

Working Paper No. 229, June 2018

**A Conjectural History of Cultural Ideas of Women and Work in Urban South India**

By

Karen Pechilis

Abstract:

This article documents the emergent discussion of middle-class women and work outside of the home in India's pre-Independence period through an analysis of articles in the high-profile *Stri Dharma* journal. Prominent themes in the journal's discourse of promoting middle-class working women include the emphasis on women's moral agency and the definition of their work as doing good in a public social space that lies between the familial and the national contexts. To conclude, the author preliminarily gestures towards a further transformation of the discourse of work in the postcolonial era, towards work as both women's rights and personal fulfilment.