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Report on the Sixth National Conference of the
Indian Association for Women's Studies



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

**"THE DYNAMICS OF THE NEW ECONOMIC POLICY —
IMPLICATIONS FOR WOMEN"**

Mysore, 31st May, 1993 — 3rd June, 1993

WELCOME ADDRESS

BY DEVAKI JAIN — An Extract

(Monday, 31st May, 1993)

"The Leadership Gap : A Challenge to Feminists"

It is my hope that this conference will make a breakthrough, remove some of the road blocks that hold us back from providing our leadership to society and state, not only in India but the whole world. Or to put it in another way, enable our creativity to play its role in global governance.

I base my hope on three premises:

- 1) That "theory"—some kind of analytically useful construct—is a necessary condition for solidarity, for effective practice, and for legitimising practice.
- 2) That there is enough gender-differentiated evidence across all disciplines, especially in practice or method, to justify the evolution of theory, of intellectual efforts, for exercises systematising the knowledge that we have gained from our work and our feminist discourse.
- 3) That while there is, however heterogeneous and fragmented, a worldwide women's movement, it has not evolved into providing, what in simple terms can be called, a women's opinion on national or global issues, policies and ideas (Jain, Jan. 1990; Kumud Sharma). The women's movement does not have political clout, sometimes leading us to go to the extreme and to say that there is no women's movement—that there is no justification or legitimacy for a women-based formation.

I would argue that there is urgent need to search for an ideological and theoretical perspective for the movement. Put conversely, the missing link is the ideology/theory that will bind the movement. This ideology has to move away from current political ideologies and develop from women's experience of politics in the broadest sense—namely within families, society and the economy. I would go further. This ideology is feminism; we need not shy away from the word. By shying away from the term we continue to be fragmented, even suspicious of each other.

I would also suggest that there is a dangerous vacuum in ideological leadership in the world today, and argue that this lack of a framework is partially responsible for the unsettled and chaotic state of our nation and the world.

From its inception the IAWS has been an organisation for scholars and activists. It has denied the categorisation of ourselves into these two conventional groups (Krishnaraj, 1991). In some ways the IAWS has redefined the scholar as an activist and the activist as an intellectual. "We (the women of the Sanghas) want time to think" (Batliwala, 1991).

Marie Angeline Savane of AAWORD, speaking to Aruna Roy at the first meeting of DAWN in 1984, argued that scholars in the women's movement, being voices, reflectors of action, are activists. Action, she said, had taught her what she knew. She pleaded with Aruna that it was unwise and unnecessary for activists to alienate themselves and their work, or to alienate those who are not working at the grassroots level, the so-called desk workers, from practice, by drawing attention to these distinctions or making much of these distinctions in location and the form of work. It could be suggestive of inverted snobbery. Women's solidarity needs to supersede these false dividing hierarchies, she argued. Feminism? Could this be a characteristic of feminism? Could this rejection of dichotomies be feminist ideology?

The Women's Studies Movement can establish that Practice is the school for Theory. And Theory is an instrument for the Practitioner, the activist. The characteristics of the women's movement, of the IAWS, and of this gathering, reveal this better than any other formation. Experiences of many ground-level organisations of women have given the particular flavour to the IAWS, of being a network, an instrument for empowerment of a broad-based kind, a mutually reinforcing process; a school of learning.

What is missing in the construct of solidarity Feminism ? Our journeys as academics and grassroots workers have been deeply intertwined—learning, complementing each other's capabilities, differing politically and evolving out of the differences. We have found an identity through our similar but different routes to working for and with poor women workers. We have come to this partly through the negative route, namely discovering that the "enemy" was the same, what can be called the common areas of hurt and hostility. Whether it was a mass-based organisation or a development research and design centre, the experience of the outside was the same, and the internal problems of growth and harmony were the same.

We need to build on such analysis, such reality, to articulate this "finding" with greater self confidence and solidarity in forums outside ourselves.

A frontal issue in the richer countries is how the political institutions should play their role in keeping with the traditional role of the state as one that provides peace and security to its citizens. Here in the South, political and economic leaders are finding it rough going. We have two kinds of poverty: the old and entrenched, and the new, emerging out of interdependence and from structural adjustment programmes. Politicians and economists are hamstrung by the conditionalities: their capacity to produce competitively and to export is dependent not only on the buoyancy of the rich countries but also on the legal and political structures of the

South that inhibit inward and outward flows of technology, labour, and products. They are operating in a highly regulated world market, but with injunctions which fantasise a free market.

Their situation is in a sense an enlarged picture of the local domestic and sub-national marketplace within poor nations. The market has its own power structure (Gordon White). The powerless poor must operate in a market against the powerful rich.

There is urgent need for a theory that can respond to this phenomenon, drawn from practice—from the critique of the current leadership by those actors who care for social justice, for security in civil society, and for environmental protection.

This is an empty space which needs to be filled. It is a view that this can be done by women as the formation that challenges all the classical assumptions. The disarray in the world needs a political and economic reconstruction. In this area, I believe, the potential for leadership lies with us.

The process of preparation for the two U.N. World Conferences—Population, in Cairo, in 1994, and Women, in Beijing, in 1995—offers us an opportunity to outline an agreed agenda for action, a programme for reconstruction of our societies and the state. There will be so many gatherings, papers, books, ideas, recommendations. Can we extract from the process a simple minimum agenda, backed up by a theoretical/ideological base which would give it power in the mainstream ? ♦

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

— JAYATI GHOSH (An Extract)

(31st May, 1993)

"Gender Concerns in Macro-Economic Policy"

Jayati Ghosh, in her keynote address, pointed out that the question that is of major concern today is how we, as concerned citizens as well as women, react to the set of macro-economic policies that are officially projected as the move towards "economic reform", and how we view the possibilities for alternative measures which may be more in consonance with our own broader visions for social change and genuine progress. At the outset some points need to be emphasized. We would be committing a grave error – and doing ourselves a disservice – if we view the issue solely in terms of "the impact on women" or relegate ourselves to the grey zone of "weaker sections" eligible for "safety nets" from the charitable coffers of the state.

Rather, we must consider the entire area of macro-economic strategy afresh in terms of the entire impact on economy and society, but with a perspective that is sensitive to women's needs and conditions. Further, we should move beyond the stage of simply reacting to official policies – although this we must also perforce continue to do, given the relative power of the state and its ability to impose policies", to formulating and pressing for those alternative economic strategies which we see as required for productive restructuring of the economy and more desirable social distribution.

A mere critique of the present economic strategy, while undoubtedly necessary, cannot be enough.

We must also have a fair idea of what we propose instead, not simply as a way of reacting to existing policies and seeing how we can mitigate their effects, but really as part of our own vision of a just society. Therefore, it is necessary to look at the whole issue of macro-economic strategy the other way round : we should first define our own goals for long-term restructuring of the economy, and adapt our medium-term adjustment and short-term stabilization measures accordingly so that they do not conflict with the long-term goals. A genuinely democratic society and polity is one where decision-making is decentralised as far as possible, where minimum basic needs in terms of goods and services are provided to the entire population through systematic and conscious involvement of an accountable government, where both women and men have access to education, which in turn allows for creative and useful productive work as far as possible, and where these essential goals are not compromised by external vulnerability in either economic or political terms. It is perhaps a measure of our times that such relatively modest aims can be seen as utopian or unrealistic.

The purpose of any structural adjustment strategy, in my view, should be to change the structure of incentives in the economy in such a way as to work towards these goals. In the present economic context that implies several things : firstly, a change in the incentives for the wealthier sections, to encourage them to save and invest more domestically rather than consume unproductively, or export capital; a shift in incentives designed not only to conserve scarce resources but prevent the concentration of their ownership and control; a change in incentives to encourage greater self-sufficiency in crucial areas such as food security; a greater emphasis on improving productivity in the economy as a whole and in all sectors rather than in a few chosen sectors; an emphasis on efficient and effective utilization of our greatest resource - labour - rather than allowing the tremendous waste and inefficiency of unemployment; and a degree of protection from the more inequalizing and destabilizing effects of the operations of global markets. The focus of the adjustment strategy should therefore be to work out the means - in terms of fiscal and monetary strategy, guiding investment allocations, price signals, etc. - that will change the structure of incentives in this manner. In all this, a major emphasis on decentralisation of economic decision-making of the state apparatus

is absolutely crucial, not only to make for more democratic accountability, but also for better and more efficient use of resources.

Such aims in turn mean that the short-term and medium-term strategies should not be such as to expose us more directly to the uncertain vagaries and whims of international capital, but should instead seek to achieve stabilization through internal efforts. It is worth recalling that the trade balance was brought under control two years ago essentially by sweeping import controls rather than exchange rate changes, and that true internal balance in terms of a control of the revenue deficit has still not been achieved. Internal and external balance today need measures that are harsher on the richer groups than on the poor, (such as increased direct taxation and cutting down on wasteful intermediates for luxury production) and which are simultaneously more effective. Further, it is important to ensure a stable and high rate of export growth not to only bring the external accounts into sustained balance but also to protect the economy from the threat of capital flight or the dependence on capital inflow, but such export growth requires strategic state intervention rather than reliance on the market alone. Such policies require an entirely different political motivation as well as a different approach to external dependence. Lest it be argued that such policies are "politically unfeasible", it would serve us well to remember that government policies can be altered by sufficient pressure, and perhaps it is our job to create the awareness that can build up such pressure.

All this is a matter of some urgency, because of the rapidity of the economic policy changes and their possibly far-reaching implications. This is a particularly challenging time for the women's movement, for two chief reasons. One is the ideological threat of religious fundamentalism and other forms of patriarchal doctrine which have begun to threaten even the few carefully won freedoms for women in our society. And the other is the tendency to integrate the Indian economy closely into a global set of inequalizing market structures, which may set into train processes that are difficult to reverse because they alter the rules of the game in significant ways. Many of these processes will operate to worsen the material conditions of women workers in the immediate sense, and will affect the future ability to improve conditions as well. The need to confront these threats must be the central issue on our agenda. ♦

SUMMARY REPORT OF THE PROCEEDS IN THE EIGHT PARALLEL SUBTHEMES

SUB-THEME I

IMPACT OF NEP ON WOMEN'S WORK, EMPLOYMENT AND FOOD SECURITY.

Co-ordinator : Sudha Deshpande

Discussants : Neraj Hatekar

Joy Ranadive

Papers and Presentations

Session I : Implications of NEP on Women's Employment : Macro Context

- 1) Structural Adjustment, Feminization and Strategies by Nandita Saha, Sujata Gothoskar and Nandita Gandhi.
- 2) The New Industrial Policy and Its Impact on Women by Ramala Baxamusa.
- 3) Women's Work in Changing Income, Demand and Technology Situations : A Study of "Home-makers" Engaged in Primary Production for Household Use by Jyoti Kiran.
- 4) New Economic Policy and Female Employment : Some Aspects by Nandini Kannan.
- 5) Imperialism and Women in India and Nigeria : Some Issues by Suguna Pathy.

Session II : Impact of NEP on Women Workers in the Rural sector

- 1) New Economic Policy and Female Employment in Rural Sector by G. Sai Baba and K. Vijayalakshmi.
- 2) Women in the Rural Non-Farm Sector - The Neglected Section of the Economy by Rameshwari Varma et al.
- 3) Impact of New Economic Policy on Minority Women's Work Force in Rural Areas in West Bengal by Farida Hussain.

Session III : Impact of NEP on Woman Workers in the Urban Sector

1. Implications of NEP for Women in Diamond Industry of India and Studded Jewellery Industry at SEEPZ in Bombay by Subhadra Patwa.
2. Shadow Worker by Nandita Gandhi & Nandita Shah.
3. The New Economic Policy and Its Impact on

Employment of Women in the Public Sector by Shanta Vidya.

4. Women's Employment in the Banking Sector of India : Changing Realities and the Need for Change in Perspective by Sujata Gothoskar.
5. Ragpickers : Access to Waste : The Threat of Privatization by P.M. Chikarmane
6. Employment and Work Pattern of Women Coal Miners in Changing Economic Scenario by Sami Akhtar Khan
7. Women Workers in Prawn Processing Units : An Analysis of Work, Wages and Exploitation by Hema Kumari

Session IV : Impact of NEP On Food Security

1. The Public Distribution system and Health Policy : Need for An Integration by Neeraj Hatekar,
2. New Economic Policy and Food Security by B. Ratna Kumari & P. Leela.
3. The Status of India's Economy : Welfare Measures and Women by Suchalata Panda

Summary Report

There were 4 sessions in this sub-theme

- i) Impact of of NEP on Women's employment : Macro-context;
- ii) Impact of NEP on Women Workers in the Rural Sector
- iii) Impact of NEP on Women Workers in the Urban Sector, and
- iv) Impact of NEP on Food Security

1. It was generally agreed that the NEP would increase hardships for the vulnerable sections of workers in general, and women in particular, as labour markets would become more flexible in future. Though it was too early to draw firm conclusions, evidence from few micro-level studies supported growth of female employment which was both low paid and insecure. The trend could be expected to continue in future. There was a need to have micro-level studies which could reveal these changes and help evolve appropriate strategies to check adverse effects. There was an urgent need to mobilize all those sections of population including women who

were affected adversely by NEP. Trade unions, NGOs and Women's organizations may have to think of strategies to enable workers to face the situation. This was important because flexibilization of labour markets and decentralization of production had given rise to complex employer-employee relationships. Increasing dependence on sub-contracting had split production processes, giving rise to a chain of middlemen. The workers, whether men or women, needed to be mobilized to face this challenge to reduce their exploitation - from employers and middlemen.

2. In the second session the discussion was focussed on women workers in the non-farm sector of the rural economy. These women were mostly unpaid family workers. Apart from inability to market their products, shrinking demand for their products endangered their meagre incomes. Greater integration of urban/rural markets was likely to affect them adversely in future.

It was generally agreed that there was a need to have more information about these women and their aptitudes, which could help in planning training and educational programmes. Programmes like IRDP, DWCRA and TRYSEM could be strengthened. But there was a need to make women participate in self employment programmes as participants.

3. The third session discussed impact of NEP on urban women working in the public sector, in an export oriented industry and certain occupations which could be labelled as "urban". Though it was too early to draw conclusions regarding the impact of NEP on Women's employment in the public sector, certain observations made in this respect are pertinent. In the last two years, there was no new recruitment in most public sector units as a consequence of either a deliberate policy or technical change, especially computerization. The trend not only threatened the existing trade unions, but could displace permanent labour through voluntary retirement schemes and may even increase non-permanent employment.

Plight of women working in export oriented industries reveals the kind of precarious employment NEP is likely to create for women in future. These women were mostly low paid non-permanent workers. Long working hours, the nature of work and unhygienic working

conditions often impaired their health. More importantly, the skill they acquired was non-transferable and could not be used in other occupations if they lost their jobs. Their problems were acute since they were not unionized.

Decentralization of production in the urban industrial sector over the eighties had given rise to certain production patterns in urban labour markets. The worker and the employer were not only physically located in two different locations but, in between, there could be at times, a chain of middlemen. These home based workers, mostly women often at the mercy of the middlemen, were an exploited lot. They were found working for more than one employer, earning a meagre income and getting irregular work.

In the wake of the privatization that NEP entails, workers in certain menial occupations may be deprived of their income. Ragpicking was one such occupation in Pune. Efforts of an NGO there suggests that there is a greater need for others involved at grass roots level to act as watchdogs to protect these workers.

The kind of employment which is likely to emerge, suggests

- i) there is a need to create pressure groups that would force the government/employers to take into account interests of workers.

and

- ii) there is a need to form trade union - like associations of workers through either co-operatives or mahila mandals to promote their own interests.

4. In the fourth session, the discussion was mainly focussed on PDS. It was generally agreed that the current PDS programme was insensitive to local needs. There was an excessive dependence on fair price shops for channelising food grains. But in the light of the corruption involved, there was a need to look for other avenues for distribution of food grains.

Targetting of food subsidy was not likely to be economically viable and hence should be avoided.

More comprehensive studies need to be undertaken to determine if the cut-back in food subsidy will adversely affect women in particular, in terms of inequality in intra-household distribution of food.

A wider perspective should be taken of food subsidy and security. Inputs like irrigation, clean drinking water, education of women and overall health inputs were equally important. A holistic approach, therefore, was needed for food distribution and health policy.

SUB-THEME II

MEDIA, EDUCATION AND CULTURE

Co-ordinator : Akhila Sivadas
Discussants : Sonal Shukla
 Usha Rai
 Rama Jha
 Gita Rama Krishna and
 Chandila Mukherjee
Chairperson : Sonal Shukla
 Ritu Menon

Papers and Presentations :

- 1) An Overview on Media
 — Ritu Menon and Akhila Sivadas
- 2) Soap Opera : Potential for Women's Development
 — Smriti Navatir
- 3) The Humrahi Experience
 — Mukta Rajadhyaksha
- 4) Coverage of Women's Issues in the English Press
 — Ammu Joseph
- 5) Portrayal of Women in the Hindi Magazines
 — Mani Mala
- 6) Overview on the Implications of Structural Adjustment on Education
 — Dr. Krishna Kumar
- 7) Opposition to Progressive Science Education
 — Anita Ramphal
- 8) Education for the Girl Child
 — Vimla Ramakrishna
- 9) Structural Adjustment Through Gender Equity
 — Anjana Mangalagiri
- 10) Education as a Means Towards Empowerment
 — Mahila Samakhya : Abha Bhaiya
 & Srilata Batliwala
- 11) Presentation by Samata
 — S. Sudha, N. Kannamma
 & Madhumita Pal.

Summary Report

In the post - Masjid India, it is necessary for us to be sensitive to the rapidly changing scenario in the country — not only in terms of the New Economic Policy (NEP) which is the over - reaching theme of the Conference, but on the alliances that are being made between right wing forces of all kinds and their impact on society and politics and, of course, on women.

In a sense, our sub-theme was grappling with the impact of right-wing forces on all the three segments of media, education and culture.

Our discussions and presentations on the theme of education focussed on the social safety net, its conceptualisation, implementation and its impact on education for women's equality. What emerged was, the utter paucity of information about this scheme, the lack of accountability and the lack of any kind of a democratic process, despite the talk of participation and participatory planning. Since the crux of such a scheme is that it is not a grant but a loan marked by conditionalities and the grim expectations of cost effectiveness and social returns, the question arose as to how could education for empowerment be evaluated in economic terms ? What will this mean for the ongoing programmes for women's empowerment like Mahila Samakya and Samata ? What sort of education will these World Bank - aided projects impart ? Will the stress be on empowerment or on those pragmatic issues such as greater access, skill training and building a literate work force for the international market ?

The panel emphasized strongly the necessity for (a) access to information; (b) reviewing the programme with local NGOs and women's groups prior to operationalising it; (c) retaining and strengthening the facility for negotiating terms and conditions; and (d) not surrendering the evaluation processes or mechanics to the World Bank.

We are all aware of the experiences of earlier programmes like Mahila Samakhya and the Total Literacy Movement, or the Samata, where the emphasis has been on empowerment. Now, in the Social Safety Net programme, in states such as U.P., the World Bank funding is going to be funnelled through the Mahila Samakhya programme. The question that arose on the possible fallout of such linkages highlighted the vulnerability of these programmes to the pressures both from the Central and local governments and from donor agencies whose agendas for women's education are distinct from the feminist perspective which would make possible the success of the programmes.

How will the women's movement and the NGO's involved in furthering the women's movement deal with a situation which is now fait accompli ? Do we give up the negotiating spaces and take up a confrontational stand ? Should we become non-cooperative ? Or, should we try and influence from within as well as from the outside, so that the original objectives and motivations are retained ?

In response, the protagonists of these programmes asserted that, given the potential of the schemes and the success achieved so far, it would be extremely unwise to surrender the spaces entirely. Women's groups both inside and out, should, however, be prepared to take up a tough negotiating stance vis-a-vis both the Indian government and the World Bank.

Despite the scepticism of some, the discussion regarding the autonomy of programmes such as these, and their genuine fear of co-option, it was generally felt that neither the state nor the women's movement are monolithic bodies and nor do they speak in one voice at all times. The history of the women's movement has been one of alternately making demands of the state and resisting its repressive and authoritarian practices. This aspect of the problem was discussed at length, and, at the end, the general consensus was that the NGO's and the women's groups should take advantage of the access and mobilisation that such programmes offer and not relinquish this valuable "space" to the right wing forces, whether economic, religious or political.

The increasing presence of right wing forces was one of the areas of discussion. The specific example of political parties trying to capitalise on the religious bias of the masses came up again and again. Such tendencies have serious consequences for all secular and democratic educational processes, of which, women's education and empowerment are a significant element.

As far as the mainstream media is concerned, there has been an implicit acceptance of both the ideology and the practice of right wing economic principles. Discernible over the last few years is what has been referred to as the "Yuppification" of the newspapers. The more or less uncritical acceptance of right wing thinking processes has become much more overt in a section of the language press. This "Yuppification" of newspapers has meant that most newspaper journalists concerned about social issues have to rely more or less on their own steam. Often, they have to

"sell" their stories to the editorial higher-ups, bargain for space and serve up their findings in a palatable form, which invariably means "short and superficial". Meanwhile, the women's movement has changed pace, with many more groups concentrating on grass roots activities or empirical research, rather than on highly visible propaganda campaigns, as they had in the past.

In contrast, the experience of women that initiated, controlled and managed magazines such as Asmita, Maunshi, etc. have demonstrated that principled and editorially consistent journalism is not only possible but also, to an extent, commercially viable — and in today's overall right wing climate, necessary, for presenting a gender sensitive, independent perspective.

The discussions over the five sessions revealed that both education and the women's question are the key sites for the playing out of right wing agendas of the NEP and the religious fundamentalists. In a prevailing climate of consumerism and communalism, where will the question of gender find its measure ?

SUB-THEME III

WOMEN, HEALTH AND POPULATION.

Co-ordinator : Meera Shiva

Papers and Presentations :

Session 1 : Impact of Economic and Other Policies on Women's Health

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| a) Dr. Vanaja
Ram Prasad | Changing Agriculture and Environment Related Policies : Impact on Population and Women's Health |
| b) Divya Pandey | New Economic Policies and Women's Health |
| c) Rama Baru | Structural Adjustment and its Implication for Health Care |
| d) R. Rayam &
S. R. Choodambigai | Economic Policy and Health Status of Indian Women |

Session 2 : Reproductive Rights, Contraceptive Needs and Population Policy

- | | |
|------------------|---|
| a) Malini Karkal | Population Control and International Policies |
|------------------|---|

- b) Mirai Chatterjee Women, Population and Development : Some Strategies for Reorienting Our Population Policies
- c) Laxmi (Saheli) Contraceptive Needs and Reproductive Technologies

Session 3 : Women's Health Status - Deteriorating Trends

- a) Dr. Meera Sadgopal Women, Fertility and Planetary Sustenance
- b) Rama Prasad Women and Public Health
- c) Indira Devi Primary Health Care : Implications of New Economic Policy.
- d) Renu Khanna Women's Health and Traditional Medicines
- e) Surpriya Guha Diseases as Discourse Changing Perspectives on Women's Health.

Session 4 : STD, AIDS : Implications for Women's Health

- a) Shyamala Natraj and B. Meera Women and AIDS Caught Between Two Conspiracies
- b) Indu Prakash Singh AIDS and Prostitute Baiting : Misplaced Focus

Summary Report

The first session focussed on the NEP and the changes in various policies, e.g. agriculture, industry, etc., and its effects upon women's status and health. Many points made were probably common to the findings of other sub-theme groups, that the poor are being marginalised more than ever before, and women carry the heaviest burden. This compromises further their already poor health, and often their very survival. The trend of increasingly unfavourable sex ratio, hence, is expected to further deteriorate more rapidly.

The greatest concern expressed was regarding "Food Availability and Food Security". The *cuts in food subsidies* via the P.D.S. and rises in food prices without *work and wage security* in a population where 40% people are below poverty line will have a tremendous negative impact on health

of the poor majority. Women who are trying to cope within the home by *invisible adjustments* like nutritional cuts, fetching necessities like water, fuel, fodder, etc. from far away, and home-processing of food purchased in the rawest form will undoubtedly be worst hit as they eat *last and least*, carry a *triple burden* and even today 70% of those who are pregnant are anaemic, 20% of the maternal mortality being due to anaemia related causes. Those allegedly concerned about safe motherhood and child survival have to address the basic issue of food availability and food costs.

Privatisation of government health services is leaving women totally at the mercy of the health commodity market, which often means going without previously available treatment, even when needed for the survival of the women and their children. On the other hand, commercialisation and pharmaceuticalisation makes people victims of massive overuse of medicines and medical technology in diagnosis and treatment, Iatrogenesis being the outcome of increasing medical malpractice.

Changes in agriculture under the new policies will affect health drastically. Under the Special 301 of the U.S. Trade Act and TRIPS (Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights) within the GATT (General Agreement on Trades and Tariffs) negotiations, there is a threat of trade sanctions against India unless our country agrees to change our model Indian Patent Act of 1970 as well as legalization of cross relation if Dunkel Draft Text of GATT is signed. This irreversible step will open the doors for foreign multinationals to patent our medicinal plants and seeds as has already happened with 'NEEM'.

The shift to export-oriented cashcrop agriculture at the cost of food crops will lead to further use of dumped and hazardous pesticides, at the cost of meeting domestic need for food grains - even while international prices are known to be manipulated by the powerful importing northern countries. Decrease in these international prices has led to starvation situations in different regions of the third world. The concerns related to deterioration of health due to unjust trade, serving of debt have been mentioned even in UNICEF's State of World's Children report, 1993.

The untenable rise in agricultural costs will drive small farm families off the land as it has done in America and dependency for generation of seeds on the Seed Corporation. Inevitably, women will bear the highest costs as people struggle to cope and survive.

Flooding by anti-health industries, such as tobacco, liquor, baby food, junk food, industry conglomerates, with increasing free access to media for aggressive advertising and unethical marketing has led to worsening of health. Furthermore, steady takeover of village commons and the home based small scale food processing industries by private and foreign collaborated junk food outfits is worsening the situation as is evident with Pepsi Cola, MacDonald's, Masalas by Brook Bond, Lipton, etc.

In our country which has deep-seated ancient nature-based holistic health traditions and vast old forest wealth in medicinal plants - indiscriminate export and usage of plants nearing extinction without efforts of regeneration, we will soon see market commoditisation of health carried to its gross and brutal limits - with wiping out of knowledge systems about the therapeutic value of plants or their total takeover by corporate bodies, with women withstanding the worst brunt. The need to resist this is very urgent. We must preserve, regain and strengthen our valuable old resources and traditional survival skills, which are gradually being eroded and which were kept alive by women who have been systematically eased out of health care.

With regard to the discussion on *Health and Population*, several informative and stimulating papers were presented. The currently dominant view that population is "the single greatest threat to world survival" was effectively challenged in the context of the overall real scenario of the planet, one of domination of the increasingly powerful "North" over the increasingly exploited "South". It was also noted that almost every global negotiation is being directed by the northern countries.

The contents of the Treaty on Consumption and Lifestyle passed at Rio in 1992 by the Global Forum was quoted as it was with great difficulty that this was included.

"While overall population growth is a danger to the health of the planet, it must be recognised that population growth in the North, due to extremely high levels of per capita consumption, is a far greater threat than population growth in the South".

While this treaty cannot ensure any of the necessary radical changes in global consumption levels, it records a historical shift in world understanding which we must support especially in view of the most recent U.S. proposal to omit the consumption chapter from the Population

Document being prepared at the Cairo Prepcom meeting at New York where G77 supported the US proposal - as most third world countries find themselves in no position to oppose, having seen the takeover of Security Council, WHO, etc, by US interest.

The renewed vigorous thrust in Population Control is very much part of the NEP and SAP packages, implemented by the World Bank and the IMF, for example. Amongst the disincentives is that ration cards be made available only to those with two or less children. This would mean that the majority of the poor are excluded from the "public" distribution system for food.

Certain countries and areas with low per capita income whose fertility rates have dropped nearly 40% in recent decades, like Sri Lanka, Kerala, China and Cuba, were all characterised by staunch government implementation of food, work and social security measures, health infrastructure and special broad initiatives to free women, including education. On the other hand, China's radical economic changes since the eighties, towards privatisation and liberalisation with increasing the qualities in society and erosion of social securities, have encouraged female infanticide and a new rise in birth rate in that country.

These facts indicate that the combination of SAPs with Population Control amounts to plain and simple genocide of the poor and of women.

We support women's access to safe contraceptive choices and rational contraceptive care as part of total health care. Deep concern was expressed at the systematic non-availability of any female barrier methods e.g. cervical cap, diaphragm, or female condoms when they were available two decades ago and pushing of certain long acting hormonal technologies in the name of increased choice is indicative of Double Standards.

Since "Family Welfare" is impossible without health, the Family Welfare Department should be disbanded and family planning services totally merged into all round good available health care.

We oppose the attempts at introduction of new long acting systemic invasive contraceptive measures being launched in massive Trials on Indian Women, under the present and deteriorating conditions of Women's Health and of the government health services, these methods are hazardous and only contribute to the suffering and overall female genocide, as they force all the contraceptive burden with its known side effects on the woman without

ensuring access to health care for her and the children.

Other contraceptive methods like barrier methods which are safe and effective can easily be made widely available to women in addition to male condoms, for example, diaphragms, cervical caps, spermicides, sponges, female condoms etc. Fertility awareness education must be standardised and locally sensitised, to be imparted to the whole people through women's activists and organisations to enhance their understanding of their bodies and fertility process, so as to enable them to control their fertility in their own wider interests, so as to limit their family size, be empowered in the process and not suffer needlessly, either through unsafe pregnancy or unsafe contraception.

Contraceptive research must support this trend, not the current one of hormonal implants and vaccines which do not improve but rather accommodate or worsen relations between women and men - chief beneficiaries being the manufacturers of the technologies and the product and the providers. Deep concern was expressed at the attempts at pushing of certain technologies by certain AID agencies and linking it up with AID conditionality and also linking it up with funding of private practitioners and NGO's to carry out their policy and technology choice. Extension of Consumer Protection Act to cover women suffering from contraceptive malpractice has to be undertaken as the government health care system will increasingly fail to provide the back up services. Question of accountability of the doctors, manufacturers and the agencies involved has to be made absolutely clear to the public. Creation of one group and accountability of another is no longer accepted.

High incidence of reproductive tract infection (90% of women suffer from RTIs, according to Dr. Rani Bang, published in Lancet) and increasing incidence of STDs including AIDS require urgent intervention. Ninety percent of women with sexually transmitted infections are non-promiscuous housewives, highlighting the harmful double standard towards sexuality in our society. Unjust victimisation of victims which focusses AIDS intervention on prostitutes as "high-risk" rather than high-risk behaviour of males is deplorable. The population and the AIDS policy appear extremely patriarchal and therefore will fail to meet the needs of women.

SUB-THEME IV

FAMILY AND SOCIAL SECURITY

<i>Co-ordinator</i>	: Chaya Datar*
<i>Discussants</i>	: Malini Karkal and Kamla Ganesh
<i>Rapporteur</i>	: Janhavi Andharia
<i>Chairpersons</i>	: Madhura Swaminathan and Sonia Gill

Papers and Presentations

I Family, Policy, State

1. Murli Desai, TISS, Bombay Towards a National Family Policy
2. Meera Desai, SNDT University, Bombay Family and State Policy
3. Asha Damle, Bombay Family and Social Security
4. Kamala Ganesh SNDT Univ. Bombay & Carla Risseuw Leiden University. Gender Between Family and State
5. Malini Karkal, Bombay Social Position of a Family and Status of Women
6. G. Parthasarathy Female Headed Families and the New Economic Policy

II Vulnerable Groups within Family

7. Saumya Rama Rao & Sanghamitra Acharya Graying of Women : The Emerging Issues
8. A. Vidyavathi, Ambedkar Open Univ. Hyderabad Family and Social Security: A Case Study of Home for the Aged
9. K. Shanthi, Univ. of Madras Family and Social Security : Consequences of NEP on Female Labour and Female Heads of Household : A Need for Intervention.

10. Tara Ramkumar
SPARC, Bombay
and Madhura
Swaminathan IGDR
Economic Vulnerability
of Women on Pavement
Settlements : Evidence
form a Panel Study.
11. Neela Dabir
TISS, Bombay
Social Security for the
Aged.

III Programmes, Policies and Alternatives in Social Security Measures

12. Ela R. Bhatt,
SEWA, Ahmedabad.
Social Security as Work
Security, Not Welfare
13. Mina Swaminathan
MSS Res. Foundation
Madras
The Continuum of Mat-
ernity and Child Care
Support : A Critique
of Relevant Laws,
Policies and Programmes
from the Prespective
of Women's Triple
Roles.
14. Vijayalakshmi
Rammohan Tirupati
Food Security in Early
Childhood : An Exper-
iment in the Urban
Slums
15. Mirai Chatterjee &
Jyoti Macwan
SEWA, Ahmedabad
Taking Care of Our
Children : The Experi-
ences of SEWA Union
16. Leela Gulati
CED, Thiruananth-
apuram
Agricultural Workers'
Pension in Kerala : An
Experiment in Social
Assistance
17. Geeta Mahajan Thane
Note on the Experience
of Public distribution
System (PDS) in an area
from Bombay-Thane
Rationing Zone in
Maharashtra.

IV Background paper

- Utsa Patnaik &
Subhasini Ali
The Likely Impact of
Liberalisation and SAP
on Food Security in
India.

Summary Report

The papers presented in this sub-theme could be classified into three categories —

1. Those that dealt with the overall relation-
ship between the state and the family, the nature

of the Indian Welfare State, and its macro
policies.

2. Those that described and analyzed the
status and situation of groups and persons
who were marginal both within the family and
in terms of state citizenship — i.e. *vulnerable
groups*.
3. Those that discussed and evaluated
specific policies and programmes of social
security by the state, by the community
and some alternative innovations and
experiments.

In contrast to some advanced western
countries as well as former socialist countries, the
Indian welfare state does not purport to
provide comprehensive social security to all
individuals. The implicit assumption is that those
outside the formal sector will be taken care of by
the family. On the other hand, macro
processes and policies have simultaneously been
undermining the capacity of kinship networks to
take care of those vulnerable groups. So, in effect,
those members of the family outside formal
employment sector are getting neither state security
nor full family support, a situation which will be
aggravated by the NEP.

The existing state provisions for social security
are piecemeal/fragmented and distributed among a
number of depts. and ministries, and furthermore
have many lacunae in implementation. In this
context, it was discussed whether a *comprehensive
'Family Policy'* which would both safeguard the
interests of the family with respect to the state, while
also safeguarding the interests of the *individual
within the family* was a workable and desirable
option, though a conclusive position could not be
reached.

While there was a need to broaden definitions
of family to include actually *existing care-giving
networks*, which may not have a biological, or
residential dimension, it was also agreed that for
majority of Indian women, family relationships
constitute a meaningful and significant base, and
that govt. social security in the Indian context of
meagre resources, could be workable only in tandem
with family support.

Thus the group felt that the important issues
that needed to be focussed on, were :—

- What is the minimum social security contribution
that the state has to make, even in the context
of the New Economic Policy ?

- What are the areas and the ways in which the community/or other voluntary agencies can organize social security ?
- What are the ways in which lines of responsibility within care-giving units can be fixed, and bolstered by pressure from the state and community?

The discussion pointed out to the fact that it was not a question of either/or with regard to government social security and people's own initiatives in organizing their own social security. An absolute minimum of social security now being provided by the government was a must. There was a good amount of discussion on what constitutes this minimum and which are the vulnerable groups and people who need it. Broadly, all people working in the informal sector, as also the elderly children and adolescents, among whom the female segment is more vulnerable, constitute groups for whom minimum social security is essential. The group acknowledged that this list was not exhaustive and that further discussion could lead to identifying other vulnerable groups. The proportion of the Govt.'s budget allocated for these is very small and furthermore, has hardly any leakage, and reaches the intended beneficiaries in a fairly direct way. In fact, the group felt that the scope of this minimum social security needs to be extended to *more* groups, and that resources for this could be found if the state and central governments could explore alternative ways of raising them.

In the context of the SEWA experience as well as other small scale experiments of organising child care for working women, a position seemed to emerge that so long as full employment was assured, women were capable of organizing their own social security, and such initiatives usually led to deep-rooted, long-lasting covering of many other aspects of their lives. The group, however, felt that in most such cases of people's own initiatives, some back up support from an external agency, state, or voluntary agency was necessary. In this context, a suggestion was made that the basic funding for child care could come from the state, but that the organizing could be done by the neighbourhood community, with minimum standards set by the government.

The group recommended the following support programmes :

Old age pensions must be provided for vulnerable persons and groups.

Even when they are residing with earning members of their family, the pension (which is not enough for the beneficiary to live on independently, but usually provides for subsistence) cements familial

relationships by making the aged person more acceptable for being looked after.

In this context, the Agricultural Workers' Pension Scheme in Kerala was discussed as an efficient well-targeted programme of low expenditure, that covered a very important segment of the rural poor, and that this scheme was worth extending to other states.

There was also some discussion on old age pension scheme in Karnataka, the provisions, and implications of which the group felt, needed to be researched into more thoroughly before extending to other states.

A flexible, diverse national network of child care services for the working mother was doubly important as it would also free the *older girl child* from child care. The group felt that the National Child Care Fund recommended by SHRAMSHAKTI report must be implemented.

It is essential that primary education be made compulsory and sufficient resources be allocated for this.

The group agreed that there is much scope for improving implementation of existing social security programmes including PDS and felt that more flexible and efficient organization of delivery systems is essential.

Widowed/deserted/separated women should be guaranteed sustained employment at a decent wage.

There was a fair amount of discussion on the Public Distribution System - The group was unanimous that it must not be disbanded. PDS in fact formed a vital part of the social security in the sense that the latter was too small to be effective in itself, and had to be taken *together* with PDS.

While there is scope for excluding high-income group beneficiaries from PDS the larger task is to expand its coverage to reach currently excluded rural and urban poor. Migrant workers face acute problems in access to PDS and need help. Deserted women and street children should also be ensured access to PDS as individuals.

Finally, the group felt that the relationship between family, state and social security was an underresearched one that deserved to be looked into in greater detail and depth.

Familial relationships are vital to women to a greater extent than to men and the family dynamics which marginalize female members need to be understood better if we want to understand the ways

in which State Social Security impinges on the family.

The ways in which kinship relations *seemingly* continue to support individuals, while the actual *substance of support* has been eroded by macro processes, including NEP, need further research.

The maze of fragmented social security measures, their functioning and implications need more systematized documentation in order to grasp the totality of their implications.

Emergent Resolutions

1. This forum agrees that existing social security programmes be maintained, and, in fact, demands additional resources for the social sectors. The state should provide a minimum level of social security. The identification of vulnerable persons and groups for such programmes was discussed. The group felt that if a commitment is made for the provision of minimum social security then resources could always be found and it urges both state and central governments to explore alternative ways of raising resources. Feasible methods of raising resources for social services have been proposed.

2. The group recommends the following support programmes.

i. Old age pensions must be provided for vulnerable persons. This would include those below the poverty line, agricultural labourers (for rural India), unorganised sector workers (for urban India). Widows from working class families are a special target group, and should be supported even if they are residing with earning members of their family.

The Agricultural Worker's Pension in Kerala was discussed. This programme was well targeted. The programme expenditures account for 1% of state expenditure on the revenue account and yet cover a very large section of the rural poor, meets the daily food requirements of the pensioner and helps poor families take care of their dependents. The forum felt that this scheme should be expanded to other states.

ii. A network of child care services must be provided. This is essential for a working mother. It will provide care for the young child and free the older girl child from child care. The National Child Care Fund recommended by the SHRAM-SHAKTI report must be implemented and used to promote a flexible, diverse national network of creches and child care services.

iii. It is essential that primary education be made compulsory and sufficient resources be allocated for this.

iv. The Public Distribution System must not be disbanded. While there is scope for excluding high income group beneficiaries from the PDS, the larger task is to expand coverage of the PDS in order to reach the currently excluded rural and urban poor persons. The problems of access to PDS faced by migrant workers must be looked into. Deserted women and street children should also be ensured access to PDS as individuals.

v. Women in female-dependent households and widowed/deserted/separated women should be guaranteed sustained employment, preferably skilled, at a decent wage.

3. The group agreed that there is much scope for improving the implementation of existing social security programmes. It was also suggested that there be more flexibility in organising the delivery systems.

4. Further support for women's social security requires legislative changes that give them a right to property acquired after marriage.

* Chaya Datar was unable to attend the conference proceedings. In her absence Malini Karkal and Kamla Ganesh acted as the co-ordinators.

SUB-THEME V

NATURAL RESOURCES AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Co-ordinator : Madhu Sarin.

Session I

Chairperson : Madhu Sarin

Discussant : Gail Omvedt

Rapporteurs : Chandrika Sharma & Viji Srinivasan

Session II

Chairperson : Kumud Sharma

Discussant : Govind Kelkar

Rapporteurs : Bharat Patankar & Seema Kulkarni

Session III

Chairperson : Madhu Sarin

Discussant : Minoti Chakravarty - Kant

Rapporteurs : Sara Ahmed & Shyamala Hiremath

Papers and Presentations

Session 1

Theme: Water & Marine Resource Management :
An Alternative Development Paradigm.

Bharat Patankar & K. J. Joy — Alternative
Development Paradigm.

Nalini Nayak — Coastal Fishermen &
Women's Struggles.

Viji Srinivasan — Inland Fishery &
Women.

Norma Alvarez — Impact of Tourism on
Women.

Seema Kulkarni — Search for a New
Development Paradigm.

Session 2

Theme: Macro Level Implications of Economic
Liberalisation on Natural Resource Management and
Women.

Gail Omvedt — Shetkari Sangathan's New
Programme and Women

Narayan Banerjee — Environment and Rural
Women : Lessons from Peasant Women's
Conferences.

Gabriele Dietrich — Women and Housing
Rights.

Dr. Sara Ahmed — Identifying Gender
Issues in the Sustainable Development
Debate.

Sub-theme Session III

Theme: Forests, CPRs, Watershed Management &
National Parks & Sanctuaries.

Illina Sen — Forest Related Issues from MP's
Chhatisgarh Area.

Bharati Rai Choudhury and Kusum Karnir
— Issues Related to National Parks &
Sanctuaries.

Shyamala Hiremath — Common Lands.

Sudha Murali — Youth for Action on
Watershed Development

Indira Devi & S. Vanaja Rani — Women &
Environment.

Indu Prakash Singh on Drought.
Dr. (Mrs.) S. L. Baruah on Assam.

Summary Report

The NEP is not 'new' but an attempted solution to a systemic crisis of the existing political economy. NEP will not solve but further accentuate environmental problems due to being based on extraction of exhaustible non-renewable resources, non-sustainable exploitation of renewable resources and massive displacement of the most vulnerable people.

Centralised, patriarchal, caste and class biased decision making control over natural resource management does not recognise the livelihood processes and customary rights of people directly dependent on natural resources for survival. Common property resources and indigenous institutions managing them will be further eroded with concentration of wealth and resources in the hands of the state, individual and corporate sectors.

The people most adversely affected are the women and men of the landless, tribal, pastoral, peasant, dalit and fisher folk communities. Women's subordination and invisibility is leading to their further marginalisation and alienation from control over natural resources and production processes.

An alternative to state and market domination needs to be evolved, which is based on regenerative and decentralised production systems founded on principles of equity, including gender equity, sustainability, participation and holistic well being. Only such a system of participatory democracy can address issues of gender equity, poverty, human rights and ecological sustainability.

Being a response of the system to deal with its own crisis, NEP, however, does offer some space for people to devise and implement alternative strategies. If pursued with the backing of a strong movement, alternative proactive strategies can be established through using this space.

In the field of water management, NEP is going to allow private enterprise with state support to intervene in water regimes to develop privately owned water storages. Drought eradication is being sought through watershed development without equitable use rights ; introduction of capital intensive technology controlled by multinational capital ; intensive water dependent commercial monocropping at the cost of perpetuating drought for the majority and other technological solutions which will concentrate water

rights in the hands of the rural elite. Large irrigation projects, while displacing large numbers of people, submerging forests and causing water logging and soil salinity have destroyed traditional sustainable water management systems.

Commercialisation of agriculture and declaring agriculture as an industry will further accentuate unequal distribution of land, reversing the policy of land reforms. This has already begun in some states. Patenting of seeds and other life forms by multinationals will reduce women and men farmers to the status of dependent users with total devaluation of their own knowledge and skills.

Competition for forest lands and resources has already begun with industry again, demanding large forest areas for raising commercial plantations. This is despite the 1988 forest policy giving first priority to the subsistence needs of forest dwellers and other users residing in their vicinity.

Privatisation of village common lands on which the most vulnerable groups depend for subsistence goods is being reintroduced in the name of increasing economic productivity through mining and conversion to other uses.

The interests of pastoral communities have been totally overlooked in land use and management policies.

Creating more and more national parks and sanctuaries for the maintenance of biodiversity is being used to displace large numbers of forest dwellers and to totally cut them off not only from access to forest produce but from their intimate knowledge about forests. With women being the major forest users in forest dependent communities, they are being transformed from being repositories of knowledge to depersonalised commodities joining the labour pool.

Tourism promotion in places like Goa is displacing traditional fisher folk, leading to increasing prostitution among the displaced women.

Despite liberalization, state ownership and control over inland water bodies (ponds, tanks, reservoirs) has increased. Inland fishery promotion by male dominated and non-participatory organisations has eroded traditional livelihood rights of fishing communities with total marginalisation of fisherwomen from the production and marketing processes. There has been a similar large scale displacement of coastal fisher folk with women's traditional integration in the fish production process totally destroyed.

In some parts of the country toiling women and men have shown that they can devise alternative, people centred system of natural resource management based on principles of efficiency, equity, sustainability and participatory decision making through collective action. Some of the initiatives which can be taken are :

- Delinking water rights from land rights. Introduction of equitable distribution of water (even from existing large irrigation systems) sufficient for fulfilling basic needs on a per adult basis (both women and men) could reduce the impact of unequal land distribution through the mechanism of equitable water rights while also introducing gender equity.
- Self-reliant agriculture, based on equitable water distribution and new regenerative infrastructure, could create equal opportunities for women to assert their freedom and equality in a decentralised but advanced production system.
- Decentralised, participatory management of land and water relations, could promote biomass based self-reliant agriculture, freed from control of national and inter-national capital, simultaneously enriching local ecology on the basis of equity and sustainable livelihoods.
- Collectivities of forest dwellers, users of village commons and other resource users need to demand that no resource use change should take place without a consultative process with the women and men dependent on the resource and no displacement should take place unless it is on terms and conditions acceptable to them.

Today, survival of the planet itself has become an issue of global concern due to the rape of mother earth in the name of economic development. The global atmospheric commons transcend national boundaries and are forcing national states to come together to evolve a global environmental policy. In the negotiations between nation states, southern governments bear the heavy responsibility of protecting national interests in global negotiations. But, here too, it is essential to demand that the national government does not have the mandate to barter away customary rights of forest dwellers to enable forests to function as carbon dioxide sinks for emissions let into the atmosphere by Northern countries.

SUB-THEME VI

VIOLENCE AND THE COMMUNITY

Co-ordinator : Jasjit Purewal

Discussants —

Srilata Batliwala

Jasjit Purewal

Flavia Agnes

Papers & Presentations

Jaya Srivastava (Ankur, New Delhi) — Violence and Socio-Economic Trends.

Sabla Sangh (New Delhi) — 'A Movement's Response to Violence'.

Ruth Manorama (Women's Voice, Bangalore) — Presentation.

Anu Radha (New Delhi) — Presentation.

Flavia Agnes (Majlis, Bombay) — 'Gender Perspective Within the Politics of Minoritarianism.'

Sister Pilar (Mahila Jagriti Kendra — Gomia, Bihar) — Presentation (Communalisation of violence against women).

Shruti Tambe (Maharashtra) — 'Trends of Violence Against Teenage Girls in Maharashtra'.

Kavita, Nirja & Shubita (IDS, Jaipur) — 'The Gang Rape of Bhnawari - Response of State, Women's Groups and the WDP — Some Reflections'.

K. Ajitha (Bodhna, Calicut) — 'The Kerala Experience'.

Indu Agnihotri & Brinda Karat (Janwadi Mahila Samiti — New Delhi) — 'Violence Against Women'.

Jasjit Purewal (Sakshi, New Delhi) — 'The Violence Within' Kiran Bedi (IG Prisons, New Delhi) — 'Drug Abuse and Domestic Violence'

Dr. T. Kumar (Project Director — NIPPCD, New Delhi) — Presentation (State Intervention in Women's Development).

Naina Kapur & Kirti Singh (Lawyers, New Delhi) — 'Practising Feminist Law'.

Nahida Shaikh (TISS — Special Cell, Bombay) — 'Special Cell to Help Women & Children'.

Vimla Dang (M. P. Punjab) — 'Women, The Greatest Sufferes Under Terrorism.'

Summary Report

The 'Violence and the Community' session continued like a workshop for the three days of the Conference with a basic captive group of nearly 45 people who stayed through to the end. The discussion continued well past the session time into informal meetings at night. The group felt that the linkage of violence

and the New Economic Policy as a causal linkage was neither directly known nor strong enough to debate at this stage. However the broad point of analysing how much more the new economic policies disempowered women was established and the disempowerment which would directly lead to greater violence on women in all aspects of their lives.

This session tried to ascertain the new frontiers in the old aspects of violence in women's lives. It was a conscious attempt to understand the new frontiers and to make them the basis for work both amongst academicians and activities. There was a lot of reflective analysis as well as an internal review of the total canvas of violence that women face today.

The issues identified were the following —

- 1) The NEP will lead to greater violence in Indian women's lives, especially at the workplace, as the new corporate culture will exploit their labour with impunity. Low work benefits, exploitative wages, greater demand for sex workers in the growing tourism industry and greater harassment at the workplace were identified as the main areas where research should be focussed.
- 2) The canvas of violence that women face today was greater than ever before - both because of a greater understanding and awareness amongst women as well as the economic, political and communal challenges of violence today.
- 3) Because of this larger canvas a more specialised need for understanding each form of violence was emphasised both for research and redressal. Counselling was the best example of the complex needs of women suffering different form of violence — communal, State, domestic, sexual etc. More specialised training in counselling was emphasised.
- 4) Challenging the so called support systems in a woman's life — family, relationships, society, religion, rehabilitation centres — and their contribution to the violence in her life. Sexual abuse and domestic violence were underlined as the key areas.
- 5) The new Social trends (many of which may be the direct fallout of the NEP) and their impact on women - the growing machismo trend and its impact on violence i.e., the murderous attack on teenage girls in Maharashtra by boys, the new 'free sex' environment of condom ads, the wife as an income earning asset and the pervasiveness of dowry all over the country.

6) Violence against women activists by the State, society, religion and community.

7) State — The State was considered an important sub-category which had to be dealt with as it grew increasingly more violent towards women and more indifferent to their needs.

a) State terrorism especially in the States of Assam, Kashmir and Punjab must be taken up by the feminist movement as a serious issue, focussing on the tools used by the State to assault women.

b) The dilemma of working with the State — how the Women's Development Programme and the Mahila Samakhya found the feminist component of their programme co-opted or marginalised by the State. The problems of sharing power and methodology with the State and the complexities of the relationship.

c) The age-old problem of sensitising the police to make it a more effective tool. The dilemma of asking for women police who are invariably co-opted into the larger stream of patriarchal and oppressive behaviour. The issue of 'gender-sensitization' training which needs to be designed by appropriate groups.

8) Communalism — A powerful threat to the feminist movement and consciousness today is from the rising communalism and the challenges have to be understood.

a) Feminist slogans are being co-opted by communal forces through their women's wings, therefore the feminist movement must reevaluate its symbols and slogans in their cultural context.

b) The changing roles of women riot victims—particularly the minority community women face a major role re-orientation, even reversal, within the household, as well as the neighbourhood, during the riot. These new roles are then exploited by political and communal forces.

c) The fragmented identity of a woman has sharpened in the communal reality of the country. This identity must now be understood and addressed by the feminist movement if it does not want to be marginalised. Gender must now be understood in the community and cultural context.

9) Law — Law was an important area for debate because it had undergone its own evolution in the feminist movement's history.

a) The need to look at the large gaps left in redress after the struggle for legislative reform. Practising feminist law requires acknowledging the invisible corridors of a woman's social context which is still outside the existing reforms, rendering many of them ineffective.

b) The forum for redress must not only be legal and the need to identify and use alternative forums.

10) Self — Finally the session emphasised the need to internalize the reflection and look at the changes within women.

a) Critical work needs to be done on violence amongst women especially in all their fundamental female relationships.

b) The violence that we experience within the movement and how it weakens our collective strength.

c) The large, emotional, psychological gaps left untouched in a woman by feminist consciousness which are then usurped by the oppressive structures once again.

SUB-THEME VII

ALCOHOLISM AND DRUG ABUSE

Co-ordinator : Subhas Mendhapurkar

Chairperson : Radha Bhat

Rapporteurs : Corrine Scott

Haribhai Patel

Papers and Presentations

Session I

Andhra Women's Movement Against Alcoholism

Dr. Bhavani

Dr. Suryamani

Dr. Mahammad

Assam Women's Experiences of Anti-Liquor Movement

Dr. Deepali Barua

Session II

Putting Together and Developing A Role for IAWS

Ms. Radha Bhat

Session III Socio-psycho Aspects of Alcoholism

Dr. Promila Kapur

Dr. S. Vanaja S. Kumar

Summary Report

There were about twenty participants in the first session. Many of them had direct or indirect experience with women's protest movements against alcoholism in various parts of the country - from Himachal Pradesh, M.P., U.P., Andhra, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Assam & Manipur.

The co-ordinator opened the session with remarks, explaining the plan for sessions I and II on 31. 5. 93, focusing on the historical and contemporary women's protest movements against liquor and alcoholism around the country.

Radha Bhat described her experiences with protests against the establishment of Government liquor shops in Uttarakhand region of UP, from the 1960s. She cited the fruitful experience of closing down these shops and keeping users out for about 10 years, but the powerful interests of users and Government have brought alcohol back into sale and distribution.

She raised several questions, problems and issues.

1. Anti-liquor movement has been a powerful grass-roots women's issue and movements. But it was also a painful experience for women. The difficulty is in sustaining such a movement over a long time, to achieve permanent effect.
2. She reflected on why their protests failed as a valuable learning experience for a current movement especially in A. P. Central to the success is the communities' determination to keep out drink and drinkers, based on realization of its harmful effects, particularly to women and families.

Several participants made presentations about the current movements against Arak in A. P.. V. Bhavani introduced this section with a few posters and some penetrating questions.

Some of questions that were raised were

- (a) Is drinking Arak bad, but drinking whisky by the middle class and upper class all right ? (asked by rural women in Andhra Pradesh).
- (b) The Government had agreed to stop alcohol from October, but what will happen then ? Will liquor be disbursed or sent underground ? Liquor traders are powerful, perhaps, more powerful than the Government.
- (c) Is it only a woman's duty and role to look after the family without any help or participation from her husband ? Additionally, she has the burden of trying to keep him away from alcohol as if he was a baby ?

A paper on A. P. Movement by Subbumau Suryamani was based on interviews with writers politicians, liquor contractors & villagers. Dr. Mahamad gave us insights into the dynamics of the movement but raised puzzling questions with respect to prohibition and regulation of liquor trade & sales. Values are changing with regard to alcohol consumption. Government revenues from excise duty is high and powerful political clout of liquor traders must be considered. Is any purpose served by banning arak and permitting the use of imported foreign liquor ?

Dr. Barua's paper reviewed Government policies and regulations with regard to alcohol and drugs, pointing out inconsistencies in the law, people's aspects as well as failure to implement laws and regulations which may be good enough in themselves but without people's pressure, there is no political will to implement laws, no matter whether the laws are good or bad.

Dr. Calthe of Women's Voice, Bangalore, presented the situation of Bangalore and Karnataka's growth of liquor shops and sales and tremendous profit and revenues involved. It is not only the women but entire families who suffer, and they are asking out and acting together - putting forward their demands.

Unfortunately, there was no time for discussion to analyse the situations critically and try to tackle the multiple inter locked issues related to alcoholism, liquor trade, Government regulatory mechanisms and political powers and vested interest. How can local grass-roots protest movements, made up mostly of rural and urban poor women confront

these forces ? What kind of critical theoretical framework is needed for solving the issues of alcohol and drug abuse ? These questions remained to be discussed for the subsequent sessions.

The first paper presented in the next session was on Stability and Effectiveness of Partial Prohibition Policy : Lessons from Tamil Nadu. The author presented a brief history of Tamil Nadu's prohibition policy and its determinants. She also gave some statistical data on various political-economic aspects. Lastly, she narrated experiences of the state, providing lessons for stable and effective prohibition policy.

The second paper was on "Women as Victims of Alcoholism and Drug Abuse."

The author while presenting her paper defined several concepts regarding alcoholism, and victimization of women. She also said that alcoholism has increased very much and it has become a status symbol in urban areas while in rural areas it has gone up for other reasons. The paper discusses alcohol related family violence in India. With several primary statistics, she narrated several cases and finally, suggested some measures to overcome the problem of family violence.

The third paper was on Behavioural Malignancy : Alcoholism and Drug Addiction — A Bleak Future ? The author started presenting her paper with the nature and extent of alcohol consumption in Bangalore city and narrated several cases involving school children and school girls. She gave statistics too, based on her survey work. She also gave statistical data on expenditure patterns on alcohol in different stratas of the city, besides giving the number of alcohol shops, pubs, dealers, etc.

She pointed out that some psychologists were of the opinion that alcoholism is hereditary and should be medically treated.

The participants took much interest in the discussion that followed and offered many important suggestions for solving this grave problem. Finally, it was decided by the house that a single factor, like female social workers, or government law cannot solve the problems totally and permanently. An integrated & systematic approach should be taken to minimise the problem of alcoholism.

SUB-THEME VIII

POLITICAL STRUCTURES AND PROCESSES

Co-ordinator : Susheela Kaushik

Papers and Presentations

Session 1 : Political Movements

- (1) Ms. Sadhana Arya
- (2) Ms. R. A. Mangathai
- (3) Mr. Anil Dutt Misra
- (4) Dr. Nighat Ahmed

Discussants :

- (1) Dr. Uma Ramaswamy
- (2) Dr. V. Bhavani

Session 2 : Legal processes and Implications/ Family Planning

- (1) Ms. Usha Ramanathan

Discussants :

- (1) Prof. Madhav Menon
- (2) Ms. Gail Omvedt

Session 3 : Political Ideology and Women's Development

- (1) Dr. V. Bhavani
- (2) Mr. Ananta Giri
- (3) Dr. Susheela Kaushik

Discussants :

- (1) Dr. Aparna Mohanto
- (2) Prof. G. Haragopal

Session 4 : Panchyati Raj and Grassroots Democracy

- (1) Dr. Sampa Guha
- (2) Dr. P. Manikyamab
- (3) Prof. Nazmunnesa Mahtab
- (4) Ms. Chetana Gala
- (5) Ms. Maitri Mukhopadhyay
- (6) Ms. K. C. Vidya

Discussants :

- (1) Ms. Sarala Gopalan
- (2) Ms. Suman Kolhar
- (3) Dr. Susheela Kaushik

Session 5 : Wrapping Up — Report Finalisation.

Enclosures :

- (1) CDSA's Report on Panchayati Raj
- (2) 'Gendered Politics of Human Rights' by Ms. Corinne Kumar.
- (3) Newspaper Clippings on Panchayati Raj

Summary Report

The thrust of the sub-theme session was the impact of the recent economic policies and developments on various aspects of the political processes and institutes in the nation. The overwhelming change it would bring about would be in the area of the political ideology and policies and political culture in the nation. Even while agreeing broadly that the new economic policies were not that new but have been only in the nature of continuation of the older policies since Independence which also resulted in promoting vested interest, capitalists and urban elites with their anti-poor implementation, the group still felt that the welfare schemes anti-poverty policies at least gave some space for the woman particularly of the rural and poor sectors. The NEP threatened this space. The poor rural women at the bottom of the social scale will be the most endangered.

Even though the NEP has incorporated the programmes for National Renewal Fund and Safety Net they were in the nature of afterthoughts and halfway measures, resulting out of the women's movement pointing out the implications of the NEP for poor women. This really points out to the patriarchal nature of our decision making process which arrived at the NEP. Secretive and involving a few 'faithfuls', who could not think in terms of the poor in general, and the majority of poor women, in particular. The NEP with its focus on production end export promotion, privatisation and latest technology and modernisation ignored the women. The women were thus "invisible" in politics and decision making processes. The way the National Renewal Fund has operated so far, has been mainly in the voluntary retirement scheme. Not merely more woman are persuaded to take recourse to this, but this is also contrary to the proclaimed purpose of the fund, instead of

training and upgrading the skills woman, thereby making them re-employable, it is persuading them to give up their jobs — another instance of a gap between policies and implementation.

The sub-theme grappled with an alternate path of development — between increasing privatisation and the Mahalanobis model with emphasis on welfare for the poor, with the state allowing and providing the interest of the rich. Such an alternative was the promotion of local communities, women's groups undertaking the type of functions needed by the local people, and raising the resources for the same out of the locally available resources. This, of course, will not merely need the function of local groups but also their pressurising the local industrialists & rich persons to shell out for local development programmes. This would also be an antidote for centralisation, which modernisation has come to mean and the NEP only increases it. The development world has been made to open up their economy while the developed world has begun to be inward looking. Is this the globalisation of economic structure ?

Continuing this debate further, as also following the plenary session on the variable experience with Panchyati Raj, the session on Panchayati Raj talked about the experiences of women in P.R.I.S in the context of the recent 73rd Amendment which not merely have provided for 1/3 membership to woman in general as well as in chairpersons posts, but also to 1/3 of seats reserved for SC and ST. It also talked of increasing possibilities for local governance in terms of planning, implementing and monitoring development of the area. The appointing of France Commission, scope for raising resources and the involvement of P.R.I. in development functions, decentralisation and participation and involvement of local population was the much needed model of governance and development. The women's movement had been fighting for such changes ; at last the Act rejects this in its spirit.

This might bring in some tensions, particularly under the NEP which would introduce the new agro-based and other industries in the rural areas, particularly under the new agricultural policy as it would lead to further impoverishment and unemployment.

The funding of women members has also shown how women panchayat members and chairmen could bring about alternate methods of working, fulfill the basic needs of people like drinking water and provide self confidence among other women.

Such tensions as well as the women's participating effectively would necessitate much political education, information of various developmental schemes etc, and support structures like training women's groups, Mahila Mandals, etc., that would empower the women to carry out their functions fearlessly. The enthusiasm which the recent Act has created among women throughout the country needs to be channelised and exploited for making the local government and women's active vote successful.

The sub theme also look note of role of trade unions in facing the challenge of NEP. But a majority of the women workers belong to the unorganised sectors, and as such are not the beneficiaries of trade union movement. Among the organised sector an increasing number of women participate in the trade union movement, but derive much less benefit from them. Even this seems to be shrinking as, under the NEP and privatisation, the trade union movement stands to lose much of the gains like to right to strike. The faith in trade unions is also reducing as they are merely interested in job keeping and economies.

Communalism is another area that the NEP will help to further, with its privatisation and consumerism. The indirect support to NEP by the BJP by its support to the 'Swadeshi' enterprises also portends threat to women as it is only another pointer to increasing communalism in the future. Communalism and fundamentalism are only two sides of the same coin.

The Sub-theme took up for attention the important issue of human rights. The issue of family planning was being viewed as nothing but population control with nothing to do with woman's health. It was also exclusionary ; it was also an abuse of human rights — since it was not able to raise resources to feed so many millions, it tried

to eliminate future population. The group also discussed intensely the credibility of the legal system and its use for women. The NEP's focussing on increase of resources and modernising the nation was leading it to controlling and limiting the beneficiaries. This was also part of a globalisation programme as the west, was interested in it, as a part of its 'ethnic cleansing' programme. This is part of a hegemonising the world, by the dominant sections. In seeking to universalise the human rights, the dominant are seeking a social construction based on a discourse in which women are missing, women's issues are privatised and crime against women is kept out. The Dunkel Draft, copyright conventions with their emphasis on patenting, are performing a genocide of information and knowledge emanating from the south. They re-appropriate and process them, to send them back in a neocolonial model.

The group had a made a few suggestions for further action :

1. Documentation on the experiences of woman in the unorganised/organised sector being thrown out of employment as well the abridgement in their human, economic and political rights.
2. N.G.O.'s should help in organising the women, particularly of the unorganised sector, and help them with access to development schemes, like credit and skills.
3. Documentation on the experiences of woman in Panchayati system, to learn of their problems, the ways they have coped up with them and the areas on which political education and training need to be mounted. Successful and articulate women can be tapped as role models and trainers for training. ♦

SUMMARY REPORT ON THE PLENARY SESSIONS HELD AT THE 6TH NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF THE LAWS

31ST MAY — 3RD JUNE

31st May, 1993

PLENARY SESSION I

THE NEW ECONOMIC POLICY

Participants : Ratna Sudarshan (Chairperson)
Sudipto Mundle
Madhura Swaminathan
Srilatha Battiwala.

The main argument centred around structural adjustment with a human face — without which, it would undoubtedly have disastrous consequences for the poor. This question is critically linked to the nature of expenditure compression, i.e., what kind of curtailment of state expenditure is promoted. For instance, if the government envisages cuts in the defence expenditure or in administrative expenses, then such a policy would have a positive

effect on the poor. If, on the other hand, it is the social sector that suffers curtailments, then the result will be a chain reaction, which ultimately reduces the quality of life of the poor.

What policies are finally adopted by the government would depend to a great extent on the aims and objectives of the government itself. A small elite group, controlling the government with profit oriented motives, may well steer the economy into channels that serve their own interests, which have a calamitous effect on the poor. If, however, public welfare is the motivating factor, then the policies adopted reflect this interest of the government. Societal pressure in the form of organised trade unions and strong pressure groups can try and influence this process.

Sudipto Mundle emphasized this point with some examples.

- (a) He cited the case of the Delhi Transport corporation, first. A withdrawal of subsidies led to an effort at privatisation — where people did not matter and where there was chaos on the roads. Privatisation, in this case, was spearheaded by important politicians and influential policy officials, whose only interest was profit.
- (b) Secondly, he gave the example of agricultural subsidies which may lead to a privatization of procurement of grains. This might motivate farmers to shift into the production of high profit cash crops, leading to food grain shortages and price hikes.
- (c) Third, he cited the example of the national renewal fund, which focuses only on the interests of the organised labour sector. Here, he stressed on the need to mobilise the “informal sector” to exert pressure.

Madhura Swaminathan pointed out that the New Economic Policy is silent on “poverty”. Also, there is evidence of skewed allocations in the social sector. She illustrated her argument by highlighting the number of people who are pushed into poverty — the emerging class of the “new poor” — as a direct result of this policy. She also spoke about the idea of the “safety net” which is being developed to address this side effect of the New Economic Policy.

Srilatha Batliwala made the point that just as the New Economic Policy is silent on poverty, so it is silent on “gender”, as well. Citing the example

of the triple burden on women as a result of a 60% increase in food prices, she stressed on the importance of food security. A majority of the female labour force works in the informal sector, where they are paid abysmally low wages with no social security or job security. Such women are likely to be adversely affected by this new policy.

Environmental degradation leading to fuel, fodder and water crisis also increases the burden on women, she pointed out.

Drawing on the example of the news item on the possible decrease of the female population to 30%, in Rajasthan, by the end of this decade, she emphasized the need to address the problem of “female genocide”. She also pointed out the lack of occupational health and safety measures — which increases violence against women : structural, societal, private and public. These issues also need to be looked into.

21ST JUNE, 1993

PLENARY SESSION II

“STATE AND WOMEN’S DEVELOPMENT — THE KARNATAKA EXPERIENCE”

Chairperson : Ms. Theresa Bhattacharya,
Secretary, Education,
Government of Karnataka

Speakers :

1. Grassroot Mobilisation in Karnataka — Manasa Balaga
2. Women in Development in Karnataka — Vanaja, Mangala & Hema
3. Women in Panchayati Raj — Experiences of a Woman Representative — Suman Kolhar, Former Vice President, Bijapur Zilla Parishad
4. Experiences of Women in Panchayat Raj in Karnataka — Perspectives of a Research Organisation — Revathi Narayanan, ISST, Bangalore.

Discussants

1. Shobha Nambisan, Managing Director, Karnataka Cooperative, Apex; Bangalore.
2. Prof. V. K. Nataraj, Director, IDA
3. Ruth Manorama, Women’s Voice.

This session focussed on the experiences of the women in Karnataka in developmental efforts and in political processes.

It was felt that state policies and programmes in connection with women's development were not having sufficient impact on the target groups. For instance, in a state developmental effort that focussed on health, training and education, it was found that the programmes had barely scratched the surface of the basic problems of female backwardness and deprivation. This, in spite of the best efforts of the Department of Women and Child Development (set up in 1975), which identified 18 programmes as directly beneficial to women — and presented in detail the benefits, the beneficiaries and the drawbacks of these schemes. The lack of any meaningful results, in this case, was traced to inadequate financial provisions and inefficient implementation machineries. It was felt that having a separate Department of Women and Child Development was a necessary, but not a sufficient, condition for women's progress. For the programmes to really have an impact, every department should make provisions of financial and other resources to help women.

A more effective implementation of the development programmes could perhaps be brought about by the greater participation of women in the political processes. The year 1983 was a landmark for women's empowerment. The Karnataka Legislature enacted the 1983 Panchyati Raj Act, which reserved 25% of the seats in the local bodies, exclusively for women. A heart warming account of the actual experiences of these women representatives were presented by Ms. Suman Kolhar, former vice-president of the Bijapur Zilla Parisad. Several studies have shown that however illiterate and ill-equipped the women representatives were, the majority learnt on the job and were ready and willing to contest the next round of elections. But, it was clear that they needed some form of facilitation, for otherwise it would be unfair to expect them to be effective representatives in spite of their various handicaps. The facilitations should take the form of learning programmes that help build communication skills, that tell them about their responsibilities, rights and duties as Panchayat representatives, that help them understand rules and regulations and the resources available to them. The programme must be innovative and comprehensive and must also involve gender sensitisation programmes for men. The other form of facilitation would be the building up of an

information and resource base for people working on issues related to Panchayati Raj — elected representatives, trainers, bureaucrats, academicians and researchers.

The critical need for information exchange and networking was emphasized while describing the passing of the new Karnataka Panchayat Raj Bill. Karnataka was the first state to amend it according to the 73rd constitutional Amendment Act. Much concern has been voiced about certain aspects of the new Bill which seem to undermine the supremacy of the elected representatives and political processes and vest excessive control in the bureaucracy. There are good aspects to the Act, too, where the problems and the lacunae of the 1983 Act have been addressed. What is alarming, however, is the way in which the law and the legislation have been manipulated by 'vested interests' and the public helplessness in the face of such manipulation.

The activists pointed out the crying need for scholar - activists and activist - scholars who would help bridge the gap between grassroots workers and academicians and who would ultimately help to secure a better information base and implementation procedure of various pro-women policies.

The most heartening aspect that emerged was that the gender justice and sensitisation to women's issues that is accepted in today's world were unthinkable, almost, even two decades ago. Political representation of women in the electoral process is a reality that has come to stay.

1ST JUNE, 1993

PLENARY SESSION III

ARTICULATING A SOUTH-ASIAN POSITION

A Meeting of Delegates from the SAARC Countries (Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan & Sri Lanka)

Chairperson	: Kumud Sharma	
Delegates	: Hameeda Hossain	
	Niloufer Ahmed	Bangladesh
	Tahera Aftab	
	Razia Bhatti	Pakistan
	Suhara Pradhan	
	Durga Khieveri	
	Chandra Bhadra	Nepal
	Sepali	Sri Lanka

This plenary session attempted to explore the possibilities of drawing together issues of common concern facing the women of the South Asian region which could be better tackled in a common forum. This exploration carried more weight and urgency in view of the 1995 Beijing World Conference on Women.

The participation in the Mysore Conference from the neighbouring countries (Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka) was very encouraging as compared to earlier IAWS meets. About 25 women participated from these countries.

The delegates from Bangladesh spoke about common concerns but pointed out the difficulties of maintaining effective platforms and channels of communication, for example, the repercussions of incidents taking place in one country (say, India). The women's groups or the women's lobby in the South Asian countries find themselves powerless to fight back, since they are faced with exceedingly powerful forces in each of their countries, which have very different ideologies on issues such as secularism, communalism etc.

Hameeda Hossian, was of the opinion that as other regions work together in greater cooperation, and allow for freer exchange between the people, in South Asia the opposite holds true. In spite of centuries of shared history, of kinship links (through migration, marriage and education), South Asia has wasted decades in divisiveness, and hostility. The people have been kept apart because governments have antagonisms over Kashmir, water problems, rather than looking for collective solutions to poverty, trade and cultural exchange. The result of this disunity has been disastrous for the people of the region.

a. States have built barriers to human information and understanding.

Militarisation has diverted funds from basic needs and contributed to a culture of violence

b. Governance has been based on control rather than people's participation.

c. Sectarian politics and the rise of obscurantist forces threaten to increase a communal divide.

Dismal prognostications suggest that south Asia is on the verge of disaster. Sectarianism has created destructive divisions ; economically its human resource indices are the lowest in the world and moving the region towards dangerous

discrimination in terms of class, geographical location and gender.

The scenario in India has been discussed at length in most of the workshops at this conference. The question is what do we do in formulating alternatives, in recognition of mutual concerns, and evolving a process for sharing of ideas and information, as well as to influence decision making.

Bangladesh has initiated a process to widen networks to formulate a collective consensus on issues as far as possible. Before the World Conference on Human Rights, over 40 organisations, women's groups, human rights agencies, development organisations and individuals collectively prepared a position paper which has strengthened their participation at Vienna and provided the strength for mobilisation within the country. While the North may be manoeuvring to use human rights as an interventional measure, we must realise that the battle for human rights is really between government controls over the people. Even before the Women's Conference surfaces in 1995 we should set our agenda for South Asia. We should work towards alternatives from the perspective of South Asian women. Can we share common concerns and answers to some of the dilemmas of militarisation, poverty, equality ?

We could enter into a dynamic process of exchange and dialogue on common concerns, moving from discussion amongst interested groups to national and regional exchanges. These discussions could be synthesized as regional alternatives. And from the region we could interact effectively with third world networks, such as DAWN, APWLD and so on.

Niloufer Ahmed, representing "Women for Women", a research & advocacy group, also stressed upon the need for a common agenda for all South Asian Women. She said that there was a need to emphasize the sisterhood values of caring and compassion among us all. She pointed out that the process of structural adjustment had been operative in Bangladesh for quite a few years. India should look into the Bangladesh experience and learn from its successes and failures.

The participants from Pakistan spoke about the increasing stock-piling of armaments, the escalation of conflicts and tension in the region and the impact of economic crisis and structural adjustments in their country.

Tahera Aftab from Pakistan informed the session about the formation of the Pakistan Association of Women's Studies in Karachi. In her presentation she said that the agonies of colonial rule were still fresh in the minds of all Pakistani citizens. There were several dichotomies, she said, in the fabric of Pakistani society at present. On the one hand, it was true that Islam, as a religion, is the only one that gives equal rights to women. Yet, on the other hand, it is in these Islamic countries that women are being denied their rights. A majority of women are being governed by tribal and feudal laws, they are considered men's personal property and they do not even have the right to vote. The constitution, unfortunately, has failed to remedy this situation.

The Pakistan Association of Women's Studies is trying to liberate women from the prison they are forced to live in. The Association is fighting against domestic violence and illegal traffic of women. "We have certainly been disillusioned", said Ms. Aftab, "but we have not lost all hope".

Razia Bhatti, editor, Newline (Pakistan), was of the opinion that development needs to be measured in social terms, and not just in terms of economic progress. Security is usually interpreted as military security only — the real security, however, comes from food, employment and environmental security. She argued strongly against the military expenditure incurred on the basis of perceptions of external threat. She also spoke about the communal and ethnic forces raising their ugly heads in many of the SAARC nations. As a matter of fact, these reactionary voices are heard much more loudly because they provide good copy for the media. What is necessary today is the formation of peace groups that will share experiences across borders and which will take a united stand against the forces of obscurantism and communalism.

The delegates from Nepal spoke about the problems faced by Nepali women. They highlighted the issue of trafficking of Nepali women across the Indo-Nepal border.

Suhara Pradhan, a parliamentarian, spoke about some of the problems faced by Nepali women. She said that more than 80% of the women in Nepal are illiterate. Women's health is the most neglected sector at present. In-built biases against women in the society, even today stunt their growth and development. For instance, women are usually not expected to or even allowed to take up "masculine" professions, such as

engineering etc. Home Science courses are considered sufficient erudition for them. In the field of medicine, gynaecology is the only discipline in which women specialize. A few colleges even have taboos against special subjects being taken up by girls. The father of a girl is legally not duty-bound to feed his daughter. More, daughters can only inherit property after they reach the age of thirty-five and if they are not married. Should a girl marry after the age of thirty five, she forgoes the right to her inherited property. Child marriages are still widely prevalent and though the constitution prohibits polygamy, a man is allowed to take another wife if his first wife fails to beget a son in 10 years of marriage. Nepal lacks a well formed body of women intelligentsia — as a result, there are no protests against these injustices. Ms. Pradhan sought co-operation and support from the South Asian sisters to build up a solidarity on these issues and to fight against the vulnerabilities present. There was mention of the formation of a Nepal Association of Women's Studies.

Mrs. Durga Khieveri, representing the NGO, ABC Nepal, which works against the traffic of women, said that around four to five thousand Nepali girls were sold to Indian brothels every year. There are at present, more than 2 lakh girls working as prostitutes in India — many of them, around 42%, HIV positive. She also stressed on the need for a strong network system for the girl child. She mentioned a recent meeting in Male which tried to formulate a plan for the girl child. In fact, a SAARC Association for Women's Studies was formed, with a special focus on the girl child. An independent commission for women, she said, would help to serve as a pressure group working for the rights of women.

Chandra Bhadra spoke about the women's studies program in Tribhuvan University over the last few years. She said that the New Economic Policy in the 8th Five year plan, opting for liberalization, privatization and an export oriented economy would further deteriorate the problems of women working in the informal sector in India.

The delegate from Sri Lanka, Sepali, spoke about the threat from the structural adjustment policy to women workers in the handloom industry and to women working in the agricultural sector. There has been a very high profile poverty alleviation programme in existence for the last few years in Sri Lanka, but most of the schemes address the family as a whole. This does not really help women, as the greatest number of differential interests arise from within the family itself.

2ND JUNE, 1993,

PLENARY SESSION IV

WOMEN'S STRUGGLES : ALCOHOLISM, RAPE AND COMMUNALISM

This was a totally experiential session. Grass roots groups such as Mahila Mandals, NGO's working with village women and autonomous women's groups participated with reports of their direct involvement in struggles against the state, the liquor lobby and the forces of communalism. Those who took part through presentations were the following :

1. Progressive Organisation of Women (POW) Andhra Pradesh, through Sandhya, President of the Andhra Pradesh Unit.
2. Social Uplift Through Rural Action (SUTRA), Himachal Pradesh through Durga and Yashoda, senior field workers.
3. SAHIYAR, a women's organisation based at Baroda, through Deepti and Tripta.

The session got off to a tingling start with a touchingly evocative song in Hindi rendered by Jyoti Mapsekar of Stree Mukti Sangthana, Bombay. It describes how a poor and illiterate Muslim woman writes a letter to her migrant husband in the Gulf with the help of her newly found skills from the Adult Education Centre.

Sandhya from POW exposed the nexus between the politicians and the thriving liquor trade. 180 out of 200 MLA's, she said, had connections with liquor business. Villages in Andhra may not have many of the basic needs, such as schools, drinking water etc. but a liquor shop was a must. She described the strategies used by the women. POW was a mass-based organisation, with more than 25,000 members. It had close links with the left-aligned political parties. This feature of POW's functioning enabled them to muster a lot of support to break the liquor trade and its barons. At the local level, women used a variety of modes of resistance, ranging from picketing Collectorates, throwing chilli powder on liquor contractors etc. But their efforts bore fruit in the shape of the Government ban on the supply of arrack. 8000 women were arrested for participating in the movement. Sandhya's presentation was enlivened with rousing songs sung as part of the campaign by POW workers.

Unlike POW, SUTRA is a rural based NGO with no political links. SUTRA has had a long background and history of agitating against the Government policy of increasing liquor consumption through opening more and more vends. 'SUTRA's' eyes and

ears were the 300-odd highly motivated Mahila mandals, who had planned their anti-liquor campaign, step by step. This included a padayatra to Simla to meet the Chief Minister, local picketing of liquor vendors and negotiations with the Collector and the District Administration.

Durga and Yashoda spoke feelingly about the strategies they used to put their point of view across. As part of the campaign they had composed many songs, which spoke of their determination and resolve to break the back of the liquor trade. One of these stirring songs was sung by them. They remembered and recounted some of the highlights of the campaign. They faced the Collector across the table and told him that he was the 'servant' of the public. An old woman, leading the padyatra, held up a lighted lantern in the broad daylight, to signify the darkness in 'the Government's house'. For three days, about 200 women marched along the state highway, carrying their rations on their heads. What came through most clearly from these presentations was not only the strong determination of these women but also their intelligent pragmatic analysis of the evils of liquor and how this eroded the physical and mental health of families in the villages and destroyed the rural economy.

The presentations from SAHIYAR brought a note of sombreness and tragedy to the gathering which heard the two young women in hushed silence. The matter-of-fact, factual recounting of physical atrocities committed on women and children heightened the sense of outrage and helplessness. Each person felt that the traumatic events were still too close to them to enable an objective view. Many questions were asked, many hands raised. There was not time for all of the questions. The discussion was left incomplete (for want of time), to be taken up later, whenever time permitted (a late night session took place the same day, with its focus on the communalism virus and its roots). What came through in the session was the inability of the social organisations to come to the rescue of the traumatised women. Both Tripta and Deepti emphasised that SAHIYAR went from Baroda to Surat on what was exclusively, a fact finding mission. SAHIYAR was too small, too new and too inexperienced to access young women and girls like Ayesha (15 years) and Yasmin (8 years), the kind of physical and psychological relief that was needed. Ayesha was dragged out of the Surat - Bhusaval Express, gangraped viciously (iron rods were introduced into her vagina) and then left lying on the railway line. Today, she can walk only with support and is in a daze of shock and pain. Yasmin, the eight year old, had to see her father's

legs being chopped in front of her. She was raped, doused with kerosene and set on fire. She survived, but only physically.

The presentation also touched upon the socio-economic under-pinnings of the violence in Surat. The booming Surat economy (diamond cutting, textiles) sucked in huge numbers of largely rural migrants into its informal work sector. Living in congested, unhealthy conditions in the ghettos of Surat, the almost preponderantly male work force was fed with a surfeit of violence and sex via the medium of the pornographic film. Blue film parlours have sprung up all over Surat. The police, on the other hand, was either indifferent, apathetic or connived openly with the communal elements.

JUNE 3RD, 1993

PLENARY SESSION V

CONSOLIDATING THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT

Ms. Devaki Jain, introducing the session raised the issue of an international solid front for advocacy. The questions facing the global women's movement are several. How is the mode of resistance to be extended? How is a supporting mechanism to be evolved? How to develop political clout? How to shape women's opinion on global issues? Is there a crisis of leadership in the global women's movement?

Discussing these issues, Ms. Gail Omvedt talked of twenty years of the women's movement, 1974 to 1975, continuing to 1979 were the initial years of the International Women's Decade. They were creative years, they were years of combating invisibility, violence, patriarchy. Feminism was a challenge to the world. 1980 to 1985 saw a tremendous organisational expansion. 1985 to 90 included, it was a decade of rural women, indigenous women, women's political power, women in local self-government, women's land and property rights. "But after 1990 the situation has been disquieting, there is world crisis. We, the women's movement, have something to offer, we are in a positive position. But are we offering it?"

Ms. Usha Rai raised several issues. "The split among women's organisations is deplorable. Violence on women is on the increase, specially dowry deaths, female infanticide. The National Commission for

Women has been set up. The elections have seen a reduction in terms of women MPs. 30 percent reservations for women in panchayat elections have been created. The media have to write on more serious issues such as dire poverty of women, the women victims of 'Surat'."

Ms. Hamida Hussain from Bangladesh voiced several concerns. "The South Asia Women's movement is divided. How do we come together? The modes of struggle have changed in these 15 to 20 years. Global viruses are sapping our strength — for example, the uniformity of population policies against women. We are not even able to put our voices together, we are not aware of what is happening to us".

"The NEP is a unipolar system. Struggles are carried into the international arena. Shrimplords, for example, killed women demonstrators. Trafficking in women is on the increase — in India, Nepal, Pakistan, Bangladesh. Women's rights are subject to religious laws".

"DAWN' is a process attempting to grapple with issues troubling women - feminist alternatives, social economic, political alternatives, alternatives to state domination". "The twentieth century is on the verge of disaster. We need to look at reasons which divided women. What has happened in these forty years? What have political processes done to the ideals? How can a women's platform for South Asia be built up?"

Ms. Viji Srinivasan spoke of 'more practical' issues. "We consider women's projects' and women's 'income generation' dirty words. Why? Women need to be able to speak from a position of strength. These have to be brought back. Women speak a common language. When we spoke to Kenyan women in Nairobi "What do men do?" "Nothing, nothing" they said and we knew exactly what was meant. I don't think the women's movement has failed at all. We need to do something about violence on women - short - stay homes, community education, not wait for families to get so dangerous that systems break down altogether".

Finally Ms. Devaki Jain summed up with the words "Till the next Conference let us decide to work on 'handlooms, secularism, trafficking, alcoholism, natural resources, violence".

Viji added "handlooms, save 'muga', boycott rayon." ♦

THE MADHURI SHAH MEMORIAL LECTURE* — An Extract

(2ND JUNE, 1993)

IN SEARCH OF A RELEVANT PAST

VIJAYA DABBE

Vijaya Dabbe's reason for choosing this particular topic, she said, was the confusing, contradicting and inconsistent Present of Indian Woman. On the one hand, she said, we see 'structural violence' towards women, the historically cultivated cruelty of woman towards women, and the degradation of women in cultural expressions etc. on the other hand we see historians recognising matrifocal culture in India, and thinking that 'the ultimate authority in the Indian mind has always been feminine', (Ashish Nandy, 1990) and the concept of 'Stree Adya Shakti' (Feminine Primal Power). It is a past with many conflicts and oppositions, with many negative and positive aspects.

Indian society is not homogenous as the Modern Western Society is. In this heterogenous culture we do not see a clear and even patriarchal system. In spite of the strong patriarchal influence of the Vedic tradition, the non-patriarchal nature of many non-Vedic cultures still survives outside the Vedic tradition, and also in the Vedic tradition to some extent. The Aryan attempt to contain the importance of woman was more successful in the Brahminised sectors than in the rest of society, where women retained much of their traditional freedom - and prerogatives'

(Zimmer, 1956). This Vedic and non-Vedic cultural complex presents a variety of inconsistent attitudes towards women. So to talk about Indian women in general terms is a big challenge, and one would wonder whether such a thing is possible. For, overlooking the local cultural influences in the name of a global vision would mean moving away from the reality.

Drawing relevant and positive examples from the religion & mythology of Karnataka she made the point that it is often these religious and mythological models that help the common women to seek a positive direction. Thorough research in religion, mythology, folklore and language is necessary to understand women against the background of the particular culture in which they live. The diminishing importance given to non-brahminical traditions is often a cause of losing important sources of pro-woman inspiration, since these traditions being non-patriarchal in nature often have many positive points in favour of women. Our cultural past is a complex of many, often conflicting ideas. The task before us now, is to critically analyse our past and to pick up those positive & valuable threads from this past, which give the women of today strength and inspiration. ♦

*Madhuri Shah Memorial Lecture given on the occasion of 6th National Conference on Women's Studies 1993, held at Mysore.

REPORT OF THE SIXTH GENERAL BODY MEETING OF THE IAWS

2ND JUNE, 1993

STATEMENT OF PRESIDENT

It is a great moment for me to be here with you on the occasion of the IAWS General Body Meeting, coinciding with the Sixth National Conference of the Association. In the twelve years since the Bombay Conference, we have all grown together.

I will make only a very brief statement. It has been the constant endeavour of our Executive Committee, that the IAWS should build a lobby of

women's opinion on critical issues facing Indian Society. We felt that the Association should be in the centre of the women's studies movement and should provide legitimacy to a formation based on gender. We felt that a dialogue with mainstream Social Sciences should be initiated and sustained.

The choice of theme for this Conference has been an apt one from this point of view. The Association has brought out a publication of background papers on the same subject, in collaboration with many institutions and individuals. We want not only to

consolidate and strengthen, but to provide space for convergence of facts, opinions and action.

The main activity of the Association has been the holding of the biennial conferences at national level. During the tenure of the last EC, as well as ours, there have been certain movements, some opinion building and action, towards regionalising IAWS activities. There has been talk of forming regional Associations, of holding regional Conferences to highlight local issues and perceptions which could also feed into National meetings. There is already a Maharashtra Association of Women's Studies. We need to clarify many issues, such as the relationship between the regional and the National Association of Women's Studies. Some spade work has been done already on this topic by the present Executive Committee.

During this EC tenure, we have been approached by two foreign Institutions for collaboration. One was a proposal from the Association of Women in Development, USA (AWID) for holding of a Conference of the New Economic Policies and Women. We had to turn down this request for lack of time and other reasons. The other was a proposal from the Institute of Social Studies, Hague for IAWS — ISS collaboration in theory building and methodology training. This is still under our consideration.

Our two years' tenure as Executive Committee has been a happy, if somewhat strenuous one. We held eight EC meetings and brought out 4 issues of the Newsletter. Two volumes of selected previous Conference papers have been published by Vikas. Two more are to be brought out shortly.

As members are aware, IAWS has no permanent office establishment. We have a system of a floating secretariat, which moves along with the office bearers. Our EC has found this to be a very enervating method of management. It has taken us all of 18 months to set the house in some order. I think the time has come for IAWS to consider this situation in the light of new demands being made on us, our own pace of growth and to take a decision in the matter.

I would like to place on record my deep appreciation of the cooperation extended to me by my colleagues, and of the hard work put in by all, especially the Vice president, General Secretary, Treasurer, Editor and Joint Secretary. A special word of appreciation for the Local Organizing Secretary for her enthusiastic response to the challenge of mounting this Conference. As you know, Maithreyi Krishnaraj's absence from Indian created the vacuum which I was called upon to fill. I must say, I miss

her very much and want to record my sense of gratitude and appreciation for her leadership.

I would not be truthful if I did not acknowledge the energetic support given by the staff of Institute of Social Studies Trust at New Delhi for the Secretarial work of IAWS. I want to thank each one of them, especially as both the Joint Secretary and I made for too many demands on their time and practice.

I must also record my deep sense of appreciation to Dr. Madaiah, the Vice-Chancellor of Mysore University and Dr. Seshadri, the Principal of the Regional College of Education, Mysore for giving us their unstinted co-operation in making the Conference a success. Thank you.

Devaki Jain

President

REPORT OF THE GENERAL SECRETARY

The Indian Association of Women's Studies has completed twelve years. Twelve is an important number for measuring time — as the bamboo plant knows and those wearing non-digital watches can conform — or those who are conscious of the 12 month year or the 12 signs of the Zodiac. Twelve years is a different kind of time-marker than a decade : it is part of a cosmic time schedule. I am using that factor to permit myself some leeway in presenting the 12 year report that departs a little from the conventional format.

Our first task was to elect the office bearers and send out their names and addresses to all the members. This was done, and as you all know, Maithreyi Krishnaraj was elected President of the IAWS. The other office bearers have continued in their posts. Maithreyi got a prestigious appointment of the faculty of the Institute of Social Studies at the Hague from Sept. 1992 onwards. When she found that it was difficult to manage heading the Association long distance, she sent in her resignation as president in Dec. 1992 while continuing to be a member. At our next EC meeting in January 1993, we elected Devaki Jain as President.

The EC members hail from different parts of the country, as befits a nationwide organization. The EC membership is from the following places : bangalore, Baroda, Bombay, Calcutta, Delhi, Guntur, Kausani, Madras and Mysore in India and The Hague in the Netherlands. Long-distance communication, with the expensiveness and inadequacies of the postal and telephone systems,

has been slow. In addition, end 1992 and the beginning of 1993 have seen our secular democracy take a real beating at the hands of communalism and terrorism. Being part of the same living organism called India — our efforts at Association management were also affected in various ways. Most of the ensuring problems were overcome, however, through working together with purpose and a strong sense of solidarity.

From the earliest meeting of the EC in 1991, we made a decision to go beyond merely keeping the IAWS machine well oiled. The main task of each Committee has been to organize a biennial Conference and this takes centre stage of the agenda. We decided to give it all the attention it required, while also identifying other objectives of the Association that would be consonant with this major function.

After a great deal of discussion, the members of the EC arrived at a consensus on the following points :

1. The IAWS should serve as a clearing house for the emerging classification systems, definitions and theoretical constructs in gender studies.
2. Members of the IAWS should function as a resource pool of Professional services for women's groups and grass roots organizations, helping where required, with documentation, development of project proposals, appraisal and evaluation.
3. The President of the IAWS should be an ex-officio member of the panels in Women's Studies in the UGC, ICCSR, DST, ICAR and other similar bodies.
4. For the IAWS, collaborating with similar organizations and sharing agendas and time tables would be fruitful, resulting in the production of divergent ideas on alternative models for development and social justice.
5. The IAWS should have central role in debating on national issues like the Panchayati Raj and Structural Adjustment Policy. There should be a convergence of facts, opinions and actions. Instead of getting marginalised as "Women's Studies" — pertaining only to women's concerns, our gender perspective should influence mainstream disciplines like Economics and Sociology.

Out of our own Panchshila — (agreement on these five points) was born the theme for the Sixth National Conference. The decision that the gender perspective must enter the mainstream disciplines was thus central to all our discourses at the EC

meetings. It was felt that the implications of the New Economic Policy especially on women in poverty groups needed to be examined carefully. Opinion building and action by the women's movement to safeguard women's interests and to promote their advancement was a major objective. It was felt the IAWS could provide a forum for a serious discourse on methods to ensure state commitment to women's employment, health, education, social security and the alleviation of poverty. Eight sub-themes were identified and co-ordinators requested to spell out the framework for debate and discussion. The Conference announcement brochure, which contained these as well procedural details and Membership and Registration forms, was posted to every member, as well as to Vice-Chancellors, Principals of Women's Colleges, heads of Research Organizations, heads of Voluntary Organizations, enlightened bureaucrats and other friends of IAWS.

The thrust of the meetings that followed, once the theme was fixed, concerned, a) the mechanisms of organizing the Conference, b) review of theoretical perspectives and c) a broad sweep of aspects of women's studies that could be linked to the New Economic Policy. Originally we planned that there should be two or three regional meetings on the same theme in the first year, followed by a National Conference in the next. The Maharashtra Association of Women's Studies, that was newly constituted, held a three day meeting at Gargoti, Kolhapur in Nov. 1992. On the third day, the New Economic Policy was the main theme discussed by the academics, activists and grass roots women who attended the meeting. The IAWS gave the new group some financial support for the meetings.

Since the New Economic Policy was already being discussed elsewhere in seminars, workshops and conferences, a decision was made to compile some of the papers and print a pre-conference volume for IAWS members. A large chunk of the material came from a Round Table held by the Institute of Social Studies Trust, with UNDP support. The publication unit of the Tata Institute of Social Sciences was entrusted with the task of printing the volume. Since we had already received funding for our pre-conference activities, it was decided to make the copy available to all members and Conference participants free of cost.

Identifying the Co-ordinators of the sub-themes, organizing meetings with them and deliberating upon the format and structure most appropriate for each sub-theme — took all our attention for several months. All the members of the EC were unanimous that the Conference was not just to be a paper

reading exercise. It was to be an effort to see the linkings and the overlaps of different aspects that touched our life, through the new policy of liberalisation and privatisation, which in turn put our vulnerable groups on the razor's edge of competition. These attitudes on our part were communicated to sub-theme co-ordinators and must have influenced the selection and acceptance of papers. We also made an ecology friendly decision not to type and duplicate papers in full, but to print only abstracts of accepted papers.

Talking of publication — the IAWS has been able to bring out only two of the ten publications mentioned in the Secretary's Report of 1991. Others are in the pipeline. Some have been dropped entirely as the editors have got involved in other studies, other commitments. Once a certain delay occurs — papers tend to become outdated and editors tend to lose interest. And there are always other hawk-eyed people ready to take advantage of our tardiness.

Thus 1992 was also the year of Plagiarism. For the first time IAWS was confronted with the fact of Conference papers being passed off in an edited volume, without any permission being sought or obtained. This sent us racing to the Copyright Act and to our friendly lawyer's office. Protesting to the publisher and ascertaining our legal rights in such matters were part of the excitement of being on the EC.

And once we had found the right person to advice us on legal matters, we decided to get the IAWS Rules and Regulations (as our Constitution is referred to) examined for discrepancies. We also needed to revise the membership fees and rules pertaining to associate members. This effort has resulted in the proposed amendments that we have mailed to all the members and which will be discussed and finalised at this meeting. A drafting committee has gone through each and every word and I trust that our membership will exercise its franchise in the cause of the larger good of the IAWS.

December 1992 gave a shock to the body politic with further threats of diversiveness, hatred and rabid cultism. Some of the investigative reportage on the violence in different parts of the country, studied by IAWS members, show how families protected their friends and neighbours rather than give in to the political pressures of communalism. In this again, women were more forgiving, less vindictive bringing to our attention the need for women's collective action increases. The sub-themes

of this Conference reflect our commitment to some of these contemporary issues.

The strengthening of cultural ties with countries in the region has proceeded gradually in the last few years. The IAWS would like to take the initiative to go beyond national boundaries and to include our colleagues from the SARRC countries in our common concerns for gender equity, for conservation and enrichment of natural resources and for peace in the region.

Those global objectives are yet to develop a sharp focus, but there is no doubt that unless women act collectively for the future, the male part of the world will soon run down. We may not have to wait for the predicted cosmic collision in year 2116. We may well have worked ourselves out of existence before then.

To communicate some of these ideas, we have used the IAWS Newsletter. We had four newsletters in this two year period. Here again, we would have liked to have more frequent and regular issues — but the question again is of time. There is no full-time IAWS functionary : each of us squeezes time out for Association work.

Membership lists have been updated after a marathon effort. The reason for lists being incomplete may be as follows. Since we tend to function informally — we persuade friends to join IAWS, make new members who pay in their fees and we forget to write down their names and addresses. Or so it seems to us when we constantly answer letters from members, including life members that they have not received any communication from us. The present EC members have tried to make reparations, where possible. We have now sorted out the membership list according to category and according to the State in which members are situated and fed these into a computer.

However, we find that our Computer is not smart enough to spell Tiruchirapalli or Hoshangabad correctly. For a final checkout on spellings, we need the co-operation of all members.

So that the narrative of this report could be maintained, without being interspersed with statistics, I have put in all the vital statistics in a Fact Sheet at the end.

The Election process for the fifth election is being started. Dr. Kameshwari Jandhyala, now Director of Mahila Samatha in Andhra Pradesh, has agreed to be the Returning Officer for the forthcoming election. It is hoped that every member will participate with enthusiasm in the task

of getting the next Executive Committee elected.

I would like to end this report with expressing our gratitude to all the Institutions and individuals who have given IAWS their whole hearted support through funds, access to information and expertise in many fields. The Local Organizing Secretary of this Conference, who has worked with energy and attention to every detail to enable us all to have a good Conference, deserves our deep gratitude and felicitation.

The members of the EC have worked together with a good feeling of co-operation and friendship. I would not mention any single person by name, but just say that we have all been enriched and strengthened by the experience of our joint stewardship of the IAWS, and hope that we have served our term satisfactorily.

S. Anandalakshmy

General Secretary

The Treasurer Dr. Zarina Bhatti also placed her report before the General Body. Copies have already been circulated to all members.

FACT SHEET

Current Membership Number

Ordinary Members	209
Life Members	400
Student Members	53
Institutional members	28
Corporate members	12
Associate Members	18

Election Deadlines

Last date membership for eligibility to vote	April 30, 1993
Last date for returning nomination forms to the Returning Officer	Aug. 1, 1993
Last date for withdrawal/confirmation by candidates	Sept. 8, 1993
Last date for completed ballot papers to reach the Returning Officer	Oct. 8, 1993.

Publications

1. Sujata Gothoskar (Ed.), Struggles of Women at Work, Vikas, 1992
2. Susheela Kaushik (Ed.), Participation of Women in Politics, Vikas 1993.
3. IAWS, The New Economic Policy and Women, TISS, 1993

RESOLUTIONS PASSED AT THE SIXTH NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON WOMEN'S STUDIES, HELD FROM MAY 31ST TO JUNE 3RD 1993 — MYSORE.

1. Resolved that the I.A.W.S. work, through its network of Scholars, activists and policy makers, on three major thrust areas a) handloom b) Local Government and c) Combatting Communalism.

Proposed by Devaki Jain

Seconded by Nasheeda.

2. Resolved to demand that the Burmese Govt. release Mrs. Aung San Suu Kyi and other prisoners of conscience immediately and unconditionally.

Proposed by Madhu Sarin

Seconded by Susheela Kaushik.

3. Resolved that the Indecent Representation of Women Act should be implemented fully and action be taken against those who violate it on TV, Film and other media.

Proposed by Phulrenu Guha

Seconded by Rati Rao

4. Resolved that the Govt. be called on to put an end to terrorism and the violation of human rights in Assam and Jammu & Kashmir.

Proposed by Sakeena Hasan

Seconded by Susheela Kaushik

5. Resolved that the Govt. allocation for State Social Security which is an absolute necessity for vulnerable groups, especially women should not be cut. Further, resolved that it should be enhanced.

Proposed by Malini Karkal

Seconded by Promila Kapur

6. Resolved that the Public Distribution System should not be disturbed, but be restructured to include currently excluded rural and urban poor.

Proposed by Sudha Deshpande

Seconded by Amita Verma

7. Resolved that the utilisation of the National Renewal Fund for voluntary retirement of workers be stopped immediately and that the same be used for the employment of unemployed women and those who are being thrown out of jobs.

Proposed by Susheela Kaushik

Seconded by Manjil Bhatia

8. Resolved to oppose the pressures whether under special 301 or under Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights of GATT to change the Indian Patent Act of 1970.

Proposed by Viji Srinivasan

Seconded by Meera Shrivastava

9. Resolved that the University Grants Commission be urged to strengthen women's studies with financial and formal support to the existing Women's Studies Centres and Cells in Universities and Colleges and establish new Centres and Cells where the infrastructure is available.

Proposed by S. Anandalakshmy

Seconded by Viji Srinivasan.

10. Resolved that the introduction of long-acting hormonal, provider-controlled contraceptives like Norplant (anti-fertility vaccines) without any improvement in the already deteriorating health services be strongly resisted by the women's movement.

Proposed by Meera Shiva.

Seconded by Santhosh Luthra.

11. Resolved that strong measures must be taken by the Central and State Governments to curtail the unfettered rise in abuse of Medical Technologies like ultrasound and Amniocentesis for sex

determination tests followed by female foeticide. The acceleration in the trend of falling sex ratio of females to males requires urgent action against erring Medical Professionals rather than against women going for the tests.

Proposed by Nimita Bhatt

Seconded by Indu Prakash Singh.

12. Resolved that in order to monitor the inflow of large amounts of foreign aid for population control into the voluntary sector, a vigilance committee be set up. The information obtained will be used in seeking to prevent distortions in health programme priorities.

Proposed by Jaya

Seconded by Lakshmi

13. Resolved that the cutback in expenditure on public health care, services recommended by IMF and the privatization of curative care recommended by the World Bank be strongly resisted. Further resolved that meeting basic health care needs, like safe and adequate water, affordable and adequate food, basic housing and sanitation be given top priority by our government.

Proposed by Dr. V. Bhavani

Seconded by Malini Karkal

14. Resolved that the population question in India be viewed in the right perspective. The view that third world population is the single greatest threat to world survival has been overturned by the Treaty on consumption and Life-style passed by the Global Forum at Rio de Janeiro in June 1992, which we quote :

"While overall population growth is a danger to the health of the planet, it must be recognised that population growth in the North, due to extremely high levels of per capita consumption, is a far greater threat than population growth in the South".

While this treaty alone cannot ensure any necessary changes in consumption and life-style, it records a historical shift in world understanding. Henceforth, this understanding should underline all planning towards population policies of peoples and governments. Resolved that we strongly oppose and warn our government about the attempt of the Northern countries, led by the U.S.A. to omit consumption and life-style

from global negotiations on economies and population.

Proposed by Meera Sadgopal

Seconded by Indu Prakash Singh

15. Resolved that free availability of barrier methods

like cervical cap, diaphragm, male and female condoms be ensured. Further resolved that Social marketing of controversial or hazardous contraceptions like Dipoprovera be banned.

Proposed by Meera Shiva

Seconded by Kavita Shrivastava. ◆

DUPLICATION AND DISTRIBUTION OF PAPERS PREPARED FOR THE SIXTH NATIONAL CONFERENCE

There were 8 sub-themes. Under each sub-theme there were between 8 and 15 papers, with a coverage of between 100 and 250 pages (approx.)

It was decided that papers for distribution were to be duplicated in the form in which they have been received at Mysore, under the supervision of Mrs. Rameshwari Verma. IAWS will meet the administrative, technical and postage costs.

300 copies of each set of sub-themes are being prepared, 250 for sale and 50 for sending to Treasurer for distribution to donor agencies, ministries etc. A booklet in the form of a monograph, with a printed cover page, is being brought out as a publication of the IAWS, of the Sixth National Conference on Women's Studies. Individual papers will not be on sale.

The cost of duplicating and preparing sets would be met by IAWS.

The sale proceeds of the sets would go to IAWS.

The pricing of each set be taken as under :

Rs. 25/- + VPP charges if the monograph is about 100 pages.

Rs. 30/- + VPP charges if the monograph is about 150 pages.

Rs. 40/- + VPP charges if the monograph is about 200 pages.

Looking to the approximate expenses of duplicating sets, IAWS will have to subsidise the publication and the Executive Committee agreed to it. The approximate price of each full set (8 sub-themes) is estimated at Rs. 250/-.

Mrs. Rameshwari Varma will despatch these sets by VPP to persons who place the order with her, by Sept. 1993. ◆

**The Executive Council of the IAWS
currently consists of the following members :**

- | | | |
|-----|--------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. | Dr. Devaki Jain | President |
| 2. | Dr. Amita Verma | Vice-President |
| 3. | Dr. S. Anandalakshmy | General Secretary |
| 4. | Ms. C. P. Sujaya | Jt. Secretary |
| 5. | Dr. Zarina Bhatt | Treasurer |
| 6. | Prof. Armaity Desai | |
| 7. | Dr. Maitreyee Krishnaraj | |
| 8. | Dr. Surinder Jetley | |
| 9. | Dr. Kamalini Bhansali | |
| 10. | Dr. V. Bhavani | |
| 11. | Ms. Piyali Sengupta | |
| 12. | Mr. Shyamnarayan Choubey | |
| 13. | Prof. Susheela Kaushik | |
| 14. | Dr. Rameshwari Verma | |
| 15. | Ms. Radha Bhat | |

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