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## THE ZUBAAN-SASAKAWA PEACE FOUNDATION RESEARCH GRANTS FOR YOUNG RESEARCHERS FROM THE NORTHEAST

**Zubaan Publishers and the Sasakawa Peace Foundation are offering a number of research grants for the year 2018 for young researchers from the eight northeastern states. The grants provide a small fund to prepare a research paper/essays/oral histories on a broad theme.**

### *Background*

As a geographical category, the term 'Northeast India' can be used to refer to the territory beyond the chicken neck bordering Myanmar and Bangladesh, which comprises the states of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura. And yet, it is continually defined, described and constrained within a particular identity that in many ways deprives it of its internal richness and variety. What exactly do we mean when we speak of 'the Northeast'? These eight states, slightly less than a third of the total in India, are home to many peoples, religions, customs, practices, languages and histories. Their collective grouping, the brainchild of colonial administrative practices, in a sense has also become a sort of marker of their 'separateness' as an entity, despite their wide internal variety. An argument that is often used to hold the category of the 'Northeast' together is ethnic identity – and yet, not only are these states ethnically very diverse, but ethnicity often extends beyond state and national borders into other, neighbouring territories.

If the 'Northeast' as a category is diverse, so also are its women. Each state offers a different history: From being active in peace movements as in Nagaland, to being the torchbearers (meira paibis) who come out to protest for peace and against human rights violations in Manipur, women from these states have had a long and varied history. Both individually, and in terms of collectives, they have made their place in the public eye. The early organizations — like the mahila samitis in Assam to later associations such the Naga Mothers or more recently the multi-state umbrella groups like the Northeast Network, and many more — offer a rich history of collective activism. In addition, less formal groupings and individuals have also made a name for themselves: among them Irom Sharmila with her long protest against the Armed Forces Special Powers Act in Manipur, the Imas of Manipur who staged an astonishing naked protest against the army, using their bodies as weapons, and many others. More recently, the issue of sexual

identities and trans identities has also become important. In their activism women from the eight states have come up against multiple patriarchies, whether internally of their own communities, or of the State; they have had to deal with war and political strife, with problems created by drugs and unemployment, with their exclusion from electoral politics and so much more. They have mined a rich seam of writing, of poetry, of performance, of music, drawing on their cultures and using these forms to speak powerfully of their lives to the world.

#### **DETAILS OF THE RESEARCH GRANT**

This research grant is set against the broad framework of women's multiple histories, and focuses on the issue of gender in the Northeast. The idea behind the grant is to provide financial and academic support to young researchers who may wish to look into particular aspects of the history, politics, culture of the northeastern states in relation to women and gender. The papers will be written in English. In subsequent years the grant may open up to other languages but for the moment it remains limited to English. All papers written with the support of the grant will be published electronically by Zubaan Publishers on various digital platforms. They may also be compiled in print form and made widely available. The papers may be academic research papers, long-form journalistic essays or long interviews on a particular subject to do with gender. Hybrid or creative forms are welcome.

#### **ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**

1. If you are from Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura and are less than 40 years of age, you are eligible to apply.
2. You must be fluent in reading and writing English.
3. You must commit to researching and writing a 10,000 words (minimum) essay. The grant also allows for you to develop graphic narratives, or do extended interviews, or produce creative works such as a story, in lieu of the essay, all within a specified timeline.

#### **TO APPLY**

1. Send in a grant proposal (maximum two pages) which clearly describes what you wish to do, what sources you will tap (primary and secondary), the subject of your research and a timeline.
2. Submit a writing sample of roughly 500 words or a two-page spread of a graphic story, or an extract from an interview transcript done by you.
3. Grant proposals may be creative and do not need to be written in academic language.
4. Submit your CV and any other relevant information about yourself that you think is necessary, including proof of age.
5. Two names of referees, ideally people you have worked with.

### SHORTLIST AND SELECTION OF GRANTEES

All grant proposals will be screened by a selection committee. The committee will prepare a shortlist based on certain criteria and may wish to interview some candidates. Interviews can take place by Skype or phone or in person. The committee will then decide and the candidate will be informed. The committee's decision will be final.

### DURATION

The first draft of the selected papers is expected in four months after the methodology workshop, details of which are mentioned below. Papers may need to be revised after the first draft depending on the feedback. Depending on the feedback, a month may be given for the required revisions.

### PAYMENTS

The fellowship carries a grant of Rs 35,000 less applicable taxes.

Payments will be made in two instalments: 25 per cent on approval of the project and signature of contract, and the on completion of the study.

### METHODOLOGY WORKSHOPS

All successful candidates will be required to attend a preliminary methodology workshop, as well as a mid-term online review where they will present a draft of their work in order to get feedback from peers and resource people. In the time remaining for the grant, candidates will be required to take the feedback on board and to finalize their papers.

Interested people can send in their applications to [projects@zubaanbooks.com](mailto:projects@zubaanbooks.com). The last date of submission of application is 15 May 2018.

Shortlisted candidates will be informed by 31<sup>st</sup> May 2018.

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**THE SASAKAWA PEACE FOUNDATION** addresses the diverse and complicated issues that human society is encountering in the 21st century. SPF and Zubaan Publishers work together in Northeast India, on projects linked with writers and literature. For more information, log onto [www.spf.org](http://www.spf.org).