Madhu Purnima Kishwar is currently Maulana Azad National Professor, ICSSR. Prior to this she was Senior Fellow Centre for the Study of Developing Societies. Prior to joining CSDS in 1991, Kishwar taught in a college of Delhi University. She is an alumnus of Miranada House, Delhi University and Jawahar Lal Nehru University.

She is also the founder editor of *Manushi* - a Journal about Women & Society, which was started in 1978. *Manushi* was managed by a non-profit organization called Manushi Trust. Even though the most visible activity of the Trust was the publication of the journal Manushi, the organization has been involved in a whole range of activities from its very inception.

In 1991, a distinct forum called Manushi Sangathan was created for the active interventions as well as for providing a platform for organizing citizens for democratic reforms. In 2007, the print edition of the Journal had to be suspended due
to an unprecedented crisis following a series of murderous attacks on Kishwar and other volunteers of Manushi on account of our policy reform work for street vendors. (More details in Section, “History of Doing” on page ….

Kishwar’s work as an academic covers the following broad categories:

a) **Laws, Liberty and Livelihoods:** This is aimed at evolving a pro-poor agenda of economic reforms in India. It involves close investigation of various laws and regulation that trap perfectly legitimate occupations of people working in the unorganized sector of the economy in a web of illegality and ways to craft pro people legislation and state policies for self employed poor;

b) **Indic Studies Project** to promote the study of diverse cultures and faith traditions in the Indic universe. Apart from organizing major international conferences as well as workshops and seminars on contentious issues regarding religion and culture, Kishwar has written and published a whole body of literature in Manushi and outside that offers fresh insights into diverse cultures and faith traditions of India.

c) **Gender Justice Work:** This has involved in-depth studies & critical evaluation of various laws enacted since late 19th century for the ostensible purpose of women’s rights; Study of various social reform movements that put women’s rights issues center stage. This includes study of women in Bhakti movements starting 6th C to 17th Century, 19th century social reforms movements, how women’s issues got dealt with during Gandhi led freedom movements, study of Hindu Code Bill; study of various social movements in post independence India in which women played an active role.

**Published Books**

- **Modi, Muslims and Media:** *Voices from Narendra Modi’s Gujarat*, Manushi Publications, New Delhi, 2014.

- **Zealous Reformers, Deadly Laws**, Sage Publications, New Delhi, 2008


- **Off the Beaten Track:** *Rethinking Gender Justice for Indian Women*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1999

- **Religion at the Service of Nationalism and Other Essays**, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1998

- (Ed) **The Dilemma and Other Stories** by Vijaydan Detha, Manushi Publications, 1997.

Books in Progress

- **The Quintessential Oneness of Amar Akbar & Anthony**—Bollywood’s Portrayal of Majority-Minority Relations in India.
- **Keeping Alive Colonial Tyranny**—The Plight of India’s Traditional Art Practitioners.
- **Myth Versus Reality: Of Khaps, Honour Killings & Personal Laws.**
- **Laws, Liberty and Livelihoods** – An ethnographic account of Kishwar’s 20 year long experience of law and policy reform for street vendors, rickshaw pullers and India’s traditional art performers. The book aims to provide a coherent theoretical framework for a bottom up agenda of economic reforms.

Chapters in Books

   a) India’s Anti-Rape Law Reform: The Need for a Surgeon’s Precision
   b) When Daughters are Unwanted: Sex Determination Test in India


6) “When Police Becomes the Cause of Citizens’ Insecurity: An Ethnographic Account (Volume of essays on police reforms edited by Ajay K Mehra,)


13) “Gandhi’s Views on Women's Role in the Struggle for Swaraj”, in National Movement in India, edited by Shekhar Bandyopadhyay, Oxford University Press, 2009


15) “No’ to Zenana Dabbas : Deghettoizing Women’s Politics and Enhancing Their Representation in Legislatures”, in India’s Political Parties, Readings in Indian Government and Politic” edited by Peter Ronald de Souza. E.Sridharan, Sage Publications, New Delhi 2006


22) “Arthik Azadi Ka Swawal”, in Bharat Ka Bhumandalikaran, (Hindi) edited by Abhay Dube, Vani Prakashan, Delhi, 2003

23) “Shah bano Ka Mukkadama”, in Secularism Banam Personal Law, (Hindi) edited by, Abhay Dube, Vani Prakashan, Delhi 2003


41) "Family Life: The Unequal Deal: Women’s Condition and Family Life among Small Peasant and Agricultural Labourers in a Punjab Village”, in “In Search of


Papers in Academic Journals


11) "Violence on Gurupurab in Jammu". (With Smithu Kothari), Economic and Political Weekly, April 15, 1989.


13) "Integrity in Women’s Issues". Seminar, April, 1988.


20) "Arya Samaj and Women’s Education: Case Study of the Kanya Mahavidyalaya, Jalandhar”. Economic and Political Weekly, 31(17), 1986.


In addition to the above, Kishwar has written over 150 articles, many of them research based, in Manushi journal. She also writes for various mainstream newspapers.

Audio Visual Media Work

1) **News Watch**: Kishwar researched, conceptualized, scripted and anchored a prime-time programme called News Watch on DD Channel 1. This was an investigative weekly programme of media review, providing an informed critique of media reports on important issues covering the content, as well as the presentation of media reports;

2) **Manushi Geet**: a cassette of songs on the need to strengthen women’s rights within the parental family and non discriminatory upbringing of the girl child. Some of these songs were part of a street play titled Roshni staged by Manushi all over Delhi.

3) **Manas series**: A series of six documentaries for Doordarshan on the following themes:
(a) *Dahej: Zaroorat ya Majboori* (Dowry: Compulsion vs. Need): This deals with social and economic dynamics behind the spread of culture of dowry despite stringent legislation.

(b) *Aurtein: na ghar ki, na ghat ki* (The disinheritance of women from parental property): Parents might spend lakhs in buying consumer goods for their daughters as dowry, but very few are willing to give a share of the parental property to daughters. This documentary explores the implications of the growing culture of disinheritance of women in our country.

(c) *Sharaab: Kaun pilaye, kaun rukaye?* (Liquor and State Policy: why anti-liquor movements inevitably turn anti-state?) This film challenges some of the popular myths about anti-liquor movements in India and reviews the economic and political dynamics of anti-liquor movements in four different states: Punjab, Haryana, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh.

(d) *Mera Bharat Pareshan*—Socialist era statist controls on agriculture and the consequent rural-urban divide promoted through Nehruvian farm policy

(e) *Udaarikaran: Kewal Oopar ka Udaar* (License Permit Raj: a view from below). This film explores how the working of the License-Permit-Raid-Raj thwarts the earning ability and efforts of the poor city migrants such as street vendors and cycle rickshaw pullers to move out of the poverty trap. It provides moving glimpses as to how the poorest of the poor are fleeced of their earning and the urgent need to evolve a bottoms-up approach to economic reforms.

(f) *Banaye Ajoobe, Kehlaye in Picchde* (The impoverishment and marginalization of India’s traditional technologists and artisans). Today India is considered a poor agricultural country. But until about 200 years back, our country was regarded as the world's leading manufacturing society. Europeans took hazardous voyages to India, attracted by its wealth and exquisite luxury goods. This technological legacy was the inheritance of a group of jatis known as 'Vishwakarma', who are found in every Indian city and village. Tragically enough, the jatis who elevated our country's technological, craft and industrial skills to such astonishing levels over centuries have today been declared as "Backward" and "Most Backward Castes". Why and how have their skills and art become obsolete? What impact has their devaluation had on the rest of society? These are some of the questions explored in this documentary.

The films on street vendors and cycle rickshaw pullers have played a vital role in mobilizing opinion for policy and far reaching law reform for these two sectors.

4) Kisse Kanoon Ke: A series of 13 programme commissioned by Doordarshan reviewing the actual fallout of various laws that have been enacted for the ostensible
purpose of protecting or strengthening women’s rights in post independence India. The legislations covered include the following:

a) Laws to protect women against domestic violence  
b) Anti-rape laws.  
c) Laws against obscenity and indecent portrayal of women.  
d) Equal Remuneration Act.  
e) Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act  
f) Reservation for women in panchayats and zilla parishads  
g) Law against bigamy.  
h) Bill to provide 33 per cent reservation for women in legislatures.  
i) Laws to curb Sex Determination Tests.  
k) Laws to curb prostitution  
l) Sati Prohibition Act.  
m) Inheritance laws for women  
n) Anti dowry laws.

Awards & Recognition

2. Chameli Devi Jain Award, Best Woman Journalist of the Year, Media Foundation, New Delhi, 1986
3. Haldi Ghati Award, Outstanding Journalist of the Year, Rana Mewar Foundation, Udaipur, 1993
4. Prabha Puruskar, for "distinguished service to the cause of women" Keshav Smarak Sansthan, Lucknow, 1997
6. Deshasnehi Award, India Development Foundation, Bangalore, 1998
7. Award received from Indians for Collective Action, USA for strengthening the rights of urban self employed poor, 2009

Organizational Affiliations

- Founder and Managing Trustee, Manushi Trust (1979 onwards)
- Founder President, Manushi Sangathan, Forum for Democratic Reforms
- Expert Committee of Delhi Government for drafting a new legislation for implementation of the National Policy for Street Vendors.(2010-2013)
- Member of the Delhi government’s Supreme Court appointed Special Task Force for the reform of cycle rickshaw and NMV policy and drafting new law for NMV (2010—2014)
- Member, COURT of Central University, Jammu (2012 onwards)
- Secretary, Kashmir Committee, headed by former Law Minister Ram Jethmalani
- Life Member, Editor’s Guild of India
- Governing Board Member, Janaagraha, Centre for Democracy and Governance, Bangalore
- Board of Governors, Indian Council of Cultural Relations (2009-2013)
- Governing Board, Common Cause, New Delhi (2008 to present)
- Committee to deal with complaints of sexual harassment of women at work place in the Ministry of Culture, 2009 to 2012
- Governing Board of Delhi International Arts Festival (2011-2013)
- Chairperson, Central Adoption Resource Agency (1999)
- Member, Board of Trustees, Sambhavna Trust, Bhopal People’s Health and Documentation Clinic for Victims of Gas Tragedy (1999-2002)
- Member, Board of Trustees, Indian Social Studies Trust (1997-2016)