

# INDIAN ASSOCIATION FOR WOMEN'S STUDIES

NEWSLETTER

No. 19

SPRING 1993

**LAWS**

# SIXTH NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF THE INDIAN ASSOCIATION FOR WOMEN'S STUDIES

The broad theme of the conference, to be held between Monday, May 31st and Thursday, June 3rd, 1993, at the University of Mysore, Mysore, Karnataka, is "**The Dynamics of the New Economic Policy : Implications for Women.**"

The Conference, through its carefully designed subthemes, plans to identify and highlight the two-way connection between women and the economy. An understanding of these linkages, and anticipation of the kinds of changes that are likely to happen, would facilitate opinion building and action by the women's movement, both to safeguard and to promote the advancement of women. It would help the IAWS to spear-head an active lobby for women, vis-a-vis the State in collaboration with such organisations as the National Commission for Women and other national level bodies, as well as voluntary organisations working at the grass roots.

Through developing the information base and providing mechanisms for convergence of discussions, the Conference hopes to develop viewpoints in macropolicy, showing the links between women and economy; thus food and work, the link with health and social security, changes in the structure of employment, the potential for violence, drug use, the population policy etc. will be analyzed.

Responses to the recent economic policies have to be orchestrated at three levels: academic, policy and grass roots action. IAWS will thus be in a unique position to mediate the perspectives at all three levels, present the inter-linkages, and initiate action.

Eight sub-themes have been identified for discussion.

## **SUB-THEME 1 : WORK, EMPLOYMENT AND FOOD SECURITY**

*Co-ordinator* : Dr. Sudha Deshpande  
Dept. of Economics  
University of Bombay  
Justice M.G. Ranade Bhavan  
Vidyanagari Marg, Bombay-400 098

The major issues that deserve careful attention on scholars and policy makers can be listed as follows :

1. The genesis of NEP and its content; its impact on foreign trade and foreign debt of the country, on macro-growth process of the economy in rural and urban areas and on the overall employment scene in the country, in the short run and the long run.
2. NEP and women's work in the Industrial Sector: in export trade zones, in export industries, in multinational corporations, and in small and large industries; the impact on women's work-force participation rates, their occupational diversification, their employment status, wages and their general status in the labour market.
3. NEP and the rural sector, changes in employment prospects for women in agriculture and allied activities.
4. NEP and food security in the short run and the long run: Impact of (a) inflationary pressures, (b) reduction in real wages (c) reduction in social expenditure, and (d) reduction in subsidies and PDS on the status of food security for the poor.
5. Experiences of other developing economies in S. America, Africa and Asia with regard to women's work and food security, and the implications of these experiences for India.
6. Policy alternatives of the NEP can be seen in different ways: (a) giving a human face to NEP through safety nets, PDS, increased social expenditure etc., (b) going slow on NEP to avoid radical changes and (c) considering steps like debt rescheduling and debt reduction, joining a trade zone rather than going for liberalised trade and adopting agriculture based growth strategy rather than export-led growth strategy.

The Coordinator of Sub-theme I, on **Work, Employment and Food Security** Dr. Indira Hirway, will be out of the country at the time of the Conference. She has appointed Dr. Sudha Deshpande, Reader in Demography, Bombay University to take over the coordination of the sub-theme. All future correspondence in this connection may be with.

DR. SUDHA DESHPANDE,  
Dept. of Economics,  
University of Bombay,  
Justice M. G. Ranade Bhavan,  
"Vidyanagari",  
Vidyanagari Marg,  
BOMBAY 400 098.

## **SUB-THEME 2 : EDUCATION, CULTURE AND MEDIA**

*Co-ordinator:* Akhila Sivadas  
E1 Press Enclave,  
Saket,  
NEW DELHI 110 017

The success of this discussion will largely depend on our being able to integrate the perception of academicians and researchers with the practitioners within the media, and cultural and education institutions. To accomplish this we need to discuss separately the areas of media, education and culture and at the same time, devote one session to an overview of the three aspects and their influence on each other.

## **SUB-THEME 3 : HEALTH AND POPULATION**

*Co-ordinator:* Meera Shiva,  
VHAI  
Voluntary Health Association of India  
Tong Swasthya Bhavan,  
Institutional Area (South of IIT)  
NEW DELHI-110 016

The health and nutritional status of women in India has been below optimum for generations. Though the reasons for this have been recognised, women have continued to be ignored as important contributors to the economy and society.

With the introduction of the New Economic Policy the main sufferers will be the women—rural or urban, poor and exploited—because of gender discrimination in education, lack of time and opportunity for health services and unavailability of wholesome food due to privatisation and subsequent unequal distribution systems.

Cause of poor health in women are many. Most often they are victims of factors beyond their control—like migration and relocation of their family, depletion of natural resources and therefore more effort for search of fuel and fodder and the stresses and strains of income-generating activities. Poor personal health and sexual exploitation are additional factors that handicap women.

Demographic and social changes have negatively affected the status of women in society, and have also led to the loss of the knowledge of traditional practices and home remedies that can ensure good health. Under the myth of becoming modern and sophisticated, women have become more dependent on the market. Privatisation at this stage will only help perpetuate this helpless dependence and victimisation.

## **SUB-THEME 4: FAMILY AND SOCIAL SECURITY**

*Co-ordinator:* Chhaya Datar  
Tata Institute of Social Sciences,  
P.B. 8313,  
Sion-Trombay Road,  
Denonar,  
BOMBAY 400 088

Some of the themes that may be discussed are as follows :

- Social security for single women: widows, deserted, divorced, unmarried.
- Shelter needs of single women.
- Social security for aged.
- Social security for children, especially, street children.
- Public Distribution System.
- ESI health scheme.
- Safe and piped drinking water and sanitation.
- Creches, daycare centres, balwadis.
- Pension, Provident Fund.
- Assistance programmes for prostitutes.
- Rehabilitation programme for criminals.

## **SUB-THEME 5: NATURAL RESOURCES AND THE ENVIRONMENT**

*Co-ordinator :* Madhu Sarin,  
48, Sector 4,  
CHANDIGARH 160 001.

Within this sub-theme, it is proposed to focus on the differentiated implications of the new economic policy for women in the following fields :

- (i) Changes in management of land use and ownership (displacement due to large projects, conversion of traditional grazing/common lands to agricultural/other uses, acceleration of land acquisition, etc.).
- (ii) Changes in management of water/marine resources (exploitation of sub-soil/river waters, river/sea fishing, etc.).
- (iii) Changes in management of forest resources (commercialisation of forest produce, reduced access to subsistence goods from forests, etc.).

## **SUB-THEME 6 : VIOLENCE AND THE COMMUNITY**

*Co-ordinator :* Jasjeet Purewal,  
B/5197, Safdarjang Enclave,  
NEW DELHI 110 029

For the discussion we can divide the subject into three sub-heads which will then allow discussants to take a stand for or against it.

- 1) The NEP: micro and macro policies which will directly affect the status of women, making them more vulnerable to violence. These policies should be examined in the context of economic policies over a period of the last ten years to clarify the argument of whether these are actually new policies.
- 2) Forms of violence against women and their graph for the last ten years. These should include State violence (terrorism by militants and the State responses in context of their effects on women), community violence (especially religious fundamentalism) and domestic violence.
- 3) State management systems for violence, in general, and their effect on women, in particular. The changes in the police procedure and attitudes, the law and legal reforms, State institutions like remand homes and prisons as well as welfare services aimed at counselling and aiding women to cope with violence within and outside their communities will be examined for changes in the same ten year period. How does the economics of a nation influence these systems and how will these recent policies change these influences ?
- 4) The autonomous women's movement's perception of the violence against women in this period and the evolution of tools used by the movement to counter the growing violence. What are the linkages that the movement makes with changes in State economic policies? How do the party-affiliated women's wings differ in their handling and perceptions ?

#### **SUB-THEME 7: ALCOHOLISM AND DRUG ABUSE**

Co-ordinator: Subhash Mendharpurkar,  
SUTRA,  
JAGJIT NAGAR via Jabbar  
Dist Solan H. P. 173 225

Someone important issues for discussion have been identified:

1. Is prohibition a final answer ? Is not prohibition a top-down model ? Has it succeeded anywhere in the world ?
2. How to sustain mass protests ? Experience shows that after the mass protests received success, alcohol has either been replaced by drugs or made a back-door entry. Has any social movement sustained the momentum ?
3. Have we exhausted all the legal measures against the alcohol trade ? Do we have the ability to provide a legal framework ? Can we stipulate how the State runs the alcohol trade ?

An interdisciplinary study of the questions is called for. We need to develop a common understanding and a common strategy to counter alcoholism.

#### **SUB-THEME 8 : POLITICAL STRUCTURES AND PROCESSES**

Co-ordinator : Susheela Kaushik,  
Women's Studies Centre,  
University of Delhi,  
DELHI 110 007.

The sessions could be divided as follows :

1. Implications for the Constitutional rights and guarantees for women.
2. Impact on participation of women in formal politics.
3. Grass roots politics and power relations, organisations for women's participation; Panchayati Raj participation of women, and women's development.
4. Women's Movement - implications for ideology and functioning; mechanisms for reinforcement; mandate for action.

## **SOME MORE INFORMATION ON SOME OF THE SUB-THEMES**

#### **SUB THEME 1 : WORK, EMPLOYMENT AND FOOD SECURITY.**

The three sessions on this sub-theme would be :

1. Impact of New Economic Policy on urban women workers.
2. Impact of NEP on rural workers.

3. Policy options/Alternatives to reduce the adverse impact through various safety nets. Academicians who have worked on relevant issues such as rural poverty, industrial working class, the experience of other countries in revamping the public distribution system to serve the interests of the poor and the relationship between the agricultural policy and the nutrition of poor women

have been identified. In addition, some activists will also examine the impact of structural adjustment on the urban women who are working in both the informal sector and formal sectors such as public undertakings.

## **SUB-THEME 2 : EDUCATION, CULTURE AND MEDIA**

The main thrust of the panel will be to examine the change that culture, education and media are undergoing, in tandem, if not in reaction to the structural changes that are taking place in other spheres.

However when we try to link up these developments with the impact on women we find ourselves having to cope with the many strategies that the women's groups are adopting. Efforts are being made to develop new and innovative approaches in implementing programmes where women's perspective is being promoted and strengthened. In order to understand this and the long term implications of such development, a dialogue between the practitioners or programmes staff and researchers or academicians is necessary. In this connection, we will discuss and examine educational projects such as Mahila Samakhya, Samata or the women's literacy project and media programmes such as television serials in the soap opera format dealing with the status of women.

At another level we have media practitioners and activists experimenting with different communications models such as development of gender page or the launching of a newspaper with people's resources and efforts. Finally an overview on the impact of structural adjustment on education culture and media will be attempted by senior progressionals, academicians and researchers.

## **SUB-THEME 5 : NATURAL RESOURCES AND THE ENVIRONMENT**

In this panel the focus will be on linking up the wider issue of economic liberalisation with the specific theme on Natural Resources Management and Women. To develop a cogent picture the session will aim at a judicious mix of the macro-perspective with the grassroot and local experiences of women activists. At the macro level the presentations will deal with theoretical and broader subjects such as: the macro economic view, the

analysis of pure market stand of some farmers' organisations, the changing legal framework for natural resources exploitation and last, but not the least, an alternative development paradigm. At the micro level on themes such as water and marine resources management and forests, CPRs watershed management, national parks and santruries, the focus will be on local issues and struggles. This will include the experiences of Chhatisgarh area in dealing with forest related issues, the coastal fishing and women's struggles, impact of tourism on women and irrigation management.

## **SUB-THEME 8 : POLITICAL STRUCTURES AND PROCESSES**

The subtheme "Political Structures and Processes" will concentrate on four major issues : (1) The political ideologies, institutions and forces/movements (examples elections, political parties, trade unions, communalism and fundamentalism) how they impact on the weaker Sections (including women) in the context of the economic environment, the development model etc. (2) The ideology of the new economic development and its implications for feminism. (3) The implications as regards international legal and trade relations with a definite focus on Copyright Convention, Dunkel Draft etc., right to information as well as other areas of concern to women(seed import, technology etc.) i.e. economics and the law. (4) The effect of the new policies on grassroot women's empowerment and local organistions, specially the Panchayati Raj system.

Each of these sessions would be under the specific charge of three coordinators. Invited papers as well as papers accepted would be summarised and commented with additional input, by identified discussants so that the sessions could be usefully employed for discussions which would be initiated by a panel consisting of researchers, social activists and policy persons, the idea being to bring forth all the various viewpoints.

The last session will attempt to arrive at an overall perspective on the impact of economic policies an women in politics. This way one can also help to theorise on the present state of the women's question.

# METHODOLOGY OF CONDUCTING THE SESSIONS

1. Papers submitted will not be typed out in full and duplicated at the Conference. This was an ecology friendly decision, intended to save paper. However, all abstracts submitted by the due date to the subtheme Coordinators and forwarded by them to the General secretary will be printed in a booklet which will be part of the delegate's kit. Late abstracts will not find a place in the publication.
2. Each coordinator has 3 or 4 sessions (5 at the most ) in which to include the main papers and the perspectives. It is proposed to have 3 workshops, in which points of view would be presented and the fourth could be a session to review and reflect on the earlier sessions, with the goal of building theory.
3. Persons/experts from different spheres will be invited to be discussants for separate sessions and a meeting will be convened to screen the received papers and to identify sub-subthemes/ concerns expressed in the papers. The discussant chosen for each session will be a key person. This person will be asked to make a summary presentation of the papers (avoiding the sometimes tedious experience of paper reading) and then guide the discussion that ensues.
4. Each Coordinator will identify the experts in her area from three different spheres - academic, policy and action - and invite them to write papers. The designing of the workshops will be shared with one or two more persons, one drawn from the economic field and the other with a strong theoretical base in the concerned specialization. In this way, at least three persons would constitute the core. Hopefully from this working together, a continuity and consolidation of issues and theoretical constructs will be possible.
5. The methodology of conducting the sessions will vary from sub-theme to sub-theme, depending upon the outcome of the discussants' meeting, or other factors such as number of papers received, number of invited papers etc. The individual Coordinator will decide on the specific format for her/his sessions.

## PROCEDURES FOR THE CONFERENCE

All those who would like to participate in the Conference are requested to write to :

1. Rameswari Varma, Director, Centre for Women's Studies, Institute of Development Studies, University of Mysore, Manasagangotri, Mysore 570 006. Tel : (0821) 22029.
2. S. Anandalakshmy, General Secretary, Indian Association for Women's Studies, 12, Third Seaward Road, Valmiki Nagar, madras 600 041. Tel : (044) 411395, 415996.

Participation forms for the conference may be obtained from either of the above addresses. Forms have also been enclosed in the copies of the conference announcement, which have already been mailed.

**Papers :** Those who wish to contribute a paper should send an abstract in English of 200-350 words. The abstract must reach the co-ordinator by March 15, 1993. The papers should be 2500 - 3000 words long. The last date for the submission of paper is April 15, 1993. Those who

are not able to submit their papers by the given date must bring 150 copies of their paper. The papers and abstracts are to be sent to the Coordinator of the concerned sub-theme. If none the sub-themes appear specifically to be related to the participant's paper, it can be sent to the General Secretary, who will accommodate it in one of the sessions. papers sent after the last date will not be reproduced or presented.

Besides the papers and discussions, the Association also welcomes posters, pictures, films, skits, songs and dances and any other creative expression. Those who would wish to present such material or need any equipment for this, should communicate the same to the Local Organising Secretary, Rameswari Varma.

**Display of Books and materials :** Arrangements will be made for the display and sale of books and other materials. Those who want to avail of this facility may kindly inform the Local Organising Secretary.

**Accommodation :** Accommodation and food will be provided by the University of Mysore. The food coupons will be distributed at the time of registration. Food will be served from the morning of May 31, 1993 to the evening of June 3, 1993. The mess will, however, open from the morning of May 30th, 1993 and close on June 4, 1993. Those who arrive earlier than May 31 or leave later than June 4, 1993 may avail the facility on payment.

It will help efficient arrangement, if the participants send the completed forms as early as possible.

**Conference Fees :** The registration fee for participating in the Conference is Rs. 275/- per head. Students will however, be required to pay only Rs. 150/-. All those who want to participate should identify one particular subtheme and will get the papers of that sub-theme free as part of the kit. The Conference fee may be sent along with the participant's form to the Local Organising Secretary by M. O. or bank draft, drawn in favour of the **Organising Secretary, Sixth National Conference on Women's Studies, University of Mysore, Mysore** by April 15, 1993. No cheques will be accepted. Advance payment will help in reducing the rush at the last minute.

**Spouses :** No accommodation will be available for spouses. However, if there are some who want to participate in the conference they should inform the Local Organising Secretary in advance, and register on arrival. the full registration fee must be paid by them.

**Membership :** All participants would be expected to become members of the Association. This could be done earlier, in order to avoid crowding at the membership desk.

**Creche :** The Conference will make arrangements for creche facility from the morning of May 31, '93 to the evening of June 3, '93. Only children below the age of 5 can avail this facility. Requests

for this facility should accompany registration form.

**Travel Concessions :** The Association has applied for train travel concession for the participants. Twenty-five percent concession will be available by II Class mail/express for those who travel more than 300 km. to the Conference and whose total income does not exceed Rs. 2,000/- per month, and whose travelling expenses are not borne by the Central or State Government or a Local Body or a Statutory Authority or a Corporation or a Government undertaking or a University. Railway concession certificate will be issued on request by the General Secretary of the Association.

**Travel Assistance :** Subject to the availability of funds, the Association may be in a position to help participants attend the conference, if they have not other means of travelling. Priority will be given to students and activists with no source of income, on the basis of the bonafide certificate issued to that effect by the head of their institution. Those who need this may write to the General Secretary for the form.

**Arrival :** Participants are advised to reach by the evening of May 30, 1993. Details of Train/Air Schedules will be supplied by the Local Organising Secretary on request.

On arrival, participants will be received at the airport, railway station or bus stand by volunteers. Participants are requested to look out for them.

**Return Reservation :** Participants are strongly advised to make their own reservations for return journey. However, if it is not possible to do so, a request accompanied with the necessary amount may be sent to the Organising Secretary by April 12, 1993.

**Climate :** Mysore will be pleasant in May and June. Participants are, however, requested to bring their own bedding and light woollens.

## NOTE

- Smt. Ela R. Bhatt will be the Chief Guest at the Inauguration of the Sixth National Conference of the IAWS on May 31st 1993.
- Smt. Medha Patkar will give the Madhuri Shah Memorial lecture. This will be open to the public.
- Dr. Jayati Ghosh of the Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi will give the keynote address on the New Economic Policy : Implications for Women.

All papers submitted to the IAWS will be the sole property of the Association and cannot be reprinted or published elsewhere without prior permission.

The IAWS is in the process of taking legal action for plagiarism of earlier Conference papers. Any attempt to misuse the papers of this Conference will be dealt with seriously.

Participants to the Conference are invited to bring with them films, videos or slide sets likely to be of interest to the people assembled at Mysore for the IAWS meetings.

There is a fully equipped Communications Laboratory in the Regional College of Education, the venue of the Conference. There will be plenty of time for women to share their visual material with each other.

As a policy decision, we have decided not to have song - and - dance routines, but to have evenings free for the drama in real life, that members may enact or show on video/film.

Voluntary organizations are welcome to bring their publications of books, posters and other material for display.

There will be provision for Exhibition and Sale of books at the Conference premises. Publishers and book sellers may write to the Local Organizing Secretary for details.

■ All coordinators are requested to arrive in time to participate in a meeting on 30th May, 1993 at 11 a.m.

■ There will be a General Body meeting of the IAWS during the conference, on 2nd June, 1993, at 2 p.m. Individual communications have been sent on the time and agenda of the meeting.

Only members of the IAWS will attend the GB meeting.

## TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF THE CONFERENCE

### Monday May 31st 1993

10 a.m. to 11.30 a.m. : Inaugural Session  
 Welcome address by  
 Devaki Jain — President  
 of IAWS  
 Remarks by Ela Bhatt —  
 Chief Guest  
 Keynote address : Jayati Ghosh  
 Vote of thanks

12.00 to 1.30 p.m. : Plenary Session : The New  
 Economic Policy  
 2.30 to 4.00 p.m. : Sub-theme Session 1 —  
 Eight Parallel Sessions  
 4.30 to 6.00 p.m. : Sub-theme Session 2 —  
 Eight Parallel Sessions

### Tuesday June 1, 1993

9.30 to 11.00 a.m. : Plenary Session : State and  
 Women's Development - the  
 Karnataka Experience  
 11.30 to 1.00 p.m. : Sub-theme Session 3 —  
 Eight Parallel Sessions  
 2.00 to 3.30 p.m. : Sub-theme Session 4 —  
 Eight Parallel Sessions

3.45 to 4.45 p.m. : Meeting of Coordinators  
 and Rapporteurs

5.30 to 6.30 p.m. : Plenary Session :  
 Articulating a South Asia  
 Position: SAARC delegates.

### Wednesday June 2, 1993

9.30 to 11.00 a.m. : Plenary Session : Women's  
 Struggles against Rape, Alco-  
 holism and Communalism  
 : First-hand Experiences.

11.30 to 1.00 p.m. : Sub-theme Session 5 —  
 Eight Parallel Sessions,  
 Resolutions arising from  
 earlier sessions.

2.30 to 4.30 p.m. : Annual General Meeting of  
 IAWS.

5.30 p.m. : Madhuri Shah Memorial  
 Lecture : Medha Patkar.

### Thursday June 3, 1993

9.30 to 11.00 a.m. : Plenary Session : Consolida-  
 ting the Women's Movement.

11.30 a.m. : Presentation of Reports of  
 Sub-themes and Resolutions.

1.00 p.m. : Winding up Session.



## ELECTION NOTICE

After the Conference, the procedures for electing the next Executive Committee will begin.

All those who become members before April 30, 1993 will be eligible to vote in the Elections for the new Committee.

The membership list, valid as on 30.4.93, will be the electorate for the next EC elections. Our present term of membership is April 1 to March 31, Members, whose annual membership will automatically get terminated on March 31st, are requested to pay their membership for 1993-94, before April 30, 1993.

## TENTATIVE SCHEDULE FOR ELECTIONS

It has been decided to start the election procedure after the Conference which is scheduled from 31 May to 3 June '93.

Last date for membership for eligibility to vote — 30 April '93.

1. Sending nomination forms to all members by the General Secretary (5 months before GB/ postal communication for results). July 1st '93
2. Last date for returning nomination forms to Returning Officer by members. Aug. 1st '93
3. Scrutiny of papers by R. O. Aug. 8th '93
4. Last date for withdrawal/confirmation by candidates Sept. 8th '93
5. Despatch of ballot papers to voters by R. O. Sept. 23rd '93
6. Last date for completed ballot papers to reach R. O. Oct. 8th '93
7. E. C. Meeting to consider the results Oct. 15th '93
8. Last date for communicating the results by post to all members by the General Secretary Nov. 30th '93

## MY HOME

It's a few minutes walk from the store —  
You can't miss the nameplate on the door  
There can be no mistake at all—no flaw  
The owner of the house is my father-in-law.  
I spend hours every day in its care  
Cook, clean, stitch, sew and air —  
I know what needs mending & plan the next chore  
I often juggle bills, stretch the funds some more —  
When the plants need weeding, if the closet has a mouse  
Now, my husband is the real master of the house,  
My son, the Lord-in-Waiting, is growing with time —  
Oh ! When will my home, truly be mine ?

Madhubani Ghosh

Research Scholar, Department of Economics  
Jadavpur University

# WOMEN'S DECLARATION ON POPULATION POLICIES

(In preparation for the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development)

## PREAMBLE

Just, humane and effective development policies based on principles of social justice promote the well-being of all people. Population policies, designed and implemented under this objective, need to address a wide range of conditions that affect the reproductive health and rights of women and men. These include unequal distribution of material and social resources among individuals and groups, based on gender, age, race, religion, social class, rural-urban residence, nationality and other social critical changing patterns of sexual and family relationships, political and economic policies that rhetoric girls' and women's access to health services and methods of fertility regulation and ideologies, laws and practices that deny women's basic human rights.

While there is considerable regional and national diversity, each of these conditions reflects not only biological differences between males and females, but also discrimination against girls and women, and power imbalances between women and men. Each of these conditions affect, are affected by, the ability and willingness of governments to ensure health and education, to generate employment, and to protect basic human rights for all. Government's ability and willingness are currently jeopardized by the global economic crisis, structural adjustment programme, and trends toward privatization, among other factors.

To assure the well-being of all people, and especially of women, population policies and programs must be framed within, and implemented as, a part of broader development strategies that will redress the unequal distribution of resources and power between and within countries between racial and ethnic groups, and between women and men.

Population policies and programmes of most countries and international agencies have been driven more by demographic goals than by quality of life goals. Population rise and crowding have often been blamed inappropriately as the exclusive or primary causes of problems related to global environmental degradation and poverty. Fertility control programs have been offered as a solution when poverty and inequity are root causes that need to be addressed. Population policies and

programs have typically targeted low income countries and groups, often reflecting racial and class biases.

Women's fertility has been the primary object of both pro-natalist and anti-natalist population policies. Women have been expected to carry most of the responsibility and risks of birth control, but have been largely excluded from decision-making in personal relationships as well as in policy-making. Sexuality and gender-based power inequities have been largely ignored and sometimes even strengthened, by population and family planning programmes.

As women, involved directly in the organization of services, research and advocacy, we welcome this declaration on women's reproductive health and rights. We call for a fundamental revision in the design, structure and implementation of population policies, to facilitate empowerment and well-being of all women. Women's empowerment is legitimate and critically important in its own right, not merely as a means to address population issues. Population policies that are responsive to women's needs and rights must be grounded in internationally accepted, but too often ignored, ethical principles.

## FUNDAMENTAL ETHICAL PRINCIPLES

1. Women can, and do, make responsible decisions for themselves, their families their communities, and increasingly, for the state of the world. Women must be subjects not objects, of any development policy, and especially of population policies.
2. Women have the right to determine when, whether, why, with, whom and how to express their sexuality. Population policies must be based on the principle of respect for the sexual and bodily integrity of girls and women.
3. Women have the individual right and the social responsibility to decide whether, how, and when to have children and how many children to have. No woman can be compelled to bear a child or be prevented from doing so against her will. All women, regardless of age, marital status, or other social conditions have a right to information

and service necessary to exercise their reproductive rights and responsibilities.

4. Men also have a personal and social responsibility for their own social behaviour and fertility and for the effects of that behaviour on their wives and their children's health and well-being.
5. Sexual and social relationship between women and men must be based on principles of equity, non-coercion, and mutual respect and responsibilities. Violence against girls and women, their subjugation and exploitation, harmful practices such as genital mutilation or unnecessary medication violate basic human rights. Such practices also impede effective/rights-oriented population programs.
6. The fundamental sexual and reproductive rights of women cannot be subordinated, against a woman's will, to the interests of partners, family members, ethnic groups, religious institutions, health providers, policy makers, the state or any other agent.
7. Women committed to promoting women's reproductive health and rights must be included as policy makers and programme implementors in all aspects of decision-making.

#### MINIMUM PROGRAMME REQUIREMENTS

In the design and implementation of population policies and programs, policy makers and international and national agencies should :

1. Seek to reduce and eliminate pervasive inequalities in all aspects of social and economic life by :
  - providing universal access to information, education and discussion on sexuality, gender roles, reproduction and birth control, in school and universities.
  - changing sex-role and gender stereotypes in mass media and other means of communications to support more egalitarian and respectful relationships.
  - enacting and enforcing laws that protect women from sexual and household violence, abuse or coercion.
  - implementing policies that encourage and support men's parenting

- prioritizing women's education, job training, paid employment, and the right to own land and other property.
  - prioritizing investment in basic health services, sanitation etc.
2. Support women's organizations that are committed to women's reproductive health and rights and linked to the women to be served, especially women disadvantaged by class, race, ethnicity or other factors, to :
    - participate in designing, implementing and monitoring policies and programmes for comprehensive reproductive health and rights ;
    - work with communities on service delivery, education and advocate means available to implement the programme requirements listed in this declaration.
  3. Assure personally and locally appropriate, affordable good quality, comprehensive reproductive and sexual health services for women of all ages, provided on voluntary basis without incentives or disincentives, including but not limited to :
    - legislation to allow safe access to all appropriate means of birth control ;
    - balanced attention to all aspects of sexual and reproductive health, including pregnancy, delivery and postpartum care ; safe and legal abortion services ; safe choices among contraceptive methods including barrier methods ; information, prevention and treatment of STDs, AIDs, infertility, and other gynaecological problems ; child care services ; and policies to support men's parenting and household responsibilities ;
    - nondirective, counselling to enable women to make free, fully informed choices among birth control methods as well as other health services ;
    - discussion and information on sexuality, gender roles and power relationships, reproductive health and rights ;
    - management information systems that follow the woman or man, not simply the contraceptive method or service ;
    - training to enable all staff to be gender sensitive, respectful service providers, along with procedures to evaluate and reward

performance on the basis of the quality of care provided, not simply the quantity of services ;

- program evaluation and funding criteria that utilize the standards defined here to eliminate unsafe or coercive practices, as well as sexist, classist or racist bias;
  - inclusion of reproductive health as a central component of all public health programs, including population programs, recognizing that women require information and services not just in the reproductive ages but before and after ;
  - research into what services women want, how to maintain women's integrity, and how to promote their overall health and well-being.
4. Develop and provide the widest possible range of appropriate contraceptives to meet women's multiple needs throughout their lives :
- give priority to the development of women-controlled methods that protect against sexually transmitted infections, as well as pregnancy, in order to redress the current imbalances in contraceptive technology research, development and delivery ;
  - ensure availability and promote universal use of good quality condoms ;
  - ensure that technology research is respectful of women's right to full information and free choice, and is not concentrated among low income or otherwise disadvantaged women, or particular racial groups.
5. Ensure sufficient financial resources to meet the goals outlined above. Expand public funding for health, clean water and sanitation, and maternity care, as well as link control. Establish better collaboration and coordination among UN, donors, governments and other agencies in order to use resources most effectively for health.
6. Design and promote policies for wider social, political and economic transfer that will allow women to negotiate and manage their own sexuality and health, make their own life choices, and participate fully in all levels of government society.

## NECESSARY CONDITIONS

In order for women to control their sexuality and reproductive health, and to exercise their reproductive rights the following actions are prioritised:

### 1. Women Decision Makers

Using participatory processes, fill at least 50 percent of decision-making positions in all relevant agencies with women who agree with the principles described here, who have demonstrated commitment to advancing women's rights, and who are linked to the women to be served, taking into account income, ethnicity and race.

### 2. Financial Resources

As present expenditure levels are totally inadequate, multiply at least four-fold the money available to implement the programme requirements listed in this Declaration.

### 3. Women's Health Movement

Allocate a minimum of 20 percent of available resources for women's health and reproductive rights organizations to strengthen their activities and work toward the goals specified in this declaration.

### 4. Accountability Mechanisms

Support women's rights and health advocacy groups, and other non-governmental mechanisms, mandated by and accountable to women, at national and international levels to :

- investigate and seek redress for abuses or infringements of women's and men's reproductive rights ;
- analyze the allocation of resources to reproductive health and rights, and pursue revisions where necessary ;
- identify inadequacies or gaps in policies, programs, information and services and recommend improvements ;
- document and publicize progress.

Meeting these priority conditions will ensure women's reproductive health and their fundamental right to decide whether, when and how many children to have. Such commitment will also ensure just, humane and effective development and population policy that will attract a broad base of political support.

# STRUCTURAL ADJUSTMENT POLICY AND THE CHILD IN INDIA

Proceedings of a Seminar held in Madras on December 23, 1992

Structural adjustment is now being regarded as a process which leads to improved efficiency in the use of natural and financial resources through balanced budgets and better development and deployment of the human resources. Early experience with the pattern of structural adjustment fostered in debt-ridden countries by international financial institutions revealed that the sufferings of the poor, particularly children and women, increased. This led to the concepts of "structural adjustment with a human face" and "safety nets for the poor", which are now being promoted as a part of the drive towards free market economics.

Data presented at the International Conference on Nutrition held in Rome in December, 1992, showed that the number of malnourished children worldwide increased from 166 million in 1975 to 188 million in 1990. The conference also noted that "never has the world had as many well-fed adults and so many malnourished children at the same time". This is not surprising since according to UNDP's Human Development Report of 1992, 82.4% of the annual global income went to 20% of the human population. The poorest 20% received 1.4% of the annual world income. Among the poor, children and women always suffer the most.

The M. S. Swaminathan Research Foundation therefore chose children and women for priority attention under its action-research programme area titled Reaching the Unreached. Project ACCESS (Action for Child Care and Education Strategies and Services) was the outcome of our search for new approaches to reach the economically and socially underprivileged child. Project ACCESS strives to achieve its aims by both grassroots level action and impact on public policy. This calls for concurrent attention to awareness generation, policy analysis and field action.

The seminar on "Structural Adjustment Policy and the Child" is a part of this approach. This carefully designed seminar, supported by well-documented papers, has helped to clarify the nature of the safety net needed, if we are not to remain mute spectators of the growing marginalisation and malnourishment of children.

The genesis of the seminar lay in the concern felt and expressed by the Tamil Nadu Forum for Creche and Child Care Services about the situation of the young child under the pressure of the structural adjustment process of the nineties in India. The forum for Creche and Child Care Services (FORCES) is a loose network of organizations committed to advocacy and campaigning for young children (0-6 years) of the poor and underprivileged in India. Launched in 1989, the members include women's groups, trade unions, child welfare organisations, educational and research institutions and several other agencies. The Tamil Nadu Forum (TN-FORCES) which now has 34 members, was formed early in 1992. During the year, Project ACCESS, which is the convener of TN-FORCES, initiated the plan for this seminar.

The main objectives of the seminar, were

- to draw the attention of policy-makers to both the immediate and long-term macro-economic and social implications of the ongoing Structural Adjustment Policy (SAP) on children, especially young children (0-6 years).
- to identify various possible scenarios emerging out of the financial and institutional impact of SAP on child-related programmes and to devise a potential set of feasible policy options for each, and
- to stimulate research and policy studies on the issue among scholars in various disciplines in research institutions and universities.

To facilitate a more focused discussion, crucial for drawing some policy guidelines, it was planned that the impact of the SAP on child-related issues would be analysed within the context of a particular State i.e., Tamil Nadu, which has a well-developed network of child care services, relative to most other Indian States. However, the experience of other States and other countries would be drawn upon to a significant extent. It was also felt desirable to focus attention on the age-group (0-

6) years, though the situation of older children and of women whose fate is crucially interlinked with that of young children, could also be included in the discussion to a certain extent.

Some critical areas of concern were selected and scholars were identified and requested to prepare discussion papers on three major areas. Two discussants were invited to critique these papers and a senior government official was invited to present a review outlining the response of a State Government, namely Tamil Nadu, to the situation.

The invited participants were a balanced mix of representatives of government and non-governmental organisations. On the government side, senior policy-makers from the Departments of Finance, Social Welfare, Planning and Rural Development as well as several other experienced administrators took part. On the non-government side, participants included economists, other social scientists, journalists, trade unionists, child development specialists, social activists, women's organisations, social workers, educationists, and researchers. Many of the non-government participants are active members of TN-FORCES.

With this base, the resulting dialogue was wide-ranging in scope, drawing on diverse experiences and viewpoints, and both critical and constructive in nature. The occasion yielded rich insights full of meaning for policy-makers, activists and researchers concerned with issues relating to the young child.

## PROCEEDINGS

Opening the discussion, the Chairperson for the morning session, Dr. Malcolm Adiseshiah, set the stage by drawing attention to four major groups of issues which should be focussed upon by the participants in their discussions on this subject. These were :

1. Definitions and concepts, particularly with reference to terms like Structural Adjustment Policy and New Economic Policy. Both are concerned with increasing the space for the market and reducing the space for government, but there are several areas of difference as well, which should not be minimised.
2. The differing impact of policies on different groups, for example, on children of different ages such as young children, (0-3 years) preschoolers, (3-6 years) and school -age

children (6-14 years) and the variety of needed responses.

3. In the absence of theories of SAP, the desirability of studying the experience of other countries who have already passed through SAP. The available evidence uniformly indicates serious reduction on expenditures on the social service sectors in all these countries.
4. Recognition of the extensive network of child care services already established in Tamil Nadu (described in the background paper on Child Care services in Tamil Nadu) as a strong infrastructural base on which to build further efforts for the protection of children from the likely adverse effects of SAP.

## Highlights of the presentations

The discussions during the day took place in the context of the presentation of the following four papers the highlights of which are presented below.

### 1. Status of the Child in Tamil nadu.

Mr. Vidya Sagar

The paper presented data relating to the status of the child in Tamil nadu, with special reference to indicators like Infant Mortality Rate, the level of school drop-out and the prevalence of child labour. IMR was noted to be a specially sensitive indicator, related to such factors as mother's level of education, income and work status. Hence trends in the employment of women and the casualisation of the work force would have an immediate impact on IMR. Sex differences in IMR were significant and the increase in the phenomenon of female infanticide in the last two decades was already visible.

Other import points were the high level of drop-out from school, with specific male-female differences, and the high prevalence of child labour, much greater than the available official statistics indicate.

Trends in all these indicators would have to be carefully watched to observe the impact of changing economic policies.

### 2. A Note on the Impact of SAP on Children

Dr. Madhura Swaminathan

It was clear from the experience of several countries in the developing world that SAP affects different segments of society differently, the cost usually being disproportionately borne by the most vulnerable segments, of whom children are one of

the most significant. Taking the well-being of children as an indicator of the health of a society, the impact of SAP and the responses of societies could be studied through indicators of children's health, nutrition, education and access to services.

Almost all the countries studied, showed, by these indicators, the severe impact of SAP on children. However, it was also heartening to note that in some countries, for example Chile, the pressure of public opinion had compelled the government to take a number of measures to counteract these ill effects.

The decline in expenditure on social services in India over the last few years, as well as the fact that in comparison to other developing countries India spent an astonishingly low proportion of its budget on the social sectors, were matters of great concern. It was proposed that a vigorous public campaign could help influence government policy in favour of such interventions.

### **3. Coping with the Impact of SAP on Child Welfare in India : Some Strategies and Options**

Dr. R. Maria Saleth

The next step after tracing the likely chain of consequences of SAP and likely impact on children was to predict some of the possible scenarios outlining the nature, direction and intensity of State intervention, if any, and the possible options and strategies that could be advocated as a response to each. These scenarios may range from the "worst-case" situation of "across the board" cuts to the best options of no reductions in social service expenditures.

The proposed strategies, some of which were described briefly, should not be considered as mutually exclusive options. A mix of various strategies was advocated, with political opposition and pressure as part of this mix. Further, there could be graduated response, with different degrees of intensity of opposition to different policies. At the same time, areas of cooperation, such as identifying ways of increasing the efficiency of resource utilisation, should also be fully explored.

### **4. SAP and the Child : A Case Study of Tamil Nadu**

Mr. N. Narayanan, I.A.S.

It was important that the child should not be considered in isolation from the family and the concept of the "social safety net" may be a useful one in this context. A comparative study of other

countries/Indian States shows two distinct patterns of social support services in the high growth and low growth economies. It cannot be assumed that India will go the same way as other developing countries experiencing SAP.

Tamil Nadu in the 80s showed substantial decline in IMR and CBR, as well as a high growth rate and level of social support services which can be termed high in relation to most other Indian States. This performance compares favourably with several other countries as well as Indian States and may be related to the long and strong tradition of State intervention in social welfare as well as a well-established infrastructure of child care services in Tamil Nadu.

The support of food subsidies in the Public Distribution System, the supply of medicines to the public health care system and the supply of food to the child nutrition system were quoted as examples of successful direct intervention which were able to maintain or even increase the level of inputs into welfare. Examples of more indirect interventions were the scheme of old age pensions, unemployment relief and special income-generation schemes for women.

In the short term, fiscal corrections would be inevitable and cost-benefit considerations, including issues of efficiency and targeting, would be important in determining which of these programmes would be likely to be protected in the future and which may have to suffer cuts. While child nutrition, health care and water supply were likely to receive high priority, primary education and food subsidies may possibly receive less attention.

### **Definition and Concepts**

The definition of SAP and the manner in which it affects the economy primarily through fiscal measures, was taken up first. It was pointed out that the New Economic Policy, which in India is closely related to SAP, cannot by any means be identified with it. The complex chain of consequences through which the effects of these policies on different segments of the population are felt was delineated. The effects would be both direct and indirect, long-term as well as short-term, and these needed to be separated for purposes of study.

The adverse consequences of SAP are suffered most heavily, and disproportionately, by the most vulnerable segments, such as women, unorganised labour, migrants, and the poor in general, and the children would naturally be among those most seriously affected. It was pointed out that children

could not be considered in isolation from the family as a whole, and that the worst consequences may be the indirect ones affecting the whole family : For example, the impact of SAP on women's employment, income and status was probably one of the most important set of factors affecting children's welfare.

It was also pointed out that long term trends in the economy and in society determinantal to the welfare of children were noticeable over the last few decades, and SAP may be aggravating and exacerbating these trends rather than introducing new or unforeseen pressures. In this context, the trend towards "predatory commercialisation" of society was noted to have been present for some time. This has implications for social policy and planning in both the long and short term, for government intervention as well as for the policies advocated by pressure groups.

The concept of a "social safety net" came in for some adverse comment. Some expressed the view that it was not good enough and a far more aggressive policy was needed. Others went so far as to state that it was a dangerous idea, since it promoted the idea of poverty as matter of "social conscience" and deflected attention from the realization that poverty is both a symptom and a cause of wrong development strategies.

### **Indicators of Impact**

There was general agreement that the three most significant indicators available were IMR, the rate of school drop-out and the level of child labour. Of these, IMR was the most sensitive, since it reflected changes in women's employment status, education and income (the IMR for children of working mothers being higher than that of non-working mothers, and varying inversely with the level of education of mothers). Other suggested indicators were daily per capita calorie intake, access to health services, and the quality of hospital services.

Since SAP and NEP have only been effective from July 1991, it is obviously too early to have sufficient hard data to form a reliable data base, and hence recourse has to be had to other sources. There are several well-documented micro-studies and accounts published in the press which can be used as primary sources. Most importantly, in a State like Tamil Nadu, the child care services network itself could be an excellent tool of surveillance and for data collection on critical indicators, for which purpose it is already being used to a certain extent.

The difficulties of identifying and targeting at "at risk" groups were described in situations where there are multiple economic strata coexisting in the same community, and where political pressures play a significant role in the selection of beneficiaries. The "risk index" and "risk scoring" card developed by TINP, which includes a number of status variables (except income) was described. This could become a useful tool in identifying the beneficiaries who needed to be targeted, and could be freely availed of by NGOs working in the region.

### **Experience of Other countries**

Several analyses of other country experiences were made. The study of six developing countries which had undergone SAP (undertaken in one of theme papers) showed alarming trends in the indicators chosen to measure adverse impact on children. At the same time, it was noted that in Chile, conscious public opinion and political pressure had succeeded in compelling the government to provide significant social support for mothers and children, thus indicating the available space for political action by the public.

Another analysis suggested that all developing countries undergoing SAP could be divided into two categories, the first in which the economies picked up fairly rapidly and the second which showed slow and faltering growth. It was stated that only the first set of countries had been able to sustain social support services for the hard hit groups.

Yet another analysis categorises countries as those which had strengthened social support measures only after achieving some growth, and those which had opted for high social support even with low growth (Kerala, Sri Lanka) with positive results. There were thus a number of options open to governments.

### **Resource Allocations by Government**

The main government response was seen in terms of resource allocation for social services and protective programmes, with the options being — the same level, more or less. A sense of confusion was expressed about the perceived "two voices" in which government appeared to be speaking on this issue. On the one hand, it was frequently stated that as a result of liberalisation, and the new economic policies, Government would in future spend less on the public sector, leave economic activities more to the private sector and thus be in a position to spend more on all the social services. On the other hand, records of experience



in other countries and the trends in India over the last few years showed alarming and consistent decline in the level of all expenditures on social services. It was not at the moment clear whether this trend was like to be halted or reversed.

There may also be differences in the long-term and short-term responses. The pressure to close fiscal deficits in the short term may mean immediate cuts, but there is a possibility of reversal in the longer-term. However, as the most vulnerable segments of the population, especially children, do not have the staying power to last out till the long term, this issue becomes a critical one in the short-term also.

Whether public expenditures are likely to merely be maintained at the present level, or be marginally reduced, the important question to be considered was how they would be distributed. From policy statements and from the case study of Tamil Nadu, it seemed likely that the more visible and politically sensitive programmes, such as child nutrition and to a lesser extent health, would be protected, while primary education is likely to suffer the worst neglect. As a result, other children of school-going age may be increasingly pushed into work, and would suffer the double deprivation of lack of education and early entry into the work force, while the younger children (3-6 years) may be relatively more protected. The position of the youngest, as reflected in IMR, may again be more seriously affected, as it would reflect the vulnerability of their mothers. The neglect of primary education and maternal health would have severe long-term consequences for productivity and economic growth for the country as a whole, but may in reality turn out to be the short-term choice.

If serious cuts, across the board or selectively, are made, the ever-present danger of "privatisation" of social services, especially education, would come to the fore. Frequent laudatory references by government spokes-persons to the increasing privatisation of primary education in Kerala are enough to indicate that this fear is not wholly imaginary. If extended to other social services such as health and child care this trend could be extremely hard for the poor to bear.

In the event of an increase in expenditure on social services against the important question was the "how" or the manner in which it is done. Current indications are that there are plans for massive expansion of the ICDS, externally funded schemes for primary education in the educationally backward States, women's employment through

Indira Mahila Yojana, revamping of the PDS, and new schemes for adolescent girls. These indicate that the State intends to adopt a heavily interventionist role in the social service sector, but in the "more of the same" mould, repeating the time honoured "top-down" approach of extending the same centrally conceived rigid model across the entire country in the face of tremendous diversity, and without regard for the now well-understood and much-exposed weaknesses of this model of intervention. The medicine, in such a case, may prove to be worse than the disease.

A piquant irony of the situation is the insight that so far State government do not appear to have taken the threat of SAP very seriously, probably because they expect the Union Government to bear the brunt of the burden and to protect them to a considerable extent. Since however, most of the social service expenditures are in the State sector, the repercussions cannot be taken so lightly.

### **Strategies and Options**

The bulk of the discussion was devoted to the consideration of various strategies and options available for dealing with the effects of SAP and with the related issues of ways and means of improving the effectiveness and efficiency of resource use.

As far as the first set of issues was concerned, the matrix presented in the paper on strategies and options provided the basis for discussions. It had been proposed that a mix of strategies should be developed and various responses worked out to meet various anticipated scenarios. Suggestions and comments made related to governmental action on the one hand and action by other non-governmental groups and organisations on the other ; to both direct programming for children and to indirect interventions ; and to both short-term and long-term considerations.

The general consensus, articulated by many, was that this was an appropriate time to plead for much greater allocation of financial resources to the social services sector than ever before, as well as for indirect interventions affecting the protection, welfare and development of children. The need was not merely to protect programmes or avoid cuts, but positively to enhance allocations for these sectors, for it would probably be necessary for the concerned groups to struggle for higher allocations by various means.

In this context, the need for political action and mass education for the creation of public awareness on the issues was underlined. Such actions are likely to be constructed as mere opposition gestures if undertaken only by political parties and groups and hence the need was felt for development of broad-based non-governmental coalitions and forums to press for action in favour the child. Continuous pressure on government from many directions, and the involvement of legislators and all sections of the public was needed, in order to focus attention on the needs and to secure provision for adequate resources for them.

Several participants, however, went a step further and questioned the acceptance of SAP as an already unalterable given, to which we can now only respond. It was suggested that the entire concept should be reviewed so that an economic and development pathway appropriate to the country could be worked out. In this context, it was reiterated that widespread public awareness and a strong campaign and indeed a protest movement against the concept would strengthen the hands of the government in negotiating with the IMF and World Bank. In this sense, political action would form an essential ingredient of any strategy for countering the effects of SAP.

The dangers of privatisation of social services, earlier referred to, and of increasing commercialisation of social relations as a consequence of the growth of a market-oriented attitude, were also matters where the struggle had to be taken up at the level of public awareness and education in order to compel government intervention in the right direction.

The role of NGOs, political parties, educational institutions, media, public figures and others was felt to be significant in creating and sustaining consciousness about the social issues and in stimulating and promoting the larger social movements. Such a consciousness and movement were essential supports for primary education and women's development and for the abolition of social evils like child labour, female infanticide and alcoholism which might only be further aggravated by economic hardships.

### **Direct and Indirect Intervention**

As regards direct interventions, concern was expressed about the likely reduction (both in real terms and in terms of proportion of resources) in expenditure on primary education. On the one hand, the already highly skewed pattern of expenditure on education in the country subsidised

higher education, which is mostly utilised by the more affluent sections of the population, at the cost of primary education. On the other hand, most of the expenditure on primary education at present went to teachers' salaries, with hardly any reserved for qualitative improvement, the provision of books and educational materials, teachers training etc. The low quality of education in the primary schools in the State sector was in itself a major contributor cause for the increasing privatisation of education to which the more affluent turned, and to the high drop-out rate and preference of income-earning activities among the poor. This situation merits greater rather than less attention to primary education in the immediate future. A powerful plea has been made for compulsory primary education as a precondition for the abolition of child labour, in both the short term and long-term contexts.

Among direct interventions, the need for more attention to water supply and sanitation was repeatedly mentioned. If this support for health services was not provided, there was a real danger that what was gained on the swings would be lost on the roundabouts, and the expenditure on curative health services become wasted.

Keeping all these factors in mind, five main areas were identified as those where it was obligatory for the State to protect, it not enhance the level of services, namely

- food supplies
- medicines
- child nutrition
- family incomes
- primary and preprimary education

On the question of raising resources for programmes directly concerned with child health, nutrition, education and care (ECCE) the proposal for a National Child Care Fund, first brought forward by the Forum for Creche and Child Care Services in 1989, was made again. It was suggested that such a Fund could be financed by a cess on employment, public contributions, tax-exempt corporate donations and available labour welfare and insurance funds. Such a move would also help in making "visible" the extent of State concern for children.

Indirect interventions were those which tackled employment, income-generation and family incomes, especially those directed at women, since it is well-established that a larger proportion of women's

earnings are utilised for supporting the family. The generation of employment and the provision of credit for self-employment, especially for women, was necessary on a very large scale. At the same time, enforcement of the Minimum Wages legislation all over the country was equally important, along with supportive measures like extending the benefits of labour legislation to workers in the unorganised sector. The creation of a more healthy environment, through the development of housing facilities and basic amenities for the poor, were other indirect interventions which would have a powerful though less discernible impact on health and welfare—for example, by reducing the morbidity and mortality that can be attributed to water borne disease.

Another indirect linkage was associated with alcoholism, both through its impact on child health and nutrition and on increasing the number of, and burden on, woman-headed households. In Tamil Nadu, the financial connection between the abolition of prohibition and the expansions of the noon Meals Programme has long been established. The success of the State child nutrition programme in reducing levels of malnutrition among children should not obscure the understanding that this has been bought at a tremendous cost, following the expansion of the liquor trade with all its related evils.

### **Effectiveness and Efficiency**

While increased resource allocation was one side of the picture, the other side, concerning cost-effectiveness and efficiency of services, also received considerable attention. All were agreed that it was essential to explore ways and means of getting the most out of every rupee spent and a number of suggestions were made to this end.

It was reiterated that the content, nature and quality of services were closely interdependent and besides grew to a considerable extent out of the conceptualisation of the programme itself. In this context, the contrast between a "top-down" approach and a "bottom-up" approach was referred to several times. Participatory, localised planning with the full involvement of the beneficiaries would go a long way not only in developing the most useful approaches, but also in monitoring delivery and implementation. Further, some degree of financial contribution from the beneficiaries, however small, would also help in creating involvement, realistic planning and optimal utilisation and maintenance. This was especially important in a situation where the demand for services far exceeded the supply,

as in the case of rural water supply for example. Yet local participation today has become eroded to such an extent that assets have not only to be created by government but also maintained almost exclusively by government.

A second important principle that received wide support was decentralisation both in planning and in management. The restoration and strengthening of institutions of local government is the first step in enabling them to manage social services locally. This should not be avoided merely because of the perceived dangers of local bodies like Panchayats having a tendency to be dominated by upper-class, upper-caste and male interests. On the contrary, the challenge must be confronted, and efforts made to make local bodies more representative of and responsive to the interest of the poor, the landless, women, minorities, dalits etc.

Localised management and accountability would promote greater "transparency" in management, as well as greater self-reliance and less dependency on government, since it would encourage raising of local resources of many kinds. In this context it was pointed out that local resources did not refer only to financial resources, but included many other types of resources, such as :

- time, skills and labour or human power, drawn at no cost or low cost from such sources as students, retirees and other persons
- local knowledge and skills, as in the case of traditional medicine, health measures, building techniques and crafts skills
- local materials, as in the case of local foods, medicinal herbs and building materials.

The involvement of NGOs in designing, managing and monitoring programmes was another principle which received stress and was widely supported. The strengths of NGOs lay in their close contact with the people, flexibility, small size and ability to respond rapidly. Thus they could more easily engage in participatory planning, draw out local resources from the community, design need-based programmes which effectively reach the people, address issues of concern to them, and provide accurate and rapid feedback etc. Partnership between NGOs and government was widely seen as a key ingredient to improve the quality, relevance and content of programmes.

Targeting of programmes, particularly at a time of financial constraint, was seen as yet another

important aspect of programming which deserved serious attention. The many difficulties in targeting and several failures were commented upon. For example, a recent study of the Noon Meals programme in a small area of Tamil Nadu has found that 60% of the beneficiaries do not require the nutritional support while 40% of those in need are unable to receive the supplement. If this is true on a large scale, there is an urgent need to redesign the programme so as to correct this error. Another example was quoted from the PDS in Tamil Nadu. Measures of exclusion based on profession tax, income tax or other criteria may exclude about 15 lakh families from a total of about 1.2 crore beneficiary families. While this could provide for a real increase to the needy families, it has to be balanced against the administrative costs of carrying out and monitoring the exclusion. In spite of all these difficulties, it was felt that more careful and stringent targeting was needed to provide the services where they were needed most. The use of the "risk index" earlier referred to and the involvement of NGOs in the exercise were both seen as important element in targeting.

### **Conclusions and Summing-up**

Certain broad conclusions emerged from the well-focussed and strongly argued discussions of the day, and these were given further emphasis in the concluding address by the chair.

It was felt necessary to take a holistic view of how all vulnerable segments of the population, of whom children were one, would be affected directly and indirectly by SAP and the new economic policies flowing from it and to take note of the various mechanisms by which these effects are brought about. At the same time, it was useful to focus attention on the child as an indicator of the health, development and well-being of society as a whole, especially as several useful indicators of children's status have been developed and adequate data are available to monitor change.

It seems clear that the burden would fall mostly heavily on these vulnerable segments, including children in the short run. However, these adverse short-term effects may be useful in drawing attention to basic needs and priorities and in stimulating debate about the direction and pathway of development, especially as they concern human development and welfare. In the long term, the nature of development, of planning and the extent of people's participation in the setting of goals through the political process, and in implementation, were significant issues that needed attention and

short-term solutions should not divert attention from the long-term needs.

While useful lessons could be learnt from the experiences of other countries who have been through similar situations, it would not be wise to assume that India must be necessarily tread the same path as any of them. It is also difficult to generalise about a country of this diversity and complexity. Studies of how situations are actually being handled by different State Governments, and of contrasts in development in different regions, would also be very useful in the evolution of policy. Making use of available data and information and utilising available channels for gathering data were also important.

As far as government action is concerned, a substantial increase in expenditures on the social services sector is indicated. There is also, however, an enormous space for action by the non-governmental sector, not only in arousing public opinion and creating the needed political consciousness, but also in action in partnership with the government for better implementation and effectiveness of services.

### **Valedictory Remarks**

In his concluding remarks, Mr. K. V. Ramanathan, Chairperson for the closing session, noted that the immediate impact of SAP would be to enforce fiscal discipline and close deficits, implying a cut in subsidies and a consequent increase in prices. This is probably the most direct and devastating impact that SAP would have on the poor, but other kinds of losses would also fall most heavily on vulnerable groups.

While withdrawal of food subsidies may have painful consequences for the poor, the removal of some other less visible subsidies may actually be beneficial. The Indian system of education is highly elitist in character, and has been consistently subsidising higher education of all types at the expense of primary education. It is time this situation was reversed by charging fees for higher education and spending more on primary education. He made a strong plea not only for greater support for primary education but at the same time for revamping all the social services in a less elitist direction.

A significant step that could be taken by government was the reduction of expenditure on the bureaucracy, which would not only conserve resources for use elsewhere but would also send

a signal to the people about priorities and values and indicate that the government meant business. This was one important way in which the "reduced governmental space" promised by the new economic policies could be actualised. He also strongly endorsed the calls for greater decentralisation, participatory planning, local management, cost-effectiveness and partnership of NGOs with government. In conclusion, he referred to the possibilities of the "liberalisation dividend" for the purpose of restructuring social services in a new and less elitist direction.

### **An Agenda for Action**

While formal resolutions were passed by the group, there appeared to be a consensus at the end of day about the following main groups of actions that needed to be taken.

1. There was a strong case for increased budgetary allocations by Central and State Governments for all the social services sectors, including health, education, nutrition, water supply and sanitation.
2. There was also a strong case for redesigning social sector programmes in a more egalitarian and less elitist manner, with emphasis on reaching the most vulnerable segments.
3. Decentralised management and participatory planning were seen as two important measures for the achievement of better content and quality in social sector services.

4. The key issue of cost-effectiveness and efficiency of service delivery needed to be urgently addressed in several ways.
  - by the development of low-cost options and strategies
  - by transparency in management
  - by drawing on local resource for a greater degree of self-reliance and relevance and
  - by the involvement of NGOs to a much larger extent
5. A call was given for the government to provide minimum protection in the five major areas of food, medicines, child nutrition, education, (both primary and preprimary) and family income.
6. In addition, indirect intervention in favour of the poor and of children, required strong emphasis on a programme of employment generation by the State, with specific reference to women and to the unorganised sector in general.
7. The need for a mass campaign of public education to foster a higher degree of public consciousness of the issues and for political action to provoke, compel and ensure governmental action in needed areas, as well as to bring about long term social change and stimulate social movements for reform were seen as necessary tasks to be undertaken by the non-governmental sector in general, including but not limited to political parties.

[ Extract from booklet on "Structural Adjustment Policy and the Child in India", published by M. S. Swaminathan Research Foundation, Madras. ]

### **Errata**

We regret that there was a slight error in the article " Environmental Issues and Women— A Point of View" by Joyashree Roy (IAWS Newsletter, Winter, 1992). Line No.4 in page 6 of the Newsletter No18 should read as : "These activities do not fall in the 'outside' market oriented categories of work, rather 'inside' subsistence oriented non-monetised categories where female workers dominate, as this category is the single largest female occupation in the conventionally defined labour force."

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