georgetown University, USA.

In addition to her work on higher education, her research interests and publications focus on issues of security, peacebuilding, gender, Gandhian philosophy, Marxist politics, Buddhism and the performing arts.

Dr. Gopinath is also the **Founder and Honorary Director of WISCOMP** (Women in Security Conflict Management and Peace) an initiative begun in 1999 to promote the leadership of South Asian women in the areas of international politics, peace, security and diplomacy. WISCOMP provides a unique space for collaborative action research and peace building networks in the South Asian region and works at the interface of theory and practice; academia and the NGO sector.

Dr. Gopinath has piloted and fostered confidence building measures through regular conflict transformation workshops and collaborative projects among intellectuals of the SAARC region and especially between Pakistani and Indian young influentials. An innovative program in Kashmir, which networks and trains women for dialogue and peacebuilding envisioned by her is today recognized as an innovative model for recovering women's agency in areas of protracted conflict.

Meenakshi Gopinath is a member of multi track peace initiatives such as the longest sustaining Track II Neemrana Initiative between India and Pakistan and the Pakistan India People's Forum for Peace and Democracy.

As part of her contribution to facilitate efforts to foster a culture of peace, Meenakshi Gopinath has written and lectured extensively on issues of Conflict Transformation, Peace building and Education for Peace in South Asia and internationally.

She has authored ***Pakistan in Transition***, (1975) and co-authored ***Conflict Resolution – Trends and Prospects***, (2003) and ***Transcending Conflict: A Resource book on Conflict Transformation*** (2004) and ***Dialogic Engagement*** (2005).

She has also contributed chapters to edited volumes and several articles on issues of Gandhian thought, Security, Gender, Peacebuilding and Indian politics.

Dr. Gopinath was the first woman to serve on the National Security Advisory Board of India which she did from 2004 to 2006 where she sought to mainstream gender and human security concerns. She serves on the Governing Boards of research institutes, think tanks, NGOs and educational institutions. She is currently Co-Chair of the International Academic Council, University of Peace, Costa Rica and Member, Governing Board of Coexistence International at Brandeis University, USA, International Steering Committee of the Global Action for the Prevention of War, USA among others.

She currently also serves on the Boards of Sarvodaya International Trust, Centre for Policy Research, Regional Centre for Strategic Studies, Institute of Social Sciences, Foundation for Academic Excellence and Access (FAEA), Centre for Peace & Conflict Resolution, Pradaan, Shri Ram School, Doon School and on the Indo-German Consultative Group among others.

Dr. Gopinath is a **Fulbright scholar** and has received several fellowships including the Australian International Education Foundation Fellowship for 1996-97, the University Grants Commission Indo-Israel Exchange Programme 1994-96.

In pursuance of her commitment to develop programs for educating for peace, she is often called upon to develop curricula and courses of study in this growing and dynamic field. She is responsible for the introduction of Conflict Resolution studies at the University of Delhi and set up the Centre for Peacebuilding at Lady Shri Ram College which is the first of its kind at the undergraduate level in India.

In recognition of her contribution to the field of women's education and empowerment, she has received several awards including the **Padma Shri Award, Indira Priyadarshini Gandhi Award**, the **Rajiv Gandhi Award for Excellence in Education** and the **Mahila Shiromani Award** and the **Delhi Citizen Forum Award** and **Qimpro Platinum Standard Award for Education** and **Celebrating Womanhood South Asian Recognition Award for Social Harmony**

Her interests also include classical art forms, Buddhist philosophy, and theatre in education. Dr. Gopinath remains an active participant in national and international civil society initiatives on fostering coexistence between communities, women's engagement in building peace and sustained dialogue processes. Her work in the area of enhancing excellence and equity in education spans over three decades.