

RESEARCHING AND WRITING WOMEN, GENDER AND SOCIETY IN HIGHER EDUCATION: A MALAYSIAN EXPERIENCE THROUGH THE LENS OF KANITA

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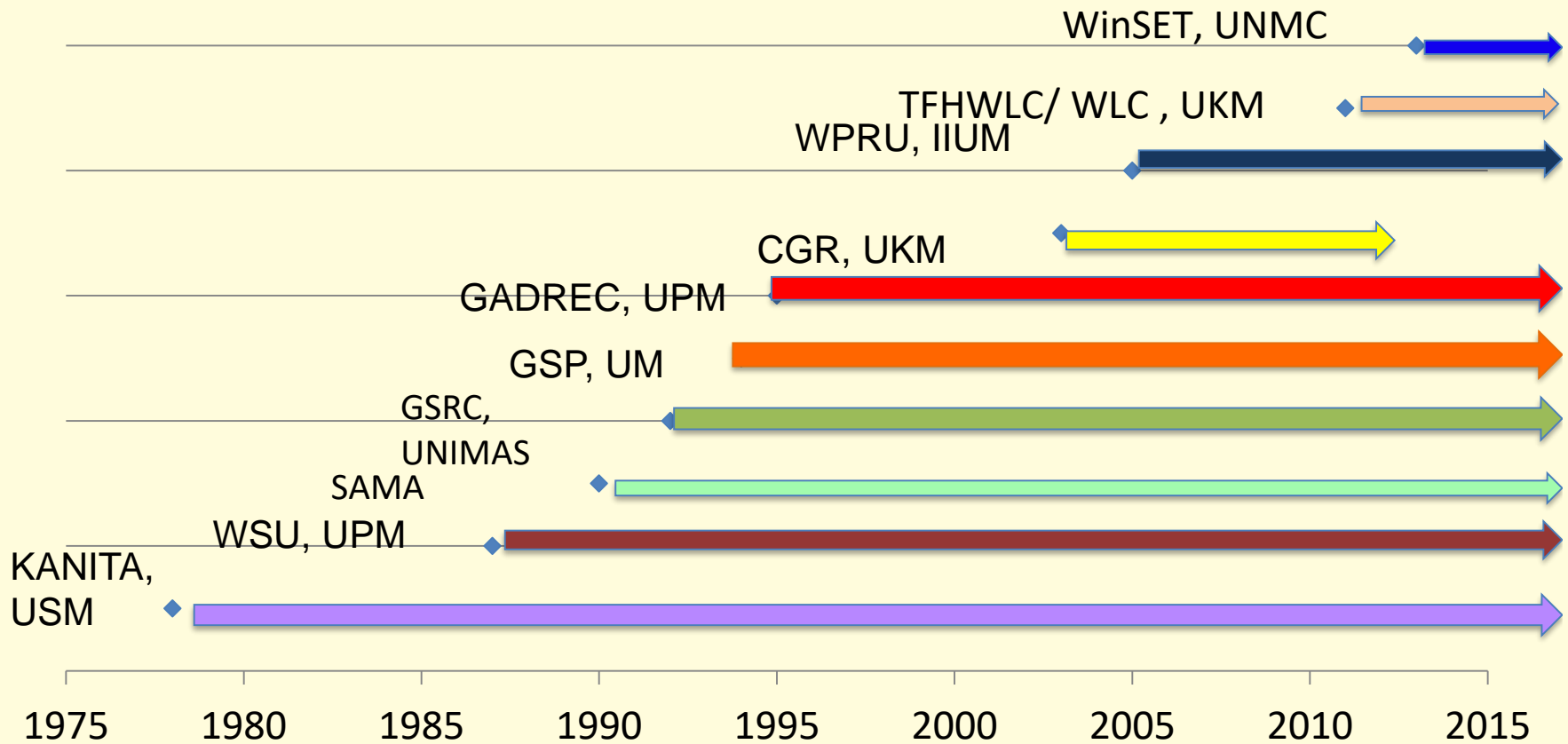
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The beginning of gender research in Malaysian universities

- 1970s industrialisation and modernisation policies; large numbers of young women migrated for work from rural areas to the designated free trade zones in urbanised centres
- Women seen as increasingly important human resources in the drive towards balancing family, community and national development
- International demands for diversity and inclusiveness leads to the recognition of the relevance of the gender lens in labour market discourses
- Increased awareness of the importance of gender framework in interrogating conventional social sciences

Historical timelines of gender research/ studies programmes in Malaysian higher education



Location of gender research programmes in universities



We lead

Gender studies programme	Location within institution
KANITA, USM	School of Social Sciences (1978-2001) Autonomous research centre (since April 2001)
WSU, UPM	Centre for Extension and Continuing Education Faculty of Educational Studies
GADREC, UPM	Faculty of Human Ecology
GSP, UM	Dean's Office, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences
CGR, UKM	Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities
WPRU, IIUM	(Virtual and multidisciplinary – originally coordinated from Kuliyyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences)
TFHWLC, UKM	Autonomous research centre (with initial funding from the MWFCF) (CGR defunct)
WinSET, UNMC	Multidisciplinary Committee (initially coordinated from Department of Chemical and Environmental Engineering)

ToR and activities of gender studies programmes



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GS Programme	ToR and Activities
KANITA, USM	Research and postgraduate programmes; advocacy (training, community engagement and consultancy)
WSU, UPM	Postgraduate programme, research; extension services to rural development agencies
GADREC, UPM	Conducting elective courses for undergraduate Human Development Programme, MSc in Gender and Development (for family and community development practitioners)
GSP, UM	Minor programme for undergraduates (and gender-focused research by academic members)
CGR, UKM	Research
WPRU, IIUM	Research
TFHWLC, UKM	Research and postgraduate programmes; consultancy and training
WinSET, UNMC	Policy and practice development and monitoring

Challenges: mainstreaming gender research in higher education

- Getting a foot in in conventional research structure
 - Challenging and negotiating deeply patriarchal structures
 - Separate from or integrated with other fields?
 - Studies of women or gender?
- Encouraging pursuit of postgraduate studies by research in women and gender issues

Challenges: mainstreaming gender research in higher education



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- Priority areas and funding issues
 - Who wants to fund? What do they want to fund?
- Methodological philosophy: stakeholders v subjects; feminist/ gender lens comprehension

- At the core of feminist epistemology and methodology
- BUT
 - Higher education policy on translational research: what is the desired outcome?
 - Product development v theory of change?
 - Is advocacy seen as an integral part of research?
 - Fulfilling high impact publication requirement (at the expense of consciousness raising and advocacy?)

Opportunities:

- Wider engagement with different constituencies
 - Interconnecting knowledge and lived experiences
- Accessibility of information sharing and funding options
- Diversified modes of publication of research outcome
- Diversified modes of advocacy

Emerging areas of research with the digital era and advent of 4IR



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- Voices of women in sciences and technology
- Women mobilising through technology
- Presentation of gender issues in disruptive technological era
- Crowdfunding for women's causes?

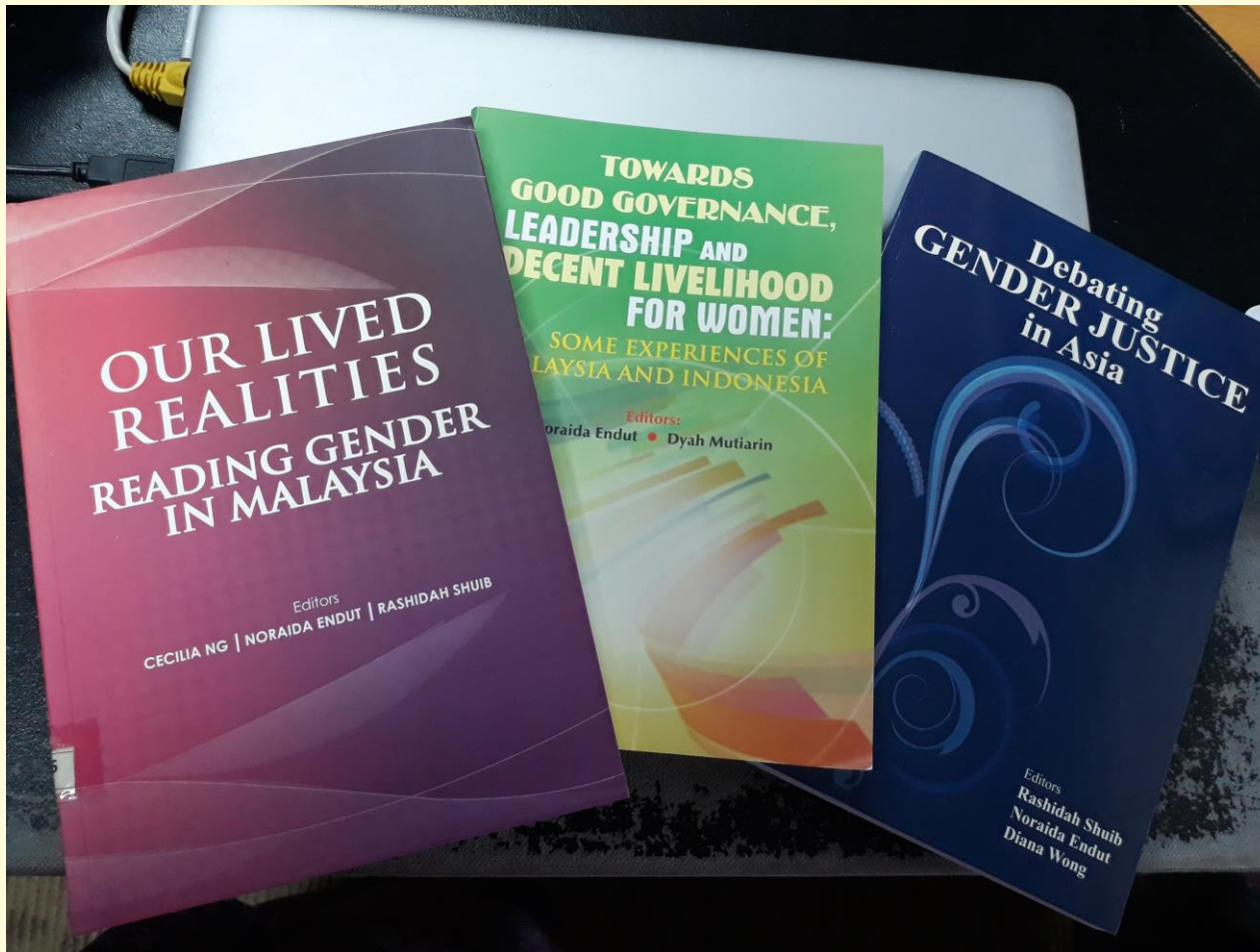
- Digital divide between groups of women
- Women going back into the homes: working from home and its implications
- Implications of technology to work-life balance?
- Technology facilitating VAW

- University- and nationwide advocacy on elimination of sexual harassment on campus
 - Engaging with the university governance for the adoption of a policy and procedure against sexual harassment (policy and procedure in place since 2009)
 - Obtaining a research grant to conduct a study on SH on campus (2007-2011)
 - awareness and training programmes at university-wide and departmental levels
 - Awareness and training programmes through collaboration with other universities and agencies

- Community engagement that aims at empowering women in different aspects of their lives
 - Programmes with single mothers' groups that build capacity for women to help/ support other women
 - Empowering staff and students with knowledge and practice of gender equality through academic and non-academic activities (capacity building workshops)
 - Always including research elements and discourses and development of knowledge products in conjunction with engagements

- KANITA is increasingly focusing on sharing and engaging with researchers and advocates from ASEAN and Asian countries to understand comparable experiences
 - Publication with Indonesian partners
 - Workshop on developing research proposals on common gender issues in ASEAN (with Indonesia, Thailand, Brunei, Philippines, Singapore, Japan)
 - Research and publication collaboration with European and Asian partners (Norwegian Research Council Project)
 - Capacity building projects with international partners focusing on ASEAN (Harpwell Women's Leadership Programme for ASEAN; Erasmus Capacity Building: MOOC for Marginalised Groups in ASEAN)

KANITA'S recent publication



Recent publications with KANITA's contributions



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Terima kasih