

# Meena Rani Khandelwal

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## EDUCATION

1995 Ph.D in Anthropology, University of Virginia  
1988 M.A. in Anthropology, University of Virginia (distinction on comprehensive exam)  
1985 B.A. in Religious Studies and Anthropology, University of Virginia (with high distinction)

## PROFESSIONAL APPOINTMENTS

2007 – Assoc. Professor; Depts. of Anthropology and Gender, Women’s and Sexuality Studies; UI  
2003 – 2007 Asst. Professor; Depts. of Anthropology and Women’s Studies; UI  
2001 – 2003 Visiting Asst. Professor; Depts. of Anthropology and Women’s Studies; UI  
1998 – 2001 Visiting Assistant Professor; Dept. of Sociology|Anthropology; Denison U  
1997 – 1998 Visiting Assistant Professor; Dept. of Anthropology & Sociology; Kenyon College  
1996 – 1997 Instructor; Dept. of Anthropology; University of Alberta  
Fall 1995 Instructor; Dept. of Anthropology & Sociology; Sweet Briar College  
Fall 1992 Instructor; Dept. of Sociology|Anthropology; University of Richmond

## HONORS AND AWARDS

2017 INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT TEACHING AWARD, COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS AND SCIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS, UNIVERSITY OF IOWA  
2000 FEMINIST TEACHING AWARD, Denison University  
1995 MCKENNAN POSTDOCTORAL TEACHING FELLOWSHIP, Dartmouth College (declined).

## BOOKS

In Prep Cookstove Chronicles: Feminist Fieldnotes on a Local Technology in India  
2006 Women’s Renunciation in South Asia: Nuns, Yoginis, Saints and Singers, co-edited with Sondra L. Hausner and Ann Grodzins Gold, New York: Palgrave Macmillan  
Also published in 2007 as Nuns, Yoginis, Saints and Singers, co-edited with Sondra L. Hausner and Ann Grodzins Gold, New Delhi: Zubaan (Indian edition of Palgrave book)  
2004 Women in Ochre Robes: Gendering Hindu Renunciation, Albany: SUNY Press.

## JOURNAL ARTICLES AND BOOK CHAPTERS (PEER-REVIEWED)

In Prep **Khandelwal, M.** “The Nada Chulha Story”  
2022 Beck, M., M. E. Hill Jr., and **M. Khandelwal\***. “How to Keep the Home Fires Burning: A Comparative Study of Cooking Hearths for Ceramic Vessels” Ethnoarchaeology  
2022 **Khandelwal, M.\***, M. E. Hill, M. Beck, S. Valappanandi, and H. Mahapatra. “The Gender of Fuelwood: Headloads and Truckloads in India” Journal of South Asian Development 17(2):230-259.

- 2017 **Khandelwal, M.\*** and K. Lain.  
 “The Humble Cookstove” LIMN, Issue 9 Little Development Devices & Humanitarian Goods (<https://limn.it/articles/the-humble-cookstove/>).  
 Providing an innovative online forum for anthropological research, LIMN is an open-source venue to communicate and display ongoing scholarly research on contemporary problems and curated and reviewed by publication editors, S.J. Collier, C.M. Kelty, and A. Lakoff and a team of editors for each issue. This essay is accompanied by digital media co-created by M. Khandelwal.
- 2017 **Khandelwal, M.\*** and C. Freeman  
 “Pop Development and the Uses of Feminism” in Seduced and Betrayed: Exposing the Contemporary Microfinance Phenomenon. Pp.49-67. M. Bateman and K. MacLean, eds. School for Advanced Research Press.
- 2017 **Khandelwal, M.\***, M.E. Hill, P. Greenough, J. Anthony, M. Quill, M. Linderman, and H.S. Udaykumar. “Why Have Improved Cook-Stove Initiatives in India Failed?” World Development 92: 13-27.
- 2016 **Khandelwal, M.**  
 “Cooking with Fire: Deep Meaning and Environmental Materialities in a Globalized World.” In Mapping Feminist Anthropology in the Twenty First Century. Pp.211-233. E. Lewin and L. Silverstein, eds. Rutgers U Press.
- 2015 **Khandelwal, M.**  
 “Renunciation and Domesticity.” In Hinduism in the Modern World. Pp.196-211. B. Hatcher, ed. Routledge.
- 2014 **Khandelwal, M.\*** and C. Akkoor  
 “Dance On! Intercollegiate Indian Dance Competitions as a New Cultural Form.” Cultural Dynamics 26(3):277-298.
- 2012 **Khandelwal, M.**  
 “The Cosmopolitan Guru.” In The Guru in South Asia. Pp.202-221. J. Copeman and A. Ikegame, eds. Routledge.
- 2009 **Khandelwal, M.**  
 “Research on Hindu Women’s Renunciation Today: State of the Field.” Religion Compass 4(December):1003-24.
- 2009 **Khandelwal, M.**  
 “Arranging Love: Interrogating the Vantage Point in Cross-Border Feminism.” Signs 34(3):583-609.
- 2007 **Khandelwal, M.**  
 “Foreign Swamis at Home in India.” Identities 14:313-340.
- 2006 Hausner, S.L. and **M. Khandelwal.\***  
 “Introduction: Women on Their Own.” In Women’s Renunciation in South Asia: Nuns, Yoginis, Saints, and Singers, Pp. 1-36. M. Khandelwal, S.L. Hausner and A. Grodzins Gold, eds. Palgrave Macmillan.
- 2006 **Khandelwal, M.**  
 “Do Saints Need Sleep?” in Women’s Renunciation in South Asia: Nuns, Yoginis, Saints, and Singers, Pp.39-68. M. Khandelwal, S.L. Hausner and A. Grodzins Gold, eds. Palgrave Macmillan.

- 2001 **Khandelwal, M.**  
"Sexual Fluids, Emotions, Morality: Notes on the Gendering of Brahmacharya." In Celibacy, Culture, and Society: The Anthropology of Sexual Abstinence, Pp.157-179. E. Sobo and S. Bell, eds. University of Wisconsin Press.
- 1997 **Khandelwal, M.**  
"Ungendered Atma, Masculine Virility, and Feminine Compassion." Contributions to Indian Sociology 31(1): 79-107.
- 1996 **Khandelwal, M.**  
"Walking a Tightrope: Saintliness, Gender, & Power in an Ethnographic Encounter." Anthropology and Humanism 21(2): 111-134.

\*major contributor

#### **BOOK REVIEWS AND REVIEW ESSAYS**

- 2020 *Learning to Love* by Raksha Pande, Rutgers University Press (cover blurb)
- 2019 *Given to the Goddess: South Indian Devadasis and the Sexuality of Religion* by Lucinda Ramberg, South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies 42(5):1003-1004.
- 2015 *Real Sadhus Sing to God* by Antoinette DiNapoli, Anthropos. 110(2):612.
- 2009 *A Place at the Multicultural Table* by Prema Kurien, American Ethnologist. 36(4):816-819.
- 2005 Review essay of *Women at the Center: Life in a Modern Matriarchy* by Peggy Reeves Sanday and *Our Women Are Free: Gender and Ethnicity in the Hindukush* by Wynne Maggi, American Ethnologist. 32(1):1017-1019.
- 2004 Where Are You From? by Dhooleka S. Raj, American Ethnologist. 31(4):4017-4018.
- 2004 *Jewels of Authority* by Laurie Patton, Religious Studies Review.
- 2003 *Castes of Mind* by Nicholas Dirks, Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History. Electronic journal.
- 2001 *White Saris and Sweet Mangoes* by Sarah Lamb, Journal of Asian Studies 60(4):1228-1229.
- 2001 The Performance of Gender by Cecelie Busby, Ethnos 66(2):276-277.
- 2000 *Sex, Sexuality, and the Anthropologist*, ed. by Fran Markowitz and Michael Ashkenazi, American Anthropologist 102(2):396.
- 1995 *Listen to the Heron's Words* by Ann Gold and Gloria Raheja, American Anthropologist. 97(3):604-605.

#### **SELECTED PUBLICLY ENGAGED SCHOLARSHIP**

- 2019 Udaykumar, H.S. and **M. Khandelwal\*\***  
"Wrapping Our Hands, Hearts, and Heads around a Forest Half a World Away" in As Far as the Eye Can See: The Promises and Perils of Research and Scholarship in the Twenty-First Century, ed. by Stephen J. Pradarelli. University of Iowa Press
- 2017 **Khandelwal, M.** "The Long Path to Enlightenment." SAPIENS Debate on Why We Yearn for the Simple Life" <http://www.sapiens.org/debate/simplicity-enlightenment/>
- 2004 **Khandelwal, M.** "Supplemental Bibliography." In Female Ascetics in Hinduism by Lynn Tesky Denton. Pp.203-207. Pub. posthumously and ed. by S. Collins. SUNY Press.
- 2002 **Khandelwal, M.** "Grounding Renunciation." Guest column in Section News of Society for the Anthropology of Religion, Anthropology Newsletter, April 2002.

\*\* secondary contributor

## **SELECTED MEDIA AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT**

- 2022 Research mentioned by journalist Harley Rustad in “‘Travelers Who Were Lost Forever’: Why Tourists Experience ‘India Syndrome’” The Guardian January 13, 2022
- 2021 Interview with Reporter Dana H. Cronin, NPR Illinois Public Media and Harvest Public Media [interview Sept. 22, 2021 for show aired in October 2021]
- 2021 Laura R. Graham and Meena Khandelwal, “UI Faculty demand TIAA accountability” Op-Ed in Cedar Rapids Gazette June 2, 2021
- 2020 Meena Khandelwal and Laura R. Graham, “Guest Opinion: Faculty request transparency and sustainability for TIAA farmland investments” Op-Ed in The Daily Iowan Nov. 16, 2020  
Guest Opinion: “Faculty Request Transparency and Sustainability for TIAA Farmland Investments”, Daily Iowan (November 16, 2020)
- 2020 Guest Panelist, NPR KUT Austin Views and Brews Radio Show, May 19, 2020

## **SELECTED GRANTS AND FELLOWSHIPS**

### ***External***

- 2022 NEH FELLOWSHIP (pending)
- 2015 FULBRIGHT-HAYS GROUP PROJECTS AWARD [Director] to support a group of 12 students and faculty for a 4-week seminar in India on cookstove improvement efforts. (\$83,000)
- 2009 UNDERGRADUATE INTERNATIONAL STUDIES AND FOREIGN LANGUAGE PROGRAM AWARD [Participant, with PI Paul Greenough] for curriculum development.
- 2002 SENIOR RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP [PI] from American Institute of Indian Studies for nine months of ethnographic research in India on Hindu renunciation.
- 1990 JUNIOR RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP [PI] from American Institute of Indian Studies for dissertation research on female Hindu renunciation in India.
- 1989 FULBRIGHT-HAYS FELLOWSHIP [PI] from U.S. Department of Education for dissertation research on female Hindu renunciation in India.

### ***Internal***

- 2021 OBERMANN CENTER BOOKENDS AWARD (~\$1000).
- 2020 OBERMANN WORKING GROUP, Khandelwal and Udaykumar, Directors.  
“Environmental Futures in India” (\$1000)
- 2019 PROVOST’S GLOBAL FORUM for “The Legacy of Mahatma Gandhi at 150: Nonviolence, Race, and Politics”. Fred Smith Director, Khandelwal co-Director. (\$26,000) [Remote WorldCanvas event in April 2020, In-person event postponed due to pandemic, then cancelled.]
- 2018 ARTS AND HUMANITIES INITIATIVE – MAJOR PROJECT GRANT for “The Social Landscape of Wood: A Comparative, Collaborative Project in Rajasthan and Odisha, India” for one month of ethnographic field research in India in summer 2019 and two weeks of field research in January 2020. TERI School of Advanced Studies (Delhi) collaborators Swarup Dutta and Gopal Krishna Sarangi. M.E. Hill PI, Khandelwal and Beck co-PIs. (\$29,230)
- 2018 ARTS AND HUMANITIES INITIATIVE AWARD for one month of ethnographic field research in India in summer 2018. Khandelwal sole PI. (\$7,283)
- 2014 CENTER FOR GLOBAL AND REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL RESEARCH SEED GRANT PROGRAM for “Counting on Trees for Carbon Sequestration: Understanding the Energy-Environment-Gender Nexus in Rural India. Udaykumar PI, Khandelwal Participant. (~\$30,000).
- 2013 CONSTELLATION COURSE PROPOSAL submitted to Office of Provost. (~80,000)

- 2013 OBERMANN WORKING GROUP on sustainability in India, with Dr. Udaykumar (\$1000)
- 2012 INNOVATIONS IN TEACHING WITH TECHNOLOGY AWARD for “Problem Solving with Transnational Feminism” to incorporate both problem-solving pedagogy and digital production into course (\$3000).
- 2012 OBERMANN WORKING GROUP on sustainability in India, with Dr. Udaykumar (\$1000).
- 2011 I.P. MAJOR PROJECTS AWARD (UI) for workshop on Diaspora Philanthropy held at University of Iowa in March 2012 (~20,000).
- 2010 STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AWARD for GWSS to support kick-off event in April 2011
- 2009 OBERMANN INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH GRANT (UI) for workshop in Summer 2010
- 2009 STANLEY AWARD FOR INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL (UI) for travel in Summer 2010
- 2009 ARTS AND HUMANITIES INITIATIVE AWARD (UI) for writing in Summer 2009
- 2005 ARTS AND HUMANITIES INITIATIVE award from University of Iowa
- 2004 OLD GOLD award from University of Iowa

### **INVITED SCHOLARLY PRESENTATIONS**

#### ***International***

- 2022 Keynote Speaker (remote) at ‘Rethinking Gender: An Interdisciplinary Perspective’ Webinar in Celebration of International Women’s Day, Vidyasagar University, Department of History, Kolkata, India. March 2022.
- 2021 Guest Speaker (remote) at International Research Methodology Workshop for M.Phil.Ph.D. Scholars in Social Sciences, University of Hyderabad, Centre for the Study of Social Exclusion and Inclusive Policy (CSSEIP). March 2021.
- 2017 Guest Speaker at Duke Kunshan University Asian Environmental Humanities Conference, DKU, Shanghai, China. May 2017.
- 2015 Guest Speaker at Centre for Study of Law and Governance, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. “Meat, Milk and Trees: Disciplinary and National Border-Crossing in the Materiality and Politics of Food”. February 2015.
- 2015 Guest Speaker at Centre for the Study of Social Systems, School of Social Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi “Decolonial Pedagogy for Environment and Other Urgent Matters”. February 2015.
- 2015 Guest Speaker at National Centre for Biological Sciences, Science and Society Seminar, Bangalore “Interdisciplinary and Inquiry-Based Pedagogy for Environment and Other Urgent Matters”. January 2015.
- 2014 Guest Speaker at Centre for Study of Indian Diaspora, University of Hyderabad, India “Nachte Raho! Inter-collegiate Indian Dance Competitions as New Cultural Form”. January 2014.
- 2005 Guest Speaker at Jawaharlal Nehru University (New Delhi) Anthropology Colloquium, “Arranging Love”. April 2005.

#### ***United States***

- 2020 Guest Speaker at South Asia Seminar, Yale University (scheduled for late March, cancelled due to COVID-19 pandemic)
- 2019 Keynote Speaker at Global South Summit, University of South Carolina – Upstate “India’s Humble Chulha and Our Big Questions”. March 2019.
- 2018 Guest Speaker at Global Knowledges and Local Universities, Global Studies Program, University of Virginia. “India’s Humble Chulha”. March 2018.

- 2018 Guest Speaker at Chao Center for Asian Studies, Rice University  
"India's Humble Chulha and Our Big Questions". February 2018.
- 2017 Guest Speaker at Duke University Asian Environmental Humanities Workshop, Duke University  
"Sacred Cows and New Environmental Realities in Rajasthan: Vegans, Vegetarians and Beef-Eaters". January 2017.
- 2015 Guest Speaker at Center for South Asia, University of Wisconsin-Madison  
"Sacred Cows and New Environmental Realities in Rajasthan: Vegans, Vegetarians and Beef-Eaters". April 2015.
- 2013 Guest Speaker at Mount Mercy University's Global Issues Series, Cedar Rapids, Iowa.  
"Playing with Fire: Women, Firewood & Climate Change in Rajasthan, India". October 2013.
- 2012 Guest Speaker at Center for the Humanities at Grinnell College, Grinnell, Iowa.  
"Mechanical Engineer and Feminist Anthropologist Talk about Trees". November 2012.
- 2012 Guest Speaker at School for Advanced Research (SAR), Santa Fe  
"Women, Informal and Formal Economy". September 2012.
- 2011 Guest Speaker at Grinnell College - guest lecture in course  
"Transnational Feminism". November 2011.
- 2006 Guest Speaker at Syracuse-Cornell University South Asian Consortium symposium on South Asian Religious Transnationalism: Regional Dynamics, Global Passages  
"Foreign Swamis at Home in India: Transmigration to Rishikesh". April 21-22, 2006.
- 2005 Guest Speaker at Grinnell College – guest lecture in sr. seminar on South Asian Saints "Women and Sannyasa". September 2005.

#### **Recent Conference Presentations**

- 2019 Panel Organized "Energy Transitions at Home: Cooking, Lighting, Cooling, Building" Annual Conference on South Asia, Madison, October 2019
- 2019 "The Nada Chulha"  
Annual Conference on South Asia, Madison, October 2019
- 2018 Roundtable "South Asian Studies in Motion: Coming to Terms with Area Studies in a Global Curriculum" Association of Asian Studies Conference "AAS in Asia", Delhi, July 2018.
- 2015 "Diaspora NGOs and Indian Nationalist Sentiment" presented at American Anthropological Association Annual Meetings; Denver, CO.
- 2014 "Decolonial Pedagogy for Environment and Other Urgent Matters" presented at American Anthropological Association Annual Meetings; Washington, DC.
- 2014 "Hydroscience & Engineering Meets Feminist Anthropology" presented at conference Designing the Digital Future: A Human-Centered Approach to Informatics. Giving People a Voice in Technology Design" hosted by Obermann Center for Advanced Studies, University of Iowa.
- 2013 "The Awkward Relationship between (Transnational) Feminism and Anthropology" presented at AFA Anniversary Panel at American Anthropological Association Annual Meetings; Chicago.
- 2013 "Feminists, Foods, and the Hazards of Talking with Engineers" presented at Feminist Pre-Conference at Annual Conference on South Asia; Madison
- 2013 Invited Panel Organized "Development and NGOs in South Asia: Feminist Debates on Empowerment", Association of Asian Studies Annual Meetings, San Diego. March 2013.

## **Additional Research Activities**

- 2021 I participated in an Obermann BookEnds Workshop where I received feedback from four scholars on my full book manuscript.
- 2019-20 One month of field research in India. December 2019 – January 2020.
- 2018-20 Cultivation of Collaborative Partnership with The Energy Research Institute University (Delhi) and with NGO Foundation for Ecological Security (Udaipur, Angul)
- 2018 One month of summer field research in India
- 2019 One month of summer field research in India
- Fall 2013 Attended Future of NGO Studies conference, Chicago. October 2013.
- Fall 2012 Participant in 5-day School for Advanced Research Seminar, Santa Fe, NM, on Critical Perspectives on Microfinance. September 2012.
- Fall 2012 Participant, Obermann Working Group on Comparative Race
- Fall 2012 Organizer, Obermann Working Group on Sustainability and Solar Cookers in Rajasthan, India

## **COURSES TAUGHT AT UNIVERSITY OF IOWA**

### **Undergraduate:**

- Environmental Politics in India [new Spring 2020] SJUS/GWSS/ANTH/GEOG:1046
- Global Migration in the Contemporary World ANTH/GWSS/IS:2151
- Love, Marriage and Family in India ANTH/GWSS:3121 (formerly Love & Kinship in South Asia)
- Intro to Cultural Anthropology ANTH:1101
- Intro to Women's Studies 131:010
- South Asian Sexual Cultures 113:127
- Anthropology of Marriage and Family ANTH:2102 (113/131:108)
- Gendering India ANTH/GWSS:2108
- Transnational Feminism GWSS/IS:3350 and ANTH:3125
- "Big Ideas" course People and Environment: Technology, Culture & Social Justice  
ANTH/GWSS/GEOG:1046
- GWSS Honors/Senior Research Seminar.

### **First-Year Seminars and Short Courses**

- Up in Smoke (Short Course/Workshop)
- Women at the Heart of Development (Short Course/Workshop)
- Cooking Up Storms (First Year Seminar)
- Bollywood, Curry and Temples: How 'India' Came to America (First Year Seminar)

### **Graduate Seminars**

- Reading Transnational Feminist Theory GWSS/ANTH:5120
- Crossing Borders Seminar: Disrupting Diasporas: Indo-Fijian, Indo-Trinidadian, and American Indian Experiences 044:286; 016:247; 1H:247; 8:231; 13:262; 30:242; 35:273; 48:247; 113:247; 129:231
- Feminist Ethnography 113:221 and 131:245
- Feminist Anthropology Theory 113:220

## **SELECTED PROFESSIONAL SERVICE**

### **Peer Reviewer**

Medical Anthropology Quarterly, PoLAR, Energy Research and Social Science, Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion, Modern Asian Studies, Cultural Dynamics, Religion Compass, American Anthropologist, American Ethnologist, NSF, University of Washington Press, Routledge.

### **Director**

South Asian Studies Program, University of Iowa (2007, 2013-14, 2018-19, 2021-22)

### **Programming Chair**

Association of Feminist Anthropology, American Anthropological Association (2016-18)

### **Member**

International Studies Academic Advisory Board, University of Iowa (2016-19)

### **Member (Elected)**

Undergraduate Educational Policy and Curriculum Committee, University of Iowa (2011-13, 2016-19)

### **Member (Elected)**

South Asia Council, Association of Asian Studies (2010-13)

### **Co-editor**

Indian Traditions section of Religion Compass. Task is to invite scholars to contribute essays in their area of expertise and then to supervise the peer-review process for these commissioned essays. (2011-12)

### **Secretary (Elected)**

Association of Feminist Anthropology, American Anthropological Association (2006-08)

### **Advisory Board Member**

Monsoon-United Asian Women of Iowa (2012-14)

### **Board Member**

Monsoon-United Asian Women of Iowa (2007-08)

### **Core Member**

Asian Community Outreach Committee (2003-04)