

INDIAN ASSOCIATION FOR WOMEN'S STUDIES

newsletter

No. 13

June 1991

Editorial

Indian Women, Endangered Species!!!

In India we have a record deficiency of women over men. This characteristic can be seen in many other developing countries too. What is cause for concern to India however, is the fact that the women to men ratio has been continuously declining over the last few decades. In the 1901 census there were 1,072 females to 1000 males. Since then the ratio of women to men gradually declined and to-day we have only 929 females to 1,000 males. In most of the countries in the world the sex ratio tends to be favourable to female even though the males outnumber females at younger ages. But after the age of twenty, females outnumber males. The reason is, there is high mortality among males than females as the latter have a great resistance power to diseases than males. In India and some other developing countries the situation is different due to neglect of females not only in childhood but, at almost all ages.

According to some scholars, there can be two major reasons for the decline in the ratio over time.

1. The sex ratio at birth is becoming more favourable to males than what it was in the past due to abuse of antenatal sex - determination tests.
2. Female mortality has been higher than male mortality and this differential has increased instead of narrowing down in the age group of 0-44.

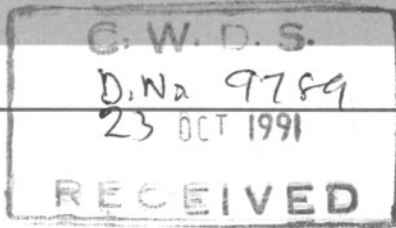
We observe that the declining sex ratio in India is not a biological phenomenon. It is the cumulative effect of social practices and preferences which are inseparable from each other. It is a fact that the girl child is mostly neglected in most of the families. A boy, who is younger or elder than the girl, enjoys better food and treatment in his illness while the girl's health is neglected. The girls are brought up in a discriminatory way. Though the law prohibits child marriage, we observe child marriages all over India and even in the zopadpatties of metropolitan cities. They give birth to a child at the age of 14 and 15. In India, therefore, maternal mortality is higher than in developed and developing countries. Female mortality and morbidity rates are higher than their male counterparts - about 1/3 higher in reproductive age of 15 - 44 as revealed in National Sample Survey and other studies. Too early, too frequent and too late child bearing are the main causes of anaemia and T.B. among Indian women. Protein deficiency is common in pregnant and nursing mothers. That is the main reason for high mortality during pregnancy, delivery and thereafter.

The finding of one micro study says that the problem of women's health depends upon socio-economic variables, less nourishing food, ignorance regarding maintaining good health and price rise are the main things which collectively affect women the most. It further states that in the countries where the women participate more in agricultural work, the undervaluation of women and girls is relatively less. The women have better economic status in rice based agricultural society than in wheat based agricultural society. Studies like these though micro in nature, speak out about the position of women in India.

"The marginalisation of women in the economy, in the family, in the community and the political process all contributed to women's growing poverty, hunger and high mortality in virtually all age groups", the Committee on the Status of Women had stated way back in 1974.

There is a rise in the rate of crimes of violence against women. Every day in newspaper, incidences of dowry deaths and rape cases are reported. If we have to stop it only few token programmes for women will not help. The women's organisations are aware of it and demanded for a commission on women. Though the bill was passed last year there is no move from the Government's side to implement it. The responsibility of women's organisations and the activists has increased now. We have to identify the aspects of the process of social, political and economic changes which help the women for better life with dignity.

One may agree with Bharati Shrinivasan, Asst. Director, F.P.A. of India that "the sex ratio may not be reflective of status and autonomy of women". Sex ratio is not as important as the quality of life i.e. economic freedom and decision making. The sex ratio has gone up in Kerala, but is the quality of life of women there any better than it was in 1981. A solution to this is that if we have to change this situation, we have to work on a war-footing on some issues. We have to create awareness among women folk that amniocentesis should be used only to detect foetal defects and not to remove female foetus. Female illiteracy is also responsible in some way for our low status and position in socio-economic and political process. Female illiteracy and declining sex ratio are equally responsible for our subordinate role in the society. If we do not remove illiteracy among women we are bound to be behind our men in all sectors of economic and political activities. It is our good fortune that the framers of our Constitution (and specially Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar) guaranteed equal rights and privileges for women. The Five Year Plans have undertaken various programmes for upliftment of women and improving their socio-economic and educational status. The 1991 census furnishes the information that women have been



bypassed by the development process in terms of their educational, employment and health status.

If this is to be removed the women's associations and organisations have to play a key role in the process of development. We have to see to the implementation of Family Planning Scheme, to insist for girl's education, insist on getting

opportunities to improve women's skill, implementing labour laws specially protecting women's interests in the organised and the unorganised sectors. It is an acceptable statement by a scholar that the 1991 census is both an eye-opener and a mandate for concrete action on the demographic front.

Rohini Gawankar

Announcement

The Fifth National Conference on Women's Studies at Jadhavpur University, Calcutta was a grand success. IAWS newsletter No.14 will carry a detailed report of the Conference. We express our heartfelt thanks to all participants, theme-coordinators and supporters of the conference that highlighted major issues concerning "Religion, Culture, Politics vis-a-vis Women".

Report of First Conference of IAWS

Rs.10

Available at R.C.W.S., SNTD Women's University, Vidya Vihar, Juhu Road, Santacruz West, Bombay - 400 049.

Papers on Fourth National Conference of IAWS.

(Waltair, Vishakapatnam)1988

A set of 3 vols. Price: Rs.150/-

Available at Women's Studies & Development Centre, University of Delhi, Chhatra Marg, Delhi - 110 007.

Women Reach for Half the Sky (Fourth National Women's Conference on Women's Movement in India)

- Ms. Sujata Gotoskar.

Calicut, Kerala.

"We make our living by catching snakes and rats. We sell the venom of the snake and the skin and eat the flesh. The Government gives some money for killing rats as they destroy crops", says Jagada Irula. Jagada belongs to the Irula tribe who live in Chingleput district in Tamil Nadu. She was sharing her experiences in the Women and Work workshop, which was organised, along with 8 other workshops at the Fourth National Women's Conference on Women's Movement in India from the 27th to 31st December 1989 at Calicut in Kerala.

The conference was hosted by several women's groups in Kerala like Bodhana and Manav. The conference was the product of several processes encompassing many women's groups in the country who formed the National Co-ordination Committee.

More than 2,000 delegates from Gujarat, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Delhi attended the conference and participated in the 9 parallel workshops on communalism, politics, violence, law, health, ecology, work and planning policy.

The workshop on communalism, was the most well attended as the present political situation has almost forced people to face this gigantic and frightening force. Most women felt a desperate need to evolve alternative strategies to counter the forces of communalism. It was unanimously resolved to observe March 8, Women's Day, as anti-communal day and the year 1991 as anti communal year. "While the actual campaign beginning from March 8 would be planned keeping regional needs in mind, a common symbol needs to be evolved and adopted to signify collective action against communalism",

says Geetha, member of the Snehidi group in Madras, one of the co-ordinators of the communalism session.

Most women deeply felt the need to build a women's movement around the issue. The conference took a stand on the Ram Janambhoomi - Babri Masjid issue and opposed all efforts to demolish, desecrate or modify any place of worship of any community by another community.

Women from various parts of the country shared their experiences of casteism and communalism. "Gujarat is almost becoming a communal state", said Tanushree Shah from Chingari organisation in Ahmedabad. "The communal hatred is palpable, visible. It is not only that Karsevakas were given Rs.500/- each and a certificate ensuring employment when BJP comes to power. That is there, but the poison has reached the very core of peoples beings". Kalpana K. from Hyderabad too spoke about the political vested interests who had fanned communal hatred and killings.

Many delegates felt that religious, caste and community identity was an important emotional need felt by most people, also women, "One wonders what do we have to offer instead of that identity? Anti-communalism? That's too weak and too negative. We need a powerful positive symbol. That is the challenge", said G. Suji of Maharashtra who felt strongly about the Shiv Sena phenomena in her State.

In the workshop on women and politics, delegates spoke about their experience of state repression and police atrocities. They strongly felt that it was necessary to understand that "politics is not somewhere out there, but every aspect of our lives is governed by politics, because politics means control over and exercise of power - whether in the family or regarding health or employment policies", said Gauri Chaudhary of Action India, Delhi.

The session on women and violence was differently and interestingly organised. The full classroom and the enthusiasm of the delegates were indications of the full scale participation. Role plays, skits, music were the main ways of "discussing" or rather communicating ideas and analysis on different issues – rape, domestic violence, sexual harassment. A 15 year old schoolgirl from Kerala spoke about her own gang rape in September 1990. The group was supportive to the girl and immediately drafted letters to the authorities demanding immediate action against the rapists.

Recommendations were also made for the separate Domestic Violence Act to enable women to get immediate relief.

The women and media session had also organised plays and skits to depict issues women faced. One issue discussed at some length was pornography. The workshop demanded provisions in the Advertising Standards Council of India to check obscenity in advertising and degrading women through advertisements.

The ecology workshop discussed issues relating to nuclear energy, environment, pollution and tourism.

The women and law session discussed criminal law, civil law and laws relating to marriage, divorce, custody, inheritance etc. A perspective towards formulating a women's code was also discussed.

The women and work sessions discussed first the issues that affect women in their work - the division of labour by gender, women's unpaid and low paid work, women's lack of access to alternative training and employment. Delegates then related their own attempts at and experiences of forming alternative organisations and of struggles of women from work-groups as different as tendu leaves collectors, beedi rollers, fish-net makers, snake - catchers, domestic workers and agricultural workers.

The workshop on health discussed issues relating to the existing health system and the need for evolving alternatives. The central bill on sex determination tests which punishes women was discussed and condemned.

All these workshops were conducted at the same time in different class-rooms of Devagiri College, with a sprawling 1 km. campus. The workshops were conducted simultaneously in at least 4 different languages - Tamil, Hindi, Malayalam and English – sometimes more, Kannada and Marathi.

The translations tended to take up some time, but as the women from Rajasthan said, "that was the beauty of the conference. Watching Tamil or Kerala women talk excitedly, with passion.... we didn't understand the language, but we understood the passion.... We also know 4 words of Tamil and 6 of Malayalam now."

Forum for Women & Politics

APPEAL

Dear Friends

As some of you know, in the last few months many groups and individuals in the autonomous feminist movement in Delhi came together in order to raise a series of demands (and related issues) before political parties and seek pre election commit-

The food, accommodation and sanitary arrangements were organised with a great deal of thought and effort, especially given the constraints under which the organisers had to operate. But as in anything on such a massive scale, the arrangements fell short of the needs. What was amazing however was the team spirit of the women in making the best of what was available.

The organisers had expected about 1,500 women to participate. The enthusiasm however was such that about 2,500 women made it to Kerala from different parts of the country, some travelling for several days and nights.

In the First National Conference organised in Bombay in 1980, about 250 women had participated. In the Second National Conference, again in Bombay in 1985, the numbers had risen to around 450. In Patna, the Third National Conference saw about 700 women. In the Fourth Conference the numbers had more than doubled in just over 2 years.

Another very lively feature of the conference was the exciting range of cultural programmes organised by women from different states. In fact, right from the inaugural session women from different states danced and sang together. This created a mood of gaiety, mutual respect and easy camaraderie.

One woman objected: "The country is burning; people are dying in communal riots and violence. How can we dance and sing?"

Geetha from Tamil Nadu spoke for the rest of the women: "The country is burning; people are full of hatred and intolerance towards each other, towards each others cultures, traditions and histories. Our only hope is mutual respect and developing an alternate culture which affords space to each of us, adapts from other cultures and feels comfortable with these. Our singing and dancing together is one such attempt".

Most of the workshops which went on for 2 – 2½ days were also enriching and informative. "We realised the range of experiences and also the need for basic information in the workshop", said N. Krishna from Anantapur, Andhra Pradesh.

"The most important thing I got from this conference", said Annama from Karnataka, "is the feeling of being with 2,500 women - women like me and women not like me, sharing with them, eating, sleeping, cleaning with them.... just being with so many like me...."

"It was also the feeling", says Neelam C. from Uttar Pradesh, "that we also come together as women to forge links beyond our families, our communities, our castes, our religions, as independent women concerned about our collective future, the collective future of humankind".

ments from them. A note about the forum and its demands is enclosed.

One of the four major demands the forum had raised was on the National Commission for Women. While considering the Act of 1990 (which set up such a commission) reasonable—and important enough to be seriously discussed within the feminist movement - we felt there were ambiguous areas within it, and the ambitious scope which it was given, was hardly matched by the administrative provisions within the Act, or the funds which were allocated for it (Rs.11 lakhs).

Our experience of the processes of review, legislation and implementation, we also felt, showed that without adequate feminist representation, the Commission would flounder. Hence we demanded that within 2 months of the formation of a new government, a series of public hearings with women's groups etc. be held on the scope, powers, composition, structure and functioning of the Commission; that on the basis of recommendations made by all of us (at these hearings), the Commission be set up and start functioning within 6 months.

The history of setting up the National Commission has been a rather ugly one - under both the Congress-I and Janata Dal Governments, initial meetings have broken down because of the arbitrary methods of representation which those governments sought. Now the Chandra Shekar government has sought to appoint members to the Commission without consulting women's organisations and representatives - and that too during the election period. Several women's organisations have been lobbying against this move - such as the MDS, JWP, AIDWA, JMS, NFIW, CWDS. Since the Commission is desperately needed to focus on women's issues nationally, we felt that our involvement in its structure and functioning, is critical. We are mailing this information and questionnaire based on key areas of structure, functioning and appointments, which can then be forwarded to the government as a national response of women's groups. Since our participation in this will add to the strength required to influence policy on women, we hope you will reply at the earliest.

The main points of the National Commission Act are:

That it will examine all Constitutional provisions and laws concerning women, and propose changes in the laws.

That it will vet implementation of laws and recommend improvements and recommend changes.

That it will take up specific cases of atrocities against women.

It can be seen from this that the scope of the Commission is huge. Additionally, the Act gives the Commission all the powers of a civil court, to deal with cases concerning women.

Hoping to hear from you soon.

Forum for Women and Politics

During the elections of May 1991, 8 women's groups in Delhi - ACTION INDIA, ANKUR, KALI, JAGORI, JWP, SAHELI, SABL A SANGH, SHAKTI SHALINI and some independent women came together on a joint platform and for the first time brought the representatives of political parties face-to-face with non-party women at a public meeting held at the Constitution Club on May 13, 1991.

All parties had made token gestures towards women as we were now being seen as a constituency to be courted. We, the women of the autonomous movement in Delhi, focussed our attention on 4 main areas, in brief:

A. Fifty percent representation for women in political parties and decision making bodies at all levels.

Code of behaviour specific to violence against women and communal politics to be stipulated for candidates.

B. On the formation of the National Commission for Women and its immediate implementation. The involvement of women's organisation in the process to ensure decentrali-

sation in deciding its scope and powers.

C. Resource allocation for women be given priority over defence expenditure.

Establishing Women's Development Cells.

D. Concern for the decreasing sex ratio as shown by the census of 1991: female 929 to male 1000; we demand positive discrimination for the survival and equal status of the girl child.

Judging from the media impact this could be said to have been a successful initiative taken by a small group of women in Delhi. We must now prove that we were serious in our concerns and pursue our goals systematically.

Also, the response and support we got from women of all classes at the public meeting meant we had raised their expectations. To voice our demands to show the strength of the autonomous women's groups was only a beginning. We felt we had to sustain this effort and create a forum which could lobby in Parliament, put pressure on whichever government comes to power to recognise that women make up half the population and we want equal participation in politics.

This forum sets as its first agenda the National Commission for Women.

Questionnaire

Name of organisation

Address:

The following rules are suggested for the effective functioning of the Commission. The existing Act is given alongside our proposed/suggested rules. Please tick the appropriate box and elaborate your answer, if you wish, in the extra space provided under each question.

Provisions of the Act

Suggested rules

Appointments

11 3 (2)

The Commission shall consist of:

a) a Chairperson committed to the cause of women, to be nominated by the Central Government.

b) five Members to be nominated by the Central Government from amongst persons of ability, integrity and standing who have had experience in law or legislation, trade unionism, management of an industry or organi-

1 (a) Specific names for the Central office of the Commission to be suggested by women's groups. Please keep in mind members would have to hold a 9 to 5 job in Delhi.

yes no

(b) if yes please send your recommendations of seven names; i.e. one chairperson, five members (one SC and one ST), one

sation committed to increasing the employment potential of women, women's voluntary organisations (including women activists), administration, economic development, health, education or social welfare.

Provided that at least one Member each shall be from amongst persons belonging to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes respectively.

c) a Member-Secretary to be nominated by the Central Government who shall be....

i) an expert in the field of management, organisational structure or sociological movement or

ii) an officer who is a member of a civil service of the union of an all-India service or holds a civil post under the Union with appropriate experience.

member-secretary.

2. State/district/village level committees to be decided by women's groups at the levels concerned.

yes no

take suomoto notice of matters relating to-

i) deprivation of women's rights;

ii) non-implementation of laws enacted to provide protection to women and also to achieve the objective of equality and development;

iii) non-compliance of policy decisions, guidelines or instructions aimed at mitigating hardships and ensuring welfare and providing relief to women' and take up the issues arising out of such matters with appropriate authorities.

II 9(1)

10 (2) The Central Government shall cause all the reports referred to in clause (b) of sub-section (1) to be laid before each house of Parliament a long with a memorandum explaining the action taken or proposed to be taken on the recommendations relating to the union and the reasons for the non acceptance, if any, of any of such recommendations

set up its own bureaucracy

yes no

7. National Commission to appoint a subcommittee of five members from women's groups to liaise with Parliament on women's issues.

yes no

Structure

II 8

1. The Commission may appoint such committees as may be necessary for dealing with such special issues as may be taken up by the Commission from time to time.

2. The Commission shall have the power to co-opt as members of any committee appointed under sub-section (1) such number of persons, who are not Members of the Commission, as it may think fit and the persons so co-opted shall have the right to attend the meetings of the committee and take part in its proceedings but shall not have the right to vote.

(f) look into complaints and

3. (a) Greater access for women through office/ representatives of the Commission at various levels.

yes no

(b) If yes, clarify the appropriate level;

State District
 Village All three

4. (a) These sub-committees at various levels should be staffed by activists of existing women's organisations.

yes no

Please specify

4. (b) if no, the National Commission should

Functioning

The commission or a committee thereof shall meet as and when necessary and shall meet at such time and place as the Chairperson may think fit.

3. The persons so co-opted shall be entitled to receive such allowances for attending the meetings of the committee as may be prescribed.

8. The Commission to work regularly from 9 to 5 and not only 'as and when necessary'.

yes no

5. Atleast one person to be appointed as representatives of the Commission in each Ministry (not from the bureaucracy) to participate in all major policy decisions and vet the work of Ministries.

yes no

10(1) (a) to (f)

10 (1) The Commission shall perform all of any of the following functions, namely—

- (a) investigate and examine all matters relating to the safeguards provided for women under the Constitution and other laws;
- (b) present to the Central Government, annually and at such other times as the Commission may deem fit, reports upon the working of those safeguards;
- (c) make in such reports, recommendations for the effective implementation of those safeguards for improving the conditions of women by the Union or any State;
- (d) review, from time to time, the existing provisions of the Constitution and other laws affecting women and recommend amendments thereto so as to suggest remedial legislative measure to meet any lacunae, inadequacies or shortcomings in such legislations;
- (e) take up the cases of violation of the provisions of the Constitution and of other laws relating to women with the appropriate authorities;

6. Since a substantial part of the functions of the Commission are concerned with law, a special Standing Committee on law is required. Five lawyers to be identified for the purpose by the Commission from among activist lawyers for a term of two years, both at the Centre and State levels. The Legal Standing Committee to meet at least four times a month.

yes

no

An Appeal from Amnesty International

Amnesty International is a worldwide movement independent of any government, political persuasion or religious creed. It works impartially for the release of prisoners of conscience, fair and prompt trials for all political prisoners, and opposes in all cases torture, the death, penalty and extrajudicial executions.

We are presently initiating an action focussing attention on the rape and ill-treatment of women by security personnel and policy in Punjab. The action on human rights abuses concerning women in India is scheduled for early 1992. The particular issues addressed in the action, and the individual cases involved, are outlined in our recent report on human rights abuses in Punjab which was published in May 1991. I enclose copies of the relevant parts of the external document for your information. Your organisation may wish to publicize the issues raised in these pages, or to comment on them directly to us.

One of the major aims of the action is to extend our contacts in India to organisations which are involved in the field of human rights and civil liberties. We thus hope to establish channels through which information relevant to human rights abuses concerning women can be confidentially exchanged.

Any information you may have, such as press cuttings and court documents, about the issue outlined in the document and individual cases of harassment would be most helpful. It would also be useful to have your suggestions about other people or organisations we could contact in Maharashtra or in other states for data on the rape and ill-treatment of women by security forces and police. Similarly, any suggestions you may have about people to whom we should address our concerns (police, civil servants, lawyers etc.) would be most welcome.

Contact person:

Matthew Zagor
Asia Research Department
Amnesty International
International Secretariat
1 Easton Street,
London WC1X 8DJ
United Kingdom.

Action Research Project Girl Child and the Family

Sponsored by the Dept. of Women and Child Development, Govt. of India.

Gender equality in India is still a distant dream. Women and girls continue to be treated as second class citizens in a country that claims to value socialistic democracy. Despite the Five Year Plans, even a modicum of equity has not been achieved; there is therefore a growing realization that the benefits of progress and development have not reached women and girls.

With the year 1990 being officially designated as the "Year of the Girl Child", the Dept. of Women and Child Development substantiated its concern in several ways, including the funding of an action research project on the Girl Child. Simultaneously, those persons active in the area of Women's Studies, who had been keeping track since the 1975 document "Towards Equality", decided to link up the chain of Women's Studies Centres operating in the Universities, as a special scheme of the UGC, with the national study. Directors of the Centres and other academics in the field met together, identified the thrust areas for study and chalked out a plan of action.

Workshops, consultative meetings, formal and informal discussions were held in the months of March, April and May 1990. While all the participating members recognized the need for

a comprehensive data base on the Girl Child, they were not satisfied with the objective of producing just another status report. There was consensus that there must be a component of intervention and affirmative action.

The materials available on gender issues varied in content, method and scale. It was decided to have this study conducted with the same research instruments across the country, without losing the texture of each specific sub-culture. Under the guidance of experts from the Indian Council of Social Science Research and the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, two workshops were held for Orientation and Training in the methods of research in June, 1990.

At the workshops, there was a large input into sampling techniques as well as methods of interview. Establishing rapport, being tuned in to the needs of others, being able to get women to talk about themselves, listening with empathy, being aware of the nuances of their speech and actions – each of these skills related to interviewing was learnt. Well known field workers were invited to discuss their experiences and to offer suggestions on our study. Visits to the field (families, day care centres, children's homes and community centres) were also arranged.

It was decided that the entry point to the villages or the urban community could be a programme on health, literacy, immunization, or legal literacy. Experts on these areas would be available within the Universities, who could also be consulted for the designing of the Action Programmes later on. It was planned that the study team would function as a link or liaison between the development schemes and the community.

Each of the university centres would take up 100 households in each of the four villages and the two urban wards, totalling 600. The level of economic development and the level of female literacy were taken as independent variables for the purpose of this study.

Twenty-two Women's Studies Centres are participating in the study. They are situated in the following states: Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Delhi, Gujarat, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. A list of the universities can be seen in the Appendix.

The Coordination Committee constituted for the study was made up of the following members:

Dr. S. Anandalakshmy
 Dr. Vina Majumdar
 Dr. Maithreyi Krishnaraj
 Dr. Susheela Kaushik
 Dr. Vasantha Ramkumar
 Dr. K.G. Krishnamurthi
 Dr. N.K. Nijhawan

A survey of literature of the region was to be undertaken by each Centre, from both literary and academic sources. In addition, the research team was expected to collect folk music, folk stories and proverbs as well as to savour the popular literature for evidence of gender bias. By using less orthodox sources, it was hoped the texture of everyday life of the girl child would be revealed.

In addition to the area profile, there was a schedule to be filled for each household. There was one questionnaire for the girl herself and one for the mother. Thus each Centre would

be collecting information to go into over 1800 schedules. The coding system and the code books have been developed at the ICSSR by Dr. N.K. Nijhawan and his team, after extended discussions with the different research teams at coding workshops held at Gulbarga, Mysore and Delhi. It is planned that the entire data will be analysed centrally under the guidance of the data experts from the ICSSR.

The age of the girl child in this study would be from 7 to 18 years. Issues related to socialization, education, health care, roles and responsibilities, time use and participation in the labour force of the informal sector were the main constituents of the study. There was a special emphasis on the problems of early marriage, early motherhood and widowhood, separation, divorce and being the victim of abuse and atrocities. It is well known that these problems get compounded by poverty and deprivation. In recent years, activist groups and media have depicted dismal and tragic episodes in the lives of girls. Both the objective and the subjective experience of powerlessness will be a special focus of the study.

Quantitative data about demographic factors will form the base of the research study. The open ended questions, after appropriate coding will be subjected to non-parametric techniques of statistical analysis. Each centre was expected to get the schedules translated for use in the field.

To conclude, the girl child is disadvantaged on two counts: age and gender. This results in low access to health services, education and skill training even in the primary group of the family. To document and analyse the situation and to serve as advocates for empowerment and enhancement of the opportunity structure for the girl is the CAUSE.

Key persons in the Dept. of Women and Child Development connected with this project:

Ms. Mira Seth – Secretary
 Ms. Uma Pillai – Jt. Secretary
 Ms. T.K. Sarojini – Jt. Director

Location of Women's Studies Centres collaborating in the study and names of Project Directors

- | | |
|---|------------------------|
| 1) Andhra University, Vishakhapatnam | Dr. V.S. Pramila |
| 2) Hyderabad University, Hyderabad | Dr. Rekha Pandey |
| 3) Nagarjuna University, Guntur | Dr. V. Bhavani |
| 4) S.P. Mahila University, Tirupati | Dr. S.A. T. Adilakshmi |
| 5) Patna University, Patna | Dr. Niroj Sinha |
| 6) Delhi University, Delhi | Dr. Susheela Kaushik |
| 7) Gujarat University, Ahmedabad | Dr. Usha Kanhere |
| 8) M.S. University, Baroda | Dr. Amita Verma |
| 9) Karnataka University, Dharwar | Dr. Prabha Mahale |
| 10) Gulbarga University, Gulbarga | Dr. Ujjwala Patil |
| 11) Mysore University, Mysore | Dr. R. Varma |
| 12) Kerala University, Tiruvananthapuram | Dr. V. Ramkumar |
| 13) Durgavati University, Jabalpur | Dr. H.P. Verma |
| 14) Pune University, Pune | Dr. Ramanamma |
| 15) S.N.D.T. Women's University, Bombay | Dr. M. Krishnaraj |
| 16) Tata Inst. of Social Sciences, Bombay | Dr. Lakshmi Lingam |
| 17) Berhampore University, Berhampore | Dr. Bibekanand Das |

- 18) Punjab University, Chandigarh Dr. Pam Rajput
 19) Jodhpur University, Jodhpur Dr. U.R. Nehar
 20) Alagappa University, Karaikudi Dr. Regina Papa
 21) B.H.U. Varanasi Dr. Surinder Jetley

- 22) Jadavpur University, Calcutta Dr. J. Bagchi.

Submitted by S. Anandalakshmy, Convenor, Coordination Committee, Action Research Project on the Girl Child and the Family.

In the Election Report (1991) of the IAWS

The Committee Says:

We regret to note that many members have not read instructions carefully, which has resulted in invalidating their nominations or confirmation or voting. Further, some specific instructions need to be given, where certain things are not applicable. For example, in the consent letter, "I do/I do not" must carry instruction that whatever is not applicable should be deleted.

The executive of the IAWS is thankful to the following members:

Election Officer – Dr. Neera Desai

Tellers – Dr. Usha Thakkar
 Dr. Vibhuti Patel.

Results:

Dr. Maithreyi Krishnaraj	President (Life Member Constituency)
Dr. Amita Verma	Vice President (Ordinary Member Constituency)
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International Restructuring in Industries and Services

Who is IRENE?

IRENE is an international non-governmental organisation, independent and non-profit making. It is specialised on the issues:

International division of labour;

International restructuring in industries and services.

Within these issues we look at the consequences for workers in the industrial and service sector. With special attention to, and special activities concerning women.

What is special about IRENE?

We use the term "restructuring in industries and services" to cover the rapid changes taking place in national and international economic policies (both public and private) that lead to the internationalisation of industries and services and the relocation of production.

These policies are central to North-South relationships and, increasingly, those between East and West.

The main subjects involved are labour, trade, investment, technology, formal and informal employment, trade unions, migration, regional development and the environment.

Our principal concern is with the consequences of these changes upon lives of working people, women and men, throughout the world and in particular with the unprecedented rise in levels of unemployment.

Following a survey in 1980 of European non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and national trade union centres to find out what research and education work was being done on industrial restructuring, a meeting was held in Belgium in 1981 for all who were interested in the issue. Representatives attended from the international trade union movement and the NGOs in most European countries, and it was decided to set up a network to maintain contacts and information flows among those working on the issue.

At the end of 1983 a secretariat was realized. In 1987 the issue of restructuring in the service sector is taken up, evolved out of the developments in the industrial sector.

IRENE, A network for who?

The network is open to community based NGO's, trade unions and action-research organisations from all over the world, which are involved in development education and the international division of labour.

The network aims to:

- stimulate the exchange of information between organisations working in the field
- promote the expansion of this work
- introduce new issues
- publish (about) research and educational material on North-South relations with special reference to the international division of labour in the industrial and service sector.
- exert influence on the policies concerning development co-operation and restructurings in industries and services, especially those of the EEC and its member states.

The board/steering committee of IRENE is formed by a group of contact persons from development education NGOs in the EEC member states. They meet two or three times a year to exchange information and to develop plans for IRENE's activities. The executive work is undertaken by a small secretariat in The Netherlands.

Ever heard of IRENE's seminars and study days?

An important function of IRENE is the organisation of seminars, workshops and studydays. We always organise them in cooperation with other organisations working in the field.

Next to several studydays, IRENE organised in the first period three extensive seminars:

- In April 1984 a seminar brought together development education activists in Europe to discuss the issue of how to build international solidarity in a changing world.
- "The informalisation of women's labour" was the title of a seminar, held in October 1985, where researchers and activists from many parts of the world explored the issues of the informal sector, how it is supporting the formal sector, and the process of informalisation of women's work. They shared findings and experiences in women's groups and projects. And gave an important stimulance to the content of the work of IRENE.
- The seminar of May 1987 focused on tutors engaged in development education in the labour movement. The main issue was the integration of international development issues in existing structures of workers' education. Practical experiences, case studies and questions of methodology were shared.

Our Programmes

I. Flexibilisation in industries & services

The contemporary programme (started August 1988) of IRENE is called "Flexibilisation and International Restructuring in the Industrial and Service Sector". Since then the following activities were realised:

- Workshop "Unemployment; co-ops and unemployment

centres." October '88, Derry, Northern Ireland.

- Seminar (3 days) "Internationalisation of commercial services as an engine of growth for developing countries". October '88, Arnoldshain, West-Germany.
- Studyday on "Flexibility of work, the changing position of working women". January '89, Antwerp, Belgium.
- Studyday on "Export processing zones". February '89, Amsterdam, The Netherlands.
- Conference "Is the service sector a motor for development in A.C.P. countries?" April '89, Brussels, Belgium.
- Seminar (3 days) "New labour relations – international developments in the garment industry and the consequences for workers". June '89, Dordrecht, The Netherlands.
- A two day workshop on "Regional disparities and zoning". October '89, Derry, Northern Ireland.
- A two day seminar on "1992 and non-EEC migrant labour". November '89, London, United Kingdom.
- A one day conference on "Europe 1992: Protectionism or free trade; consequences of 1992 for developing countries in the textile sector and in consumers-electronics". March '90, Utrecht, The Netherlands.
- A four day conference on "Action for a better legislation for homeworkers; recommendations to improve the position for homeworkers". May '90, Helvoirt, The Netherlands.

In all our activities we bring together people from different countries and where possible we invite people from developing countries.

In the coming period a seminar is being organised on:

- "The flexibilisation of labour in the context of North-South relations – consequences for workers - reactions from workers' organisations".

Other activities will be on:

- The position of women in the changing international service sector.
- The Uruguay Round of the GATT and the Lome IV Convention, especially on the topic of international trade in services and its consequences for developing countries.
- The recently published report of the South Commission; Southern views on and strategies for development.

As we develop IRENE's work in co-operation with other organisations, the schedule for the coming periode is not yet fixed. Reports of IRENE's activities are available.

II. Europe 1992 and developing countries.

Between October '89 and April '91 IRENE is working on a second programme entitled "The external side of the internal market", in which we concentrate on the consequences for developing countries when there will be a "single market" in the EEC after 1992.

The project consists of two international workshops and an international seminar.

Do you know our Newsletter?

The main link between the network participants is the magazine "News from IRENE", which appears three times a year.

The newsletter is of practical use for development education activists and provides an exchange of news on projects and activities, information on groups and organisations and educational materials. These relate to groups and activities in the Third World as well as in Europe. Each issue of the newsletter highlights specific themes, often according to activities carried out by IRENE.

Other organisations can give information about their work, or have requests published in the newsletter.

Data banks

For the purpose of the work we have built up two databanks, as part of our network. One is on "women and work" (since '84), the other one is on "international trade in services" (since '88). Names and address of organisations and individual

researchers and activists, and where possible, information and articles about their work, are put into these databanks.

More information?

If you want to have more information about IRENE and its future activities, please write us.

We very much appreciate it, when you send us information about your work.

New address IRENE

Stationsstaat 39
5038 EC TILBURG
The Netherlands
Tel. 31.13.35.15.23
Fax. 31.13.35.02.53

Association of Women in Development

AWID International Forum November 20-24, 1991.

Guidelines for preparing presentation proposals.

The AWID International Forum will include varied formats for sharing and learning, in recognition of the different expectations and different ways of understanding and communicating that participants will bring to the event. The Forum design affirms the value of research, and equally affirms the power of experience to teach and create knowledge. Combining both, enriches our efforts to improve women's status. Read the following descriptions and submit a proposal for the kind of presentation you would like to present.

Workshops, Debates, Panels

These sessions are intended to provide structured opportunities to discuss ideas, acquire skills, and develop strategies. With the aim of fostering a high quality dialogue, AWID is requesting proposals for entire presentations, i.e. individuals are expected to jointly plan, organize, and present a particular session. However, AWID recognizes that putting together an entire session may not be possible for participants from overseas or for participants working at the community level in North America. From these two groups, AWID welcomes proposals for individual presentations and will then match people for combined presentations according to common concern and experience. Proposals are sought for:

- **Workshops:** 2 hrs. or 3 hrs.; 2-3 presenter/facilitators

Workshops are participatory and experiential and emphasize the "how to," such as design of program models; methodologies for training, evaluation, etc.; or strategies related to a particular issue or problem.

- **Debates:** 2hrs.; 2 presenters, plus a moderator or 2-3 "questioners"

Debates are designed to stimulate lively discussion on a controversial area, such as: assumptions about development,

a particular issue, or a program strategy.

- **Panels:** 2hrs.; up to 4 presenters (including the convener)

Panels provide the opportunity to summarize and discuss written papers on a common issue or to examine comparative experience through case studies or other analytical presentations. Panel presentations should be no more than one hour, leaving the second hour for questions and small group discussion.

Roundtables

These sessions enable presenters to briefly recount learnings from experience or from research, or to pose a challenge they are facing in their work, and then to engage a small group in discussion and analysis. Roundtables include 2-3 presenters; each presentation is five-ten minutes and may include aids such as flip charts, posters, or hand-outs. Proposals may be submitted by teams or by individuals who would like to be paired with one or two others. Roundtables are 1 1/4 hours.

Videos and Films

During the Forum, a room will be set aside for a continuing program of videos and films on women in development issues and programs. Proposals are welcomed from anyone with a video or film she or he would like to share.

Networking

An important goal of the AWID Forum is to build links between people which continue on after the event. With this in mind, opportunities for networking will be a prominent part of the program. A room will be reserved for participants to meet informally; there will also be times and places for interest groups or caucuses to meet. A "marketplace" will provide a

Contd. on page 12

Douglass College of Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey announces Women, Power and Social Change

The ninth in the ongoing series of seminars conducted through the Blanche, Edith and Irving Laurie New Jersey Chair in Women's Studies at Douglass College will take place weekly, on Wednesdays from 1-4 p.m. during the Spring term beginning January 22, 1991, and will be conducted by Jacqueline Pitanguy, the current occupant of the Chair....

This seminar will analyze women's movements and feminism as new historical actors, claiming an appropriate role within power dynamics, fighting for the enlargement and redefinition of the concept of citizenship and bringing a new political culture into the public sphere.... We will examine how women's experiences of their discriminations has varied historically in regard to the questions raised and the political ways of raising them, as well as in relation to social movements, political parties and State apparatus....

The seminar will focus on general analysis of political exclusion and resistance to it, examine and define citizenship within a given society, and identify the discriminated groups and the criteria by which they are excluded. It will ask such questions as:

- Has feminism been successful in extending political voice to new actors?
- Are the questions raised by women now considered to be a legitimate part of the political debate of society?
- Has feminism been able to get new questions included in

the debates among those to whom society gives legitimacy to speak; or has it been able to deprive legitimacy to the voices of those who do not consider such questions political issues?

Applications are now being accepted from students, scholars, activists and practitioners who wish to participate in the Spring 1992 seminar. Seminar participants should live within commuting distance of campus and be able to commit to attending the seminar weekly. The seminar will be as inclusive as possible, but not so large as to preclude full participation by all its members. The application includes a completed cover sheet; a letter indicating interest and describing expertise in the topic, i.e., research proposals, details of activism, etc.; vita; copies of papers or other supporting documents, where relevant; and no more than two letters of reference. Students wishing to take the seminar for credit should also include course work information along with descriptions of their activism work, where relevant; and must have permission of their advisor/graduate director. (Undergraduate and graduate students wishing to take the seminar for credit are expected to attend the weekly sessions, fully participate in discussions, and complete all assignments).

All applications should be sent to Ferris Olin, Executive Officer, Laurie New Jersey Chair in Women's Studies at Douglass College, 27 Clifton Avenue, Box 270, New Brunswick, NJ 08903-0270 by October 15, 1991. Notification of acceptance into the seminar will be made by November 15, 1991. For additional information call (908) 932-6948.

The National Organization for Women to Celebrate Silver Anniversary – January 7-14, 1991.

Beginning the second week of January 1992, NOW will join with feminists from around the world in a week of activities, including political discussions and artistic and cultural events, focusing on the global struggle for women's equality and the progress made in the fight for women's right. The week's activities will be centered around a Global Feminist Conference sponsored by NOW, at the Washington Hilton, January 9th through the 12th.

The Global Feminist Conference will provide a forum in which to focus on issues being addressed by feminist activists from around the world. Working groups will be established to explore topics such as: international debt policies and their connection to the growing feminization of poverty; violence against women, which remains a common problem among women in all countries; strategies and goals for political and economics empowerment; women's health; and the effects of the deteriorating environmental picture on women and the world.

All of the week's events will be organized to give women activists from around the world a chance to share ideas and strategies and to discuss the dramatic world struggles and events facing us. Throughout the week, NOW is planning a host of impressive cultural and political highlights to celebrate 25 years of the organization's work. The Smithsonian will be the site of exhibits and events related to the history of women and the women's movement. We are exploring a concert by the Women's Philharmonic at the Kennedy Centre. Other events will also highlight women artists from around the world. Major speeches by feminist leaders and the introduction of NOW's new President, Patricia Ireland, are also scheduled.

Contact: National Organization for Women,
1000, 16th Street, NW, Suite 700,
Washington DC 20036-5705
Phone: (202)331-0066
Fax: (202) 785-8576

setting to exhibit tools and products. Music, poetry, and the creative arts will also be woven into the forum as another means for individuals to come together.

For More Information

For more information about proposals contact:

Dr. Suzanne Kindervatter
Program Chair, OEF International
1815 H Street, NW, 11th Floor,
Washington, DC 20006 USA
Phone: 202-466-3430
FAX: 202-775-0596

To request proposal forms or brochures contact:

The Conference Office
261 College Court, KSU
Manhattan, KS 66506-6009
(913) 532-5575
FAX: 913-532-5637

Woman

She is tied down to drudgery and domesticity
She is oppressed, mechanised, brutalised
She is not able to see herself.

- Through the essential experience of her own
She has developed specific capacities—
- Organised, administrative, oral, generative
but she is not able to see herself.

She has an understanding of basic and vital areas of life.
but she is not able to see herself.

She is creative, perceptive, intuitive, sensual, practical
She has reflected upon the inner space
and the depth and dimension of feeling
but she is not able to see herself.

She has knowledge of man in his nakedness
but she is not able to see herself.

She is yoni – centre of all creation and creativity
her energies reach out to ever expanding spaces
but she is not able to see herself.

Every woman is capacity - SHAKTI
but unless she first recognises this to be so
she can not link it to awareness
appropriate action
directions that she can take
individually, collectively

Chandralekha
Skills, Madras.

Aalochana for whom?

'Aalochana' is for activists, researchers and all those who are interested. 'Aalochana' will strive to provide a forum where ideas, experiences and information will be exchanged. With this in mind, camps, workshops and seminars will be organized.

Printed by Kumar Consultancy at Grafikers Press, Bombay - 400 013.

Areas of research

'Aalochana' will initially focus on the following areas of research:

1. Women and Family
2. Women and Work
3. Women and Organization
4. Feminist Theory.

Address:

Aalochana
86/11B, Kanchangalli,
Erandwana,
Pune 411 004.

Membership

All those whose membership has expired by March 1990, kindly renew your membership by writing for forms to the Treasurer, Dr. Kumud Sharma, B-43, Panchsheel Enclave, New Delhi - 110 001.

Categories of Membership and subscription rates:

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