

## Call for Papers

### Women's Leadership in the Religious Domain: Perspectives from South Asia and Beyond

#### Panel Abstract and Overview:

Women's leadership in the religious domain in postcolonial South Asia and beyond, has emerged in the last century as a powerful site of gender emancipation and democracy. While nineteenth century social reform hinged on improving women's condition and facilitating their education, these early reforms were primarily initiated, and led by men – a good number of them being missionaries. This scenario changed during, and after independence that saw the participation of women in the public sphere, as equals of men against a history colonial oppression within their regions. In the context of evolving, nascently democratic, and postcolonial nationalisms in South Asia and beyond, educated women increasingly sought representation as equals, despite enormous personal struggle – to assume leadership in the religious sphere. Embedded within the male-dominated, postcolonial context, women leaders refashioned themselves in solidarity with men, and with the precolonial religious groups of their society, while at the same time, making space for themselves as empowered citizens, scholars, and feminine agents, who sought to upturn the colonial gaze – a gaze that had hitherto denounced all religions, and religious communities from South Asia and beyond, as backward. Defining this character of women's agency as 'embedded agency', research presentations in this panel discuss the journeys of women, and their stories of emancipation within the religious domain, from South Asia and beyond.

This panel at the **34<sup>th</sup> Deutscher Orientalisten Tag (DOT)**, hosted by the **Freie Universität, Berlin in September 2022**, invites scholarly contributions from all disciplines working on South Asia and beyond (regions that directly impacted South Asia or were impacted by it) to reflect on case studies of women's leadership within the postcolonial religious domain of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. If interested in participating, please register for the DOT 2022 at the given link <https://www.conftool.pro/dot2022/> and submit an abstract of 250 words, with the remark that your contribution belongs to the panel named **Women's Leadership in the Religious Domain: Perspectives from South Asia and Beyond**.

For any questions and further information please contact **Deepra Dandekar** (Deepra.Dandekar@zmo.de)