

PhD Position: Human Rights in the Menstrual Movement (ERC-funded PERIODS project, India case study)

Do you agree that menstruation is about so much more than blood? Are you interested in linking menstruation to broader questions of gender justice and social mobilization? Then this PhD position might be the right fit for you. – The position is part of the [PERIODS](#) project on Human Rights in the Menstrual Movement funded by the European Research Council and led by Dr. Inga Winkler. You will play a key role in the project by taking the lead on the case study in India focused on the intersections of caste, gender and menstruation.

The project examines how menstruators' lives are shaped by socio-cultural norms and processes of compounded stigmatization and marginalization. On that basis, the project seeks to determine how lived experiences inform movement building, what demands people articulate, what strategies and approaches groups rely on, and how struggles at the local, national, transnational, and global level influence each other.

The project will explore the **intersections between casteism, patriarchy and menstruation**. Interviews and focus groups will elicit Dalit women's experiences with the menstrual cycle, religious prescriptions, and the compounded stigma of caste and menstruation. Do menstrual restrictions commonly reported in the literature on Hindu culture and religion play any role in their lives? How do they perceive notions of impurity related to menstruation? How do intersecting forms of stigma and oppression related to menstruation and caste inform their everyday life and relationships with others who menstruate? What are the challenges and opportunities for linking feminist movements led by Dalit women and movements focused on menstrual justice?

Your duties and responsibilities include:

- Develop the research design for the PhD project at the intersection of menstruation, gender and caste and obtain ethical clearance in line with the goals of the funding award
- Collect data through interviews and focus groups and other empirical methods and conduct data analysis and management
- Collaborate with team members on other components of the project (in particular on other forms of marginalization and stigmatization)
- Write and publish in peer-reviewed venues
- Support other activities as relevant during each stage of the project and participate in the activities of the Law group at Wageningen University.

You will work closely with the team on the PERIODS project, which, apart from your position, includes the principal investigator (PI), a PostDoc, other PhD candidates who work on case studies in South Africa and Hungary, and a research assistant. You will be co-supervised by Dr. Inga Winkler at Wageningen University and Prof. M. Sivakami at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences and you will benefit from the collaboration of Dr. Deepthi Sukumar with the Safai Karmachari Andolan.

Safai Karmachari Andolan (SKA) is a National movement for the liberation and rehabilitation of persons and communities affected by manual scavenging. SKA's National Feminist Platform aims to counter and combat caste, patriarchy and untouchability with menstrual justice within an intersectional framework, and is informed by the social justice ideology of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and E.V Ramaswamy (better known as Periyar).

To meet the requirements of the role, you will bring:

- Advanced skills in research, analysis, critical thinking, and writing
- Demonstrated ability to work independently and as part of a team in a dynamic, interdisciplinary and intercultural research environment

- Outstanding communication skills that enable you to work in an intercultural setting across timezones and geographies
- Excellent organizational and management skills that enable you to balance different tasks and priorities
- Familiarity with the geographic and socio-cultural context of the case study

You must also have:

- A successfully completed MSc, MA or equivalent degree in sociology, anthropology, gender studies, socio-legal studies, public health, or other relevant discipline
- Interest in research on human rights, gender, and/or social movements
- Training in qualitative empirical research methods and/or socio-legal studies, ideally working with groups facing marginalization
- Familiarity with developments in the field of human rights and critiques of human rights
- In addition to English, fluency in (South) Indian language(s) will be considered a strong asset. Please indicate your language skills.

In our international working environment, communication on the project team takes place entirely in English. This requires about [language level](#) C1 .

You will work here:

The PERIODS project is funded by an ERC Consolidator Grant and runs from 2025 to 2030. It explores the promises, pitfalls, and renewed potential of human rights in the menstrual movement. PERIODS has two central objectives: first, to develop a thick and nuanced understanding of human rights in the menstrual movement, and second to generate empirical insights from a young, translocal, global South-driven movement for the reconceptualization of human rights based on social practice. The project centers the social practice of human rights in the menstrual movement by drawing on the articulations of lived experiences of people who menstruate, and on the perspectives of movement leaders. It combines empirical research using in-depth interviews, focus groups, qualitative surveys, and document analysis with conceptual work grounded in human rights. Theoretically, the project is rooted in the critical engagement with human rights and a re-envisioning of human rights ‘from below’. It considers the practice of human rights in the menstrual movement as constitutive of what matters for the realization *and* conceptualization of human rights.

The project is led by Dr. Inga Winkler, an Associate Professor in Human Rights. It is embedded in the Law Group chaired by Prof. Louis Kotzé at Wageningen University. The Law Group is a vibrant, dynamic, intercultural research community that is closely integrated into the Department of Social Sciences, has a critical, socio-legal orientation and stresses interdisciplinary research.

We offer you

- A four year PhD position (spending Years 1 and 4 in the Netherlands and Years 2 and 3 in India) starting as soon as possible
- Monthly stipends adjusted to the cost of living in the Netherlands and India over the full four years
- Enrollment in the PhD programme of the Wageningen School of Social Sciences at Wageningen University, including PhD courses, library access and ICT services
- A course program tailored to your needs and that of the research project
- Support through the research community in the PERIODS project, including other PhD students, supervisors, the project’s Advisory Group, and social movement leaders

Do you want more information?

For more information about the position, please contact Inga Winkler, Associate Professor in Human Rights via inga.winkler@wur.nl.

Do you want to apply?

Please send your application via email to inga.winkler@wur.nl.

We particularly welcome applications from people who identify as Dalit.

Please submit the following documents –

- 1) **Curriculum Vitae**
- 2) **Motivation / cover letter detailing your qualifications and interest**
- 3) **Article-length writing sample (max. 10,000 words)**
- 4) **Contact information for 2 references (who can be contacted upon shortlisting)**

Applications will be considered on a rolling basis and you are encouraged to submit your materials as early as possible. You can apply until 30 May 2025. The first interviews are scheduled for 13 June 2025 and 16 June 2025.