IAWS
INDIAN ASSOCIATION OF WOMEN'S STUDIES

Newsletter

Autumn, 1994

Editor's Note

In the last issue we had said that we would like to make the *Newsletter* a forum for debate on various theoretical and topical issues relevant to women's studies and the women's movement. At present there is almost an excess of government interest in women's issues: the formulation of the Panchayati Raj Bill, the Policy for Women in Maharashtra, the proliferation of the Mahila Samakhya programme, the Swaminathan Committee Report on Population, India's country paper for the Beijing World Conference on Women, etc. etc. How has the women's movement reacted to these policies and other programmes ? What sort of research is being done on the impact of sundry policies on women? How effective have government programmes on women been? What has been the impact of progressive — and regressive — legislation over the last two decades? How do we characterise the State?

We appealed to about a dozen activists with differing ideologies, espousing different strategies, to write on these issues, but only a few responded. Their thoughts are presented here and, hopefully, will lead to a wider discussion and perhaps to more analytical studies for the IAWS National Conference in 1995.

The material presented here formed the background for discussions at a workshop held in Delhi between October 19-21, 1994, on The State and the Women's Movement in India.

We are sorry that the last ***Newsletter*** *(July 1994) did not reach several members because of postal irregularities. We request all members who have not received their copies to please inform the office.*

Autumn 1994

THE STATE AND THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT

Moving Beyond the 'In or Against the State' Debate

Abha Bhaiya, Nandita Gandhi, Kavita Srivastava

The contemporary Indian women's movement and the State have always shared an ambivalent relationship with each other. The IWM has protested against and demanded a series of legal reforms on rape and dowry, on amniocentesis, for reserved quotas, the setting up of women's commissions,and so on. Its persistent campaigns and international pressure have forced the State to recognise the subordinate status of women and give women's issues much-needed visibility. Of late, local and central governments have begun consulting women's groups on the formulation of policies and legislation, on conscientisation, and on gender sensitisation.

On the other hand, the State has continued to reinforce the subordinate status of women through the non-recognition of their unpaid domestic labour, by seeing them as dependents of men, and by marginalising and impoverishing them through the development process. It has also reinforced inequality between the sexes by sanctioning discriminatory personal laws. Its own arms — the police and the judiciary — are not only gender blind but, at times, deliberately anti-women. Many experiences of women's groups with the government, its bureaucracy, and especially the police, have been negative and dismaying. This has led to scepticism, suspicion and often hostility within the women's movement.

How should the women's movement strategise with the State? This is an old debate but continues to remain on the agenda because both the women's movement and the State — and the context of their interaction — are not static.

Moving Beyond

The women's movement is neither homogeneous nor even a federation of different groups. It is composed of individuals and groups with different ideologies and political party affiliations, using a range of strategies. There is no one voice that it speaks with but all share a basic acceptance of the fact of women's subordination and a belief that it can be eliminated. From within the movement then, there is no one characterisation of the State.

Views have been put forward on what the State *is not* : it is not monolithic, it is not dominated by one class or caste group; it is not gender-neutral; and it is not apart from or outside of society. The movement itself has had different responses to electoral politics and to the question of the seizure of state power. The debate on the relationship of the State and the women's movement has, thus far, hovered around the 'in and against' the State positions. The 'against' proponents hold that given the State's dominant class, caste and gender composition and interests, cooperation with it will eventually be frustrating or a failure. Others are concerned about the State's co-option of the movement's language, issues, and its activists.

Women within government departments and those working in its programmes, concerned academics and activists, on the other hand, believe they can take advantage of the State's structural ambiguity and amorphousness, of the conflicting interests of the dominant groups within it and the rising consciousness regarding women's oppression. These offer women the possibility of creating some space for pursuing their own agenda and furthering women's interests. It also carries the struggle against patriarchy into the State where it is so insiduously installed and powerfully supported by its entire machinery. Many activists choose to selectively strategise, confront and co-operate, depending on the issue concerned.

It is necessary at this juncture to re-open the debate because the scenario has changed dramatically in the past decade. The contemporary women's movement is two decades old. It has grown in terms of newer members and an enlarging base; there is a shift from looking at specific women's issues to presenting a feminist perspective on all issues, and its strategies have become multi-pronged and diverse. The State is being pressurised by international finance agencies into introducing a Structural Adjustment Programme; by fundamentalist forces and by the rise of caste-based political parties. In a bid to deal with the women's movement, it has come up with more policies and legislation. Thousands of women are being non-formally educated, empowered with consciousness regarding their rights, given space in local self-government.

Women activists cannot ignore the issue of reservations for women when thousands of rural women candidates will be affected by it. Mahila Samakhya, a non-formal education programme, is most unlike government programmes as it is implemented through a combination of NGO and official inputs and con-

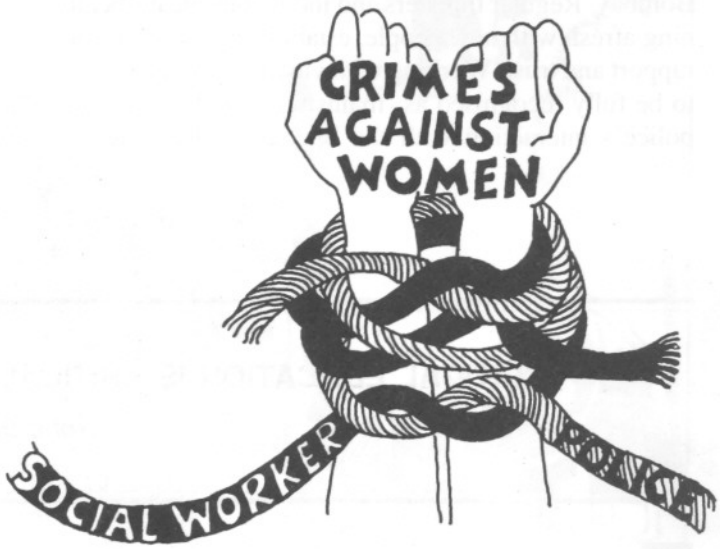
sciously avoids targets. Again if the State were willing to set up more Special Police Cells, would the movement endorse such a move?

In another arena, the State is attempting to reduce its responsibilities in welfare sectors like health and education, for which it is increasing its contact with NGOs and women's groups. But it is also increasing its control over citizens, and especially women, through its population policies, for example.

Is it possible to move away from the physicalist 'in' or 'against' position, into a discussion on how the women's movement has addressed the State in its various campaigns and demands? Did the movement further empower the State through its demands for legislation? Has it allowed itself to be co-opted? Can it in fact use the master's tools to dismantle the master's house? Can the women's movement explore ways of empowering women without involving the State? Finally, what are the feminist principles and visions which are the basis for evaluating State and other programmes for women, for a critque and confirmation of co-option?

WORKING WITH THE POLICE

Anjali Dave



Two decades after the commencement of the International Year of Women, 1975, we can see some visible changes in the policies, programmes and laws on women drafted by the Government of India. It has acknowledged that women's voices have to be heard not only from their traditional space in the domestic sphere, but from their marginalised and unequal positions. One attempt to heed their complaint was the establishment of a Special Cell for Women and Children in Bombay to deal with violence against women.

Some of us who have been associated with the formation and functioning of the Special Cell for the last ten years have been thinking of reviewing and documenting both our own involvement, and the Cell itself. This preliminary discussion touches upon the necessity of working with the police, its limitations, our experience of it, and our links with the women's movement.

Filling a Need

In 1984, The Tata Institute of Social Sciences began a dialogue with the Police Commissioner of Bombay, which resulted in the setting up of the Special Cell ; TISS provided finance and trained social workers and the police provided its premises and administrative support.

Two apparently unlikely parties had come together; a necessary partnership because the police do not employ trained personnel to deal with the socio-psycho aspects of policing, nor are they themselves equipped to deal with issues like conflicts in marriage, violence against women, and so on.

For us, an otherwise closed police system was now partially open. Our ten year experience with the functioning of laws and police procedures has given us insights into the system and helped us negotiate spaces within it to the advantage of women.

Our Experiences

We have learnt to help battered and violated women leave home without later being accused of theft. We have tried to give wider meaning to definitions in laws, rules and regulations so as to create practices which are more women-friendly. We learnt a variety of methods of discussion and negotiation, both with the women and the police. Training programmes for police officials were designed on the subject of violence against women, and we have now completed the first round of trainings in all the districts of Maharashtra. In the course of these trainings, we found that the police were no longer faceless, but people who are required to play a constitutional role which is often contrary to their socialisation and socio-political environment. Quite unexpectedly, we found ourselves learning to look at their problems sympathetically.

We have learnt that it is not enough to reform laws, introduce new ones or make new policies; more important, sometimes, is to try for substantial changes in women's daily lives. More and more women today are seeking third party intervention as community support structures are becoming weak and ineffectual. Panchayats and caste councils are losing their traditional hold over people in urban areas; laws and courts continue to be gender-blind and anti-women. The Special Cell could play a role in helping women gain some control over their own lives.

Limitations

Working within this colossal organisation can also be extremely frustrating. Our area of influence is limited to Bombay. Regular transfers and inductions means beginning afresh with new people, establishing the necessary rapport and trust. Working with violated women has yet to be fully recognised as 'mainstream' policing, so the police's interaction with the Special Cell is often an isolated experience. Moments of despair are plenty, when nothing seems to move. The biggest problem yet to be faced is replicability of this programme in the rest of Maharashtra.

The Women's Movement

We believe that there is a link between this intervention, the women's movement and feminist thinking. We believe that interaction, influence and action should be a constant feature of our intervention but ever so often we hear veiled insinuations about 'crossing the floor' or being 'more sympathetic' to the police. We are called anti-feminist. This makes for suspicion and distrust with our having to constantly provide proof of our belief in women's rights and a just social system. For me the larger question is:

Can we afford to divide feminists within the women's movement ?

Anjali Dave teaches at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Bombay. She still continues to be associated with the TISS/Police Deptt. experiment.

CRITICAL EDUCATION IS CRITICAL FOR WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

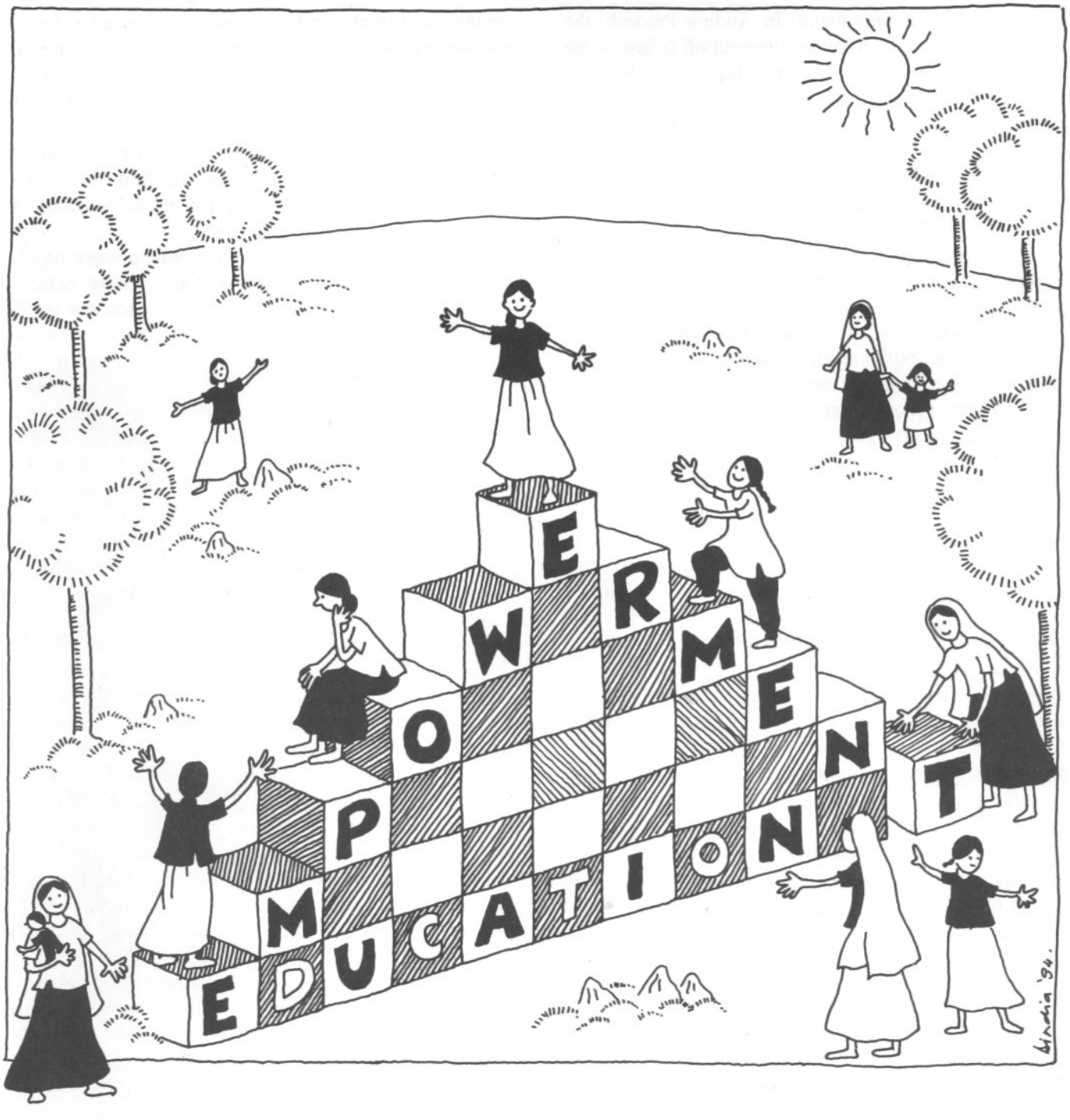
Abha Bhaiya

Education is one way of creating awareness, changing power relations and empowering women. Since education is becoming an important part of government programmes for women, it is necessary for us to assess the potential of such programmes and look at our experience of them. This is especially important because they involve not only feminist activists but thousands of rural, poor women who are waging a committed personal and political struggle.

The genesis of the Education for Women's Equality Programme, better known as Mahila Samakhya (MS), lies in the recognition by the Education Department that existing policies and programmes have failed to bring formal and non-formal education into women's lives. Part IV of the National Policy on Education (1986) clearly states that because women are doubly oppressed by gender and class a special effort will have to be made to reach out to them. MS was initiated to operationalise this policy.

It is surprising that such a programme was set up by the government. In its own way it is unusual as it has no targets to achieve, and has involved NGOs, women's groups and feminists in its planning and execution. But then the State is neither static nor monolithic. It keeps changing as internal and external pressures act on it. Although it has an undoubtedly patriarchal and class character and is enormously powerful, nevertheless different State institutions and departments have varying degrees of power. The Education Department cannot, for instance, be compared to the Police or the Army. Thirdly, while we are witnessing an increasing centralisation of State power, individual governments are, at the same time, setting up new institutions like the National and State Commissions of Women which are autonomous, monitoring organisations, some with *suo moto* powers to enquire into discriminatory practices, inside or outside the government.

Similarly, the women's movement, too, is fluid and changing. In the early 1980s, it was dominated by autonomous women's groups; by 1988 (if we go by the National Conference in Patna and later in Calicut) it had expanded its base to include women from NGOs and State-sponsored programmes. It has been strength-



ened by the formation of women's wings within Left political parties, and feminist academics and researchers have contributed to it intellectually. This diversity of politics and practice within the women's movement has become its strength.

The campaigns of the 1980s concentrated on forcing the State to amend or introduce laws affecting women's lives — rape, dowry, sati, etc. The creation of special cells as part of the police machinery was an outcome of women's struggles which made domestic violence a public issue. The State has responded in other ways too; take for example, 30% reservation for women in the panchayat elections. Activists of the women's movement debated the issue and realised that such policies were not going to change the patriarchal or class character of our society, *but* that they had the potential of impacting the lives of masses of women.

It is gradually becoming evident that whether within State- run programmes or outside them, in more autonomous spaces, women are finding newer, more in-

novative ways of organising. In Andhra Pradesh, the State-run literacy programme triggered off a large scale mobilisation of women against liquor vending. In Banda, UP, women in the MS have learnt to become barefoot engineers doing surveys, repairing hand-pumps, producing leaflets, and so on. Women are thus active agents in changing their situation. This is not to suggest that a time-bound State programme can create a movement; rather that if it inculcates the power of critical thought and action it will have achieved its objective. As a sahayogini in Tehri said, "The programme will end but not our consciousness."

Autonomous women's groups have neither the resources nor the political infrastructure to create a constituency of women. However, their strength lies in their capacity to keep vigil, act as pressure groups and present a feminist perspective on issues. With the growth of fundamentalism and the increasing number of women joining right wing parties, we can ill afford to stay isolated. It is no longer enough to simply condemn the State and play reactive politics. Intervention has been one of the most powerful strategies of radical politics, and a well-conceived, positive interventionist approach can release the creative and political energy of women most effectively.

Interaction with the State at a programmatic level is bound to raise questions about autonomy and co-option. One of the important non-negotiables in the MS programme is the training of functionaries. Autonomy in organising trainings has allowed feminists to influence the flow of critical information. For instance in a recent training we shared the information that US AID had given a grant of nearly Rs 800 crores to Uttar Pradesh for a population control programme. While discussing the interests of the aid-giving agency and the State, we were able to strategise on combating this onslaught on women's bodies and lives.

On the other hand it is altogether possible that the State will pressurise the functionaries of Mahila Samakhya to take up targets for family planning programmes. It is also possible that these women will independently evolve methods of challenging or working around the State's repressive policies. It is more crucial to debate how we in the women's movement will build alliances with them when they are fighting State repression.

Trainings have also created possibilities for establishing the inter-relatedness of issues and, in the long run, providing an input into feminist theory. Women have grappled with notions of extensive versus intensive work; private versus public issues; form versus content in struggle; and have evolved a broader, feminist definition of education. Discussions on domestic violence have made women challenge the family as an oppressive institution. Similarly, discussions on State policies have forced them to question the role and nature of the State. Their location within a State programme can help them make the State more accountable in areas like housing, the public distribution system, health, education, and so on.

It is not the case that feminists will always be allowed autonomy in trainings. When we have experienced a threat to it, we have decided to stop our interaction with the State-run programme but not with the women in it. The programme officers have had to call us back.

With the increase in bilateral funding and funding from international lending agencies like the World Bank, IMF, US AID, etc, the lives of poor pople, and especially of women, will be impacted in a significant way. Yet they are the ones who have little access to information and even less influence on these negotiations. The World Bank has recently come forward with a soft loan of Rs 850 crores to assist the U P Basic Education Project. The women's empowerment component of the programme will be channelised through the existing MS. The MS Resource Group met the World Bank officials to negotiate the terms and conditions to ensure that the pace, the content and autonomy of the programme are preserved.

How can we ensure autonomy and resist co-option by the State? In order to ensure autonomy, it is extremely important to strengthen some of the principles of empowerment: ensuring the flow of information, strengthening women's groups into becoming pressure groups, securing women's representation in local decision-making bodies. Next, we should build alliances with committed and sympathetic bureaucrats who can help us maneouvre official mazes and loopholes. Lastly, we can make a greater impact, although in a very limited way, by organising women to take control of educational inputs and demand relevant education. Education can be used as a subversive tool by working towards the explicit goals of the programme in such a manner that it exposes the implicit, hidden agenda of the State and aid agencies.

Critical education thus, is critical for women's empowerment.

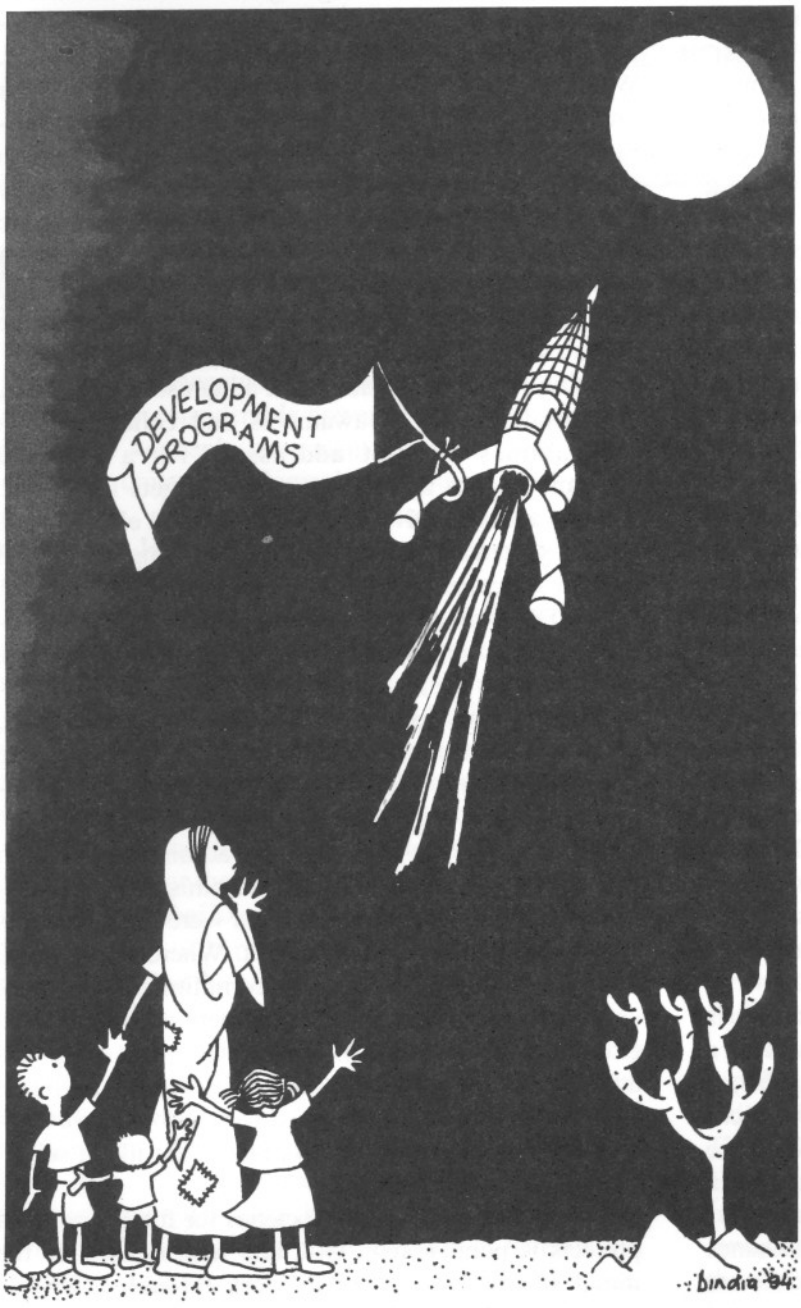
Abha Bhaiya, founder member of Jagori, is an activist, researcher and trainer. She is presently working on an action-research study of single women. She is also a National Training Consultant with the Mahila Samakhya.

FALLING THROUGH THE GAPS

Management of Government Programmes for Women in India

Vimala Ramachandran

Intensive advocacy from the early Seventies by the women's movement resulted in the formulation and launching of specific programmes and schemes by the Indian government for women's development and empowerment. The release of *Towards Equality*, the Report on the Status of Women in India, in 1975, was a landmark. With the growth of a vocal women's movement, many issues concerning the invisibility of women's work, employment, women's collectives, health care, credit, empowerment, etc, have been debated and discussed. A great deal of this discussion found its way into the planning and design of government programmes. The Department of Women and Child Development was set up, DWCRA [1982], STEP, TRYSEM, rural credit schemes, the Women's Development Programme, WDP [1984], Mahila Samakhya [1988] were initiated. The Woman Question became visible and there was a feeling that the women's movement was beginning to make its mark.



Government policies recognised that the status of women, their fertility, nutrition and health and the survival of their children, plus a host of other development indicators are integrally linked with literacy and educational opportunities; and that access to health or education is constrained by social, cultural and economic factors. It acknowledged that intervention in one or more sectors, in isolation, does not yield the desired results. While these interlinkages have been recognised by policy makers at the macro level, translating them into action has posed the greatest challenge.

Delivery systems, flow of funds, budgets, selection of personnel, training and administrative structure seem to become a dominant constraint in achieving the objectives. The logistics of interdepartmental coordination, convincing functionaries to forge links, helping develop a holistic view of development, were invariably set aside for administrative considerations like control over staff selection, use of vehicles, etc. Keeping the gender perspective on course even

in programmes meant for women became increasingly arduous, leading to a persistent gap between stated goals and their realisation in the field.

Disillusionment with supply-oriented and target-driven programmes gave way to planning for demand generation [WDP], organising beneficiaries [CAPART], education for empowerment (MS) and so on. While this made for a significant change in government vocabulary, the logistics of dealing with "demand", with the implementation mechanism relatively unchanged, were not addressed. For example family planning messages have been flashed across the country — but people's access to safe contraceptives neglected. Consequently the entire machinery of the family welfare programme is geared to chasing female sterilization targets.

Some awareness generation programmes demonstrated a certain degree of success especially in reaching out to poor women, making them aware of their legal rights and equal wages, enthusing them to seek literacy. The job description of village level workers in such programmes includes social change agent functions. They are expected to discourage child marriage, delay age of marriage, address nutrition habits, etc. All these "expectations" demand that they swim against the social current — especially if they are to work among the poor. Often they have to battle with the administration to highlight the problems of the poor, such as minimum wages, and ration cards. When such "government workers" initiate community based action, they meet with resistance among their colleagues in government.

Bhanwari Bai, the Sathin from the Rajasthan Women's Development Programme was raped as she campaigned against child marriage, an integral part of her job description. This incident is symptomatic of the inherent contradictions of government-sponsored awareness programmes. The response of the administration and its unwillingness to even admit that she had been raped, pitted the programme, the Deptt. of Women and Child Development and the National Commission for Women against the police, the district administration and the Home Deptt — a clear divide along gender lines.

The administrative machinery of the government is essentially pluralist and it does not act or react in a unified manner. An overriding territorial impulse, a remnant of the colonial era, determines its functioning. Different arms of the government do not, by force of habit, appreciate another's need and sometimes even work at cross purposes. In particular there has always been tension between law enforcement, revenue/finance and development functions and also among different development departments.

Notwithstanding these contradictions, there have been many instances when the government has tried to forge convergence "at the grassroots". Village or cluster level workers are expected to effect this convergence. When the question of motivating poor women or delivering additional services to poor rural women arises, the chorus heard in the corridors of government is: "The anganwadi worker will do it". Or "Why not the existing mahila mandal?" "What about the gram sevika or the ANM?" Functions are added to the list of these "honorary" workers, but none subtracted.

Awareness generation or collectivization programmes face another kind of problem. When government decides to appoint new change agents like the Sathins or Sakhis, the question of providing them with a supportive working environment is invariably overlooked. Workers in such programmes are left to create their own support structures inside and outside the government. This alliance is viewed with suspicion when "change agents" are not government servants. They carry the weight of these programmes, but do not have decision-making powers. This insider-outsider status puts them in a difficult position especially when all financial and administrative authority is vested in the hands of civil servants.

Being rooted in the dominant administrative culture, the specific needs of awareness and collectivization programmes are not addressed. As a result a programme with tremendous potential gets lost in the maze of administrative procedures. Almost eleven years after it started,the specific staffing, training needs and support structures of DWCRA are yet to be addressed. The WDP went a step further than DWCRA in creating a cadre of highly motivated Prachetas and Sathins. When Mahila Samakhya was being designed, both experiences were kept in mind; however over the years, there has been a growing realisation that something needs to be done to address stagnation and bureaucratization.

Recognising the problems of administering such programmes through mainline administrative departments, Mahila Samakhya Societies were registered under the Societies Registration Act. Where it did work, women with enthusiasm and commitment were recruited, NGOs and social activists were nominated onto empowered committees and Govt-NGO partnership was attempted. It has been a continuous battle to retain these "concessions". In some cases the battle was lost and the programme ended up functioning like a subordinate government office.

Registering autonomous societies for foreign assisted projects is popular with GOI and with donors. In the initial stages, willingness to work through "Government Created Non-Govt Organisations" signalled a desire to make the system deliver, but was gradually

reduced to the smooth chanelling of funds.

The critical bottleneck is invariably one of appointing, motivating, supporting and retaining committed persons. Here the administration is gender blind — it refuses to acknowledge the specific needs of women. It is not even recognised as a problem! The general attitude is: "Oh! it is only a ladies programme", meaning that no special expertise is required for it.

Notwithstanding past experiences, new programmes and schemes are designed afresh with the language becoming more radical. Today in almost all the social sectors the buzzwords are gender sensitive planning, empowerment, participatory management systems, catalysing change through people's collectives, and now, reproductive rights and reproductive health.

The rhetoric gets shriller by the day, but the question is — how much has actually touched the poor woman on the ground?

Vimala Ramachandran was the former National Project Director of Mahila Samakhya, and is a WID and Educational Planning consultant.

Autumn 1994

THE STATE AND THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT

C.P. Sujaya

There is no doubt that the relationship between the State and the women's movement has changed in the past two decades. The Indian State is shaped by its federal structure, its delegation of responsibility and authority, and the very considerable power wielded by its bureaucrats. The women's movement has never been a one-structure, unitary ideological body but an amorphous, multi-class, sporadic, issue-oriented and autonomous movement. How have these two complex bodies interacted with each other?

In the years of the Freedom Struggle and those immediately following Independence, the term, "social worker" was an honourable appellation. Its respectability and high status flowed from its legitimisation by the State. There was no fracturing of interests, no fragmentation of identities. The State *contained* its social workers without any seeming discomfort. Social workers stood in as delivery agents, supplementing government extension staff. They did not challenge the authority of the State on behalf of the women. Durgabai Deshmukh may have grumbled when the autonomy of her Board was slowly eroded by the bureaucracy, but the good intentions of the State were not in doubt in her mind.

From a supportive mode, the trend became mediatory and then adversarial. In some areas, such as population and family planning, the State invited sharp criticism and reactions through its policies and programmes. Yet at the same time, other instrumentalities were at work and different dialogues were being held — lobbying was going on, formulation of plans, creation of bureaus and structures, inclusion of women in the Sixth Plan, etc. Today the State is almost schizophrenic. It calls upon its bitterest critics from the women's movement to speak in seminars and workshops and, on occasion, sends them to conferences. It formulates programmes for mobilising grassroots women to articulate the demand for change in policies. How many agitations against State policies on alcohol have been funded by the State? Ela Bhatt wrote in her preface to *Shramshakti,* ". . . . it is ironic that one is asking the State to support a machinery to promote action for change in State policies".

Besides this 'love-hate' relationship, there is one of dependency which is mutual, though not the same. In fact, the State stands for many features which the women's movement abhors: centralisation, command and control, lack of concern, clumsiness with data, etc. The State thinks of the movement as a vested interest, a nuisance, elite groups seeking power and visibility but without owning any responsibility. But the bureaucracy also recognises the movement's access to their political masters, it recognises its knowledge of and closeness to the reality of women. It would be no exaggeration to claim that the movement's enormous data base is its main attraction. The bureaucracy has often to strain itself to answer the myraid calls for information from politicians, Parliament and international donors.

Many groups within the movement have been uncomfortable with the State adopting a feminist vocabulary, a radical stance and its mobilising of grassroots women. There is a genuine and deep-seated fear of co-option by the all-powerful State. They would rather see the State concentrate its energies on functions like implementation of laws, and delivery of basic health care, education and food through the public distribution system. They see the State becoming less and less capable of performing these functions and more inclined to spreading itself into soft-

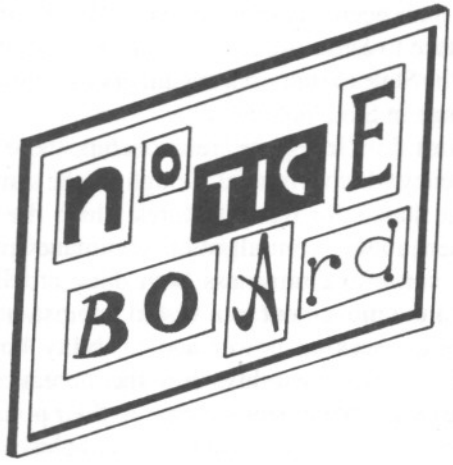
ware areas like legal literacy and forms of awareness. Allegations have been made that the State is withdrawing from the human development sector.

There seems to be an overall shift in the role of the State which has become more evident since the introduction of the new economic policy in 1991. As often happens in India, the new and the old co-exist. Thus the opening of the Indian economy to global markets is accompanied by a stated adherence to supporting the social sector and providing a safety net. The State is emphasising its social committment through figures showing higher allocations for rural development, education, etc. But invisibly and insiduously the framework is changing and so are the two actors.

The visibilisation of the women's question, especially during the International Women's Decade, has spawned a number of structures and 'machineries' within the State. However, such bodies as the Central Social Welfare Board have also existed in the past. The Board in 1974 asked for a National Commission. Today the women's movement is critical of their lack of accessibility to women's groups and the unidirectional way in which they tend to pursue issues. The structures have proliferated over time, some have vanished and some others have changed in priority and importance. The Board is no longer at the centre of things. The National Committee existed for two brief flashes in the 1970s and the 1980s.

However, there has been no innovation in the mechanisms and procedures of the State. The women's movement has, in a way, accepted that the State machinery is flawed. It no longer looks for a perfect structure and if it is critical, it is productively critical. A movement towards interdependence seems to be taking place. The Women's Development Programme and the Mahila Samakhya have broken new ground in combining elements of a programme, an interactive mechanism as well as a process of communication between the State and women's groups. Panchayati Raj can become the new machinery for the advancement of women as it seeks to redistribute power. Close to a million women will participate. Can the women's movement remain the same after such a tremendous sea change?

C P Sujaya is a senior member of the IAS who is committed to gender equality and justice. She has actively supported the women's movement through research and writing, in policy formation and by lobbying within the government.



Some Recent and Forthcoming International and National Events

International

"Linking Our Histories: Asian and Pacific Women as Migrants", 30 Sept-2 Oct 1994. Organised by the Gender Relations Project, Research School of Asian and Pacific Studies, Australian National University, Canberra, Australia. *Contact*: Kalpana Ram & Margaret Jolly.

"International Workshop on International Migration and Traffic in Women", 17-20 Oct. 1994. Organised by Foundation for Women; VENA; and the Women's Studies Centre, Chiangmai University. *Contact*: Foundation for Women, P O Box 47, Bangkoknoi, Bangkok 10700, Thailand.

"Peace and War Issues: Gender, Race and Ethnicity in Historical Perspective", 11 -12 Nov. 1994. Organised by Rutgers Center for Historical Analysis and Peace History Society. *Contact*: Conference Co-Chairs, RCHA, 88 College Avenue, New Brunswick, NJ 08903 USA

"Women's Participation in Decision Making: First International Women's Solidarity Congress", 11 -13 Nov. 1994. Organised by Meray Epikman, Hisarpark, 1Cad Firuzaga Sok, 9/1-2 06240, Ulus-Ankara, Turkey.

International Conference on "Violence Against Women:

Chinese and American Experiences", 16-19 Nov. 1994. Organised by Chinese University of Hongkong, Tin Ka Pink Building, 6 FCVHK, Shatin, NT, Hong Kong.

" Social Security and Social Protection: Equality of Treatment Between Women and Men", 21-25 Nov. 1994. Organised by International Labour Office, 4, Route des Marillons, CH-1211 Geneva, 22 Switzerland.

"The Women's Health Conference", 2-4 Dec. 1994. Organised by Women's Health Project, Centre for Health Policy, c/o SAIMR, P O Box 1038, 2000 Johannesburg, South Africa.

" 26th Conference of the International Association of Women in Radio and Television", 5-8 Dec. 1994. Organised by International Association of Women in Radio and Television, WOMEDIA Manila, 151 A Nahiyain Street, Sikatuna Village, Quezon City 1101, Philippines. *Contact*: Nikki Coseteng, Anna-Leah Sarabia.

" India - The Queer View": The First Gay and Lesbian Film Festival and Tour of India, 27 Dec 1994—13 Jan 1995. Organised by IGLHRC, 1360 Mission St., Suite 200, San Francisco, CA 94103, USA.

"International Conference on the Sex Industry in Asia", 22 - 24 Feb. 1995. Organised by Rights of Entertainers in Asia to Combat Human Oppression and Unjust Treatment (REACH OUT), P O Box 98108, TST Post Office, Tsim Sha Tsui, Kowloon, Hong Kong.

"World Summit for Social Development", 6-12 March 1995. Organised by the NGO Forum '95 Copenhagen Host Committee which is the alternative to the official UN Summit. NGO Forum '95, Njalsgade 13 C, DK 2300 Copenhagen S, Denmark.

"NGO Consultation on Women", 9-24 March 1995. Organised by NGO Forum on Women Secretariat, 211 East 43rd Street, Suite 1500, New York, NY 10017 USA.

National

"Asia Regional Workshop on Violence Against Women" 21-25 Oct. 1994. Organised by MATCH International Centre, Canada and Karmika, India. B 26 Gulmohar Park, New Delhi 110049.

"Speaking Tree, Women Speak", Asian Public Hearing on Crimes Against Women and Violence of Development" Dec. 10 1994. Organised by Vimochana and Asian Women's Human Rights Council at the J N Tata Auditorium, Natural Science Seminar Complex, Dr C V Raman Road, Bangalore.

"Trends in Women's Studies", Talk by Prof. Florence Howe of the City University of New York. Dec. 15 1994. Organised by RUWS, SNDT, Juhu Campus, Santa Cruz West, Bombay.

"National Seminar on Women and Eco-Development", Jan. 1994. Organised by C P Ramaswami Aiyar Foundation, 1a Eldams Road, Madras 600 018.

CALL FOR PAPERS

Papers are invited on the issue of Gender Policy and Planning by: The Barlett, University College London, 9 Endsleigh Gardens, London WC IHOED, UK.

SIGNS: Journal of Women in Culture and Society seeks submissions for its special issue on feminist theory and practice tentatively scheduled for Summer 1996.

For more info write to:

Joeres or Laslett,

495 Ford Hall, 224 Church Street S E, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN 55455 USA

The Indian Journal of Gender Studies is the new avtar of *Samya Shakti*. Subscription rates: Individual Rs 150; Institutional Rs 295. Published by Sage Publications India Pvt Ltd, Post Box 4215, New Delhi, 110048

WORLD CONFERENCE ON WOMEN

September 1995, organised by the United Nations and NGO Forum Beijing, China

Already preparatory meetings have been held and government officials and NGO participants are preparing papers, organising panels, workshops, exhibitions and other events for it. Some glimpses:

The Peace Train

200 women of Eastern Europe and Asia are expected to travel from Helsinki to Beijing. Each stop will focus on local and global themes, with workshops, skill sharing sessions, etc. Registration is US $ 4000 inclusive of air fare, accomodation and attendance. Scholarships are also available. *Contact*: Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, 1 Rue de Varembe, 1211 Geneva 20, Switzerland.

India's Country Paper

The Government of India is organising consultations with women's groups from the western, southern, eastern and northern regions. Its voluminous 140 page report will be discussed and recommendations included in the draft paper. The first consultation was held at Hyderabad, August 5-13, 1994, followed by Jaipur, August 27, and Pune October 20, 1994. Calcutta and Lucknow are next.

Manjeet Bhatia who attended the second consultation reports:

"The consultation at Jaipur was held for the region ranging from Kashmir to Madhya Pradesh. There was a gamut of central and state officials from the CM of Rajasthan to heads of the Social Welfare Boards. The venue had a very festive look and the organisers did not seem too serious about discussions. Most of the participants had received the draft paper on the eve of the consultation.

"The major part of the morning and afternoon were taken up by lengthy speeches by politicians. The few NGOs and Sathins who attended were quite ill at ease. They were finally given an opportunity to speak. They suggested that women be given job reservations, family courts, educational programmes with infrastructure, joint ownership of land, etc. They also called for a ban on amniocentesis." *Excerpts*

While Some Prepare to Attend, Others Prepare to Boycott

The War Resisters' International Women's Working Group has boycotted the WCW because it will legitimise the repressive regime in China, and because Tibetan, Taiwanese and Hong Kong women will not be given visas to attend.

A consortium of donor agencies has formed a Co-ordination Unit in Delhi, for facilitating activities in India for the World Conference. The Unit is systematically holding meetings in different parts of the country on various issues like health, the new economic policy, development, etc. It is also co-ordinating meetings between official representatives and women's groups. For more information write to: The Co-ordination Unit, 802 Arunachal Bhawan, 19 Barakhamba Road, New Delhi 110001 *Tel* 3713221 *Fax* 91-11-3713219.

Published by Nandita Gandhi for the Indian Association of Women's Studies (IAWS)
C-54 South Extension, Part II, New Delhi 110 049
Copy editing by Ritu Menon / Illustrations by Bindiya Thapar

Designed and printed by Shruti Designs, New Delhi 110 085