

# newsletter

## INDIAN ASSOCIATION FOR WOMEN'S STUDIES

NEWSLETTER NO. 4, SEPTEMBER 1987

### Editorial

Though a little late, we are entering the second year of our Newsletter. It is our pleasure to share with the members of our Association and the readers, some of the important landmarks in our Association activities ever since the last Newsletter was published in December 1986. We have gone through the second election of the Third Executive Committee, the results of which were declared in February 1987. The E.C. in its meeting on 30th March 1987 at Bombay, chose the following as the office

needed support structures specially for the Rural Women/girls so as to increase their access to educational facilities. A concise report of these recommendations is being carried in this Newsletter. The E.C. also believed that the Association should be undertaking or sponsoring, in conjunction with various national educational agencies and voluntary organisations (a) a study of the National Policy of Education, (b) take stock of the development in Women's Studies and (c) disseminate the various recommendations of IAWS, its objectives and activities among the various Universities and Colleges all over India. In this connection, it focussed on the National Policy on Education for specific treatment. The Association would be happy to collaborate as well as extend its services, by way of resource materials and participation, to any organisation or member who would be interested in undertaking such activities.

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|----------------------|--------------------|
| Ms. Ila Pathak       | —President         |
| Ms. Surinder Jetley  | —Vice-President    |
| Ms. Susheela Kaushik | —General Secretary |
| Ms. Prabha Mahale    | —Joint Secretary   |
| Ms. Vina Mazumdar    | —Treasurer         |

Ms. Madhuri R. Shah and Ms. Lucy Jacob will be ex-officio members of the E.C.

The Association has expanded in its membership as well as in its activities in the past two years.

As for the present year, the E.C. at its meeting in Bombay had projected a few activities, the most important of which is to appoint two Task Forces on the Implications of the National Policy of Education for Women. The Task Forces have since, met twice and have arrived at a set of findings and recommendations. The Task Forces particularly concentrated on Science and Technology Education for Women as well as some of the urgently

The E.C. also thought it necessary to get the N.P.E. and the Programme of Action translated into the various regional languages.

Meanwhile the Association notes with satisfaction the progress achieved in the field of research, Curriculum Development, syllabus changes as well as various departmental and extension activities in the area of Women's Studies which are taking place in the Colleges and Universities with the U.G.C., I.C.S.S.R. and I.C.H.R. assistance.

We would like to share with our members the information that the U.G.C., as part of its Seventh Five Year Plan allocation, has started Women's Studies Centres in four Universities of India viz. Delhi, Punjab, Kerala and Poona. It also has initiated a scheme whereby the colleges all over India can start women's studies cells. Further information on this will be available with U.G.C. which has issued specific guidelines for the University and Colleges in this regard.

The last Newsletter had carried a report of the fourteen sub-themes of the Third National Conference of Chandigarh as well as the various resolutions, passed at the Conference. The Association intends to publish a more detailed report on the proceedings of the Conference. Towards this purpose it has appointed a Committee with Dr. Lucy Jacob as Convenor. Before too long we would also be undertaking the publication of the full papers of the Conference.

We are also happy to note that the N.C.E.R.T. has revived its women's cell though

a similar cell is yet to be started at the U.G.C. and other organisations.

The Association, through this Newsletter would like to remind all those members whose membership had expired on 31st March 1987, to send in their subscription through draft cheque in favour of Indian Association for Women's Studies without waiting for a reminder from us. We may bring to our member's notice one of our earlier decisions that only those who become members before 31st July of the election year would be eligible for the right to vote in the election. Our next election is due in December 1988. In this connection we would welcome any effort on the part of members for expanding the membership, particularly in those regions where the membership is very thin, for e.g. in the southern and eastern parts of India.

Finally the Newsletter has been carrying in the past, some items like an open page and communications. In this connection the E.C. has appointed a set of regional co-ordinators, the names and addresses of whom are given elsewhere in this issue. We would request our members and others to contact the regional co-ordinators on the various issues concerning the Association, particularly in the context of any information on activities they would like our Newsletters to carry. Comments from the readers on the Newsletter coverage as well as suggestions for the future activities of the Association would be most welcome.

(SUSHEELA KAUSHIK)

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## Calling for papers

**National Seminar on "Women and Violence—Various Manifestations".**

Organised by Centre for Women's Studies Development Studies, Bihar-Patna Zone.

*Venue* : A.N. Sinha Institute of Social Studies, Patna.

*Date* : Third Week of December 1987

*Panels* :

- (1) Violence in the family
- (2) Violence in public area
- (3) Violence by State or Public Institutions, Police Stations, Factories, Offices, Agriculture.
- (4) Violence in Caste, Class and ethnic conflicts.
- (5) Role of Media.

*Contact Person* :

Dr. Niroj Sinha,  
Reader, Political Science,  
Magadh Mahila College,  
P.U. Patna.

# Regional Coordinators of IAWS Newsletter

The Executive Committee has appointed the following persons as regional Co-ordinators of the Newsletter with a view to collect and despatch information on the various activities in the field of Women's studies development in the concerned regions. The Editorial Committee will select the items for publication in the Newsletter. All the members and others are requested to send in their information to the concerned coordinator or directly to the Editor Sister Karuna Mary Braganza, C/o ALACHE, C-6 Centre, S.D.A., New Delhi-110 016.

## List of Regional Co-ordinators

### Names and Addresses

Dr. Pam Rajput,  
Deptt. of Political Science,  
Punjab University,  
Chandigarh-160 014.

Dr. Vasanti Devi,  
B-11, Vivekanand Nagar,  
Dindigul-(Tamil Nadu)

Dr. Arati Ganguli,  
Women's Resources Centre,  
P-595, Puranadas Road,  
Calcutta-29.

Dr. Sushila Agarwal,  
L.2.D University Campus,  
Jaipur-302 004.

Dr. Manu Bhaskar,  
Lecturer,  
Dept. of Sociology,  
University of Kerala,  
Karivattam, Trivandrum (Kerala)

Dr. Varalakshmi,  
Executive Director,  
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B-6/G.2. S.R. Nagar, Hyderabad.

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Deptt. of Anthropology,  
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Dharwar-580 003.

Dr. Jyoti Trivedi,  
S.N.D.T. Women's University,  
Vithal Das Vidyavihar,  
Santacruz (West)  
Bombay-400 049.

Dr. S.N. Barua,  
Professor and Head,  
Department of History,  
Dibrugarh University,  
Assam-786 004.

Ms. Susie Taru,  
Deptt. of English Literature,  
Central Institute of English,  
Foreign Languages, Hyderabad-540 007.

Mr. Khishwar Shirali,  
Ghama Hatti,  
Simla (Himachal Pradesh-171015)

Ms. Vibuti Patel,  
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Express Highway,  
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Dr. Vimal Balasubramaniam,  
605/1, Lancer Barracks,  
Sikandrabad-500 026.

Dr. M/s. Corinne Kumar D'Sonza  
7 Balaji Layout,  
Wheeler Road,  
Bangalore-560 005

## Appeal to Members

All those whose membership has expired by 31st March 1987, kindly renew your membership by sending the amount by Money Order/Draft in favour of *Indian Association for Women's Studies* to the Treasurer, Dr. Vina Mazumdar B-43 Panchsheel Enclave, New Delhi-110 017.

Any change in address may be communicated. IAWS will welcome efforts by members to expand the membership, particularly of institutions.

### Categories of Membership and Subscription Rates

(a) Ordinary Members	Rs. 25 per annum or Rs. 100 for 5 years.
(b) Life Members	Rs. 250
(c) Institutional Members	Rs. 300 per annum or Rs. 1000 for 5 years.
(d) Corporate Members (Institutions only)	Rs. 2,500
(e) Student Members	Rs. 10 per annum
(f) Associates	Rs. 25 per annum or Rs. 250 for 10 years.

# A Report and Recommendations of the two Task Forces.

The Executive Committee of the Association, at its meeting held on 31st March 1987 at Bombay, had appointed two Task Forces on "The National Policy on Education and Its Implications for Women", and the "Implications of NPE for Science and Technology for Women." The two Task Forces met on 8 and 9th July 1987 in New Delhi. The following were the major recommendations of the Task Forces, as endorsed by the Executive Committee of the Association, at its meeting in 11th July 1987.

The recent National Policy on Education (NPE) talks of the values and goals of education as one of "Education for Women's Equality".

In this context it identifies the purpose as *the empowerment of women*. The concept, in turn, means *something more than merely an approach of welfare or even an approach of equality. It implies something more positive, namely definite role and participation for women in national development, not merely for themselves, but also for the good of the wider society*. Women have to be viewed as agents for building a strong united and progressive Indian nation. Their potentialities have to be fully utilised in order to bring about a new, just and humane social order that will sustain ecological and environmental order, and peace in the society. If women have to share in the wider responsibilities, with a social identity, they need to be empowered to break the constraints that now restrict their roles and capacities.

Such an empowerment of women implies and requires, (i) releasing them from their present constraints, (ii) bringing society to recognise the contribution and role of women. *Role of Education in Empowerment*: Education has a role in providing operative mechanisms by which the women can be released from these constraints which are psychological, sociological, structural, physical, biological and economic. This role has to be played both from within and outside the educational system.

Empowerment is a strategy (a) to free women from their present state of subordination, and in many cases, even exploitation, (b) releasing their creative energies and thus (c) enabling them to play mobilising roles as agents for social transformation.

It should help to restore to women their rightful place in society as the producers and consumers, and to recognise them as self-reliant as well as socially committed.

## Recommendations

7. The Programme of Action by the Government of India speaks of a Village Education Committee. To gain the maximum mobilisation of masses the committee should be empowered in the following manner:

- (a) by making it a statutory sub-committee of the panchayats;
- (b) by making it responsible for planning, implementation, supervision and monitoring of all programmes for education, health and support services, together with incentives to students/teachers, in order to achieve the basic objective of women's empowerment through organisation, and access to educational and all other developmental participation;
- (c) by placing the resources earmarked for this purpose at the disposal of the committee. The Village Committee be formed in such a way that the majority are women and among them majority is drawn from the target groups. Women members of panchayats and of grassroot organisations, formed with the help of Dwakrs, Integrated Rural Development Programme (I.R.D.P.) or Mahil Mandal under antipoverty programmes may be included. Teachers ought to be a part of the committee along with the Sarpanch and other functionaries of the Government directly concerned with the development of women and children of the area. The committee should be headed by one of the women members of the panchayat.

1. The present structure designed by the Government for supervision and management of programmes like Non-Formal Education (N.F.E.), Adult Education, Integrated Child Development Schemes (I.C.D.S.) and even the formal school system are top-heavy hierarchies which are designed to facilitate the participation of the community.

They consume the major part of the resources allocated in the programme. For instances in the Non-Formal Education Programme recently designed by the Government



of India, at the project level the management cost will be 16.72 percent for every 100 centres with district and state level the cost put together will consume approximately 43 percent of the total resources budgeted for the programme. The cost of supervision further away from the field becomes higher. For example, the salary of a Joint Director or a Senior Consultant at the state level is Rs. 4,000 p.m.; the salary of the second level staff at this point and that of the Assistant Director at the district level range between Rs. 2,000 and 3,000 and the peons of all these levels will get a salary of Rs. 850 p.m. At the present management level, the Officer-in-Charge will get Rs. 2,600 and his peon, Rs. 850. As against this the NFE instructor, the Atlas which has to carry the programme on her shoulders, will draw the munificent salary of Rs. 105 if she is teaching primary level children and Rs. 125 if she is teaching children at the upper primary level. The total amount provided for a non-formal centre per year is Rs. 4,150 for primary and Rs. 7,996 for upper primary.

2. Education is a critical development input; it is to be delinked from the legacies of welfare approach.

3. All incentives to students shall be through challenges and their form and content shall be decided by the grassroot (micro) level committee.

4. All types of vocational training without discrimination be provided to both boys and girls all over the country which should include adult education instruction, non-formal instruction, child development (with different skills needed for different age groups), nutrition, primary health care, nursing, other paramedical skills, agriculture, forestry, other agro-based skills and technical skills for which needs exist in rural areas. Since such needs vary from area to area, the decision about such subjects, may be taken by the village committee; the Government's role should be to provide information necessary for the committees to make decisions, and the resources to implement the same.

5. Top priority should be given to basic literacy and numeracy as a precondition of empowerment of women.

#### 6. Support services

- (i) Strengthening of the Anganwadi structure, It could be located in a place most suitable to increase access of girls and women to the educational and training opportunities offered by the Government's national policy.

#### 7. Legislative measures

The Programme of Action (POA) mentions legislative measures but does not specify any.

- (i) We do not support child labour but as long as child labour continues we propose the following :

Employers in both organised and unorganised sectors who employ illiterate workers of both sexes including children be compelled to make arrangements for their education.

- (ii) Employers of migrant labourers must contribute towards setting up of NFE/Adult Education Centres.

- (iii) The administration and management of such centres should be entrusted to women's groups which will include representatives of the illiterate labourers, especially women in the decision-making process.

The expenditure incurred in providing such educational services may be considered for tax-exemption.

Concurrently, penalty for non-compliance should be built into all labour and fiscal laws.

#### 8. Media

- (i) In audio and audiovisual educational media, audience research and monitoring are necessary to prevent wastage and repressive programmes from being transmitted.

- (ii) Among the targets of expansion mentioned in POA there is one of "Eliminating elements of consumerism, violence, etc. from media programmes without delay". The Government has not done this. Instead such programmes have escalated through commercial advertisements and late-night movies. Commercial advertisement and feature films along with feature film based programmes should be eliminated forthwith.

- (iii) Dissemination of information about all programmes of education and women's development being offered by the Government in simple local languages to all panchayats, NGOs and educational institutions expected to play a positive interventionist role in the empowerment of women as per National Policy on Education (NPE). Provision for this must be made within the current year's budget, and the assistance of the educational institutions and concerned Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) sought for this purpose.

## 9. Role of Secondary and Higher Education

At the secondary level, an overwhelming number of girls' options for further education in the areas of their choice are cut off. This is not because they lack competence, but because the only institution within their reach do not offer those options, e.g. science or mathematics. This is also at the college level in many states. The myth that the failure rate among girls is high because of compulsory mathematics or science, must be refuted. We propose to gather data on gender specific performances in different subjects at different levels of education, and hold another workshop on critical issues relating to (a) women's access to science and technology, and (b) the role of institutions specialising in fields related to empowerment of women.

10. Coverage of issues in women's health in medical education, especially at the undergraduate level, is sadly deficient. We need to involve institutions for medical education in our struggle.

11. At the stage of higher education in general the need for awareness raising is acute. Higher educational institutions have to play a crucial role in the transformation of values, the training of teachers, administrators and policy

makers, if the objective of empowering women is to be achieved. At the seminar the innovative experiments initiated by a few universities to change their curricula was noted. These universities geared their teaching and extension activities for the empowerment of women, even before the National Policy on Education came into being, whereas a large majority of institutions across the country are not even aware of the challenge that has been thrown to them. Nor are they aware of the new role prescribed for them by the National Policy on Education and the Programme of Action which states categorically that by 1995 all educational institutions should be involved in women's development activities.

We appeal to all educational institutions to come forward and participate in this national effort, by utilising their expertise, and human and other resources. We believe that in the framework of the alternative strategy and approach advocated here, educational institutions, students and teachers can play a far more effective role in assisting the process of planning and implementation by monitoring from below, with empowerment as its objective.

**SUSHEELA KAUSHIK**

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## Publications by Indian Association for Women's Studies.

(Few copies left)

- (1) Report of the National Conference on Women's Studies, April 20-24, 1981. Available from SNDT Women's University, Vithaldas Vidyavihar, Juhu Road, Santacruz (West) Bombay-400 054.
- (2) Report of the Second National Conference on Women's Studies, Trivandrum, April 9-12, 1984. Available from Indian Association for Women's Studies, Rs. 10.00.
- (3) Third National Conference on Women's Studies, Theme: Women, Struggles and Movements, 3 volumes, 1-4 October, 1986. Available with General Secretary, I.A.W.S., Rs. 150.00.

# Women, Law and Development—Is Equal Justice Possible ?

- Is law meant for crisis situations ? Or, is law to be an essential component of the development process ?
- If law is an integral component of development, why not have periodic review of the existing laws.
- What steps need to be taken to remove vestiges of discrimination against and exploitation of women ?

These were some pertinent questions raised by sensitive women lawyers at the workshop on Women, Law and Development organised by Vikasini at Bombay in April, 1987. The workshop received keen response from women activists, educationists, social workers from Gujarat and Maharashtra and support of women's centres and Sophia Polytechnic for Women, Bombay.

The group discussed these questions at length. The steps taken by the Government to enhance women's status were appreciated. The scope of recent amendments in State legislations to curb violence was considered. But it was felt that justice cannot be safeguarded by legislation alone. Justice has to be ingrained in the hearts of men and women, educated and uneducated, for legislation to be effective.

To give equal justice to all and reduce inequalities, it was suggested that :

(a) Judiciary should make an objective review of the existing laws. Certain legislations enacted to protect women's interests have had a reverse effect. One such legislation is 'Equal Pay for Equal Work.' Such legislations need to be modified and revitalised.

— Why not review the law of 'Equal Pay for Equal Work' and rename it 'Equal Pay for Comparable Work' to avoid further injustice to women ?

— Similarly why not do away with existing laws of inheritance and have a more dynamic concept, such as the concept of community property ?

(b) Law should not be an impediment when unjust dramatic situations arise. The legal set-up should function in a manner that will prevent such situations.

As an outcome of talks by lawyers, communication experts, intervention by activists,

and in-depth panel discussions, the group recommended that :

(a) More emphasis should be given to the formation of right attitudes, perspectives and values regarding women's role and their dignity as persons.

(b) To achieve this women's studies should be used as an effective instrument. The U.G.C./state governments could send guidelines to universities/secondary schools to introduce women's studies as part of the foundation or core courses for all students.

(c) The syllabus of women's studies should give equal stress to theory as well as practical exposure to the social reality. The content of the course should include the following topics :

(i) A detailed study of the Constitution at the school level.

(ii) Subjects like Politics, Economics, Social Studies and Literature could focus attention on women's issues. Due emphasis to be laid on extension work.

(iii) The status of women emphasising her dignity as a person :

—Brief global review of women's status and a historical review of their status in India—rural, urban and tribal.

—Women and family—marriage and family relationships.

—Women and health—nutrition and family welfare.

—Women, politics and religion.

—Women's rights, legal and meta-legal remedies.

—Women's concerns, problems and violence against women, i.e. exploitation, sexual harassment, eve teasing, molestation, amniocentesis, rape, prostitution, dowry deaths, etc.

—Government and non-government efforts towards economic independence of women and creation of social support systems.

(d) The teachers of training colleges should play a more dynamic role in creating greater awareness in society by :

- (i) Sensitising the teacher trainees to women's concerns and emerging roles.
- (ii) Making valuable addition to creating new literature for women.
- (iii) Restructuring the SUPW activities, choosing more meaningful and relevant activities through which teacher trainees may reach out to others.
- (iv) Encouraging use of alternate media, such as puppetry, role-play, street plays, action

songs, folk theatre in rural and face-to-face group situations, and so on.

- (v) Writing of articles, talks on radio, tele-casting of programmes on television highlighting women's issues and concerns.

The group maintained that the Indian woman needs to change her self-image and to perceive herself as a person in her own right. This changed perception of herself will spearhead the desired social change.

—AMRIT NIKORE

## Joint Action against 'Sati' Needed

The Editorial Board strongly condemns the murder in the name of Sati, of Roop Kanwar at Deorala, Rajasthan, on September 4, 1987, as well as the shocking failure of the State to make any attempt to prevent either the act or its subsequent glorification in the Chunari Ceremony. We appeal to all the right thinking people of this country to act so that such heinous crimes against women are not repeated.

I.A.W.S. Newsletter is published thrice in an year and despatched presently from :

A.I.A.C.H.E.  
First Floor, C-6, Community Centre  
Safdarjung Development Area  
New Delhi - 110 016

From 1st November, 1987 A.I.A.C.H.E. will have the following new address :

A.I.A.C.H.E., Lokabodhan Kendra  
39, Institutional Area  
Pankha Road  
D-Block, Janakpuri  
New Delhi - 110 058

## Editorial Board

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