



Meeeto (Kamaljit Bhasin-Malik) (1978-2006) was a scholar, activist and dancer. She attended her first protest march when she was one and a half years old. She started studying Bharatanatyam with Leela Samson when she was about five years old. She studied at Sardar Patel Vidyalaya, New Delhi and Rishi Valley School in Andhra Pradesh.

She graduated with first class honours in History from St Stephen's College. She won the Radhakrishnan-British Chevening Scholarship to study history at St Hilda's College in Oxford University and graduated from there also with first class honours.

Between 2001 and 2004, Meeto researched and wrote on projects ranging from the refugee problem in post-Partition Punjab to the role of parliamentarians in Indian democracy and the role of the colonial census in creating monolithic identities in Sri Lanka (research that led her to spend three months with the International Centre for Ethnic Studies, Colombo). She was the first primary coordinator of SAHR (South Asians for Human Rights) and helped organize the

first general convention of SAHR in Neemrana, Rajasthan in 2002 and in Delhi the year after. Between 2003 and mid-2004, she worked as a programme associate at the Ford Foundation in Delhi working on human rights and development issues.

As a dancer, Meeto performed with Leela Samson's dance production *Spada* across India and in Bangladesh. She helped Leela Samson organize the Natyakala conference in Chennai in December 2002. She also worked as a production assistant for a film made by Eva Wärberg and Nasreen Pakkho from the Kvinnofolkhogskolan, Sweden, documenting the World Conference on Women's Parallel NGO forum in 1995.

In 2004 Meeto won the Clarendon fellowship and returned to Oxford University. Her pre-doctoral research, tragically interrupted by her passing away in 2006, is published under the title *In the Making: Identity Formation in South Asia* by the Three Essays Collective.

As a scholar, Meeto was interested in the construction of identity in South Asia. Although the communal history of the subcontinent has often been told as a story of conflict between communities, Meeto viewed coexistence as equally worthy of investigation. In her words, 'It seems as if coexistence and peaceful interactions make poor



historical record, but it is crucial that they become part of the historical record, if one is to have a holistic picture of the past.' She also studied syncretic Sufi communities, including those of Baba Farid and Sakhi Sarwar.

Meeto's academic and professional interests were at one with the way she lived. She revelled in the aesthetic traditions of the multiple religious and cultural traditions to which she was an heir as a South Asian citizen.



To commemorate her brief but brilliant life, Meeto's mother, Kamla Bhasin has decided to institute an award in her memory to honour young South Asians whose work demonstrates a commitment to communal harmony, peace, justice and human rights.

The Award is of India Rupees one lakh and a citation. If more than one person is selected, the money will be shared. The recipients will be invited to present their work at the award ceremony.

The Award will be announced annually in October.

The recipients of the Award will be chosen annually by a selection committee. Advertisements inviting nominations will be appropriately publicised before the due date each year.

To be eligible, nominees must be

- Under the age of 40
- Citizens of a South Asian country (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka)
- Working on issues of communal peace, harmony, justice and/or

human rights, broadly conceived; the nominee may be working anywhere in the world, but the focus of the work should be on South Asia as defined above

- Working in any capacity including activism, advocacy, academia, and journalism, and in any medium such as writing, art, dance, music, film, and theatre.

The Advisory Committee of the Meeto Memorial Awards is:

- Asma Jahangir, *Pakistan*
- Hameeda Husan, *Bangladesh*
- Sithie Tiruchelvam, *Sri Lanka*
- Syeda Hameed, *India*
- Sadanand Menon, *India*
- Anusha Lall, *India*
- Rahul Rao, *India/UK*
- Kamla Bhasin, *India*



The Award is managed by ANHAD and Sangat

The Secretariat of the Award is located in ANHAD
23, Canning Lane,
New Delhi 110001

Telephone 23070740 / 22
e-mail anhad.delhi@gmail.com

