

Feminist Approach to Technology (FAT)

134, 3rd Floor, Vinobapuri, Lajpat Nagar – II, New Delhi 110024
Telephone: +91-11-41320391, fat@fat-net.org, www.fat-net.org

Feminist Approach Technology is a not-for-profit organization that believes that women's participation is equally important as men's not just in usage of technology, but also in the creation of and decision-making around technology.

Mission: to enhance women's awareness, interest and participation in technology in order to decrease the gender divide in all technical fields and strengthen the involvement of women in the technical workforce and in policy making. We believe that technology is necessary for the empowerment of women because of the important role technology plays in the economic and social development.

Strategy

What is a "Feminist" approach to Technology?

It is a gendered critique of the design, use and impact of technology, as well as empowering women to participate in its future. Equal participation of women in producing and decision-making regarding technology is important to ensure that widely used technologies do not affect women adversely.

FAT sees women's relationship with technology in three ways:

- Women as users
- Women as creators/makers
- Women as decision-makers around technology

Women as users

- FAT works with adolescent girls and young women, especially those who do not have easy access to technology, to build their leadership and agency through innovative use of technology.
- FAT works with grassroots women leaders/activists to help them develop technical skills that can facilitate their work.

Women as creators/makers

- FAT works with girls from disadvantaged families to promote STEM (Science Technology Engineering Mathematics) education and application through hands-on learning in an inclusive space.

Women as decision makers

- FAT works with women's groups and organizations to create a larger dialogue and collective actions.
- FAT engages in research and advocacy to mainstream engendering technology.

Programs:

Young Women's Leadership Program (YWLP)

The aim of the YWLP is to use technology and new media as a feminist tool to build leadership of disadvantaged young women. In this program, we work with marginalized girls and young

women, between the ages of 14 to 25, through a safe and accessible technology learning space called the Tech Center on a regular basis. The technology skill training in the Tech Center is interspersed with various feminist leadership-building modules in such a way that it not only build individual agency of the girls and young women but also empowers them as change agents within their community. Many of the alumni of this program in Delhi have emerged as new leaders within our organization and change makers within their community in such a way that we can say that the program is for young women and led by young women.

Girls and STEM (Jugaad Lab)

Our goal is to promote Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) education for underprivileged girls and provide them an opportunity to explore science, technology and innovation through hands-on learning. We aim to do this through our project "Jugaad (Innovation) Lab" which has been established as an exploratory learning space where girls between the age of 10 to 15 come to learn STEM concepts through innovative project work, while also tinkering their curiosity and spirit of inquiry. This pilot project in Delhi has recently completed 1 year and is slowly growing to reach more girls.

Advocacy Initiatives

One of FAT's goals is to create a countrywide dialogue and consensus on the need to increase women's participation in technology-making and equal access to technology use. While FAT's networking and advocacy efforts have increased its solidarity with women's groups across the country, there is still a dearth of organizations working to promote women's participation in technology creation. Intensive collaborative efforts are needed to achieve this mission. To this end, FAT runs its advocacy initiative aimed at facilitating collective actions towards bridging this gap. At present, we are working with many grass root women's groups and organizations to build their capacity in understanding science and technology's intersections with women's rights issues that they work on. We are also working with them to build their skills and capacity to use technology more efficiently for their work on women's rights.

What makes our strategy work?

We believe that the feminist framework within which we analyze women's relationship with technology and role within technology, which guides our overall approach, strategy and methodology, is what makes us an effective organization. We incorporate our understanding of power politics and exclusion in each aspect of our work, whether it is in overall program design or in carrying out smaller elements within the design.

Our Commitment

FAT believes in building and supporting young women's leadership, not just through programs but also within our organization. At present, 22 out of 26 team members are less than 30-years-old and 14 of them are young women leaders graduated from our Young Women Leadership Program. We actively invest in our young team members and strive to provide them the platform to hone their leadership skills. This is what makes our organization unique.

FAT's model has been appreciated nationally and internationally, and is being replicated in many places in India.