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EDITOR'S DESK

After half a century of independence, we're still struggling against odds to set right the gender, caste and class imbalance in our 'socialist democracy'. As part of this determined effort within the women's movement in India, the IAWS has organised a seminar, **The Early Years of Independent India: Women's Perspectives**, to be held during August 9-11 in Baroda. Prominent women's studies scholars and activists will be participating in this event. All members are invited to attend and contribute to the discussions. IAWS is also organising the **VIIIth National Women's Studies Conference** in June 1998. Details of both are inside.



In our previous newsletter we had announced the theme **Survival and Sovereignty** as the Focus of the Year, indicating that the IAWS would organise workshops in various regions of India under the rubric of this overarching concern. The response has been excellent, and some very important workshops, including an extremely successful Summer School in Women's Studies, have been conducted in the last six months, reports of which come to you in this issue.

This time we've decided to start printing brief publication lists of the various Women's Studies schools and centres in India about which most of us in other parts of the country have little information. We inaugurate this feature with publication details of the Schools of Women's Studies at MS Baroda, Calcutta and Jadavpur Universities, and request all other schools and centres to mail us their publication lists (by July 31 for the next newsletter).

Many thanks to all those who contributed to making this such a substantial issue that we actually had to increase the number of pages! Unfortunately, we received no news or reports from the northeast this time too, and surprisingly enough, none from the north either. Please help us remedy this imbalance next time. Send us:

- **analytical reports** - (max. 750 words) of seminars, workshops, etc.;
- **brief announcements regarding upcoming events** - seminars, workshops, campaigns, new feminist publishing houses, bookshops, etc.;
- **critical and constructive reviews** - (max. 700 words) of recently published and significant books or research on women;
- **creative writing** - we can print only short pieces like poems, songs, etc.
- **letters** - (not more than 300 words each).

Send all newsletter material to: **Kavita Panjabi, 67B Ballygunge Circular Road, Calcutta 700 019.**

Looking forward to hearing from you, and meeting you at the upcoming IAWS Seminar and Conference,

Editor



New Economic Policy and Women's Control Over Resources

During January 28-30, 1997, a regional workshop on 'Survival and Sovereignty: New Economic Policy (NEP) and Women's Control Over Resources', jointly organised by the Indian Association of Women's Studies and Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, was held at Tirunelveli, attended by activists and academics from Tamil Nadu and Kerala. Fr Thomas Kocherry, Secretary, National Fishworkers Forum, inaugurated the workshop, followed by the keynote address by Gabriele Dietrich of the Centre for Social Analysis, Madurai.

Both speakers wove their speeches around the issues of sovereignty and survival, highlighting the impact of NEP on national sovereignty over India's natural resources, and on the populations dependent for their very survival on these resource bases. They outlined the detrimental impact on fishworkers, agriculturists and forest-dwellers, specifically on the women of these communities, of the development model anchoring these policies. Women's marginalisation, they emphasised, is built into this model of capital-intensive, profit-oriented development.

Fr Kocherry started his address with a startling statistic about the unequal distribution of people and resources among the developed and developing nations and continued with examples of how the NEP is further alienating resources from the mass of working people in the developing world into the hands of transnational corporations. He narrated his experience with the fishworkers' movement against the development path set in motion in the 1950s, with the introduction of mechanised trawling and continuing into the present with the licensing of foreign industrial fleets to fish in India's exclusive economic zone. He lent a hopeful and pragmatic note to the workshop by recounting their success against monsoon trawling and aquaculture.

Dietrich paid tribute to the approach chosen by the IAWS of bridging academic concerns and the pressing issues faced by the majority of people in the country. She referred to the IAWS National Conference on Communalism and Secularism at Jadavpur University in Calcutta in 1991 and the Conference on the Impact of the New Economic Policy in Mysore in 1994 and connected both these topics in her perspective on survival and sovereignty. She added emphasis to Fr Kocherry's warnings about the NEP by pointing to the problem of land alienation from fishing, agricultural and forest communities for the purposes of commercial agriculture and sandmining. She explained how this process was resulting in a crisis of food security and deterioration in the quality of life for these populations as their groundwater is salinated, cheap source of fish protein is denied to them, coastal shores are eroded and land rights lost.

These two presentations set the stage for the wide variety of themes including: alienation of resources from

artisan communities, the problems of food security and pollution along the coast, collective action by populations dependent for their survival on these resource bases, the backlash by corporate and political interests attempting to give these struggles a caste taint, the condition of child labourers and, finally, the relationship of academics to activists and communities marginalised by these processes of alienation and commercialisation.

The workshop concluded with Gabriele Dietrich's introduction of the National Alliance of Peoples' Movements (NAPM), a coalition of peoples' movements at the national level that has come together around the common struggle against globalisation and its threat to the survival of workers and their already diminished sovereignty over natural resources. She spoke about this as a constructive programme aimed at structural change from the grassroots upwards through a devolution of control over resources at the local level.

One problem with the existing consolidation of struggles, she explained, is a lack of communication between different groups targeting a common threat. NAPM seeks to correct this by forging links between the localised struggles

of fisherfolk, agriculturists and other small producers, and identifying policy changes at the national level which affect all of them adversely.

The valedictory address was given by Vasanthi Devi, Vice-Chancellor of MS University, who spoke about her efforts to make the academic world accountable to those outside it. Accountability would, therefore, involve opening the eyes of this middle class to the environmental and social fallout of the dominant development paradigm, and to the way education itself — the form of social capital in which this class is most deeply invested — is complicit in generating systems of values favouring individual gain at the expense of the majority.

The recent attack on an investigating team sent by MS University's Environmental Sciences Centre, has provided an impetus for students and faculty alike to re-examine the social role of academics and the curtailing of their own invaluable right to investigation. Vasanthi Devi also spoke more broadly on the relationship between the middle and working classes and practices such as dowry, rampant consumerism, and the domestication of women, that are spreading from the former to the latter. Universities, as centres of middle class training, have a crucial role to play in the consciousness-raising process. Therefore, efforts such as this workshop which bring students and faculty into contact with activists and movements, she said, must be pursued at all costs.

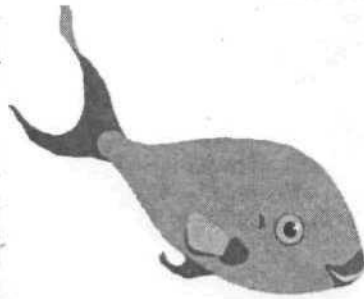
On the third day, the NSS and MS University organised a feedback session for students and staff of various colleges





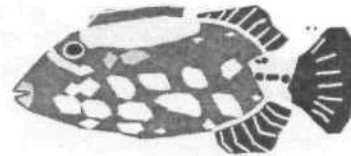
in order to share the findings of the workshop in Tamil with wider sections of the academic community.

The burning issues of the workshop such as the Perumanal struggle against sandmining, the campaign against prawn farms, and the struggle against sterilites were extensively highlighted and Vasanthi Devi conceptually connected the concerns of 'women's issues proper' — dowry, women's careers, beauty contests — with a critique of the whole trend of development policies. As a result of the discussions, the Ecology Department enquiry team went



public for the first time by voicing a protest against the manhandling through goons of VV Minerals. This shows that the workshop truly fulfilled its purpose of forming links between researchers and activists.

The NAPM meeting on February 7 with Medha Patkar was a follow-up of the IAWS workshop, highlighting many of the issues already identified. Vasanthi Devi addressed this meeting as well and the NSS mobilised a large contingent of students together with activists from local movements. Both activism and research have received tremendous encouragement through these joint efforts.



Ajantha Subramaniam & Gabriele Dietrich



IAWS National Seminar

The Early Years of Independent India: Women's Perspectives

August 9-11, 1997 at Baroda MS University

In 1947, the nationalist leaders took up the task of shaping modern India with great enthusiasm and high ideals. The early years after independence saw the birth of many noble institutions; the Indian Constitution professed to give equal rights to all citizens regardless of class, caste, creed or sex. State policies were designed to create a welfare state which was to provide basic services to all. Several laws were passed with the specific purpose of improving the status of women in India. The state also accepted the main responsibility for rapid development of the national economy through a planned approach. With the growth of modern industry, the trade union movement received an impetus and political recognition. At the same time, the partition of the country had left millions of people in bitterness and distress. Also, groups of dissidents with alternative political, social and economic agenda had begun to build up movements of various shades which had met with widely varying responses from the state machinery.

Indian women, who had been active and visible in all the pre-independence struggles, were also a party to these new developments. Yet, after 50 years of independence and the onset of modern India, gender-based discrimination against women in the country remains entrenched in all spheres of life. And women have little authority in the decision-making bodies that determine their fate. The Indian Association of Women's Studies, in collaboration with the Centre for Women's Development Studies, invites scholars and activists to reflect on the apparently radical developments of the first 25 years of independent India. We hope that the deliberations will bring out more clearly the actual roles played in public life by women during that period. It should also illuminate the representation of women for women and for others as reflected in the various cultural media of the time.

Themes: **The Nehruvian Era**
The Groundswell of Popular Movements
Women, Culture and Representation

There will also be a special session on **Testimonies** by women who have participated in various movements.

The tentative list of invitees includes: Jasodhara Bagchi, Aparna Basu, Ela Bhatt, Malini Bhattacharya, Pushpa Bhawe, Nabaneeta Dev Sen, Mrinal Gore, Vina Mazumdar

Outstation Registration: Rs 300 (including meals and accommodation at Baroda MS University)

Local Registration: Rs 150 (including lunch and tea/coffee)

Please confirm participation by **July 15** (IAWS General Secretary's Office)

Summer School in Women's Studies

A month-long Summer School in Women's Studies was conducted by the Indian Association of Women's Studies and Asmita Resource Centre for Women, Secunderabad, over March 10–April 10, 1997 at the National Institute for Small Industries Extension & Training, Hyderabad. March 10 was a significant date as it marked the death centenary of Savitribai Phule, a pioneer in women's education.

This year, the curriculum focused on violence. Designed as an interdisciplinary effort, the curriculum located the issue of violence historically, in different regions, in varied contexts, and in relation to literature, economic policies, environment, caste, class, ethnicity, identity, health and media.

The interconnectedness of these diverse areas/disciplines was introduced through a session on the Social Construction of Gender which included introductions to concepts of dominance, hegemony and patriarchy cross-culturally. The identification of readings was critical to this exercise. The resource persons who spent two days with participants had complete flexibility in approaching their disciplines/areas of concern and in structuring their sessions. In designing the entire course and the overall curriculum and reading list, we created the possibility and space for this flexibility in ways that enhanced the potential of that space as also the comprehension of the students. This has been the most significant achievement of the course. All the resource persons expressed their amazement with the manner and pace at which the group was able to make linkages between complex readings in their presentations. This should be viewed with reference to the fact that the group consisting of 19 students came from very diverse backgrounds, mostly from regional universities in the south and from non-English speaking families.

The group was also representative of the unevenness in our educational system, and was not equipped by formal education to deal with the reading material it was given. However, many of the participants had some experience in NGOs, women's groups, and political groups in Andhra, Kerala and Tamil Nadu, in addition to their university degrees. In the course of one month, however, every participant had learnt to read, to interlink readings, to make linkages between readings and political reality and to help each other plough through difficult and complex material. This was our second significant achievement, especially since our educational system equips students to engage in highly individualistic and competitive pursuit of careers, as opposed to collective work and reflection.

Those invited for guest lectures included Neera Desai, Vasanth Kannabiran, Jasodhara Bagchi, U Vindhya, Ammu Joseph, Gabriele Dietrich, Srilatha Batliwala, Maithreyi Krishna Raj, Padmini Swaminathan, Uma Chakravarti, Kumari Jayawardena, Rama Melkote, Ritu Menon, Kumud Pawde. Alongside the sessions with the group, we used this opportunity to open up a more visible space for women's studies in the public arena. We did this by organising public lectures by each of the resource persons under an overarching theme 'Challenges to Women's Studies'.

While the attendance at the lectures was far from satisfactory, a one-month Public Lecture Series had been organised for the first time ever and it created a platform for dialogue for anyone who was interested and had the time.

The schedule for the one-month residential course included two hours of classroom lectures each day by resource persons from different disciplines followed by tutorials, discussions, group presentations and seminars on specific themes:

- the relationship of women's studies to the women's movement;
- the relevance of an understanding of violence in women's studies;
- memory, violence, resistance in women's writings;
- ideology, representation, violence and gender in the mass media;
- the science question in feminism;
- understanding feminist historiography;
- feminist critiques of economic theory.

The significant elements in the manner in which the course had been structured were:

The resource persons invited to deliver the lectures are pioneers in women's studies as well as in incorporating gender concerns within disciplines. They are also active in women's movements and in popular mass movements. Their lectures, therefore, foregrounded the importance of an interdisciplinary feminist perspective and its necessary linkages with movement politics.

At its last meeting in April 1997, the EC of the IAWS unanimously passed this resolution condemning the attack on Gaddar:

We strongly condemn the brutal and premeditated attack on the revolutionary poet and people's artist Gaddar on April 6, 1997 at his residence in Secunderabad. Gaddar, an artist committed to the cause of the people, has for over two decades been using his songs, poetry and dance to fight for a humane and just society. He has campaigned untiringly against state repression and police brutality against movements for civil and democratic rights in Andhra Pradesh. The brutal attack on Gaddar by unidentified gunmen, starkly symbolises the deterioration of democratic values in our society.

We unequivocally condemn this dastardly attack and demand that the guilty be punished.



A total of 150 articles in different disciplines from diverse regions across the world were identified for the course and distributed to participants in eight parts. Apart from this, a makeshift library with a collection of at least 200 women's studies texts and 30 video films on women's issues were made available for reference on the campus.

The participants formed themselves into three groups: Anveshana, Manavi, Chetana. They took turns chairing the classroom lectures, moderating discussions, and constituted a committee to look into any issues concerning interpersonal relations, logistics, accommodation, food, etc.

The primary objective of these group activities was to transform the individual experience of reading and researching into a collective one by facilitating interpersonal relations among the participants through sharing knowledge and developing reflective skills. Hence, the reading materials were grouped and classified thematically as well as discipline-wise to enable each participant to develop interdisciplinary learning skills and resource bases.

In their reflections on the Summer School process, participants wrote about the state of women's studies in India and regional variations in class and caste. They wrote that the school had:

- strengthened their understanding of the dimensions of gender and its interrelations with class, caste, religion, community, etc.;
- revealed in a stark manner, political aspects of violence through: (a) what a participant herself experienced on campus; and (b) state violence in Andhra and the attack on a popular cultural activist like Gaddar, who was originally scheduled to conduct a cultural workshop for the group;
- made an impact on self-awareness and confidence;
- made a participant say that she wished to become not just an academic but 'an active academic';
- created an awareness that the significance of women's studies was not recognised by people within the

- university and of the need to work in this area;
- provided the tools to link field experience with feminist theory;
- helped individual research both in terms of broadening understanding as well as making research more meaningful;
- enabled the understanding of the link between women's studies and the women's movement;
- facilitated sharing of personal experience within the group and participants on the whole;
- enabled the participants to acquire perspectives on feminism and the women's movement, and in understanding concepts like patriarchy and gender relations;
- created a sense of solidarity;
- transcended the rigid university structure, curriculum and emphasis on individual performance;
- linked gender issues with issues of caste, class and ethnicity.

Some felt that the course had enabled them to critically evaluate their own caste and class locations and understand the concept of 'personal as political' in the context of multiple and competing identities.

The public response to this institute has been very encouraging. *Vartha*, a Telugu daily and *India Today* (Telugu edition) carried features on the SSWS at the beginning and end of the course respectively. The All India Radio broadcast two half-hour features with interviews of students and course directors in Telugu and Hindi.

On the whole this was an extremely enriching experience for all those involved in the process: the sponsoring organisations, the team that conceptualised and conducted the course, the participants and the resource persons, and we hope we will be able to do this more often. The material distributed as part of the course is available for sale in bound volumes.

S Anandhi, Kalpana Kannabiran, Meera Velayudhan

ANNOUNCEMENTS



Women's media panel

Four women's organisations in West Bengal, Ganatantrik Mahila Samiti, Paschim Banga Mahila Samiti, Agragami Mahila Samiti and Nikhil Banga Mahila Sangha organised a convention on December 1, 1996 to explore the possibilities of withstanding the effects of cultural, imperialism and to

develop a struggle for the democratisation and qualitative upgradation of the media. Consequently a 'women and media' committee was set up, comprising representatives of the four women's organisations and some experts and activists, with Malini Bhattacharya as the convenor.

Lahore women's studies

A women's resource centre based in Lahore, ASR, has launched an Institute of Women's Studies that will offer residentially taught courses and a visiting Scholars' Programme to enable scholars and activists in Women's Studies to take some time off to read

and write on their own.

The first Certificate Course will begin in September 1997 and continue for 12 weeks. The medium of instruction will be English. For detailed information, write to:

Jasodhara Bagchi, School of Women's Studies, Jadavpur University, Calcutta 700 032 or Kalpana Kannabiran, Asmita Resource Centre for Women, H no. 45, Road no. 2, West Marredpalli, Secunderabad 500 026.

NOTE

Sunita Pathania (EC): New address D-8 Kurukshetra University Kurukshetra, Haryana Ph: 24076

Identifying Local Women's Issues

In response to the IAWS initiative to organise regional workshops, a consultation workshop on Identifying Local Women's Issues was held during January 13-15, 1997 at Thiruvananthapuram and was coordinated by Manu Bhaskar, EC Member, IAWS. The broad objectives were to bring academics and activists together and identify the pressing issues concerning women in different regions of the state. The workshop was to expose the urgent problems on which pamphlet and other reading materials in Malayalam could be prepared for a wide readership. Nearly 30 participants comprising teachers, researchers and activists from various districts participated in the three-day workshop. Besides, 30 postgraduate students of the Department of Sociology, University of Kerala, got an opportunity to be exposed to these discussions.

Saradamoni, Uma Devi and Manu Bhaskar initiated the discussions. Their presentations highlighted misconceptions and contradictions regarding women in Kerala and the urgent need to remove this smokescreen to bring out the realities about their actual status. The most glaring example one can cite is a kind of invisibility and subservience which women themselves appear to accept despite the educational opportunities which are open to them. Myths about higher levels of achievement by Kerala women have prevented the growth of women's studies and the women's movement in the state. This contradiction is getting sharper with the introduction of the New Economic Policy. Higher rates of unemployment affect the women directly and seriously in Kerala.



and, especially of the tribals; growing atrocities against women; water crisis; food security; impact of bio-technology and the menace of aquaculture; media invasion; unemployment; education; health; family and marriage; and the various policies affecting vulnerable groups such as tribals, dalits and the fishing community and especially pose a threat to women's survival.

Fatima Meer, who was in the city in connection with the International Film Festival of India, spent an afternoon with the participants to share her experience with the ANC and the African Women's movement. Sugatha Kumari, Chairperson, State Women's Commission, in her valedictory address appealed to the academics and activists to take greater cognisance of the deteriorating situation of women in Kerala.

Manu Bhaskar

VIIIth National Conference on Women's Studies

Survival & Sovereignty: Challenges to Women's Studies

Scheduled for June 1998

Venue to be decided

IAWS members are invited to send in their suggestions and comments regarding the sub-themes and the conference in general to the General Secretary's Office, Mumbai, by July 31, 1997



Food Security and Women's Access to Natural Resources

This workshop was jointly organised by the IAWS and the Unit for Women's Studies, TSS, on January 25-26, 1997. It was planned by Chhaya Datar as an EC member and also as Head of the Unit for Women's Studies, TSS. The core discussion was on the situation in two states, Maharashtra and Gujarat, in relation to the disastrous impact of industrialisation on land and water, leading to small and marginal farmers, landless labourers and artisans being deprived of their livelihoods within their traditional habitats. The deliberations aimed at strategies on how to restore the livelihood opportunities to these people, particularly the women who could not and did not want to migrate. We looked at the concrete experiences of many poverty alleviation, drought eradication and water conservation programmes. The main observation was that all these programmes aimed at development of assets but their design did not allow the women and men who work as labourers on the construction sites to have access to these assets.

Some case studies were presented on initiatives taken to build new institutions in such a way that women get access to land and water through negotiations with landowners who traditionally have access to credit and who benefit from any asset development policy. One paper argued that these ventures can be viable and funded through the normal channels of NABARD or any financial agency for rural development.

The participants were of two kinds: a) academics working on the issue of increasing priority to industrialisation over agriculture following the recent liberalisation policy; and b) persons working with the poverty alleviation and water conservation programmes as well as projects for stabilising the marginal farmers and landless labourers.

The following themes were discussed in four sessions:

- 1 In the face of change: Industrialisation, natural resources, gender, and the food security crisis;
- 2 Access to natural resources, poverty alleviation programmes and women;
- 3 Initiatives to create food security: Sharing experiences;
- 4 In the face of change: Laws related to access to land and water.

We ended with themes which need to be explored further in order to revamp the poverty alleviation and asset creation programmes such as watershed development with public funds.

This is being demanded by women at the grassroots level and should be adhered to by the government that agriculture, especially biomass regeneration, should be accorded priority in plan outlays within the legal regime that

lays down norms for the use of natural resources. The deliberations concentrated on the issue of efficient use of private and community fallow land, and the small plots in the dry land zones to provide livelihood for the resource poor women and men in the countryside.

AGENDA FOR FOLLOW-UP

We need to:

- assert that the government adopts a development policy that prioritises agriculture (biomass);
- document experiments related to productivity increase in biomass generation without using conventional methods of green revolution. The problems of up scaling capability of the new technology should be assessed;



- systematically offer alternatives to the present poverty alleviation programme, identifying groups experimenting with new methods of agriculture/biomass regeneration;
- document technological and socio-economic processes, and the issues which expose the contradiction within apparently homogenous communities;

- quantify the access to resources, and clarify what is access, how to get it, how much access is considered a minimum necessity, and how to prioritise such access;
- assert that our aim is not confined to the minimum agenda of how to cross the poverty line but also focus on building sustainable food and livelihood security for marginalised groups;

- explore legal issues for locating impediments to women's access to natural resources;

- enlarge watershed development programmes at four levels to increase availability of water to people dependent on them:

- † drinking water;
- † minimum assured water for foodgrains;
- † water for irrigation to produce commercial crops;
- † water for producing a progressively enlarged pool of fodder, fuel and timber for satisfying the needs of energy for the whole village, and the needs of raw material of artisans, who live off the biomass;

- explore how the decisions on crops are taken in the fragile environment and a highly fluctuating rainfall regime to understand the recent shift away from food crops. The perceptions of both the genders need to be recorded separately, to understand if at all there exists any division between women's and men's perception.

Chhaya Datar

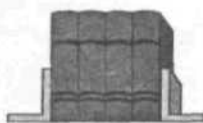


Material in Marathi

Maharashtra Stree Abhyas Wyaspeeth organised a workshop of college and university teachers at Pune on April 12 & 13, 1997.

The objective of this workshop was to prepare material in Marathi on topics from syllabus related to women. Teachers of different disciplines from eight out of 12 universities in Maharashtra attended and participated in the workshop. Discipline-wise groups were formed and the coordinators for each group were appointed. The groups decided to hold three more workshops to complete their work.

This workshop was held under the IAWS scheme for holding regional workshops. Rohini Gawankar and Chhaya Datar are in charge of this series of workshops.



Material in Gujarati

The committee to prepare material in Women's Studies in Gujarati met at SNDT Women's University on January 24 & 25, 1997.

The members had an intense discussion on women's issues and the present debates in women's studies ranging from changing dimensions of family to challenges before women's

movements. It was felt that though there is a growing demand for material on such topics in Gujarati from students, teachers and grassroots level workers, there is dearth of relevant material.

The available materials are often dispersed and inadequate. There is need to put the data and material in one place, which will be helpful to academics and activists. It was agreed that there is an urgency to providing the material, which can clarify the basic concepts and can sensitively portray social realities.

The members, therefore, at the end of two days' detailed discussions, arrived at certain specific programmes. Several topics were considered for this purpose.



VIth National Women's Movement Conference

We from various women's groups and movements from different parts of the country, will be meeting for the Sixth National Conference at Ranchi, Bihar during December 28-30, 1997, where we hope to share our experiences, insights, struggles, and strategies with each other. We shall celebrate our coming together, dance, sing, be with each other. We invite all women in agreement with our declaration to come to the conference, share their works, ideas and creativity.

- ✓ Remember to register before October 31, 1997. Registration for this conference is compulsory. Organisers are responsible to arrange food only for those who register before the deadline.

Registration rates: Rs 150 or Rs 300 (please contribute Rs 300 if you can do so)

- ✓ Volunteer for the different tasks at the conference.
- ✓ If you want to contribute to any of the themes in the conference, conduct a workshop, talk about your activities, have a poster exhibition, etc., then please get in touch with the Forum Against Oppression of Women, 29 Bhatia Bhawan, Babrekar Marg (off Gokhale Road), Dadar West, Mumbai 400 028.
- ✓ Do collect donations for the conference and send them to the SCC at Ranchi. Remember to make your cheques and drafts in the name of 'Nari Mukti Sangharsh Samimelan'.

Note: The conference had to be planned in the December holidays. Within these the only possible dates were chosen. We are aware the month of Ramzan begins on December 29 or 30. It is not possible to shift the dates but we will surely make arrangements for *Iftaar* and *Sehri* for those of us who are fasting for Ramzan. Please let us know what all we need to do as organisers to make your participation in the conference possible.

Please write to the **State Coordination Committee** for registration forms at:
c/o late N K Banerjee, Women's College Lane, Nagratoli, Ranchi 834 001



Eastern Region Perspective for the 9th Plan

For the eastern region, Nirmala Banerjee had the dual responsibility of organising one workshop under the IAWS theme of Survival and Sovereignty as well as another one in the UNIFEM series of regional workshops on women's perspectives for the 9th Plan. Since the audiences and concerns for both themes were very similar, she combined the two under a common banner with the help of the Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, and organised a two-day joint workshop in Calcutta on 14-15 January, 1997.

The workshop drew representatives of women's organisations, scholars working on related issues, as well as representatives of the UNIFEM. The participants came from West Bengal, Bihar, Orissa, Assam, Tripura, Manipur and Meghalaya. In spite of considerable efforts, communications difficulties prevented us from getting delegates from the other northeastern states. Several of them did manage to send brief notes incorporating their ideas.

Nonetheless, a few organisations and individuals from that region have expressed a need for a separate IAWS workshop in the region. IAWS would be happy to support such an effort later this year provided there are sufficient funds.

The workshop dealt with three broad themes:

- 1 economic empowerment;
- 2 basic needs and food security;
- 3 instruments for women's empowerment.

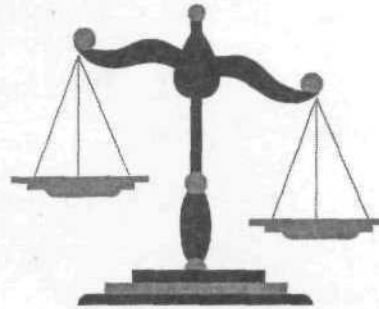
Among its major recommendations, the group emphasised the need for a more positive attitude to women's empowerment, delinking it from the usual household poverty alleviation programmes. The requirements of women working in urban areas and away from home were highlighted.

For health, it was felt that the nation should adopt a women-centred approach in order to make the system truly sensitive to the needs of the deprived. The workshop felt that, instead of merely talking about public programmes for women's education, there was a need to note the negative role played by families in this context. It was also felt that women's organisations should start questioning the tendency to lock women into traditional roles and occupations.

Greater exposure to technological knowledge and equipment is essential and women need more information and transparency about the policies and developments being formulated. The lack of awareness of women's specific problems on the part of the officials dealing with programmes for them was repeatedly emphasised.

Above all participants, specially from the northeast, pleaded urgently for peace and an end to insurgency and violation of human rights.

Nirmala Banerjee



81st Amendment Bill 1996

On February 23, 1997, the Indian Association of Women's Studies and the School of Women's Studies, Jadavpur University, organised a one-day seminar to discuss the 81st Amendment Bill 1996, which seeks

to secure reservation of one-third seats for women in the Lok Sabha and the State Legislative Assemblies. The main objective of the seminar was to analyse the multiple layers of ideas, possibilities and choices that are embedded in the demand for reservation. This was viewed as part of the larger demand for women's participation as decision-makers in political processes, a necessary component of social transformation.

The speakers in the first session were Ela Bhatt, eminent activist and founder of SEWA, and Devaki Jain, noted academic and feminist activist. This session, chaired by Geeta Mukherjee, MP, opened up some of the confusions, questions and doubts about the issue, particularly the much-debated problem of reservation as an undemocratic concept incompatible with the demand for equality. Bhatt supported reservation for women on the grounds of solidarity, but believed it would be a more sustainable change if women fought for stronger representation within their respective parties. She felt that women should mobilise and pressurise political parties to give more tickets to women, as well as to collectively formulate a common vision of the future of India. Devaki Jain saw reservation as a necessary initial 'shock treatment' to shatter the hard rock of patriarchy and the myths that women do not understand/are not capable of real political participation. According to Jain, the next step would be to further women's leadership and show that representation can be real, that power can be used to improve the quality of life.

The second session was chaired by Bharati Ray, MP. The speakers were Malini Bhattacharya, noted academic, activist and parliamentarian, and Samita Sen, Department of History, Calcutta University. Bhattacharya analysed the entire debate on reservation, looking towards the future and trying to understand how the politics of the future can be influenced by the legal and constitutional changes that reservation would bring about. Admitting the pitfalls that lay in the way of being given quotas, she saw it as an essential entry point for women if any kind of empowerment is to come to them collectively. Sen focused on the confusions arising from the political concepts that underlie the question of reservation and analysed some of the arguments against the Bill. Her conclusion was in support of reservation, but with a major input of political will into the women's movement.

The general consensus of this widely-attended seminar was in favour of reservation, but as an imperfect beginning of a process which could only be taken to some desired goal by the women's movement in India.

Shivani Banerjee Chakravarty



Post-Beijing Review and Action



The first Conference on Post-Beijing Review and Action organised by the National Alliance of Women over February 17-19, 1997, provided a rare opportunity for women from all over India to share their concerns regarding the Post-Beijing scenario. The conference was organised to link up micro issues to the macro level, and to develop strategies for the implementation of the Platform for Action relevant to all women, in particular, the grassroots. The aim of the conference was also to review the commitments made by the Government of India in Beijing.

This national conference had the endorsement of more than 15 state-level consultations. The issues and concerns expressed in these deliberations highlighted the negative impact of liberalisation on women, emphasising the process of feminisation of poverty, the growing violence against women. Another major concern was the low priority and response shown to the 81st Amendment.

The regional and sub-regional issues which came up were growing militarisation in the northeast, violation of human rights, deterioration of health and PDS, rising communalism and non-implementation of some of the major programmes and policies promised by the government. Concern was also shown about the ineffective functioning of many state women's cells for prevention of crime against women, the lack of social security systems for women and children, also child prostitution and sex-tourism.

The conference had a panel discussion on the 9th Plan, PFA document, CEDAW and women's human rights. These sessions expressed concern regarding women and budgetary provision in the 9th Plan Document. However, it was felt that gender issues need not be ghettoised as women's concerns and directed to the Department of Women and Child Welfare. The perception of women in other departments such as Rural Development, Agriculture, Education, Labour, Home and Law and Judiciary should be integrated.

Regarding the 9th Five-Year Plan allocation, participants were anxious as there has been no provision for gender-sensitisation programmes in areas like health. Without gender-sensitisation programmes specifically in this sector where women are present in large numbers as functionaries would lead to a situation of women being merely used as an implementation force, rather than women being active facilitators of change.

The conference included regional group discussions, and state group discussions. Many state-level specific concerns were raised and the need for preparing information in regional languages, exchange programme within the country and building up of sub-regional committees was also voiced. In most of the states the summary of PFA has been translated into regional languages and circulated.

Women Writing in Telugu

The Telugu Department, Padmavathi Women's University, Tirupathi and Asmita Resource Centre for Women, Hyderabad, conducted a National Seminar on Women Writing in Telugu in Tirupathi, on February 22-23 1997, to commemorate the birthcentenary of Kanaparthy Varalakshamma, a prolific novelist and poet, and a committed women's rights activist. Through her column 'Sarada's letters' in the periodical *Gruhalakshmi*, she raised several important issues relating to women's political consciousness. She not only wrote about the need to assert women's suffrage, but also campaigned door-to-door on this issue.

In the inaugural session of the seminar, Vijayalakshmi gave a biographical sketch of Kanaparthy Varalakshamma. This was followed by an introduction to the seminar by Kusurna Kumari, Head of the Department of Telugu, Padmavathi University, Volga, feminist writer and poet, delivered the keynote address on 'Women's Literary History: An Analysis'.

She traced the history of Telugu literature in three phases. The first phase, which has continued through time, consists of women who, in their writing, tread paths defined by men. The significant point to note here is that it is a phase in which women simply write, not in the self-conscious way of women writing as women. From the 1950s, Volga traced the second phase in which women through their writing question discrimination, societal values that assume double standards, and assert their rights as women. This phase has, if anything, grown stronger and more articulate over the past few decades.

The third phase — which logically follows from the second — can be traced to the beginning of the decade of the 1990s. In this phase, women have begun to explore their identities, and explore their freedom and the possibilities for self-expression alongside addressing issues of oppression and discrimination. This phase, it appears, has immense possibilities today, especially because social movements and realities now lay greater emphasis on culture and provide greater opportunity for self-expression and positive reflection.

After this there were a range of papers presented by faculty and staff of various universities and writers and poets on the history of and trends in Telugu literature, right from Muddupalani's *Radhika Santuwanam* to contemporary Dalit feminist writing. There was a rich discussion on feminist literary criticism, which raises the hope that it will set the trend for literary criticism in Telugu in the future.

Among the resource persons for the seminar were Tammareddi Nirmala from Nagarjuna University, Katayani Vidmahe from Kakatiya University, and Cheluri Rama Rao from Hyderabad. Among the feminist writers who took an active part were Kodepudi Nirmala, Patibandla Rajini and Challapalli Swaroopa Rani. Students of Padmavathi University took an active part in the discussion which followed.

Volga



Rethinking Media: Gender, Globalisation and Social Change

The two-day workshop, organised by the Centre for the Study of Culture and Society and Anveshi Research Centre for Women's Studies, was conducted in four sessions over February 22-23. In the inaugural session, Tejaswini Niranjana, one of the workshop coordinators, explained how the idea of the workshop arose from a widespread dissatisfaction with existing material on the media, particularly the electronic media.



The changes taking place in our society were extremely complex, but the media materials have been wholly inadequate in addressing them. Also, there seems to be a mismatch between the theoretical models invoked by writers and specific Indian conditions of readership/viewship and production. The task of the workshop, it was suggested, should be to help create new conceptual vocabularies to understand the implications of current media developments.

The first keynote paper — 'An Agenda for TV Studies in India' by Madhava Prasad (Calcutta) — emphasised the fact that one could no longer speak of a National television in India, that we could not evade the question of global television. This was different from the field of cinema, where the national was an obvious point of reference. Instead of speaking of 'Indian television', Prasad argued, it might be more useful to speak of Indian interventions in television studies.

The post-lunch session was devoted to three presentations by young scholars who had been part of the study group leading up to the workshop. In his paper entitled 'Fans, Families and Censorship', S V Srinivas (Hyderabad University) spoke about the controversy over the recent Chiranjeevi starrer, *Alluda Majaaka*, delineating the complicated social and political issues involved in the denunciation of the film by women's groups of different ideological persuasions.

Uma Maheswari (Hyderabad University) and Madhumita Sinha (CIEFL) talked about 'Gender and Regional Language Newspapers' — their case study presenting the role played by *Eenadu* in supporting the anti-arrack movement led by rural Andhra women in 1992. Viewing the newspaper's activities partly as a larger strategy to ensure its dominance of the regional press, they also indicated that the seemingly positive portrayals of women in the newspaper might have actually reinforced existing stereotypes.

Satish Poduval (CIEFL) discussed 'Television and Nationalism in India', focusing on the early initiatives (SITE) which first brought television to our country. Scientists such as Sarabhai spoke of using satellite technology to bypass illiteracy and quicken the development process through an "electronic injection of modernity".

On the second day, Ashish Rajadhyaksha (Bangalore), in his keynote paper 'Addressing the State', talked about the

need to understand the electronic media through three histories: that of the nation-state as producer, manager and mediator of the media. In the Nehru era, it was urged that we adopt the BBC model and questions of citizenship at the time were intimately related to the aesthetic of realism; in the 70s, the state increasingly shifted to a managerial function; and today, in the regime of a new nationalism, the state assists in making the 'nation' mediate between the global and the local.

This was followed by another keynote paper by Vinod Pavarala (Hyderabad) — 'Audience Research: Problems and Possibilities'. He gave an overview of the prevailing theoretical models for studying media audiences, referring to successful studies such as the one by David Morley on the 'Nationwide' audience in England. He pointed out that what we were seeing today was a major advance from older conceptualisations, which tended to think of the audience in homogeneous terms.

The concluding session had presentations by two younger scholars, Meghna Haldar (Hyderabad University) and Jayasree Kalathil (CIEFL), followed by a personalised account of feminist film-making by documentary filmmaker Deepa Dhanraj (Bangalore). Meghna presented the findings of a pilot study on representation of rape in Hindi cinema and the reactions of actual audiences to such depiction. Jayasree spoke about Doordarshan's women's programming and the way in which such programmes 'imagined' an audience. She matched DD's viewership figures with a brief survey of actual viewers and their programme choices, suggesting that the concept of 'women's programmes' depended on the notion that only women watched them, and also on the idea that the audience had a certain profile in terms of class-caste, which was not really the case.

Dhanraj gave an account of how her earlier films envisaged the women's movement as their primary audience, and, therefore, took for granted a certain narrative of heroic action. Filmic modes of representation contributed only to strengthening this image, often fudging by omission the complex difficulties of organising for social change. She showed excerpts from her recent films which were part of a unique experiment in training women for participation in the Panchayati Raj.

The sessions were attended by about 45 people. It was suggested that we plan another workshop for next year to build on the gains of the present one. Most of the papers from this workshop will be revised and published in a special issue of the *Journal of Arts and Ideas*. This would facilitate rethinking not only about media but also women's interventions in media-related issues.

Tejaswini Niranjana



Pakistan-India People's Forum for Peace and Democracy

This forum organised its third joint conference in Calcutta over December 28-31, 1996. The Gender Session — Social, Political and Cultural Resistance of Women in India and Pakistan — focused on three broad areas: militarisation and state violence against women; cross-national trafficking in women; women against communalism; and cultural resistance and gender-just laws.

The critique of militarisation raised crucial points from a gender perspective. It emphasised that militarisation and nuclear proliferation took place at the expense of much needed development in the social sector, and that it promoted the aggressive cult of masculinity. Rita Manchanda stressed that the point was not that women were more peaceful than men, but that they were more vulnerable to the diversion of funds from areas such as health, food, education etc., as they have to bear the responsibility of running homes and rearing families.

As this is still a nascent area of women's resistance, it is crucial to assess both — the roles women have played, and the reasons for their limitations. Questions raised included: what kind of roles had women played for peace in situations of ethnic, communal and Indo-Pak conflict; why do women working for peace become weakened in these situations even after having worked strongly for it; while women's fundamentalist groups have been formed in Kashmir, why have women's resistance groups like the Mothers' Front of Women in Black not come up in India and Pakistan.

Sheen Faroukh thoroughly endorsed these views. She pointed out that discrimination against women, no reservation of seats in parliament, and enforcement of the guardianship of husbands or fathers over women were all integral aspects of state violence. These, too, should be confronted along with the physical violence such as torture and killings masterminded by the state.

Bela Bandyopadhyay introduced the issue of cross-national trafficking in women between India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka, and to the Gulf Countries from South Asia. The rapid increase in such trade in recent years has become a cause of concern. Though there is some information on this trade between India and Bangladesh, little is known about the situation in Pakistan.

While some delegates claimed that Pakistan is used only as a transit stop for trafficking to the Gulf, others such as Rao Abid emphasised that it was a problem in Pakistan though the number of women involved was smaller than that of the other South Asian countries. Hence, this is a crucial issue to be addressed jointly, specially because of the condition of hundreds of sex-workers languishing in jails without any hope of returning to their countries for lack of documents and finances, and because of the

complete reluctance of their governments to ever acknowledge these women as citizens, far less play an active role in preventing cross-national trafficking. Fauzia Saeed illustrated the difficulties of dealing with the situation, citing a case where a Pakistani activist had to fly all the way to Bangladesh and get massive press coverage on the condition of Bangladeshi women smuggled into Pakistan for the government to initiate any action.

The discussion on women against communalism began with the emphasis that all the five major religions of the world — Islam, Hinduism, Christianity, Judaism and Sikhism — are patriarchal and discriminate against women. Rifat Hassan stated that though these religions have been negatively used against women, they also have resources that can be developed positively for them. Criticising the discrimination against women in the name of Islam, she asserted that the Quran actually gives women many special rights, and that its ethical principles should form the basis of the paradigm for Muslim women.

Aparna Bhattacharya voiced a problem regarding the implementation of such changes in other contexts such as the Indian one. She said that while progressive laws have been implemented in

Pakistan vis-a-vis the regulation of the talaq procedure, or the modification of the right to bigamy, in India, however, the move to implement such changes becomes a question of endangering a minority identity.

Ratnabali Chatterjee asserted that the struggle against communalism should be forged on the basis of cultural identity, of a common idiom of resistance shared across different religions. She and Teesta Setalvad focused on the importance of addressing the problem of the increasing number of religious fanatics such as the Sandhvis, and how they divide women in their gender identities against each other into two communal groups. Hence a joint cultural and legal struggle against the effects of communalism on women is the need of the day.

Participants decided that at the next convention there should be an attempt to organise group meetings with local women's organisations working on gender issues that are of concern to the Pakistan-India Forum.

In view of the lack of gender justice in the existing legal systems in both countries, a committee has been set up to formulate a joint Charter of Egalitarian Principles that should govern the laws in practice in each country, be they personal, religious or civil. Further, it should be the deciding factor in each case relating to gender justice and the Forum should lobby with the governments of the two countries to commit themselves to this charter.

Kavita Panjabi





Women on the Internet

For those involved with feminist research and/or women's studies, the Internet provides access to a wide variety of resources globally. *Electronic Access to Research on Women* by Judith Hudson and Kathleen A Turek¹ will, hopefully, give readers a sampling of what is out there and some helpful places to get started. Almost all the information presented here has been retrieved from sources on the Internet. Other helpful books are Laura Hunt's *Sources of Women's Studies/Feminist Information on the Internet*,² Joan Koreman's *Gender Related Electronic Forums*³ and the WMST-L list. Our thanks to all of them for gathering and sharing this information.

ELECTRONIC LISTS

Probably the most frequently used application of the Internet is e-mail. However, in addition to sending and receiving messages between individuals, you can also subscribe to a number of electronic fora. These are generally lists where you receive messages by e-mail or newsgroups.

There are dozens of lists on topics which are of interest to women focusing on areas of academe, profession, sexuality, health and more. WOMEN⁴ describes itself as a "general purpose list, intended to be a connection between all women's groups and areas of interest for women and their friends." You subscribe to lists by sending an e-mail message (usually SUBSCRIBE LISTNAME YOUR NAME) to an address run by automated software. You should receive a confirmation message and mail from the list.

WMST-L is an academic list for the discussion of Women's Studies teaching, research, and program administration. Subscribers have the opportunity to exchange information about teaching strategies, current research, and funding for text and film suggestions for courses, research sources, and programme development. WMST-L also posts conference, calls for papers, and job announcements and maintains an online collection of syllabi, bibliographies and other files, including the one referenced here entitled OTHER LISTS. To subscribe send the message SUBSCRIBE WMST-L YOUR NAME to listserv@umdd.umd.edu.

ECOFEM focuses on women and the environment. Send subscription requests to listserv@csf.colorado.edu.

SOUTH ASIAN WOMEN'S NET is for and

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about women from South Asian countries. It is open only to women. Send subscription requests to listserv@magnus.acs.ohio-state.edu.

WMN-HLTH is a Women's Health Electronic News Line sponsored by the Centre for Women's Health Research. Send subscriptions requests to listserv@wavn.u.washington.edu.

NEWSGROUPS

Newsgroups offer the opportunity to ask questions and exchange information. Messages are posted to electronic bulletin boards which can be accessed through programmes such as tin or rn. Soc.women, soc.feminism and soc.gender-issues are three newsgroups which may be of particular interest to women researchers.

FILE RETRIEVAL

Copies of syllabi, film reviews, bibliographies, papers, and more can be retrieved by gopher, telnet, or ftp. You can often request that a file be sent to you via e-mail. In addition to the Internet guides noted here, the University of Maryland WMST-L Data Archive offers categories such as calls for papers, conferences, employment, government and politics and gender issues.

The History of Women and Science, Health and Technology: A Bibliographic Guide to the Professions and the disciplines is available via gopher to WISCIN FO.WISE.EDU.

WORLD WIDE WEB

WWW organises information available on the Internet by subject headings. By linking sites together, as well as files, WWW simplifies access to a wide range of information including files in gopher and ftp directories.

Under Women's Studies, selecting "For some interesting links" connects you to a menu from which you may access the PeaceNet's Women's Gopher, The Ada Project (Women in Computing), Breast Cancer Information Clearinghouse, the Women's Wire Gopher, and more.

Other Web pages include Sara Stapleton-Gray's page for feminists who are political activists at <http://www.clark.net/pub/s-gray/feminist.html>. Topics include Communicating with other Feminists, Current Feminist Issues: News and Resources, Women's Organisation, and Feminist Resources.

Help menus are available on virtually all programmes and most information about resources include instructions on how to get there. Additionally, on line help is available by e-mail to either consult or postmaster (for e-mail help).

¹This text can be accessed by telnet or gopher to INFORM.UMD.EDU. Select 4 Educational Resources; 2. Academic Resources by Topic; 11 Women's Studies Resources; 5. computing; 3. Guides to the Internet; and 1. guide by Hudson and Turek.

²To access Laura Hunt's guide telnet or gopher to INFORM.UMD.EDU. Proceed as in above except for the last step where you should select 2. guide by hunt.

³Joan Korenman's list is available by sending the message GET OTHER LISTS to LISTSERV@UMDD.UMD.EDU; via gopher to UMBC.EDU, choose Academic Department Information, then Women's Studies, then Electronic Forums of Interest to Women; on WWW, the url is <http://www-unix.umbc.edu/~koreman/wmst/>

⁴To subscribe to WOMEN, send the message SUBSCRIBE WOMEN to MAJOR DOMO@WORLD.STD.COM.

Gender information

To understand the scope of gender and development information, an Eastern Regional Training Workshop on Information Services in Gender, Development and Culture was organised by the School of Women's Studies, Jadavpur University, in December 1996, in collaboration with the Centre for Women's Development Studies, New Delhi.

The objective of this workshop was to counter the process through which the dissemination of information is manipulated in order to perpetuate cultural myths that keep women subordinated. This six-day workshop was planned to strengthen the professional skills of gender and culture-related information givers. Participants of the workshop included policy makers, programme planners, implementers, mass media personnel, NGO activists and grassroots level women.

Sarbani Goswami



Conversations — VI

And I answered:
 Mother, do you see my
 nightmare too?
 Or have you, mother,
 written tonight
 of your grandmother
 long gone, forgotten by me,
 but not by you. When your
 mother had protested – No.
 Don't let your daughter go
 It is a faraway land, unknown.
 You had asked her if she
 would live her life again
 or mine. And she had cried.
 Yes mother, as I move and
 give birth to my dreams, I
 give birth to you.
 In your hands I have seen
 plants grow, weeds flower
 cries turn to laughter.
 in your eyes I have known
 storms that swept away
 any hand raised on me,
 but I have also seen
 those winds turn on
 themselves, your hands forming
 broken motions. Today I see
 You hurling stones in the sea spray,
 laughing as you lift your arm
 in the wind. I smile even
 when the poem you send me
 writhes in the pain and fury of your
 forgotten friend on my desk.

Shalini Mahajan

TO IAWS MEMBERS

Many copies of the *Newsletter* have been returned to us, so in order to help ensure that it reaches you, please check the name and address on your label. Make sure they are complete and correct, including the pin code.

In case you have not received your copy of the *Newsletter*, please let us know. In both cases write in to the IAWS central office in Mumbai.

The trouble is ...

The trouble
 between you and us
 said the woman
 to the forest official
 is simply this
 you want
 the trees dead
 they are timber
 and money to you
 we want
 to live with them
 they give us fodder
 for our cattle
 and fruits
 for the children
 and shade
 to rest in
 even air
 to breathe
 and fuel
 to cook on
 if we cut
 it is like killing
 a child

The trouble is
 between you and us
 said the woman
 to the development workers
 is simply this
 you rape
 Mother Earth
 she is money to you
 you rip it off
 you poison her
 you make her bear
 three crops
 in a year
 can I bear
 three children
 in a year?
 will she not die?
 Does she not
 need rest?
 Can we sell
 our mother
 when she is destitute?
 Do we not feed her
 clothe her nakedness?

The trouble is
 between you and us
 said the fisherwoman
 to the fisherman
 is simply this
 you rape Kadalamma
 with your technology
 you think
 fish is money
 and you want
 to fish more
 to make more
 But the children
 cannot eat
 money
 the money
 eats us
 your debts
 suck the marrow
 from our bones
 you drink
 you beat us
 you make the sea
 go empty.

The trouble is
 with ourselves
 said the women
 among each other
 is simply this
 We do not rely
 on ourselves
 We do not know
 that we know
 we only cook
 and give suck
 and rock the cradle
 and toil
 from morning
 to night
 and cry
 our hearts out
 amidst violence
 When will we take
 our hearts
 into our hands
 and quietly learn
 to run the world
 ever so gently?

Gabriele Dietrich



**School of Women's Studies,
Jadavpur Univ., Calcutta**

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- ☐ *Calcutta for Women: A Critical Directory of Organisations Working on Women within Municipal Calcutta*, Jasodhara Bagchi, Manjula Bose, Jaba Guha & Debjani Sarkar (ed.). 1990

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- ☐ *Right to Health: Towards Assuming It Oneself*, A health manual on women and children (in Bengali) prepared by Krishna Banerjee
- ☐ *Satabarshe Ashalata Sen*, Jasodhara Bagchi & Abhijit Sen (ed.). Calcutta: School of Women's Studies & Stree, 1995
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- ☐ *Beneficiary Assessment of Poor Women in Rural West Bengal: The Case of Birbhum*, Dilip Kumar Ghosh. State Institute of Rural Development, Occasional Paper no. 1, First Series, 1996
- ☐ *Coming of Women into Panchayati Raj*, Ashim Mukhopadhyay. Occasional Paper no. 2, First Series, 1996

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Women's Studies**

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**Women's Studies Research
Centre, Calcutta University**

- ☐ *Detecting Disadvantages—A pilot study of Scheduled Caste women in two districts of West Bengal*, Bharati Ray (Project Director), WSRC, CU, 1994
- ☐ *From the Seams of History: Essays on Indian Women*, Bharati Ray (ed.), OUP, 1995
- ☐ *The Journal of Women's Studies*, Biannual: April & October; Editor: Bharati Ray, Associate Editor: Krishna Sen, CU, 1990
- ☐ *Sekaler Narisiksha: Bamabodhini Patrika*, CU Press, 1994
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Centre, MS Univ., Baroda**

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- ☐ *Women in Migration: Some Methodological Issues*, Kalpana Paralikar

The Akshara Handbook: An Alternative Classification & Documentation System — Information processing & dissemination from a feminist perspective, Lakshmi Menon & Nandita Gandhi

Akshara, 501 Neelambari, Rd no. 86, (opp. Portuguese Church), Dadar West, Mumbai 400 028



Sathins in distress

The Sathins, working at the lowest rung of the Women's Development Programme in Rajasthan, have managed to emerge as a significant woman's power during the last decade and mobilise rural women at the grassroots. In the face of enormous personal risk, they have faced opposition with tremendous courage.

However, during the past 12 years, the Sathin has been the target of constant departmental exploitation. Under the guise of being a 'voluntary worker', she is given a paltry honorarium of Rs 250 per month and there are no service rules or security of employment. For the past four years, the Sathins have been struggling for their just demands under the banner of the Sathin Karmchari Sangh. Today, when Sathins and village women are opposing anti-women processes, the Rajasthan government is showing indications of winding up the Sathin model of women's development. For the past five years, no new Sathins have been recruited, and out of the 2000 sanctioned Sathin posts, two-thirds are lying vacant.

Some demands of the Sathins:

- * the institution of Sathin be kept intact;
- * the Sathins be given a just wage, amounting at least to minimum wage;
- * departmental exploitation of the Sathins be immediately stopped;
- * village issues be given priority;
- * the process of deciding the future of the WDP be transparent and involve the Sathins.

Extend your solidarity to the Sathins' struggle. Send letters/telegrams to the Sathins at 78 Shanti Niketan Colony, Kisan Marg, Barkat Nagar, Jaipur. Telefax: 0141-591408; and to the Chief Minister, and Minister, Women and Child Development, Rajasthan, urging that the demands of the Sathins be met.



Give financial contribution to the Sathin Karmchari Sangh, 408/2 Anasagar Ghati, Gauri, Ajmer 305 001

Kesar Bai, Mahila Vikas Abhikaran Sathin Karmchari Sangh

Kausalya Devi

While expressing our grief and anger at the brutal killing of Chandrasekhar, former President of the JNU students' union, we cannot but take heart at the emergence of his mother Kausalya Devi as the rallying point of radical politics in the country.

Kausalya Devi was a poor village woman. Widowed when Chandrasekhar was a child, she waged a grim struggle to fulfil her dream of educating her only son. The dream turned into reality when Chandrasekhar moved into the hallowed campus of JNU for an MPhil. But it took an entirely new dimension as her son embraced revolutionary ideology and, after completing his studies, made a conscious choice to go back to his roots and work among the poor and exploited. Kausalya Devi stood by her son, indicating that Chandrasekhar's education was, in a way, also a process which led to the growth of consciousness of his mother.

Chandrasekhar and his comrade, Shyam Narain Yadav, were gunned down on March 31 at Siwan in central Bihar by killers hired by those who saw in him a threat to their vested interests. The incident has now snowballed into a militant movement for justice involving thousands of students from various universities from all over the country. The abrupt loss of her only and brilliant son has brought out the best of the ideals of motherhood in Kausalya Devi. She has not only refused to accept the Rs 1 lakh compensation offered to her by the Prime Minister but has also become the leading light in the agitation to bring the killers to book. Despite his premature demise, Chandrasekhar continues to live in Kausalya Devi.

I am sure IAWS will condemn this barbaric attack on Kausalya Devi's son and highlight the exemplary courage and spirit of an unknown Indian woman.

Sumit Chowdhury, Documentary Filmmaker

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 Rs 100 for 2 years
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I enclose herewith a demand draft/money order of Rs _____ made out to the Indian Association of Women's Studies.

Signature & date: _____ Address: _____

Name: _____

(please print)

Education: _____

Occupation: _____ (Please give pin code and phone number, if any)

Please fill in, detach and mail to:

Rohini Gawankar, Treasurer, IAWS, Shiv Prabha, 304 R K Vaidya Road, Dadar West, Mumbai 400 028