



FRAMJI DADABHOY
ALPAIWALLA MUSEUM

BIPS

Workshop

The Legacy of Parsi Women in India

(Attendance by invitation only)



2026

F.D. Alpaiwalla Museum (Mumbai), 27-28 November 2026

The Legacy of Parsi Women in India

A Workshop at the F.D. Alpawalla Museum, Mumbai

The Legacy of Parsi Women in India: Workshop

This Workshop will discuss some of the key areas in which women participated in the development of Indian society and culture during the 19th and early 20th centuries and the impact this had on modern professional, domestic and devotional life. It will consider how the role of women grew in a society that was in transition. How did women become the agents for change during this period? What persuaded some Parsi women to lead the way out of the more repressive aspects of two prevailing systems: colonial rule and Parsi patriarchy?

Speakers from across India with a few from the UK, USA, and Hong Kong, will address the different areas in which Parsi women gained agency and prominence in the fields of law, education, medicine, literature, politics, theatre, media, and in domestic and devotional life.

F.D. Alpaiwalla Museum

The F.D. Alpaiwalla Museum, administered by the Bombay Parsi Panchayat (BPP) - the apex administrative body of the Parsi community in India - will host the Workshop at its premises in the Memorial Building, Kharaghat Colony, Malabar Hill, Mumbai.

The museum was restored, upgraded and reopened on 27 March 2025 with a generous grant from the Ministry of Culture, Government of India. It is the only archaeological and ethnographic museum in the world dedicated to the Zoroastrian community. Its collection includes a firman issued by the Mughal Emperor Jahangir, coins, excavations from a dakhma in Iran dating from the 17th century, Chinese porcelain and a substantial library. Items, such as the inner sanctum of a fire temple commissioned for the Everlasting Flame exhibition at the Brunei Gallery, SOAS in 2013, and in the National Museum in Delhi in 2016, have also been donated to the Museum.

The British Institute of Persian Studies

BIPS is the UK's foremost learned organisation dedicated to promoting and supporting scholarship and research excellence on all aspects of Iran and the wider Persianate world, and to increasing public understanding and knowledge of this region.

BIPS is one of the British International Research Institutes (BIRI), supported by the British Academy.

Provisional Programme

Friday, 27 November 2026

9.30-9.50 AM	Arrival
9.50-10.00 AM	Introduction and Welcome
Session 1	
10.00-1.10 PM	
10.00-11.00 AM	Jesse Palsetia , University of Guelph - Keynote <i>Parsi women, their supporters and collaborators in the progress of women's emancipation in society, and the difficulties and ironies of their state</i>
11.00-11.20 AM	Coffee Break
11.20-11.40 AM	Leila Sohrab Vevaina , The Chinese University of Hong Kong <i>The social impact of women's financial power</i>
11.40-12.00 PM	Rusheed Wadia , Independent Researcher <i>Women's involvement in the mercantile community (tbc)</i>
12.00-12.15 PM	Discussion
12.15-12.35 PM	Mridula Ramanna , Former Head, Department of History, SIES college, Mumbai <i>Emergence of Parsi women as medical professionals</i>
12.35-12.55 PM	Perveez Mody , University of Cambridge <i>Parsi women and marriage</i>
12.55-1.10 PM	Discussion
1.10-2.10 PM	Lunch

Session 2

2.10-5.20 PM

2.10-2.30 PM **Dinyar Patel**, SPJMR, Mumbai

Parsi women and travel: the diaries of Serene Cursetji

2.30-2.50 PM **Jenny Rose**, Res. Assoc. Claremont Graduate University, CA

Parsi women's education a l'Europe

2.50-3.10 PM **Discussion**

3.10-3.30 PM **Tea Break**

3.30-3.50 PM **Pheroza Godrej**

Parsi women pioneers in the art world (tbc)

3.50-4.10 PM **Meher Mistry**, University of Mumbai

Wielding the Pen: the legacy of Parsi women writers to Gujarati literature

4.10-4.25 PM **Discussion**

4.25-4.45 PM **Shernaz Cama**, Parzor

Parsi women in transition, the reformist & the revolutionary: Madame Bhikaiji Cama and Hilla R. Faridoonji

4.45-5.05 PM **Firoza Mistree**, Independent Researcher, Hon. Advisor F.D. Alpaiwalla Museum

The nature of Fragile Dissent, two Parsi women at the cross-section of colonialism: Lady Avabai Jejeebhoy and Ruttie Petit

5.05-5.20 PM **Discussion**

7:30 PM **Dinner**

Saturday, 28 November 2026

Session 1

10.00-1.00 PM

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| 10.00-10.20 AM | Vesta S Curtis , BIPS/BM
<i>Goddesses and queens on coins: representation without empowerment</i> |
| 10.20-10.40 AM | Murali Ranganathan , Independent Researcher
<i>Parsi Women in Iran: Travelogues from the Early Pahlavi Era</i> |
| 10.40-10.55 AM | Discussion |
| 10.55-11.15 AM | Coffee Break |
| 11.15-11.35 AM | Mariano Errichiello , SSPIZS, SOAS
<i>Women, Purity and Esotericism in Early 20th Century-India</i> |
| 11.35-11.50 AM | Discussion |
| 11.50-12.10 PM | Kerman Daruwalla , TISS-Parzor, Mumbai
<i>Women's participation in priestly ritual</i> |
| 12.10-12.30 PM | Sarah Stewart , SOAS
<i>The domestication of priestly ritual</i> |
| 12.30-12.45 PM | Discussion |
| 12.45-1.00 PM | Closing remarks and plans for publication |
| 2.00-4.00 PM | Excursion tbc (optional) |



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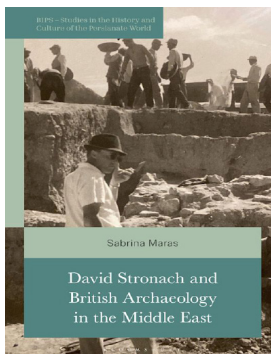
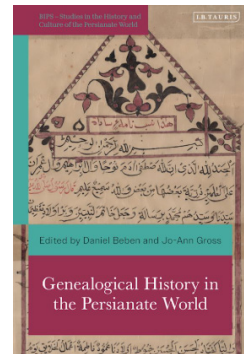
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BIPS Publications

BIPS publishes two monograph series, *Studies in the History and Culture of the Persianate World* and *BIPS Archaeological Monographs*, and the peer-reviewed academic journal *IRAN* (two issues per year).

Genealogical History in the Persianate World. Edited by Jo-Ann Gross and Daniel Beben. Published: June 2025.

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David Stronach and British Archaeology in the Middle East. By Sabrina Maras. Published: June 2026.

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