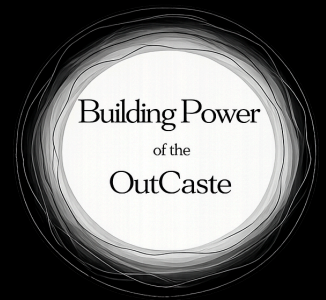


Building Power of the OutCaste



NextGen Rights Lab Module Workbook

Intersectional Feminism & Feminist Leadership

(For Gen Z & Millennial Intergenerational Leaders from Caste-Affected & Minority Communities)

1. How to Use This Workbook

This workbook is a self-guide to the module:

“Intersectional Feminism / Feminist Leadership”

It is written for people like you:

- from caste-affected communities,
- from minority groups (religious, ethnic, linguistic, gender/sexual minorities, migrants),
- and allies who are willing to listen, unlearn, and act differently.

What this workbook will do:

- Introduce key feminist ideas that are grounded in caste realities, not imported slogans.
- Offer short, practical exercises you can do alone or with a friend/collective.
- Help you think about how you use power in your own spaces – families, organisations, movements, classrooms, timelines.

What it will not do:

- It will not give you a “perfect” theory of feminism.
- It will not pretend that all women have the same experience.
- It will not separate feminism from caste, labour, religion, or sexuality.

Instead, think of this as a compass:

- Something you can come back to when you feel lost, burnt out, or confused about leadership.
- A reminder that feminist leadership is not a personality type. It is a practice.
- Use a notebook or digital doc to write your answers. The learning is in the writing, not just in reading.

2. Module Overview

Module title used in sessions:

Intersectional Feminism & Feminist Leadership

By the end of this module, you should be able to:

- Explain what intersectional feminism means in your own words – beyond buzzwords.
 - Recognise how caste-patriarchy shapes bodies, labour, mobility, and voice.
 - Notice patterns of power and care inside your own groups (who speaks, who does the emotional labour, who gets credit).
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3. Feminist Leadership

Understand feminist leadership as a way of:

- building honest coalitions,
- sharing power across generations,
- telling stories that lead to real remedies,
- protecting each other from backlash,
- and reading/re-writing rules.

Commit to at least one concrete change in how you lead, organize, or participate.

Why Intersectional Feminism for Caste-Affected & Minority Communities?

You have probably seen two things:

- “Mainstream” feminism that talks about women but forgets caste, religion, class, disability, queerness, and migration.
- Caste or community politics that talks about justice but sidelines women, queer persons, and others – or asks them to “wait” until after the main struggle.
- Intersectional feminism says: both are incomplete. You cannot fight patriarchy without fighting caste. You cannot fight caste without facing patriarchy (and queerphobia, and ableism) inside your own community. You cannot talk about “women’s empowerment” without asking which women, doing what work, under which conditions, with what risks.

For caste-affected and minority communities, intersectional feminism is:

- A way to refuse sacrifice (“your body for the community’s honour”).
 - A way to protect those at the sharpest edges – Dalit, Adivasi, Muslim, Indigenous, queer, trans, disabled, migrant, poor women and girls, and gender-diverse people.
 - A way to build organisations and movements that do not reproduce the same hierarchies we claim to fight outside.
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4. What Is Intersectionality Really?

Intersectionality is often misused as:

- “women + caste + sexuality + class = intersectionality” (just adding words), or
- a competition: “who is MOST oppressed?”

This is not helpful.

Think of intersectionality instead as a lens that asks:

- What structures are shaping this person's life?
- How do these structures interlock – not just add up?
- What remedies and strategies will reach them, not just the “average woman” or “average citizen”?

A Simple Frame

When you see a situation, ask:

WHO is this happening to?

WHERE are they located in terms of:

- caste / tribe / community,
- religion,
- class and type of work,
- gender and sexuality,
- disability or chronic illness,
- age and migration status.

WHICH systems are pressing on them at the same time? (e.g., caste system, patriarchy, capitalism, majoritarianism, border regimes)

WHAT would justice look like for them specifically (not in general)?

5. Exercise 1 – Intersectionality Map of a Real Person (20 – 25mins)

Choose one person as your example. It can be:

- yourself,
- someone you know,
- or a composite character based on real people (e.g., a Dalit woman gig worker, a Muslim queer student, a Rohingya single mother, a trans Adivasi labourer).

Write down:

Who is this person? (Keep it general enough for privacy if needed.)

- Approximate age:
- Location (rural/urban, state/country):
- Education/work:

Fill in these lines:

Caste / tribe / community:

- Religion:
- Gender & sexuality:
- Class / kind of work (formal, informal, unpaid, domestic, agricultural, gig, etc.):
- Migration status (local, internal migrant, cross-border, refugee, stateless):
- Disability / health situation (if relevant):

Now answer:

a. What are three ways life is harder for them because of this combination?

- ...

b. What is one point of support or resistance they have?

(e.g., a union, a sibling, a teacher, a local group, a law, a faith space, an online community)

- ...

c. If you could change one structural thing for them (law, policy, workplace rule, campus rule, family norm), what would it be?

This is intersectionality in practice: not an abstract concept but a way of seeing clearly who is being left out and what would actually help.

6. Caste Patriarchy: Control of Body, Labour & Movement

In South Asia and many other places, patriarchy is tied to caste and community control.

Caste-patriarchy often shows up through control over:

Bodies

- **Who can love or marry whom.**
- **Who is “allowed” to express desire, dress a certain way, be visible.**
- **Honour killings, moral policing, forced marriages, conversion talk, “love jihad” narratives.**

Labour

- **Who does which kind of work (domestic, care, sanitation, field work, sex work, office work).**
- **Who is paid and who is expected to work “out of love” or “duty.”**
- **Who is forced into the most degrading and dangerous jobs.**

Movement

- **Who can move freely at night, travel for work/study, own a vehicle.**
- **Who needs permission from father/husband/elder, or faces violence for being “outside”.**
- **Who can migrate to cities or abroad, and under what conditions.**

Intersectional feminism names these controls and refuses them.

7. Exercise 2 – Caste-Patriarchy Audit (20mins)

Think about your own community / area / family context.

Answer:

Who is seen as “respectable” and “good”? Who is seen as “shameless” or “bad”? What are the rules behind these labels (clothes, relationships, food, friends, movement, speech)?

Think of three everyday rules (written or unwritten) that especially target:

- lower-caste women,
- minority women,
- or queer/trans people in your context.

Write them down. Example:

- “Girls from our community don’t marry outside.”
- “You can study, but only in this city.”
- “You must not be seen with X type of friends.”

For each rule, ask:

- Who benefits from this rule?
- Who is harmed by this rule?
- What does the rule protect: love, dignity, or someone’s image and control?

Choose one rule that you feel ready to challenge in some small way. Note what that challenge might look like (even if it’s just starting a conversation).

8. What is a Feminist Leadership?

Feminist leadership is not about:

- who is loudest,
- who is on panels,
- who has the “perfect” politics on social media.
- Feminist leadership is about how we use power.

Some key practices:

- Sharing decision-making power
- Not the same 2–3 people deciding everything.
- Clear, transparent processes.
- Room for disagreement without punishment.

Valuing care work and emotional labour

- Not dumping all logistics, note-taking, and emotional support on women, queer, or younger people.
- Recognising this as real work.

Telling stories that lead to remedies

- Not just collecting testimony for trauma-porn.
- Connecting stories to demands, policies, legal action, resource shifts.

Protection & solidarity against backlash

- Planning what to do when states, trolls, families, or institutions hit back.
- Not abandoning people when they become inconvenient.

Learning to read and rewrite rules

- Understanding bylaws, policies, contracts, and procedures.
 - Changing them where possible; breaking them carefully where necessary.
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9. Exercise 3 – Power & Care in One Group You Know (20 – 25mins)

Choose one group you are part of:

- a student collective,
- an NGO or team,
- a fellowship cohort,
- a family or housing group,
- a digital organising group.

On a page, make two columns:

Column A – Power

- Who usually:
- sets the agenda?
- speaks most in meetings?
- signs documents or appears publicly?
- represents the group to outsiders (donors, media, partners)?

Note down names or roles.

Column B – Care & Labour

Who usually:

- organises logistics (rooms, travel, food, tech)?
- checks up on people emotionally?
- takes notes and makes follow-up calls?
- runs the WhatsApp/Signal/Slack, calendar, etc.?

Again, note names/roles.

Now answer:

- Do these two columns look very similar or very different?
 - Are certain people (often women, queer, younger, or lower-caste members) mostly in the Care & Labour column?
 - Write one small change you could propose in the next 1–3 months to share power and care more fairly.
 - For example: rotating facilitation, rotating minute-taking, joint spokespeople from different backgrounds, acknowledging care work in meetings.
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10. Intergenerational Feminist Leadership

Intergenerational leadership is not “young vs old”. It is a relationship.

In feminist leadership, each generation brings something:

Elders

- **memory of previous waves of organising, repression, betrayals, and victories,**
- **knowledge of local codes, gossip, and history that never got written,**
- **survival skills in dealing with state, family, and community backlash.**

Mid-career leaders

- **experience with planning, budgeting, navigating institutions,**
- **relationships with donors, lawyers, journalists, and officials,**
- **capacity to translate movement demands into “acceptable” formats without diluting them.**

Younger leaders (Gen Z & young millennials)

- **fluency with digital culture and tools,**
- **language and humour that reach peers,**
- **less fear of “untouchable” topics, more willingness to experiment.**

Feminist leadership braids these roles:

- **not worshipping elders,**
 - **not dismissing them either,**
 - **not romanticising youth,**
 - **not burning them out,**
 - **but building shared projects where everyone contributes and learns.**
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11. Exercise 4 – Feminist Leaders in Your Life (15–20 mins)

Make three mini-lists:

Elders I have learned from

- **They may be famous or unknown: a grandmother, a neighbour, a teacher, a local organiser.**
- **Write 3–5 names or descriptions.**
- **For each, write one sentence about what you learned from how they used their power.**

Peers I trust as co-leaders

- **Friends, colleagues, comrades, siblings.**
- **Write 3–5 names/descriptions.**
- **For each, write one sentence: “I trust them because...”**

Younger people I want to be accountable to

- **Younger siblings, students, community kids, youth group members.**
- **Write at least 2–3.**
- **For each, write one sentence: “I want to be accountable to them by...”**

Now answer:

- Is there someone from each category you would like to talk to about leadership in the next month?
 - What is one question you want to ask them?
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12. Boundaries, Backlash & Care

- For feminist, anti-caste, minority-rights leaders, backlash is real:
- Online trolling, doxxing, rape/death threats.
- Family pressure and emotional blackmail.
- Workplace punishment or exclusion.
- Police cases, surveillance, or legal harassment in some contexts.

Good feminist leadership includes:

- Knowing your limits – you are not a machine.
- Building circles of care – people who can step in if you have to step back for a while.
- Learning basic digital, legal, and physical safety practices.
- Saying no when a task or role will destroy you.

It also means not exploiting others:

- Not pushing younger or more marginalised people to take all the risks.
 - Not expecting women or queer folks to be endlessly “strong” and available for emotional labour.
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13. Exercise 5 – Your Boundaries & Care Plan (20mins)

Answer honestly (you don't have to share this with anyone):

1. When I feel pressured in my work/activism, I usually:

- keep going until I collapse, OR
- withdraw completely, OR
- share with one or two people, OR
- ... (your pattern)

2. Name three boundaries you want to keep more clearly:

For example:

- “I will not do free emotional labour for institutions that underpay me.”
- “I will not respond to abusive DMs from strangers.”
- “I will not join meetings where I am consistently tokenised or shouted down.”

3. Name three people/spaces that are part of your care system:

- friends, therapist, collective, faith space, online group, etc.

4. Write one step you can take in the next month to strengthen this care system (e.g., regular check-in, therapy, clearer ask to a friend, starting a small peer support circle).

14. Pulling it Together – From Module to Practice

Here are the core threads from this module:

- Intersectional feminism is our method, not just our identity.
- We do not separate “gender work” from caste, labour, religion, sexuality, disability, or migration.

Feminist leadership means:

- building honest coalitions (where we can disagree and still work together),
- sharing power across generations,
- telling stories that lead to real remedies,
- protecting each other from backlash,
- learning to read and rewrite rules.

This workbook is not the end. It is an invitation to keep noticing:

- Who is included or excluded in meetings, panels, funder calls, campaigns, research, art, and media.
 - Who carries invisible labour.
 - Where you yourself have privilege – and what you choose to do with it.
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15. Final Commitment Exercise – One Practice You Will Change (20-25mins)

Give yourself time and be honest.

- Look back at all your notes from this workbook. Underline or highlight any sentence that hits you in the gut – where you feel “this is about me”.

On a fresh page, write:

- “From this module, one practice I will change or adopt in my work is...”

Now spend at least 8–10 lines describing:

- what the practice is,
- why it matters,
- what might make it hard to sustain,
- how you will remind yourself.

Examples:

- “I will stop taking on all care work in my group silently; I will ask for shared roles.”
- “I will check who is not in the room and ask why.”
- “I will design one meeting a month with an explicit feminist ground rule (no interruptions, rotate facilitation, etc).”
- “I will always ask: whose life does this decision cost more?”

If you feel safe, share this commitment with one other person you trust and ask them to check in with you about it after 3 months.

Keep this page. This is your contract with yourself, not with the programme.
