

# FAIZA RUKSAR ARIF



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Bangalore, India



Embrace: The Gender Lab

ORC ID



PORTFOLIO

## EDUCATION

### DEGREE & COURSES

#### AZIM PREMJI UNIVERSITY, INDIA

Post Graduate (Diploma) in Research for Social Action, 2023-2024 (Currently pursuing)

#### TATA INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES, INDIA

**Master of Arts in Women's Studies, 2016-2018**  
CGPA: 8.6 (A) Graduated Magnum Cum Laude with a silver medal.

#### TATA INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES, INDIA

**Bachelor of Social Sciences, 2013-2016**

CGPA: 7.6 (A-)

Majored in Psychology, Economics & Political Science.

### FELLOWSHIPS & GRANTS

#### CREA

**Feminist Leadership, Movement Building and Rights Institute-South Asia (2024)**

Residential program to strengthen feminist solidarity, leadership, advocacy, and strategies for collective social transformation.

#### NGUVU COLLECTIVE | Launchpad

**She Creates Change 2023-2024**

A fellowship on building digital advocacy & campaigning for social change.

#### VITAL VOICES & BUMBLE

**Bumble Next Movers Program, 2022-2023**

One of seven women changemakers selected and awarded a grant.

#### VITAL VOICES & RELIANCE FOUNDATION

**Women Lead India Fellowship, 2022-2023**

Build transformation leadership in women.

## SKILLS

### PROFESSIONAL SKILLS

- Quantitative & Qualitative Research
- Program Design
- MEL & Impact Assessment
- Content & Curriculum Development
- Project Management & Leadership
- Grant & Proposal writing
- Design & Graphics
- Strategic Planning
- Stakeholder Partnerships & Fundraising
- Social Media Management

As a dedicated social science practitioner, my focus has been leading the development and implementation of transformative program initiatives aimed at elevating the standard of living in rural India. Currently serving as the Head of Program Design, Monitoring and Evaluation, and Stakeholder Partnerships at the One Billion Literates Foundation in Bangalore, I am committed to fostering improved access to education, livelihood, and health opportunities. My expertise lies in the synthesis of research methodology, policy analysis, systems and design thinking, and intersectional paradigms. With a passion for understanding identity conceptualization and its psychosocial underpinnings, my current research focus encompasses exploring queer & transgender lived experiences, gender-based violence, sexual & reproductive rights, gender justice & minority politics.

In addition to my role at the foundation, I am currently in the process of establishing 'Embrace,' a grassroots gender lab. Through this initiative, I aspire to normalize and mainstream gender conversations, providing gender-based solutions within marginalized contexts. This venture aligns with my vision to contribute both to real-world, on-the-ground social contexts and the broader realms of policy and research. Formally trained in research methodology, policy analysis, systems and design thinking, my multifaceted skill set allows me to approach social challenges with a comprehensive and innovative perspective. I am driven by the belief that impactful change arises from a combination of hands-on engagement and rigorous theoretical understanding.

## WORK EXPERIENCE

### Founder | Embrace

The Grassroots Gender Lab | Bangalore, India  
2022 - Present (Operating Independently)

The grassroots gender lab aims to normalise and mainstream gender conversations through program design, training & and skilling stakeholders & organisations and through research & and advocacy. The lab is currently working with different organisations & companies to integrate gender into their programs.

- **Oscar Foundation, Mumbai:** Designing a gender-based life skills football program for low-income slum children. Conduct specialised Gender training for the Foundation's coaches & young leaders.
- **One Billion Literates Foundation, Bangalore:** Designing and Implementing a gender program for semi-educated rural women, focusing on reproductive health, consent, safety, and identity beyond motherhood. Included training for women to raise awareness in their communities.
- **Vacha Trust, Mumbai:** Designing a gender-based adolescent leadership program for urban slum children,, a gender & health program for adolescent girls and a residential gender training for trainee teachers and NGO facilitators.
- **Corporate Partnerships on LGBT inclusion:** Worked with Dr Reddy's on developing a DEI transgender inclusion organisation policy. Conducted sensitization training for Dot Dash Meredith & Deloitte for managers, HR and employees.
- **Podcast for LGBT Supporters & Caregivers:** Working on a podcast to educate parents, educators, and caregivers on gender identity, sexuality, and allyship for LGBT+ individuals.

### Lead | Program Design, M&E & Stakeholder Partnerships

One Billion Literates Foundation | Bangalore, India  
March 2020 - Currently Employed

Current role: Lead organizational enhancements by designing interventions, optimizing operations, and spearheading impact measurement across programs. Managing stakeholder partnerships, from grassroots to key collaborators.

## TECHNICAL SKILLS

- Data Documentation:  
Microsoft Excel, Word, PowerPoint
- Research and Data Analysis:  
SPSS, Multivariate Analysis, ATLAS Ti & NVIVO, Google Studio
- Illustration & Graphics:  
Adobe In Design, Illustrator, Procreate, iMovie
- Website & Social Media:  
Wordpress & Canva

## RESEARCH

### COMPLETED STUDIES

(Published/under publication)

1. Arif, Faiza R. (2018), "The Voice Behind the Veil: An Exploratory Study on the Identity Politics of Muslim Women and the Practice of Veiling (Hijab)", ASCI Journal of Management Vol. 47 No. 1(Spl) March 2018 [https://www.asci.org.in/journal/Journal-47\(1\)MARCHsplissue.pdf](https://www.asci.org.in/journal/Journal-47(1)MARCHsplissue.pdf)

- Winner of 'Sessions Best Paper' at the 2nd International Conference on Gender & Sexuality, 2019, Bangkok, Thailand

2. Book Chapter: The Burdened Body: Using a Well-Being lens to explore lived realities of Accessibility & Quality of Transgender Healthcare in India is published in Springer's Handbook of Gender & Health: Perspectives from South Asia. (Currently under publication)

3. Demystifying the Dysphoric: A re-telling of transgender narratives of gender dysphoria and identity conceptualisation (Qualitative, phenomenological study)

- Submitted to the International Journal of Transgenderism

4. Burdens & Bonds: Self-formation, Bodily Autonomy & Transgender Subjectivities of Motherhood in India.

- Selected for presentation at the IAMAS 2024 conference hosted by Boston University.
- Under review for Publication in the Special Issue of the Internal Journal of Women Studies: Reproductive Justice across Disciplines and Demographics

5. MA Dissertation I (March 2018)  
De-veiling the Veiled: Identity Politics of Muslim Women and the Custom of Veiling.

6. BA Dissertation I (March 2016) Invisible Wounds: An Ethnographic study of a Mental Health Facility in Hyderabad.

### PLANNED STUDIES

- Designed a gender program focused on menstrual health awareness and the organization's period policy.
- Developed health awareness initiatives promoting a healthier lifestyle for children and adolescents in govt schools.
- Conducted research studies on educational outcomes and English proficiency in children, incidence of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs), and women's skilling, empowerment and financial independence.

### Previous Role: Lead, Academic Product Development & Impact Evaluation | 2020-2022

- Directed curriculum development for the Elevate education program across 92 government schools.
- Led EdTech program initiatives and partnerships with Solve Education and Key Education, creating gamified curriculum.
- Developed courses for community women, and conducted frontline worker and teacher training.
- Formulated Theory of Change and log frames, and contributed to website, donor, and social media management.

### Gender Specialist | Training & Content

Periferry, Bangalore (June 2020 - Sep 2023)

#### Corporate Gender Sensitization Training:

- Designed and led training workshops for corporate heads, HR, managers, and employees from 60+ top organizations, including Adidas, Deloitte, Siemens, JP Morgan, BNP Paribas, Walmart, Bosch, Verizon, Intel, Bayers, Goldman Sachs, Adobe, Dr Reddy's. Trained over 30,000 individuals to build inclusivity and implement trans-friendly workplace policies.

#### E-Learning Course Design - 'Allies for Change' (Infosys India):

- Conceptualized and developed an online gender training course hosted on Infosys' learning management system. Extended the course to all Infosys employees to raise awareness on LGBT inclusion in the workplace.

#### Master Trainer, REVIVE:

- Conducted workshops and training sessions for transgender individuals seeking employment. Developed a standardized curriculum and session plans, training fellow trainers for the REVIVE program.

### Consultant | Knowledge Management

UNDP, Karnataka, Bangalore (March 2023-July 2023)

- Proposal writing: Developed & designed proposals around Tribal welfare, waste disposal and educational counseling submitted to the Karnataka State Rural Livelihood Promotion Society and other government departments.
- Reviewed existing documentation and knowledge strategies, identified existing gaps and updated strategy with indicators. Documented/disseminated human-interest stories/ case studies emerging from the project implementation with a focus on women and most vulnerable and poorest in accordance with the "Leave No One Behind" (LNOB) principles of the 2030 Agenda.
- Conducted capacity building programs for the Project Team regarding effective documentation and media/communication strategies and channels. Liaised and coordinated with the partner organizations (KSRLM) and other key stakeholders to facilitate knowledge product development process and cover field impact.

### Consultant | Research & Design

Centre for Social & Behaviour Change, Ashoka | Delhi, Remote, India  
(October - December 2021)

Research Studies:

#### Early Initiation to Breastfeeding and Exclusive Breastfeeding:

- Assisted in structuring and collating data sets for research on breastfeeding practices.

#### Behavioural Insights for HPV Vaccine Uptake (Adolescent Girls 9-14 yrs.):

- Contributed to data organization and collation for the study focusing on improving HPV vaccine uptake.

- Reviewed findings of ongoing studies to create detailed reports and presentation decks for funding stakeholders and implementation partners.
- Developed infographics for effective partner communications and social media dissemination.

1. Burdened by the Invisible Hand: Financing Experiences of Gender Identity Affirmation through Medicalised Procedures among the TNB Population

- To be published under Taylor & Francis's Feminist Economics Special issue on Gendering the Debt Crisis: Feminist Political Economy Perspectives

4. A field study on 'The transformative potential of English Literacy on semi-educated rural Community Women' An external mixed-method study was commissioned by the One Billion Literates Foundation. Collation and synthesis of data are currently underway.

5. A field study on 'Foundational Literacy in second language learners: Reflections & Learnings from One Billion Literates Foundation Model

## INTERNSHIPS

### Mamidipudi Venkatarangaiya Foundation (MVF) (Nov 2016)

- Conducted a field study on the gendered impact of residential bridge schools on literacy in Mahbubnagar district, Hyderabad, India, during November-December 2016.
- Collected and collated quantitative data on literacy across four villages in Mahbubnagar, Telangana.

### Akshara Centre, Bombay (May 2017)

- Conducted secondary research on the education and employability status of women in Mumbai's G South Ward in May-June 2017.
- Drafted a context report for the Empowering Dreams education program.
- Assisted in developing a mentorship program for semi-educated rural women and contributed to creating a policy framework for hostel facilities in the Development Plan of Mumbai.

### Conservation of Nature through Rural Awakening (April 2014)

- Conducted a field study in April-May 2014 on tribal livelihoods based on non-timber forest products in Andhra Pradesh, Hyderabad, India.

## Research Assistant | Sayfty's PAN India Sexual Violence Toolkit

Sayfty (August - November 2019)

- Assisted in the creation of a comprehensive toolkit for survivors of sexual abuse, covering medical, legal aid, and mental health/counseling services.
- Reviewed and edited primary data and interviews, ensuring accuracy and relevance.
- Structured and collated content for the report, contributing to editing and compilation processes.

## Content & Communications Officer

Content & Communications Officer, Bangalore (April 2018 - September 2019)

### Content Development Lead, VOICE:

- Spearheaded content development at VOICE, with a primary focus on adolescent programming in rural Telangana.
- Strategized and developed new programs, actively participating in implementation by leading on-the-ground training sessions for program implementers, and ensuring quality control during program piloting.

### Boys4VOICE Sensitization Program:

- Spearheaded the development of 'Boys4VOICE,' a sensitization program for adolescent boys covering menstrual and sexual reproductive health, gender-based violence, gender and sexuality, and consent.
- Managed the program's implementation across 16 government schools in rural Telangana.

### Oorja Program:

- Led the development of the Oorja program, empowering underprivileged women with modules on career building and essential knowledge on gender, menstrual health, and sexual and reproductive health.

### IEC Materials Development and Training:

- Collaborated with the Telangana Social Welfare Residential Educational Institutions Society to create IEC materials and flipbooks on menstruation, gender-based violence, and rights.
- Trained frontline and Asha workers to conduct educational sessions using flipbooks in villages across Mahbubnagar, Telangana.

### IBTADA's Girl Resource Centers:

- Developed educational collaterals for young underprivileged girls in IBTADA's girl resource centers in Alwar, Rajasthan.

## REFERENCES

### Professional References

#### Anish Ramachandran

CEO, One Billion Literates Foundation  
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anishr@onebillionliterates.org

Relationship: Reporting Manager

#### Shilpi Sharma

COO, Oscar Foundation  
+91 8655637425

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Relationship: Gender Curriculum

### Academic References

#### Nilanjana Sengupta

School of Development, Azim Premji University

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nilanjana.sengupta@apu.edu.in

Supervisor, PG Diploma

#### Vindhya Undurti

Gender & Psychology, Tata Institute of Social Sciences

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uvindhya@gmail.com

Supervisor, Both BA & MA