

C3 TEACHERS
The Remedial Herstory Project
The New Hampshire Council for the Social Studies

9-12 and Inquiry Title

Are Hindu Goddesses Feminist Icons or Stereotypical Tropes?



"Kali." Wikipedia Commons. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kali>.

Supporting Questions

1. How have Hindu goddesses been represented as powerful and progressive figures?



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2. How have the Hindu goddesses been used to perpetuate stereotypical tropes about women? 3. How have myths surrounding the Hindu goddesses affected the real lives of Hindu women?



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Grade level Inquiry Title

Content Angle and Standards ?	<p>D3.4.9-12. Refine claims and counterclaims attending to precision, significance, and knowledge conveyed through the claim while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both.</p> <p>D4.1.9-12. Construct arguments using precise and knowledgeable claims, with evidence from multiple sources, while acknowledging counterclaims and evidentiary weaknesses.</p>
Staging the Compelling Question	Assess whether Hindu Goddesses represent a model which is empowering to women or whether they depict an ideal of womanhood which can be used to keep women in a state of oppression and inferiority.

How do Hindu scriptures and icons present women?
Make a table of positive and negative attitudes to women

Source B: The Laws of Manu

How have the Hindu goddesses been used to perpetuate stereotypical tropes about women?

Make a mind map of the attitudes, roles, and purposes of the goddess

How have Goddess traditions shaped Indian history?
Make a timeline of Indira Gandhi's career and highlight similarities to Goddess stories

Source A: Sita

Source B: The Goddess Devi

Source A: The historical evolution of Bharat Mata

Source B: A temple dedicated to Indira Gandhi

Source A: A portrait of Kali

Summative Performance Task	ARGUMENT: Are Hindu Goddesses feminist icons or sexist tropes? Construct an argument (e.g., detailed outline, poster, essay) that answers the compelling questions, using specific evidence from the historical sources while addressing opposing views.
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	<p>EXTENSION Ask students to share their response with someone, or if they already worked in a group, ask them to nominate someone to represent their group to the class as a whole. Capitalize on differences between group responses. Why did one group answer differently than another? What impacted them or stood out more? What is the majority opinion?</p>
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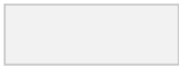
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<p>Taking Informed Action</p>	<p>UNDERSTAND The way women were treated in the past often times persists into the present in how we teach about it or in societal norms that have not changed.</p> <p>ASSESS Students should consider <i>what should be done</i> today to correct either the portrayal of women from this period in history or the issues at play?</p> <p>ACT Students could take informed action in one of the following ways:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Find an article or book about history that misrepresents women and gender in history and write to the author or editor. 2. Investigate women and gender rights issues that persist and engage with the movement by attending a protest, signing a petition, or donating to the cause. 3. Make a PSA video, blog, or social media post with the intent to persuade the audience to better understand women from history or a persistent gender rights from this inquiry.
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**Featured sources are suggested and links are provided. It may be that these links are broken and we apologize in advance for the inconvenience.*



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Inquiry Description

This inquiry leads students through an investigation of Hindu goddess myths and how the stories, depictions, and rituals surrounding these goddesses have influenced the treatment and social

expectations of Hindu women throughout history. It requires them to critically analyze various sources to assess the somewhat contradictory information within them and weigh up their argument through investigation of the individual sources and by considering the sources as a whole

It is important to note that this inquiry requires prerequisite knowledge of the Hindu religion, namely the concept of there being many incarnations of the same God/ess, the importance of ritual to the Hindu tradition, the prevalence of Hinduism in South Asia, especially India, and the fact that the religious and social realms were not clearly distinguished in Indian culture until the British colonial period, and are still taken as co-dependent today. It is also important that students understand the plurality of the Hindu tradition, and the many local variations in practice and beliefs.

NOTE: This inquiry is expected to take 4 class periods. The inquiry time frame could expand if teachers think their students need additional instructional experiences (e.g., supporting questions, formative performance tasks, featured sources, writing). Teachers are encouraged to adapt the inquiry to meet the needs and interests of their students. This inquiry lends itself to differentiation and modeling of historical thinking skills while assisting students in reading the variety of sources.

Structure of the Inquiry

In addressing the compelling question students are first asked to examine two sources which present a more positive view of female power within the Hindu tradition, by examining more clearly “religious” sources including a religious icon and a religious scripture. They are asked to examine what traits these sources assign to the Goddess, and to women more general, and are asked to evaluate how these views may impact the lived realities of Hindu women today.

Secondly, they will be asked to examine how the goddess traditions have perpetuated detrimental stereotypes about women, namely the trope of them as merely wives and mothers who need a man’s control. They will read two academic excerpts analysing the influence of the goddess tradition and how these have impacted the everyday lives of women. They will be asked to consider what qualities are attributed to the Goddesses discussed in these texts, and evaluate how this matches up to (or negates) popular stereotypes.

Finally, they will be asked to examine a discussion of the historic importance of one particular Goddess, Bharat Mata, and consider the way that this goddess has served political purposes. It will require students to think about why images, myths, and stories are told in a certain way, and how this can be to the benefit or detriment of women and society in general.

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In staging the compelling question, it may be useful to start with engaging the students in the Hindu tradition generally. There are many videos online of Hindu worship, rituals, songs, and stories which provide a visual introduction to the tradition and give students an idea of the centrality of worship and ritual to the Hindu tradition. It may be helpful to show students clips from televised portrayals of the Ramayana, one of the texts which will be introduced as a source in this inquiry and explain how this television drama became a national ritual in Indian society to show the ubiquitous nature of these traditions.

Additional Resources:

- “What is Hinduism?”, BBC Bitesize, Available: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/zh86n39/articles/zmpp92p>
- “Hinduism for Beginners”, Learn Religions, Available: <https://www.learnreligions.com/hinduism-for-beginners-1770069>
- Manik Sharma, The Hindustan Times (2018), 20 Years of DD’s Ramayana: The back story of the show that changed India TV forever. Available: <https://www.hindustantimes.com/tv/30-years-of-dd-s-ramayana-the-back-story-of-the-show-that-changed-india-tv-forever/story-og0vbfSYwK75Zl7mQmdsjN.html>

Before moving on to the specific topic of Hindu Goddesses, it may also be useful to give the class time for some discussion about what a stereotype is, what common stereotypes are about women in general, and how stereotypes can influence society. Thinking about how this differs from culture to culture, and from insider versus outsider perspectives would also be helpful – e.g. ask students what stereotypes are about *Asian* women versus white, British/American women. This is important to address any racial bias that may be present (consciously or unconsciously) in the approach to these questions, and to further pinpoint specific ideas that students should look to explain via the sources.

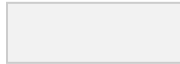
Additional Resources:

- Gender Roles and Stereotypes, AMAZEorg, Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ulh0DnFUGsk>
- Understanding Unconscious Bias, The Royal Society. Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dVp9Z5k0dEE>

Before delving into the sources, it may also be prudent to introduce the difficult topic of patriarchy in India today with some discussion of the treatment of women in India. For example, statistics about domestic violence, rape, female infanticide, female literacy, dowries and honour killings. While such topics need to be introduced sensitively, they will encourage students to think about the apparent contradictions between the more empowering goddess traditions and the lived realities of Hindu women today. It will also help students to have an idea of comparisons to look for in the inquiry sources, and may help them to connect the dots between traditional practices and current realities.

Additional Resources:

- “Poll ranks India the world’s most dangerous country for women.” Belinda Goldsmith and Meka Beresford, The



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Guardian Newspaper (2018). Available:

<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2018/jun/28/poll-ranks-india-most-dangerous-country-for-women>

- Amnesty International India Report 2020. Available:

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/asia-and-the-pacific/india/report-india/>

- Indian Census, Crimes Against Women Report 2021, Available:

<https://web.archive.org/web/20160116122212/http://ncrb.nic.in/CD-CII2012/cii-2012/Chapter%205.pdf>

- “NCRB’s Report Reveals A Rape Happens Every 16 Minutes in India; UP tops list of crimes against women”. The Economic Times (October 2020).

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/ncrbs-report-reveals-a-rape-happens-every-16-minutes-in-india-up-tops-list-of-crimes-against-women/videoshow/78440875.cms>

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The first supporting question is “How do Hindu scriptures and icons present women?” This question is important as the Hindu tradition as represented in scripture, art, and oral traditions have shaped Indian

and much of South Asian history for thousands of years. In Hinduism, religion and society are closely bound - some even argue they are inseparable. Thus, the religious view of women has a direct correlation to the social reality of women. Hinduism is still the biggest religion in India (80% of the population), and there are approximately 1.2 billion people globally who identify as Hindu. Thus, even today, how Hindu scriptures and icons present women affects how billions of people perceive and treat women across the world. The formative task is to make a table of empowering attributes and negative aspects of the Goddess or women in general within the sources, and underneath identify what the most prevalent attributes are.

The scaffolds and other materials may be used to support students as they work with sources include a partner who may observe different details from them, and any devices that may help them understand or research words in the images they do not know

Additional Resources:

- “Worship of God in the Form of Mother Kali”. Vedanta Video. Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kFzCzXvpK4>
- Brodbeck, Simon & Black, Brian (Eds. 2007). Gender and the Mahabharata. Oxon: Routledge.
- “What are the Ancient Hindu Laws of Manu?” Learn Religions. Available: <https://www.learnreligions.com/laws-of-manu-manava-dharma-shastra-1770570>
- Hildebeitel, Alf & Kathleen M. Erndl (2000). Is the Goddess a Feminist? The Politics of South Asian Goddesses. New York: New York University Press.
- “Hindu Goddesses and the Third Gender”, The Remedial Herstory. Available: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z4xzTbW4zUM>

The following sources were selected to demonstrate a couple of ways that goddess stories are relayed to wider Hindu society. These two have been selected as they present contrasting views of women, the first depicting a powerful goddess who is superior and even dangerous to men, the second proscribing that women be subservient, inferior, and unworthy compared to their male counterparts. This will encourage students to consider how two such contradictory representations can come from the same tradition.

Teachers may wish to get their students to consider the following questions:

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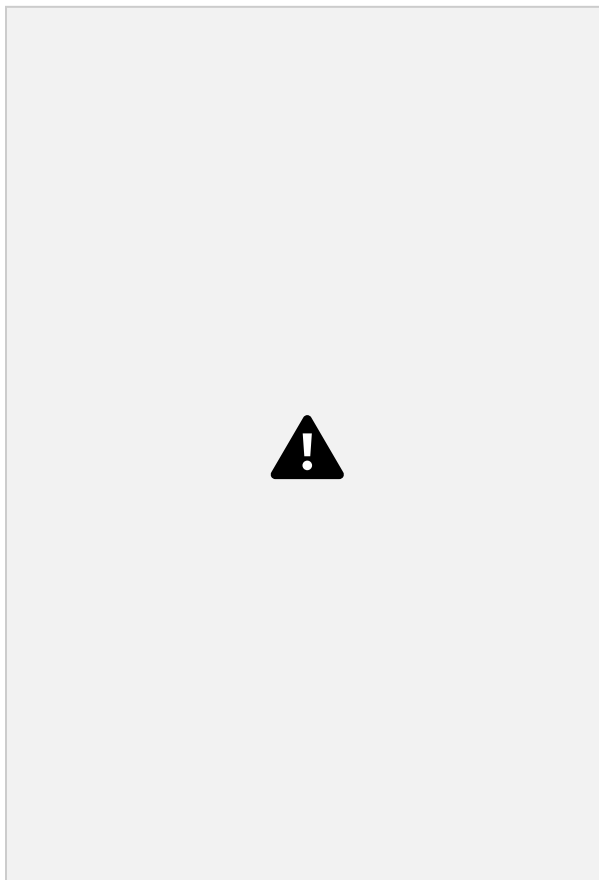
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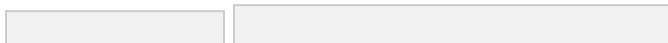
- Source A:
 - o What is Kali wearing around her neck?
 - o How does the image of Kali standing on the chest of her husband, Shiva, invert traditional gender norms that we might expect to see in ancient traditions?
 - o What feelings might this image evoke in male audiences versus female audiences

- Source B:
 - o What qualities does this deem are most appropriate for a woman?
 - o What consequences does this text threaten for women who do not adhere to this pattern of behaviour?
 - o Who is regarded as responsible for a woman's behaviour?

- **Featured Source A:** Portrait of the Goddess Kali in her most famous stance, standing on the chest of her husband, the God Shiva.



<https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/4/49/Kaliposter1940s.jpg>



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● **Featured source B:** An excerpt from the Laws of Manu, an ancient Hindu scripture written around 200AD:

"Because of their passion for men, their mutable temper, and their natural heartlessness, they become disloyal towards their husbands, however carefully they are guarded in this [world]. Knowing their disposition, which the Lord of creatures instilled in them at the creation, [every] man should most strenuously exert himself to guard them." Submission to male control is the dominant duty of women: Nothing must be done independently, even in her own house by a young girl, by a young woman, or even by an aged one. In childhood a female must be subject to her father, in youth to her husband, and when her lord is dead to her sons; a woman must never be independent.... Though destitute of virtue, ... or good qualities, a husband must be constantly worshiped as a god by a faithful wife.... If she violates her duty towards her husband, a wife is disgraced in this world; (after death) she enters the womb of a jackal, and is tormented by diseases (as punishment) of her sin. She who controls her thoughts, words, and deeds, and never slights her lord, resides with her husband (in heaven after death), and is called a virtuous (wife).'

Susan Wadley. 1977. 'Women and the Hindu Tradition'. Signs. Vol. 3, No. 1: 113-25.

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The second supporting question is: “How have the Hindu goddesses been used to perpetuate stereotypical tropes about women?” This is an important question because religious traditions and deities such as Goddesses are often used to justify certain social practices which affect the treatment, status, and general opinion of women. It is often hard to tell whether stereotypes came from religious traditions or whether religious traditions were influenced by existing gender stereotypes. Therefore, it is

important to critically analyse these traditions to examine how they, and the interpretation of them, has changed over time, and what effect this has had on the followers of that tradition.

The formative task is... Create a mindmap for each goddess, and create 3 branches, “attributes”, “roles”, “purpose” and expand the branches with examples from the sources.

The scaffolds and other materials may be used to support students as they work with sources include a partner who may observe different details from them, and any devices that may help them understand or research words in the images they do not know

Additional resources:

- Sita Sings the Blues. Available: <https://www.sitasingingstheblues.com/>
- “Rama and the Ramayana: Crash Course World Mythology #27” Crash Course, Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qsuqbPda5uo>
- “Kolkata: The Durga Puja Carnival”. Outlook Traveler. Available: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c093WIPkG0s>
- Volga (2016), *The Liberation of Sita*. Translated by T. Vijay Kumar and C. Vijayasree, Harper Collins.

The following sources were selected to show the often contradictory nature of goddess worship in Hinduism, and the influence that religious myths and stories have had on the lived realities of women. They show the ways in which Goddess provide a role model for how human women should behave, and the varying extents to which this can be liberating or oppressive for women.

Teachers may wish to ask their students to consider the following questions:

- Source A
 - o What traditional qualities does Sita embody?
 - o How might the suffering Sita endures from the male characters of the Ramayana prove inspirational to women today?
- Source B
 - o What qualities does the Devi have?
 - o Are these qualities different to the other incarnations of the goddess or traditional norms for women that you have seen above?

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- **Featured Source A:** A discussion of the role of the Goddess Sita in traditional Indian gender norms

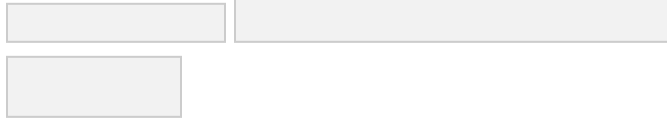
Inaugurating an international conference on the Ramayana in Delhi in 1981, Supreme Court Justice Hidayatullah quotes a Hindu scholar: "The Radmyana is a mirror of the highest ideals of Hindu culture and civilisation. Herein is described the ideal hero Sri Ramachandra who is not only the exemplar for all living and dutiful sons, but who is the ideal husband and king.... Sita is the noblest flower of Indian womanhood, devoted to her lord in thought, word and deed ... There can be no better text-book of morals which can be safely placed in the hands of youths to inspire them to higher and nobler ideals of conduct and character" (Iyengar:27). Speaking for himself, then, Justice Hidayatullah, a Muslim, says: "Rama and Sita ... are exemplifiers of right thought, right speech and right action under all circumstances. Sita represents compassion and grace. She suffers most but preserves herself with heroism, love and devotion. She is the ideal wife and is the model for our womanhood ... Rdmdyana, one of our classics, gives to our youth the fundamentals of our culture" (Iyengar:28). But in another welcoming address to that same conference, Umashan- kar Joshi remarks: "If the Rdmdyana moves one to the depths of one's being, it is perhaps due to the raw deal meted out to Sita" (Iyengar:24). This juxtaposition of ideal and raw deal provides the irritation that moves us, like oysters, to create something here. Sita's raw deal is dramatized primarily in three episodes that have remained controversial over the centuries. First is the agni pariksha or fire ordeal in which Sita, at the end of the great war between Rama and the demons, must undergo a test of chastity that requires her to throw herself into a blazing fire. Second is the abandonment of Sita...Some years after returning to his capital, Ayodhya, Rama decides that-despite her having passed the fire test with flying colors, despite his personal certainty that she is innocent, and despite her being in an advanced state of pregnancy-Sita must be banished from the kingdom because suspicions about her chastity are proliferating in the countryside. Not only banished, she is deceptively taken to the forest by Lakshman and abandoned without a word of farewell or explanation from her husband. The third moment of rejection, a reprise of the agni parfksha with a variation, occurs at the end of the Valmiki Ramayana. Rama makes a final attempt to bring Sita back after she has lived for years in the forest, raising their sons to young manhood without him. He suggests that she endure one more fire ordeal before being allowed to stay with him in Ayodhya. Sita rejects this offer and calls upon mother earth to open and receive her. Earth opens, Sita enters, earth closes. Sita is gone... Chloe Gardner Remedial Herstory Inquiry-Based Lesson Plan Today more than ever before, Sita is a site of contestation. The Sita who clung to the dharma of worshiping her husband and bowing to his will, even when he repeatedly and cruelly rejected her, is still embraced as the ideal woman by many Hindus of both sexes. But others, increasingly, are describing that ideal as concocted by and serving the interests of dominant males from ancient times to the present. What is it that they are rejecting? In a cultural environment where Rama and Sita are widely and fervently believed to be real, both historical and divine figures, we can say that most of them are not claiming to reject the "real" Sita. Swimming in an ocean of texts, knowing that all textual Sitas are chhlya Sitas, rising and disappearing between the covers of a book or the opening and closing of a performance, they are rejecting the Sita of patriarchy.

Linda Hess (1999). "Rejecting Sita: Indian Responses to the Ideal Man's Cruel Treatment of His Ideal Wife". *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 67:1, pp. 1-32. Oxford University Press.

- **Featured Source B:** the wider tradition of Devi (Goddess) in the Hindu tradition.

‘Devī, simply meaning ‘Goddess’ (also referred to as the ‘Great Mother’) is understood to be an

embodiment of Shakti,



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the feminine and ‘creative power of the universe’ (Hallstrom, 2017, 173). She is eternal and formless, but all other goddesses are considered to be manifestations of her (Erndl 2017, 158). Unlike most of these incarnations, Devī is not considered a consort of a male deity but independent (Coburn 1998, 9). Worship of Devī (Shaktism) is now present in almost all Hinduism sects (Klostermaier 2002, 97), and has become increasingly crucial since the rise of bhakti (devotional) movements which allow women the more intimate, personal relationship with the divine previously denied them (Coburn 1998, 9). Shaktism celebrates female power and even Devī’s superiority over male deities (Coburn 1998, 9). Shaktism acknowledges the creative potential of women who are seen to maintain familial and social order (Menon & Shweder 2000, 159). Shakti is also considered the counterpart of the masculine Purusha (spirit) – but neither can survive without the other, providing a promising model for gender equality (Wadley 2016, 114). In the tantric tradition, Devi is considered the central path to liberation and consequently women unusually fill key religious leadership roles (Klostermaier 2002, 95-6). In addition, thanks to the Shakti within them, some human women are worshipped as incarnations of the Goddess (Hallstrom 2017, 177). Goddess cults have directly benefitted women by providing access to education and religious rites usually denied them (Hallstrom 2017, 180). Devī is often reimagined for local contexts, providing not just hope in times of crisis (when Goddess worship increases [Klostermaier 2002, 93]). However, beliefs about Devī can also have a more negative relationship with actual women’s lives. Both sexes stress that Devī is not a realistic role model for human women - although they share many characteristics with her (Coburn 1998, 43). Her incarnation as Kali is nonetheless used to justify male control of female sexuality and destructive potential by symbolising the equation “Women = Power + Nature = Danger.” (Wadley 2016, 115-7). In her guise as ‘Great Mother’ too, Devī serves to typecast women in that role. As Coburn (1998, 43) states: ‘The story of Devī is quite unconsciously woven into the very fabric of the social order and daily behaviour.’

Paraphrased from: Lisa Lassell Hallstrom (2017), ‘Anandamayi Ma: God Came as a Woman’ and Kathleen M. Erndl, (2017) ‘Possession by Durga: The Mother Who Possesses’, in John Stratton Hawley & Vasudha Narayanan (Eds) *The Life of Hinduism*, New Delhi: Aleph Book Company.

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The third supporting question is: “How have Goddess traditions shaped Indian history?” This is an important question as history and religion often have a symbiotic relationship. As with stereotypes, religion is often used to justify political decisions which shape history, or to present history in a way that aligns with a particular worldview. Simultaneously, however, religion itself is shaped by the historic context in which it emerges and is constantly reinterpreted given the historical conditions of the day. As the country where Hinduism originated, and as the country with the largest number of Hindus, Indian history is particularly important as an example of how Hindu Goddess traditions have shaped history.

The formative task is... Research Indira Gandhi’s achievements as Prime Minister. Make a timeline of her career, focusing on her reputation and popularity. Highlight achievements/views that you think have parallels with the stories of the Goddesses, particularly Bharat Mata.

The scaffolds and other materials may be used to support students as they work with sources include a partner who may observe different details from them, and any devices that may help them understand or research words in the images they do not know

Additional resources:

- <https://www.history.com/topics/india/indira-gandhi>
- <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Indira-Gandhi>
- <https://www.livehistoryindia.com/story/herstory/bharat-mata-from-art-to-reality/>
- <https://www.proquest.com/docview/2174263203?accountid=10673>
- <https://www.thoughtco.com/female-heads-of-state-in-asia-195688>

The following sources were selected to show the way in which Goddess traditions have been used for political purposes by colonial and domestic powers in India. The sources show that the line between the political and religious are often blurred in Indian culture, and that the qualities that are valued in a female politician are also those required of a goddess. These sources also highlight how women can achieve temporal power while still being kept within the strict box of wife and mother.

Teachers may wish to ask students to consider the following questions

- Source A
 - o What language do the poets quoted above use to describe mother India and what emotions vi does this evoke?
 - o In what ways could the imagining of the country India as a female goddess empower women in contemporary India?
 - o Why does this author believe the feminisation of India is detrimental to societal views of the role of women?

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- Source B
 - o What is noticeable about the worshippers at the Indira Gandhi temple?
 - o Why might people equate politicians with god/esses?

- **Featured Source A:** A discussion of the historical evolution of the Goddess Bharat Mata.

'Around 1905, as a young patriot, Munshi met the Hindu nationalist Aurobindo Ghosh (1872- 1950) and asked him, 'How can one become patriotic?' With a disarming smile, Aurobindo pointed at a wall map of India and said: 'Do you see this map? It is not a map, but the portrait of Bharat-mata [Mother India]: its

cities and mountains, rivers and jungles form her physical body. All her children are her nerves, large and small. Concentrate on Bharat [India] as a living mother, worship her with the nine-fold bhakti [devotion]'. A decade later, across the subcontinent, Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941), India's first Nobel Prize recipient for literature, introduced a similar senti- ment in his 1915-1916 Bengali novel Ghare Bhaire [The Home and the World]. At a crucial moment in the narrative, Sandip, one of its male protagonists, addresses Bimala, the heroine of the story, and declares passionately: 'Have I not told you that, in you, I visualize the Shakti [power] of our country? The geography of a country is not the whole truth. No one can give up his life for a map! When I see you before me, then only do I realize how lovely my country is' In addition to enlivening the nation-space, corporealizing it and archaizing it, these bodyscapes gender it, frequently as female. Feminist geographers have suggested that the conception of the nation as cartographically female enables a 'masculinist' relationship to place. Such gendered bodyscapes, along with the poetry on these goddesses which frequently accompany them, encourage the male subject-citizen to view the national territory as a vulnerable woman who needs their protection and as a mother who had to be rescued through heroism and sacrifice. These gendered bodyscapes also enable the viewing of the nation's territory possessively, even pleasurably. So, even as the nation appears as the ground on which filial bonds between the citizenry and the territory are erected, it also emerges as a field for the play of erotic desire, as a regime for regulating pleasure.' In Tagore's novel, in response to Sandip's declaration, this is how Bimala responds: Sandip's eyes took fire as he went on, but whether it was the fire of worship, or of passion, I could not tell. ... When, in Sandip's appeals, his worship of the country gets to be subtly interwoven with his worship of me, then does my blood dance. ... I felt that my resplendent womanhood made me indeed a goddess. The bodyscapes of Mother India (and Mother Tamil) erupt within the interstices of a nationalist discourse where the erotic, the patriotic and the cartographical converge in imagining the nation as an entity worth living, and dying, for.'

Sumathi Ramaswamy (2001). Maps and Mother Goddesses in Modern India. *Imago Mundi*, 53, pp. 97-114

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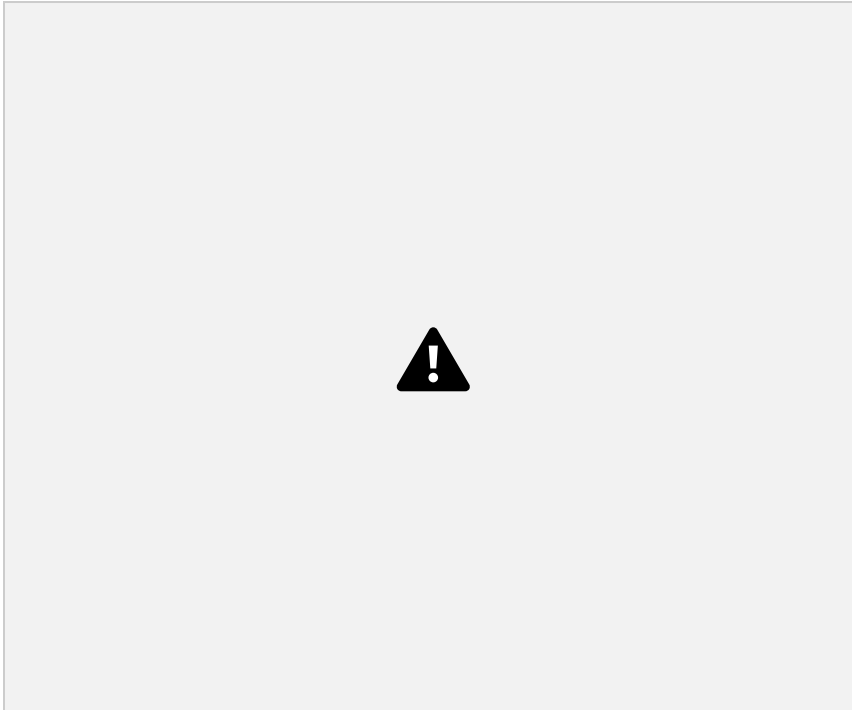
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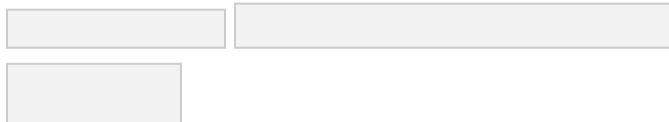
The Remedial Herstory Project

The New Hampshire Council for the Social Studies

- **Featured Source B:** A temple dedicated to the first (and only) female prime minister of India, Indira Gandhi.



Jagran News. October 2017. Available:
https://www.jagranimages.com/images/31_10_2017-indira_tempal1.jpg





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At this point in the inquiry, students have examined the different ways that Hindu women, and Goddesses specifically, have been portrayed in popular discourse, and how this has impacted the lived realities of women, the political landscape of India, and Hindu religious devotion.

Students should be expected to demonstrate the breadth of their understandings and their abilities to use evidence from multiple sources to support their claims. In this task, students should write an extended answer arguing whether they would describe The Goddess as a feminist icon who serves to empower women, or as a stereotypical trope which allows women to be typecast as women and mothers? They should justify their answer with reference to the sources.

Students' arguments will likely vary, but could include any of the following:

- That the goddess is a feminist icon because she is regarded as the ultimate force of the universe, and worshipped across the tradition as a celebration of women and their creative ability, benevolence, and power.
- That the goddess is a stereotypical trope because even the Goddesses must be subservient to or restrained by their male counterparts, and are reduced in their function to wives and mothers just like human women.
- That the goddess can be regarded as both, but that the negative stereotypes have been emphasized by patriarchal tradition and scholarship over the years, hence the prominence of the less empowering vision of the goddess.

To support students in their writing they can use this provided organizer for a body paragraph. The organizer refers to the HAPPY acronym: Historical Context, Audience, Point of View, Purpose and whY is this significant?

First Argument	
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<p>Write a topic sentence that summarizes the paragraph and tells how this proves the thesis.</p> <p>Provide background information here.</p> <p>Cite anyone you paraphrase or quote!</p>	<p><i>(Repeat the first part of your thesis)</i></p> <p><i>When...</i></p>
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<p>What textual evidence proves this?</p> <p>Describe 1 or 2 HAPP elements about the source of your evidence.</p>	
<p>What textual evidence proves this?</p> <p>Insert a short quote here.</p>	
<p>What makes this quote credible, valid, or helpful in providing insights to this issue?</p>	<p><i>The quote revealed...</i></p>

<p>Who disagrees or disputes a piece of your argument?</p> <p>Describe 1 or 2 HAPP elements about the source of your evidence.</p> <p>What textual evidence do you have? Insert a short quote here.</p>	<p><i>Others claimed that...</i></p>
<p>What makes this quote seem untrue, inaccurate, or only partly true?</p>	<p><i>While it may be true that _____, it was clear that...</i></p>

To extend their arguments, once students have written or formed an argument, consider doing one of the following extension activities:

1. **Discussion:** Consider facilitating a discussion of the analysis questions. Ask students to share their response with someone, or if they already worked in a group, ask them to nominate someone to represent their group to the class as a whole. Capitalize on differences between group responses. Why did one group answer differently than another? What impacted them or stood out more?

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2. **Four Corner Debate:** Consider a "four-corner debate." In the corners of the room tack up a piece of paper with four differing and possible answers to the inquiry question. After students complete the lesson packet, pose the question to the room at large and ask students to move to the corner of the room (or in between locations) that represent their answer. Then, ask students to explain their choice. As students discuss they are allowed to move closer or further from ideas. This is a great strategy for kinesthetic learning.

3. **Socratic Seminar:** Consider doing a "Socratic seminar" to extend the learning and get students to

question what they still don't know or understand. Start with the inquiry's question. Students should be encouraged to answer one another's question directly, but also to answer the question with another question. This continues the conversation and gets at more rich ideas. The teacher should try to say as little as possible and let the students lead the dialog. One strategy for this is to seat students in a circle. Give each of them a cup and 2-3 tokens. When a student makes a substantive contribution to the discussion the teacher will walk over and place a token in the cup signaling that they have contributed. Students will become aware of who has spoken and who has not, and leave space for one another.

4. Structured Academic Controversy: Consider turning the lesson into a "structured academic controversy." Take the overarching question and turn it into a "debate." Students can choose or be assigned a side in the debate and use the documents provided to argue their "answer" to the overarching question. They can argue over interpretations and credibility of some documents.

5. Reacting to the Past: Consider doing some role play with your class. Reacting to the Past is an active learning pedagogy of role-playing games designed by Barnard University. In Reacting to the Past games, students are assigned character roles with specific goals and must communicate, collaborate, and compete effectively to advance their objectives. Reacting promotes engagement with big ideas, and improves intellectual and academic skills. Provide students with a set of rules about staying in character and what types of things they must know about their character. Students should be provided with a packet of role sheets with instructions on their individual goals and strategies for game play. Students can use sources and information from these activities, and can search for more details online about their individual character. Reacting roles and games do not have a fixed script or outcome. While students are obliged to adhere to the philosophical and intellectual beliefs of the historical figures they have been assigned to play, they must devise their own means of expressing those ideas persuasively in papers, speeches, or other public presentations.

Students have the opportunity to Take Informed Action by doing one of the following suggested action activities:

1. Find an article or book about history that misrepresents women and gender in history and write to the author or editor.
2. Write a letter to the Secretary of Education for your state about the teaching of women and gender history.
3. Investigate women and gender rights issues that persist and engage with the movement by attending a protest, signing a petition, or donating to the cause.
4. Make a PSA video, blog, or social media post with the intent to persuade the audience to better understand women from history or a persistent gender rights from this inquiry.