

Xth National conference held on 17-20th October, 2002 at Bhubaneswar, Katinga Institute of Industrial Technology
Organised by IAWS and Utkal University, Orissa.

Sub-theme: Special Plenary Session on Women and violence in Gujarat

1. *Srinivasan, Bina, Manjrekar, Nandini, Khanna, Renu, Shah, Trupti.* Women in a Fractured Society : The Gujarat Pogrom and After.
2. *Khan, Sophia.* Gujarat - India's laboratory of fascism.
3. *George, Sheba.* Women in the crossfire of the relentless siege on a religious Minority.

Our story, twenty years of IAWS.

4. *Bhagwat, Vidyut and Rege, Sharmila (Eds).* Our story, twenty years of IAWS.
5. *Bhatty, Zarina.* Indian Association for Women's Studies, its objectives and Growth.
6. *Lingam, Lakshmi.* Nuts and bolts of running the office of the general secretary.
7. *Mazumdar, Vina.* Greetings for the twenty year old, from one of the midwives.
8. *Desai, Neera.* IAWS, two decades of journey of tight rope walking between research and activism.
9. *Bhattacharya, Malini.* Women's studies, the last decade and challenges for the next .
10. In conversation with Jasodhara Bagchi: . Women's studies, looking back - looking forward.
11. *Datar, Chhaya.* IAWS plays an anchoring role for women's studies.
12. *Sharma, Kumud.* Regional seminars and workshops, building IAWS' resources and developing stronger links between academic pursuits and activist endeavors.
13. *John, Mary E.* Whither women's studies?

14. *Padia, Chandrakala*. Women's studies, the next decade.
15. *Varma, Rameshwari*. IAWS, a retrospective.
16. *Tambe, Anagha*. Mapping the themes in the IAWS conference, a journey through the last two decades.
17. *Dyhadroy, Swati*. When feminism network, IAWS newsletter in the last decade.
18. *Sen, Ilina*. Women's studies and the women's movement in the last decade of the twentieth century.
19. *Poonacha, Veena*. Women's studies and women's movement, resonating voices or discordant notes.
20. *Patel, Vibhuti*. Relationship of women's studies and women's movement (1992-2000)
21. *Verma, Amita*. Women's studies in Gujarat.
22. *Tambe, Shruti*. The Pioneer 'Sister Organization' of IAWS Maharashtra Stree Abhyas Vyaspeeth.
23. *Vasavi*. I.A.W.S. Jharkhand.
24. *Bhasin, Kamla*. Energizing conferencing remembering the spirit of IAWS conferences .
25. *Asmita Resource Centre*. We were making history, inaugurating conferences with histories of struggle.
26. *Kannabiran, Kalpana*. Presidential address.
27. Sustaining democracy, challenges in the new millennium – Book of abstract.



Sustaining Democracy:
Challenges in the New Millennium

President's Address
Zarina Bhatti

Xth National Conference of the
Indian Association for Women's Studies
17th -20th October 2002

Utkal University, Bhubaneswar, ORISSA

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

Zarina Bhatti

Dear Vice Chancellor, Prof. Pandav Nayak, Prof. Hassan, participants from abroad, friends and colleagues. It is my privilege to deliver the President's address to the 10th Biennial Conference of the Indian Association for Women's Studies, the first in this Millennium. This is a time both for reflection and for looking ahead. The future, from where we stand, is beckoning us with mixed messages - pessimistic as well as optimistic. The causes for pessimism cannot be overlooked; instead, there is need to reflect upon them for lessons to be learnt. There is also room for optimism. We must move with positive determination and embark on the path of recreating and innovating, to build a brighter future for all, men, women and children.

The theme of this Conference "Sustaining Democracy: Challenges in the New Millennium" is very apt at this juncture in our country, indeed even globally, when cracks have already begun to emerge in the secular democratic system of governance that free India adopted half a century ago. It is the right time now to fill these cracks before they become too wide and threatening. All of us assembled here, need to put our heads together to face the most important challenge of the ensuing century, that of sustaining democracy and its secular character in our country. In fact, it is now being widely recognised that there is a strong positive relationship between sustaining democratic institutions and achieving sustained development. Not surprisingly therefore the Human Development Report, 2002 has devoted itself to the close relationship between democratic institutions and development. Furthermore it points out, rather ominously, that a decline in democratic standards and sustained development has been observed in several developing countries.

It delights my heart, as one of the first members of the IAWS to see this imposing gathering of concerned women and some men. It also tempts me to

reminisce over how the Association has grown in twenty years of its existence from a humble beginning in 1980 at the S.N.D.T. Women's University in Bombay to this large gathering of committed scholars and activists.

Allow me to retrace briefly the history of IAWS. It is the story of the thinking, the academic vigor and the deep concern for development, in general, and for women in particular. This has brought us so far, and now beckons us to further enhance not only women's own position in society but also their contribution to national development, social, economic, political and ethical. Yes I said ethical too, because I believe that ethical standards, although forever changing, are an essential part of a nation's profile. Two ethical values are basic: equality with dignity for all and freedom - freedom of expression, freedom for an individual's right to choose and, particularly, to follow the faith of her/his choice and, above all, freedom for dissent with an assurance that dissent is respected. These ethical values constitute the foundation of the Indian Constitution. Our feminist scholars and activists, sharing these values, have steadfastly attempted to expose, through research and action; any erosion in the secular foundation of modern Indian society and have sought new paradigms to sustain our foundational values and ideals.

The need for women's studies was first felt when the Status of Women Committee Report was published under the auspices of the newly formed Indian Association of Social Science Research (I.C.S.S.R) in 1975. The Report laid bare the persisting gender inequalities and the grim realities of women's lives on which no impact of the Constitutional rights granted to them was visible. Women continued to lead lives of deprivation and oppression on account of their gender, often aggravated by class, caste and community. A number of studies and research projects were taken up to implement the recommendations of the Status of Women Committee Report. In the light of this, and encouraged by the positive and enthusiastic response of women's scholars and activists at the first women's Conference held in Bombay, such eminent leaders of the women's movement as, Neeraben Desai, Veena Majumdar, Devaki Jain, Madhuriben Shah, Jyoti Trevedi, Hemlata Swarup

and Mr. Shankar Narayan, then Addl Secretary, University Grants Commission and several others, decided to lay the foundation of the Association. Thus was born the Indian Association for Women' Studies.

The Association has proved to be worthy of the trust placed in it. Activists and academics both have enriched each other's domain of activity by collaborating and supporting each other. Feminist scholars have not confined themselves to the ivory tower of secluded learning but, from the beginning, have been a part of the movement, supporting the activists with the findings of their research as well as with their insights into the society and the polity. Likewise activists have enriched the scholars with their empirical data and inspired them with their altruistic enthusiasm. The term 'Action Oriented Research", which has been coined in India, bears witness to this relationship between the two segments of concerned women, who have shared their common objective of sustaining and promoting the advancement of women and society.

Historically the genesis of women's studies rested in gathering more and more information on women's condition, focusing particularly on quantitative data. This made it possible to look at the indicators on birth and mortality rates, sex ratio, extent and nature of women's participation in economic and political life, literacy rates for men and women, levels of educational achievement and health status of women.

The seventies witnessed a shift in the paradigm of development itself. Instead of relying solely on quantitative economic indicators of development, social indicators came to be recognised as crucial in measuring development. As this understanding grew, it posed a methodological problem: what methodology to use and how to make the existing social science methodology relevant. The response to this problem eventually led to a shift in the approach to women's issues from welfare orientation, based primarily on simple quantitative analysis, to one backed with more academic and analytical sophistication. The paradigm shift also caused a change in focus from just women to women in society and, more specifically, their role and contribution to the development of Indian society.

A new brand of feminist academician emerged, one who searched for knowledge about women in society and thought in terms of an integration of gender perspective with other disciplines, be it social sciences, hard sciences, humanities or literature. The Indian Council for Social Science Research established a number of Centres, among them the Centre for Women's Development Studies (CWDS) in New Delhi, which has contributed enormously to the understanding of gender in society, and in integrating gender in the system of higher education. At the same time a few other private women's study centers also came into existence, notable among them was the Indian Social Science Trust (ISST) in Delhi, which subsequently opened a branch in Bangalore. Women's Study Unit at the S.N.D.T. University had already been busy conducting research and teaching on women's issues. These and other such institutes have been engaged in developing relevant research methodologies and evaluation techniques, clarifying concepts, developing gender sensitive development indicators as well as new and more relevant analytical tools. In the meanwhile feminist scholars have put pressure on the government to respond to the growing demand for funding feminist research and for incorporating women's studies into the higher education system.

It was a stroke of luck or a benign act of providence that, just at this juncture the University Grants Commission decided to appoint a woman Chairperson of the eminence of Madhuriben Shah., who had been a Vice Chancellor of S.N.D.T. Women's University, Bombay, and had been deeply interested in women's development. It was she who decided, after the very positive experience of the first women's Conference in Bombay, and noticing the enthusiasm of women scholars, to set up Women's Study Centres in Universities and Colleges.

Women's Study Centres (WSCs) were started to promote research - both academic and action oriented - teaching and advocacy. The WSCs have most significantly contributed to starting a dialogue in multi-discipline collaboration which, among other gains, has surfaced related concerns of methodology and, at the same time, has created a space for women's

studies vis-à-vis other disciplines within the system of higher education. IAWS has been instrumental in establishing networks between WSCs and other private research centers outside the University system. Regional workshops and biennial conferences of the IAWS have focussed on relevant gender issues and provided a platform for academics and activists from all four corners of the country to come and share their scholarship and experiences. Due to the opportunity thus made available, a great deal of information has been generated, which has helped the establishment of a number of Documentation Centres in the country. Conferences, such as this one, as well as workshops, have initiated dialogues between scholars in different disciplines which, in turn, has led to multi-disciplinary collaboration in the structuring of gender as an area of study. However, given the rigidity of the University system, the introduction of courses on gender, at the undergraduate and graduate levels is proving a difficult task. There is little scope for innovation within the system and attaining a faculty status for women's studies in the system of higher education still seems a long way off. Paucity of financial resources, heavy teaching load in colleges, tedious and time-consuming procedures have impeded progress in this direction.

Another reason for non-acceptance of women's studies as a full-fledged discipline is that it does not open up new job opportunities while existing employment opportunities are limited both within and outside the University system. Since the nature of women's studies is essentially multi-disciplinary, their relationship to other more rigidly defined disciplines is vague and has caused social scientists to be disinclined to own women's studies their discipline.

Despite these constraints women's studies have been gaining ground and while they have not gathered enough mass to be accepted as a separate discipline, their inter-disciplinary character is receiving more and more acceptance and a gender perspective is being incorporated in courses and syllabi in a number of Universities. There does exist, however, a body of opinion that questions the need for regarding women's studies as a separate discipline and wonders whether gendering disciplines will not serve the same

purpose. Further debate on this issue is needed, though personally I feel that it is not an either/or question because the processes of gendering disciplines and of building a separate discipline can be pursued simultaneously.

As is well known the greatest challenge in India is poverty and socio-economic disparities. Developmental efforts to narrow the gap between the rich and the poor, between men and women have not been particularly successful. On the contrary, poverty has come to be increasingly feminised and the emerging economic and socio-cultural challenges have affected women adversely. Economic forces of globalisation are further complicating the situation by imposing a uniform coca cola culture. These are hidden forces which are restricting choices and creating a consumer oriented culture dictated by aggressive advertising with the sole purpose of maximising profit for a few. Introduction of new technology, opening of the Indian economy to multi-nationals, communication invasion, increasing access to information and the rise in consumerism are all leading to a heightened sense of deprivation in the socially and economically disadvantaged classes. Simultaneously, a growing awareness of basic human rights is creating counter-productive tensions, especially in a situation where the Government is unable to handle them. As always happens, tensions, bred by rapid socio-economic changes and crisis situations, lead to deterioration in women's condition, particularly in the case of poor women.

The emerging new brand of fundamentalism, both in the majority and the minority community, is promoting religion-based identities and separatism, destroying thereby the familiar and accepted notion of nationhood in India. These forces in the majority community are trying to impose majoritarianism by invoking ancient traditions and culture, and with the help of a partisan interpretation, attempting to imbue it with moral justification. Because to link patriotism to the past it is necessary to glorify the past, an attempt is being made not only to reinterpret history but even to invent it. Minorities are expected to derive their patriotism from loyalty to the glorious past and if this loyalty is not visible in a credible manner, their patriotism is questioned.

These self-styled protectors of Indian culture are negating the notion of 'unity in diversity' which for long has been the hall mark of Indian civilisation. India has absorbed in the past a variety of races, religions and cultures. A tolerant and open door attitude to a multiplicity of cultures and the availability of multiple cultural choices has been the most enriching factor of our composite culture. The variety of races, faces, languages, dresses, architectural styles, cuisine, music that has decorated the Indian cultural landscape has been unique in the world. And it is this uniqueness that is under siege today.

Conceptualisation of the Indian civilisation by the fundamentalists has given women a central position. But, while Indian womanhood has been perceived differently at different junctures in Indian history, the recent rhetoric of revivalism requires her to uphold the ancient virtues of modesty, chastity and sacrifice. Hence the imposition of dress code on women and the disfiguring of young women's faces if they dare ignore the dictates of the fundamentalists. In this context women and women's movement has a dual role to play. In the first instance, women must resist to be co-opted by the fundamentalist forces that are trying to lure them in the name of religion and secondly, they must expose these disruptive forces and safeguard our cherished goal of secularism and democracy. Therefore, we, as a body of academics, also need to clarify the concepts of secularism, democracy and nationhood.

The issues that feminist scholars have taken up in the last twenty years cover a wide range. Feminist scholarship is no more confined to the collection of data and its analysis, for it now ventures into probing gender in human thought processes. In doing so it is developing a gender perspective, which is adding a new dimension to the understanding of human relationships in the existing power structures of family, economy and polity. For example, new approaches to the study of history are not only making women visible in history but are also recording the social processes that have historically affected women's life and status. These new approaches to the study of history are particularly relevant at this juncture in India when some motivated people are trying to rewrite the past to counter the forces of secularism and

modernity. Romila Thapar, through her study of Kalidas' classic *Shakuntala* shows, how the construction of the past can be influenced by the needs of the prevailing ideologies, and how the present selects items from the past to legitimise the prevailing political and ideological vested interests.

Similarly, feminist economists are redefining 'work' and 'employment' and introducing new methodologies for their measurement. Traditionally only that employment is considered qualified for economic measurement which involves productive work, whether for wages or for own family business. Long hours spent in domestic chores and rearing children by women, is not included in either category of employment. Some work done by women for family business, such as, caring for cattle and kitchen gardening for growing vegetables for self consumption, though productive is often ignored or inaccurately measured. Feminist economists have made a valuable contribution by critiquing the methodological inadequacies of data collection, particularly with reference to the unorganised sector which accounts for 90% of women's participation in productive work. Feminist economists are currently engaged in locating gender in the new era of economic reforms involving privatisation and globalisation.

Another significant area of feminist scholarship relates to research on the institution of family in India. Indians perceive themselves as highly family oriented and regard woman to be pivotal in maintaining the family integrity as a doting wife, serving daughter-in-law and sacrificing mother. Feminist scholars have devoted considerable time in unveiling gender inequalities and oppressive relationships within the family, relating to property rights of women, female sexuality, reproductive rights and the role of female labour in sustaining families.

In the next decade or two, feminist scholarship can make valuable contributions by raising questions like: what has been the role of Women's Study Centres since their inception and how effectively have they been able to forge a feminist perspective in teaching and research in Universities. Further, what curriculum changes have they managed to affect; what space

have they succeeded in negotiating for women's issues in the system of higher education; and how and where new locations for women's studies have emerged. Addressing such questions will not only enrich feminist scholarship but also scholarship in general. They will also provide support to the feminist movement for bargaining a better deal for women in family and society.

On the activist's front, a struggle for women's political and legal rights has been a major issue. Women's movement has been quite successful in getting a better deal for women and has persuaded the government to take legal and policy measures to empower women and improve their status .

Government's response to feminist pressures has been a mixed one. In respect to legislative measures to safeguard women's rights in the family and society the Government of India has been forthcoming. A number of laws have been enacted starting with the Hindu Code Bill, granting equality, or rather near equality, in personal and familial spheres because a number of loop holes still exist, to the 73rd and 74th Amendments providing 33% reservation to women in Panchayati Raj institutions. Similar legislation for the representation of women at higher levels of decision making bodies such as the Parliament and State Legislatures is however resisted tooth and nail.

In order to reduce women's poverty and other economic hardships faced by them, a host of schemes, such as, Rashtriya Mahila Kosh, Indira Rozgar Yojana, Women's Self- help Groups, Women's Employment Programmes, etc. have been initiated. But the manner and extent of implementation has left much to be desired, mainly on account of cultural attitudes of the implementers and the lack of accountability in the system.

Special needs of the more disadvantaged women working in the unorganised sector of the economy were recognised and a National Commission of Self Employed Women was set up in 1988. The Commission gave a comprehensive account of the condition of women workers in the sector and made a number of recommendations to improve their lot, none of which have been addressed for implementation until now.

The National Education Policy was revised in 1991 and reiterated that women's education was a critical input for development . Despite this proclamation women continue to lag behind men not only with regard to literacy but at all levels of formal education, particularly higher education and courses in modern technology, engineering, etc. Instead of removing these gender based educational disparities, the present Government has been devoting its attention and resources to politicising education and thereby stifling scholarship and academic freedom. To meet its political end history is being rewritten with a distinct communal bias, glorifying ancient Indian culture and interpreting it to the detriment of women's status by eulogising her role within the household and highlighting the virtues of virginity, purity, sacrifice and submission.

A National Commission as well as State Commissions for Women have also been instituted to fulfil a watchdog role for safe guarding women's rights and enhancing gender equality. So far these Commissions have proved ineffective in fulfilling their mandate, mainly due to the pressure of political vested interests.

A National Policy on Women (NPW) has now been formulated which lays down the policies and approaches to be adopted by the Central and State Governments for women's development and gender equality. But the NPW lacks teeth, it has neither made budgetary allocations nor worked out an implementation machinery. While theoretically including almost everything under the sun concerning women's status it has neglected to strategies a system of accountability for non-compliance to the policy.

Similarly a National Policy on Health also exists, yet figures for women's mortality and morbidity are rather depressing. Sex ratio according to the latest Census (2001) continues to be adverse, 933 women to 1000 men. Particularly disturbing is the growing incidence of female feticide, so clearly reflected by the sharper decline in the sex ratio in the age group zero to six years. Crime against women is also on the increase and prostitution of girl children has increased manifold. Most of these regressive trends can be traced to the

patriarchal mind set and gender discriminatory attitudes. Women's movement in India will have to address the above factors in coming years.

Women's movement has also been divided on some political and legal issues relating to women, in particular on the issue of Women's Reservation Bill and uniform civil code. No doubt that a uniform civil code will stifle, to a large extent, cultural diversity and will undermine the rights of the minorities, yet there is a need for changes in some iniquitous and oppressive personal laws operating among the minorities. Feminist scholars and activists have been hesitant in addressing the issues of minority women and hence studies on minority women and in multi-culturalism are few and far between.

On the conceptual level secular feminists have found themselves in a dilemma as to how they should assimilate minority women's issues into the agenda of broader feminist issues and, at the same time, safeguard their religious and cultural identity. This dilemma has been somewhat aggravated by the rise of fundamentalism in both the minority and the majority community, and the periodic outbursts of communal conflicts have further hardened religio-cultural identities. The pursuit of secularism in India has erroneously taken the path of political interference in protecting all religions, instead of neutralising religion in so far as politics is concerned. Consequently religious identities have sharpened and diverted the attention from the realities of minority women, specially Muslim women, which are not very different from those faced by other women of the same class and region. Inquiry into issues arising in this area can fruitfully add to knowledge and also throw light on the complexity ridden field of attaining a harmonious relationship with minorities in the plural society of India.

I am happy to note that this Conference will deal with some of these issues and will, particularly, deliberate on the rise of fundamentalism and communalism and the violence associated with this phenomenon that is eroding the very foundation of our secular democracy. Communal violence, which blatantly showed its most ugly face in Gujarat only a few months ago, has caused deep concern among the feminists which is being addressed

through scheduling a special session on the communal violence in Gujarat in this Conference. The object is to examine the causes of the kind of hatred and brutalities observed in Gujarat and to probe into factors that could help build an environment of trust and solidarity between communities. The concern for solidarity and amity, based on the common resolve for establishing and sustaining a peaceful secular democratic society, is not limited only to India, but extends to the entire South Asian region which is confronting similar forces of fundamentalism and religious bigotry that are threatening peace and development in India. I hope that the South Asia panel on Peace and Women, scheduled in this Conference, will provide a positive feminist perspective to the understanding of conflict, war, nuclearisation and violence in the region. Indian feminists, together with South Asian participants, will work out strategies to counter these threats, and provide a vision for building just and peaceful societies in South Asia, that accommodate diversities and respect for divergent religions and cultures.

I cannot do better than to quote from the farewell speech of our former President Dr K.R.Narayan who called "tolerance, the soul of our culture and tradition" and stated that it was this precious tradition that "made India's unity creditable and enduring". Similar sentiments were reiterated by the new President of India, Dr.A.P.J. Kalam, who emphatically expressed his "unflinching commitment to secularism" and called secularism the "cornerstone of our nationhood." Let us also make a pledge to defend unflinchingly the cause of a secular democracy in India and Asia - the greatest challenge of this millennium - with all the wisdom, energy and advocacy skills that we possess. Thank you.

Dr. Zarina Bhaty

17, Zakir Bagh, Okhla Road, New Delhi 110 025

E'mail : [HYPERLINK mailto:bhaty@nde.vsnl.net.in](mailto:bhaty@nde.vsnl.net.in) bhaty@nde.vsnl.net.in

Globalisation, Women's Identity and Violence

Consolidated Regional Workshop Reports

Lakshmi Lingam
Shilpa Phadke (Eds.)



Xth National Conference of the
Indian Association for Women's Studies
17th -20th October 2002

Utkal University, Bhubaneswar, ORISSA

COLLABORATING INSTITUTIONS

ABHIYAN,

Saras Sadan
Fatima Nagar, Middle Lane
Dangratoli Chowk
Ranchi 834 001
Jharkhand
India
Phone: +91-651-310572

School Of Women's Studies,

Utkal University,
Vani Vihar
Bhubaneswar 751 007
Orissa, India
Phone: +91-674-587453 (O)
Fax: +91-0674-581850,
email: swsutkal@vsnl.net,
asha1@sancharnet.in

Gandhigram Rural Institute

Madhurai
Tamilnadu

Centre for Social Analysis

No.37, Janakinarayan Street
S.S. Colony
Madurai
Tamilnadu
Tel: +91-452-605134 / 602352,
Fax: +91-452-601424
email: csatts@md5.vsnl.net.in

The Women's Studies Unit,

Tata Institute of Social Sciences,
P.O.Box 8313, Deonar
Mumbai 400 088
Tel: 556 3290-96, Fax: 556 2912
email: wsu@tiss.edu

Centre for Women's Development Studies,

25 Bhai Vir Singh Marg
New Delhi 110 001
Phone: +91-11-3345530/3365541
email: cwdslib@alpha.nic.in,
cwdslib@sansad.nic.in

Institute for Women's Studies,

Lucknow University
Lucknow 226 007
Tel: 0522 389620

The Department of Women's Studies,

NMKRV College for Women,
Jayanagar
Bangalore 560 011
Tel: +91-80-663 7042 / 655 6103,
Fax 634 0116

**Globalisation,
Women's Identity and Violence**
Consolidated Regional Workshop Reports

Lakshmi Lingam
Shilpa Phadke (Eds.)

Indian Association for Women's Studies

October 2002

www.iaws.org

PREFACE

The pre-existing crises of basic livelihoods, food and income insecurity; unemployment; environmental degradation; class, caste and gender violence; increased burdens on women and reduced entitlements to resources, are being felt in an intensified manner spawned by the bewildering processes of globalisation of the economy, politics and culture. New technological revolutions microelectronics and biotechnology are changing labor processes, altering relations of production and distribution, feminising some sectors of the labor force, and leading to a hitherto unprecedented globalisation of the production and economic power of Transnational Corporations. Transformations in global trade and finance have increased the flows of global capital many fold and rendered global and national monetary systems volatile and difficult to manage. New trade and economic zones, and growth poles are emerging. Women's labour is being used more flexibly and women workers are more mobile than they have ever been before. There is an increasing commodification of women's bodies by the markets. The markets and the fundamentalist right wing politics are defining women's identity in different ways, but both uniformly strengthen patriarchal values.

Given the criticality of these issues, particularly in a context of Structural Adjustment since the early 1990s, the Executive Committee (EC) of the Indian Association for Women's Studies deemed it fit to focus on the subject 'Globalisation, Women's Identity and Violence' in the regional workshops. The overview of the outcomes in the regional workshops indicate the echo coming in loud and clear from Indian Women of the intensification of marginalisation coupled with newer constraints and barriers being built by the fundamentalist and communalist forces. We have to deal with all these with greater strength and vigour in the coming years.

On behalf of the EC, I would like to thank all the Collaborating Institutions and individuals from the North, South, West and East of India who had shared concerns with the IAWS and organised workshop/seminars in these regions. This has been a mutually enriching experience. We totally had six workshops during the period 2000 - 2001. The reports are available in this compilation.

I would like to thank Ms. Shilpa Phadke who co-edited this report for her insights and grasp of the subject. Ms. Susheela Nagaraj Joish, Programme Co-ordinator, IAWS, who had helped me in the co-ordination of several tasks including the compilation of this report, needs special acknowledgements. Esvee Graphics, Mumbai, has shown their skill in typesetting and formatting the report in record time. The support of artists and printers from Bhubaneswar who have done the artwork and printing for this publication needs special mention. Special thanks to Prof. Asha Hans and her team, who had taken the responsibility for the printing tasks in Orissa, despite being pressed for time. The financial support received from Ford Foundation, New Delhi, to organise the Workshops and DFID, New Delhi, for bringing out Conference related publications made these efforts possible. We thank them profusely for the same.

Dr. Lakshmi Lingam,
General Secretary, IAWS
October 2002.

CONTENTS

Issues of concern : Overview of Regional Workshops	Lakshmi Lingam Shilpa Phadke.....	1
State, Civil Society and Women's Empowerment Southern Region Conference Report	K S Umadevi Ms.Pushpa Reddy	22
Multiculturalism and Gender Issues Northern Region Conference Report	Dr. Rooprekha Verma	28
Dalit Feminism: A Critique of Difference Western Region Workshop Report	Dr. Lakshmi Lingam* Ms. Pratima Bhandarkar	51
Globalisation, Identity Politics and Rising Violence	Dr. Gabriele Dietrich	61
Globalisation, Women's Identity and Rising Violence against Women (within the orissa context) Eastern Region Conference Report	Dr. Asha Hans	69
Impact of Globalisation on Women's Lives Eastern Region Workshop Report	Ms. Vasavi	80

ISSUES OF CONCERN: OVERVIEW OF REGIONAL WORKSHOPS

Lakshmi Lingam*
Shilpa Phadke^o

During the year 2000 – 2001, the Indian Association for Women's Studies had collaboratively organised regional workshops to focus on the broad theme of 'Globalisation, Women's Identity and Violence'. The workshops were held in Bangalore, Mumbai, Madurai, Ranchi and Lucknow in collaboration with various Women's Studies Centres in Universities and/or Women's organisations. Each conference/workshop/ seminar for they were differentially named, kept to the agenda in spirit but explored issues, ideas and theoretical constructions that were felt to be most pressing in the local-regional contexts.

The themes at each of these workshops were as follows:

- *State, Civil Society & Women's Empowerment*, was organised by the Department of Women's Studies, NMKRV College for Women, Bangalore, 30th November & 1st December 2001. The Bangalore seminar provided a platform for a dialogue between state's representatives, civil society participants and academicians to discuss issues related to globalisation, fundamentalism, and violence against women, and to assess the possibilities for women's empowerment from various positions and perspectives in this context.
- *Dalit Feminism: A Critique of Difference*, was organised by the Women's Studies Unit, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai on the 1st & 2nd August 2001. The Mumbai workshop set itself the objectives to understand the emergence of Dalit women's movement and discern the debate that has ensued with regard to issues like 'representation', upper class/caste women's leadership of the women's movement and dalit women's leadership as an alternative and issues of difference and identity politics.
- *Globalisation, Identity Politics and Rising Violence*, was organised by the Political Science Department, Gandhigram University and co-organised by the Centre for Social Analysis, Madurai on the 24th & 25th of March 2001. The Madurai

● General Secretary, IAWS. Reader, Women's Studies Unit, TISS, Mumbai email: lakshmil@tiss.edu
o Research Scholar, TISS, Mumbai email: abshi@vsnl.com

workshop focused on the impact of globalisation on women on the Southern states with the aim to fostering a dialogue between researchers and activists to critically situate and analyse the various developmental debates in the context of globalisation and liberalisation.

- *Globalisation and Women's Identity (within the Orissa Context)*, was organised by the School of Women's Studies, Utkal University, Bhubaneswar, 13th & 14th March 2001. The Bhubaneswar seminar examined globalisation with specific reference to the way it is played out in Orissa, at the same time underscoring the possibilities for resistance.
- *The Impact of Globalisation on Women's Lives*, was organised by the IAWS with the collaboration of ABHIYAN, Ranchi, 4th & 5th November 2000. The Ranchi regional seminar focused on the impact of the appropriation of forest resources on the lives of *adivasi* (tribal) women and the ways in which this exploitation was exacerbated by multi-nationals through the process of globalisation
- *Multiculturalism and Gender Issues*, was organised by the Centre for Women's Development Studies (New Delhi) and Institute for Women's Studies, Lucknow University, Lucknow on the 28 to 30 September 2001. The Lucknow conference focused on multi-culturalism in a nuanced and multi-layered way and examined its relevance for women and the women's movement in the current context of globalisation, fundamentalism and divisive identity politics.

In the following sections a broad analysis of the issues that had been discussed in the five workshops has been presented.¹ This has been based on the regional workshop reports submitted by the workshop co-ordinators. The detailed reports are appended to this overview. Hereafter for the purposes of simplicity and clarity all ideas and issues will be discussed theme-wise. We will begin with the three issues that formed the broad base for the workshops, viz. globalisation, identity politics and violence. The major issues that have been addressed in relation to this broad theme include the media, multiculturalism, fundamentalism, caste, class, representation, employment, education, health, and issues related to the women's movement and politics among others. The complex inter-linkages between these have been explored.

Globalisation:

As globalisation was one of the broad themes set for the regional workshops, a large part of the debates and discussions in all the workshops centred on globalisation issues as they impacted women in varied contexts. The main ideas addressed in the

¹ Hereafter all will be referred to as workshops regardless of what they were individually called.

six workshops included a perception of globalisation along a continuum, concerns regarding lack of data about women, informalisation of labour, reduced availability of social services and the impact on marginalised groups like scheduled castes and tribes. Another issue that was seen to be important was the ecological impact of globalisation and its effect on women's lives.

In many of the workshops it was pointed out over and over again that globalisation is not a new phenomenon. What is new is the acceleration in the speed and scope of movement of real and financial capital primarily because of removal of state controls on trade and investments; new information and communication technologies; and the emergence at the international level of new institutions for mediation and negotiation.

The process of structural adjustment began much before 1991, which merely represented the culmination of the process. The exclusion of the weaker sections and withdrawal of funds from the social sector had started much earlier. The fiscal deficit and little foreign exchange reserve created a situation, which superimposed new problems thus aggravating problems that had started much earlier. The very real anxieties in regard to globalisation are rooted in: its implications for workers and jobs, the environment, growing inequalities and the dominance of developed countries in the structure of world governance.

The development process during the second half of the 20th century which led to the formation of international finance organisations and overwhelming dominance of trade regimes was outlined. The struggles of the "old feminist" generation against the hegemonic development were recalled. It was argued that while the younger generation has had to face a situation in which welfare measures were already dismantled, the state had abdicated its responsibility and only some left over 'safety nets' were made available, while military expenditure has gone up dramatically.

It was argued that globalisation has always been recognised across the ages and that capital has always searched for global markets and been linked to the worst forms of coercion (like slavery for example). It was re-iterated over and over again that women's role in the macro economic order remained invisible. The non-availability of data for analysis has made the assessment of the impact of globalisation difficult and in the case of women this problem is further compounded by the multiplicity of the roles performed by women.

It was argued that even as globalisation provides benefits and opportunities to some, it forecloses opportunities for many thus threatening livelihoods and survival. In the future globalisation is likely to increase 'skill selectivity' as economic sectors become more receptive to information technologies and bio-technologies thus adversely impacting those without such skills. Liberalisation and globalisation have impacted the poorer classes in traditional occupations undermining their livelihood

and security. With the informalisation of labour, workers rights and legal protections are also withering away. Globalisation, by unleashing the forces of competition marginalises those unable to compete making the market the supreme arbitrator of success and failure. Concomitantly, social sector expenditures are likely to decrease further in the future. Current trends also suggest that there will be greater privatisation of both higher education and health-care facilities. Given the prevailing social preferences, this is likely to affect women adversely.

The gender implications of globalisation are difficult to determine because conventional economic categories and statistical data fail to capture the crucial aspects of women's participation in a developing economy. Women workers have been the first to be retrenched by the policies of liberalisation and structural adjustment. Loss of incomes combined with rising prices creates unrest and women are the worst affected as on them falls the stress inducing responsibility of balancing household budgets. The problems associated with globalisation are exacerbated in the context of Orissa, which is one of the poorest states of India with high proportions of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe population. Within this the access of the poor, particularly women to services, which form the core of human development sectors, declines.

A need was articulated for an in-depth discussion between people who were on different sides of the fence in their perception of globalisation. On the one side are those who see the decentralisation which comes with liberalisation as an opportunity to promote empowerment for women and on the other those who feel that the destruction of the resource base and universal market penetration serve to further disempower and marginalise women.

The question of women's empowerment was raised in the context of the New Economic Policy, which is cutting costs on health, education and social spending. Globalisation is impacting adversely on women's health. A gender sensitive public health policy was advocated to achieve gender equality, which is inclusive of health issues and programmes.

In the context of issues related to health and other social services, women's perception and utilisation of health care facilities was discussed. It was argued that there is a general apathy on the part of women toward their own health. As a result of the patriarchal order and the socio-economic conditions in which women live they tend to neglect their health, nutrition and the also face work related hazards. Several recommendations were made in workshops, for improving Primary Health Care centres to improve to women's health.

The adverse impact that appropriation of forest resources in Jharkand was having on the lives of *adivasi* women was underlined in the context of the globalisation. It was argued that multinationals were intensifying this process and women would

have to be in the forefront of struggles against global capital. It was underlined that globalisation in the region was at least 2000 years old and pointed out that it was not possible to set the clock back but that strategies to regulate the process would require organised and collective efforts.

It was argued that health, migration, employment, and environmental problems rising as a result of globalisation have threatened the sanctity of human life. However, organisations addressing the implications of globalisation must pay special attention to the issues concerning dalit women who are further oppressed in the globalisation process by virtue of being poor, dalit and women. The implications of structural changes for dalit women are particularly harsh. In the contexts of the connection between globalisation, multi-nationalism and displacement, the impact of these on dalits and *adivasis* who are often the victims of such 'development projects' was discussed. Dalits are more often displaced and are forced to migrate to the cities where they do not gain access to public services like ration, electricity, water, and education for their children. A detailed review of the education levels of women in Jharkhand (15-44 age group) underlined how development policies had in fact widened the gap between women and men.

Globalisation affects women at different levels. At one end of the social spectrum women are affected by consumerism and at the other end deprived of basic necessities. It was argued that globalisation also seeks to generate a new set of norms and values for women. These issues now take us to the realm of culture politics under globalisation. The political discourse of culture under globalisation has articulated itself through two related discourses - one of western culture bashing and the other a discourse of "Indian culture" that exhibits anxiety over the supposed hegemony of western culture. Both these discourses are anti-feminist and antithetical to the progressive women's movement.

According to the Human Development Report (1999) over the past three decades the income gap between the world's richest fifth and its poorest fifth has more than doubled. Even within countries the inequalities in incomes, wealth and access to resources are rising. Globalisation has seriously impacted employment. Women workers have as a trend moved out of agriculture to eke out an existence in the informal sector where wages are low, productivity is low and there is no security. However, it was felt that while the desirability of women's protest against globalisation is accepted we should also examine the crisis of governance, which mediates the effects of globalisation. Women should oppose not only globalisation but also their own governments and evolve new paradigms for governance not only within nations but also between nations.

The notion that globalisation has fostered new opportunities was repeatedly questioned in the workshops. It was pointed out that many of these have strings attached. For instance Unilever promoted marketing of its products through self

help groups. During the discussions there were attempts to go beyond the micro experiences and critically analyse self help groups as they also serve to co-opt women into globalisation. Likewise women in Panchayats or consumer markets while getting symbolic space and some marginal gains are actually isolated from the larger processes of change. They are stuck in their micro projects and get more burdened. Banks take no responsibility for micro credit as women now look after themselves. They internalise the market logic and start selling multinational goods out of sheer despair, which destroys local small-scale production. The importance of co-operatives in getting fair prices was highlighted.

The effects of globalisation on the Kerala economy were discussed focusing on the onslaught on agriculture, which impacted food security adversely. In relation to the post-globalisation scenario in Orissa three areas were studied: privatisation and its impact on small scale industry and cottage industry; the shrimp culture in Chilika and the Gopalpur Tata Steel project and at Kashipur Multinational Aluminium Giants. There was also some allusion to the various people's movements in protest against globalisation in Orissa.

From another perspective it was argued that the exploitation fostered by globalisation has added to earlier forms of exploitation. Globalisation has also not affected corruption that continues unchecked particularly in the political arena. In the context of women's involvement in Panchayats, attention was drawn to the epic struggle of Gram Swaraj Movement against aqua culture, in which large number of women were involved. The Aqua Culture Authority Bill was passed in the Rajya Sabha with undue haste because of pressure from the World Bank. Many politicians have farms violating the Supreme Court order. The discussant called for a second freedom struggle without which there would be no freedom for women or male workers or any other oppressed sections. In another discussion, the backtracking of the welfare state was underlined and the history of protest and resistance in *adivasi* communities was highlighted across India.

In the context of globalisation and the human rights of tribal women in Orissa it was argued that despite the fact that tribal communities are considered egalitarian, if the women took time out to participate in political processes, the fragile economy of the home collapsed. Tribal women were almost completely illiterate particularly in the tribal districts and were largely unskilled as well. However, tribal women have come forward to manage community grain banks, put together savings and started collective accounts. They were actively involved in various struggles and their strength has often reminded the state and the multinationals that the tribal people must be given a due hearing.

In a discussion on the pre-colonial status of Jharkhandi women it was argued that women controlled the then power structures. The penetration of global capital has meant an attack on the identities of *adivasi* and dalit women. The specific impact of

globalisation on villages, especially the rise in fuel prices that was affecting the mobility of women was noted. The differential sex ratios between the *adivasis* and the non-*adivasis* regions of Jharkhand were discussed.

The impact of globalisation on ecology was also dwelt upon. In a discussion on bio-diversity in traditional agriculture, it was shown in detail how the traditional system not only enhanced levels of nutrition and the availability of fuel and fodder but also gave cash income to women. The erosion of bio-diversity and tendency towards mono-culture of cash crops had thus not only ecologically adverse effects but has led to loss of access to resources, loss of employment and destruction of knowledge systems and feminisation of poverty. Creative suggestions were offered for a gendered approach to participatory bio-diversity conservation. It pointed out the crucial role of home gardens for the preservation of bio-diversity in Kerala. In the discussion it was also pointed out that while access to markets is important, training women in marketing may not be the most helpful skill. Recovery of knowledge systems, which are destroyed under the onslaught of market forces, is important.

The struggle of the workers in the Kashipur area was discussed. The people's agitation was spontaneous when their life, livelihood, home and forest was being snatched by multinationals. Police action and violence did not deter them and they posed a challenge to the state in very interesting ways. The special vulnerability of the Jharkhand region to global capital due to its rich mineral resources was also highlighted.

In the context of issues of displacement and ecology one argument suggested that natural land, forest and water are the foundations of human civilisation which is at stake due to globalisation. It was argued that displacement not only affects the life, livelihood and health of the tribal population but also their cultural life. The exploitation of tribal women by forest officials, police and multinational companies was also discussed.

The question of refugee women and children who constitute approximately 80% of people who cross borders because of political reasons was also discussed. Despite the signing of an international convention most developed countries have closed their borders. It was noted that as states open their borders to capital, they close them to populations.

Globalisation and its role in the feminisation of certain kinds of work was discussed at some length. There has been a steady feminisation of agricultural labour as wages dropped relative to other occupations. However, in the absence of reliable indicators there is no way to map the impact of these changes on the employment of women.

The feminisation of poverty was discussed largely in the context of the wage inequity in the unorganised sector. It was argued that women are largely excluded from

economic decision making. They face poor working conditions, low wages and limited employment and professional opportunities. Poverty has a distinct gender dimension. Women disproportionately contribute to unskilled labour, receive less wages for the work they do, and their access to surplus accumulation and control is severely restricted. This impacts not only on women but also their children.

Other illustrative cases discussed, in the context of work, included export oriented projects in Nasik, Mumbai slums and in Chengelpet, Tamil Nadu. In all the cases discussed the standards demanded are very stringent which create a stressful working situation. Health problems are not attended to and it is difficult for workers to even get recognition as workers. Another study presented work on producer's markets in Madurai and Dindigul. This is a specific project of the Tamil Nadu government to improve the lot of small producers under the impact of export orientation and import liberalisation. It was found that women's participation in these markets was uneven but those who did participate were substantially enhancing their contribution to the family income. However, it was found that the price fixing committees had no women members and women administrative officers were also not involved.

A need was articulated to distinguish between economic work and work of another nature like child-care this was countered by questioning the basis on which economic productivity is decided. It was pointed out that the women's movement initiated the entire 70s debate on work. Trends and patterns in the workforce in the 90s were examined and it was shown that in the rural areas there has been a decrease in the proportion of both self-employed women and women as regular wage workers while the proportion of women casual workers has increased. Women also suffered in terms of male female inter sectoral job adjustments which forced them to go back to agriculture. Rural women's weak educational background and lack of skills affects them adversely when modern sector activities in the rural non-farm sector become more skill selective.

It was pointed out that in the context of economic and social changes one needs to examine dalit women's contemporary situation and experiences from the perspective of caste, economic class, politics, and patriarchy focusing on the transformation in work, wages and family life. A feminism that aims to improve the lives of women and at the same time recognises their differential relation to one another cannot ignore the material reality of capitalism's class system in women's lives. Dalit feminism must respond to the emerging salience of class in addition to the qualitative difference brought about by caste.

The question that was being asked through the discussions was: how can we refashion a politics of the women's movement to mitigate the economic effects of globalisation on poor women and/or work towards resisting globalisation?

One position suggested that feminist politics that privilege the local in conjunction

with identifying the structural constraints of the economy and which build in an understanding of how patriarchal structures operate at all levels would prove better as an anti-globalisation strategy than one informed by the well known feminist slogan "Think globally, Act locally". We are urged to reframe our paradigm in the present era of globalisation such that it allows us to "think locally" as well.

While inequality and poverty have existed even prior to the contemporary globalisation, it is nonetheless important to examine and understand the peculiarities of this globalisation. Despite the complex linkages and inter-connections that have been drawn between gender inequality and the processes of globalisation, there continue to be serious gaps in information. There is little reliable statistical data on women's employment, informalisation of labour and other indicators. There are also several methodological issues in our analysis of globalisation that need to be further addressed. There is a need for more work in this area for greater academic clarity as well as to better understand the strategies that can be used to counter these processes.

Identity Politics:

Identity politics in the context of caste, religion, community, region, among other differences between women are among the most pressing issues that women's studies and the women's movement in India have to contend with in the 21st century. The workshops addressed identity politics in the context of caste and religio-communal issues.

The workshops, particularly the Mumbai workshop interrogated questions of identity politics in the context of caste. It was argued that while some critiques were of the view that until the caste problem is addressed no other social problem can be solved, but the women's movement saw gender issues as inextricably woven in caste and class issues.

In a related discussion it was argued that identity politics, under the thesis of multiculturalism takes into account neither historicity of identities nor believes in the idea of necessary structural changes to achieve long term social justice. It advocates tolerance and competition, ideas conducive for neo-liberal polity and a globalised economy. The core argument in issues of identity, that women are not a homogenous group/ community/ class but are divided into several categories that are related to each other in a hierarchical manner, require attention. Hence there cannot be one women's movement but different women's movements.

In the context of concerns about numerous women's movements questions of multiculturalism were addressed particularly at the Lucknow workshop. It was argued that the post-modern understanding of multiculturalism accepts boundaries and distinctions and argues for continuity of difference and acceptance. However, conversely the fluidity of this approach while it gives it a certain openness, it is

marred by not being able to define anything at all. There was an elucidation of the contexts in which Hindu fundamentalists had attempted to conflate various categories (like religion with culture). Furthermore, it was pointed out that multiculturalism could in fact be used for very undemocratic and anti-people ends. For instance, it was pointed out the market forces have joined hands with the Hindu right and this despite the market's rhetoric of 'openness' meant a strengthening of patriarchal values. The Hindu Right uses fundamentalist ideology to market globalisation as something indigenous thus selling a vision that in reality negates rights and equality. Another important point that came up concerns the political linkage in the present times between the fundamentalist agenda, neo-liberalisation and the forces of globalisation.

Cautioning against the confusion between multiplicity and multiculturalism, it was argued that it was critical that multiplicity should not be confused with democracy. The co-existence of cultures/ differences should not be mistaken for multiculturalism either. Further, multiculturalism itself cannot be used as a hold-all for all democratic values, or to signify democracy itself. Democracy must mean more than this.

Related to this there was a distinction drawn between procedural democracy and substantive democracy. Different ethnic groups in democratic societies feel that ensuring procedural democracy is not sufficient to negate the pressures of cultural assimilation that are often demanded by majority groups. Such a demand for assimilation is seen to undermine substantive democracy as cultural identities are erased in the making of the national citizen in multicultural democratic societies. Both procedural and substantive democracy is necessary requirement for a full democratisation of groups and communities, which form a part of society. Fundamentalist groups resist these tendencies for democratisation and although such resistance is not conducted against globalisation and markets, it is often done so in either an anti-western or anti-modern discourse.

The criticality of locating the women's movement vis a vis the issue of fundamentalism was pointed out. There are differences within the movement, which mean that there is no one homogenous movement but at the same time there are commonalties. It was pointed out that Muslim women or women as Muslims were never an issue. In fact the community identity of women was not an issue in the campaigns that took place in the late 70s and 80s and even into the 90s prior to 1992. Concerning the issue of rape, women were not seen (at least within the movement) as holders of religious identities because the focus was on the abuse itself. The only time that identity was relevant was more to do with caste when there were gang rapes of dalit women. In the dowry campaign there was no assumption that dowry was somehow a Hindu issue, but at the same time not much attention was paid to the ethnic angles to dowry.

The first time that women's religious identity became an issue was in the Shah Bano case when Muslim women took to the streets in favour of their Personal law and opposed to the court judgement granting maintenance to Muslim wives. In response the women's movement had pro-Shah Bano demonstrations with women from all religious backgrounds participating. Women in burkhas led some protests. It was pointed out that it was interesting that there seemed to be a compulsion to take on the specific identity and this discourse raised the critical question of who can speak for whom.

These dilemma-inducing questions resurfaced during the Sati campaign where Hindu women using the same language of representation campaigned in favour of Sati. These concerns of identity affected the women's movements' participation and positions in the debate on the Uniform Civil Code (UCC). In a situation where the Hindu Right Wing had appropriated the UCC, the women's' movement quickly distanced itself from the UCC and asked for gender just laws. The important question, it was argued, was where do we go from here. We need to link up with other movements to see what is the nature of strategies if any, to address the inter-linked issues of caste, community, gender violence and discrimination. There have been accusations that the women's movement is leaning towards majoritarianism which may be countered by asking for increased participation of other voices, but at the same time it must also be acknowledged as a valid critique.

During the discussion there was a great amount of agreement regarding the manner in which the movement had dealt with community identities and only looked at women as women and largely ignored other identities. It was felt that we do need to stop seeing minority women's issues as delicate and to review all personal laws. There is a need to clarify our position and to claim our Indianness in order to create an Indian platform. It was also agreed that there is a value to including different voices and that the very practice of such inclusion by the women's movement had negated accusations of being upper class/ caste/ majority.

Violence:

Issues of violence against women were discussed in several contexts during the six workshops. These included the linkages between loss of livelihood, poverty and violence; inter and intra caste based violence; both symbolic and actual violence in the context of religious fundamentalism and communalism.

In the context of the New Economic Policy, it was argued that the accelerated growth rate for India has not affected the increasing poverty. For a poor state like Orissa with a large tribal population and low rates of literacy this has meant very poor gender indices as well. The crime rate (rape, dowry murders, dowry torture, dowry suicides) against women has shown a rise in both absolute numbers as well as the percentage of crimes against women. This escalating violence was seen as also linked

to liberalisation, access to satellite media, and increasing alcohol consumption.

Connections were made between the violence of the development process on the resource base and people's livelihoods with the actual increase of various forms of violence against women. There has been a rise in the rates of suicide, domestic violence, and rape cases. Specific cases of violation of civil and political rights in the private sphere in the case of honour killings or culture/ identity-preservation based community terrorism in the form of acid attacks, public murders, community punishments were also discussed.

It was also emphasised that caste is an important factor causing oppression and violence among dalit women. Lower caste women's bodies are abused more often. This violence is perpetrated not only by non-dalits but also by dalits. It was pointed out that dalits are not a homogenous category and that intra dalit violence tends to go unnoticed. Inter-caste marriages even among dalits are opposed and the principle continues to be control of female sexuality. In intra-dalit violence the worst affected are women. Dalit men continue to control resources both within and outside the house and the incidence of domestic violence is high. It was strongly argued that while the women's movement should pay cognisance to caste-based discrimination and violence, the focus on patriarchy, which exists across different caste and class groups, should not be lost sight of.

For the purposes of this report issues of fundamentalism will also be located in the context of violence. The gendered dimensions of fundamentalism were debated at length particularly at the Lucknow workshop. It was put forward that the new fundamentalism in our country both from the majority and minority communities is promoting separatism based on religious identities. In both cases this has involved an increased focus on dress codes, modesty, chastity inevitably leading to diminished spaces for women. The women's movement must devote energies to counter these disruptive forces which were threatening the secular fabric of the country.

The basis of such fundamentalist discourses were discussed at length and exposed. Fundamentalist discourses are premised on the notion of a return to a glorious past, a past that never existed in any "true form". Fundamentalist discourses are inevitably detrimental to the rights of women. They tend to image women as non-producers and any historical evidence of women's contribution to the economy is ignored. It was argued that it was in this context that we must examine the present capitalist market and understand the re-entry of women in the market. There is also a need to understand and examine the political linkage between fundamentalist agendas and the forces of neo-liberalisation and globalisation.

Fundamentalists of all religious colours without exclusion see the family as the only space for women and have in common the exclusion of women from positions of significance or power. Fundamentalist organisations are also claiming to be the

rightful agency with whom negotiations in terms of rights within the community have to take place. It is imperative that the women's movement counters any such claims. It was also pointed out that in the current scenario there is no difference between communalism and fundamentalism as the boundaries have completely blurred.

It was argued that while one needs to give special attention to religious identity in any discussions of minority or majority communalism, the overall approach should focus on women as women, as rights bearers and move forward from there. There is a need to understand communalism more deeply and perhaps develop a new language to counter it. There is also a need for recognition of the burden women bear of carrying the honour and identity of the community.

It was noted that culture and religion could not be separated and one is used to facilitate or legitimise the other. This also showed the link between private and public as, although there is a difference in recognition of rights and their security, the private sphere is actively used to control access and participation in the public sphere. Also the public sphere is constructed in ways that perpetuate gender distinction and bias. Illustrations of these complex inter-linkages between culture and religion in determining the public and private sphere in particular ways were discussed.

Discussions also focused on the nature of access and the legitimacy provided to the participation of women as part of the right wing. This is not the kind of access that the women's movement is striving for and we need to differentiate our position. It was pointed out that the participation of Hindu women in the public sphere in a violent manner during the demolition of the Babri Masjid also brought out into the open the critical need to understand the fundamentalist values and women's agency.

Education was alluded to briefly as well. The education policy of the present government was discussed which seeks to saffronise education. It pretends to be progressive and women friendly policy by speaking of women's equality in education and scientific temper in the policy. The group discussed this double-faced approach and also put forward a series of recommendations for education.

Caste and Difference:

It was argued that the single most important theoretical problem is to analyse the intersection of patriarchy with caste and class to illuminate the oppression of dalit women. A systematic historical, sociological and feminist examination is essential to understand the complex interplay between caste, class and patriarchy by focussing on institutions, cultural systems and ideologies associated with these structures. We need to recognise that the interaction of patriarchy with caste and class does not make for a 'greater' or 'lesser' oppression, but for a qualitatively different type of

oppression. The relationship between the structure of caste and the structure of patriarchy was examined with a view to understanding the specificity of social subordination of dalit women. It was argued that in order to build an Indian theory of patriarchy there is a need to accommodate the difference between women and to take cognisance of commonalities between men and women that bear upon gender power relations within lower caste groups and see the impact of these on women's subjectivities.

The work and ideas of Ambedkar were discussed at some length. There was a brief discussion in this context of the efforts of social reformers to improve the lot of women. It was argued that Ambedkar was deeply concerned about the problems of women. In his analysis of caste, the analysis of women's subordination is subsumed, thus the caste system is the source of women's oppression. He included Articles 14, 15 and 16, which deal with equality in the Indian Constitution. He produced a more radical Hindu Code Bill, doing away with all customary practices in the areas of marriage, divorce, inheritance and succession. It was argued that Ambedkar's views are still relevant to address the complexities of caste and gender in the current scenario and if Ambedkar's emancipatory agenda is combined with the feminist discourse then it will definitely lead to the emancipation of "all women" in our society.

It was pointed out that the philosophies of both Ambedkar and Phule dealt with the management of women's sexuality by high caste patriarchy. With the "tamasha" culture, the brahmin women were regarded as "chaste" and the women from lower castes were considered "available". The rise of the Dalit Panther movement was also discussed in the context that it highlighted caste issues and neglected to address patriarchy within the system. It was also pointed out that the use of the term 'reformer' to describe Ambedkar was incorrect. Instead, Ambedkar has to be described as a 'revolutionary' who attempted to bring about change in the lives of women in general and of the lower caste women in particular.

In the context of a specific study of Chingleput district in Tamil Nadu, there was a focus on dalit culture. Dalit culture was defined in a very broad way including the whole organisation of material life and related the problem of rising violence to the loss of land and common property resources under globalisation. In the present scenario there has also been an impact of issues like dowry, demand for electronic goods and job-oriented education. This trend was counterposed with the heritage of a life-sustaining culture among the dalits in which birth and death were crucial events because of lack of access to properties. This heritage was also connected with the remnants of Buddhist culture which are present in Chingleput district. There was a critique of the gap between dalit movements, which compromise with opportunistic political forces and project a violent rhetoric. It was felt that a life centred culture could more easily connect with an alternative development paradigm which could help dalits to form deeper and more meaningful alliances. In the

discussion it was pointed out that there are several issues that need to be addressed within the dalit community. Dalit adolescent girls are often more educated than the boys who project a macho image thus creating various problems. Girls working in small units are facing harassment from their own community, finding it difficult to get married and facing escalating violence.

There were several discussions around issues of difference particularly at the Mumbai workshop. These were articulated in the context of the hierarchies between upper and lower caste women. Concerns of representation and voice were raised in the context of the women's movement and feminist politics. Various theoretical issues in this regard were discussed. Migration to urban areas as a solution to caste oppression was questioned arguing that living in slums was not liberation.

The evolution of the dalit women's movement which came as a response to the brahmanical overtones of the present women's movement was briefly outlined. It stressed caste differences between women and sought closer caste identity with dalit men. Caste differences among women active in the movement were contextualised within the framework of the "theory of difference" by dalit men and later this was adopted by women theoreticians as well. This theorisation developed into a radical antagonistic stance through "identity politics".

Dalit feminism (including questions of Representation & Reservation):

It was argued, most particularly at the Mumbai workshop that while both dalit feminists and the women's movement emphasise that they are suppressed, deprived and backward, there is a difference in questions of representation. Dalit women have not thus far been given opportunities to represent mainstream women. It was argued that the credibility and contribution of the dalit woman is devalued because she speaks in a local language. The successes and achievements of dalit persons are assumed to be a result of the scheduled status and not on merit. In dalit politics as in general politics, a woman is seen to be an instrument towards some end and not as an individual with rights. The mainstream women's movement's attitude of "we will give and they will receive", in the case of the dalit cause was criticised.

Questions were raised about the intra-dalit relationship: how do gender, caste, class and patriarchy operate within the dalit community? Questions were also raised regarding the caste faction after the Mandal commission and the relation of the *bahujan strivad* with dalit feminism?

It was argued that on the one hand women are used as proxies in politics but at the same time these women in politics do not seem to use this forum to pull up other women with similar backgrounds. That said, it is true that there is not a single political party so far that has listened to a dalit woman who offered suggestions for the whole party. It thus needs to be acknowledged that it is difficult for one dalit

woman to lift others under the given circumstances. Thus, getting more dalit women into the forefront of politics is a slow but steady task. A parallel was drawn between black feminism and dalit feminism as while the former is racism based on colour, the latter is based in caste.

It was also argued that reservation for dalit women in the political scenario needs to be considered within the 33% quota system allocated for women in politics. In this context questions were raised about fragmentation of the dalits as there are Buddhist, Christian and Hindu dalits. One would then have to contend with questions of who is the most victimised as the identity is that of victimhood and this is used as an instrument in party politics.

It also emerged that dalit women would want to branch out more not out of a need for identity but for a conceptual clarity and understanding of the issues encircling them, while at the same time remaining part of the women's movement as a whole. Dalit women should not be viewed only as clients who receive a service; instead an ideology needs to be constructed to understand the complexities of the issue.

On the question of representation it was argued that there is a difference between advocating for victims of violence like Mathura and Rameezabi on the one hand and working towards their representation on the other.

Empowerment:

Issues related to women's empowerment were discussed in terms of its meanings, its economic and political contexts, urban concerns, the relationship between state and civil society in promoting or hindering women's empowerment and the role of NGOs.

The relationship between the state, civil society and women's empowerment was focused upon. The state and various theories relating to the state were discussed. A conceptual framework for the workshop with reference to the Gandhian idea of the 'Ideal State' and the Marxist-Socialist theory of a 'Stateless State' was provided. A stateless state, it was argued, emerges only when the state is under control of the proletariat, only after all forms of exploitation are rooted out and people are properly educated. The relationship between the women's movement and the state was also dwelt on. The question of the Women's Reservation Bill in parliament and state legislatures was raised with the argument that both at the State and National levels, agitations have consistently been pressuring people in power to table the bill. However, it was argued that there is no commitment to the bill which is only intended to create an illusion of equality.

Empowerment in one perception was seen to refer to the entitlement of women to have and exercise power over their lives both as individuals and as members of a social system. There was an effort to analyse the constraints faced in the

empowerment of Indian women and strategies were suggested to overcome the various barriers. The question was raised as to how empowered women were at the end of the year of women's empowerment. It was argued that the new economic situation had led to new ways of exploitation of women. It was suggested that women activists, political leaders and few women's organisations are largely involved in the question of political empowerment ignoring other kinds of empowerment which need to be addressed. The mainstreaming of the entire gamut of issues articulated in the National Policy on Women's Empowerment 2001 is a direct result of civil society interventions and resistance struggles in different parts of the country. Since these systems within civil society are already in place the state should create mechanisms to affirm and support the non-state institutional mechanisms. The need to revalidate the vital role of the women's movement in the reconstruction of Indian society on more pluralistic and egalitarian foundations was also put forward. There was also a focus on urban women and the stereotypes of empowerment as well as dis-empowering gaps within the notions of empowerment.

It was argued that the gender empowerment of women in Indian villages has become absolutely imperative in the present day and that NGOs are working for women's causes and their participation in political, economic and social spheres. In this context, the functioning of the Joint Women's Programme and the Stree Shakti programme and their impact on women of Byahatti village in Hubli were analysed.

In the context of the role of the state it was argued that a positive partnership between state and civil society is necessary in promoting the interests of its citizens and in empowering them. The case of the APMACS (Andhra Pradesh Mutually Aided Co-operative Society Act) of 1995 which, without any ostensible objective of empowering women has succeeded in doing exactly that by facilitating the establishment of self owned and self managed rural banking institutions was cited as an example.

The notion of empowerment was also seen in a metaphorical through a literary analysis of a text, highlighting empowerment as the ability to choose, to exercise options and have choices. The need for training as well as capacity building activities to ensure empowerment of women was also highlighted.

It was argued that empowerment is a myth for poor vulnerable weaker sections of society particularly in a 'third' world democratic country like India and more so in a backward state like Orissa. Even though the Constitution guarantees equality and a dignified life to every citizen, the social, economic and health status of poor women is deplorable. Government welfare schemes rarely reach the women working in the fields and the women in the slums. These marginalised women provide many basic services to the community but are never taken into account when planning for the global economy.

It was pointed out that there could be no conclusive definitions or recipes for empowerment. Nor does empowerment signify a specific goal towards which the state and civil society must evolve but is a conceptual notion that entails a process orientation and can this in itself be a process and an end. Empowerment, it has been determined, is an ongoing phenomenon involved in the attainment of equality in economic, educational, health, social and political sectors. It includes but is not restricted to the removal of constraints imposed by patriarchal structures/ ideologies safeguarding women against the various forms of violence, the drafting of gender sensitive policies, and ensuring effective legislation.

Media:

The linkages of the media with globalisation both in terms of technology and projected imagery were discussed. It was argued that we should examine both the positive effects (access to information and more assertive and articulate role models) and the negative effects (women projected in either stereotypical *pativrata* roles or as sex objects) of the media. Globalisation has no ideology of its own and takes on the popular language - for instance advertisements for foreign goods use stereotypical images of Indian women. It was felt that the media has also been impacted adversely by globalisation.

It was argued that the media perpetuates gender stereotypes which strengthen the invisibility of women's contribution to society. Statistical data was provided which suggested that women working in Doordarshan are confined to the lower levels of the organisation and do not have decision making positions.

The construction of women and women's bodies through fashion, through the selling of consumer durables, and through "confessional" columns were delineated. Television, particularly, it was argued, projects women with an unnaturally magnified capacity for enduring suffering. In regard to the stereotyped roles in which women are projected, alternate modes were suggested which could be used to depict women realistically as human beings with a sense of self worth and identity outside of defined roles. The links between globalisation, consumerism, pornography and violence against women were also discussed.

The strategic role of the media and the need to engage with it in a critical and informed manner, and re-educate ourselves of its priorities as the media is not a neutral actor were discussed. A need was articulated to objectively analyse media messages in the context of globalisation, fundamentalism and stereotyping of roles of the marginalised. Also the danger of communal symbols and consumer lifestyles projected by the media needs to be analysed and seen in the present socio-economic scenario.

Sexuality:

Concerns relating to sexuality included the issues concerning sexual and reproductive rights, sexual harassment, trafficking in women and girls and the appropriation of issues by the Hindu Right Wing.

It was highlighted that we need to address the socialisation of women through a patriarchal ideology. It was argued that there is a need to address issues of reproductivity in ways that allow women to view themselves and their bodies in a positive light. There is also a need to impart sex education and give young women an understanding about rights in relation to their bodies and sexuality.

In regard to health and population concerns it was pointed out that women were only addressed in the context of their reproductive capacities, the attempt being to control these. Population control measures have also been targeted at women. Women often internalise notions of shame about their own bodies and deny themselves pleasure or pride. An appeal was made to place the health issue on the agenda of the women's movement in a big way.

The issue of eve teasing and the problem of violent and insulting language was also addressed. There were discussion around the issue of trafficking of women and girls in Orrisa. This was based on a study that the Task force on women and violence undertook in 15 selected districts in Orissa. Poor socio-economic conditions, discrimination against minorities, unequal treatment of women/girl children, lack of economic viability, education and legal protection are some of the reasons that make women and girls vulnerable.

It was argued that even today women's bodies and their sexuality are flash point issues which have no global consensus. In the context of beauty contests for instance there has been an appropriation of issues by the right wing. It was pointed out that the women's movement has to make a sustained effort to construct a language which is not vulnerable to being co-opted by the right wing and which can ensure that the issues are understood from our perspective.

Movement:

Concerns regarding the women's movement and the crisis juncture at which it finds itself in the early part of the 21st century threaded almost all discussions in the six workshops. Many of these were located around countering the various challenges posed by the Hindu right wing and the market forces. The movement has also been forced in the last decade and more to contend with questions of identity politics.

It was pointed out we have to acknowledge that there is no single movement. While we are talking about a movement of differences we must also reiterate that there are also several commonalties.

Another discussion centred on the labelling of the Indian women's movement as western and question its "Indianness". It was argued that this group of feminist bashers view Indian culture as fixed and unchanging in which an upper middle class idea of culture serves to substitute as the national culture to which all are imagined to conform. Their understanding of what the feminist movement stands for is sexual freedom, destruction of families, support for lesbianism and so on. There is no acknowledgement of issues such as imbalances in sex ratio, high female illiteracy, feminisation of poverty, gender discrimination in the labour markets, which the Indian women's movement has highlighted. It was argued that a feminist politics that can challenge the onslaught of this group of interlocutors needs to highlight the inequalities and oppressive social and gender relations within a framework that captures both diversities and dynamics of cultural processes and retains the authenticity of grassroots women's experiences.

The point was also made that applying labels like 'brahmanical' and 'elite feminists' to women leaders of dalit women's movement to connote the process of sanskritization is derogatory and demeaning. It was strongly felt that efforts need to be made to involve dalit women in the women's movement.

In the context of empowering civil society it was argued that there is a need to revalidate the vital role of the women's movements in the reconstruction of Indian civil society on more pluralistic, egalitarian foundations. It is important for the women's movement to forge alliances with other social groups and to investigate the relationship religion, communalism, caste and politics if and to rearticulate the role of women in Indian society. In this context we need to take serious cognisance of differences and discriminations based on class, caste and religion.

Citing case studies it was pointed out that Orissa has witnessed a large number of protest movements but these have been largely localised and present a fragmented picture. Among these are the Gopalpur movement and the Kashipur movement, which were localised and not part of any comprehensive large movement and therefore not able to capture the essence of the fight against globalisation. This was in part due to Orissa's rigidly hierarchical society. In Orissa, tribals, dalits and women constitute the largest number but are the most marginalised. Issues of social reform, caste, etc are not components of any of these movements and they are dominated by a patriarchal ideology. In order for a women's movement to come about we need to address the religious conservative ideology which is prevalent. In this it was argued, there is a lesson to be learnt from the less conservative tribal and dalit ideologies. We have closed our minds to these alternative cultural modes existing in our society from which women have much to gain.

It was argued that there was a need for women's groups to seek common grounds and agendas with other movements like the displaced people's movement, health movement, environmental movement. It is only through working together that we

can collectively hope for a progressive change. It was argued that intellectual property rights and rights of access to resources like food, fodder, and fuel are the basis of all movements. This necessitates the need to build an alliance on commonalities. Different movements have their own specific objectives and strengths but they have a common focus, to ensure that water, electricity, fodder and fuel remain with the people. The threat of globalisation and the need to converge concerns across movements while maintaining the specificity and identity of each struggle/ movement were emphasised.

Concluding Observations

Reflections on issues of globalisation, identity politics and violence, articulating various complex and multifaceted linkages often raised concerns regarding the various challenges facing women's studies in the contemporary scenario.

It was felt that women's studies had focused on labour participation during the seventies and on the 'double burden' and intra-household discrimination in the 1980s. In the nineties the impact of globalisation, has meant the destruction of the resource base, property rights and the inter-play of caste-class and gender. Women's studies faces new ethical challenges in this situation. We have to cope with a receding state, expanding markets and uncertain family and community structures. A strong statement was made in regard to pedagogic practice arguing that there is a need to sensitise teachers and students in order to foster both critical research and action.

It was pointed out that we in the women's studies need to focus on theory building and that there have not been adequate efforts on the part of Indian feminists in this direction. Arguments focused on what constitutes theory and the ethical and disciplinary contexts of such theories. This would be useful to feminism, as it would provide us a broad conceptual framework within which to locate the particular. This of course is not to suggest that the particular cannot be theorised by itself. For instance it was pointed out that dalit feminism could be compared with black feminism in such a framework because of the similarities of the issues addressed by both movements. There is a need for theory it was argued, as we are not just women in compartment in the train of history, we would like to know where it is heading and have some say in the direction.

The regional workshops have played an important role in setting the agenda and laying the groundwork for the October conference in Bhubaneswar.

STATE, CIVIL SOCIETY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT SOUTHERN REGION CONFERENCE REPORT

Organised by

**The Department of Women's Studies,
NMKRV College for Women, Bangalore,**

In Collaboration With

The Indian Association for Women's Studies

30th November & 1st December 2001

K S Umadevi*
Ms.Pushpa Reddy#

The conference provided the platform for dialogue between state's representatives, civil society participants and academicians, to discern, to what extent women's empowerment is possible in the 'true sense', given the situation and conditions of women in India. Today, especially with the onslaught of globalisation and increasing fundamentalism of various types. The concept of women's empowerment has to be expounded upon in the context of persistent patriarchal practices and ideologies, current market forces, continuous and pernicious forms of violence against women, a prejudicial media, a failing health-care system, structural adjustment policies and the numerous developmental strategies currently in implementation. The participants and paper writers at the conference included academics, NGO activists and advocates, grass root functionaries, and State Government representatives from Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. Prof. K.S.Umadevi, Principal, NMKRV College for Women, cordially welcomed the delegates and participants to the conference. Thereafter, Prof. Rameshwari Varma, IAWS Treasurer, briefly explained the history of the IAWS. She reiterated some issues from her background note to the conference which needed to be expanded upon in the conference, as well as highlighting many pertinent questions that also needed redress/addressing. She expressed a fervent desire for meaningful dialogue on the multifaceted topic, and for determining of the extent to which NGOs and the women's movement have made strides with regard to women's empowerment.

The key note address, delivered by Dr. Renu Mukunda, a Consultant on Community development and Gender Issues, provided a conceptual framework for the conference,

* Principal and HOD Women's Studies, NMKRV College.

Senior MA, Women's Studies, NMKRV College.

with reference to the Gandhian idea of the "Ideal State" and the Marxist-Socialist theory of a "Stateless State". She added that a stateless state, emerging only when the state is under control of the proletariat, is possible only after all forms of exploitations are rooted out and people properly educated. Once this is accomplished, then the civil society would gradually take over the functions of the state, which would naturally, inevitably wither away. But until then, the state should be all-powerful for defending life and the interests of the people. She questioned whether the state represented the genuine aspirations of its people the state being such an omnipotent and omnipresent force. She warned of the ill effects on the masses when the state abdicates its true responsibility to socialism and begins to cater to the dictates of the market forces and the ever increasing exploitative, global powers of multinational corporations. Dr. Mukunda further reiterated that the women's movement, a major non-violent and creative determining phenomenon in the fight of the exploited, in this century, has set in motion a liberating force which cannot be reversed. Feminist discourses have enabled us to rethink, re-examine and re-evaluate our assumptions and practices and to expose violence, atrocities and hopelessly self-destructive values of patriarchy. Together, feminist discourse and the women's movement, hold the potential to radicalize our understanding further. She concluded her comprehensive address with the following thought-provoking issues: - the concepts of power, achievement, productivity, work, control over social and natural resources are all the values, the markers of a patriarchal order, the values of a system dominated by the masculinity principle, standing in the way of a non-oppressive world. The question is whether our attempts for empowerment of women are to be integrated within the patriarchal order or are going to subvert it?

The first paper of the first session of the conference, entitled "Empowerment of Women in the Indian context: A Sociological Analysis", was presented by Dr. D.K.Sudha, Lecturer in Sociology, Bhadravathi, Karnataka. She stated that empowerment of women refers to the entitlement of women to have and exercise power over their lives, both as individuals and the members of a social system. Her paper was an effort at analysis of the constraints in the empowerment of Indian women and she provided a number of possible strategies with which to overcome these barriers. Patriarchy, traditional patterns of socialisation, economic backwardness, corruption, power politics, lack of women leaders and the indifferent attitude of women towards their development were the constraints she identified as hampering and retarding empowerment of women. She categorically stated, therefore, that the empowerment of women in the state appears to be a myth.

The second paper, on "Globalisation, Feminization and Women Empowerment", by Dr. Chaya Degaonkar, Department of Economics, Gulbarga University, Karnataka, focused upon the process of globalisation as taking over labour. The relationship between state, labour and capital has had a radical paradigmatic shift in the recent years, she argued, with the global capital imposing over domestic capital, resulting

in changes in production structures. Her paper analysed the specific impact of this on women's labour in agriculture induced by these structural changes. There has been a steady feminisation of work in South India in agriculture, but within the context of globalisation, and there are no significant indicators to show any significant trends in empowerment of women. She concluded by advocating a revolutionary reform in institutions of feudal social structures.

Dr. M.Jamuna, Professor, Department of History, Bangalore University, raised, in the third paper, on "Empowerment of Women - Precept and Practice", the question: what and how empowered are women at the end of the year of Women's Empowerment? She added that with the emergence of neo-capitalist imperialism, women are subject to new types of exploitations. The paper explored the deleterious and debilitating effects of increases in rape, crimes against women, dowry deaths, sexual exploitation, infanticide, sex imbalances, increased use of pre-natal diagnostic techniques and child marriages. She finds that female activists, political leadership and a few women's organisations are mainly concerned with the question of political empowerment, pushing the realities of women's plight into darkness. Her recommendations are that: unless sincere efforts are made not to scuttle government schemes at the bureaucratic and political levels; until patriarchal forces are curbed and an attitudinal change in both sexes is brought in, and serious awareness is generated at the grass roots level; until useful and effective laws are brought in, all talk of empowerment and equal rights would be hypocritical, meaningless and an exercise in futility.

"Empowering the Indian State and Civil Society - Perspective on the Reconfiguration of Women", by Dr. K.S.Vaishali, Department of English, Bangalore University, argued that the mainstreaming of the entire gamut of issues articulated in the National Policy on Women's Empowerment 2001, is a direct result of civil society interventions and resistance struggles in different parts of the country. Dr. Vaishali further substantiated that since these systems within civil society are already in place and doing the work, the state should create mechanisms to affirm and support the non-state institutional mechanisms. The paper concluded that there is a need to revalidate the vital role of women's movements in the reconstruction of Indian Civil Society on more pluralistic, egalitarian foundations and to forge alliances between women's and other social groups. It is also important to investigate the relationship between religion, communalism, caste and politics and to rearticulate the role of women in Indian Society, and take serious cognisance of the differences and discriminations based on class, caste and religion, if the question on Indian women's empowerment is to be satisfactorily answered.

The second session of day one began with a paper presented by Dr. R.Rathnakumari, Centre for Women's Studies, Andhra University, Vishakapatnam, Andhra Pradesh, entitled "The Role of State in Women's Empowerment - A Case Study of Andhra

Pradesh". She stated that the construction of gender is a matter of both social construction and cultural representation. Even after half a century of Independence, the status of women is still not even close to the desirable, and the data of various agencies clearly indicate that empowerment is still a far cry for the average Indian women. She stated that the effectiveness or even desirability of the state interventions remains a critical question because the construction and reinforcement of gender roles, the mediation of women's access to resources and decision-making powers are largely located within the family household and community. She cited the case study of A.P as an illustration of the significant role of the Government of Andhra Pradesh for women's empowerment.

The second paper on "Custom Made Bahun and Barbies" by Dr. Sindhu Menon, Department of English, Bangalore University, indicated that the role of the media in relation to women's issues is an ambivalent one. She used the mode of advertising in the media to show how the stereotyping of women is reinforced through new means. The commodification of women in the electronic and press media are continually perpetuating role stereotypes and are guilty of pigeon-holing women into increasingly pre-defined and narrow slots. She concluded her paper with some alternate modes that can be used to depict women realistically and as human beings with self worth.

"Pornography - A Violence against Women", the third paper in the session presented by Smt. S.P.Srimathi, Department of Women's Studies, NMKRV College, Bangalore, focused on how globalisation and consumerism are interlinked to the concept "violence" and its relatedness to women. She postulated that Pornography is a form of violence against women, it being defined as "images and representations divorced from social reality and as production, consumption and distribution of pictures/ words". It thus perpetuates a system of ideas and beliefs that are constitutive of male power which leads to the subordination of women who are into pornography or who are forced to work, live or be educated in an environment flooded with pornography.

The concluding paper of the first day was "the Question of Women's Empowerment in the True Sense", by Dr. K.G.Bhuvana Maheshwari, Department of English, Bangalore University. She focussed on urban women and the stereotypes of empowerment as well as the dis-empowering gaps within the notions of empowerment, citing examples. The paper examined and explored in depth the awareness of empowerment as a moment-by-moment regeneration of one's strengths alongside the parallel structures of women's empowerment to patriarchal equivalents.

The first paper in session one on the second day of the conference entitled "Women's Bill, An Intervention in State Policy", was delivered by Dr. Meera Chakravarthy, Professor, Department of Sanskrit, Bangalore University. Her paper raised the

question of the Women's Reservation Bill in parliament and stated that, at both the State and National levels, agitations have consistently been pressuring people in power to table the Bill. However, the men in governance present the bill now and then to create an illusion of propriety and equality. She adds that inequality is increasing all the time and that the exploitation of women has much to do with the power relations and economic exploitation in social relations and social structures. The gravity of the problem is becoming last in the quagmire of empty talks, and she feels that the policy on Reservation is merely formulated to avert 'conflict'. It was laid aside in legislative and became dead by omission. Reservation, she said, is a moral issue and there is a need to create pockets of quota for women. Being imbued with the patriarchal concepts, the policy of reservations is thus an illusion - and empowerment therefore becomes an empty manifesto.

This was followed by "changing socio-economic profile of Rural Women - Role of JWP and Stree-Shakti", presented by Dr. Shree S. Herlekar, Hubli. The gender empowerment of women in Indian villages has become absolutely imperative in the present day and the NGOs are working for women's causes and their participation in political, economical and social spheres, in this direction. The Joint Women's Programme, as one such organisation, is spreading awareness about women's socio-political and economic rights. The paper analysed the functioning of the Stree-Shakti programme and the activities of JWP and their impact on women of Byahatti Village, Hubli. She highlighted, in depth, the problems and constraints related to the motivation and interaction of JWP with the women, listed its achievement in the village and put forward some strong recommendations for the future implementation of such programmes.

Dr. K.G. Uma, Professor, Department of Sociology, Bangalore University, and Director - Centre for Women's Studies, delivered the next paper on "Women's Perception and Utilisation of Health Care, Facilities for Reproductive Health Care - A Case Study in Karnataka". There is a general apathy on the part of women towards their own health, as well as on the part of the Government with regard to women's health issues. Because of the patriarchal order in which women live, together with the socio-economic conditions of their lives, women tend to neglect their health, nutrition and issues related to occupational hazards. However, public health programmes and primary health centres created and managed by male doctors are inefficient, bureaucratic and steeped in paternalistic notions. The study conducted in Chitradurga district, by Dr. Uma, shows the women generally neglect their own health because of total absorption in family issues as first priority, lack of female doctors at PHC and the high cost of medicines that are not available at PHCs. She provided comprehensive statistics on the study and followed these with many valid recommendations for improving PHCs with regard to women's health issues.

The next paper on "Enabling legislation, Empowering Institutions, Women and Thrift

co-operatives in Andhra Pradesh - A Perspective” by Smt. Sandhya Kanneganti, Centre for Economic and Social Studies, Hyderabad, states that a positive partnership between state and civil society is incumbent in promoting the interests of its citizens and in empowering them. Her paper cites the case of APMACS Act (Andhra Pradesh Mutually Aided Co-operative Society Act) of 1995, which, without any ostensible objective of empowering women, has done exactly that, empowered them - by facilitating women’s establishment of self-owned and self-managed rural banking institutions. In the process, it empowered them through psychological confidence, social recognition, economic strength and acquisition of managerial skills. The Women’s Thrift Co-operative, promoted by the Co-operative Development Foundation, under APMACS Act, 1995, provided the impetus to some 40,000 women in the Karimnagar and Warangal districts in Andhra Pradesh.

The last paper in this session, entitled, “Of Walls and Women”, by Vimala Rama Rao, Professor and Head of the Department of English, Bangalore University, presented a metaphorical examination of the notion of empowerment through a literary analysis of a text. She highlighted empowerment as the ability to choose, to exercise options and to have choice. The state, she says, has various schemes to empower women. She discusses one such scheme, which benefits a marginalised woman, whose option to own a home is juxtaposed with a national disaster in a sensitive short story written by Bolavar Mohammed Kunhi in Kannada.

“Health Empowerment of Indian Women in the context of Globalisation” The first paper of the penultimate session of the closing day of the conference was presented by Dr. K.Saroja, Associate Professor, Department of Human Development, College of Rural Home Science, Dharwad. She raised the question of women’s empowerment in terms of health in the global economic context, with regard to the new Economic Policy which involves cutting costs on health, education and social spending, the privatisation of medical care, increase in medical costs, and the flooding of the Indian market by Transnational Pharmaceutical Companies. Globalisation is impacting negatively on women’s health, both directly and indirectly. She advocates many measures to rectify the situation, the main one being a gender sensitive public health policy to achieve gender equity and inclusive of health issues and health programmes. Hence all policies should be gender sensitive, comprehensive, universal in nature, portable and accessible.

The next topic “Towards True Empowerment of Women”, by Sri. K.S.Narayan, Institute for Social and Economic Change (ISEC), Bangalore, covered broad issues in lieu of empowering women, from social to economic to political aspects. He highlighted the need for training, as well as capacity building activities, to ensure the empowerment of women.

The last speaker of the final session of the conference, Dr. Shreemathi, Hampi University, spoke on “Women’s Body, Sexuality and Empowerment”. The concept of

presenting women, as it is at present, is one of a 'weak' individual. Women need to be empowered to become 'strong' beings. She highlighted issues on socialisation of women through ideas; looked at capacity of reproduction of women as empowering, spoke on sex education and the need to appreciate the power released through puberty. She maintains that this would indeed be of immense psychological power to a young girl.

During the Valedictory session, on the final day, a panel discussion was held, and was chaired by Prof. Rameshwari Verma where ideas on empowerment of women were outlined. The panelists were: Dr. Gabriel, Dr. B.Rathnakumari, Andhra University; Dr. Revathi Narayanan, State Programme Director, Mahila Samakhya, Karnataka; Dr. Shakuntala Narasimhan, Journalist, Bangalore and Dona Fernandes, Founder - Vimochana, Bangalore. A collective effort at arriving at some conclusions was the task of this panel. Amongst others, Dr. S. Narasimhan gave input on the media issue and women's portrayal; Smt. Dona Fernandes spoke vociferously on the issue of violence against women and Dr. Revathi gave a detailed, incisive report on the successes of the Mahila Samakhya Project. Dr. Gabriel, drew the attention of the house to the dangers of the present development paradigm and particularly its disastrous effects on women. She said the people's movements must take up these issues and work for a new development paradigm.

The Valedictory address was delivered by Smt. Madhura Chatrapathy, Trustee, Director, Asian Centre for Entrepreneurial Institute, Bangalore, who spoke at length on entrepreneurship and women, citing some interesting examples. In the final analysis, empowerment has to be seen as having taken on an enormous task but with no conclusive, clear cut and definitive definition emerging at the end. Empowerment does not, however, signify a specific goal towards which the state and civil society must evolve, but is a very conceptual notion that entails a process orientation and can thus in itself be a process and an end. Empowerment, it has been determined, is an ongoing phenomenon highly involved in the attainment of and by equity in economic, educational, health, social and political sectors. Also important are the removal of constraints imposed by patriarchal structures/ideologies; 'safeguarding' women against the various forms of violence by various methods; the drafting of gender sensitive policy/strategies and ensuring that effective legislation input into place.

The complexity of the problem of empowerment defies any easy solutions and easy answers. What emerged from this conference is the need for both, structures of the state and those institutions within civil society, to negotiate a set of workable solutions in the pursuit of equality, equity and a nation of empowered individuals.

MULTICULTURALISM AND GENDER ISSUES NORTHERN REGION CONFERENCE REPORT

Organized by

Centre for Women's Development Studies, New Delhi

and

Institute for Women's Studies, Lucknow University

In Collaboration with

The Indian Association for Women's Studies

28th to 30th September 2001

Dr. Roop Rekha Verma*

Day 1:

Inaugural Session

The first day began with the inaugural panel, addressed by Professor Roop Rekha Verma, as the co-ordinator for the conference. Dr. Zarina Bhatti, the Chairperson of the Indian Association for Women's Studies, Dr. Kumud Sharma, Senior Fellow, CWDS, and Ms. Zohra Chatterjee, Secretary, Women and Child Development. Dr. Kumkum Sangari delivered the keynote address. The panel provided a unique opportunity to the participants to understand the positing of Multiculturalism, in the context of present attempts of homogenisation and structuring "one national identity" and ramifications of these for women.

Prof. Roop Rekha Verma welcomed the delegates who had arrived in Lucknow despite the violent conditions created in the city on the eve of the Conference. This showed commitment of the participants to the women's cause. Prof. R. R. Verma, contextualised the Conference by her reference to the current events of fundamentalist terrorism on the one hand, and the threat of war on the other. She emphasised that war could never be an option - not even the last option, and exhorted the Conference to pass a resolution for global peace. " However inaudible our voice may be, it is strong because it is women's voice", she said.

* Dr. Rooprekha Verma, Director, Institute of Women's Studies, C/o Philosophy Department, University of Lucknow, Lucknow - 226 007, Phone : 0522-389620 (O), email : rooprekha@id.eth.net

Dr. Zarina Bhatti, in her remarks as the President of the IAWS pointed towards the historic juncture at which the Conference was taking place. She referred to the Black Tuesday, which witnessed the destructive might of technology that could destroy, even annihilate civilisation itself. Terrorism is an extreme form of protest borne out of deprivations and frustrations caused by an economically and socially inequitable social order. Interestingly enough it is fuelled both by the powerful and the powerless. The competing power seekers co-opt the poor uneducated people by inflaming ethnic and religious fervour in them, and breed hatred and intolerance in the minds of men, women and children, she said. Dr. Bhatti said that the new breed of fundamentalists that is emerging in our country, both in the majority and minority community is promoting religion-based identities and separatism. Certain political forces are trying to erode the very foundation of Indian society, which is based on diversity of religions and cultures.

The conceptualisation of Indian culture and tradition has placed women in central position. Indian womanhood has been perceived differently at different junctures in history. In the context of the recent rhetoric of revivalism, Indian woman is required to uphold the ancient virtues of modesty, chastity and sacrifice. Thus the imposition of dress code on women and disfiguring young women's faces who dared ignore the dictates of the fundamentalists. She further said that the variety of faces, the languages, the dresses, the architectural styles, the cuisine, the music that is found on the Indian landscape has been unique in the world. And it is this very uniqueness that is under siege. It is in response to this threat to our composite culture to our enormous capacity to absorb and accommodate differences, and to welcome choices, that we women have to devote our energies to counter these threats.

Dr. Bhatti opined that women and women's movement have a dual role to play. In the first instances women must resist to be co-opted by the fundamentalist forces who are trying to lure them in the name of religion secondly the women's movements through their advocacy programs have to expose the disruptive forces and safeguard cherished goals of secularism. Dr. Bhatti ended her address by exhorting participants to join IAWS and by reciting a couplet by Majaz:

tere maanthe pe yeh aanchal bahut hi khub hai lekin
tu is aanchal se ek parcham bana leti toh accha tha

Ms. Chatterjee, expressed her eagerness to learn the issues related to Multiculturalism. She emphasised the need to evolve ways and means to involve grass roots women in the entire exercise.

Dr. Kumkum Sangari in her Keynote address focused on the usage of multiculturalism and its academic genesis as strategic theory, and its understanding of gender. She began by raising a few questions such as what could multiculturalism mean? Is it a term, or an idea? Is it more democratic to be a multiculturalist than

not? Is it an idea, which comes from below or is it forwarded by the state? Dr. Sangari said that the term "multiculturalism" was mainly located in academic discourse, recognising certain definitions, which recognise feminist influences. The term itself was used to define the condition of immigrants from the third world to the first world. It stressed the importance of recognising difference, and meant to say that first one must recognise the difference in culture and then foster respect for the difference. This leads to the next question, as to who is to recognise the difference? For example, the Black Caribbean culture was recognised as existing alongside the white European culture. It was hierarchically below. Its usage however did give legitimacy to the immigrants in Europe and other parts of first world to have their voices heard. In looking for legitimacy for difference, we can recognise the British as the strongest proponents of diversity except that they saw diversity as chaos, and their own role to ensure order in it. As such their understanding of diversity was hemmed by their desire for streamlining it. The Indian census of 1892 clearly shows that the people of India did not know the religion they belonged to. They could only identify sects or particular gods' etc. but did not view themselves as belonging to a particular religion. The British, not being able to make sense of this, then tried to freeze identities. So while on the one hand, the British understanding does satisfy the liberal approach of identifying difference, the recognition on the other hand, is not sufficient, if we do not argue for its continuance. The post-modern understanding of multiculturalism, Dr. Sangari said, accepts boundaries and distinctions, and argues for continuity of difference and its acceptance.

However, if we examine the Post modernist approach, it has to admit that it has been completely fluid, which while giving certain openness is marred by being unable to define anything at all. Further, she said, at present looking at India, we would need to accept that we do have a strange mixing of orthodoxy with technical understanding of the issues. Within this, there are attempts to homogenise. For instance, the usage of the Hindutva identity, and wide-ranging attempts to equate religion with culture, saying both are the same, despite clear evidence that it is not so. Trying to link this entire homogenisation debate with ethnicity, given that we never had the wide-setter rule, no tribes, etc. our own perception of ethnicity per se, is difficult. Ethnicity would be a usable rationale for example, with the aborigines who used the ethnic language for their experience. But it can hardly be said for the Hindus, even though the dalits might use the same language to express their experience. This brings us to our perception of separateness. In France, the Arab women continue to wear purdah. There is an attempt to cast the separateness. For instance, the Victorian prudery, so strictly practiced, was often an attempt to distinguish the British women from Indian, which lent it self to the whole issue of "us and them". As such, this is not so white and black, as decisions on women's issues are dependent on the interconnectedness of one nation to another. It is in this backdrop, that we need to talk of sisterhood, rather than "us and them" in all

situations, Dr. Sangari maintained.

Cautioning against the confusion between multiplicity and multiculturalism she said that it was critical that multiplicity should not be confused with democracy. The co-existence of cultures/differences should not be mistaken for multiculturalism either. Further, multiculturalism itself cannot be used as a holdall for all democratic values, or to signify democracy itself. Democracy must mean more than this. In the marketing of globalisation, the usage of multicultural language is a symbol of how it can be used for very undemocratic and anti-people end. The current trend, flowing from globalisation, of piecemeal production has led to the location of female labour in the centre, the rationale being it is cheap, insecure and available. This has meant an increase in domestic home-based labour, with related cutbacks in service for the old, children and other groups.

At the end Dr. Sangari, pointed out how the market forces had joined hands with the Hindu right, and have, despite a note on so called openness, have meant a return to and a strengthening of, patriarchal values, which has meant that we will be losing the war. This perhaps is the answer to the question of how come the Hindu right is stepping up the fight for globalisation.

Dr. Kumud Sharma gave vote of thanks, and noted that Dr. Sangari had set the tone for the conference, by linking academic discourse to practical usage of theory, and its strategic nature.

Plenary Session I: Fundamentalism and Gender

Dr. Indu Agnihotri, an Activist and a Professor of History, and Dr. Urvashi Butalia, activist and author led the panel on this issue.

Dr. Indu Agnihotri underlined the relevance of the present discussion, as it brings forth the current issue, which are challenges before all of us. Tracing the history of communalism and fundamentalism, she noted that communalism came to us in the garb of fundamentalism. There is different kind of fundamentalism. However, we need to recognise that it is embedded in society and in religion. It is important to understand the relationship, as it is a political linkage. We must understand that we are up against a very political fight, and as such it is important to discuss the historical context and the embeddedness of the issue.

Dr. Agnihotri said that fundamentalism needs religion for it to exist, although it is not a feature of religion. It tries to draw legitimacy from a certain glorious past. The entire discourse is to return to that past glory, which most often never existed. The discourse is based on and directed towards an evocation of a mythical past; this is true of whatever religion we look at. There is an attempt to say that there was an ideal moment of the religion to which we must return. Even though, there has never

been any such historical moment, as at all moments religion has been in a process of evolution of practices, philosophies, etc., which does not provide or make for a rigid model. For example, there was no Vedic period, which was decisive. The whole of the Hindu past has been mostly transitory on the shaky basis of which is structured the present attempt to project homogeneity of religion. So in one period there was heterogeneity of thought, approaches. There was no homogeneity of the practitioners at any point. A similar trend can be noted in case of Islam. The beliefs of the system have to be rooted in the existing practices of the society in which it was rooted. So gender relations were pre-existent to societies, within which religion was intervening. As such the historical context has to be understood to understand the contemporary battles, which we are fighting.

To the question how do the fundamentalists image women, Dr. Agnihotri's answer was: as social burdens, as separate entities from the social life. There is a commonality of perception, which envisions women as non-producers. This is also a clear contradiction of the reality of today or ever, in terms of what women truly are. There is enough historical evidence of women's contribution, which is obvious. But is still ignored. The myths around women as non-producers have been contradicted with enough historical evidence to show the kind of role women have played in terms of socio-economic contributors: women as farmers, as labourers, as dasis etc. However, the entire battle of controlling women is being fought by fundamentalists by imaging women as non-producers, Dr. Agnihotri maintained. Dr. Agnihotri said that it was in this context that we must examine the present capitalist market, and understand the re-entry of women in the market. This illustrates the contradiction between the movement and fundamentalism. Family has been the scene of battle, as the fundamentalists see the family as the only space for women. This is clearly shown by the overlap in statements about women by all fundamentalists Hindus/Muslims/Christians/Sikhs. Although there is a difference in the specificities of each there is a commonality in the exclusion of women.

On the other hand, Dr. Agnihotri said, the fundamentalist organisations are claiming to be the only power with which the negotiations in terms of rights within the community have to take place. In this way, the women's movement stands against the fundamentalists of all hues. Given this context we do need to move away from seeing Islamic fundamentalism as merely reactionary, however, that does not take away from the fact that the discourse of Hindutva is even more threatening as it claims the power of the majority. There is a booklet titled "Adarsh Ghar". And it talks about an ideal home. The inhabitant of this model home are living in a joint family system, where the younger members are subservient to the elders, women keep to housework, while men go out and earn. Sons follow in the footsteps of their fathers and take on the same profession as the father. This clearly idealises the family based occupation model, which is obviously class-based, evocative of the caste divisions, without any space for gender and dalit realities. The booklet also

attempts to present a homogenised vision of womanhood, regardless of their realities, seeking to posit one role of women as the most ideal, as opposed to others. The book seeks to present views, which takes us back to caste-based work, and a vision that takes away rights. Dr. Agnihotri reiterated the linkage between fundamentalism and globalisation, in which globalisation is marketed as something indigenous and is used to market a vision that negates rights and equality.

Dr. Urvashi Butalia, proposed to examine fundamentalism from women's side and look at the history of these concepts and the response of women. Earlier, there were very clear commitments about keeping Communalism and Fundamentalism apart. Now we clearly state that it is one and the same thing. While earlier we had said that the entire discourse of the Hindu Right is a communal phenomenon, now it is clear that it is the same thing as fundamentalism. Dr. Butalia said that today, there is a new fundamentalism, symbolised by Mr. George Bush, who is defining 'us and them' in which the 'us' is a military power. The homogenisation of Islam with terrorism is a new gift, which fits the Hindu agenda perfectly. There does seem to be a linkage of violence with men who are seeking linkages with religion. So, at present the only voices for peace are the voices of women. For example the peace plea of the Women of Kosovo, which is based on their own experience, and asks America to grieve of its dead and engage with reconstruction not war.

Dr. Bhutalia maintained that it was critical to understand the role of the women's movement vis a vis the entire issue of fundamentalism. She admitted that there was no one movement, and those we are talking about movement of differences, and also a kind of commonality.

She pointed out that Muslim women or women as Muslims whenever an issue or rather the identity of women as belonging to communities was not an issue in the campaigns that took place in the late 70s.80s and even into the 90s prior to 1992. The Anti-rape campaign revolved around 2-3 cases, prominent among which was the Hyderabad case of Rameeza Bi, where she was raped and her husband killed, and still the court referred to her as a prostitute. The other cases were the Mathura rape case, Suman Rani, Kusum Tyagi. Followed by Bhanwari Devi, at the time no one (at least in the movement) saw women as holder of religious identities, being more concerned with the abuse itself. The only time that identity was relevant was more to do with caste, as there were gang rapes of dalit women. In the dowry campaign there was an assumption, that dowry somehow was a Hindu issue. However not much attention was paid to the Muslim angle, as the issue was dowry. Even in the subsequent movements, like Chipko, arrack etc. the focus was the issue, and women were central.

Dr. Bhutalia pointed out that the first time women's religious identity became an issue was in the Shah Bano case. It was now that the Muslim women took to streets against the judgment granting maintenance to Muslim wives, and in favour of the

Personal law. The Movement responded by doing pro-Shah Bano demonstrations, which were very obviously peopled by Muslim women, often being led by women in *burkhas*. It is interesting to note the compulsion here to take on the identity, and the entire discourse, which raised the central question of who can speak for whom. This dilemma also surfaced during the Sati campaign. At this time also the women campaigning for Sati used their identity as Hindu women, and as such the campaigners against Sati also used their Hindu identities, seeking to use the same language to respond to the questions being raised about who is speaking for whom. There was of course time when women leading the movement were called western, as well as alienated from their roots. Even at that time, there were attempts to claim a more grass-root identity. We have to be careful not to fall in the same trap. However, this positioning is not happening in a vacuum. There is a context, which is deciding priorities and political stances for the movement, Dr. Bhutalia maintained.

The change in the voice of the movement participating in the debate on the Uniform Civil Code took place precisely due to a realisation of rising consciousness on the issue of identity. There was a clear hijacking of the discussion on Uniform Civil Code by the BJP, in addition to other issues, and the language of the movement was quick in responding, so as to distance and distinguish itself from the BJP. However this has meant that we re-examine our belief about the unity of women, and consider the women being used as interns for fundamentalism and also distinguish ourselves from them. For instance, while we always spoke about women access to the public sphere, the use of the public sphere by women like Uma Bharti, Sadhavi Rithambra showed us clearly, that we meant a different kind of access than being advocated for women by the BJP. So we had to explain what we meant by access and participation. However, there are certain areas in which these kinds of questions are never raised, for instance family planning, reproduction etc.

Taking the example of Kashmir issue, Dr. Bhutalia pointed out that it has been seen largely as a "nationalist" issue, and the rise of fundamentalism has exhibited itself twice over now, especially in the imposition of the dress code. It is important to look at the women's movement's responses to Kashmir. There is not enough critique of "nationhood" and "nationalism". She said that it was important to notice the disintegration being experienced and recognise that forced dress code (which is unacceptable) is not the only form of violence being experienced by women.

The most important question, she said, was where do we go from here. We need to link-up with other movements to see what is the nature of the strategies if any, to address the crosscutting issues of caste and community, gender violence and discrimination. There are accusations from even movement leaders that the movement is leaning towards majoritarianism, which may be countered by asking for increased participation of other voices, but at the same time is a valid critique, as it helps us to sharpen our understandings, positions and responses.

Dr. Kumud Sharma as the chair of the panel noted that excellent presentations had been made which would set the tone for the deliberations of the coming two days. The presentations had brought out the existing solidarity on the issue, as well as the manner in which the debates have been re-negotiated, and the public space that has been claimed by the movement for the debate. The session was opened for discussion on the presentations made by Dr. Indu Agnihotri, Dr. Urvashi Bhutalia and Dr. Kumkum Sangari.

The discussion, in which a large number of delegates participated, was animated and very meaningful. Some participants supported Dr. Bhutalia's statement regarding the manner in which the movement never dealt with community identities, and only looked at women as women. Some participants lamented the present trend of minority women's issues being perceived as very delicate issues. It was felt that we do need to review all personal laws and we do need to take position. Some participants expressed worry over the manner in which new forums for Muslim women are being created on the basis of the Muslim identity. They felt that there was a need to claim our Indianness, and create an Indian platform.

This was responded to by Dr. Agnihotri, who agreed that there was no hesitation on the part of the movement in speaking for Muslim women or women of any other identities. However, it is true that the committed articulate section cannot speak for everyone and there is a value in including different voices. This has been taken note of by the women's movement. And by its very practice of inclusion of different voices, the tag of upper class/caste/majority interests has been trashed.

Several participants felt the need for some kind of an action plan which could be a common minimum charter and would give a direction in terms of issues that need to be addressed as well as manner in which they should be addressed.

The entire issue of women's work was discussed, and while a need was articulated to distinguish between remunerative work and non-remunerative work, like child-care etc., this was countered by questioning the basis on which economic productivity is decided. As certain kind of work may not be paid but may be very critical and highly productive, the ramifications of the distinction must be critically looked into. Dr. Agnihotri responded by pointing out that the women's movement initiated the entire 70s in debate on work. However, one is looking at an entry point to re-open the debate on subsistence labour, so as to challenge the fundamentalist effort at ensuring stereotypes of women's work: in-house work etc. While the distinction between remunerative and non-remunerative work does not have to be blurred, there has to be a way to measure women's contribution.

Another important point which came up in the discussions concerned the political linkage in the present times between the fundamentalist agenda, and the forces of

neo-liberalisation and globalisation. The lines between subsistence labour and domestic labour are extremely blurred which serves everybody's purpose. The fundamentalists want the women out of the public sphere without losing their labour. So by pushing women inside, they still have access to their labour without dealing with demands for rights, as the struggle then is focused on survival. This also ensures capital accumulation. This ensures the right of the rich to contribute the way they are, as the system is irrelevant to them, and ensures growing lack of access for the poor to get out of their situation.

The discussion also took up such questions as family planning, etc., which were presented as secular issues. But these may not be secular issues. They have been extremely contentious and continue to be the same. Even today, women's bodies and their sexuality are flash point issues, which have no global consensus. The discussion also dwelt on the issue of language and the hijacking of the issues of women's movement by the Hindu right, and the kind of paralysing silence that one is pushed into. For instance the UCC debate, the Beauty contests etc., There has to be careful consideration of language, so that the movement does not sound rightist, and there has to be sustained effort at constructing language which is ours, and can ensure that the issues are understood from our perspective.

The participants also brought up the political and strategic limitation of using strategies like engaging religious leaders in resolving women's issues and its repercussions. The need for discussion and questioning the entire acceptance of nationalism and national identity as a patriotic premise also surfaced. It was agreed that there was a need to question the premise of nationalism and the ensuing acceptance of state violence. These need to be examined deeply and challenged in terms of their impact on women.

Afternoon Sessions:

In the afternoon of the first day of the Conference, three concurrent sessions were held:

1. Health and Population concerns {Facilitator: Ms. Jasodhara Das Gupta }
2. Media {Facilitator: Ms. Shahira Naim }
3. Private and Public Divide {Facilitator: Ms. Tulika Shrivastava}

The reporting of the deliberations of these sessions was scheduled on the second day of the Conference.

Day 2

Plenary: Globalisation, Politics & Women

The second plenary session was addressed by Dr. Uma Kalpagam & Dr.Nisha Srivastava.

Dr. U. Kalpagam gave an account of the present state of development and pointed out that even as globalisation provides benefits and opportunities to many in many areas. It could also foreclose certain other benefits and opportunities in other areas which may indeed be crucial for the survival of people. According to her the optimism about globalisation is unfounded, for in a world structured by varieties of inequalities the benefits of globalisation are also unequally distributed. Dr. Kalpagam presented some of the problems and issues that have emerged with globalisation in the domains of economy, culture, society and politics and how they impact on women's lives in India.

Examining some trends and patterns in workforce in the nineties, Dr.Kalpagam said that in the rural areas there has been a decrease in the proportion of both self-employed women and women as regular-wage workers while the proportion of women casual workers has increased. The NSS 50th round survey (1993-94) noted an increase in the proportion of women workers in the primary sector thus reversing an earlier trend. This indicates that the option for diversification to non-agricultural employment is increasingly limited for women. Between 1987-88 and 1993-94 agriculture absorbed most of the new female workers in rural India besides absorbing those displaced from other sectors. Owing to lack of dynamism in rural India, women also suffered in terms of male - female inter sectoral job adjustments, which forced them to go back to agriculture to give way to their male counterparts. Rural women's weak educational background and lack of skill affects them adversely when modern sector activities in the rural non-farm sector become more skill - selective. Globalisation is only likely to increase skill selectivity in the future as economic sectors become more receptive to information technologies and biotechnologies. Same trend was found in the urban areas.

Dr. Kalpagam further pointed out that a sector -wise analysis of the impact of liberalisation and globalisation suggests that for the poorer classes in different traditional occupations such as farming, fishing etc., their livelihood security have been undermined largely on account of lack of rights and statutory protection. Where a majority of the workforce is in the informal sector, it leads to whittling down of workers rights and legal protection. Globalisation is governed by norms of flexibility as regards labour use and as flexible labour contracts become more pervasive, the distinction between formal and informal sector becomes fuzzier she said. Under a less regulated labour regime with flexible labour contracts systemic biases in employment on account of caste, gender education. Skill etc. is likely to be reinforced.

Under flexible labour contracts, the prospects of women's employment in the organised sector are not very bright as management generally views formal sector women workers as the least flexible, while informal sector women workers are considered the most flexible. While emerging IT sector offers opportunities for women especially in remote processing jobs, their accessibility is restricted to the educated women alone. Causing fears that the IT sector may cause increasing polarisation within society and within the work force. Globalisation by unleashing the forces of competition marginalises those unable to compete thus making the market the supreme arbiter of success and failure. Concomitantly social sector expenditures are likely to decrease in the future. If the current indications are taken seriously, we can expect a greater privatisation of both higher education and health-care facilities. Given the prevailing social preferences, this is likely to affect women adversely.

Given this scenario on the economic front, how can we refashion a politics of the women's movement to mitigate the economic effects of globalisation on poor women, Dr. Kalpagam asked. Livelihood security, prioritising social sector development, a comprehensive social security scheme, protection and expansion of labour rights to informal sector worker appear to be areas that need both political focus and policy advocacy. These are areas their different sections of the women's movement have been working for long and these have no doubt to be strengthened. But Dr. Kalpagam also emphasised that the women's movement has to reconsider ways to privilege the "local" and bring the "local" to the forefront of our political consciousness in a politics of anti-globalisation. In the economic domain for instance, livelihood security would entail conferring on local communities the right to determine use of natural resources. Conserving bio-diversity and preservation of locally sustainable economic systems. A feminist politics that privileges the local in conjunction with identifying the structural constraints of the economy and which builds in an understanding of how patriarchal structures operate at all levels would prove better as an anti-globalisation political strategy than one informed by the well known feminist slogan "Think globally. Act locally". Dr Kalpagam urged that we reframe our paradigm in this era of globalisation such that it allows us to "think locally" as well.

Elaborating the social effects of globalisation Dr. Kalpagam said that there is a greater polarisation as indicated by life style patterns. While consumerism has affected women at one end of the social spectrum, the other end is deprived of its basic necessities. Mobility and accessibility have undoubtedly opened up a vast world of opportunities for some women. But for the majority, consumption and lifestyle inequalities in a world without much opportunities and accessibility means that the traditional ideological constraints bind them more severely. In that constrained world, women and girls have always been considered a liability and a burden. For such people, a girl child appears even more burdensome now in their reckoning of opportunity costs. The rise in female foeticide in recent years resulting in adverse

sex ratios in many communities and regions needs to be understood in terms of the increase in the perceived burdens of a girl child in the changed economic context, Dr. Kalpagam maintained.

Giving the example of the advertisement of virgin Atlantic Dr. Kalpagam brought home the point that globalisation also seeks to generate a new set of norms and values for women. These issues now take us to the realm of culture politics under globalisation. The political discourse of culture under globalisation has veered around two extreme positions - one of western culture bashing and the other a discourse of "Indian culture" that exhibits anxiety over its imminent capitulation to the dominant western culture. Both these are discourses inimical to the progressive women's movement, Kalpagam said.

Dr. Kalpagam further gave a detailed critique of the Western-culture bashing that was once made popular by German Kultur discourses and finds recent echoes on the defence of "Asian values" by many authoritarian regimes in the countries of South East Asia as well. According to Kalpagam the problem with this kind of positioning is to attribute to the West a cultural homogeneity that it certainly lacks in the increasingly multicultural world of immigrants, diasporic population and hybridities. Moreover it does not recognise the plurality of opinions and life styles even in this imagined homogenous group for if there are groups that support abortions and gay and lesbian marriages there are equally vociferous religiously - inspired groups that oppose these social and legal changes. Dr. Kalpagam explained that she takes a position of defence against the Western culture bashers for the present purpose of working towards a contextually relevant feminist politics in order to underline the importance of incorporating into the understanding - how the forces of modernity impinge at the grassroots in terms of transformation of desires, need and resources.

Another inimical discourse to which Dr. Kalpagam drew attention, was "Hamara Sanskriti group" comprising predominantly of male interlocutors of Indian feminism with rather suspect motives, often drawing support from the first set of culture police. It is a common refrain among this group of male interlocutors to question the "Indianess" of the Indian women's movement, only to be dismissive of the concern for egalitarianism. This group of feminist basher's view Indian culture as fixed and unchanging in which an upper-caste middle-class idea of culture often the culture that the interlocutor is familiar with, serves to substitute as the national culture to which all are imagined to conform. Hence the Indian women's movement is seen as something western or western inspired feminism ill-suited to our culture, nor is the women's movement's concern for egalitarianism conceded any merit. Ask them what the feminist movement stands for and they will tell you that it stands for sexual freedom, family - destroying tendencies such as sharing of house work between the spouses, women's economic independence, women's choice to have or not to have

sex and children, support for lesbianism and so on. They would hardly mention issues such as imbalances in sex ratio, high female illiteracy, and feminisation of poverty, gender discrimination in labour markets and other kinds of systemic gender inequalities, which the Indian women's movement has highlighted. Kalpagam said, a feminist politics that can challenge the onslaught of this group of interlocutors need to highlight the inequalities and oppressive social and gender relations within a framework that captures both diversities and dynamics of cultural processes and retains the authenticity of grass root women's experiences. A grass root feminist politics that privileges a discourse of the "local" has in this contest a greater potential to challenge traditionalist male chauvinism.

Elaborating further, Kalpagam rejected as too simplistic the argument that the development of globalisation has accompanied religious fundamentalism globally due to the attempt of globalisation to forge cultural homogeneity. She explained this phenomenon by referring to the distinction between procedural democracy and substantive democracy. Different ethnic groups in democratic societies feel that ensuring procedural democracy is not sufficient to negate the pressures of cultural assimilation that are often demanded by majoritarian groups and more and more people are less and less willing to succumb to the powers of assimilation. Such an assimilation demand is seen to undermine substantive democracy as cultural identities are erased in the making of a national citizen in multicultural democratic societies. So contrary to the scholars like Charles Taylor who see procedural democracy and substantive democracy as two alternate variants, Kalpagam saw both as necessary requirements for full democratisation. This is not the same, as saying that political democratisation at the state level should be matched by democratisation of society as well. People in democratic societies are members of institutions, groups and communities, and what we mean by democratisation of society is really the democratisation of these groups and communities. Further she said that the fundamentalist groups resist these tendencies for democratisation and although such resistance is not conducted against globalisation and markets, it is often done so in either an anti-western or anti-modernist discourse.

It is under these various forces, Kalpagam said, that the social construction of gender takes place. The social constructions of woman are equally varied – from the consumer women in product advertisements; the westernised looking Indian woman in Indian office settings who equals in efficiency with the office workers of western nations; the multi faceted Indian woman who folds in as homemaker, a dot.com CEO and script writer; the woman who is forced to wear burqa by Kashmiri militants; the empowered woman of our Panchayat Raj; the millions of other woman waiting in turn to be empowered by our paternalistic state; the wounded Bharat Mata and so on. Such social constructions of women, which are also role delineations are meant to transform the conduct of women in desired directions to suit the particular forces at operation.

Dr. Nisha Srivastava, in her address examined Globalisation as a situation, its genesis as well as the kind of impact it would have on women in particular and on the social community in general. Dr. Srivastava maintained that globalisation was not a new phenomenon and that what was new was the acceleration in the speed and scope of movements of real and financial capital primarily because of

- Removal of state controls on trade and investments
- New information and communication technologies
- The emergence at the international level of new institutions for mediation and negotiation

Dr. Shrivastava raised the question why should globalisation be feared despite great expansion of world output and trade and closer interaction. Her answer was that the fear was rooted in

- i) implications for workers and job,
- ii) implication for environment,
- iii) growing inequalities and
- iv) dominance of developed countries in the structures of world governance.

Women's work in the home is little recognised and even less valued. Nevertheless, caring for the sick, the elderly, children and all other members of the family, nurturing human relations with love and selflessness form the invisible backdrop for all economic activities. All societies unfairly allocate most of the responsibility and burden for care in the family and the community to women, Dr. Shrivastava said. Globalisation had fuelled higher consumption patterns for the rich. This has put pressure on the environment of poor countries Dr. Shrivastava informed that according to the Human Development Report (1999), over the past three decades, the income gap between the world's richest fifth and its poorest fifth has more than doubled. Similarly, the report shows that inequalities in incomes, wealth and access have been rising even within counties. Globalisation today, she said, is led by the developed capitalist countries exclusively and aggressively to promote and push their agenda. To this end the institutions that have emerged are dominated by the G-7 countries and are unrepresentative and undemocratic.

Giving an account of the impact of globalisation on India economy Dr. Shrivastava referred to the data of National sample survey. Over the 90's the number of this employed as a proportion of the population has declined. This is so for both rural and urban, male and female. People being out of work may be desirable in some circumstances, but not in others. If a child is taken out of the workforce and put into school, it is desirable, but not if an adult loses his/her job. Largely, the decline in worker population ratios up to the 24-year age group has been accompanied by

an increase in enrolments at the primary middle and college levels. So to the extent that men and women have given up work to gain education. It is a desirable development, Dr. Shrivastava maintained. However, schooling does not explain why employment ratios have fallen for both men and women above 24 years of age. This is explained by the decline in economic activity. Both industrial and agricultural output has stagnated, and consequently employment opportunities have declined and the worker population ratios have come down. Dr. Shrivastava further informed that over the period, women workers moved out from agriculture to eke out an existence in the informal sector where wages are a pittance, productivity is low, and there is no job security. Although the percentage of population below the poverty line has gone down in the decade, the decline is only by 2-3 percent in the period between 1989-94 and 1999-2000, which is insignificant. While 33.5 percent males live below the poverty line, the percentage of women below the poverty line is a little higher, it is 35.5 percent. Although Dr. Shrivastava found it difficult to give clear verdict on reforms, she found it clear that globalisation as it is being pushed by the corporate interests of the developed world has worsened the situation for the poor and the powerless.

Although Dr. Shrivastava accepted the desirability of women's protest against globalisation she cautioned against making it the punching bag for all our failures. She presented the crises of governance as more crucial than that of globalisation. She maintained that women have not only to oppose globalisation, but also their own governments and that they must evolve new paradigms for governance, not only within nations, but also between nations.

Dr. Hemlata Swaroop, the co-Chairperson of the session summarised the presentations of Dr Kalpagam & Dr. Shrivastava. She recalled that during the Earth summit, the Human Development Report bore a cover with a picture of an inverted funnel to show the gap between developing and developed nations, which had increased, manifold since 1960. She also pointed out that the growth rate during the period when the process of globalisation intensified had become 2%. The question of who gains is becoming more and more critical. The session was then opened to discussion.

Some participants pointed out that the forces of globalisation had no ideology of their own, and take on the popular language. Advertisements for foreign goods using stereotype images of "Indian Women" exemplify this. Some other participants feel that in all discussions on Globalisation we critique the theme at the macro structure, but then think of local initiatives. While it may not advocate Globalisation as such, there is an attempt to say that regardless of the major policies, we will build our own things, locally, which is a surrender of sorts. Another point, which came up in the discussions was that if we maintain that globalisation is here to stay and we will try to answer it with local governance, this approach cannot go very far. It was felt that

there was a need of a sharper questioning so as to structure a more up-front challenge to the phenomenon of globalisation. Some participants said that media itself was impacted by globalisation. Journalists are now on contracts, losing their jobs which in its own turn will affect independence of the press, as already there is a moving trend to look at newspapers as products rather than people's conscience. The manner, in which gender pages are created and scrapped, stories thrown out for colour photographs, is a clear indication that the Editors are representing the market more and more and the people's consciousness, less and less. It was also pointed out that one can say that globalisation can be negative and positive. However, the question would be, for whom it is positive and for whom it is negative.

Dr. S. Charles. The other Co-chairperson of the session thanked the participants and the resource persons for their time and participation.

Afternoon session:

In the afternoon of the second day of the Conference, three concurrent sessions were held:

1. Communalism [Facilitator: Dr.Urvashi Bhutalia]
2. Role of State [Facilitator: Dr. Pooja Juyal & Dr. Manjum Agrawal]
3. Education [Facilitator: Dr. Nishi Mehrotra]

The reporting of all the concurrent sessions was made in the last session of Conference.

Reporting Session:

I Communication:

Main issues:

- 1 Communication and Women's movement
- 2 Communication as a force with economic backing, and not merely to do with religion.
- 3 Communication vis a vis Secularism: the understanding of the two concepts
- 4 Both majority and minority communalism.

The group recognised that there has been a qualitative change for the worse in the situation since the rise of the Hindu right and the destruction of the Babri Masjid which makes the present discussion imperative as well as calls for more clear cut action. The discussion in the group focused on the following:

- The situation of communal violence and riots, in which minorities are targeted, are often engineered (as in Bhagalpur) to destroy their economic base. Such situations also result in creating fear and insecurity among minorities, especially women, who take the lead in reform in minority communities. Often the community retreats further which is both a cultural and an economic loss to the mainstream.
- It is essential to deal with the myths, stereotypes and feelings that we imbibe and internalise about the “other” – whether it is a religious other or a caste other at different levels
- The role of electoral politics, particularly now that the women are being seen as an important vote bank is crucial. Similarly, globalisation and the reserve army of women’s labour it draws on, tie in often with the communal agenda
- The strategies women should adopt to deal with communalism must be worked out. Can religion be an entry point for women? The question threw up a large debate in the group wherein a broad consensus seemed to indicate that while one needs to give special attention to religious identity in the discussions of minority/majority communalism, the overall approach should focus on women as women, as right bearers, and work from there.
- The movement has to study/understand communalism more deeply and develop a new language to counter it.
- The need to understand communalism not only as something that relates to riots but also to people’s day to day life and discourses.
- The recognition of not only women’s double burden of work (in-house & out-sourcing work) but also the burden of carrying the honour and identity of the community.

II. Private and public Divide:

The group on private and public divide spent time in understanding the usage of the same in terms of fundamentalism and its impact on women. The discussion took up the following main points:

- The location of women in the private, and men in the public sphere
- The values attached for women to continue in the private sphere and the access to public space allocated to certain kinds of participation by women, within given frameworks.
- The distinction in recognition of rights in each sphere and the complexities in accessing rights in the private sphere, even for “good” women.

- The advantage that flows from this artificial divide to fundamentalist forces.

The group also looked at the ensuing validation of the private and public divide, by the language of the globalisation forces, in tandem with the fundamentalist agenda, which by use of popular images seeks to locate women within home and eulogises this role as the ideal, and the loss of the public arena as minimal. The group brought out many examples of violation of civil and political rights in the private sphere. These examples centred around mainly:

- Honour killings
- Culture/Identify-preservation based community terrorism: Acid attacks, public murders, community punishments etc.

The group also discussed the nature of access and the legitimacy provided to the participation of women. It analysed the manner in which the access to the public sphere has been at the premium of the nature of participation. The participation of Hindu women in the public sphere in a violent manner during the felling of the Babri-Masjid also brought out in open the critical need to understand the fundamentalist values. This was important, as these are used day in and day out, in every day life, which make space for violent responses in the events of this nature. There is a consensus that women's rights are located in the private sphere without challenging that the "family" per se is not an area which is limited to the private sphere and there are many interventions of the family which are based on the public sphere and /or affect the public sphere. It is only when the issue of intervening to protect women's rights is raised that the issue of "private" area become all-important. For instance, despite knowing that dowry is a critical issue, and in effect has the potential of determining whether a women lives or dies, parents continue to marry off daughters.

It was noted that culture and religion could not be separated and one is used to facilitate or legitimise the other. This also showed the link between private and public as, although there is a difference in recognition of rights and their security, the private sphere is actively used to control access and participation in the public sphere. Also, the public sphere is determined in a manner as to practice gender distinction and bias. This can also be seen in the "sati" committed by Charanshah two year ago in Mahoba. She belonged to a caste in which there is no known tradition of sati, but there are three temples of Sati in that area and enough uncounted stories to forward it as a "good" value. This complex linkage between culture and religious values combines to defeat women's struggles and needs to be addressed in a cohesive manner. These linkages are also seen in the half-hearted proactive measures taken by the state to apparently ensure the political participation of women. In the absence of addressing the cultural reasons that have kept women out of decision-making, the state has created a situation in which women are vulnerable

to coercion, violence, and exploitation. We may condemn the Sarpanch Pati (Husband of the Head of the Panchayat) practices and the state, but a real situation, to be lived through by the woman concerned as well as the community. Further, it defeats the very purpose of the Amendment to the Constitution. So while such proactive measures are needed, the state cannot do one thing (legislation) and not the other (action to follow-up) and continue to use the language of private/public divide.

Such political usage of arena needs to be exposed and challenged, as the rights that need to be secured are not different in nature just because of their location. The actual facts for the oblique marginalisation/invisibilisation of violations in the private need to be surfaced as a political reality which is informed by gender-bias and seeks to maintain a status quo in relation to women, along with their different realities.

III. Education:

The group on Education focussed mainly on recommendations. It discussed the educational policy of the present government which seeks to saffronise education while pretending to be a progressive and women friendly policy, and speaks of women's equality in education and scientific temper.

The recommendations were:

- Education should maintain quality, equality and secular principles.
- Within the value education frame whole education should be broad minded, women positive, livelihood/work related and non-discriminatory.
- The National Curriculum framework of NCERT should be re-examined with a wider consultative framework, as it does not give space for democratic development of curriculum.
- Education must take into account messages about communalism, saffronization, segregation and exclusive to be egalitarian and inclusive for all.
- Separate women colleges (This was questioned by many participants and not accepted unconditionally)
- Emphasis on continuing education for rural women and girls for need based learning and continuing literacy campaigns aligning with local issues.
- Proactive support to CBOs and other community groups to set accountability of education providers and improve quality of basic education. Right to information and public drafts.
- Higher and technical education to be gender focused for students and teachers.
- Support innovations in education to facilitate cross fertilisation of ideas

- Privatisation of education to be reviewed in view of the interests of all who seek it so as to prevent marginalisation of poor, girls & disadvantaged.
- All future curricula at all levels should be in consonance with the constitutional principles of equality, democracy, secularism and promotion of women's equality.

IV. Role of State

This group also focused mainly on recommendations:

- The natural sovereignty of the state be preserved and promoted, in the context of globalisation and the State should promote the interests of its own people.
- The state should maintain its secular nature and credentials.
- The state should take all steps to fight fundamentalism
- The state should maintain its responsibilities as a welfare state, focusing attention on issues of women's health and education
- The state should encourage and ensure people's participation at all levels, in policy formation and dissemination
- The state should abstain from acts of state terrorism and violation of civil liberties
- The state should protect people's civil liberties from infringement by other agencies.
- The state could uphold and encourage the process of decentralisation
- Social and democratise movements in the country should be intensified.
- The state should intensify its role in the cause of the maintenance of law and order, and the state should refrain from patriarchal and gender biased attitudes.
- The state should work on electoral reforms and prevent criminalisation of politics and implement them
- The electoral reforms calling for declaration of income of elected representative should be made.

V. Media:

The group on Media outlined the strategic role of media the need to engage with it in a critical and informed manner, and re-educate ourselves of its priorities, as even media is not a neutral actor. The following points were emphasised by this group:

- The agenda-setting role of the media is important. However, the agenda being set by the media for public debate has to be critically analysed.
- A need to objectively analyse the media messages in the context of globalisation, fundamentalism, stereotyping of roles of the marginalised, (gender, minority, disabled, dalit, etc.)
- Media should be seen as a part of the whole discourse of restructuring, and not outside it. Media should be seen as an "ideal" type. The owners and the employees are very much operating in the same milieu and should be seen in that context. Media should also be sensitised as partners and allies.
- The danger of communal symbols and consumer lifestyles projected by the media needs to be analysed and seen in the present socio-economic context.

VI. Health and Population Concerns :

This group presented the following major points :

- The manner in which women's bodies are perceived, as zone of control is crucial. The reproductive ability is the critical power over which control is sought and ensured. In fact, women's health issues are often confined to reproductive abilities only.
- The manner in which contraception is promoted is also something that needs close examination. Population control has been linked to women, the next easy step being coercion.
- The shame attached to possessing a woman's body is also something, which is internalised and women themselves deny pride or pleasure in themselves unless they are serving a specific purpose.
- In the age of globalisation the insistence on chemical-quick-fix contraceptives is increasing, while even knowledge about the natural contraception is disappearing. It is important to recognise that women's health is not even seen as a priority. And even when some attention is paid to her health, it is only reproductive health, which is noticed, and not her general health. It is necessary to have an agenda for women's health and reproduction.
- Dual burden leads to stress, which further causes problems like tuberculosis among women. An appeal was made to place the health issue on the agenda of Women's movement in a big way.

After the reporting by all the six groups and discussions thereon, the Conference concluded with passing the following resolution for peace:

“ This Conference convened by IAWS, CWDS and Institute of Women's Studies, Lucknow University, condemns all acts of terrorism and violence and associating terrorism with religion. We also unanimously condemn the rhetoric of war and retribution being justified in the name of 'infinite justice' and 'enduring freedom'. We are concerned that this rhetoric has already had far reaching repercussions, which are evident not only in attacks on minorities in the US but also in our own country, as is evident from the recent violence in Lucknow. We feel that a true commitment to justice should first begin at home before offering help in the global fight against terrorism. We believe that war is not a solution to any problem. Rather, it is one of the fountainheads of problems and human misery. Moreover, women have a higher stake in peace and therefore we appeal to all concerned to mobilize opinion against war and its destructive methodology of dealing with conflicts”.

**DALIT FEMINISM:
A CRITIQUE OF DIFFERENCE
WESTERN REGION WORKSHOP REPORT**

Organised by

**The Women's Studies Unit, Tata Institute of Social Sciences,
Mumbai,**

In Collaboration With

The Indian Association for Women's Studies

1st & 2nd August 2001

Dr. Lakshmi Lingam*
Ms. Pratima Bhandarkar¹ #

The workshop titled "Dalit Feminism: A Critique of Difference", is a collaborative workshop organised by the Indian Association for Women's Studies and the Women's Studies Unit, of the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai on 1st & 2nd August 2001.

The workshop set itself the objectives to understand the emergence of Dalit women's movement and discern the debate that has ensued in the recent past on the issues like 'representation', upper class/caste women's leadership of the women's movement and dalit women's leadership as an alternative and the issue of identity politics.

In her introductory remarks, Prof. Pushpa Bhave, Vice President of the Association remarked, that historically, in Maharashtra, all women were labelled as dalits, thus collapsing all caste and class differences. However, such an approach is not fruitful either in theorising or in activism. For example, Janabai was doubly oppressed, as a woman and as a Dalit. Babasaheb Ambedkar was the only person who analysed caste and gender relations and highlighted the caste system as being at the core of the Hindu mindset. Prof. Bhave quoted Ambedkar's famous words: "Women are the gateway to the caste system". Both Ambedkar and Phule's philosophy dealt with the management of women's sexuality by the high caste patriarchy. With the "tamasha" culture, the Brahmin women were regarded as "chaste" and the women from lower castes were considered to be "available". The years between 1975 and 1985 saw the rise of the Dalit Panther and other movements in Maharashtra, which

* Reader, Women's Studies Unit, TISS, Mumbai. Email: lakshmil@tiss.edu

¹ # Research Officer, Unit for Women's Studies, TISS, Mumbai

were however, opposed by the "higher caste" and the feudal set up in rural Maharashtra. The Dalit Panther highlighted the caste issues to the neglect of patriarchy that existed within the system. While some critiques were of the view that no social problem can be solved unless the caste problem is addressed, the women's movement argued that gender issues are inextricably woven in caste and class issues. Hence, they cannot be neglected. Women in the Dalit Panther were oppressed in the patriarchal set up, but according to Prof. Bhave, when the dalit men raised this issue, the mainstream women's movements objected saying that the dalit men were appropriating dalit women's grief to their advantage.

Bringing us to the contemporary scene, Prof. Bhave observed that academicians and activists are divided on the 'difference' issue, hence it is important to seek clarifications and move forward. According to her health, migration, employment and environmental problems arising as a result of globalisation have threatened the sanctity of human life. Organisations dealing with the implications of globalisation cannot turn a blind eye to the caste system (which itself belittles human existence), as the dalit women are further oppressed in the globalisation process.

The workshop had four sessions. The session outlines are given here in brief:

Session 1 : Conceptualising Caste, Patriarchy & Gender

Session 2 : Dalit Movement and Women

Session 3 : Dalit Women's Movement & Women's Movement – Interface

Session 4 : Responses & Conclusion.

The **first session** on Conceptualising Caste, Patriarchy and Gender was chaired by Prof. Gopal Guru. There were two presentations in this session:

"Theorising Dalit Women's Oppressions—Some Issues"—Prof. Padma Velaskar, TISS:

Prof. Velaskar attempted to address some basic theoretical issues, which are crucial to furthering our understanding of women's oppression. The single most important theoretical problem is to analyse the intersection of patriarchy with caste and class to illuminate the oppression of dalit women. The methodological approach to the problem of dalit women's oppression involves a systematic historical, sociological and feminist examination of the complex interplay between caste, class and patriarchy, focussing on institutions, cultural systems and ideologies associated with these structures. What needs recognition is that the interaction of patriarchy with caste and class does not make for 'greater' or 'lesser' oppression, but for a qualitatively different type of oppression. Caste, class or gender alone, cannot

adequately explain dalit women's experiences.

The speaker examined the relationship between the structure of caste and the structure of patriarchy with a view to understanding the specificity of social subordination of dalit women. The speaker explored the differences and commonalties between upper caste and lower caste women, and between lower caste men and women. The caste untouchability system oppresses, disables and exploits directly – bringing forth the commonality between men and women. To build an Indian theory of patriarchy there is a need to accommodate the difference between women and to take cognisance of commonalties between men and women that bear upon gender power relations within low caste groups and see the impact of these on women's subjectivities.

The speaker pointed out the implications of structural changes for dalit women. In the context of economic and social change one needs to examine dalit women's contemporary situation and experiences from the perspective of caste, economic class, politics and patriarchal angles, focussing on the transformation in work, wages and family life. A feminism that aims to improve the lives of all women and at the same time recognises their differential relation to one another cannot ignore the material reality of capitalism's class system in women's lives. Dalit feminism must respond to the emerging salience of class in addition to the qualitative difference brought about by caste.

“Dr. Ambedkar's Views on Women's Emancipation” – Prof. Jogdand, Mumbai University

The speaker presented his paper on the above topic by introducing Ambedkar as the first leader of the dalits who not only wrote on the various issues but also waged series of protests against the evil practices that existed in our society. Ambedkar was not only the architect of the Constitution, but most of all an 'emancipator' and 'liberator' of the weaker sections (i.e. SC, ST and women) of our country. From the available evidence in the form of his writings – “The women and the counter revolution”, “The rise and fall of Hindu women”, Hindu Code Bill and his speeches delivered on gender justice – it is clear that Ambedkar was deeply concerned about the problems of women.

Before discussing Ambedkar's views on women's emancipation, the speaker gave a brief on how women were regarded in early Indian society and the efforts done by the social reformers to improve their lot. Ambedkar argued that the caste system itself is responsible for women's subordination and exploitation.

To put the men and women on equal footing it was Ambedkar who included the Articles 14,15 and 16, which deal with right to equality in the Indian Constitution. He produced a more radical Hindu Code Bill doing away with all customary practices

in the areas of marriage, divorce, inheritance and succession. He wanted to liberate women from the clutches of patriarchy and caste. In Ambedkar's analysis of caste, the analysis of women's subordination is subsumed. Thus, he identified caste system as the only source for women's exploitation. In comparison to other social reformers and his contemporaries, Ambedkar's approach was a fundamental one. He did not indulge in the debate on which reform to take up first – political or social; for him bringing about social change in all spheres of life was important.

In conclusion, the speaker expressed that Ambedkar's views are still relevant to address the complexities of caste and gender in the current scenario, and if Ambedkar's emancipatory agenda is supplemented to the feminist discourse then it will definitely lead to the emancipation of "all women" in our society.

As a conclusion to the first session Prof. Gopal Guru had elaborated on the need for theory, theory building and pre-requisites for theorizing, in response to a general observation on why the attempts to build theory is not a priority for Indian scholars in general and feminist scholars in particular.

A theory cannot be done when an experience is being particularised. It requires universally valid conceptual framework. However, what is condemned to be particular can also be argued as a theory.

- Theoretical explanations cannot be right, just because the one propagating the theory is born in that category. Any person can do theory about any category. Ambedkar was denied on the grounds that a dalit person cannot do a general theory.
- Can literature become a theory? Literature offers critical reflection and is a facilitator of theory.
- A theory is not meant for a competitive market. Every theory needs to coexist as they share the common fields of political economy and environmentology.
- The chair compared dalit feminism with black feminism because of similar problems addressed in both movements.
- There is a need for a theory as we are not just women in a compartment in the train of history; we would like to know where the train is heading.

The **second session**, chaired by Prof. Dahiwalé, from Pune University had Ms. Usha Wagh – Dalit Mahila Forum, Pune, speak on 'Dalit Politics and Women' followed by 'Patriarchy and Caste within Dalit society' by Dr. Seema Sakhare, Nagpur, both in Hindi.

'Dalit Politics and Women' – by Ms. Usha Wagh, Dalit Mahila Forum, Pune

The speaker highlighted certain myths on the women's movement's understanding of Dalit politics:

- Dalit politics implies the politics done by the dalits.
- Dalits cannot do politics without reservation.
- All women are dalits.
- Women think that being dalits they have the right to speak/confront politics.

The speaker then went on to present her points of discussion.

While both dalit feminists and the women's movement emphasise that they are suppressed, deprived and backward, it is a utopian act of uniting the two. The speaker is of the view that dalit women have so far not been given opportunities to represent mainstream women. Her credibility is lowered because she speaks in a local language and not in a standard language; thereby the contribution of dalit women is devalued. In a dalit women's forum, if a political figure arrives, then the movement is politicised and condemned for not having any relevant issues. When a dalit person progresses or achieves something, he/she is not given due credit for the achievements and it is assumed that the person has got it for free and not striven for it. In dalit politics, as in general politics, a woman is used as an instrument and is not respected as an individual in her own right. Sexual relations are always at the core of such politics. The displacement of women is brought about by society either on purpose (forced eviction, mass murder, gang-rape) or through natural disasters, resulting in an emergence of child labourers, rag pickers and commercial sex-workers.

The speaker criticised the mainstream women's movement's attitude of 'we will give and they will receive', in the case of the Dalit cause.

'Patriarchy and Caste within Dalit Society' – by Dr. Seema Sakhare, Nagpur

The speaker began the presentation by taking us back to 1972 with her experiences in advocating for the rights of Mathura, who was raped by two police constables Ganpat and Tukaram in the confines of the police station. She mentioned that she has fought against violence against women. She had not 'essentialised' caste, at that point.

The speaker emphasised that caste is a prominent factor causing the oppression and violence among dalit women. Lower caste women are more often targets of abuse. The reason given for violence against women is that they do not obey the order of the upper caste people or they raise their voices for their rights.

The speaker highlighted that Dalits are also not a homogenous category. The speaker pointed out that the violence against dalits by the dalits go unnoticed. Intracaste marriages among the dalits is opposed by dalits. Of the atrocities done on the dalits by other dalits, the worst victims are dalit women. Patriarchy in the dalit household was highlighted. While, violence against women cuts across all class and caste groups, there is regular wife beating, physical and mental violence against dalit women by their alcoholic husbands. Dalit men control women's productivity both within the household and outside. Males also have control over property and other economic resources in the dalit family. The speaker strongly felt that while the women's movement should pay cognisance to caste-based discrimination and violence, the focus on patriarchy, which exists across different caste and class groups, should be a priority.

The **third session**, chaired by Prof. Pushpa Bhave, had three speakers. 'Dalit Feminism: Need for Convergence' – by Prof. Chhaya Datar, TISS 'Interrelationship of various movements' – by Lata P.M., National Alliance for People's Movement (NAPM) and 'Violence, Dalit Feminism and Healing of Fragmentation' – by Prof. Gabriele Dietrich, Madhurai.

'Dalit Feminism: Need for Convergence' – by Prof. Chhaya Datar, TISS.

The speaker began the presentation with a brief outline of the evolution of Dalit women's movement that came as a response to the brahminical overtones of the present women's movement. It stressed the caste differences between women and sought closer caste identity with Dalit men. After scrutinising the chronological sequencing of the articles published in journals over the last few years, it appears that caste difference among women active in the movement were contextualised within the framework of the "theory of difference" by Dalit men and later this framework was adopted by women theoreticians also. However, the theorisation acquired antagonistic stance claiming more radical position by adopting "Identity Politics".

Identity politics, under the thesis of multiculturalism takes into account neither historicity of identities nor believes in the idea of necessary structural changes to achieve long term social justice. It advocates tolerance and competition, ideas conducive for neo-liberal polity and globalised economy. Some of the principles behind the identity politics are well appreciated. The core argument is that women are not a homogeneous group/community/class but are divided into several categories that are related to each other in a hierarchical manner. Hence there cannot be one women's movement but different women's movements.

While the theory of difference believes that there is a plane level with different sections of people on it, the Marxist theory brings to the fore hierarchical oppression. Marxism views production and reproduction as the vital areas of human life. Technology is the key element to development and market. Subsistence perspective as opposed to

survival perspective, puts forward reproduction as an activity of main concern and must be carried out in a globalised manner. In the above context, brahminical feminism believes that dalit women get liberated when they migrate, although they live in slums. As an eco-feminist, the speaker challenges urbanisation as a panacea and advocates the need for women's groups to converge to find common grounds with other movements like displaced people's movement, health movement, environmental movement, etc. There is a need for Dalit women's movement to analyse the situation of Dalit women in the context of present reality in terms of socio-economic and politico-cultural aspects, which is fast changing under the stormy ethos of globalisation.

'Inter-relationship of Various Movements – by Lata P.M. from NAPM

The speaker gave her experiences of working for the *Narmada Bachao Andolon*, which is in essence working for the *jal, jungle and jameen* (water, forest and land) rights of the people. The presentation brought to the fore the effects of globalisation. Privatisation is not only about the upper caste people losing their jobs, but dalits and adivasis too bear the brunt by being displaced because of projects like MIDC and Enron. Dalits are more often displaced and are forced to migrate to the cities where they do not gain access to public services like ration, electricity, water, and education for their children, etc. Development is at the cost of the dalits and adivasis.

Rights of access to resources like food, fuel and fodder are the basis of all movements. This necessitates the need to build an alliance on commonalities. Talking of any cause need not pertain to a specific caste; an alliance brings together the struggles. The National Alliance for People's Movements is an alliance of various movements. Different movements have their own objectives and strengths, thus preserving their identity in an alliance, but they have a common focus, to ensure that water, electricity, fodder and fuel remain with the people. Nuclear energy, uranium is important for the country but not at the cost of displacement. The speaker focused on the threat of globalisation and the need to converge concerns across movements while maintaining the specificity of each struggle/movement.

'Violence, Dalit Feminism and Healing of Fragmentation' – by Prof. Gabriele Dietrich, Madhurai

Prof. Gabriele Dietrich had argued through a detailed set of incidents on state and caste violence connected to electoral politics, in the State of Tamil Nadu. Dalit women experience multiple forms of patriarchal violence. She had also highlighted the significance of the sensitivity of the women's movement to issues of inter and intra-caste violence on women.

The events that led to the writing of this paper were the state violence and caste violence interconnected with party politics in Tamil Nadu. The National Commission for Women raised objections against the scandalous behaviour of the police against women to show who controlled power. The women were quite outspoken about the atrocities. The second round of election-related violence was in September 1999, 50 villages were raided, houses were burnt, a young boy was electrocuted through the passage of current in water, many miscarriages were reported; it was a human rights violation on a large scale. However a dalit leader of the dalit movement in Tamil Nadu ignored the magnitude of the event and he was banned from the area for two months through the joint efforts of the women's organisations.

In an alliance movement, it is important to take a stand and identify caste-based violence. Village nurses in Tamil Nadu, many from the dalit and *vaniya* caste formed a union to protest against the government doctor of the health centre who abused them on basis of their caste. Similarly, other alliances were formed to take up the issues of construction and beedi workers.

One of the issues in the fragmentation of the women's movement in the context of global exploitation is the assault on agriculture and food security with the onslaught of mechanisation. Agricultural is the livelihood of most dalits and any development has to be sustainable in the context of the history and aspirations of the dalits. Women's invisible labour under conditions of violence and internal colonisation cannot be overlooked in the process.

Some of the salient Points that came up for discussion during the two-day workshop were as follows:

1. Theorising difference of the masculinities
2. Relevance of eco feminism
3. Dalit women's political agenda
4. Fragmentation of issues in the context of identity politics and globalisation
5. Can dalit women's question be separated from dalit men's question?

During the **fourth & final session of consolidation and responses**, chaired by Prof. Pushpa Bhave some of the additional areas that were tabled as follows:

- i) Intra-dalit relationship: how do gender, caste, class and patriarchy operate within the dalit community? ii) the caste fraction after the Mandal Commission and the relation of *bahujan strivaaad* with dalit feminism.
- The presentations reflected that dalits cannot be grouped into one homogenous category as there are divisions resulting in caste differences and caste violence within the dalit community.

- The use of 'reformer' to describe Dr. Ambedkar was pointed out as incorrect. Instead, Dr. Ambedkar has to be described as a 'revolutionary' who attempted to bring about a change in the lives of the women in general and of the lower caste women in particular.
- While on the one hand, women are used as proxy in politics, it was felt that these women in politics do not seem to use this forum to pull up other women with similar backgrounds. While it is easy to question this, it must also be remembered that it has taken 50 years of independence before women political leaders like Phoolan Devi or Mayawati stood for elections. Getting more dalit women into the forefront of politics is an equally slow but steady task. One might wonder that issues dear to the dalit cause have not been taken up by the dalit women in politics. This again is a myth as there is not one political party so far that listened to a dalit woman and offered suggestions for the whole party. It needs to be acknowledged that it is difficult for one dalit woman to lift others in the circumstances described above.
- Reservation for dalit women in the political scenario needs to be considered within the 33% quota system allocated for women in politics. The reason being, while only the educated women and those with access to opportunities make it into the election process and ultimately get elected, dalit women tend to get left out because of hierarchical differences operating against them.
- As there are Dalit Buddhists, Dalit Christians and Dalit Hindus, is a further fragmentation of the dalits envisaged in the context of reservation? This question is raised in the context of 'who is most victimised?' Here the identity is 'victimhood', there is a competition of who is more victimised and this is used as an instrument in party politics.
- The Atrocities Against Schedule Caste and Schedule Tribe Act of 1989, defines atrocities as those which are carried out by a non SC/ST individual on a person from the SC/ST community; i.e. where the offender is a non-dalit. It was felt that there is also a need to expand the scope of this Act to accommodate intra dalit atrocities as well.
- There is a difference between advocating for the likes of Mathura and Rameezabi on the one hand, and working towards their representation, on the other.
- A parallel was drawn between black feminism and dalit feminism as while the former is racism based on colour, the latter is based on caste.
- It was felt labels like 'brahminical' and 'elite feminists' to women leaders of Dalit Women' movement to connote the process of sanskritisation are derogatory and demeaning.

- Cultural practices derogatory to women; for example, devadasi and jogan practice; digging up the bones of a dead pregnant woman and rejoicing; woman cladding neem leaves and parading the streets as religious offering, etc. Do we see these as merely cultural practices of the 'other', or identify the oppression that goes on in the name of culture? It was observed that these cultural practices which have originated or have been perpetuated in patriarchal feudal systems have to also be examined in terms of what kind of power, spaces and controls do they give women over material resources and livelihood.
- It emerged that dalit women would want to branch out *not more out of a need* for identity, but for a conceptual clarity and understanding of the issues encircling them, while at the same time remaining a part of the women's movement as a whole. Dalit women should not be viewed as clients who receive a service. Spaces to develop ideology and critique from the dalit perspective within the women's movement is much needed. Where there is determination, there is no barrier of caste and gender that cannot be crossed during a campaign or movement. It is strongly felt that efforts need to be made to involve dalit women in the women's movement.
- Patriarchy and caste have a material base influencing the access to resources. Impurity and pollution are the commonalities between dalit men and women. Tamil Nadu has witnessed the oppression of dalits by the OBCs who are an inch above the dalits in the social ladder. While patriarchal hierarchy exists within the dalit community as a whole, structural hierarchy within the household cannot be ignored.

In conclusion, this western region seminar has brought out different caste complexities in Goa, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Gujarat. Many representatives here first worked with dalit women and then got involved in the women's movement. It was clarified that there is no question of negating dalit feminism. No feminist movement has rejected Phule and Ambedkar's principles. Acknowledging all the view points, opinions, and experiences shared by the speakers and the participants, the chairperson of this session closed the workshop by emphasising that there was still a lot of work to be done, a lot of struggles to be involved in and a lot of successes to be achieved.

GLOBALISATION, IDENTITY POLITICS AND RISING VIOLENCE

REPORT OF THE IAWS REGIONAL WORKSHOP
AT GANDHIGRAM RURAL UNIVERSITY,
POLITICAL SCIENCE DEPARTMENT CO-ORGANISED BY
CENTRE FOR SOCIAL ANALYSIS, MADURAI
MARCH 24/25 2001

Dr. Gabriele Dietrich ·

The rationale of the workshop was to assess the impact of globalisation on women in the Southern states and to create a dialogue between researchers and activists. There is a need for in depth discussion between people who see the decentralisation which comes with liberalisation as an opportunity for women's empowerment and others who feel that destruction of the resource base and universal market penetration marginalises and dis-empowers women more than ever. The setting of Gandhigram's Political Science Department was congenial, as the Head of the Department Dr. Palanidurai is deeply involved with women in Panchayats, both at the state level and the national level. Other participants were teaching women's studies in very remote places or were organising women in self-help groups, while a strong contingent from Kerala is involved in issues of women and health and in exposing violence against women.

After a brief cordial welcome by **Dr. Palanidurai**, D. Gabriele explained the history of IAWS with emphasis in its long term commitment to secularism and social justice, highlighting some of the major discussions over the years, especially the debates on communalism in Yadavpur, the first assessment of Globalisation in Mysore and the growing awareness of ecological issues in Jaipur and Pune.

Ms. Nalini Nayak, a veteran in the fish-workers movement in Kerala and at global levels and also involved in building SEWA Trivandrum, gave a conceptual introduction into the workshop topic. She questioned the breaking of national barriers by global capitalism and went into the history of nation-state formation and its connection with identity politics (largely along the lines of Benedict Anderson, Imagined Communities)

She then outlined the "development" process during the second half of 20th century which led to formation of international finance institutions and the overwhelming

• Dr. Gabriel Dietrich, Centre for Social Analysis, 37 Janaki Narayan Street, S.S.Colony, Madurai 625 010
Tel: 0452-605133/602352, Fax: 0452-601424, email: csatts@md5.vsnl.net.in, Dr@md5.vsnl.net.in

dominance of trade regimes. While UNCTAD had still emphasized Development, by the end of the century after the Dunkel Draft, GATT and WTO, trade had become the dominant mechanism.

She recalled the struggles of the "old feminist" generation against the hegemonic development, while the younger generation has had to face a situation in which welfare measures were already dismantled, the state had abdicated its responsibility and only some left over "safety nets" were made available, while military expenditure has gone up drastically.

In this situation, the "new opportunities" appear highly questionable. What can women in panchayats hope to achieve? What do self-help groups really accomplish? There is a tendency to incorporate women's energies into the policies of WB and MNCs. In this context some examples were cited.

For instance, Unilever promoted marketing of its products through self-help groups also. In the murder case of Indira and Rathnamal of Bheemantoppu near Thiruvallur, self-help groups had been used against the local struggle for total prohibition and to protect the position of the local collector. Thus, while decentralisation in itself is a welcome step it can also be problematised as part of the strategy to reduce the responsibility of the State.

Nalini worked out the conceptualisation of production of life and livelihood vs. production for profit and the need to overcome the dichotomy between production and so-called "re-production" as production of life is itself the base for all extended production. She went into the conceptualization of Herman Daly of "entropic throughput"- which implies the need to recognize the first and second law of thermodynamics and to calculate the energy-consumption from start to finish.

Herman Daly envisages development as qualitative improvements, independent of quantitative growth. She illustrated the destructiveness of the present growth process with the onslaught-taking place on agricultural sector.

She also elaborated on the crisis in fisheries, forestry and small-scale industries. Today it is taken for granted that "some people have to pay the price" for economic growth. What is required is a focus on food security and ecological sustainability. This would require a different, people centred political process as well. The challenge before the women's movement is to create such a process.

The second paper of this session was presented by **Padmini Swaminathan** of MIDS on "Globalization, Employment and Women's Health". She pointed out that there is nothing inevitable about globalisation and that 1991 onwards only meant wholesale globalisation while the process itself had been going on much longer. Exclusion of weaker sections and withdrawal from social sector had started earlier. The fiscal deficit and little foreign exchange reserve created a situation, which superimposed

new problems. This aggravated many problems, which had actually already started from second Five-Year Plan onwards.

The corporate sector finds it difficult to face the competition, while the government, now bought over, is wooing multinationals. Due to illiteracy and numerous social problems, it is difficult even to provide the basic infrastructure. Padmini provided insights into export oriented projects in Nasik, Mumbai slums and in Chengleput. In Nasik, a well-organized Adivasi workforce was harvesting grapes. The European counterparts had held workshops to enforce stringent rules on problems of chemicals, size, shape, packing which all had to correspond to international standards. This standardization made the job extremely stressful and led to burnout syndrome by age.40. Eyestrain, aches and pain were common symptoms. But as the objective was to let their children study, the workers did not have a proper alternative as agricultural labour or work on their own farm would have meant a less of income.

The Mumbai situation consisted of home based production, especially by Muslim women who were doing tailoring and embroidery. The work burden was very severe and even terminal illnesses were not attended to.

The Chengleput study related to registered small scale units which offer employment to women, but all highly informal. Even recognition as labourers is difficult and the workers cannot get their P.F. when they leave. The immense time pressure of the job leads to acidity, stomach aches, ulcers. But women can make no health claims. The situation is extremely difficult for the lower middle class.

During the discussion Padmini pointed out that China had handled the same problems in more unified way and therefore had got more advantages while in India, the situation is much more fragmented and therefore bargaining power vis-a-vis multinationals is less.

The second session dealt with micro experiences. Ms. Gokilavani of women's Studies Department, Alagappa University Karaikudi presented a study on producer's markets (Uzhaivar Sandai) in Madurai and Dindigul. This is a specific project of the Tamilnadu government to ameliorate the lot of small producers under impact of export orientation and import liberalisation. It is an attempt to create direct links between producer and consumer and to eliminate middlemen.

About hundred such markets have been established and Madurai was the first experiment. It turned out that women's participation in these markets was very uneven (between 9%-54%). Most of the women were between 30-40 years old. It was found that women were substantially enhancing their contribution to the family income by participating in Uzhaivar Sandai. Indebtedness was identified as a major problem. It was found that the price fixing committees had no women members and women administrative officers were also no involved. It was suggested that self-help

groups could tackle the problem of indebtedness and that women's representation in price fixing committees and in the bureaucracy would help to improve the situation.

Ms. Uma, research student at the Department of Political Science, Gandhigram University shared her experiences of 4 years involvement with women in Panchayats. The Rajiv Gandhi Chair held by Dr. Palanidurai works for creation of awareness, information dissemination, and attempts to create a support base, spreads success stories and builds policy advocacy. There are 4257 women Panchayat Presidents in Tamilnadu.

Mary Sebastian from Centre for Rural Management, Kottayam, presented a paper discussion on seven years of work with self help groups, describing in detail, procedures of weekly meetings, promotion of saving habits and breaking the power of the money lender.

The discussions on this session attempted to go beyond micro experiences and critically analyse self help groups as they have also in some cases served to co-opt women into globalisation. Likewise, women in panchayat or consumer markets, while getting a symbolic space and some marginal gains, are actually isolated from the larger processes of change. Banks take no responsibility for micro credit and women get more burdened. They internalise the market logic and start selling multinational goods out of sheer despair, which destroys local small-scale production.

In the fourth and final session of the day, John Jayaharan, doctoral student from Centre for Social Analysis, presented his research project on "Dalit Culture and Reconstruction of Life After violence", studying Chingleput district of Tamilnadu. He defined culture in a very broad way, including the whole organisation of material life and related the problem of rising violence to the loss of land and common property resources under globalisation. He discussed cases of violence related to acquisition of land (either through buying or through land - grabbing) and also connected with demand for higher wages. He addressed issues linked to the process of modernisation which brings higher marriage expenditure, dowry, demand for electronic goods and job oriented education.

He counterposed this trend with the heritage of a life-sustaining culture among Dalits in which birth and death were crucial events because of lack of access to properties. He also connected this heritage with the remnants of Buddhist culture, which are present in Chingleput district. He critiqued the gap between Dalit Movements which compromise with opportunistic political forces adopt a violent rhetoric and people's life centred culture which he felt, could, more easily connect with an alternative development paradigm centred around life and livelihood. He felt that this life-centred culture could help Dalits to form deeper and more meaningful alliances as built up by National Alliance of People's Movements (NAPM) which tries to connect the struggles of Dalits, Adivasis, small peasants and workers in the

informal sector. In the discussion it was pointed out that Dalit adolescent girls are often more educated than boys who project a macho image and create problems with the employers. Girls working in small units are facing harassment from their own community and are finding it difficult to get married. This too contributes to rising violence.

Another example was narrated from Shivagangai district regarding the participation of Dalits in the procession of Kandadevi temple. The background was that Dalits had economically made gains by working in the gulf but remained socially stigmatised. In the ensuing conflict, many Dalit women had also been injured.

On the second day, the first session dealt with contested perceptions of "Development". Parvatha Varthini from Sociology Department, Fatima College, Madurai presented a paper on Globalisation and NGDO's. She pointed out that non-governmental organisations are facing threat from three quarters in this present phase of globalisation.

1. From the State by means of control over FCAR.
2. From consumerism within NGOs.
3. From the threat to people's survival itself.

In this situation many organisations face a problem how to preserve their integrity. there is a tendency to go into advocacy work instead of outright people's organisation and modern information technology plays an increasing role. There is a change in the self - perception of NGOs. The Action Groups of the seventies saw themselves as forces of overall transformations. Now many NGOs see globalisation as a fact and are adopting a social welfare line to compensate abdication of responsibility by the state. since four years many call themselves NGDOs to stress on "Development". But whose development? Earlier it was global thinking and local action. Now the grassroots contact does not appear necessary. Varthini critiqued this trend and pleaded for the building of micro level alternatives. She herself works with youth and school children around Usilampatti, an area where female infanticide and foeticide are prevalent.

The second paper in this session was by Darley Jose from CDS Trivandrum on: "Bio_diversity in Traditional Agriculture - a Gender Approach". This comprehensive paper, based on over eight years of research made observations about the crucial role of home - gardens for the preservation of bio-diversity in Kerala. Darley showed in detail how the traditional system not only enhanced levels of nutrition and the availability of fuel and fodder but also gave some cash income to women. The erosion of bio-diversity and tendency towards mono-culture of cash crops has thus had not only ecologically adverse effects but has led to loss of access to resources, loss of employment and destruction of knowledge systems and the feminisation of poverty.

The paper made very creative suggestions for a gender approach to participatory bio-diversity conservation and gave very concrete guidelines for consideration. If taken seriously, these guidelines could bring a sea change in the use of the women's component in the Panchayat Raj Institutions.

Discussions centred around food security vs. cash economy as well as management of bio-waste, vermi-culture and home -composting. It was pointed out that while access to markets is important, training women in marketing might not be the most helpful skill. Recovery of knowledge systems, which are destroyed under the onslaught of market forces, may be more important.

The second session of the morning dealt with problems of violence. Ms.Guruvammal of Gandhigram University (Tamil Department) presented a spirited paper on eve teasing and also pursued the problem of violent and insulting language.

Ms.sivasakthi Research student at Gandhigram presented a paper on domestic violence. However, the much larger part of the session went into the presentation and discussion of Aleyamma Vijayan's paper on "Globalisation and issues of women in Kerala" . Aleyamma very graphically presented the effects of globalisation in the Kerala economy, especially the on agriculture and on food security and showed very clearly how this has led to the increase in the rates of suicides, domestic violence and rape cases. There is a fourfold rise of violence during the last decade. She particularly attacked the displacement caused by BDT schemes in harbours and airports scathingly critiqued the import of agricultural goods which have led to crash in rubber prices and have caused displacement of coconut oil by palm oil. She also showed disastrous intervention in health care. The paper was innovative in connecting the violence of the development process with its severe onslaught on the resource base and on people's livelihoods with the actual increase of violence against women.

This perspective was carried ahead by an input by renowned trade unionist Gita Ramakrishna from Chennai who is the National Joint Secretary of Nirman Mazdoor Panchayat Sangh and one of the leading spirits behind Women's Struggle Committee in Chennai.

She highlighted the new economic exploitation under globalisation on top of the still ongoing feudal exploitation. Even highly successful companies like HMT are now sold to multinationals out of "commitment to WTO". The parliament and people have not been consulted before the country was sold out by signing on a dotted line. In the context of corruption she pointed out that Tehelka.com is only the tip of an iceberg. Five crores per minister in five years is a moderate estimate. The objective is to snuff out local production. The scrapping of import duty is unwarranted and unnecessary and its agriculture in unprecedented ways.

The scenario in the public sector is bleak. All the Coal mines are either sold or closed. In the Bokaro mines, the workers are committing suicide, as wages have not been paid in two years. Unfortunately there has been no collective resistance.

A similar lot has befallen weavers and peasants in Andhra. Likewise, in Coimbatore, suicide has doubled over the past two years. Kovai is a deal city. Textile machinery and pump sets are now imported. Binny Mills have been closed. Auxiliary industries and workshops are also affected.

Construction labour is badly hit all over the country. All digging and concreting is now done by machines. In Coimbatore, even in house building readymade concrete parts are being used. It has become a fashion. Corruption in big construction projects is astronomical. In WB projects, 5% "commission" is allowed. Politicians take 10-15%. 2500 crores were spent on one fly over in Mumbai. The profits made are enormous. 100 crores have been spent on fly over by Chennai corporation.

At the same time Manomanoharan Joshi says that childcare services need not be supported even under present conditions, only one rupee per day is provided for child care on a construction site. No subsidy is available for monsoon allowance-a provision, which exists in fisheries after a long struggle. It becomes necessary to struggle on the very right to work, as even the organised sector is collapsing.

Gita also drew attention to the epic struggle of Gram Swaraj Movement against aquaculture which involves large number of women. The Aqua Culture Authority Bill was passed in the Rajya Sabha in undue haste because of the pressure from World Bank. The villages have become like company farms. All the major politicians have such farms, violating the Supreme court judgement of 1997, including the Chief Minister and Jayalalitha's close friend Sashikala. In Sashikala's farm there had been satyagraha which had been suppressed with severe rowdyism. Even now criminal cases are pending.

Gita called for a second freedom struggle without which there would be no freedom for women or male workers or any other oppressed sections like Dalits and Adivasis. She commemorated the valiant struggle of women ten years ago when six women had died in the Ennore power plant and the management took a stand that women should not be employed. She also quoted Ram Manoharan Lohia's progressive stand on women, especially property rights and right to work.

This input created a lively discussion in which many more examples of loss of employment due to globalisation were cited. e.g Standard Motors near Chennai had employed 10,000 workers, but had to be closed down because of coming of Food Company which employs 1500 workers.

During the final session, a collective summary was drawn. it was felt that women's studies had focussed on labour participation during the seventies and on the "double

burden" and intra-household discrimination in the eighties, while the nineties, under impact of globalisation, had opened up the destruction of the resource base, property rights and the interplay of caste-class and gender. it was felt that women's studies face new ethical challenges in this situation and need to probe into the political role of women's movements and committed academics. We have to cope with a receding state, expanding markets and uncertain family and community structures. There is a great need to sensitive teachers and students to the gravity of the situation and to equip them for critical research.

**GLOBALISATION, WOMEN'S IDENTITY
AND RISING
VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN
(WITHIN THE ORISSA CONTEXT)
EASTERN REGION CONFERENCE REPORT**

**Organised by
School Of Women's Studies, Utkal University, Bhubaneswar
In Collaboration with
Indian Association for Women's Studies
13th & 14th March, 2001**

Dr. Asha Hans[#]

Inaugural Session

The opening session provided the background, aims and objectives to the seminar. **Dr. Asha Hans**, Director School of Women's Studies, Utkal University welcomed the participants and provided the thematic focus and the expectations from the meeting. She referred to the background note and hoped that the Conference would go beyond what had been provided as a guideline. She thanked IAWS for their participation in and support to the meeting.

Prof. Jashodhara Bagchi, former Director of the School of Women's Studies, Jadavpur University and member of IAWS provided an illuminating discourse on globalisation and its linkage to violence and women's identity. Her view, that globalisation has always been recognised across the ages and that capital has always searched for global market and linked to the worst forms of coercion as in slavery, to the almost seductive appeal of its cultural artefacts, not to mention education and other cultural goods provided an interesting framework to the meeting. Her idea that women's role remained invisible in the macro economic order was reiterated by a large number of scholars at the meeting.

She stated that it was to capture the regional specificities of the situation that the Indian Association of Women's Studies had decided to organise deliberations in five

[#] Dr. Asha Hans, School of Women's Studies, Utkal University, Vani Vihar, Bhubaneswar 751 007,
Phone : 0674 587453 (O)0674-581850 (Fax)

regions in India, the north, south, west, east and the north-east. As the Co-ordinator for the Eastern Region she had broken this up even further and the first regional workshop was held in Jharkhand.

She hoped that in the next two days the meeting would confront the problems, think about possibilities of resistance for globalisation. She concluded by saying that she looked forward to learning a great deal from the joint deliberations during the next two days.

Smt. Jayanti Pattnaik, the keynote speaker provided an overview of Globalisation and the concurrent violence associated with it. She provided a detailed analysis of the role of media in this context.

She felt that the non-availability of data for analysis has made the assessment of the impact of globalisation difficult. The complexity of assessment she further argued compounded given the multiplicity of women's roles in any society. She then provided her perceptions on the economics of globalisation and its impact on women.

Smt. Pattnaik linked two issues to globalisation in Orissa. The first, which she spoke extensively on, was crimes against women and the other the role of media. She began by discussing the increasing violence against women in the state. She found a wide degree of district level variation in the data but despite this unevenness she provided an analysis of the situation. Her views on the globalisation of media was linked to witnessing India at the receiving end of a number of foreign television channels via satellite. As media perpetuates gender stereotypes it assists in strengthening the invisibility of women's contribution to society. She further provided data on women working for Doordarshan and their confinement to lower levels of the organisation. Despite the large number of laws to control media, women she felt were still objectified.

Session I: The title of this session was Globalisation and its impact on Orissa. It was chaired by Prof. Jashodhara Bagchi. This session formed the backdrop to the meeting. Three extraordinary analysis were presented on the Orissa situation followed by intense discussion.

Dr Kishor Samal, Professor of Economics at the Nabakrushna Chowdhury Centre for Development Studies, Bhubaneswar, providing a general overview of globalisation and its impact on Orissa. The title of his paper was Liberalisation / Globalisation and its impact on Orissa. He began by defining the concepts of globalisation and liberalisation. He traced the reasons for the emphasis on opening of economies in the 1990s. He questioned the process of globalisation itself by making differentiation between physical, financial, human, social and natural capital.

In his debate on the existing situation, he brought in the place of women and children

and the impact of the changing economies on them. He put forward his views on international policies in this context and how rich countries make use of the process to enrich them.

After the extensive discussion of the international changes, he discussed the place of Orissa in the globalisation process. In this he laid emphasis on dis-investment policies and their impact on wages, privatisation and its impact on education and health. In this context he studied three issues- 1) privatisation and its impact on small scale industry and cottage industry 2) The shrimp culture in Chilika , the Gopalpur Tata Steel Project and 3) Multinational Aluminium giants at Kashipur. Finally he provided a overview of people's movements in protesting against globalisation in Orissa.

The second paper was by **Dr. Bijay Bohidar**, Reader of Political Science, Khallikote College, Berhampur, titled: Globalisation and Women's Question in Orissa. Bijay Bohidar's presentation was linked to globalisation, protests against it in Orissa and the women's movement. He argued that Orissa has witnessed a large number of protest movements but these are largely localised and present a fragmented picture. In this context he presented the example of Gopalpur movement against the location of a Steel Plant but which had no impact outside Orissa. The Kashipur movement, which he saw as being larger but again, localised. He commented that some might assume this as post-modern phenomena of an existence without a comprehensive ideology. He forecasted that larger and more movements would take place. At the moments he saw even the BALCO and Kashipur movement as not part of any comprehensive large movement and therefore not able to capture the essence of the fight against globalisation. He argued that this situation existed because of Orissa's rigidly hierarchical society. Power he observed as being in the hands of a small caste the Khandayats. The marginalized in Orissa including, tribals, dalits and women constitute the largest number but are the most marginalised. As issues of social reform, caste etc. are not components of any of these movements, dominance of a patriarchal ideology exists. If any woman's movement, he argued has to come about we need to address the religious conservative ideology prevailing. In this he suggested we need to learn from the less conservative tribal, dalit ideology. He argued that we are talking of learning from other parts of the world but have closed our minds to these alternative cultural modes existing in our society. Women, he argued would gain from these modes.

The third paper presenter was renowned social activist **Ms. Vidhya Das** of Agragamee, an NGO based in Kashipur a tribal District of Orissa. Her paper was on Globalisation and Human Rights of Tribal Women in Orissa. Her paper on tribal women emerges from her experience in working with women in the tribal regions, and also her conviction that women's issue is not only a gender issue, but as much, if not much more, an issue of racism, casteism, and discrimination.

She narrated how the tribal women though members of a hugely underprivileged community still looked at others with fear. Even though tribal societies are considered egalitarian, if the women took time out to participate in political processes, the fragile economy of the home and hearth crashed. Regarding education, tribal women were almost completely illiterate in the tribal districts, did not have skills and liquor played havoc on their lives. She elaborated on how with interventions, the women came forward to manage the community grain banks, put together their savings, and started collective accounts. She then discussed about the issue of brooms, and minor forest produce, and the rights of the tribal women. Tribal women had never bought and sold things, they had little experience of processing, nor the knowledge of finishing goods for the consumer markets but economic independence gave them a unique strength. Next was the fight against the Alumina plant at Kashipur. Women faced horrors like lathi charge, got hurt and injured. This struggle has taught the state and the corporate world that tribal people cannot be wished away, they must be given a due hearing.

Session II- The title of this session was Globalisation and Violence. The Chair Person of this session was Dr. P. K. Mishra, Dept. of Psychology, Utkal University and Steering Committee Member, SWS, Utkal University. There were three papers in this session.

The first paper was presented by **Dr. Paula Bannerjee**, Dept. of South and South East Asian Studies, Calcutta University. The title of her paper was - Marginalised Women, Displacement and Violence in North East India. She presented the other side of globalisation where finance capital and its movement across borders is not the issue. Here are refugee women and children who constitute approximately 80% of people who cross borders because of political reasons. Despite an International Convention which countries have signed most developed countries have closed their borders. As states open borders to capital they close them to populations. One of the methods employed in South Asia is by voluntary repatriation that was carried out in Sri Lanka, Myanmar etc which has been problematic. This has resulted in large numbers being displaced within countries. Bannerjee directed the attention of the participants to the North East of India where the long lasting conflict has meant large scale displacement. These women and children constitute a marginalised body of people whom no nation is concerned with. Nations have been responsible for increasing conflicts across the globe due to sale of large scale armaments and increasing arms budgets.

Women in this area have taken up the issue of closing of borders and conflict due to increase in armaments and ethnic problems. A number of women's groups such as the Naga Mothers have tried to bring about peace in the region.

The second paper of this session was presented by **Ms. Amrita Patel**, Research Assistant of SWS, Utkal University. Her paper gave an overview of the New Economic

Policy initiated in 1991 in India. There is a consensus, she said that during the nineties the growth rate in India has shown some acceleration. This growth rate, she argued, as a result of the economic reforms has not affected the declining trend in poverty. The social and gender development due these reforms is also hardly visible. She provided her findings in the background of Orissa, a poor state of the country with vast mineral resources and a large tribal population, and low literacy, which has very unfavourable gender indices.

In the paper she presented the crime rate and the reported crimes (such as rape, dowry murders, dowry torture, dowry suicides) against women for the last one decade (1989 – 1999) for Orissa. Through statistical data she showed that there has been a rise in the absolute numbers in the crimes as well as in the percentage in the crimes against women in the state, especially in the tribal districts. She concluded that liberalisation, access to foreign media, increasing alcohol consumption etc are some of the possible causes of the increasing crime rate against women of Orissa.

The last paper of this session was by **Dr. Mamata.Tripathy**, Research Associate, School of Women's Studies, Utkal University. The paper was titled as-Rights of slum women in Bhubaneswar in the context of Globalisation. She had shown how the economy has a umbilical relationship with women in the society since the dawn of civilisation and how the women are affected by the economic policies. Even though Article 21 of Indian Constitution along with Article 14 and 19 guarantees a dignified life to every citizen of India, but the social, economical, health status of women deplorable and more so of the slum women.

Empowerment is still a myth for these poor vulnerable weaker section of society particularly in the Third world democratic country like India and more so in a backward state like Orissa. She questioned whether the schemes meant for them ever reach all women, particularly the women working in the fields and living in the slums. These marginalised women provide many basic services to the community. She argued that these slum women are never taken into account while planning for the global economy. The slum women are still completely marginalised, struggling for their life and livelihood in the liberalised market. Their rights are violated every now and then with or without their knowledge. In the paper presentation, she cited some of the violation of rights of the women inhabiting Bhubaneswar slums in the globalised economy. Their right to health, education and livelihood which is at risk in the liberalised market system were the core themes of the discussion.

Session III was the last session of the day. Entitled "Women and Children's Rights Under a Globalisation Process". Dr. Paula Bannerjee presided over the last session. In this session there were two papers. The first was by **Ms. Kasturi Mahaptra**, a social activist well known for her support of Anjana Mishra and running an organisation for the disabled named Open Learning System . Manisha Mazumdar, Co ordinator of the Task Force on Women and Violence presented the second paper.

Ms. Kasturi Mohapatra has been at the forefront of the Child Rights Movement in Orissa. She spoke of two major issues child protection and sex education for adolescents. Her presentation dealt with a programme she had run for class 8- 10 children. She had found that most children had been abused by their relatives and acquaintances. Her presentation shifted to sex education and the lack of sex knowledge among adolescent girls and the role of her organisation in taking sex education and legal literacy to the rural areas.

In the second part of her talk she spoke of the provision of protection to 500-600 children in the cyclone affected areas of Astarang, Nimapara, and Ersama. As children faced both physical and psychological problems after the disaster, support had been very important which she had provided.

The second paper, by **Ms. Manisha Mazumdar**, Coordinator, Task Force on Women and Violence titled 'Globalisation and Prostitution and trafficking of women and girls in Orissa', was based on the findings of the Task force on Women and Violence undertook, on trafficking and prostitution of girls and women in 15 districts of Orissa. Manisha Majumdar had observed that the findings indicate a direct effect of globalisation. She elaborated on the predominant ideas/reasons for prostitution and trafficking in the state. Linkages to health, education, socio economic status of the sex workers, a day in the life of a sex worker, politician-police-middlemen nexus, functioning of the brothels, and possibilities/opportunities for rehabilitation, were elaborated by her. Poor socio economic condition, discrimination against minorities, unequal treatment of women/girl children, lack of economic viability, education and legal protection are some of the many reasons behind the vulnerable conditions.

14th March

Session IV was "Displacement and other grass root impact" which was chaired by Dr. Bijay Bohidar.

The first presentation was by **Ms. Sandhya**, Activist and worker of a NGO named Ekta Parishad working in the area of Banpur , Orissa. Sandhya opined natural land, forest and water are the foundation of human civilisation, which is at stake due to globalisation. Sandhya shed light in her presentation upon the negative repercussions of displacement not only on the human resources but also on the natural resources. Displacement not only affects the life, livelihood and health of the tribal population but also their cultural life. She narrated her experiences about the exploitation of the tribal women by the forest officials, police and multinational companies.

Ms. Suman Jhuria and Ms. Mukta Jhuria , workers in the Kashipur area and leaders in the agitation against the Alumina giant narrated their perceptions of

globalisation. They said that the people's agitation was spontaneous when their life, livelihood, home and forest was being snatched by multinationals. They themselves felt the need for uniting to check the invasion of the multinationals. The lathi charge, fire gas and finally shooting by the police in which some of their villagers died, did not deter them. These women, very eloquently, described the genesis of the agitation, the resistance and the strength of purpose. The question answer session after their narration was lively and interesting and provided an insight into the tribal women's thought process and workings.

Session V – Titled “ The Economics of globalisation” had 6 paper presenters. Smt. Jayanti Pattnaik chaired this session.

Ms. Manipadma Jena, the first paper presenter analysed the role of media in India, in the context of globalisation, began by inquiring into its impact on women in general. She questioned whether we are in control or are overwhelmed by the process. Her answer was that she felt that in India we are at this point of time not overwhelmed but rather disoriented. She suggested that what we have to analyse the positive and negative aspects. The positive side of the new media she demarcated as providing women with information, a new direction to be self reliant, and self assertive. The negative side she said constituted the mindless use of women in the commercialisation process. Women's bodies are exploited without any projection of their achievements.

Manipadma's paper covered different types of media and its affect on women's lives in Orissa. She covered electronic, print media, advertisements, as well as films. In the first part she presented the use of supplements by print media. It is in these supplements she found the most change and here women's bodies find place increasingly larger space through fashion and beauty contests. In the second she discussed about the advertisements of household equipment which affected women through demand on dowry. In the third she argued that confessional columns which were mostly manufactured were affecting the youth and creating a new culture. These columns emphasised pre-marital sex, live in relationships etc. Manipadma also spoke of advertisements and use of women's stereotyped roles in the advertisements that are not only unreal but strengthen patriarchal norms. Finally Manipadma saw in serials and films women projected with a superhuman capacity for suffering, and not the real life of achievers of which there are many. She ended her presentation with the issues of easy access to pornography on the Internet and films despite laws, norms and committees that are ineffective as they can be circumvented.

Ms. Navaneeta Rath presented a paper titled 'Impact of globalisation on women workers in the handicraft sector – a study of the female appliqué workers of Orissa'. The paper dealt with the integration of the national market with the international market and removal of trade barriers and the opportunities and threats posed by it

in the context of quality, cost and productivity. Rath chose to observe the quality of human capital in appliqué sector and to analyse the changing terms of trade and to explore the areas of improvement. She concluded with data presentation that women as human capital are becoming incompetent, lack formal institutional training and are illiterate. They are unable to express themselves or to devote extended hours at the units and resented overtime work. They face premature retrenchment and are assigned subsidiary roles. She also saw erosion of social protection and a decline in entrepreneurial attitude. There has also been a rapid increase in child labour. She ended with a number of recommendations.

The next paper was titled "Feminisation of Poverty and the wage inequality in the unorganised sector" by **Dr. P.Yashodhara**. In the view of the presenter women are largely excluded from economic decision-making. They face poor working conditions, low wages and limited employment and professional opportunities. Much of the contribution made by Women has remained invisible or unpaid. This discrimination has led to "Feminisation of Poverty".

Poverty has a distinct gender dimension. Among the poor, women are poorer. They live in subsistence domain, they disproportionately contribute to unskilled labour, they receive low wages for the work they put in and their access to surplus accumulation and control is severely restricted. The consequences of the above are three fold: first, it impinges on the quality of life of the women themselves. Second, it affects the quality of life of the children they look after. Third, there is an inter-generation effect, which adversely affects the society as a whole and that, includes men as well. As a case study, she presented the life conditions and the wage inequality in the women construction labourers.

Ms. Sarbani Ghosh of SWS, Jadavpur University described the invisibility of women's research in all academic circles. There is a lack of documentation in women's studies.

Ms. Manjulika Ghose presented her paper on Globalisation and women. She discussed the positive as well as negative impacts of globalisation on women. In the positive effects of globalisation so far as women are concerned she presented the observations from interviews of MBA girl students at IIM, Joka, Kolkata and also with those from the AIISWBM, Kolkata, girl students from the Department of Tourism and Tea Management Centre, University of North Bengal who are trying to come out of the traditional domestic and professional roles and are entering into uncharted paths of employment. She saw a boost in acquiring professional and managerial skills which are directly job-oriented but which affect their personal lives. There is she felt a definite paradigm shift in the women's perception of themselves.

She presented the changes that globalisation might have brought about in the employment opportunities of women and their perceptions of themselves divorced

from the 'other', which represents the male and the society at large. In regard to less skilled women she presented a case of settlers from Rangpur district, now a part of Bangladesh, which forms the international border with West Bengal whose lot has deteriorated due to globalisation

In conclusion she perceived that while globalisation created opportunities, due to its highly urban-centric character, globalisation has tended to accentuate the marginalisation of rural women.

Dr. Urmimala Das' paper titled 'Contextualising Voices of Women Against Globalisation and Violence in Kashipur, Orissa' was the last paper of the session. Dr. Urmimala Das traced the story of economic development in the state and the appalling deprivation, hunger, ill health, homelessness, illiteracy still persisting. In the paper she discussed the developmental projects and the fights against it by the indigenous tribals. In particular her attempt was to contextualise of voices of women in Kashipur people movement against the Alumina project. She traced the international capital trickling to Kashipur, how the state had given a freehand to start various projects in the tribal hinterland of Kashipur area in Rayagada district. Community needs of these tribals like their rights over land, water, fire wood and forest produce was overlooked. Development planners never raised the very source of livelihood questions.

The protest movement and women are always visible at its forefront. They faced 'lathis', 'bullets', which they tolerated but without being violent. She gave examples of the enormous sacrifice of the simple tribal women folk. She concluded with the interface of feminist struggle and the role of NGOs in resisting globalisation.

Round Table

A member of AIDWA in Orissa, **Ms. Tapasi Praharaj** chaired the Round Table. In her introductory remarks she provided a background to the globalisation process in the world and India, starting from the depression of the 1930s.

Tapasi Praharaj, in the context of Orissa, said that modernisation of mining activities has affected the women of Sundergarh and Keonjhar mining areas. Conversion of agricultural land into aquafarms has rendered many women agricultural workers jobless. Another aspect of globalisation is the stopping of the Public distribution system (PDS). About 40 crore women are below the poverty line. The removal of the PDS has impacted the poor women of India adversely. The health sector reforms meant paying user fees for health care and increased the cost of life saving and essential medicines. Women who are marginalised with respect to health care are further removed from accessing health care system. She concluded that this fight was similar to the one against the East India company and could like the independence struggle, where we have to safeguard both our lives and our future.

Dr. Asha Hans commenced the discussion in the Round Table by suggesting that we have to see how far we can go and what our visions, goals are. We also have to remember, she argued that Orissa is going to be the centre of the globalisation process and academics, social activists and grass root workers have to consolidate to stand for people's rights. In this session she said, we need to suggest strategies.

Ms. Bijaybhasini Mohanty, had presented observations of a survey on women workers in the construction industry which she had carried out. After agriculture, she said construction is the second largest sector employing women. Globalisation had brought a lot of hopes in the construction sector. In reality the lives of these workers had not changed and among the women there was a defeatism, which she felt, could be countered by providing them with information on their rights.

Other members of the round table **Srabani and Yashodra** emphasised the role of media. **Dr Anup Das** spoke about women's identity, lack of data and other issues that hamper women's progress but felt that women's capacity was extensive and could be further strengthened by various means, which he suggested.

Prof. B. K Nayak: a Professor of Mathematics, began by saying that he was not an activist himself but had seen women participating in the Gopalpur movement. He discussed how they were very sure of their needs when they were asked what these were. He examined the role of World Bank in the Orissa projects and suggested that women needed to be protected from the effects of globalisation.

Dr. Sudhir Jena Reader in Political Science spoke of agricultural implements and a need to change them. He further examined the role of Panchayats in the process of empowerment of women in Orissa.

Valedictory

The proceedings were mostly in Oriya, as most participants said they could understand the language. **Prof. Gokulanda Das**, who was then the Vice Chancellor of Utkal University presided over the programme.

Dr. Asha Hans gave a brief introduction regarding the purpose, theme and intention for holding such a conference. As the context of the conference was Orissa, she emphasised the importance of such a session. This provided a platform for not only the academicians to present their views on the impact of globalisation but also there was interface with grass root level NGOs, workers and activists who are struggling against the onslaught of globalisation in the state.

Dr. S N Mishra gave the welcome address. He informed those present about the activities of SWS, Utkal University and expressed his happiness on being able to organise the regional conference of IAWS along with SWS.

Ms. Tapasi Praharaj, the Guest of Honour, elaborated on the spread of privatisation in the state and how all sectors such as railways, banks, insurance, education (teachers) are resisting the manipulation of the government with respect to privatisation. Women are affected the most in such a situation. She lamented that the government has not been able to bring out the policy for women as yet. As she had elaborately narrated the scenario in her previous address, she concluded that that this fight was the struggle for survival in which all must join hands.

Dr. Kamala Das, Hon'ble Minister of Women and Child Development, Govt. of Orissa, the Chief Guest of the valedictory programme, addressed all explaining the rationale of celebrating the year 2001 as year of women's empowerment. Govt. of India as well as the Orissa govt. is planning to launch many developmental programmes in this year.

Describing the process of liberalisation and privatisation as inevitable, she questioned as to why Orissa is still economically backward in spite of being endowed with mineral and forest resources. Also she cautioned that one should not forget one's own culture and heritage in this new world order.

Referring to the development of women, Dr. Das emphasised the need for economic independence of women and formation of Self Help Groups (SHG) in this regard. The state policy for women, which is going to be notified soon, will give a new direction to the developmental activities for women in the state of Orissa. About education of girls, she expressed her regret in the low enrolment of girls in the primary stage as well as high drop out rate. Also she urged the college / university educated girls to be economically sound. In a situation where crimes against women are rising, girls themselves have to be capable and build skills to tackle the evils of the society.

The tribal women from Kashipur confronted the Minister Dr. Das and asked her as to why they are being disturbed every now and then. According to them the multinational companies have been displacing inhabitants and robbing them of their life, forest and land. Dr. Das, however, justified that with the setting up of the JK Paper Mill at Rayagada, locals have benefited. Also, if the protests against Paradip Port were valid, then the Port would never have been established.

Prof G. Das in his address remarked on the amazing confidence of the tribal women and equated it to the inherent force or shakti within each woman. But the wastage of education amongst girls for marriage is not desirable. He urged each girl to be capable in her own way to be economically sound and be able to take care of herself as well as the family. As far as globalisation goes, he reminded that this policy of open market should not destroy our culture and heritage. The onus is on us to safeguard and maintain the identity of our state.

Amrita Patel of SWS gave the vote of thanks.

IMPACT OF GLOBALISATION ON WOMEN'S LIVES[§] EASTERN REGION WORKSHOP REPORT

Organised by ABHIYAN, Jharkhand
in Collaboration with
the Indian Association for Women's Studies

4th & 5th November 2000

Ms. Vasavi

A regional seminar was organised by Abhiyan and the IAWS at the Xavier Social Work Institute, Ranchi to discuss the impact of liberalisation on the lives of women in Jharkhand. The seminar opened with a Jharkhandi Geet and a traditional adivasi felicitation of the team from Calcutta. Prof. Jasodhara Bagchi inaugurated the proceedings and Ms. Vasavi read out the messages of the IAWS, President, Dr. Zarina Bhatti. Ms. Vasavi introduced the theme, underlining the impact that appropriation of forest resources was having on the lives of adivasi women. The multinationals, she argued were intensifying this exploitation and women would have to be in the forefront in the struggles against global capital. Prof. Nirmala Banerjee underlined the globalisation in the region to be atleast 2000 years old and argued how it was not possible to set the clock back. But strategies to regulate the process require organised and collective efforts. Dr. Indu Dhan highlighted the importance of co-operatives in getting fair prices. Dr. Ramesh Sharan, put forth a detailed review of the education levels of women in Jharkhand (15-44 age group) and underlined how development policies had infact widened the gap between women and men. Dr. Rose Kerketta – highlighted the special vulnerability of the Jharkhand region to global capital due to its rich mineral resource. Kavita Rai delineated the pre-colonial status of Jharkhandi women and argued that women controlled the power structures. The penetration of global capital has meant an attack on the identities of adivasi and dalit women. Dayamani Barla, noted the specific impact of globalisation on villages, especially the rise in fuel prices that was affecting the mobility of women.

Ms. Jayanti Sen and Dr. Kiran chaired the second session and Prof. Malan Cha Ghosh presented their papers. Faisal Anurag underlined the backtracking of the welfare state and highlighted the history of protest and resistance in adivasi communities

[§] This is an abridged English version of a full-fledged Hindi report available with the Author.

^{**} Ms. Vasavi, Journalist, Janasatta, H.B. Road, Jharkhand, RANCHI 834 001, Jharkhand. Email: rch_vasavi@sancharnet.in

across India.

In the session chaired by Prof. Nirmala Banerjee, Munni Hansda and Dayamani Barla put forth their views, Sankhi Sahu who had dared to plough and had been ostracized by the villages (Kalinga in Gumla District) narrated her struggle. The differential sex ratios in the adivasi – and non-advasi regions of Jharkhand were discussed.

The proceedings concluded with a presentation by comrade A.K. Rai. He highlighted the relationship between women's labour and the atrocities against them and pointed out to the dangers of privatisation and liberalisation especially for women. In response to comrade Rai's presentation, Prof. Bagchi underlined the need to understand better the significance of feminism.

The two-day workshop had been organised in the wake of the formation of Jharkhand as a new state. The workshop ended on a note of thanks by Chaina Moitra to Sanchetna, Calcutta for providing economic support and Shravani, Rosaliya, Kanti, Mira, Phulomoni, Piyala, Prakash and Biju Toppo for making the arrangements possible. Rapporteurship was done by Tete, Kavita and Phulomoni. Ms. Vasavi was thanked by the participants for arranging this much-needed workshop.

For copies contact:

Dr. Lakshmi Lingam

General Secretary, IAWS

C/o Unit for Women's Studies

Tata Institute of Social Sciences

Sion-Trombay Road, Deonar

Mumbai - 400 088

Phone: +91-22-5567717, 5563290-96

E-mail: lakshmil@tiss.edu



Indian Association for Women's Studies
www.iaws.org



Our Story:
Twenty Years of the IAWS

Vidyut Bhagwat and Sharmila Rege (Eds.)

Indian Association for Women's Studies

October 2002

Acknowledgements

We profusely thank the financial support extended by the following organisations to the Xth National Conference and related activities:

The Ford Foundation, New Delhi

OXFAM, Lucknow and Bhubaneswar

DFID, New Delhi

Department of Women and Child,
Government of India

National Commission for Women, New Delhi

Indian Council for Social Sciences Research, New Delhi

UNICEF, Bhubaneswar

Urmila Foundation, USA

IMFA, Bhubaneswar

Our Story: Twenty Years of IAWS

Editors:

Vidyut Bhagwat Sharmila Rege

IAWS

Indian Association
of Women's Studies

© Indian Association of Women's Studies
2002

Layout and Formatting:
Mudra,
383 Narayan Peth,
Pune 411 030

Contents

Our Story: Twenty Years of IAWS	5
Indian Association For Women's Studies, Its objectives and Growth Zarina Bhattu	7
Nuts and Bolts of Running the Office of the General Secretary Lakshmi Lingam	9
Section I – IAWS: Looking Back – Looking Forward	
Greetings for the Twenty Year Old: From one of the Midwives Vina Mazumdar	11
IAWS: Two Decades of Journey of Tight Rope Walking between Research and Activism Neera Desai	12
Looking Back Maithreyi Krishnaraj	14
Women's Studies: the Last Decade and Challenges for the Next Malini Bhattacharya	16
In conversation with Jasodhara Bagchi: Women's Studies: Looking Back – Looking Forward	18
IAWS: What Do We Do Now? Nirmala Banerjee	20
IAWS Plays an Anchoring Role for Women's Studies Chhaya Datar	21
Regional Seminars and Workshops – Building IAWS' Resources and Developing Stronger Links between Academic Pursuits and Activist Endeavours Kumud Sharma	24
Whither Women's Studies? Mary E. John	26

Women's Studies: The next Decade Chandrakala Padia	28
IAWS – A Retrospection Rameswari Varma	30
Mapping the Themes in the IAWS Conferences: A Journey Through the Last Two Decades Anagha Tambe	32
When Feminists Network: IAWS Newsletter in the Last Decade Swati Dyahadroy	38

Section II – Women's Studies and Women's Movement: The Last Decade

Women's Studies and the Women's Movement in the last decade of the Twentieth Century Ilina Sen	43
Women's Studies and Women's Movement: Resonating Voices or Discordant Notes? Veena Poonacha	45
Relationship of Women's Studies and Women's Movement (1992-2002) Vibhuti Patel	48

Section III – IAWS: The Regional Networks

Women's Studies in Gujarat Amita Verma	50
The pioneer 'Sister Organization' of IAWS: Maharashtra Stree Abhyas Vyaspeeth' Shruti Tambe	54
I.A.W.S. Jharkhand Vasavi	57

Section IV – Recasting 'Conference Culture'

Energising Conferencing: Remembering the Spirit of IAWS Conferences Kamla Bhasin	59
We Were Making History: Inaugurating Conferences with Histories of Struggle Asmita Resource Centre	62

Section V – Building an Archive

Presidential Addresses Compiled by Kalpana Kannabiran	65
--	----

Our Story: Twenty Years of IAWS

Introduction

The last decade was marked by women's struggles around issues thrown up by the politics of Mandal-Masjid-and the World Bank. The gendered character of communalism and globalisation became evident in this decade that saw growing communal, caste atrocities against women. The new technologies of globalisation combined with cuts in welfare have unleashed new miseries in the spheres of labour, sexuality and everyday lived cultures. The decade was also marked by the struggles of women in the informal sector and Dalit women's autonomous assertions. The formation of broad Left-Dalit and feminist platforms and voices of women in Durban further confirm our belief in collective struggles.

The apparent collapses and the inadequacy of registers of our languages and methodologies have led to a 'crisis of confidence' in the social sciences. While micro-histories and concerns are welcome, the apologetic attitude to collective hope and action is a matter of concern. This is a critical juncture for all of us practicing women studies- as there seem to be no ready made paradigms and we must patiently 'listen' rather than 'resolve'.

In the late 1990s, many women's studies scholars and practitioners have turned their attention to graduate and post graduate programmes in the discipline. Old questions are being asked in new ways for new times. Once again questions about the interdisciplinarity of Women's Studies are being asked. The possibilities and limitations of transforming and being transformed by traditional disciplines are being debated. What seemed like abstract debates in the 1980s are concrete quandaries for many of the Centres and departments where Women's Studies has been practiced for more than a decade. This is a critical juncture, for the events of the 1990s have made the work of feminist scholars, at once more crucial and vulnerable to challenges from within and without the university. Any discussion on the dilemmas and opportunities facing women's studies in the academy has to be located in the context of interdisciplinarity. The structural, institutional, epistemological and political issues involved in interdisciplinarity have to be untangled. We recognize that interdisciplinarity will not naturally emerge, that considerable reflection, creativity

combined with strategic planning and alliance building is called for. If interdisciplinarity is to be more than a mission statement, we have to continue to grapple with the nuts and bolts of fostering interdisciplinarity, the different models of practicing interdisciplinarity in the university and their implications for Women's Studies.

This collection was planned in the tradition of feminist reflexivity to bring together reflections on the last decade and organisational strategies for the future. In the first section, the 'midwives, nurturers, daughters –of women's studies whether obedient or rebellious have reflected on the intellectual, organizational and institutional issues in women's studies. The second section puts together critical reflections on the relationship between the women's movement and women's studies in India. The third section is crucial for planning more inclusive and intensive strategies for regional networking of the IAWS. Contributions from the Western and Eastern India reflect on the experiences and significance of sustaining regional networks. The fourth section is an attempt to document the ways in which the IAWS conferences and meetings have 'recast' conference cultures. Songs, dramatizing of histories and struggles have emerged as an integral part of the conferences. As we began to connect with friends to plan this collection and put together documents for this issue, we realised that the IAWS has a rich history of its own which needs to be documented. An archive should be next on our agenda- we'll have to store and save our histories in these times of hijacking of histories and agendas. The fifth section is a step in this direction towards building an archive

of the IAWS. The visuals in the collection reinstate the commitment of IAWS to secular democracy and have been borrowed from Bhasin et al edited volume entitled 'Against All Odds' published by Kali for women, New Delhi.

In putting this collection together, we have incurred several debts. Members of the Editorial Board of the IAWS Newsletter have been actively involved in the planning of this collection. Special thanks to Zarina Appa, and Pushpatai for the guidance; Rameshwari and Lakshmi for their sustained support and all the members who sent us their comments. The office staff of the Krantijyoti Savitribai Phule Women's Studies Centre has often worked extra hours for this collection to get through on time- a big thanks to them. Special thanks to our young colleagues - Swati and Anagha for their active participation from the planning to production phases of this collection. Thanks to friends at Alochana, Kamala Bhasin, Juhi Jain, Kalpana Kannabiran, Chayya Datar, Lakshmi Lingam and Vibhuti Patel for sharing their collection of reports and photographs. We are grateful to all the contributors who sent in their articles in record time. We regret the regional unevenness in the contributions, which in part is a consequence of the uneven responses to our requests for articles and reports. This effort to document our history – is by its very definition a collective effort and we are grateful to all involved in the effort. The usual disclaimer of course applies.

Vidyut Bhagwat Sharmila Rege

Indian Association For Women's Studies, Its objectives and Growth

Zarina Bhatty



Indian Association for Women's Studies (I.A.W.S.) will celebrate its 22nd birthday later this year. It has reached adult hood, and adult hood is associated with maturity, responsibility and growth. Can IAWS claim to have acquired these qualities? Taking into account both qualitative and quantitative parameters, the answer will be yes but not an unqualified yes, as it has been suffering from growing pains too.

IAWS was born as a result of the deep concern for women's continuing subordination in Indian society despite the Indian Constitution granting gender equality. This persisting subordination of women was vociferously brought out by the report of the Committee on the Status of Women in India (C.S.W.I.) published in 1975. The report broke the complacency towards women's plight which prevailed during the post-Independence decades of the 50s and the 60s. Although, earlier, there had been sporadic women's movements in different parts of the country in addition to Social reform movements of the 20s and the 30s, which were initiated by enlightened men, the feminist movement as it is understood to-day may be traced back to the post 1975, the year when Mexico hosted the first International, U.N. Conference on women.

C.S.W.I. report and the Mexico Conference provided a suitable environment to highlight gender issues. A number of N.G.O.s emerged focussing on women's backwardness and launching programmes for

women's development. About the same time the I.C.S.S.R., responding to the Report's findings, also initiated programmes for research on women, it commissioned a number of studies and motivated social scientists to put gender on their research agenda. A Centre for Women's Studies, was set up, as Dr. Veena Mazumadar as its director. The S.N.D.T. Women's studies already had Research Unit on women headed by Dr. Neeraben Desai. Indian Institute of Social Science Trust (ISST) was also established, by Dr. Devaki Jain, in Delhi, to conduct research on women, later on a number of other women's research centres also came into existence.

These developments led to the holding of the first National Women's Conference in Mumbai under the joint auspices of the S.N.D.T. Women's University, The Centre for Women's Development Studies, Delhi, and the University Grants Commission, which then was chaired by Madhuriben Shah, an ardent supporter of Women's development. The Conference indicated an enthusiastic and widespread interest in women's studies and the idea was collectively mooted by the stalwarts of women's movement, present at the Conference to set up an Association for Women's studies. This idea was whole heartedly supported by Dr. Madhuriben Shah, as a Chairperson of the University Grants Commission. Thus the I.A.W.S. was set up as a Registered body in 1980 to provide linkages between institutions and individuals engaged in research and teaching on women and to collaborate with the activists who were advocating the cause for women's development. The founders of the Association envisaged women's studies to be a transformative agency by promoting research and teaching in the higher education system. This was considered necessary to create awareness of women's issues across disciplines, to enrich knowledge itself and to create awareness among

students and the Faculty. An important objective of I.A.W.S. has been to generate gender consciousness among the planners towards gender inequalities and for the need of women's active and effective involvement in national development. I.A.W.S., therefore, from the beginning had a twofold agenda, first, to generate an inclusive knowledge base recognising the significance of gender in academic inquiry and second, to contribute towards the social transformation of society by collaborating with the activists in their advocacy endeavours.

Over the years new concerns have been articulated by its members, regarding the future thrust of the Association and its relationship with the activists wing of the movement which was regarded in Neeraben's words as an academic arm of the movement. As is natural, the academics and the activists both also had responded to the new political and economic situation prevailing in the country, with which have emerged new concerns. At this juncture, as I see it there are two major challenges that need to be addressed by the I.A.W.S. community, academics and the activists included. One reflects at the status of the women's studies in the higher education system and its contribution to Knowledge itself. There have been two major locations of women's studies in the country, Women's Studies Centres (WSC) in the Universities, and institutions for research on women outside the university system. The number of WSCs have increased to 33 currently, which have been churning out research studies and also been collaborating with the N.G.O.s. The quality of research and the extent and level of collaboration with the N.G.O.s have differed. Some WSCs have been struggling with the welfarish approach to women's issues while others have been probing deeply into concepts and methodologies and have been trying to integrate gender into other disciplines. This process has been slow and a difference of opinion regarding the nature of women's studies has also surfaced. Although there is no difference of opinion on the multidisciplinary nature of women's studies, there is a debate on whether it needs to be developed and recognised as a separate discipline or should gendering of disciplines will suffice. It is a healthy debate I personally feel that it is not an either or situation, the processes can be carried on simultaneously. Women's studies having its own identity and

acquiring a separate status in the University system will have greater chances of introducing gender perspective into other discipline.

Women's Studies Centres outside the University system have been more oriented towards action research rather than purely academic. These Centres have also been operating more closely with the activists. A distinction between more academic research and action oriented research need not lead to a hierarchy, placing academics on a higher pedestal, there are some lurking fears which needs to be watched.

A concern has been expressed by some feminist that academics and the activists are distancing themselves from each other. I do not share this concerns. In fact it has not been the case in I.A.W.S. The close relationship between the two arms of the movement has amply been reflected in the issues taken up in I.A.W.S. workshops and in its biennial conferences; the large number of participants from activists organisations; and the representation of activists in its executive committee.

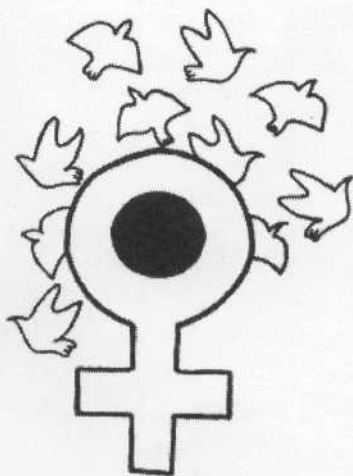
What I will regard to be the greatest danger to the movement, at this juncture is the danger of co-option of women's studies scholars by the fundamentalists. Recent statements by some scholars crediting Manu Smirti as a feminist text and claiming that patriarchy was introduced in India in the 8th century A.D. and that before that Indian woman was the queen of the household, are very disturbing. Further that School curricula is being based on these motivated truths and thus the woman's domestic role is being idealised in the golden Vedic period. In creating such a scenario the self styled, patriotic scholars are trying to send a message that women's movement is redundant, all that is required is to take a long jump into the Vedic period and the Indian woman will be assured of a queenly status in Indian society. These recent developments are of grave concern to both the academics and the activists. Hopefully both these two arms of the movement will come closer to face this challenge which are not only trying to destroy the neutrality of scholarship but also the very fabric of our multicultural democratic society.

■ ■

Nuts and Bolts of Running the Office of the General Secretary

Lakshmi Lingam

The terms of reference of the General Secretary of the IAWS has not been stated in the Constitution of the Association explicitly. The same is true also of the other office bearers. This lacuna is strength as well as a weakness. It gives the General Secretary, during her term, the possibility to identify new focus areas and segments of people in the movement and women's studies to work with. Despite the absence of role specifications in the Constitution, guidance is readily available through former Committee members, the General Secretary, correspondence files and Minutes Book of the Executive Committee meetings. For many other practical purposes, common sense developed with years of dealing with different kinds of bureaucracy and diplomatic skills developed over years of relating to different types of personalities at the work place, at home and in the community come in handy for managing the office and problem solving. Hence, the scope of the 'job' of the General Secretary, which unfolds almost on a daily basis, is more process oriented while being task oriented at the same time.



I would like to jot down some of the tasks that I think are the nuts and bolts of running the IAWS Secretariat. The various tasks are classified here as academic, administrative and advocacy. However, these are not watertight compartments.

Academic Tasks

During the tenure of an Executive Committee, several activities are carried out with the intention to further the cause of women's studies by:

- improving the visibility of the discipline;
- attaining greater clarity on emerging issues;
- keeping the membership informed on feminist perspectives on various issues; and
- sharing collective concerns, dilemmas and experiences.

The workshops, regional meetings, collaboration and partial support to events related to the interests of the IAWS are some of the ways in which this is done. The National Conference organised once in two years reflects the current thinking in the discipline and in the movement on contemporary issues of development and gender justice. Based on the suggestion of the previous EC, the present EC had identified some of the EC members as regional Co-ordinators to help organise regional workshops. Though most activities are collectively discussed and decided upon the General Secretary facilitates, mediates and follows up the proposals, the budgets, the reports and the necessary dates and deadlines.

Planning the focus of the National Conference, preparing the concept note and identifying subtheme topics and Co-ordinators through a participatory process are the other significant tasks carried out by the General Secretary with active participation and

support from the Executive Committee members. During the course of preparing for the conference, division of work emerges to cover the aspects of planning logistics, fund raising, communication, co-ordination of sub-theme sessions, etc. There is no uniform pattern in this. Every EC has its own way of organising these aspects. However, uniformly the GS is accountable for all aspects.

Preparation of the conference brochure, book of abstracts, compilation of the regional workshop reports has been my responsibility. However, this has also been distributed among the members, in some of the ECs. The fact that EC members are generally located in different cities/towns and many EC members do not have office and institutional support, either because they are retired or they are activists, leaves the GS to be solely responsible for all these compilations and publications. Facilitating the election process of the next EC, is another activity of significance that the GS performs.

Administrative Tasks

Maintaining the IAWS Directory of members is always an ongoing task, with members joining in on regular basis and ordinary and student memberships expiring around March of every year. Hence, the Directory is always dynamic and streamlining it has always been a preoccupation for all General Secretaries. Deletions and omissions always cause a lot of heart burn because this the lifeline for the General Body to be informed about events, elections and information. So not a day will pass without somebody writing to complain that they have not been receiving communications.

While the Treasurer is incharge of maintaining the accounts books and keep it regularly updated. All matters pertaining to allocations and approvals have to be duly streamlined by the GS with full knowledge of the EC. This includes allocations and advances to publish the IAWS Newsletter which often the responsibility of one of the Six monthly organisation of EC meetings, maintaining the minutes book and reporting on the tasks performed during the reporting period are important responsibilities to eliminate adhocism in decisions and also document work in progress through the association.

Preparation of Annual narrative reports for funding agencies that support the various events of the Association is an important task. Maintaining contacts with funding agencies and maintaining contacts with the members and individuals that show interest in becoming members, is a regular Public Relations task.

While collaborations with Women's Studies Centres at regional level are often identified and nurtured by the EC regional representatives, the Secretariat is responsible for seeking regional workshop reports and the Treasurer follows up for the financial statements.

Advocacy Inputs

The Newsletter of the IAWS represents the concerns of the Association. However, in a professional capacity of being a women's studies researcher and in the capacity of being the General Secretary, I am expected to provide an opinion on a range of issues, like women's empowerment policy; population policy; media representation of women; on issues of violence and globalisation. These are important ways in which the General Secretary represents the concerns of the IAWS.

The issue that always confronts me and perhaps all individuals who have been General Secretaries is how to assess the value of running the Association, at a personal, professional and also at the level of serving the discipline. This is a hard task and there are no indicators as of now to do that.

Greetings for the Twenty Year Old: From one of the Midwives

Vina Mazumdar

You are twenty, going on twenty one, soon you will think you are old,
 All who surround you, steer and guide you, some not so young, nor bold.
 You are a rover, without any cover, not even a permanent home.
 Many who love you, want to settle you, within the walls of a room –
 Because they believe in - order and ruling
 Filing and accounting order.
 Records are needed, as and when heeded
 To avoid in the future – disorder.

But you, my darling, were born without a farthing –
 To challenge a powerful system,
 The symbol of a hope, from many who were broke
 But believed they could transform the system
 Not through destruction, but persuasion,
 Carrying the torch for knowledge –
 Through research and teaching, action, debating –
 Enriching young minds with courage.

Structures these days, age faster than earlier,
 And become homes without people,
 With declining rationale, sponsors and personnel
 The life-force moves away – as natural.
 Life is dynamic, Knowledge not static.

'Tis a mistake to tie them down.
 Challenge especially, needs strategically
 New thrusts, ways and not frown
 On changing methodology, for order and maintenance
 Of records, history and the spirit –

Of moving on gracefully, welcome affectionately
 New people ready to (wo)man it.

Retain your youth, and remain a rover
 Keep on challenging the system!
 Systems – though obdurate, hesitant and cussed –
 Know they must bend to the wind.
 Fanning that wind is your raison d'etre –
 Think up new ways to do it better.
 Monolithic models hid most of our reality,
 Bharat darshan opens door to diversity.



Acton India, Delhi

IAWS: Two Decades of Journey of Tight Rope Walking between Research and Activism

Neera Desai

While reminiscing about the emergence of IAWS and traversing through its the two decades countless memories come back to mind. The first conference held at Mumbai in 1981 was organised within about six months, with lot of trepidation about the response and outcome. To the joy and satisfaction of many of the participants and those involved in the organization, the attempt proved to be an invigorating, meaningful and exiting experience. Participants constituting both young and old, belonging to various ideological hues, running around the campus, dropping in at the book exhibition, enjoying the evening at sea shore, hardly missing any session and finally with one voice passed the resolution to launch the IAWS – a crucial landmark in the history of women's studies and women's movement. In fact there is a nostalgic feeling lurking among many of the participants.

At this historic occasion retrospection over what have the intervening years of the organisation meant in terms of issues discussed, of increasing the involvement of the members, of its outreach or action taken to bring forth gender justice in the Indian society? Of course detailed analysis of the IAWS could be a future systematic project; here I would briefly record some of my feelings about the role of IAWS in the last two decades and challenges ahead. While traversing through the history three or four features of the conference come to mind. Firstly, the IAWS has surely provided a forum to meet and dialogue on various critical issues affecting women in the radically transforming Indian society. A casual glance at the major themes of the biannual conferences and the plenary sessions will indicate the range of issues covered and perspectives encouraged. Secondly though it may not have reached all the strata of women ranging of students , teachers, researchers, activists, sensitive bureaucrats

and the grass root workers but every conference has been drawing more and more participants providing them the opportunity to interact as freely and equally as possible. In fact deliberate attempt had been made to bridge the gap between various participants. Thirdly from the very initial years activities of collaborating with national and international organisations involved in women's studies discussions have been pursued helping to build solidarity amongst the various groups; thus IAWS as a concerned organisation is visible at number of such meetings and conferences. Fifthly by encouraging though not always very successfully regional meetings and workshops so as to reach out to the various local groups and also address some of the regional concerns. IAWS conferences to a great extent has been an arena for coming to gather of number of different interest groups and individuals for dialoguing on critical, disturbing issues. The debates have been of substantial depth and nuances which to an extent have made significant dent in the recognition of women's studies in enhancing the knowledge base of gender reality.

The enigma which now before us is, what has been the transformative role of IAWS, besides providing a space to articulate and debate on women's issues? Should praxis be one of the axis on which the role of an organisation could be evaluated. Two decades is sufficiently long period when some introspection about its role in the area of effectiveness may be attempted. As mentioned earlier undoubtedly IAWS has given space to both academics and the activists. There was a period around the second and the fifth conference when a feeling of hiatus between the activists and the researcher had surfaced. In the Calcutta conference issues of difference, who speaks for whom and marginalisation of minority groups began to surface which raised the issue of

Looking Back

Maithreyi Krishnaraj

The IAWS was born in 1981. A conference was called after a decision by our stalwarts among whom were Veena Mazumdar, Neera Desai, Lotika Sarkar and Madhuri Shah, to host a national women studies conference at SNTD with the involvement of ICSSR, UGC, UNICEF and other funding bodies. By a special resolution passed at this conference, an Indian Association for Women Studies was created. Most people refer to this first conference as the 'IAWS conference' which is not correct. It was the first women studies conference not the first IAWS conference.

Since then every alternate year we have held conferences in different venues. What marked the first conference was its concern for promoting women studies in the university system and in building alliances with women's groups. In the turnout of more than 400 women from all over India were contingents from political parties, AIWC, YWCA, young scholars from many universities, students, new women's groups. This broad range was not kept up in later years. At that time women studies centres had not come up. Women's groups had not yet rallied under the label 'autonomous women's groups'. The issues discussed in panels voiced concerns about women's status and feminism was not yet a part of the vocabulary. The ICSSR programme of women studies under the leadership of Veena Mazumdar had clearly laid emphasis on economic issues. The level of discussion was general, there was no divide between 'activists' and 'academics' as the latter had not become a category.

The process of confronting the subordination of women was primarily seen as a political challenge and women studies was to be an aid- truly speaking the 'academic arm'. There was great faith in the role of higher education as an influential agent for

transformation. The faith in research arose also with the impact that Towards Equality made on a complaisant society. Law seemed a potent instrument for we were meeting after the famous Mathura case. We were all going to work together in this shared vision of sisterhood. Lawyers, women professionals, voluntary groups, established traditional organisations and grass roots women. This high hope was not sustained. While individual political activists continued to attend conferences, after the first two conferences party women stayed away. A pity for dialogue between party groups and others receded. The rise of hindutva has now made this even more difficult. The new context of the political – economical changes have reduced the space for women's active intervention.

The first IAWS conference (but the second WS one) was in Tiruvanandapuram with sensitive bureaucrats taking initiative in participating and organising conferences. Those women within the government who had been educated on 'Towards Equality' were confident that governments could be nudged into making changes. Themes like work participation and political participation, women's struggles featured prominently. Many men in the government and academics were convinced of women's cause. The autonomous women's groups gained more visibility.

By the time we met in subsequent conferences, women studies scholarship had emerged and these were reflected in the level and themes that began to dominate. Historical analysis of nationalism and patriarchy came centre stage. The activist-academic divide took the form of accusation that academics exploit activists for building their theory. While in the later years this contentiousness faded, the emergence of NGOs and funding availability for

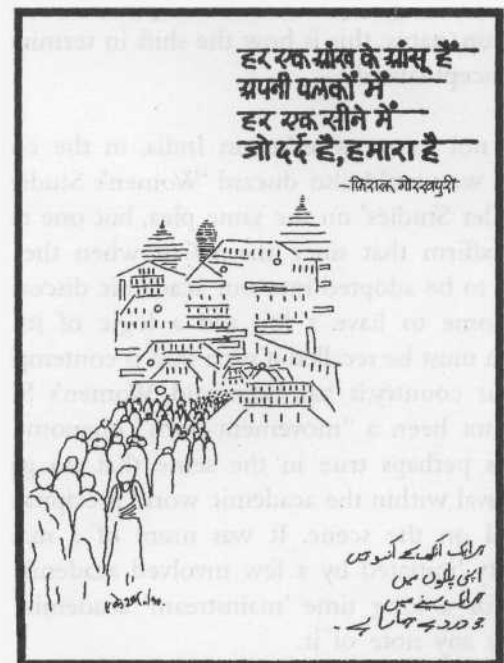
research to these groups shifted the line of disputes. Though *unacknowledged* there has been a good deal of interchange between action and academia, both drawing from each other. For example questions of unpaid work, intra-household distribution, development theories and practice, use of and critique of national data sources were fertile grounds of such beneficial exchange. Experiences of activists on how the law works, on violence, on perception of different category of women, on what is involved when one seeks to work with government or challenges improved research. Teaching of women studies promoted greater interaction as activists were often guest lecturers. It is difficult to say to what extent these were the direct fall out of IAWS is difficult to say but I perhaps it helped in creating an environment for this interaction. International conferences lent more visibility to women's issues.

Decades later, the shifts in intellectual discourses within feminism increasingly percolated into women studies- representation and difference. On the positive side, one noticed an increasing sophistication in analysis, greater rigour in understanding law, in development theories, in methodology, in mapping the diverse experiences of regions.

So, what can we count as achievements, failures, possibilities? The success score is in the regularity with which the conferences have been held; in the quality of papers and discussions; in its outreach; in the dedication with which each conference was organised by host women. The newsletter is an innovation. The flip side is that organisationally we are still weak. Mail does not reach is a constant complaint. There is no proper permanent secretariat; of course being a professional organisation this is not feasible but some skeleton office where people can contact during off- conference times is a lacuna. Elections have not brought in new workers. All EC members do not work or attend the meetings with the same sincerity. Some who are elected see it as a prestige appointment and are rarely available for actual 'housework', that invisible category because they are abroad or too busy. Some attempts have been made to have regional associations but these are still too few in number. Delhi continues to be dominant and regions such as Bihar, Assam, NE, UP have not participated adequately. Attempts at publication have not been successful. Young middle

class women, the daughters of our movement are not coming in large numbers to keep the torch aloft.

So the future? Our alliance have to go stronger; more young people must be brought in; regional associations must be built up in all parts of India as channels for grassroots women to participate. There has to be more room for discussions, less packing of sessions to the hilt that groups do not have free time for organising their own meetings outside official hours. Though IAWS has passed resolutions these remain tokens, not taken seriously by any agency. In other words IAWS is not a strong mouth piece for women's issues from the point of view of the public, though it has been a good forum for scholars and the movement. It straddles an uneasy tight rope between women's conference to focus on issues and women studies conference to generate intellectual output.



Rajasthan Kisan Sanghatana

Women's Studies: the Last Decade and Challenges for the Next

Malini Bhattacharya

The term 'Women's Studies' was invented in the U.S.A. in the 1960s and created a space for itself in the academic world of the West through the campus upheavals of the late 1960s that challenged the boundaries of established disciplines and questioned academic canons. I am told by friends in the U.S.A. that the term has already been discarded in academic circles, that like 'Feminism' it has fallen into discredit, to be replaced at most by 'Gender Studies', which is supposed to be more balanced in so far as it is a relational term. If identities of men and women are socially constructed, and if the differences between them are ideologically determined rather than absolute, then what we are really studying is 'gender' and the relationalities of the 'masculine' and the 'feminine', not just women's problems/issues/position/status; this is how the shift in terminology is conceptualised.

I do not know whether in India, in the coming years, we would also discard 'Women's Studies' for 'Gender Studies' on the same plea, but one may at least affirm that since the 1970s when the term came to be adopted into our academic discourse, it has come to have a life and a logic of its own which must be recalled if such shift is contemplated. In our country, it has been said, Women's Studies 'has not been a "movement-born" phenomenon', this is perhaps true in the sense that no general upheaval within the academic world precipitated its arrival on the scene. It was more of a marginal activity 'initiated by a few involved academicians', and for a long time 'mainstream' academia took hardly any note of it.

However, from the very beginning, 'Women's Studies' in India maintained very strong bonds with women's movements; *Towards Equality*, the text that pioneered Women's Studies in India, came out under shadow

of Internal Emergency at a time when all democratic movements were being repressed by the Government at the Centre. But in spite of having been sponsored by the same Government, *Towards Equality* made no compromises so far as the authenticity and the critical vision of the true research worker was concerned, and was thus able to give the women's movement from which it derived its issues, the consciousness of its own political relevance. Intervention by a group of academics in the Mathura rape case in the early 80's again provided the movement with weapons to wage a struggle against rampant instances of sexual violence that went with caste and class oppression. Subsequently, the movement against incidents of 'Suttee' on one hand and the so-called Muslim Women's Bill on the other was inspired and enriched by the conceptual underpinning that academics, legal experts and intellectuals brought to it. Women's Studies in India may not have come in the wake of campus activism as in the West, but it has continuously derived its *raison d'être* from and contributed to the discourse of democratic movements in the country.

Perhaps, this engagement with activist issues is one major reason why the term 'Women's Studies' retains its relevance for us in spite of the continued antagonism both from mainstream academic disciplines and from some brands of activism. For our purpose, 'woman' itself is a relational word and includes 'man'. While it is true that the significance of these terms is socially conditioned and refers to gender relationships at particular moments of our social life, it is also true that these relationships are embedded in power-structures where 'women' like 'proletariat' or 'dalit' represents a subordinated status. These power-structures also operate within settled disciplines in spite of their claim to academic neutrality and cast a veil of silence around the process

of subordination itself. The term 'Women's Studies' embodies a political thrust, that addresses some crucial gaps and silences within the discourse of settled discipline and helps to open up the inviolate power-structures within academic practice. Substitution of 'Women's Studies' by 'Gender Studies' would indicate a loss of this political thrust, and a dilution of the commitment to privilege a perspective, that has been suppressed and neglected throughout history. On the other hand, activism could also benefit from such conceptualisation. Maybe a shift from Women's Studies to Gender Studies would make it more acceptable to mainstream academia, but would also result in a loss of its political relevance.

Women's Studies in India today also reflects the fractures within the Women's movement. Ongoing debates have been there since the 1980s regarding the nature of the relations between gender-identity and other markers of identity such as class, caste and religious community. Sometimes the same people who refuse to admit 'class' as a coordinate analytical category with 'gender' because it was limited to economic differences, would privilege 'cultural' categories like caste and community as referring to differences which have more relevance for Women's Studies. The upsurge in identity-politics in the last decade has meant that we have moved away from straightforward universalist theories of gender and have begun to study the sectoral implications of other kinds of identities. But the relative absence of 'class' in the feminist discourse in our country suggests a certain gap in our thinking which also limits and hampers the analysis of other kinds of identities.

Differentiations based on caste/religious community are sometimes seen as having more 'real' implications for analysis in Women's Studies while class is seen as more of an abstraction imposed hegemonically on such analysis. When one looks at the situation in Women's Studies today, which has been created by the moribundity of the liberal secularism of yesteryears and the efforts to create a mystique out of the caste/religious identities of women by presuming such identities to be 'cultural' rather than 'political', one feels that the category of 'class' is irreplaceable for promoting the self-criticality/ self-reflexivity Women's Studies must base itself upon.

Our Story: Twenty Years of IAWS

Class is a diachronic category which seeks to hypothesise how all human relationships including gender relationships change over time. The outlines of the hypothesis may be open to critique, but such hypothetical effort is perhaps necessary to historicise categories like gender/caste/religious community. Will Women's Studies in the coming days be more open to such efforts?



Rajasthan Kisan Sanghatana

For someone like me and several others who I know and interact with, women's studies came across very much as a part of the women's movement. Some of the questions that were raised in the women's movement were translated into critical questions in our professions and this opened out the horizons of our disciplines. As practitioners of women studies, we no longer had to be confined to the walls of our discipline. In any case, the way I had practiced the discipline, it had been more open to interventions from social aspects of the discipline. But with women's studies, the critical output could be drawn out further. I consider that women's studies was raising not only issues of the women's movement but also suggesting ways of coming to grips with the terrain of advanced knowledge in which we are supposed to operate within the university system.

If I see rightly, I see that in the last ten years there have been efforts along the lines of what Maitreyi Krishnaraj has aptly called 'permeable boundaries'. The fact that societies in which we live are stratified has made it possible to access through gender some of the other kinds of stratification more readily and to have a more nuanced understanding of humanism. Gender is one of the major constituents in the making of inequality in the world of disciplines and of practice. Gender having being there the longest, helps the other forms of domination to hook on to it. If one can use gender as a 'tool of critique' – a lot more of the stratified society would be easier to confront. Gender as a critical tool or to use Kumkum Sangari's phrase, gender as the 'cutting edge' opens up different kinds of discrimination and is a way of interrogating the disciplines.

About women's studies in the next ten years – it is difficult to predict – so I do so with considerable hesitation. One hopes that the present technological

happenings will not completely lure away women's studies. These technologies are producing their own set of miseries and forms of polarization in society – instead of the empowerment that liberal market oriented policies were supposed to have brought in. In fact, gender is also capturing the notion of masculinity very fast and for the first time in our society too, there is a feeling that men are at the wrong end of voyeurism. I don't know, if the men feel empowered with this but looking at advertisements like 'Yeh Andar ki Baat Hai' or those of other underclothes – I don't think that masculinity is being glorified at all. So in a way, gender is in a position to question masculinity as it had the notions of femininity. But I am opposed to the term men's studies which as if suggests that gender has vanished and upsets the critical principle of gender. Ultimately one can only hope that women's studies do not get incorporated in the academic naturalization process, which kills a number of critical questions. Therefore, I am not enthusiastic about gender studies becoming 'a discipline'. I think it can be a critical perspective a cutting edge across disciplines converging on certain basic insights into the working of patriarchy and other very oppressive forms of domination, which are both modern and pre-modern. In any case both the modern and traditionalist paradigms are products of patriarchy. That is why globalization and fundamentalism nestle so happily and closely. There is nothing really global about globalization just as fundamentalism is identarian and yet so accommodative of other identarian trends. On both the fronts – globalization and fundamentalism there has been a big sell out to the system. I hope women's studies will continue to hold out against this complete sell out to the dominant system. Therefore, one hopes that women's studies will keep its space within the university set up. There is a lot of lip service being paid to gender and equity but

ultimately no system is comfortable with it. So the confrontation will have to continue.

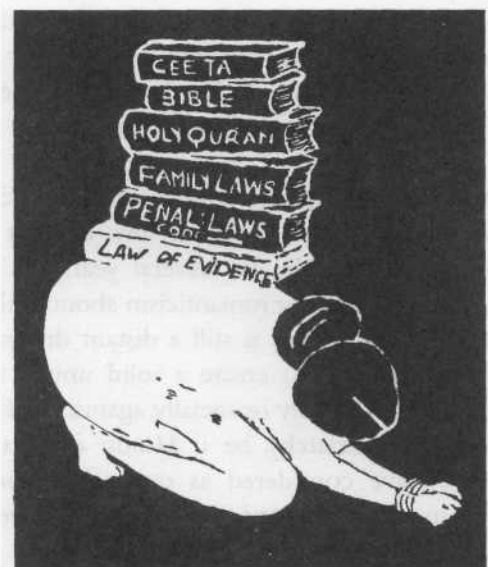
Another problem is that a lot of professionalism has come to the practices of gender and equity. There is no need to feel thwarted. There are ways in which questions may still be kept alive. Even the corporate NGO sector will have to be bothered by these questions and remain answerable to women's studies. This is a generalized hope and it's difficult to present any direct evidence for this hope. Going by recent happenings at Kampala at the third in the series of World Women's Conference, there is a lot of anger and vibrancy being expressed by the African Women's Movement and movements from other parts of the world. For instance, a group from Columbia was getting signatures against the completely destructive paths that both the extreme Left and Right had taken. In case of refugees too, women have a crucial role to play. They are the worst victims of displacement but also the people who will ultimately reconstruct daily lives. The challenges before women are so vast that I think that we cannot settle down into a comfortable niche.

As for the IAWS – its regional and international linkages – one could have done better. But the very fact that bi-annual meetings are organized – says that there is something to look forward to and connect. Organizing these meetings is not easy and to that extent the Association has done well on the networking front. It's wonderful that the whole of India can come together and that there is always a South Asia focus. We need to keep this activity going at the all India level. I am not sure if the parallel conferences of the women's movement are still going on. It's strange how there have been several configurations- there has been a kind of convergence with a critical edge of women's wings of political parties, autonomous women's groups and NGOs. Rather than just drop one's hands in despair as if all this was following the dictates of the UN Conferences and so on – we need to look at the convergence on legal and communal front. People's movements too have criss-crossed across and gathered energy from gender. Research and interventions on caste have also traveled well across the country. With all the limitations of its practice, IAWS is our association –there should be as much possible work done to keep it alive. Some of the old guard – do

feel that its no longer the same, but we need to remember that institutions do not remain the same. The last two conferences have been vibrant. For the present one, considerable trouble has been taken over making the central statement. I am pinning my hope on its potential getting realized.

■ ■

This is the text of a stimulating dialogue with Prof. Jashodhara Bagchi at the Krantijyoti Savitribai Phule, Pune, September 2002



ASR (Lahore)

IAWS: What Do We Do Now?

Nirmala Banerjee

In times of crisis, a person automatically starts reviewing her resources – what associations she can fall back on, what help she can expect, what assets she can cash on. I think for all of us women of India this is indeed a period of crisis when we have had to face the breakdown of so many institutions that we had always taken for granted. For many in Gujarat it has been a very real physical assault, coupled with a sudden denial of their basic rights, not just as Indian citizens but even as members of civilized humanity. For the rest of us who have been nothing more than agonized but distant observers, this has nevertheless also been a period of a very serious moral and intellectual crisis. It has torn through the thin veneer of the secularism that we had taken for granted amongst our associates and peers. And it has made a mockery of our belief in the state as an agency for the welfare of the weak and the vulnerable. Especially for those of us who were there at the beginning of independent India and who had believed that they would make a positive contribution, however small, to building India's emerging institutions, the crisis is very real, because the events have suddenly underscored the fragility of our lifetime achievements.

Can we, as a group of desolate and bewildered citizens and feminists, reclaim any of that lost ground? True, over the last several years we have come to realize that our romanticism about building a meaningful sisterhood is still a distant dream; we have not been able to create a solid united front that can fight, politically or socially, against the forces of traditional patriarchy, be it Hindu or Muslim. What we have considered as our achievements—whether in education, or in the economy, have not really reached the really needy or vulnerable. And over years, our presence has merely worked to make those in power conscious of the necessity to contain

the challenge that feminism may pose to their way of life.

And yet this is when I would look to the IAWS as one of the few institutions that can bring together concerned scholars and activists for working out strategies for coping with this crisis of confidence. We have to our credit enough experience and research from all parts of the country for making a realistic assessment of the dimensions of the counter forces. We have our carefully nurtured traditions of intra-institution democracy and of communication at all levels. And we have the humility to approach the issues with a clear acknowledgement of our past failures. What we, as an organization have to do now is to reach out into arenas where the battle has already begun and to make our stand known. This may lose us the state patronage that we have so far enjoyed; it may also isolate us from our close associates. It is a risky venture because the rights and wrongs of the day-to-day events are no longer clearly demarcated. That is why I hope this coming conference will use the opportunity to clearly work out our long-term stand about the shape of the society that we want to live in.

■ ■

IAWS Plays an Anchoring Role for Women's Studies

Chhaya Datar

I am a member of IAWS from its inception and was elected as a general secretary for a period of 1996-98. Except three conferences, one in Mumbai, when the decision was taken to launch the IAWS, the one in Mysore in 1993 and the third one in Hyderabad in 2000, I attended all the conferences and found myself invigorated every time. In the beginning I remember I used to sit in the audience and watch with much reverence all the mothers of Indian feminism weaving the feminist discourse from the platform of biannual conferences. Their commitment to provide direction to women's studies despite the fear of being outcast from their own discipline, nurturing conviction that the women's studies provides vantage point for an interdisciplinary approach to understand reality in its complexity, and their organising capacities, everything was awe inspiring.

Later, I saw myself shouldering the responsibility of organising one such conference in Pune, in 1998. Looking back I feel it was a very productive tenure with Nirmala Banerjee as a president and Neera Desai as an ex-officio member. We organised also a mini conference in Baroda to celebrate 50 years of independence, and invited stalwarts who were part of the freedom struggle and the first generation feminists to listen to their testimonies and record them on video. On the whole we followed the same format of activities as was laid down by earlier

executive committees. Apart from these two conferences four regional workshops were sponsored during those two years. We also tried to follow the footsteps of our predecessors by inviting one South Asian speaker in every panel of the plenary. One of the major efforts undertaken by our executive was to introduce the electoral reforms. Being a veteran in the IAWS functioning, Neera Desai worked hard to identify the pitfalls in the present constitution and identified much needed changes. But I suppose that because of the lack of sufficient lobbying we could not achieve these reforms in the general body organised in Pune. The Pune conference became the most eventful due to the spontaneously organised Peace March by the participants in association with the local organisations to protest against the launching of nuclear bomb by India and Pakistan, both one after another. In fact our Pakistani contingent could not reach the venue because they were returned from the Islamabad airport after the nuclear explosion just two days before their departure for India. Credit goes to Kamala's inspiring presence in the conference. I found publishing of quarterly newsletter also plays important role of networking and reinforces the sense of belonging.

Despite having rich agenda of activities during last 22 years, I feel that progressively something is missing in this platform. Although in founding of IAWS the initiative came more from the academic stream of the women's studies, quite a few women activists



from different organisations were very active during the efforts of registration and later always provided radical activist inputs to the deliberations within the conference. I remember that always we had organised side meetings of activists to discuss the current burning issues, which could not be taken up on the official platform of plenaries. One would look forward to these events, which would refuel the activist spirit among many of us, before returning to our grassroot activities. In a way, we used to enjoy this cleavage between the activists and the academics and had strong sense that because of us the women's studies could maintain its critical edge. I must say that this spirit is lost in the recent conferences. One reason could be that the younger feminists themselves have come of age now and have started shouldering the responsibility of the IAWS, i.e. they have become a part of the establishment and cannot afford to rebel from outside. Many issues, which were not found scope within the IAWS conference agendas have now been incorporated as a part of agendas. But also, one very important observation is emerging that the second or rather third generation of the women's movement is missing, as the second generation has moved in to take reigns of the IAWS in their hands.

It needs to be also noted that meanwhile the women's movement has started convening its own conferences, where autonomous women's groups are taking initiatives. May be that cleavage has turned into a big divide and I feel very strongly that some reconciliatory action is necessary from the establishment of the IAWS.

Establishing Sisterhood Relationship with the Women's Movement

One action I had suggested earlier during Calcutta conference is that to encourage the women's movement conference organisers to use the same venue as the IAWS conference. And schedule the movement conference consecutively for two days after the IAWS conference so that many participants of the IAWS would be able to join this event, without incurring additional travel cost. It would be a good exposure to those IAWS members who are not usually a part of the women's movement activities, but are curious to know what is going on.

Women's movement conference generally focuses on the current issues requiring consistent campaigns. Agenda for campaigns are usually drawn during its deliberations. The conference is also used for thrashing out the differences of opinions, and perspectives for strategies. IAWS plenary themes and speeches address academic concerns for research and integration in the curricula of the existing disciplines. The women's movement conferences try to address immediate concerns of the grassroot women and the concerns such as lesbianism etc. which are taboo in the mainstream of academia. I certainly believe that although the platforms differ for the academic activities and the movement activities, there are overlaps of concerns and definitely overlaps of persons. If women's movement wants to influence the academics, which is one of the objectives of the women's movement, it cannot expect it to happen indirectly, through the news and literature. Women's movement activists need to be proactive and approach wider audiences.

Proactive Role to Integrate Women's Studies Centres in the Mainstream

I would like to suggest that the IAWS executive should adopt one more functional responsibility to its mandate. Apart from providing space for the emerging scholarship in women's studies and networking possibilities among the scholars and activists, I feel IAWS also should be more proactive with the women's studies centres, both UGC funded and also those which function as independent Feminist Resource Centres. My suggestion is that senior executive committee member should be assigned this exclusive responsibility of contacting the women's studies centres, particularly those which are newly established and act as a mentor to these centres. Enough budget should be provided for traveling and establishing communication with these centres. May be profiling of these centres could be done through the newsletter so that others know the areas of specialisation of those centres. They should be encouraged to publish highlights of their activities through IAWS newsletter. To bring these centres in the mainstream of women's studies is a major concern. They have funds and they should be channelised more purposefully. The liaison between the centres and the IAWS should be strengthened.

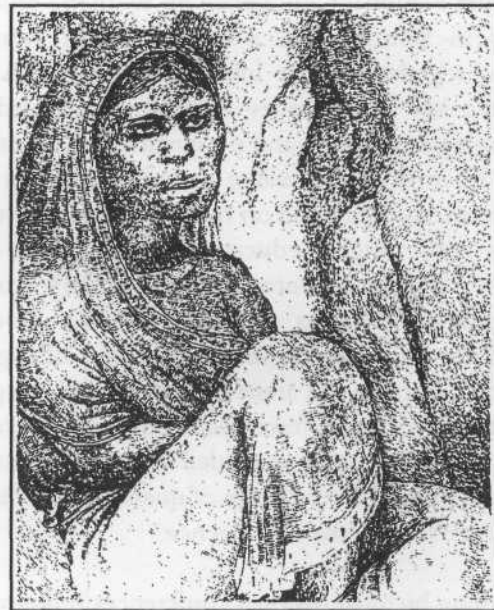
In future may be the centres could contribute some funds to the IAWS. There is a need to establish website of the IAWS to make it more accessible to all concerned with the women's studies. The Women and Child Development department of government of India and NIPCCID together are thinking of establishing a National Resource Centre accessible through net. IAWS could play a major role of communication and consolidation of women's studies through its newsletter and spearhead the process of establishment of this resource centre on NET.

Women's Studies Association in Regional Languages

Another major responsibility, which should be a part of the IAWS mandate, should be to assist and encourage associations of women's studies in regional languages. At the undergraduate level many colleges offer social sciences and humanities in the regional languages. Thus, there is a need to identify the already existing literature in the local languages with feminist perspectives and publish a list of that literature relevant to the teaching needs. The associations could undertake responsibility of translating and publishing some important classics in Indian and World feminist literature. They could encourage preparing textbooks for the specialised courses such as, "Women and Society" introduced by many universities.

In brief I would suggest that instead of focusing all the attention on festive events like conferences, which are of course necessary, the IAWS should also include promotional activities in its mandate.

■ ■



Karen Haydock

Regional Seminars and Workshops – Building IAWS’ Resources and Developing Stronger Links between Academic Pursuits and Activist Endeavours

Kumud Sharma

IAWS in the last twenty years has provided a common platform to academics, activists, policy planners, researchers and students to articulate their concerns and share ideas on alternate visions of women’s struggle for a just and equitable society.

The First National Conference on Women’s Studies (1981) in Bombay was a celebration of women coming together. It gave birth to IAWS which has over the last two decades actively contributed to developing knowledge and perspectives on women’s issues. Keen to conceptualise women’s question the first Conference focussed on mainstreaming women’s studies within higher education system. 1980s was also the time when autonomous women’s groups emerged and activists organised women around several key issues. In the 80s institutions of higher education became the arena of debates and struggle of women’s studies to take roots. The emergence of IAWS at this juncture provided it an opportunity to reflect upon a whole range of questions grounded in women’s collective experience.

Organising biennial national conferences is the main task of IAWS. The Association has organised nine



national conferences so far which have addressed issues such as – women’s struggle and movements; poverty, survival and struggle for change; religion, culture and politics; new economic policy; feminist vision and alternate paradigm and practices; survival and sovereignty; challenges to women’s studies and public policies. Some key issues of debates among the participants were the questions of women’s organisations and their relationship to broader movements, the vital but troubled relationship between researcher and activists and theory and practice, role of ideology, culture, religion and politics in gender violence, rising fundamentalism and identity politics and minority and dalit women’s perceptives on state policies and practices.

In 1985 the Association organised an Asian Regional Conference on ‘Women and the Household’ in collaboration with the Commission on Women of International Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences and Research Committee 32 on ‘Women and Society’ of International Sociological association. It also organised a national seminar on ‘Organisation and perspectives on developing women’s studies in India’ in collaboration with Delhi University and UGC.

IAWS in collaboration with Centre for Women’s Development Studies organised a national seminar on ‘The early years of independent India: Women’s perspective’ to commemorate 50 years of India’s independence. A highlight of the seminar was the oral narratives of women who fought for the national liberation struggle and participated in the Telengana and Tebhaga movements. These testimonies have been published by the IAWS.

The Association also undertook to set up small task forces on specific issues and organised regional workshops on relatively neglected areas or as a preparation to the national conference.

Recognising the importance of regional histories and comparative research perspectives the association organised four regional workshops to understand parallels, continuities and disjunctions between one region and another. Regional workshops have also been organised on issues such as globalisation, identity, politics and rising violence against women, dalit feminism, issues of reservation and civil code, feminist economics, women and media and so on.

After the Trivandrum Conference (1984) a small group was formed to promote research on the 'Role of women in the Indian Freedom struggle'. In 1987 two task forces were constituted. The first one was to examine the implications of the section on 'Education for women's equality' in the National Policy on Education (1986) and the second on the 'Role of Science and Technology in promoting gender equality'.

In 1989 IAWS appointed two task forces to prepare an approach paper to women's studies in the Indian context delineating the perspective, methodology and the conceptual framework. The second task force was to review the problems experienced by women's studies centres supported by UGC.

IAWS has always been a collaborative venture encouraging institutions, women's groups, women's studies centres and activists to put their energy and resources together to make the association an active and vibrant network.

Book exhibitions, songs from the women's movements, plays, video films, on the themes of the conferences and craft exhibitions, have been regular features of the National Conferences.

IAWS is committed to promoting cooperation and solidarity between women's groups, scholars and activists working in different countries of South Asia. Each National Conference has made an effort to organise a South Asia Panel on the theme and invite delegates from the SAARC countries.

From 1985-86 the Association started bringing out a periodic newsletter to facilitate networking and dialogue on research, campaigns and concerns of the women's movement.

IAWS began its journey with a commitment to curriculum development and new and innovative ways of teaching women's studies. The need for interdisciplinary research and theorisation on women's issues, and collection and preparation of teaching material remains a big challenge. To keep women's studies grounded in prexis and the tensions between feminist scholarship and political practice is another challenge.

In the last twenty years and particularly in the 1990s the Indian scenario has changed significantly. The contemporary women's movement has taken up many challenges and voiced concerns with state policies, development paradigm, political economy, women's struggle against poverty, violence and rising fundamentalism. Recognising the complexities of changes and new threats to people's and women's movements, feminist critiques and alternative visions articulated through women's movement need to be looked afresh. The alliances built over these years to provoke debates and discussions, to do advocacy and lobbying on emerging concerns need to be strengthened. Communalisation of politics and globalisation of economy are eroding the rights of women. Children, minorities, tribals and dalits. Critical voices and struggles have to be sustained. IAWS has to continuously review its role in order to provide an interactive and vibrant forum.

Whither Women's Studies?

Mary E. John

Nobody needs to be told about the sense of crisis and insecurity that grips practitioners in the field of women's studies today. But what exactly is the nature of this crisis? How recent is it? Is it unique to women's studies? It is particularly urgent at this time to go beyond immediate versions of this crisis by placing it in historical perspective, if we are to produce effective visions for the years ahead. This newsletter represents a valuable opportunity to raise some issues, however briefly, for further discussion:

1. The experience of crisis as such is hardly new. Indeed, accounts of the inception of women's studies in the 1970s tell us that it began with a sense of crisis, due as much to conflicting pressures as to the absence of a history to build on. The interesting contrast with the present moment, however, becomes palpable when we look at the 1970s from both institutional and political points of view. Women's studies was born within the portals of higher education at a time of institutional growth and consolidation. State subsidisation of higher education was taken for granted and a secure future for university faculty, research scholars and students could be assumed, whatever else events such as the imposition of Emergency and the fundamental loss of democratic rights might have taken away. In fact, it was precisely the absence of anxiety of this kind that made it possible for a considerable number of urban middle class young women and men, fired with idealistic zeal, to leave their familiar contexts and engage wholly in social and political activity. It is thus significant that the wave of radicalism of the 1970s, including the rise of student politics and the rebirth of the women's movement, was buttressed by a stable and expanding institutional environment. This also suggests that it was this combination of radical politics and institutional security that encouraged an overarching and ambitious vision for the fledgling field of women's studies. As founder-mothers Neera Desai and Vina Mazumdar captured the dominant mood of the moment: Women's Studies was not a discipline or a field of study, least of all a special topic, but a perspective that "required articulation in every discipline, institution, in all studies and at all levels."
2. The most distinctive aspect of the emergence of women's studies in the 1970s was the new emphasis on women as subjects of *research*, especially in contrast to pre-independence emphases on women as subjects *to be educated*. A certain convergence was evident and from various quarters – activists, scholars, policy makers and international agencies – who in various ways emphasized the absence of knowledges about women, especially "invisible women" at the grassroots. Research itself was envisaged as a form of outreach, a means of revitalising the women's movement and giving a fresh direction to state policy. What remained unnoticed in all these new endeavours, however, was that education as an issue dropped out of the picture and was all but lost sight of.
3. The intervening decades of the 1980s and 90s have witnessed a veritable explosion of writing and research on women. No subject or sub-field has been spared in the process, be it development, sociology, history, literature, the law, violence, health, caste, communalism or sexuality, and even this is not an exhaustive list. This kind of impact and presence is surely unique. (The only example of the creation of a new field of scholarship due to political and

social ferment would be Marxism, and a comparative assessment of the two would surely be instructive.) However, not even the most ardent supporters of women's studies would claim that it has come anywhere close to achieving the kind of transformative effect on higher education that its founders had imagined.

4. This brings us to the present moment. Instead of simply blaming the patriarchal "malestream" for women's studies' inability to fundamentally transform the field of the social sciences and humanities, it is crucial to ask ourselves whether those in the field of women's studies gave sufficient thought to the concrete mechanisms and interventions necessary for such a task, or whether they remained with a rather overgeneral mandate. It is surely not accidental that the most visible institutional face of women's studies has taken the shape of research centres, whether autonomous or state-aided, and women's studies centres in universities, even though the founding mandate had been against separate "disciplines" or "departments" of women's studies.
5. The present crisis in women's studies has to do with its need to consolidate and ensure itself a future. While battles for recognition have already been won, the question of its institutional reproduction is very much at issue today. Women's Studies has come of age in the 1990s in a vastly altered climate. Higher education in the social sciences and humanities is no longer the most sought after destination for sections of the middle classes as was still the case in the 1970s, and state funding for higher education itself is in jeopardy. The "idealism" in the air a generation ago has been largely replaced by a new realism and a search for security, including the hope for jobs through women's studies. The right wing appears to have stolen the march on us by having identified education as a key site for the production of ideological consent. Isn't it therefore extremely significant that the all but forgotten question of education should have made a comeback during the last decade? Pedagogical issues, classroom politics, curriculum creation and degrees in women's studies – not just diplomas and certificate courses, but even M.A.s and M.Phil.s in Women's Studies are

being debated, planned and advertised. Does this mean that institutionally speaking, women's studies has come full circle?

6. Were we to aim for the resolution of the present crisis simply in terms of ensuring a viable and stable environment for the reproduction of women's studies through teaching and research, however, there is the danger of forgetting some of the most important lessons of the past decade. The most significant event of the 1990s to have made many feminists realise that genuine politics do not just happen at those "grassroots" located far away from the ivory tower of universities, but permeate the very corridors of our most elite institutions of higher education, was the anti-Mandal agitation that rocked many cities, especially in north India. More than anything else it focussed attention on "who" attend our classes in a way that had never happened before. If in the 1970s and 80s, it was believed that a convergence between "action" and "research", between theory and politics, could be achieved by (Hindu upper caste) women activists or researchers, making common cause with the "mass" of poor women "outside", the insufficiencies of such a model are now clearer. What about processes of exclusion from education itself? Why is it that women's studies has been institutionalised at the very apex of the educational system, reachable only by a small minority? The biggest challenge today therefore is to look at our educational system more closely to see how processes of inclusion and exclusion are at work. The Right wing has managed to get ahead by simultaneously targetting our schools and our universities. It is therefore all the more urgent that we draw upon the critical tools available, including those that take us beyond the conventional boundaries of women's studies, to address a broader constituency of men and women, boys and girls. This may well bring us closer – in these dark times – to achieving the mandate that gave birth to women's studies a generation ago.

Women's Studies: The next Decade

Chandrakala Padia

Women's Studies is undoubtedly an intellectual revolution and an academic innovation. It has travelled a long way in exposing deep-seated sexist assumptions and power structures present in literary texts, political treatises and historical documents. To illustrate, Kate Millett and Adrienne Rich systematically unearthed the gender bias in our social system; Dorothy Smith and Nancy Hartsock evolved standpoint epistemologies that revised social sciences; Patricia Hill Collins and bell hooks recovered the subjugated voices of black women and called for the study of mass-mediated form of writing and representation; Trinh T. Minh Ha and Anjaldua reinvented both the social and the literary and reconceived the ways to read the social in the post colonial societies. These are only few illustrations. Women Studies has constructed new systems of knowledge, new methodologies and new perspectives.

However, despite all these achievements Women Studies has to go a long way in fighting with the monopoly and hegemony of other disciplines. Many surveys clearly indicate that many British and North American universities see Women's Studies as peripheral or temporary phenomenon. The subject and its practitioners have to live 'in an outer courtyard, far removed from the real centres of academic power and authority'. Both in India and abroad, women groups and associations have played a significant role in fighting with this situation.

Today, we have before us a two-fold task: a) to critically review the efforts made so far; and b) to redefine our priorities and agenda in that light.

On the basis of my own review and understanding of the subject I would like to submit the following agenda for the coming decade:

Rethinking the economic status of women:

A survey of literature on economic status of women reveals that most of the studies and efforts have measured the economic status of women in terms of employment, nutrition, health and literacy. A paradigm shift is required in this approach.

Women's economic status has to be measured more in terms of ownership of land and its control by them. It is a shame that Eighth five year plan (1990-97) recommendation that 'one of the basic requirements for improving the status of women is to change inheritance laws so that women get an equal share in parental property, inherited or self-acquired' has not been given any serious attention.

We must not forget that the history of women's land rights in South Asia is fraught with contest and struggle at every level – legal, administrative, social and ideological. As a result widows, divorcees, deserted women, rural and landless female labourers suffer from untold miseries. Their pains and sufferings can only be mitigated when they are provided with land and property, which would not only provide them with 'a sense of identity and rootedness within a village', but also 'a basis for continuity of kinship ties and citizenship'.

Hence, the Women's Studies in the coming decade must make this a *central point* of research and action.

Revising the syllabi and curriculum:

In spite of the fact that we could bring a shift in the conventional frame of studying women from the perspective of social status, family, marriage and socialization to examining women as a distinctly different epistemic category, we could not succeed in transferring this approach to other disciplines of arts and social sciences. Traditional meanings of the masculine and the feminine continue to persist along with the dichotomous category of nature-culture, emotional-rational and active-passive. As a result the contradictions which emerge out of her placement in a grossly male defined culture, communication, symbols and moral order against her own distinct bio-psychological foundations are not yet recognized. The university grants commission did recognize this lacunae and has tried to revise the syllabi to some extent in this direction. But a lot has to be done. Gender sensitive material has to be prepared and introduced not only at the level of higher education but also at the primary and the secondary levels. Here, the inputs must come from those 'who have struggled to bring women's voices narratives and worldviews into the academic mainstream.'

Retrieving the Indian:

In the past four decades we have passed through three phases in women studies: legal, social and feminist. In the legal phase the emphasis was on providing equal rights through law and constitution; in the social phase, the focus was to hinder the hindrances to the realization of those rights and also on building capabilities so that she may be treated with dignity; and in the feminist phase the effort is on recognizing plurality, diversity and her distinct identity. Some how this phase has been obsessed with the Western methodology, terminologies and modes of understanding. We indiscriminately borrowed the conceptual categories of the West and tried to read our history through these categories of thought. This has done considerable damage to the understanding of our own reality and intellectual traditions.

Now, it is high time that we must have a sincere study of our own sociological texts; and evolve certain indigenous approaches and methodologies

Our Story: Twenty Years of IAWS

to combat with the forces of subordination and oppression in our own country.

The challenge for Women's Studies in the coming decade is, thus, to come out of marginal theories that are inside the western frame of reference; to take into cognizance the other life forms and worldviews, articulate new positions, and to create new categories for those women who have been left out or pushed out of the existing ones. The challenge is also to recover and examine non-western modes of lives, non-rational realities and indigenous languages with a purpose of creating a new vocabulary.

चलें मिल के

चलें मिल के आओ सब चलें मिल के
कि हम सब, कि हम सब, कि हम सब
भेद भाव को छोड़ें और सब जियें मिल के
कि हम सब भेद भाव को छोड़ें और सब जियें मिल के

भेदभाव कर कर समाज ने नारी को दबाया
खुब तो उससे काम लिया और खुब ही उसे सताया
चलें मिल के ...

पूजा पाठ उपवास करके अपने को मिटाया
परलोक का है नहीं ठिकाना, मिट गई अपनी काया
चलें मिल के ...

औरत दुश्मन औरत की ये अफ्रवाहें फैलाते
एका हो न जाए कहीं बस इससे हैं घबराते
चलें मिल के ...

हममें हिम्मत, हममें ताकत, हममें पूरा दम है
कोई बता दे औरत जाति मर्दों से क्या कम है
चलें मिल के ...

(राजस्थानी लोक गीत 'पल्लो लटके' की धुन पर आधारित)
कमला भसीन

IAWS – A Retrospection

Rameswari Varma

Though I have been a member of IAWS from its early years, my active association with the IAWS is from 1993, when I was the Local Organising Secretary for the VI IAWS Conference at Mysore. IAWS is a unique organization, because it brings under its umbrella, academicians, activists, N.G.O.'s grassroots women's groups, Government and Donor personnel, women media persons and so on. I do not think we have a parallel to this in India in this respect. The steadily increasing membership of the IAWS is indicative of its popularity as well as utility. It also provides a forum for interaction among institutions and organizations working for women's causes and rights.

One of the main activities of the IAWS has been to hold biennial conferences. The IAWS also holds seminars/workshops. The IAWS conferences have covered a wide variety of themes, which have reflected the concerns of the women's movement as well. For eg., in 1993, the theme of the conference was "Dynamics of the New Economic Policy: Implications for women" – (we must remember that the new reforms were introduced in 1991. At that point of time there were large scale discussions and discourses on the NEP's implication for women). Last conference discussed "Women and Public Policy". The X Conference is discussing the question of "Sustaining democracy" – a theme that is important in the present context of fundamentalisms, atmosphere of intolerance and violence etc. Within the Main theme, the IAWS Conferences have also successfully organized sub-themes, which deliberate contemporary events/happenings that have affected women's lives, interests, and rights adversely. Thus the Conference provides a platform for learning, for enlightened discourses, for dissemination of knowledge, for networking and building solidarity among individuals and groups.

By attracting the Best in the field of Women's Studies and Women's Development to contribute and participate in its conferences/seminars/workshops as keynote speakers, sub-theme co-ordinators, panelists etc. the IAWS has contributed substantially to the building up of knowledge in the discipline. So that new comers and new talents may be encouraged to actively participate, IAWS, since recently, has followed the policy of inviting people to offer sub-themes/organize panels etc. This has encouraged many Young people to participate and contribute meaningfully. In order to spread its activities in different regions of India and so that it could be more inclusive, IAWS has been organizing regional workshops/seminars. These have been successful in attracting local talent and knowledge.

Another heartening feature of IAWS is that its membership is spread all over India and has "friends" from other countries as well. The "SAARC" panel in the conference is a special event of the conference. It has been successful in bringing together women activists, N.G.O.s and academicians from our neighbouring countries to discuss common issues of concern.



An important contribution of the IAWS has been the initiation in 1990-91 of the unique cross country study on "Girl Child and Family" – about 22 women's studies centers had participated in this study.

Since last few years the IAWS conferences have also provided a platform for "Cultural Expressions" of women's concerns and women's issues. Several films, plays, posters etc. on women's theme are exhibited. Women entrepreneurs are also encouraged to exhibit their Wares.

An important attraction of the conference is the Book Exhibition. This book exhibition is a real "window" to the latest publications which may not be available to many women scholars and activists from small towns, small universities etc.

One of the 'complaints' about the conference is that some of the papers presented do not measure upto 'excellence' or some may even lack the Necessary Perspectives. There is some truth in this. But then my personal opinion is that this happens because many women in universities and working in NGOs etc are taking up 'women's studies', because they feel it is "meaningful" and because it is "experiential". The rigor in their papers is absent because of a lack of proper guidance. Since IAWS's policy is to be 'inclusive' and not 'exclusive' – It is only proper that such papers also find a place in the conference. One suggestion that came up in this regard is worth a serious thought. The suggestion was that a "Workshop" on the 'State of Art' in Women's Studies and Feminist methodology must be offered in the biennial Conference so that new comers and others interested could be guided and helped to develop proper perspectives.

One administrative problem that IAWS faces is the absence of a permanent office/secretariat to IAWS. This is so because the office bearers keep changing with each Executive Committee and they are spread all over India and therefore there is no permanent office. The Office generally gets situated where the General Secretary is. I feel this problem has two sides to it. While it is true that having an office helps maintaining records continuity and IAWS's historical legacies etc., not having a permanent office lends a kind of 'fluidity' and 'tentativeness'. Hence it creates a kind of 'All India' image to the association.

Our Story: Twenty Years of IAWS

Though the membership is spread all over India, it is concentrated more in certain states – those where conferences have been held previously. The lesson is that in order to have more members in all states, conferences have to be held in those states where we have not held it so far.

Though in each conference "very good" papers also get presented IAWS has not been successful in editing and publishing conference volumes. Can something be done about this in the future?

Aims and objectives of IAWS are many, but it is concentrating on Biennial Conferences and some Seminars/Workshops. Can IAWS encourage/initiate more action research on the lines of 'Girl child and Family'. The IAWS has this unique location of having members from University Women's Studies Centers and Research Institutes and N.G.O.s. It can easily liason with Funding Agencies, which gives it a unique advantage for initiating/sponsoring research.

Earlier the IAWS President was also an ex-officio member of the U.G.C. standing Committee on Women's Studies. This practice helped to build a bridge between the University system and IAWS. I am afraid that this practice has been discontinued – thus, an important link is lost.

Though there is a large body of membership, very few attend the general body meeting. I wish more members would take active interest in the association and guide the IAWS to more years of Glory and Achievements.

■ ■

Mapping the Themes in the IAWS Conferences: A Journey Through the Last Two Decades

Anagha Tambe

It is the journey from the review of syllabi in the first national conference on women's studies in 1981, to the need felt in 2002 to discuss 'the doing of women's studies' in the tenth conference, that we would try to trace. We would attempt to chart out the thematic discussions at the nine odd IAWS conferences as articulated in the reports of the conferences. With the shifting contexts, challenges and pressures of the new millennium, looking back at the journey of the last two decades of the IAWS conferences seems necessary at this point. This recapitulation of earlier analyses, critiques and strategies examined in the various sub-themes would probably enable to have a more nuanced understanding of the question. This recapitulation is attempted through a content analysis of the sub-themes (called workshops in the first two conferences) floated in the different conferences. We have tried to categorize the themes in order to see how a particular theme is examined differently at different points of history. This categorization is of course overlapping as a theme could be marked for more than one category. One is also aware that there are several gaps in the way a theme is chalked out by the coordinator, worked out in the conference abstracts and actually discussed and reported in the sub-theme reports. Within these limitations, it is possible to see the themes as forming around the following categories:

- 1) Work and Economic Issues, 2) Development and Environmental Issues, 3) State, Policies and Legal Provisions, 4) Political Participation and Women's Struggles, 5) Family, Household and Issues of Demography, 6) Education and Knowledge System, 7) Culture, Religion, Media and Literature, 8) Health and Reproduction, 9) Question of Violence.

It would be interesting to trace the career of one single theme-Work and Economic Issues, which has been a recurring theme.

In the first decade of the 1980s, with the gaping hiatus between the dream of modernity and development in the post independence India, and the reality of women's continuing subordination as revealed through the CSWI report, there was an examination of questions of survival and struggle and a concern to bring together academicians, government policy makers and implementers on these issues. This pointed out to the need to establish women's studies as an academic concern and to maintain its link with women's movement. The first national conference on women's studies was convened to initiate the incorporation of women's experiences and roles in academic studies, research and curricula. Thus the effort was to underline women's studies as a serious area of academic concern. On the theme of women and work it questioned the very conception of work, sexual division of labour and 'non-working female population'. The problem of categorization, computation and remuneration of different sorts of women's work- house work, unpaid family labour, wage work- was examined in the wider context of class. Features of exploitation common to all women and those related to women of specific castes and classes were simultaneously highlighted.

The second conference outlined its aim as the consolidation of knowledge already available, with in depth discussion on a few limited areas including Women, Work and Employment. Under this theme, the attitude to women's work as secondary and the distinction between women's work within and outside home were questioned, pointing out its link to caste and class considerations. The patterns and

factors underlying the changes in rural women's work were also examined linking it with forms of organization of production. Through the micro studies, problems of women workers were highlighted and the apathy of the trade unions noted. The failure of special programmes for women of the government and the significance of women's organization was underlined. The categorization of work and worker in the census was also an important issue for discussion.

The third conference problematized women's struggles and sought to look at its relationship with women's research. In this conference the role of women in struggles in agriculture, industry, informal sector and professions was discussed in details as was the question of aligning of gender issues in it. The historical studies on the construction of the images of peasant women as sexual and militant persons revealed the need of writing oral history of women in various struggles.

The fourth conference sought to understand the social context of gender inequalities within the family and the outside. It highlighted the processes by which women and their work, within and outside the household was moulded to suit the need of capitalism by separating household from economic activities. The impact of technological change – in the domestic, agricultural and fishing industry and its implications for women's work were outlined.

The next decade was marked by two major incidents – the Shahbano and Roopkanwar case – which drew attention to the links between gender and community. The rising forces of communalism and globalization in the decade of 1990s influenced the concerns of women's studies in a major way. This led to an investigation of issues of religion and culture, which were previously not dealt, as there was overwhelming preoccupation with economic matters. The fifth conference engaged with the issues of religion, culture and politics in the context of weakening and reversing of women's rights. The significant links between culture and economy-cultural values, standard perceptions of women's role in the development programmes and women's role in economy came to be traced. This understanding was further nuanced by focusing on regional economies and the ways in which they shaped the

characteristics of cultural practices like dowry, bride price.

The sixth conference examined the effects of Structural Adjustment Programme and the New Economic Policy on various aspects of women's lives including work, employment and food security. It was now apparent that varied data had been collected through various micro studies of women workers in different sectors –agriculture, prawns processing, rag-picking, jewellery industry to name a few.

The fifteen years of struggle had yielded some noticeable changes, some failures, yet there was hope and many gray areas of complexity and confusion had been opened up. This called for a stock taking of feminist debates and alternative policies and also the development of future vision and strategies. With this in mind, the seventh conference not only assessed the changes in women's work but also discussed ways to support women workers, especially those in the unprotected zones. Discussions underlined the need to develop studied responses to globalization.

The eighth conference sought to take these challenges to women's studies further, highlighting the issues of survival and sovereignty. It examined the issue of women's work by investigating into the challenge of food insecurity among various categories of people. It examined how changing entitlements to Public Distribution System on one hand and export oriented diversification on the other influenced women's work. The need to encourage local initiatives like grain banks was also underlined.

The ninth conference took up the exercise of assessments of trends in public policies as the state seemed to be continuing on its path of retreat. Interestingly this conference talked of the role of government initiatives in promoting women entrepreneurs in small scale sector and discussed the lacunae in the implementation process.

This brief review marks at least following trends regarding the concerns of women's studies and women's movement about women's work. Firstly, with CSWI report, there was an engagement in the field of development and an effort to make visible the actual work done by women within the

household, to some extent at the methodological and conceptual level. In 1990s as the issues of culture became critical, there was a significant contribution in terms of an analysis of women's work not only in the context of political economy but that of household, kinship and cultural patterns as well. The questioning of the development policy had also led to an analysis of the environmental issues and an inquiry into the alternative paradigms of development. Secondly, women's labour force participation, especially in the unorganized sector was documented extensively and analyzed through several studies of women workers in a wide range of fields. In the last decade, there were extensive micro studies assessing the impact of globalization on women's work. However these studies remained more or less descriptive, with little empirical rigour. Thirdly, the relationship between women's studies and women's movement has been quite uneasy. Initially there were many academic activists, mainly

coming from the left circles, questioning the notion of work and development. But there emerged a kind of hierarchy on the basis of experience and theoretical rigour and a chasm between them the agenda of the women's movement and the focus of women's studies started sharpening.

Thus, the history of the interactions between women's studies and women's movement is not a unilinear but a chequered history. The debate over distinction/relationship between theory/research/women's studies and practice/activism/women's movement has repeatedly appeared in the IAWS conferences. The question of autonomous women's organizations and their relationship with the broader democratic movements and presently the debates around the nongovernmental organizations dealing with women's issues has also been a recurring theme. These questions continue in the concerns of the present.

Table 1: About the IAWS Conferences

The Main Theme	Plenary Sessions/Workshops
First National Conference 1981, Mumbai	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of Syllabi
Second National Conference 1984, Trivendrum on 'Gender Justice'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender Justice • The Position of Women in Kerala
Third National Conference 1986, Chandigarh on 'Women's Struggles and Movements'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Relevance of Women's Studies in the Indian Context • Alternative Perspectives on Women's Roles in Development • Problems of Women in Punjab
Fourth National Conference 1989, Waltair on 'Rural Women: Poverty, Survival and Struggle for Change'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On Feminism and Being a Feminist • Over a Decade of Research Policy and Activist Intervention: Achievement, Limitations and Future Prospects • Women in Andhra
Fifth National Conference 1991, Calcutta on 'Religion, Culture and Politics'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevance of the Theme • The Emerging Self-Identity • Women in West Bengal • Comparative Perspectives
Sixth National Conference 1993, Mysore on 'The Dynamic of the New Economic Policy'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women and development in Karnataka • Violence against women • Women in SAARC Countries

The Main Theme

Seventh National Conference 1995, Jaipur on 'Looking Forward, Looking Back: In Search of Feminist Visions, Alternative Paradigms and Practices'

Eighth National Conference 1998, Pune on 'Survival and Sovereignty: Challenges to Women's Studies'

Ninth National Conference 2000, Hyderabad on 'Women's Perspectives on Public Policy'

Plenary Sessions/Workshops

- Voices of Resistance and Struggle
- Rajasthan State Panel
- Women's Visions and Strategies for a Peaceful and Democratic South Asia
- Resurgent Patriarchie

- Stable Livelihoods v/s Pursuit of Profit: Micro and Macro Issues Related to Globalization and Food Security
- Economy and Ecology
- Our Households, Ourselves: Bodies, Subsistence and Resources
- Culture and Resistance

- Women's Perspectives on Public Policy: Incomplete or Lost Agenda
- Tribal Issues and the Women's Movement
- Moving Beyond Wombs: Foregrounding Women's Health Agenda
- Reservation Policies and the Women's Movement
- Censorship and Silence: Perspectives on the Freedom of Expression

Table 2: Categorization of the sub-themes appeared in the nine IAWS conferences (1981 – 2000)

(The number in the bracket indicates the number of the conference)

Work and Economic Issues

- Women and Work (1)
- Concept of the worker (2)
- Caste, class and attitudes to women's work (2)
- Rural women, work and employment (2)
- Women in Industry (2)
- Women's organisations, income and employment generation (2)
- Women in agrarian struggles (3)
- Women and the Industrial working class movement (3)
- Women, informal sector and forms of struggle (3)
- Professional women's struggles (3)
- Technological Change, Labour Processes and Employment (4)
- Religion, Culture and Politics: The economic context (5)
- Work, employment and food security (6)
- Work and workers** (7)
- Women, work and resistance (8)
- Women in business (9)

Development and Environmental Issues

- Women and Development (1)
- Access to Productive Resources and the social organisation of production (4)
- Environmental Degradation and Regeneration (4)
- Natural Resources and the Environment (6)
- Women – centred natural resource management: Land, Water and Energy (7)

	Water and forest (8)
	Land alienation and displacement (8)
	Food security and entitlements (8)
	Meeting the evolutionary, cultural and ethical needs of communities (9)
	Engendering new and emerging community rights and responsibilities in natural resource management (9)
State, Policies and Legal Provisions	Women and Law (1)
	Constitutional equality and patriarchy (2)
	Woman and Her Body (2)
	Women and Family Law (2)
	Government policies and programmes: politics and economic Perspectives (4)
	Laws implementation and processes of legal change (4)
	State policies and their implications (5)
	Religion, Culture and politics: the impact of women's rights and legal system (5)
	State and sharing of political space (8)
	Public policy and people in prostitution and sex work (9)
Political Participation and Women's Struggles	Women's Institutions and Organisations (1)
	20th century movements for freedom from colonial rule and religio-cultural protest movements from earlier periods (2)
	Peasant/tribal/workers' movement (2)
	Participation in formal politics (2)
	Concepts (2)
	Women in youth and students struggles in India (3)
	Women and Indian nationalism (3)
	Regional and Sectional movements and women's rights (3)
	Ideology, political parties and groups and the women's question in post independence India (3)
	Political Institutions, Structures and Processes (4)
	Collective struggle for change (4)
	Political use of religious/cultural idioms (5)
	Political structures and processes (6)
	Women, political participation and politics of organizing (7)
	Women's experience in panchayats (9)
	Mobilizing for change: possibilities and challenges (9)
Family, Household and Issues of Demography	Family survival mechanisms (4)
	Family and Socialization (5)
	The demographic context and patterns of women's relationship to religion, culture and politics (5)
	Family and Social Security (6)
	Family and Women's sexuality (7)
	Intra-household access to resources (8)
Education and Knowledge Systems	Women and Education (1)
	Role of Science and Technology (1)
	Women's struggles for education with special reference to weaker sections and minorities (3)

Educational and Socialization: The formal, non-formal and informal processes (4)
The role of Education in religion, culture and politics and gender justice (5)
Creation and dissemination of knowledge and knowledge systems (7)

Culture, Media, Literature and Religion

Women and Literature (1)
Women and Media (1)
Religion, secularism and women's rights (3)
Sexist bias in media (3)
Ideology, Culture and Politics (4)
Mass-media (5)
Religious organisations and institutions, fundamentalism and reformism (5)
Education, Culture and Media (6)
Women and media (7)
Culture, Identity and Women's rights : Exploring new directions in feminist praxis (7)
Women's writings: Redefinitions, Aesthetics and future visions (7)
Culture, representations and movements (8)
Globalisation and Culture (8)

Health and Reproduction

Women and Health (1)
Women's struggles for health and nutrition with emphasis on weaker sections and minorities (3)
Health, Sexuality and Reproduction (4)
Health and Population (6)
Women and Health (7)
Women's autonomy and reproduction (8)

Question of Violence

Women and violence (3)
Gender and Violence: Role of state, community and family (4)
Violence and the community (6)
Alcoholism and Drug abuse (6)
Violence against women (8)
Gender, conflict and political violence (9)
Violence against women (9)

When Feminists Network: IAWS Newsletter in the Last Decade

Swati Dyahadroy

IAWS – the first all India level association of women’s studies was established in 1982. This was a forum for interaction amongst individuals, institutions and organisations engaged in teaching, research or action for women’s development. It also aimed at developing a network for collection of information relating to teaching, research and action programmes to enrich both women’s studies and women’s movement. Towards this purpose, various activities like national and regional level conferences, seminars, formation of working groups, publication and dissemination came to be organised. The IAWS also aimed at functioning as a pressure group. Within a short period of time the all India network was established. The need for a forum for dialogue and sharing had come to be expressed by members.

Thus the idea of a newsletter was initiated and despite the lack of infrastructure and regular funding, the IAWS took a decision to publish its newsletter.

This article is a modest effort at analysing the content of the newsletters brought out by IAWS¹. In this analysis, we begin with what the newsletter begins with – the editorial. Most often, the editorship changes biannually and hence there have been a good representation from different regions in India. This is not a matter of the representation of various regions alone but also of tracing the regional differences in our mapping of gender issues.

The following chart will give us a review of the significant themes that appeared in the Newsletter.

Year	Region of Editorial Board	Theme
January 1986	Delhi	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) About IAWS 2) Report: a) Nairobi Conference 3) Women and Education
May 1986		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Muslim Women's Act- Discussion and Resolution 2) Debate – a) Male Feminists? b) Women Culture and Communication 3) Panel in World Sociological Conference
December 1986		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Report – 3rd IAWS Conference in Chandigarh – Sub themes and Plenary 2) Resolutions passed in the Conference 3) An Appeal – To Women in Punjab
September 1987		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Special Efforts: Regional Co-ordinators for the Newsletter 2) Report: Two Task Forces on the issue of a)The National Policy on Education and its Implication for Women, b) Implication of NPE for Science and Technology for Women 3) Women, Law and Development

1 Some issues are missing in this review.

Year	Region of Editorial Board	Theme
June 1988		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Reports: a) Seminar on Women and Violence, b) ICSSR Workshop on Women's Studies, c) Nari Muktee Sangharsha Sammelan 2) Announcement: Fourth national Conference of IAWS 3) About Women and Women's Studies
December 1988	Varanasi	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Discussion on Government Document: a) NPP for Women – 1988-2000AD 2) Information – UGC sponsored Women's Studies Centres 3) Report – International Conference on Agricultural Technologies for Farm Women
March 1989		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Report: 4th National Conference of IAWS
July 1989		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Information: Workshops and Seminars Organised in various parts of India 2) Reports: a) Women Science and Technology, b) Sub-theme in All India Sociological Conference 3) Announcement: NARY Conference on Women
December 1990		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Women and Literacy and work 2) News from Women's Studies and Women's Movement Reports: a) Seminar on Women's Development and Literacy, b) International Seminar on Feminism across Cultures, c) National Commission on Women
January 1991 Decade Special Issue	Maharashtra	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) History of IAWS 2) Memoriam: Madhuri Shah 3) Women's Studies Women's Movement at global and National Level
June 1991		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Global News of Women's Studies and Women's Movement: a) Silver Anniversary of national Organisation of Women, b) AWID International Forum on Women and Development 2) Reports: a) Women Reach Half the Sky – 4th National Conference on Women's movement in India, b) Research Project on Girl Child and the Family 3) Appeals: a) From Amnesty International action against ill treatment to women by Police and government Officials, b) By Forum for Women and Politics.
December 1991		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Report: Sub themes and Plenary in 5th National Conference 2) Resolutions passed in the Conference
July 1996	Delhi	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Review Of IAWS activities for the period of Dec 1993 to July 1996 2) Introduction of New Executive Committee of IAWS 3) Report: 7th National Conference of IAWS
Winter 1996	West Bengal	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Note from the Secretary 2) Announcements: a) Theme for the Regional Conferences – Survival and Sovereignty, b) Uniform Inequality? 3) Reports: a) Seminar on In Defense of Witches, b) networking in Maitree, c) Workshop on Songs Skit and Poster Politics, d) Seminar on Beauty Bazars

Year	Region of Editorial Board	Theme
Summer 1997		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Women, Resources and New Economic Policy, 2) On the IX Plan 3) Women, media and Internet
Winter 1997		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Themes for the 8th National Conference of IAWS 2) Era of Silence or Struggle
Autumn 1998	Maharashtra	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Introduction of New Executive Committee of IAWS 2) Reports: a) 8th National Conference of IAWS, b) Fact Finding Committee on Urban Displacement in Baroda 3) Announcement: Certificate Course in Women's Studies
Winter 1998		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Report: National Consultation on Sexual Harassment on University Campus 2) Note – On Women and Regional Histories 3) News from Regions – Maharashtra Stree Abhyas Vyaspeeth
Summer 1999		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Sexual Harassment on University Campus 2) Announcement: 9th National Conference of IAWS
November 2000	Maharashtra	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Introduction of New Executive Committee of IAWS 2) Reports: a) Interim Narrative Report of the IAWS, b) 9th National Conference organise by IAWS, c) Women and Mental Health, d) Global March 2000 3) Women and Population Policy
April 2001		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Presidential Address 2) Issue of Violence: Against Young Girls and Women 3) Reports: a) The Impact of Globalisation on Women's Lives, b) Seminar on Women's Studies
September 2001		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Globalisation in the context of Gender and Caste 2) Selected Bibliography on the theme 3) Reports: a) Crimes of Hate, Conspiracy of Silence: A report by Amnesty International, b) Seminar on Globalisation and Women's Identity in Orissa c) Globalisation, Identity Politics and Rising Violence
January 2002		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Women and Politics: a) Women in Panchayat Raj b) Empowerment of Women, c) Debate on 33% Reservation 2) Selected Bibliography on Women and Politics 3) Announcement: Sub theme Proposals for 10th National Conference
July 2002		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Women and Mental Health: a) Violence and Mental Health, b) Sexual Harassment and Mental Health, c) Communalism and Mental Health 2) Information: a) Organisations working on the issue at national and International level, b) Groups Working with Children on the issue of Child sexual abuse 3) Reports: a) Conference on State, Civil Society and women's Empowerment, b) National Seminar on Shakti: From Infringement to Empowerment, c) Interdisciplinary and the Question of Women's Studies

The above table suggests that the IAWS newsletter reflected the concerns of the women's movement and has thankfully avoided falling into a trap of the esoteric. The shifting of editorial boards across regions and reports from the regional meetings and conferences has expanded the networking beyond the premier centres.

The content analysis of the editorials shows that through the editorial various contemporary issues like female infanticide, the sexual harassment case at Jalgaon, repressive laws against women, the impact of globalisation, the threat of increasing violence and communal violence came to be discussed. Most importantly a constant dialogue, through the newsletter has been maintained by giving information about membership and activities of the IAWS. Sometimes through the editorials, issues like the place of women's studies in academics and the meaning of the terms used in feminist theorisation were discussed. In the editorial the balance has been maintained between the sharing of the routine organisational matters and addressing some important concerns of the women's movement and the women's studies.

The next important part of the newsletter is announcements and reports of various workshops, conferences held in different parts of India as well as at International level like the Nairobi and Beijing conferences. The review of the reports of the seminars shows the diversity of themes addressed in national as well as at regional level conferences. The themes of the conferences include discussions on women and development, violence, education, agriculture, law, globalisation, mental health, the role of women in freedom struggle, empowerment of women, women writings in Telgu, women's studies and mainstream academics, beauty contest, uniform civil code among others. The reports not only serve the purpose of giving information about the major events organised but also help researchers to locate the different perspectives on the issue. Through these reports, it was possible for researchers to locate the resource centres for their areas of research. Very importantly the Newsletters published the detailed reports of the biannual conference organised by IAWS².

From 1996-1997, the IAWS executive committee decided to organise a series of regional workshops, which would help to build the organisation as also the activist endeavors. Survival and Sovereignty was the theme announced for the year 1996- 1997. This was an effort to engage the work of the IAWS in the overall impact of globalisation both economic and cultural, and the general crisis of democracy. The proposals for this were invited from different regions of India namely Northeast, North, East, West and south. The response to this was overwhelming and different themes and perspectives emerged from those. Considering the response and the importance of having regional seminar the practice continued. The themes announced were Regional Histories (1998-1999), and Gender and globalisation for the year 2000-2002. The following chart will give us a map of the themes and the regions where the conference was held.

Survival and Sovereignty 1996- 1997

- a) New Economic Policy and Women's Control over Resources – Tamil Nadu
- b) Summer School in Women's Studies – Hyderabad
- c) Identifying Local Women's Issues – Thiruvanthapuram
- d) Food Security and Women's Access to Natural Resources – Mumbai
- e) Preparation of Reading Material – Pune
- f) Eastern Region perspective for the 9th Plan – Calcutta

Regional Histories Seminar 1998-99

- a) In search of pasts? History, Women's Movement and Women's Studies – Calcutta
- b) Analyses of the Impact of process of assimilation in the North East – North East
- c) Women in History: A Regional perspective from Western India – Mumbai
- d) Southern Regional Seminar – Women's space in Southern Histories – Hyderabad

2 The detail analysis of this has been done in another article by Anagha Tambe so the themes and other details are not mentioned here.

Globalisation and Gender Question 2000-2002

- a) The impact of Globalisation on Women's lives – Jharkhand
- b) Globalisation, Identity Politics and Rising Violence – Madurai
- c) State, Civil Society and Women's Empowerment – Bangalore

Along with the reports of the conferences, the editorial boards have managed to incorporate some studied articles in the newsletter. Through these articles the debates and positions on themes such as men-feminists, Muslim Women's Protection Bill, crimes against women were articulated. Women's studies, the National Perspective Plan, Shramashakti report, international restructuring in industries and services, a campaign for freedom from sexual violence, women and Internet, the political participation of women, mental health, violence against young girls, globalisation and various other themes came to be addressed.

An important aspect of the newsletter is also the sharing of the moments of joy, and the pain of loss of some of the committed voices in women's studies and the women's movement. The review of the newsletters highlights the enthusiasm and innovations of the editorial boards. Giving space to creative writing, using sketches, letters to editors, photo features and inviting people as guest editors to bring out special issues on the specific themes are only a few examples of this enthusiasm. A significant innovation was that of having regional coordinators of IAWS newsletters- who collated the information on the various activities in the field of women's studies in the concerned regions.

Review of the newsletters gives us a picture of the various activities of the IAWS; the reports help to map the themes of discussion in women's studies and the announcements of the seminars and fellowships- reveal the new vistas in Women's Studies. To conclude, one could say that as always, those working in women's studies and women's movements bring their politically committed energies to the newsletter. Thus, the newsletter becomes more than a collection of reports – it becomes a medium for meaningful communication.



Rajasthan Kisan Sanghatana

Women's Studies and the Women's Movement in the last decade of the Twentieth Century

Irina Sen

Women's Studies and the Women's Movement share many things in common, yet have a somewhat difficult relationship today.

In many ways, women's studies owes its existence to the women's movement, and to the demand that was created from among scholars who were part of the women's movement that women's issues be given a more central position and visibility in conceptualizing politics and development. The pioneering 'Towards Equality' report of the late seventies set the tone for many of the developments that were to follow, for defining the parameters of many of our intellectual queries on the women's question in India, for identifying gaps in our data systems that needed to be filled. It is important today to recall the context in which this report was produced. The political restlessness of the late sixties and early seventies, the upsurge of mass movements involving large numbers of young people like the JP movement in Bihar, the ferment in the left politics in the country, large scale participation of women in the mass struggles of the period, and the upsurge of what came to be known as the autonomous women's movement all combined to produce a watershed in the intellectual and political spaces pertaining to women.

An extremely fruitful period followed, both for the women's movement and for women's studies in the country. Out of this ferment was born Women's Studies as an academic discipline, and the Indian Association for Women's Studies (IAWS) with a mandate to take this new discipline forward. The subsequent growth of the new discipline was carefully mothered in the initial years by many of our mother figures and under the pressure of the movement and constant lobbying by the IAWS, departments and centres of Women's Studies were

begun at many Indian Universities in the eighties and nineties. The women's movement too continued to grow and consolidate itself, and women's issues had managed to find a place in the agendas of major mainstream political parties as well as other mass movements. By the decade of the nineties, some of the demands raised by the women's movement had become part of the common sense of progressive political discourse.

Why then do we characterize the relationship between women's studies and women's movement as a troubled one today? There are many reasons for this. Firstly, of course, there is the general regression in our political life and the major spread of forces of communal politics as well as globalization. In the absence of a progressive political agenda that has general legitimacy, many of the fundamentalist formations have managed to acquire large mass followings among women. Similarly, almost all the mainstream political parties have acceded to the demands of a globalized world order to a greater or lesser extent. These have been major setbacks for the secular women's movement including the role that the movement was able to play as an anchor to the discipline of women's studies.

One of the demands that many of us made during the eighties and even the nineties was for the mainstreaming of women's issues in development. Today, however, we are faced with the situation in which gender trainings, women's development policies etc have been woven into the general agenda of development to a greater extent than before. Yet we often feel that the professional 'women's development worker' has a somewhat narrow understanding and lacks a comprehensive vision of the politics of gender and women. In a similar way, many of us are disturbed about the quality of the

research coming out from many of the women's studies centers today. There can be no denying that while some of the academic work coming out of University and other research centers has been of excellent quality, with the growth in numbers of centers and their staff, much of the work that appears within this rubric only serves to dilute and trivialize the issues involved. Many of the second generation women's studies academics have no connection with the movement and very little understanding of what it represented.

A large part of the responsibility for this rests with the present state of the women's movement itself. Increasing appropriation of the movement spaces by the state structures and NGOs acting in lieu of the state, the entry of international funding into women's organizations in a major way, the confusion in secular democratic politics- all these have left the movement in a shaky condition. The women's movement was a political articulation against structures of domination at the best of times. If the politics is taken out of the articulation, only the shell remains. It is important today for us all to realize this, and to recognize the forces of patriarchal globalization that subordinate large numbers of women in the world. Only then will we be able to regroup our forces, seek out our allies, and provide necessary direction to a sister stream like women's studies.

||



Women's Studies and Women's Movement: Resonating Voices or Discordant Notes?

Veena Poonacha

Women's Studies programmes developed (within and outside the University system) as the academic arm of the women's movement in the 1970s to prevent the collective amnesia of patriarchal societies about women's lived realities and struggles. For this process of forgetting women's historical struggles means that each generation of women will have to re-invent their battles. Specifically these programmes were expected to document and preserve women's knowledge, make visible women's lived experiences, and conduct research on social structures/processes that maintain the *status quo*.

The Growth of Women's Studies Research and Teaching Programmes

In India, the Research Centre for Women's Studies (RCWS), SNDT Women's University, Mumbai, pioneered the entry of Women's Studies in universities. One of the underlying impulses of its establishment in 1974 was the insight that Dr. Neera Desai, its founder-Director, gained as the member of the National Committee on the Status of Women. Set-up by the Government of India to enquire into the status of women, the Committee's report (i.e., the *Towards Equality Report*, 1974), showed far beyond the most pessimistic predictions the dismal reality of women's lives.

Responding to these findings, the Government of India drew up the *Draft Plan of Action*. The research component of the Plan was expected to uncover the social structures/processes that hamper gender justice in the country. Taking up the challenge, the Indian Council of Social Science Research pioneered Women's Studies research to bridge the existing knowledge gaps on women's status and to develop intervention strategies. In the 1980s, the University

Grants Commission established Women's Studies Centres/Cells within the University system to break the academic isolation of higher education through research, teaching and extension.

Theoretical Challenges for Women's Studies

The impetus for Women's Studies theorizing cannot be restricted to these official efforts. It rose out of the various consciousness-raising sessions of the autonomous women's movement, wherein women attempted to conceptualize and validate their experiences. From the outset, Women's Studies scholarship posed a challenge to mainstream theories. It criticized the pretensions of 'grand' theories and demonstrated that the universal claims underlying such theories were deceptive and based on false abstractions. This critique of 'grand' theories translated itself to the emphasis on political action, avoidance of abstract theorizing, based on an understanding of the experiential basis of knowledge.

Over the years, Women's Studies scholarship has developed in multiple and different directions. In the 1970s, Women's Studies theorizing sought to understand the roots of women's subordination. Was it biologically ordained or rooted in the process of gender socialization? What was the economic basis of women's subordination and sexual division of work? Could women's subordination be traced to production or reproduction systems? The emerging feminist voices, because of their different ideological and theoretical underpinnings, came up with different explanations. Broadly it identified the prevailing production, reproduction and sexual relationships as the foundational basis of women's inequalities.

During this period, feminist political action sought to ensure better legal protections for women and stringent implementation of law while dealing with gender specific crimes of rape, domestic violence and dowry-deaths; it also aimed at enabling women to access the existing goods and services in society. The political confrontations of the women's movement aimed at making the state more accountable for the welfare of women. The dilemma for feminists was the basis on which to ground their political action: if they asked for gender neutral laws/social policies on the ground that women were the same as men, the prevailing socio-economic inequalities would prevent them from realizing the formal equality granted in the Indian Constitution and in the various instruments of human rights; if they asked for special protections on the basis of women's differences, the existing gender roles would be justified.

In the 1980s, feminist theorizing increasingly questioned the androgynous model of human nature; it aimed at recovering women's culture and critiqued masculine ideology by pointing to the interconnections between women's subordination and the destruction of the environment. These ideas infused the various environmental, peace and anti-nuke movements across the world. This rich variety of feminist thought percolated into art, culture, religion and literature to resonate in multiple voices. Women of colour and from developing countries pointed to the ways in which race, class and gender intersected in complex ways to modify their lives. These ideas breached the private/public, mind/body, nature/culture divide in western theorizing. It indicated that the habit of thinking in hierarchical binary opposites was responsible for the 'othering' of women, races and ethnic minorities.

Paradoxically these developments also challenged the foundational assumptions of feminist thought of the 1970s. Giving up the over-generalizing and over-ambitious models of liberal, radical and Marxist/Socialist feminist analysis, Women's Studies scholarship opted for an analysis of the local, culturally specific and particular. Drawing closer to the post-structural/postmodern positions, these studies became deconstructive. Seeking to destabilize, subvert and reverse some of the hierarchical binary oppositions (including those implicating sex and

gender) prevailing in the early feminist thought, these studies questioned the overconfident distinction of the earlier decade between sex and gender identities.

Politics of the Women's Movement

The politics of the women's movement has sought to dismantle state patriarchy by addressing poverty and development issues from the standpoint of women. In its confrontations in India, feminists noticed the inconsistencies in the responses of the state to gender justice. The state was quick to enact stringent amendments to the existing laws against rape and dowry deaths and legislate against amniocentesis; yet it also succumbed to political expediency and vacillated about justice for women in the Shah Bano (1985) and the Roop Kanwar Sati (1987) incidents. At the same time, the state introduced progressive policies for women, leading to the mainstreaming of gender issues. The question is has the support accorded to women's empowerment, strengthened or subverted the feminist vision of gender equality?

The question is important in the context of the changed socio-economic and political realities. The deification of free market economies since the 1990s has eroded the regulatory powers of the state; it has also undermined the notions of a welfare state, resulting in the whittling down of the social sector spending. The women's movement is thus confronted, on the one hand, with the overwhelming poverty of local communities, undermining of people's livelihood rights and the destruction of the environment; on the other, with the rising religious fundamentalism and backlash against women. Grappling with these diverse factors, feminist politics is in flux: past strategies aimed at the state are ineffective, as an unresponsive state no longer maintains the fiction of fairness and justice. Violence against women is increasing. The recent genocide in Gujarat for instance particularly attacked women and children. There is thus a need for new political strategies and theories.

The Implications of the Growing Divide between Theory and Praxis

Therefore, how effectively will Women's Studies scholarship fulfill its role and strengthen the feminist action? Feminist scholarship has acquired a degree of acceptance in the academia. Increasingly influenced by post-modern thought, the current Women's Studies scholarship has questioned the previously held definitions of power/powerless, sexuality and fixed gender identities. The challenge to 'grand' theories has developed a rich understanding of the heterogeneity of human experiences. Nonetheless the fear is, whether this legitimate critiquing of the shortfalls of the theories of the 1970s undermined the political vision of feminism's original project? Has the relativist and experiential basis of knowledge undermine the goal of accurate and systematic knowledge? And has the focus on historical heterogeneity obscured the traditional male privilege in the construction of knowledge?

Furthermore, can feminist politics survive the theoretical onslaught on the assumption of a fixed female identity? And without a shared vision of political change, can the movement oppose the current backlash against women? Thus by failing to acknowledge the legacy of the earlier feminist struggles, are the feminist of the present generation doomed to reinvent their battles? And how far has Women's Studies programmes fulfilled its role as the repository of women's knowledge?

■ ■



Karen Haydock

Relationship of Women's Studies and Women's Movement (1992-2002)

Dr. Vibhuti Patel

Close ties between women's studies (WS) and women's movement (WM) have resulted into consolidation of women's concerns in the decision-making bodies at every level. During the last decade, women's studies centres have come up in most of the states and union territories in our country. Women's rights activists have either joined these centres as researchers or teachers/trainers or become members of consultative committees/advisory boards/boards of studies of women's studies centres. At the same time, women's studies scholars act as full members/sympathisers/evaluators of the women's rights groups.

Mutual support and consistent collaboration

between WS and WM have helped women's agency to subvert patriarchal power structures in the state, civil society and the educational institutions. Constant interaction between theory and praxis, narrative style in rapid appraisal of the situation, analytical vision, day-to-day handling of reality and strategic thinking have been marked features of healthy relationship between WS and WM. Use of modern research and training methods, mass communication network and conscientisation techniques are needed both, in the activities of WM and WS for advocacy and policy intervention.

Role of IAWS in building bridges: In 1991, when structural adjustment policies were introduced in our country, women's movement mobilised public opinion against its negative implications for women. IAWS chose the same theme for its national conference in 1993. Micro and macro level researches, data base, case studies of different projects provided by the WS scholars proved to be extremely useful for advocacy work of the women's movement on socio economic implications of economic liberalisation and globalisation on Indian women. As a result of this joint effort, memorandum was given to the finance minister to provide safety net

to safeguard women's economic interests in the context of new economic policy.

Activities for Communal Harmony: After nationwide communal riots in 1992, women's movement has focussed on promoting secular humanist perspective in the civil society and in the state apparatus. Women's studies have criticized communalisation of the education system. Audio-visual material prepared by women's movement has been used by women's studies in their curricular and co-curricular activities. But most of the WS centres have failed to introduce a module on communal harmony in their gender training programmes. Relief work among victims of 1992-93 riots and the recent riots in Gujarat has been done by both, WM and WS centres.

Reservation of Women in the Panchayati Raj

Institution: Women's movement activists started providing training of elected women representatives in the local self-government bodies in 1993. It included explanation of Panchayati Raj bill in a non-jargon free language, budgetary allocation for women's development; maintenance of accounts, special needs of female-headed households. The task is enormous. Only in the state of Maharashtra, there are 100,000 women elected representatives. At present, Maharashtra Association of Women's studies and Social Work Institutions in Bombay are playing crucial role in training elected women representatives.

Supreme court Directive of Sexual Harassment at Workplace, 1994:

After 10 years of militant campaign and judicial activism, WM could pressurize the Supreme Court of India to provide Directive on Sexual harassment at workplace. All women's studies centres, under the leadership of 1200 members of IAWS have conducted research on the

subject that has been extremely useful to make a case in favour of setting up of a cell to provide socio-legal redress to women victims of sexual harassment at workplace, educational institutions, shelter homes and prisons.

CEDAW Convention: The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women adopted in the Beijing Conference, 1995 of the United Nations has proved to be a powerful tool for WM and WS for establishing universal standards for women's rights to facilitate the agency of women and to build their capacity to negotiate change at a personal and political levels. Guidelines of CEDAW have rallying point for WS and WM.

Pre Natal Diagnostic Techniques (PNDT) Act: Since 1996, women's groups have been demanding effective implementation of PNDT Act so that abuse of advance scientific technologies such as sonography, ultrasound, amniocentesis, chorion-villi-biopsy are not used for selective elimination of female fetuses. They have also criticized pre-conception elimination of girls by use of pre-selection techniques. Research material and documentation on the subject provided by women's studies has proved to be quite effective in strengthening public interest litigation filed in the supreme court of India by Centre for Enquiry into Health and Allied Themes (Mumbai) and MASUM (Pune).

Empowerment of Women Policy: Year 2001 was declared by the Government of India as Women's Empowerment Year. Both women's movement and women's studies were involved in implementing the policy and women specific programmes. On environmental issues affecting women and portrayal of women in media, major collaborative efforts have been made by WS and WM.

Reproductive Rights of Women: Women's movement has played pioneering role in bringing paradigm shift in the family planning discourse. But, the mainstream academia has been obsessed with "Population Control" approach. Though WS has accepted the reproductive rights approach; it has not used its credibility to critique the sexist and racist bias of new reproductive technologies whether they are pro or anti natalist. Harmful effects of long acting, hormone based contraceptives that have been

experimented on women from the marginalized sections need to be examined by WS researches.

Future of Women's Studies and Women's Movement in India: The state of art profile of WS at the end of this exercise is not neat and clear, as women's life is also not simple. It is full of contradictions. The research activity and the debates generated in women's studies have reached the levels of compensatory research where women's perspective has been added to the conventional discipline. We need more systematic work to challenge the mainstream discipline, build new paradigms and provide significant theoretical understanding.

On the contrary, women's movement in India is far more creative, courageous and vibrant in terms of its research agenda, advocacy and policy oriented research and action plans. As a result, all those who used to say, "Women's issues can wait" are forced to accept "Every issue is a women's issue".



Saheli, Delhi 1985

Women's Studies in Gujarat

Amita Verma

An attempt has been made in this paper to provide a brief overview of women's studies in Gujarat. It is neither an exhaustive account nor is it presented in a strictly chronological sequence.

Background

Women in Gujarat played an important role in the Gandhian nationalist movement. Saralabehn Sarabhai, and Mridula Sarabhai were closely associated with the Congress, Anasuyabehn Sarabhai was deeply involved with the trade union movement; Mithubehn Petit, a lawyer, worked with mentally ill women at the ashram at Maroli, South Gujarat, Pushpabehn Mehta was a staunch Gandhian who worked on social welfare issues and initiated women's welfare organizations in Gujarat, the two sisters Vidyagauri Nilkanth and Shardabehn Mehta were pioneers in the field of women's education. These women provided the energy and zeal which led to the establishment of several education and welfare organizations like the Jyoti Sangh etc. in Gujarat. Many women from Gujarat became active members of the All India Women's Conference and several branches of AIWC can be found in cities like Ahmedabad, Baroda, Surat and Rajkot. Maharani Chimnabhai Gaekwad, the wife of Maharani Sayajirao III of Baroda involved herself in the activities of AIWC and became the president of the Association.

Following these early pioneering efforts, several individual women and organizations helped to sustain the movement eg. Indumatibehn Sheth who played a very prominent role in education, and later even became a Minister of Education in the newly formed Gujarat State; and Elabehn Bhatt started the self-employed Women's Associates which was a Trade

Union organization to begin with but expanded its activities as well as its reach, over the years. Smt. Hansabehn Mehta's name is specially noteworthy as she led a delegation to the Human Rights Convention in Geneva where the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was charted and signed. In 1949, Hansabehn was appointed the first Vice Chancellor of the M.S. University of Baroda and promoted the cause of women's education.

Soon after Independence, women's organizations which had valiantly fought during the freedom struggle, settled down to provide needed welfare services, using grants from the Government and other State and National bodies like the Central and State Social Welfare Board. The 'Women's Question' during this period focussed largely on women's status in the family, their access to equal educational opportunities, better equal rights of women through legislation etc.

In the seventies, an issue which triggered off women's anger and anguish, all across the country, was the increasing rate of crimes against women – rape, murder, dowry deaths, domestic violence etc. This was marked by spontaneous protests by women's groups all over Gujarat and led to the establishment of several women's organizations i.e. Sahiyar in Baroda, AWAG in Ahmedabad, Astitva in Valsad etc.

International events such as the Women's Decade, the Human Rights Conference in Geneva, the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo in 1994 and the Beijing Conference in 1995 provided existing women's organizations fresh agendas for action.

Women's Studies

It is against this backdrop that one has to view the situation of women's studies in Gujarat. How have academicians in Gujarat viewed the women's question? Have they responded to the challenges thrown up by the women's movement? To what extent have university departments or individual scholars, working in their own disciplines studied women's issues through research, theory building and action?

A rather cursory survey of departments of the M.S. University of Baroda in 1985-86 revealed that most of the studies carried out provided information about women or used women as subjects of inquiry. In 1986 at a meeting convened by the Centre for Women's Studies of the Department of Political Science in Delhi University, a set of guidelines were prepared for setting up women's studies cells/centres in universities with special financial assistance from the University Grants Commission. In response to this, a special women's studies cell was given to the department of rural development at Surat, South Gujarat University. The Departments of Sociology at the Gujarat College, University of Gujarat submitted a proposal to the UGC in the late 80s; as did the M.S. University of Baroda. At this time the Department of English at Gujarat University, Ahmedabad was already looking at issues of representation of women in the media, women's images in English literature etc. The Department of English at M.S. University of Baroda was also offering course on 'Feminist Literary Criticism'. Such scattered and fragmented efforts were under way in the late eighties.

The first full-fledged centre for Women's Studies Research in Gujarat was set up at the M.S. University of Baroda in 1990, with grants from the UGC. The Women's Studies Research Centre was administratively connected with the Department of Human Development and Family Studies of the Faculty of Home Science, M.S. University of Baroda from 1985 onwards, where a team of faculty from the WID office at the University of Illinois, Urbana Champaign were associated with an interdepartmental team of faculty at the M.S. University of Baroda were studying various aspects of women in households. In 1990 funding from the

US agency for International development was provided for development of innovative research methodologies for studying women, households and development. This funding helped in carrying out several small researches, bringing out occasional working papers, as well as newsletters, commissioning scholars to prepare monographs on various aspects of women's lives etc. Several faculty from the departments of Banking, Population Studies, Household Management, Nutrition, Human Development etc. were involved in this project. Seminars and workshops were organised periodically and academics from other universities in Gujarat as well as other parts of the country participated. The most significant features of the Women's Studies Research Centre was the setting up of an information and documentation centre. This centre catered not only to students and faculty members of M.S. University of Baroda but also to NGOs and individual scholars who were interested in studying women's issues in Gujarat.

The Gujarat Forum for Women's Studies

In 1993 the Women's Studies Research Centre organised a meeting at Baroda bringing together academics from Ahmedabad, Rajkot, Vallabh Vidyanagar, Bhavnagar etc. who were involved in teaching or doing research on women's issues. The meeting was planned to facilitate coordinated researches on significant issues related to women so that a much needed pool of knowledge could be built and disseminated to scholars in Gujarat. This meeting threw up the need for some kind of loose network of organizations, agencies and individuals in Gujarat who were working on women's issues, the main purpose of which would be to stimulate and promote women's studies in academic institutions of Gujarat. In 1994, the Gujarat Forum for Women's Studies came into existence. Both Neera Desai and Kamalini Bhansali of the SNDT University provided academic support for setting up the forum.

The Centre functioned under the Women's Studies Centre up to 2001, and several joint programmes were undertaken by the Forum and the Centre over the years. The most noteworthy of these programmes was the "Mahila Nyay Panch" in

February 1997 where women's activists from all over Gujarat came and shared their experiences of dealing with different forms of violence against women. Since 1995, the Forum and the Centre have been jointly conducting meetings and disseminating materials on population policies and their harmful effects on women. A study on women's response to domestic violence was carried out by members of the Forum and the Women's Studies Research Centre organised a seminar to disseminate and discuss the finding of the study, which was funded by ICRW (International Council for Research on Women).

In 1995, the Women's Studies Research Centre and Sahiyar, a Baroda-based women's organization, with partial funding from the IAWS, organised a state-level seminar to review and assess the women's movement in Gujarat. The seminar, which was attended by about seventy women's studies scholars and activists from all over Gujarat, covered historical contexts, the existing social, political and economic context, the women's movement and people's struggles, women and violence, the media, and communalism. Women's health and population issues and government policies in Gujarat were also extensively discussed. The meeting highlighted the areas of strength as well as pointed out existing gaps and urged the participants to intensify their efforts towards knowledge building. The seminar brought out the need for strengthening the theory-activism relationship inherent to women's studies. The Gujarat Forum was re-named the "Gujarat Forum for Women's Studies and Action". There was some resistance from a few members who felt that the primary objective of the Forum was to promote women's studies in academic institutions and that were already many well organised NGOs which worked at the field level on key issues. But on the basis of consensus the nomenclature was changed.

Following the 1995 seminar, several meetings were held to chalk out future activities and programmes of the forum but for various reasons the earlier momentum could not be sustained. A debate emerged on whether there really was a need for such a forum, given the other networks in the state, many of which had formed after the Beijing conference. Views were however elicited from several members who strongly felt that though there were

several large women's organizations in Gujarat, there was nonetheless a need for an autonomous umbrella organization which would respond to ongoing debates concerning various women's questions. Finally it was agreed that the Forum would not have a very ambitious plan of activities but would concentrate on 'building perspectives' on key aspects related to women and to bring out a substantive publication each year, which would also be of that nature. A beginning was made with an analysis of the 2000 National Population Policy, along with a list of demands, which were discussed at a state-level meeting and submitted by the Forum to the Peoples' Health Assembly, and brought out in the first issue of the Forum's newsletter.

The Forum has been active in state-level campaigns, such as the rape of an *adivasi* girl at the Ashram of a well known social worker, the issue of sexual harassment at the work place and on university campuses, communalisation and the recent communal violence in Gujarat, the declining sex ratio and sex-selective abortion, to name a few. The Women's Studies Research Centre at M.S. University of Baroda has played an important role in documentation of many of these events and ensuring dissemination of these reports.

Women scholars and the Indian Association for Women's Studies in Gujarat

Many women academics of Gujarat have been involved in the activities of the IAWS and have also worked as office bearers of the association. In August 1997 the Indian Association for Women's Studies, the Centre for Women's Development Studies, Delhi and the Women's Studies Research Centre at Baroda organised a seminar on 'Fifty Years of Independence and Women'. Some other programmes of the IAWS in which academicians of Gujarat have been involved are the "Multicentric Study of the Girl Child in the Family" which was funded by the Department of Women and Child Development in 1990. Another important activity with some initial funding from IAWS was the preparation of women's studies material in Gujarati. Four books in this series have been published. Several academics from M.S. University of Baroda got together and compiled a "Profile of Women in Gujarat". This could be used

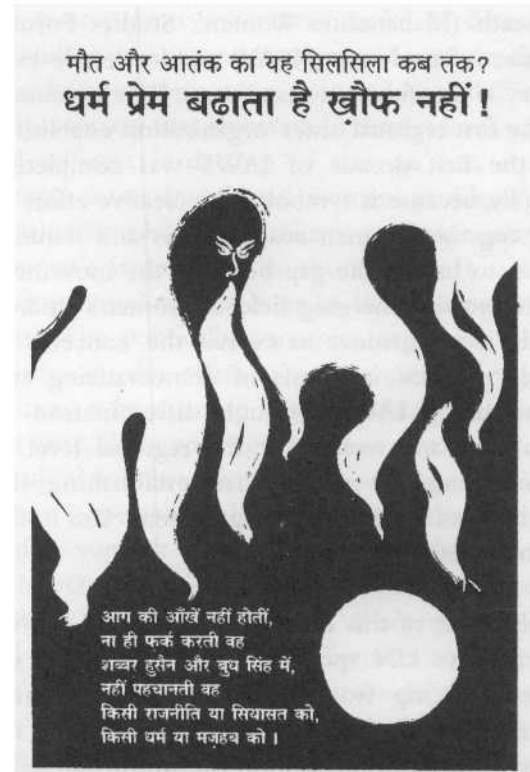
as resource material by other scholars interested in carrying out studies on women's issues.

During the past two decades several researches have been carried out by women scholars in various research institutions and independent researchers in Gujarat. Some of the institutes involved in such work are IRMA, Anand; CEPT, Centre for Development Alternatives, GIDR and SETU (Ahmedabad) and the Department of Rural Studies, South Gujarat University. Many of these women scholars are members of the IAWS and have been involved seminars conducted by Women's Studies Centres and the IAWS.

Lastly, it must be noted that women academics have also been involved in State/National level programmes, i.e. the Mahila Samakhya programme. They have helped in developing training programmes, worked as resource persons and in state and national level executive committees, and have also been involved in the periodic evaluations of the program.

In conclusion

As one looks at the present scenario, one does have a sense of satisfaction that women's studies has evolved and made considerable progress in the state. The Women's Studies Research Centre at Baroda has now started offering a course in Women's Studies at the M.S. University of Baroda which has had a very enthusiastic response from researchers. A course was also held for NGO activists from all over Gujarat on January 2001. The Centre has also initiated interactions with different university departments to undertake curriculum revisions to incorporate women's studies perspectives. The documentation centre is widely used by research scholars from all over the state. These are activities which need to be strengthened to push forward the women's studies movement in Gujarat.



The pioneer 'Sister Organization' of IAWS Maharashtra Stree Abhyas Vyaspeeth'

Shruti Tambe

What does establishment of a professional organization in a post-colonial society at a particular time devoted to women's issues suggest? Is it an indicator of expansion of civil society or extension of social movement in an institutionalized form? Can it be an expression of aspirations of a particular group to mobilize itself to enhance professional and intellectual concerns?

Exploring the case of Maharashtra Stree Abhyas Vyaspeeth (Maharashtra Women's Studies Forum, hereafter referred to as MSAV) and its decade-long journey is significant in many ways. First, because it was the first regional 'sister' organization established after the first decade of IAWS was completed. Secondly, because it symbolized a creative effort to bring together women academicians and feminist activists to bridge the gap between the movement and the newly emerging field of women's studies. Thirdly, it was a move to express the 'concerns of feminist politics' in terms of democratizing and decentralizing IAWS through dissemination of information and research at the regional level in regional language rather than establishing the dominance of English-speaking academicians in the field of women's studies.

Establishment of this forum was definitely not an accident. The UN sponsored world Summits on women starting from Nairobi motivated and triggered profound and extensive discussions on 'women's question' throughout the world, especially in third world post-colonial societies like India. These discussions tried to frame the women's question outside the 'women – the – victims' and 'women – the weaker sex' discourse. During this period individual researchers from different social sciences were dealing with 'women's problems', women's issues. The term in vogue, both in the movement

and in the academic was 'Stree Mukti' – women's liberation, and not feminism till then. The government, under the pressure of different international financial institutions had declared 'New Economic Policy' with 'Structural Adjustment Program'. This meant on the one hand recognition and mobilization of women as workers in the formal and informal sector and reduction of subsidies aimed at attaining 'welfare of women'.

In Maharashtra, a comparatively progressive and developed state of India, a sizeable number of educated, employed, mobile, politically aware of women was getting consolidated. By 1990's the products of extension and expansion of higher education in all parts of Maharashtra in the post-1960 period had settled in urban professions. The ripples of women's liberation – Stree Mukti-movement were still fresh after 1975 – the international women's year. Through the 1980's many women's organizations were set up especially in urban areas addressing issues like dowry deaths, rape, battering, equal wages to women, etc. The first UGC sponsored Women's Studies Centre in SNDT; Mumbai and individual research on women's issues had prepared the ground for women's intellectual growth. Maharashtra, with its history of social reform, non-Brahmin movement and trade unionism had absorbed these changes and had ventured in the direction of activism and research related to women's issues from a new perspective. Obviously therefore, the pioneering efforts in Maharashtra to widen the spread of women's studies in the form of MSAV were not incidental. But they were a sign of institutionalization of some of the central concerns of the women's movement in Maharashtra, including the importance given to knowledge-making by women.

In this context, a few academicians and activists involved in the newly emerging field of women's Studies mainly from the metropolitan centers of education and women's activism felt the need to start an intellectual platform aiming at 'education, expansion and action' related to women. Rohini Gawankar, Divya Pande, Vibhuti Patel, Sudha Kulkarni, Medha Kotwal, Neelam Gorhe were some of the founders of this platform, which was established in March 1992.¹ The constitution of IAWS was adopted by this organization and thus it became the regional branch of IAWS with same aims and objectives. Rohini Gavankar was the first President of MSAV and under her dynamic and committed leadership MSAV marched ahead. Pushpa Bhave, Vidya Bal, Minakshi Apte and Chandrakala Bhargav have been the elected Presidents of this platform and their visions and efforts have made it a statewide organization. Eminent scholars and activists like Usha Mehata, Neera Desai, Maitreyi Krishnaraj, Sharayu Anantram, Chhaya Datar, Vidyut Bhagvat, Shaila Lohiya strengthened the organization.² Starting with a moderate number, today MSAV has more than 200 life members and an equal number of ordinary members. This was the first 'sister organization' of IAWS – a regional branch-established at the state level working in the area of women's studies, encouraging other states to have similar regional initiatives.

The first conference, after initial meetings in Mumbai and Pune, was held at Gargoti – in Kolhapur district with a history of non-Brahmin movement and social reform. In 1995 the state level conference was held at Deorukh in Konkan sub-region. One-day workshops and seminars on themes ranging from feminist theoretical approaches to feminist literary criticism were organized in different parts of Maharashtra. Ambejogai and Sangali also hosted conferences on themes like violence and impact of globalisation. Regional and sub-regional themes like the problem of Devdasis-temple prostitutes of southern Maharashtra were addressed in these gatherings.³

As the member of the present Executive Committee of MSAV, taking a self-reflexive view of our platform is relevant. In Gargoti conference, 'Research, Education, Extension and Action' on women's issues were stated as the aims of the emerging platform. Though it was an organization of educated, urban, middle-class, employed women, it never got reduced only to women's lobby. The objectives of secularism, social transformation, eradication of inequalities and establishment of a new society based on men-women's equal contribution were articulated from the outset. The vocabulary and the strategies were aimed at ensuring the journey in this direction. The very idea of establishing regional 'branches' or 'sister organizations' of IAWS emerged from a consensus on decentralization and democratization of knowledge and related power in the field of women's studies. In Maharashtra, the need was felt for such an endeavor because women's movement (popularly called as Stree Mukti Chalwal) had gone beyond the metropolitan concentric circles of concerned individuals and progressive groups. A new awakening regarding women's status, role and contribution to Indian society was observed. In district level schools and colleges leadership of women was at least thought as worthwhile and 'women's problems' were widely discussed. The dominant public discourse on 'women's issues' was in short either caught in victimological approach or in the 'making visible' phase. The politically conscious organizations and groups in the women's movement explained women's subordination in terms of structural factors like caste, class and religion and sought the solution in radical transformation of the social structure. These groups expected their comrades in the academic field to support them and reinforce their demand with facts and theories. Nonetheless, MSAV came forward at this very moment of intense academic and social discussion to give direction and it indeed was successful in giving direction. In this sense it was complementary to the women's movement in Maharashtra. It initially aimed at bringing new force and giving impetus to the women's movement by consolidating scholarship and educated, enlightened

1 Report of Gargoti conference and discussions with Rohini Gawankar have been helpful to prepare this piece.

2 Many more eminent activists and academicians were involved in expanding this platform. Due to restrictions on space, I could not note all the important names.

3 Sub-regional conferences sometimes had animated discussions on local issues, where local activists had the opportunity to show the lacuna in some academic writings. This meant an organic dialogue between intellectuals and activists and I think this is the biggest achievement of MSAV.

opinion with commitment to understanding and analyzing women's issues from women's perspective. It was expected that with growing number of educated women and with higher number of women in academics and research MSAV would go on expanding. Also it was hoped that the organization will reach to all the sub-regions and new groups of women would get a chance to participate. MSAV was visualized as a link between developing and developed regions within Maharashtra. It was also envisioned as a link between the women's movement and academicians in the field of women's studies. This was expected to support women's movement with theoretical perspective and relevant data and the field of women's studies with insights from survival struggles of working class, lower caste women from rural and urban milieu. A sensitive and politically conscious and committed scholarship in the field of women's studies was to be created through these efforts.

How far these ends have been achieved? Obviously there is no easy answer to this question. MSAV has been definitely successful in creating awareness among social scientists about the complexity and pluralism of women's ground reality and the nature and causes of their subordination in Maharashtra and in India. But it has not been equally successful in assisting the movement with data and theoretical and/ or methodological insights. Sometimes therefore the activities and even some of the conferences have hardly gone beyond conscientization or orientation of academicians. The publications of MSAV include a brochure on 'what is women's studies?' and a compilation of translations of plenary papers in the 1998 All-India Conference jointly organized by IAWS and MSAV. The first one is very useful as an introductory note for new entrants in the field of women's studies and activists. The second one serves as important resource material for students, activists and researchers dependent on Marathi sources furnishing latest data and theoretical insight into diverse themes including survival of working class women, the issue of identity, struggles of fisher women, to reducing sex-ratio in India. Since dissemination of information and knowledge in regional language was one of the aims, publications

should be given priority in future. Also MSVA should consider giving encouragement to individual researchers with feminist perspective in the coming years.⁴

One inevitable problem of MSAV has been trying to bring together members with diverse socio-economic backgrounds. This also means at times bringing together different discourses on women's issues and problems- ranging from victimological approach to radical feminist concerns under one roof! Debate and dialogue become less important and possible and giving everyone a chance to speak becomes the overriding democratic principle! Members of MSAV thus do not always have a sense of collective identity, shared meanings and common goals.

The decade of MSAV has also been the period dominated by aggressive Hindutva and undaunted march of pauperizing policies of Globalization. We must, therefore, in spite of some of these shortcomings, congratulate MSAV for not allowing its platform to be appropriated by dominant right-wing intellectuals reducing women's 'problems' to the 'cultural field' and finding answers in 'benevolent patriarchy' or patronizing policies of the State.⁵

Of course, it is important to see whether the second generation of MSAV members share the same concerns with founder members and take the organization ahead.

■ ■

4 Recently, MSAV executive is discussing whether cross-regional comparative research would be feasible through MSAV network.

5 The introduction to the Women's Policy by the BJP-Shivsena Government, 1998.

I.A.W.S. Jharkhand

Vasavi

Ranchi, Jharkhand State which has recently emerged in the political map of India, has been unique form historical social and cultural points of view since time in memorial. This tribal region, which was the victim of colonial aggressions, has been the center of the study of different dimensions of socio political and economic issues of women. The academic relationship between the I.A.W.S. and Jharkhand in the areas of research and study has been as old as 16 years. The initiatives of the I.A.W.S. to undertake subaltern studies prepared the ground for such relationship.

In fact I.A.W.S. closeness with Jharkhand which has been the bastion of peoples movement was possible owing to its changing strategy of coming closure to the activists rather than the arm chair academicians. It is precisely because of I.A.W.S.'s endeavour to establish a co-ordination between the academicians and grass root activists it has been possible for the issues of women's participation in the two hundred years of historic tribal rebellions in the region to receive a right full place at the national level.

Prof. Janki Sinha became the first member of the I.A.W.S. from Jharkhand in 1986. It was the time when Jharkhand separate state movement was at its peak and this political turmoil augmented the demand for sociological studies of the movement. While Prof. Sinha who was a teacher in history at S.S.L.N.T. College Dhanbad was based in the mining and Industrial areas. Prof. Malancha Ghosh who followed her was a teacher in Zoology at the Women's College (science) of Ranchi the Cultural Center of Jharkhand. Prof. Ghosh encouraged Ms. China Moitra, Lakshmi, Renu and Prabhawati Tiwari from her won organisation, Mahila Utpiran Virodhi awam Vikas Samiti, to become the member of I.A.W.S. Prof. Ghosh and Ms. China Moitra become

its life member. Gradually more and more people started joining the organisation Prof. Renu Dewan, Prof. Maya Prasad, Kalyani, Prof. Sukhla Mohanti took the life membership. Till 2002 Ms. Payali Banerjee was the only student member of I.A.W.S. Now however there are six of them in the organisation from Jharkhand. Yet I.A.W.S. is lagging behind in well organised research study and action programmes on the different issues of women.

However Prof. Janki Sinha, Prof. Malancha Ghosh, Ms. Vasavi, and Ms. China Miotro have done several study and research on the problems of Adivasi and dalit women at their personal capacity. Prof. Renu Diwan a teacher of psychology edits a magazine called 'Nari Samvad' on women's issues. She and Prof. Maya Prasad for the first time took part in the IX national conference of I.A.W.S. I came in touch with I.A.W.S. in January 2000 when I was invited to the same conference. I was co-opted to the executive committee of the organisation after my presentation on tribal issues. I was the first Journalist activist from Jharkhand to be co-opted as the member of E.C.(2000-2002).

A two day seminar cum workshop was organised by me on "impact of globalisation on womens ; in the context of Jharkhand" with the help of I.A.W.S and Abhiyan a network of several orgnisation. This programme first of its kind in Jharkhand helped I.A.W.S. to further strengthen its grip over both academician and grass root workers. The participation of the University professor, social scientist, politicians, activists from remote villages, journalists, activists, and researcher on women issue, representatives of NGOS, human right activist, experts of tribal issues, economists etc. In the workshop helped I.A.W.S. to become known at a wider circle. Immediately after that a demand for a women's study center was raised.

Now, though on a small scale a Women Study Center has already been started. Ranchi University opened up such a center in 1986, which was closed down soon. But still it is under consideration to reopen it

and after the formation of Jharkhand the vice-chancellor has promised to take initiative in that direction soon.



Advertisement for Post of State Programme Director for Mahila Samakhya Karnataka

Mahila Samakhya is a programme of the Department of Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India.

The Job: As executive head of the programme, the candidate will have to implement the programme according to the MS vision and goals. She will have to guide, inspire and manage a team of over 200 staff working in over 1200 villages in 7 districts of Karnataka.

The Candidate: Will be a woman committed to the empowerment of poor rural women. She will have a feminist perspective and conceptual clarity on gender and development issues. She will be able to strategise and think innovatively. She will have good training and documentation skills. She will have networking and advocacy skills. She will have excellent managerial skills on all issues related to programme and personnel, finance and administration. She will be willing and able to travel extensively in and outside Karnataka.

Education: Master's Degree from a reputed University with good academic record.

Experience: At least 10 years work experience essential. Grassroots and/or training experience an advantage.

Language: Knowledge of Kannada essential. High level of proficiency in written and spoken English required.

Age: Above 35 years preferred

Location: Bangalore

Duration: 2 years or end of project period, whichever is earlier

Probation: 6 months

Emoluments: Rs. 12,000/- p.m.

Applications with detailed bio-data and description of responsibilities held/achieved should be mailed by 30.10.2002 to:

The State Programme Director
#68, I Cross, II Main, HAL III Stage, Bangalore 560 075.
Fax: 5297765, e-mail: samakhya@vsnl.net

Energising Conferencing Remembering the Spirit of IAWS Conferences

Kamla Bhasin

Out of the nine National Conferences of Women’s Studies organised by the Indian Association of Women’s Studies during the last two decades, I have attended five – at Trivandrum, Chandigarh, Calcutta, Jaipur and Pune. I wish I had attended them all, because for me all these Conferences were very meaningful, creative, joyous and energising occasions. ENERGISING comes to the mind as the main experience. In a way the feminist activist in me has greyed and grown with these Conferences. There is a saying in Hindi

ijatnaa gauD Dalaaogao Jtnaa malza haogaa

(the sweetness depends on the amount of sugar you put). The women and some men behind these Conferences have put a lot of sugar (labour of love) to make them meaningful and memorable.

The coming together of 500 to 800 women and men, all involved in one way or another in the struggle for gender justice, is in itself empowering. Those who come to these Conferences from different parts of the country also bring with them the energy of their own struggles, to energise these gatherings and to get energy from them.



Our Story: Twenty Years of IAWS

Many aspects of these Conferences have attracted and inspired me. The first is the tremendous diversity amongst the participants. Academics, researchers, activists, lawyers, journalists, teachers, policy makers, grass root workers, artists all at one place to share, discuss, learn and grow together. In addition these Conferences are an amazing SANGAM or confluence of different regions, ages, views, perspectives, experiences.

These Conferences have also been the meeting point of **three or more generations of feminist activists and scholars**. The younger scholars and activists get an opportunity to listen to and meet women who led the women’s movement in the 50s and 60s and those who initiated the women’s studies movement in India in the 70s and 80s; the foremothers get to meet the young women who are getting ready to take their struggles forward.

For me another special aspect of the IAWS Conferences has been the presence and participation of feminists from the **neighbouring countries**. The **South Asian panels** at the IAWS Conferences, which have now become a regular feature, have enriched our struggles by extending the hand of solidarity to women’s movements in Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

The Sound of Music

The **sound of songs and slogans** during tea and lunch breaks, in the evenings and sometimes even within sessions has reflected the energy and joy of these Conferences. In the Chandigarh Conference we at Jagori and Kali for Women jointly organised a Workshop on “Struggles Against Sexist Media”. Singing feminist songs was interwoven in this

workshop. We brought out a small booklet containing 13 new and old songs on women's issues and solidarity and sold it for Rs. two each. The songs were written in Devnagari and Roman script so that those who couldn't read Hindi, could also sing with us. The booklet opened with the following words:

"Welcome to the Conference. Welcome to Punjab and to singing with us.

Singing has been an important part of our culture, specially of women's culture. For centuries through the medium of songs, women have expressed their fears, anxieties, frustrations, joys and dreams. Using the same old tradition, we are singing our perceptions of reality, our new consciousness and strength. Our creativity is finding new expression in these songs. The echoes of such songs are coming from different parts of our country and the world and they prove that our strength, creativity and links are growing."

The thought of being with so many friends inspired me to write three new songs on women's studies for the Chandigarh Conference. One of these songs went on to become quite popular because of its tongue and cheek humour and also because it brought some latent tensions between activists and scholars into the open. This song showed that we feminists had matured and were now able and willing to laugh EVEN at ourselves. Here are a few couplets from this song for which I used the Punjabi tappa style and melody

*laaoga marIjaoM kao laae hOM
Jnaki Kbar pDI baDvo Da^@Tr Aae hOM*

(On hearing that some doctors have come. People have brought patients to seek treatment.)

*yao dvaa[- vaalao Da^@Tr nahIM
yao iktabaoM ilaKto hO ijanhoM kao[- pZta
nahIM*

(No, no these are not medicinewala doctors. These doctors write books which no one reads)

*[tnaa maaoTa pcaa- hO
samaJaa kao[- nahIM pr jaoraoM ka cacaa- hO*

(What a fat paper this one is. No one has understood it but the discussion is loud)

*yao skaOlasa- ka maolaa hO
jaao jaaga-na na samaJao vaaO ibalkula Akolaa hO*

(This is a mela of scholars. Those not familiar with the jargon feel totally lost here)

After talking about some tensions between scholars and activists the song ends on a positive note:

*ka^Mnfonsa maoM jaaeMgao
qyaaorI p'Oi@Tsa ka hma flk- imaTaeogao*

(Let us go to the Conference. To bridge the gap between theory and practice)

Banners Banners Everywhere

The colour of the banners and the sound of music at the Jaipur Conference was quite special and in keeping with the spirit of Rajasthan. Colourful banners in Hindi and English and new posters specially made for this Conference were all around the venue giving messages like

LOOKING AT THE WORLD THROUGH
WOMEN'S EYES
WOMEN'S RIGHTS ARE HUMAN RIGHTS

*naarI Sai> ijandabaad
imala jaulakr nae kanaUna banaaeM hk barabar ko
sabakao idlaaeM*

For the inaugural session at Jaipur, in typical Rajasthani style a group of musicians playing large drums and local Shehnai led all the delegates to the Conference hall. The Conference opened with a song by Mira Bai sung powerfully and beautifully by Vidya Shah. Through this song we linked our present feminist struggles to the struggles of our foremothers like Mira Bai and paid our tributes to them.

At the Jaipur Conference we had invited Rukma Bai, a singer belonging to the Maanganiyar community of Rajasthan who is the first woman in the Muslim community to give public performances. The tunes of her powerful songs made many participants break into spontaneous dancing.

An Anti Nuclear March in Pune

The spontaneity and closeness of these Conferences to real life issues and people's movements was revealed by a large Peace March in Pune, collectively organised by the Conference participants and 14 local NGOs. Dozens of participants sat in groups

Our Story: Twenty Years of IAWS

till late in the night making slogans and writing them on placards. Within hours hundreds of placards were ready in Hindi, English, Marathi, Urdu, Tamil, Sinhala, Bangla etc. We also received 500 copies of a new poster produced by MIND (Movement for Nuclear Disarmament), Delhi all of which were brought by the participants. The message in all these was loud and clear.

WE WANT PEACE IN SOUTH ASIA NOT PIECES OF SOUTH ASIA

This Peace March moved in total silence on the roads of Pune. The silence was very loud and effective and also infectious. Onlookers also fell into silence. The march ended in a public meeting where the IAWS resolution against nuclearisation of South Asia was read out and peace songs were sung. All of us felt strong and connected and made a commitment to carry the message of peace to our areas and organisations.

For me all the IAWS Conferences have been living examples of team work and synergy at different levels. May the IAWS and National Conferences continue to be energised by the participants and be a source of new ideas, energy, friendships and solidarity for every one who comes to them.

■ ■

Conference par tappe

*Log mareezon ko laaye hain
Unko khabar padee bade doctor aaye hain*

*Ye dawai waale doctor naheen
Ye kitaaben likhte hain jinhe koi padhta naheen*

*Workshop me jaana hai
Stove mera band pada use theek karaana hai*

*Ye workshop anokhee hai
Concepts aur theories kee yahaan marammat hoti hai*

*Conference me jaana hai
Samajha koi naheen par zoron kee charcha hai*

*Ye kaisa mela hai
Jhoole, dukaane naheen na koi the la hai*

*Ye scholars ka mela hai
Jo jargon na samjhe wo bilkul akela hai*

*Workshop me aaya karo
Data ham denge tum theory banaaya karo*

*Data sab se le lenge
Phir jhatpat likh parcha apne naam se chhapa denge.*

*Dekho buddhijeevi aate hain
Lambe lambe lafzon se hame buddhu ye banaate hain*

*Conference me jaayenge
Theory practice kaa ham farq mitaayenge*

– Kamla Bhasin



War and Peace: A Dance Ballet, Concept: Kalpana Kannabiran, Lyrics: Volga

We Were Making History: Inaugurating Conferences with Histories of Struggle

Asmita Resource Centre

What is history like when it is seen through eyes of women and judged by the values they define? What were there experiences, what was the movement for them?

My name is **Chityala Ailamma**. We are known as the people from Chityala. My husband was nobody... my sons, they too are nobody. Wherever it is and whatever it is, it is my name that is heard first. They keep coming, always, the people from the Sangam.

How old was I then, you ask. By the time the Union Army came, my child-births were over. I was that small - like that grandchild there - when I got married, and I matured four years later. My children were born from my fifteenth year. My oldest son I bore at 15. I had 5 sons and 2 daughters... a childbirth every 3 years. Oh, my goodness! Who can remember all that?

I must be more than 70 years now. Even now I have the hope that the Sangam will come to power. How can that hope die?

Only my name has remained. The Sangam folk come even today. It seems everyone says one should work like Ailamma...that's what they say.

My name is **Kamalamma**. My work in the party was in the cultural squad. My voice is quite good. I used to tell stories, sing songs and roam about. Once the doctor was taking classes in a village in Suryapet. My son was just 10 months. All of us, men and women, were listening to the class. He began to cry. I felt very bad, so many people sitting there and he was crying, I was embarrassed. The doctor said: "don't feel bad, the future is his". But I could not bear it. There was a comrade from my village. I gave him the child and said, 'take him to

my sister-in-law'. She had just lost an infant child and so she suckled my child and reared him. My milk dried up after some days.

And so it went on for a year and a half. By then I was pregnant again. I kept moving around with them. It was time for the child to be born. I delivered under a cluster of bushes, in the night. I reared that child six months as I was moving and working for the party. Then, the leaders said to me, "Kamalamma, either you must give this child away or else you must leave us"... Did you hear that? I was in no state to go. I was afraid in my belly. If I died I would rather die with them... I decided to give away the child...

It is 36 years today and I do not know what has happened to that child. How does one swallow a mother's grief?

Our village is Keshavpuram. I'm called **Kondamma**. The razakars came and surrounded us. They put the women on one side and the men on another side. The men- they stabbed them, and the women - they stripped them.

My name is **Vajramma**. In those days when they asked us to dance *bathkamma* we danced. We stripped when they asked us to strip. In those times where was the honour, where was the shame? We used to leave our babies in the cradle and run for our lives. That's all there was to it.

All of us are telling you what happened after all. Now what does it matter if I don't speak? What does it matter who it is who speaks?

Rajakka, why don't u tell them. It was near their well. She will tell you... they burnt the ones they

killed they killed the ones they burnt. All the stories are the same. They burnt... they killed... they raped. What else can I say? It is all the same story. Do you think we can tell our story? No.. We don't know how?

I'm **Salamma**. You ask why did I feed them? Why have you come here to see me? At least you can read a few letters, but me, I used to graze buffaloes I lived in the strength and faith that a communist survives on the strength of a shoulder. The struggle for gruel and water. I lived in such strength and power for it. I leaped 5 feet with Badam Ella Reddy. I- Salamma. The sound of Salamma was like the roar of a lion.



Where did I cook? Oh, fuck – cooking! No. I never cooked. I wore a dhoti like a man, wore a shirt (to cover my tattoos on my arms) and shorts, bound a kerchief around my head. I was disguised as a man. To us communism was for seven lives. It's like a low fever that never leaves you.

I was born at sunrise on a Friday and so my father called me **Udayalaxmi**. I grew up without the feeling that I was a girl. Right from childhood. So they always gave me such jobs. Even if they need

technical things I would do it for them. I would do anything, like a soldier. Right from childhood I never liked the blouses that girls wore. I used to wear shirts. I used to wear socks and shoes. I couldn't walk without them. Even to the mahila sangams I went dressed like that. Nowadays, if an instruction is given, one wants to know so many details but in those days if an order was given, we just obeyed blindly. That is the sign of a true communist.

In the prison, we had no materials to write anything with, but I was very good at picking pockets. We got pencil and wrote *burrakathas* on the jail walls. We would also dance very aggressively.

‘These are not stories mother – (chorus) Tandana tana

These are not legends of rama and ravana – (chorus) Tandana tana

The women, filled with joy, would say, “Udhayam, why do you need a mike, even if there are lakhs of people!” My voice was so powerful. Even now if I shout they say, “your years are upon you, but your voice is still strong”.

Then **Acchamamba** was made to stand for an election. We were sent as a squad. The squad would split up and move around canvassing for Acchamamba. They called us the 'contract marriage gang'. Then I hot upon a plan. Let us take brass water pots in our hands. The congress fellows followed us saying they would make contract marriages with us, so we let them come near and said: ' what's this? Contract marriage, tell us!' So they said 'oh don't you know? Didn't Acchamamba have a contract marriage? So I turned around and swung the brass pot at him. It cut his lip and broke his teeth. He was bleeding heavily. Now what next? They went around announcing, 'These communist women are beating up our man!'

Vidya Kannuga, a party worker from Bombay got arrested. She was a very interesting woman. In her bag she had sanitary tampons. The police found them and thought they were bombs! They called the SP and others. They asked her, "What is this, it has a fuse?" We also had never seen one; even Acchamamba didn't know what those tampons were. Vidya said to the police, "you call yourself educated, you don't even know this! Here read this," and she gave them the instructions.

There was another fighter called **Nagamma**. She was not even as tall as a rifle- she was really very short. If she slung a gun on her shoulder, it would touch the ground. She could shoot well. She used to insist on carrying a rifle everywhere. Her husband was a comrade, a squad commander. She was also in the squad. They planned a raid. The chowkidars were coming. There were always policemen with them, protecting them while they collected taxes. Coming to know this they decided to shoot them on the way. According to that plan one comrade hides in the way, then the commander, and at the very end Nagamma. So as the enemies draw near the commander they would be shot. The commander should fire his rifle. Then they would all surround him like a net. Nagamma from this side. Then they would be covered and throw their guns down. But the chowkidars came and passed. They were passing Nagamma. They must be shot when they are within range. Unable to fire his gun the commander hadn't fired. So they were going away they had passed the spot where they should be fired at and were going away. So she thought one of the 2 things had

happened. Either the rifle failed or the brain behind the rifle failed and she fired at them. The rule in the squad is that no one should fire without the commander's orders. Anyway the chowkidars who were probably unarmed ran away. The police remained in the middle. So the raid was a success. They got the guns. But she didn't keep quiet, but turned on him and asked, "Why didn't you fire on time?" they would never admit they had made a mistake.

What are we to do with women, was the question. When the struggle was over, they decided that the unmarried women should go and marry, the married ones should go back to their families! The men should study law. We didn't have a say at all. Till then we had never thought of families or children or holding on to them! They said it was not possible for us to become party commanders or area organisers. So they asked us to 'set ourselves right'. And we felt very upset. So, after the struggle they said, 'go back to your village and marry.' Marry whom? Which fellow would have the guts to marry these women?

We wanted to write about Ailamma. There are hundreds of people like Ailamma. Their history has just vanished without trace. Who can do this? Only people like us. Only the people who took part can do it. None of us have those kinds of resources. Not Ramulamma, not Satyavathi, not me- none of us wrote. Who else will write? It is because we could not write, that it came to you.

■ ■

Presidential Addresses

Compiled by Kalpana Kannabiran

I National Conference on Women's Studies, 1981, Mumbai

Inaugural Address by Prof. Madhuri Shah



I am extremely happy to be present at this historic conference and to see the extraordinary response that the Conference has received from the members of the academic community and other groups concerned with women's problems and development. When we initiated the move for this Conference five months ago, we thought we were about to begin a long struggle to persuade the educational system to take a new look at women's situation and its own role in bringing about healthy and positive changes in society, so that women do not continue to suffer from injustice, discrimination and indignity. We were prepared for indifference, reluctance and resistance, to the idea of developing Women's Studies as a new and unfamiliar venture within the educational process. The response however has been far beyond our expectation and I agree with the Vice-Chancellor of the SNDT University that this is a very hopeful indication of preparedness on the part of our academic community and others to accept a new challenge.

I am also happy to see that our colleagues in the educational system do not share the view that

anything concerning women must be left to women only. The movement for women's equality in India has enrolled many distinguished men as its followers and leaders, including the Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi. The problems that keep large masses of our women shackled to positions of inequality, inferiority and virtual exclusion from the benefits of development are not maladies for women alone. They affect the fabric of the society and influence the direction of its changes. Gandhiji had believed that it was essential for women to play an equal and expanding role in transforming the society if the out come of that transformation was to be a just and non exploitative social order. The presence of so many members of the opposite sex at this conference renews our hope that Mahatma has not been forgotten. The struggle for women's liberation, as an essential component, and instrument of people's liberation-from poverty, inequality and ignorance, can be shared by women and jointly.

Why Women's Studies?

I am often asked why, in a country like India-Which has accepted the principle of women's equality in all spheres of national life, women's studies should be considered necessary. The answer lies in the identification of substantial failures in achieving even basic equality or access to development and genuine participation of women reviews of women's situation, at national, regional or global level during the last decade reveal that women continue to suffer from a subordinate status that ignores their vital contributions to society through production and reproduction. The development of knowledge that has eliminated so many mysteries of the universe, has not managed to answer the simple question-why most societies, even the most developed ones

undervalue their women as human beings and shroud their contributions to societies' survival and development in mysteries. Why in planning for development, do women get left out in the cold, and their concerns are seen as peripheral and marginal, and not of sufficient priority?

Many of us who had the privilege to participate in the earlier movement for women's equality in this country had placed high hopes on education, equality in law and the rights to participate in the political process as the critical levers that would transform women's status. But the reviews indicate that inspite of substantial changes through these instruments, the basic problem of discrimination by society against women from their birth to death, remains unchanged. In many ways for the large majority of women, inequality and oppression have increased with the processes of economic modernisation, social change and population dynamics. The mounting tide of violence that human beings wreak on each other always affects women and children adversely. Our times, however, seem to be adding a new dimension of physical and sexual violence-against women. Which must cause concern to all who believe in a healthy society.

Efforts during the last few years to assess women's situation in different parts of the world have been hampered by inadequate information, distorted interpretations, and the absence of appropriate theories to analyse even the limited data available. Established indicators for measuring development or social change proved inadequate either to capture fully or to explain trends in women's roles and status. We have to acknowledge our debt to the distinguished Chairperson of the Committee on the Status of Women in India, Dr. Phulrenu Guha (who is with us today) and her colleagues for identifying some of the major problems in the Committee's Report. In the scattered attempts to investigate these problems further. The Indian Council of Social Science Research's Programme of Women's Studies provided a substantial contribution. I am proud to mention that the steps taken by the SNDT Women's University, to promote research and teaching on women and to directly engage in action programmes for women's development in collaboration with voluntary

organisations of women, were initiated during my tenure as Vice-Chancellor. I am also happy to inform you of the decision of the Kanpur University to develop a Centre for Women's Studies in Delhi, under the direction of Vina Mazumdar (who was Member Secretary of the Committee on the Status of Women in India and Director of the ICSSR's Programme of Women's Studies).

Such scattered efforts, however, cannot absolve the Educational system as a whole of its responsibility. As observed by the Committee on the Status of Women in India:

“The deep foundations of the inequality of the sexes are built in the minds of men and women through a socialisation process which continues to be extremely powerful. If education is to promote equality for women, it must make a deliberate, planned and sustained effort so that the new value of equality can replace the traditional value system”.

Five years later, the same plea is repeated in the World Programme of Action for the second half of the Women's Decade (1980-85) adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations.

“Instructions and interdisciplinary research on women and the implications of the goals of the Decade [must be promoted] as an input to the educational process, particularly in institutions of higher and teacher education in order to draw on the experience already acquired in some countries with women's status and to eliminate all attitudinal and conceptual biases and prejudices, especially those relating to class, that hinder understanding of the role and situation of women”.

An expert group meeting convened by the UNESCO last year, (in which I participated) recommended that programmes for teaching and research on women will not only be a “means to secure women's complete equality”, but through its complementary and corrective roles, “enrich both scholarship and social policy, demonstrating a dynamic force in the development of new forms of knowledge”

Our National Policy on Education has always viewed education as a premier instrument for promoting equality of status and opportunities between men and women and between groups divided by class, caste and other forms of historic oppression. It appears to me that Women's Studies need to be viewed as an essential method to promote our national educational objectives.

This Conference has several well defined tasks before it, which I need not repeat, I would only like to remind you of a few issues, which would be of crucial importance in educational development in the coming years.

A. How will the concept of relevance to which educational planners attach such significance, affect policies for promotion of Women's Studies? Who is going to determine what is relevant for women and for society? Is what appears to be relevant today, likely to remain so in tomorrow's society? Can we eliminate social inequality by pursuing today's apparent relevance? Is the pursuit of fundamental enquiries relating to women's status irrelevant in today's context?

B. The second issue to which I hope the Conference will give some thought is about the structure and pattern for development of Women's Studies. In some western countries, Women's Studies programmes have been developed as independent multidisciplinary courses, or a package of separate courses within individual disciplines. We have to agree that Women's Studies cannot be a discipline by itself. Its development will depend on the extent to which it acquires an intra-disciplinary as well as interdisciplinary thrust. Its future as a legitimate area of academic concern will also depend to a great extent, on its quality and its ability to shed new light and new perspectives on various areas of knowledge. In my opinion the ideal state would be reached when women's concerns, perceptions and problems have been so internalised by different disciplines at different levels of the educational process that there will be no need for promoting women's studies separately. Is it true that such integration and internalisation, faces many risks of being neglected, overlooked and starved of resources, or of receiving only token recognition. There will be problems of managing the academic

hierarchy, of overcoming the resistance of non-specialists, of getting adequate teaching time or other resources, of persuading students of significance in the face of indifference of the senior faculty. The temptation, in the face of such odds, to introduce separate courses is overwhelming. But the history of independent courses on multidisciplinary problems in India provides ample lessons of their non availability in the Indian context. I hope the Conference will provide clear directions on this matter.

C. Thirdly the Conference should examine critically the role of educational institutions and organisations which cater exclusively to women. This Conference is a unique attempt, to bring together academicians, administrators and mobilisers of people, particularly women – to search for meaningful areas of collaboration. If a consensus is achieved in some areas, I hope it will be possible for you to suggest the modalities for such collaboration. During the heyday of the women's movement in India, such co-operation did exist between women's schools and colleges and organisations of women. Over the years, the two went different ways to the detriment of both. Teaching institutions became integrated and developed the usual characteristics of units within a troubled educational system and increasingly lost touch, with the social ideology of women's lead for equality of rights, responsibilities, opportunities and status for participation in development and the political process, which had encouraged their birth, practices like dowry spread like wild fire among the educated men and women, without teaching institution making any effort to counter these trends. On their part, most organisations also tended to focus entirely on action projects of limited scope and neglected the pursuit of gathering information, social analysis and development of new perspectives in the light of their field experience and grass-root level empirical work. I am afraid, all of us, academicians, activists and administrators alike have contributed to the perpetuation of the sex role stereotypes that are the objects of such criticism today. The Conference, I hope, will prescribe some new directions to these bodies that may revitalise their activities and enrol their joint support in the cause of women's and the nation's development and transforming our society to a just and egalitarian one.

In conclusion, may I hope that this Conference will not confine itself to criticism or analysis of past failures, but also identify concrete lines of action which could provide guidelines for the future? Changing society's ideas requires persistent, sustained and courageous efforts. Changing the content and approach of an organised educational system poses an equally difficult challenge. Who should be responsible for this? Agencies like the UGC., NCERT, CSIR, ICSSR may be willing to initiate and support but without a movement for such change inside and outside the educational system, the outcome would be very limited. Our system has proved very resistant to imposed ideas. The kind of qualitative transformation that is visualised by this Conference will call for continuity of this forum – acting as the “Nation's Conscience”, and path finder.

I thank the Organising Committee for inviting me to open this Conference and wish the participants days of fruitful labour.



II National Conference, 1984, Trivandrum

Address of the President

The Association has completed two years of its life, and I am happy that it is beginning to take roots in our academic and national life. A membership of 21 institutions and 271 individuals, a record of two major conferences, some forthcoming publications, and some reserve funds, (instead of an account in the red) these are all signs of healthy growth. While I am happy to acknowledge the recognition and support that we have received from several international agencies, the fact that our activities have received support from our national agencies responsible for promotion of social research, development of higher education and for policies for women's development is, to me, an even stronger indication that the Association is fulfilling a national need. We have made a good beginning and should congratulate ourselves for that, but we should not become complacent. A great deal still remains to be done if the objectives which we set before ourselves at the First National Conference in Bombay four years ago are to be realised fully.

As you are aware, I was the Chairman of the Organising Committee of the First National Conference. I was then Vice-Chancellor of SNDT Women's University, and had tried to initiate some work in Women's Studies through our Research Unit. When Vina Mazumdar and Hemlata Swarup met me, I think it was in December 1980, we discussed how we could organise a more broad based movement to develop women's studies within the general educational system. In the standard method adopted by Indian academics wanting to do new things, we thought of organising a Conference.

We did not even know how many people in the country would be interested and initially expected only about 100 participants. We also thought that it was necessary to call persons engaged in action for women's equality and development, to make that base even stronger and more nationally relevant. We then invited some other people to join a National Organising Committee and set about writing letters. Most of you are aware of the response. In place of the 100 that we had anticipated, nearly 400 attended that Conference, and before it ended they had

resolved unanimously that an Association must be formed to sustain this efforts. The Organising Committee was entrusted with the responsibility of bringing the body into existence. It took us a little time but, I hope we have fulfilled the responsibility that was entrusted to us.

In my Opening Address to the First National Conference, I had asked the participants to think about possible ways of incorporating Women's Studies within the educational system. Some of the Working groups did very good work and came back with recommendations. By that time I had become the Chairman of the UGC, and I was very interested that virtually all the working groups had rejected the model of separate courses for women's studies, and had asked for its incorporation within the major disciplines of Humanities and Social Sciences. A year later at a workshop sponsored by the UNESCO in Delhi, the same plea was put forward by some of our members.

Following these recommendations, the UGC addressed a letter to the Universities in 1983, suggesting that Universities incorporate women's issues and concerns within different disciplines through restructuring of courses, curriculum development, research activities and extension type of work.

The UGC has received some proposals in response, which are being examined by the Secretariat. From what I have seen of them so far, very few have attempted the restructuring of courses or curriculum development. Most of them have sent research proposals, a few have asked to set up Centres or Institutes for women's studies. The proposals also give evidence that the universities have not really viewed this issue either as a need to take note of new knowledge, or as a responsibility for playing a more direct role in promoting women's equality and development. To that extent I have to confess that I am disappointed by the universities' response.

I think in the coming years, this is the most important challenge facing the Association. The primary role of a movement is to articulate issues that have been neglected or marginalised and to mobilise public opinion in support of measures that would not only redress the existing injustice, but

initiate a process to prevent such injustice in future. Women's Studies, in my opinion, has emerged as a powerful challenge – (a) to the existing marginal position of women in society, and (b) to the intellectual perceptions of the most dominant section of our people, which includes both men and women, that contribute to perpetuate the marginal role of women. The UNESCO workshop defined Women's Studies as an instrument for developing the social sciences. I would like to see it as an instrument to develop our entire educational system and all the disciplines, not merely the social sciences, but also humanities, the natural sciences and professional disciplines like agriculture, medicine, technology, law etc. I have therefore, pleaded with the Government that this should be incorporated within the New Educational Policy that is currently under preparation.

Even if we were to succeed in getting the government to agree to this, it will still be necessary for all of us – members of this Association – to work out ways of operationalising this objective within educational institutions. After all the universities are autonomous institutions and unless the academic community itself takes this up as a challenge necessary for the nation's overall development, we are not going to make much headway:

The task before the members of this Association is a challenging one. The more active we are in opening this dialogue with our own institutions, the more successful will be our effort. I am delighted that a few of our universities and colleges have already enrolled as members of this Association. I would hope that they will bepace setters in this venture. But in the long run educational institutions depend on the values, the convictions and the work of their members – teachers, students, and administrators. We, as members of this Association, have to pick up the challenge of converting these three groups to our point of view. I hope the members and the new Executive Committee will devise better and more effective methods to achieve this objective.

Thank you,

Madhuri R. Shah

III National Conference, 1986, Chandigarh

Opening Address by the Vice-President



The formation of Indian Association for women's studies is truly an achievement. It has been able to bring together various groups, individuals from different professions and engaged in different activities and a variety of institutions and organisations.

This university has hosted several professional conferences and we are grateful that it has agreed to host our conference. At the same time, it will not be out of place to point out that our Association is different from other professional organisations in both composition and objectives. The participants here include not only academics and regular professionals but also social workers, activists, writers, lawyers, doctors, para medical personnel, political workers, grassroot workers, women struggling for their rights of grass roots level, persons working for women's welfare within the government, women working in the informal sectors and in various organisations. These are not exactly disparate categories. Not only that, many participants here combine in them several interests, activities and positions; all of us have one common concern: women's issues and gender relations and a firm commitment to change for the better. Thus, while Women's Studies has been accepted as a legitimate area of enquiry in the universities and research institutions, this association is not confined only to academic pursuit. Let me repeat: we are deeply committed to change, to using knowledge for action.

We have a realisation that in social sciences, language and common sense, understanding, there has been a strong androcentric bias. Women's contribution as actors in various fields throughout history and as subjects of social processes who constitute, reproduce and modify social systems defined by relations of power have been ignored; they have either been invisible or have had distorted visibility. Their voices remained silent or unheard. This studies focused on women (though not ignoring men) in various

disciplines, evolution of earlier studies and taking up new researches with a new consciousness constitute an important objective for us. We also strive for incorporating new findings in the mainstream social sciences and other subjects. However, significance and urgency of issues and themes selected for investigation do not justify shoddy research, hastily planned and casually executed. Beware that in the scholarly world, Women's Studies is often viewed either with hostility or with contempt and condescension. We have to prove our worth and the seriousness of our endeavour. Objectivity for us is not value-neutrality. The choice of subjects is guided by the need for struggle and improvement of conditions, while in actual research bias has to be avoided and proper methods are tried to be followed. Even biases have to be known biases.

The nature of our field often demands interdisciplinary collaboration and co-operation. However, care has to be taken that in the absence of a firm grounding in one's own discipline the quality of work is not diluted. It is indeed a happy sign that we have persons who, while well equipped with the skills and knowledge of their own discipline are eager to listen to people from other disciplines and there are also examples of studies – projects – involving people from many areas and disciplines. Further, efforts towards innovation of appropriate methodology have already begun.

To assume that being a woman automatically qualifies a woman to understand and capture the experiences of diverse groups of women is to practise self-deception and to resort to a kind of essentialism. We must realise our limitations and complex human diversity. A special effort is therefore required to develop understanding, empathy and insights. Further, it is alright to emphasise the study of problems of poor women, but is it enough? Some attention to middle class women (i.e. to one's own class) is equally important. Often, the conditions and nature of their limitations and disabilities and oppression remain unclear to them; their strategies are often based on notions of femininity and masculinity, ideal motherhood, and the lower worth of their own lives. There is an urgent need for consciousness-raising regarding gender disparities among both women (of all categories) and men.

For this reason, it becomes an issue as to whether women's studies should be strictly confined to women or should involve men also. Being a woman does not automatically qualify a woman to understand women's issues. And certainly gender issues are not only women's issues. At the same time, many of my colleagues strongly feel that care must be taken that with a distinct advantage of better opportunities for acquiring knowledge, skills and positions of status and power, men do not usurp the field or make it bereft of social concern which is the hallmark of Gender Studies. Another point that is made is about giving women who have a fetching voice opportunities to be vocal and express themselves without constraints.

A careful scrutiny of feminist writings from the west is called for. Blind acceptance must be avoided. There is some sense in emphasizing the importance and value of the involvement of indigenous researchers and local workers in women's issues and Gender Studies. Undoubtedly many subtle aspects of gender relations and contextuality of meaning are often difficult to grasp; so also categories of thought and nuances of behaviour. Here I may also emphasize the need for awareness of cultural diversity within our country linked to class, caste, community, region, rural-urban divide and so on. This applies to both academics and activists.

This brings me to an important, critical issue: prejudices harboured by activists and academics against one another. In point of fact, there needs to be no confrontation between the two. Women's collective action requires a sound understanding of social reality, of people, beliefs and the logic of their behaviour. Perhaps concerned academics can provide this knowledge and requisite information if they do not confine themselves to weaving theoretical webs. Activists' value, role and contribution must not be minimised at any cost. Resistance and protest as well as constructive activity and consciousness raising without adequate grasp of social reality may result in taking faulty steps, faulty planning and action and may also result in incorrect post action analysis. Academics and activists can surely learn from one another. Rather than confrontation, co-operation should be our objective. And, we also have among us a number of persons and groups who combine research and activism. Another area for genuine co-

operation or at times even merging is action research. Value of commonsense as well as genuine concern and capacity to mobilize and inspire women to action must not be undervalued. Let me repeat: resistance movements and remedial action both require a sound understanding of the culture in which the subjects are located. And this can come from both directions, academic, well-planned studies and use of commonsense, direct contacts and observation, with a capacity to reach the people.

Those of us who had taken an initiative to establish the Indian Association for Women's Studies sincerely wish that the younger generation should now come forward and please keep in mind that take over. But we are still active, and will continue to work for pursuing the objectives of the Association.

Thank you,

Leela Dube



IV National Conference, 1988, Waltair

Statement of the President



As we begin our general body meeting today a few words from me would be in order. I only want to state how I have felt as the President of the Indian Association for Women's Studies. When my name was proposed for election as per the election rules in IAWS I was, frankly, surprised. My victory in the election redoubled my surprise. But that also was nothing compared to the astonishment I experienced when the outgoing President Dr. Madhuribahen Shah proposed my name as the next President. Before I could realise what was happening, somebody had seconded the proposal and all present in the EC meeting had welcomed it. I had gone to that meeting of 31 March 1987 only to put in an appearance and develop a better understanding of the IAWS. I have formed a habit of gaining experience wherever possible. IAWS election. I thought, gave me an opportunity to wander in "fields fresh and pastures new". The as Matthew Arnold expressed in his poem 'Scholar Gipsy'.

I confess I took a long time to understand the functioning of the Association and the personalities connected with it. Even today I do not think I have grasped everything fully. But my almost two-year-long association with the persons concerned and the target we tried to achieve have developed within me a fairly clear sense of what IAWS can take on.

What is achieved during the term of this EC will be reported by our very able General Secretary Dr. Susheelabhen Kaushik and Dr. Vina Mazumdar the dynamic person who took up the onerous duties of the Treasurer. Between Susheelabhen and Vinadi the Association has been efficiently

and carefully looked after. I am only trying to put in few words about what I have seen, experienced and thought about IAWS.

It has been my feeling that as a national level Association IAWS is not sufficiently well known throughout the country. We, in Gujarat, tried to inform teachers in universities and colleges. Many responded by saying that they did not know of such an organisation and would become members. What is true of Gujarat could be true of many other states. We perhaps need an awareness-raising campaign about IAWS existence also.

The Newsletters that IAWS is publishing could be a very useful and powerful medium for us. The information we need is about what is happening in this country in the area of Women's Studies and Activism thereby keeping a track of the Women's Movement here. As one wants to know about the fresh research undertaken, so one wants to know the findings of workshops, seminars, conferences etc. convened on women's issues. We have not been able to build the network but that could be done now.

I have always wondered if researchers could be of help to activists. Just as a researcher starts working, available literature on the chosen theme is scanned and also reported. An activist needs to do that too, in a given situation it would be helpful if the activist could find out the details of any action programme undertaken by any activist group in a similar situation. Such documentation would help. But one does not know where to turn to for such help. The activist also needs to survey the socio-economic status or may be the health status of the target group. The action programme undertaken by activists to be evaluated periodically, not only to find out the impact of the programme on the target group but also for the need to change the inputs or the approach or may be the need to end the programme. However, these need to be quickly done. One cannot take 12 to 18 months, for its relevance to the activist would be lost. Could we have some specific method devised for the use of activists?

Regional seminars on Women's Studies are necessary to spread awareness and provide a wider base to the Association. Regional/Zonal Secretaries could look

after the arrangements which the General Secretary could direct. These would help the IAWS cross the barrier of language as in such seminars regional language could be used with on-the-spot translations wherever necessary. The most important would be that in such seminars activists also could participate and that would help bridge the barriers between the scholars and the activists. The Women's Movement can gain momentum only if the efforts of the researchers and activists are co-ordinated.

More interaction, more dialogue, and better understanding would help generate mutual respect and friendliness which would replace the feeling of discomfort that the activist experiences in the company of her learned sisters. Let us look forward to the future in which the paths of studies and activism meet.

Ila Pathak



V National Conference, Jadavpur, 1991

Presidential Address



On The Way To Gender Justice: A Decade of Trial and Achievements

It is a happy coincidence that the Fifth National Conference on Women's Studies organised by the Indian Association for Women's Studies is being held in Calcutta at the Jadavpur University, following the tricentenary celebration of this great city.

In retrospect, the city can boast of political, social and cultural achievements and upheavals. However, as far as the Association is concerned, this occasion and time gain greater significance as Bengal has produced strong women who have excelled in diverse fields giving lead to the women of India. On such an occasion, one cannot but help remembering these great women. To name just a few – Sarojini Naidu, Sarla Devi Choudharani, Taru Datta, Basanti Devi – the list can go on...

Members of my Executive Committee and I are grateful to Jadavpur University for agreeing to host such a large conference which is being attended by representatives from all over India and a few neighbouring countries. On behalf of IAWS I add my welcome to all the delegates and distinguished guests.

The Association is fortunate in having Ms. Qurratulain Hyder a renowned literary scholar and Gnanpeeth awardee to inaugurate the Conference. Her contribution to the cause is through her writings on women and we consider it an honour to have a woman with us of whom we are all proud. We are also grateful to Prof. Sen, Vice-Chancellor of the host University for joining us and being so supportive to the cause.

Since the Association conceived in 1981 has completed 10 years of contribution to women's studies, for my Presidential Address, I have selected the theme : "on the way to gender justice: A decade of trial and achievements". A decade, you will agree, is a special event to take stock.

Till date, four National Conferences have been organised by IAWS, touching issues and concerns relevant to women at that point of time.

Taking a kaleidoscopic review, the first and memorable conference on women's studies was held in Bombay at SNDT University in 1981. This set the pace for the movement by giving a broad focus to Women's Studies in India to review it as a critical instrument to improve our knowledge about society. It also led to the birth of the Indian Association for Women's Studies to provide a forum for interaction amongst individuals, institutions and organisations involved in teaching, research and action for women's development and promoting women's equality through periodic conferences, specific action programmes, dissemination of information and so on.

From among active pioneers, I should say founder contributors of the Association – Leela Dube, Hemlata Swarup, Neera Desai, Vina Mazumdar, Lotika Sarkar, Lucy Jacob, Bina Roy, Devaki Jain, Phulrenu Ghua and many others – I am happy to see some of them with us to-day. This continuity of association has given added strength to the Association. I was also a party to the First National Conference.

This first convention was followed by three national conferences at Trivandrum in 1984, Chandigarh in 1986 and in Waltair in 1988 and now the current one at Calcutta. By a coincidence, the Conferences have circled the country.

You are aware, in each of the Conferences, we have focussed on a particular broad theme interlinked by sub-themes through workshops to give maximum opportunity to participants to voice their concerns, experiences and perceptions. The past and present themes of biennial gatherings indicate the effort that the Association has made in organising sessions

on current and pertinent themes. The First Conference being the initial gathering discussed a wide range of issues concerning women. The Second Conference primarily focussed on women and law, political participation and work, the Third on women's movements and struggles, while the fourth Conference concentrated on one issue with multifarious dimensions, such as rural women, poverty, survival and struggle. The current conference is on religion, culture and politics.

I am sure all will agree to the relevance of the theme in the present context. The way in which three facets of society, namely, religion, culture and politics are intertwined, ultimately affecting women in adverse manner is being proved by the events not only in our country but through developments occurring at global level. The ugly face of fundamentalism goes against the norm of equality and is an assault on women's freedom and identity, I need not repeat before this enlightened gathering the tragedy of the Roop Kanwars and Shah Banos. Unfortunately, even progressive legislation has not been able to blunt the edges. Fundamentalism which corrodes the fabric of society by promoting reactionary values and practices could only be combatted by conscious efforts at awareness generation and resistance to actions of retrograde measures in the name of protecting religion or maintaining cultural identity. Further, fundamentalism operates quite often in a more subtle and covert manner. Hence, women have to be on guard, all the time, so that the precious achievements which we have made so far though still in a limited manner are not wiped off. It is necessary to build unity in groups of women of different religions for collective action to achieve social and economic justice for women. This is an area in which the Association should give leadership through the spread of secular approach and I am confident the recommendations which will emerge will pave the way for the same.

On this occasion, a retrospective review giving highlights of the contributions of the women's studies movement and role of IAWS will not be out of place.

What began 10 years back as an awareness generation activity bringing together academics, activists and

researchers to develop and sustain women's studies, today has a different picture to project. The deliberations, dialogues and networking during the decade have grown wider in range as well as deeper. The beginning of women's studies were made with research, documentation and action. Today we have also encompassed the area of teaching where focus is largely on inter-disciplinary approach and integration of women's issues in the disciplines. Currently nearly 50 Women's Studies units have been operating in the Universities and about the same number of organisations outside the University system are concerned with academic and other issues for implementing Women's Studies. More and more material on women's position, problems, perceptions, movements, and other aspects is committed to cater to the growing need. In the Eighth Plan the spread is bound to increase.

When SNTD set up the programme in 1974, pioneering in this field, it did not have advantage of experience or convention or a model to go by. The paradigm was interpreted and established as the Centre progressed and fresh dimensions were added. In the contemporary scene, the newer centres are in a way in a more advantageous position having a broad frame to go by with possibilities of experimentation of focussing on specific aspects. Take the illustration of Jadavpur University. Since it has a school structure, the focus is on interdisciplinary aspects, drawing strength from various disciplines.

Women's Studies, which started as an exercise to make women analyse deeply the complexities of the status of women in the changing social pattern, today is an academic exercise where people from different disciplines contribute making it an interdisciplinary area and an act of transformation through close liaisoning with action. The decade has witnessed debates on concepts and theoretical issues touching feminism, definition of work, role of family, analysis of women's movements, and many others, orienting knowledge to be useful to changing society. In recent times women's studies is touching new parameters. The National Workshop on 'Visibility of Women in Statistics and Indicators' held at SNTD University in 1989 by the University Research Centre for Women's Studies jointly with the Department of Women and Child Development,

Government of India and International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), made participants conscious of the quality of information available and needed for fuller development of women in national policies and plans. As a consequence of the dialogues that ensued between different organisations, for the first time, the 1991 census operation will probe gender issues and quantify the work in homes and agricultural fields. This is a significant gain as it will improve the visibility of women in national statistics. It is indeed gratifying that after so much struggle and determination, gender dimension has been added in the national census.

I am happy to mention that today IAWS has been able to acquire a status as an important body representing women's interest, where its opinion and reactions are now valued by policy makers. In fact, this process was started by the Association through its President, Dr. Madhuri Shah, who as Chairperson of the apex body of higher education, the University Grants Commission, initiated women's studies at the UGC in 1985, responding to the developments occurring inside and outside the system. This has been a very major contribution. Thereafter, office-bearers and members of the Association have actively participated in the various debates concerning women at governmental and non-governmental levels.

Very recently, the Association collaborated with academic institutions and non-governmental organisations deliberating on the various clauses of the National Commission on Women Bill, 1990 and made recommendations to remove the anomalies which were considered, with recommendations from other organisations and individuals at the National Conference convened by the Department of Women and Child Development in the Ministry of Welfare. This Department has also built links with Women's Studies centres, seeking information for assigning research projects the latest being the national project. "The Girl Child and the Family" involving nearly 25 Women's Studies departments. Women's Studies scholars, several of them belonging of IAWS are included in policy recommendation bodies, to illustrate, the National Commission for Self-Employed Women, Joint Parliamentary Committee on Special Marriage Act, National Commission for

Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribe Women and others. That too is a positive step of achievement. Further, IAWS from the beginning has been maintaining links with international women's movements and has collaborated in conferences, panels and workshops focussed on feminist issues. This contribution gains significance on the conceptual front.

The IAWS was started with certain commitments. The conference deliberations have focussed on conceptual tasks and research orientation. New dimensions are added. I am hopeful that the same dedication to the objectives of the Association will continue. Moreover, in the present times when career is the goal of life and consumerism is a way of life, Women's Studies researchers and activists will need to provide a new model of approach and understanding.

As mentioned earlier, today's Conference is coinciding with the 10th year of the IAWS. To commemorate the decade, the Association has brought out a Special Issue tracing its development and touching selected facets related to women's studies. I am confident this occasion and the document will act not only as a historical reference when future milestones of the Association are being celebrated but will be considered a cutting point to retrospect and move forward to enrich further the activities of this national forum.

A galaxy of women – academics, researchers, activists and policy makers – have contributed to the building up of the IAWS. Some of them have been pillars of strength; many have supported the cause. All categories of persons are needed for a crusade to be meaningful, relevant and effective. It is a very difficult task to identify the contributors by name as many would be missed; but on this occasion of the decade, the Association records its appreciation and gratitude to all those who have in one way or the other, helped the Association further its 'career path'.

The words sung by Poetess Jogeshwari in 19th Century Bengal became a common saying depicting typical male attitude and patriarchal values. They were : 'The boat, the horse and the women belong to whoever rides them'. Women's solidarity

programmes have brought us a long way; but we have 'many promises to keep ... and miles and miles to go' and it is only through concerted action, vigilance and joint effort that we will be able to 'strengthen our strengths'. Differences will be there; this only reflects our maturity. Women's Studies have faced difficulties and will be facing further constraints; inspite of this situation, we have to take up new challenges and give a new scope to the activities through collective deliberations, collective thinking, collective action and above all collective commitment. Let this be our clarion call.

During my tenure as president of IAWS between 1989-1991, I have received excellent support from members of the Executive Committee and we have worked closely and cohesively. Whenever I have approached friends, colleagues and the family of SNDDT – RCWS they have been with me in this challenge. I value this support. Finally my very sincere appreciation for the work put in by Dr. Jasodhara Bagchi and her supporting team of dedicated faculty, staff and friends for looking after the most difficult facet of the Conference – the 'nuts and bolts' aspects through wonderful managerial skills.

I look forward, with all of you to an exciting debate on the various issues of the theme.

Dhonnobad Jai Hind

Kamalini Bhansali



VI National Conference, 1993, Mysore

Statement of President



It is a great moment for me to be here with you on the occasion of the IAWS General Body Meeting, coinciding with the sixth National Conference of the Association. In the twelve years since the Bombay Conference, we have all grown together. Our membership has registered an impressive increase, details of which will be presented by the Secretary and the Treasurer.

I will make only a very brief statement. It has been the constant endeavour of our Executive Committee, that the IAWS should build a lobby of women's opinion on critical issues facing Indian Society. We felt that the Association should be in the centre of the Women's Studies movement and should provide legitimacy to a formation based on gender. We felt that a dialogue with mainstream social sciences should be initiated and sustained.

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

The main activity of the Association has been the holding of the biennial conferences at national level. During the tenure of the last EC as well as ours, there have been certain movements, some opinion building and action, towards regionalising IAWS activities. There has been talk of forming regional Associations, of holding regional Conferences to highlight local issues and perceptions which could also feed into National meetings. There is already a

Maharashtra Association of Women's Studies. We need to clarify many issues, such as the relationship between the regional and the National Association of Women's Studies. Some spade work has been done already on this topic by the present Executive Committee.

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

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

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

I would like to place on record my deep appreciation of the co-operation extended to me by my colleagues, and of the hard work put in by all, especially the Vice President, General Secretary Treasurer, Editor and Joint Secretary. A special word of appreciation for the Local Organizing Secretary for her enthusiastic response to the challenge of mounting this conference. As you know, Maithreyi Krishnaraj's absence from India created the vacuum which I was called upon to fill. I must say, I miss her very much and want to record my sense of gratitude and appreciation for her leadership.

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

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

Devaki Jain



VII National Conference, 1995, Jaipur

Welcome Address President



Honourable Guests, Fellow Delegates and Colleagues,

I deem it a matter of great honour and privilege to offer a warm welcome to you all to the Seventh National Conference of the Indian Association of Women's Studies. As all of you must have noticed the Conference is being organized differently. Any new step brings with it some adjustment problems. But there is a thrill in treading new paths. I therefore urge upon you to bear with some of the inconveniences you might have faced. Kindly look at the Conference as a joint venture and not as a 'we' and they' relationship. We are here to join hands in building a new vision of better society for both men and women.

We are meeting at a very critical moment in the development of Women's movement not only for Jaipur but also for the entire country. We are meeting at the time when one of the cruelest injustices has been perpetrated on a committed ardent activist Bhanvari Bai—under the guise of moralistic overtones and in the name of Indian Culture. It is not merely the fact of acquittal of the four alleged rapists but the manner in which the court arrived at the decision which reminds us of the days of Mathura Case nearly two decades ago. The blatant contention that in India society a woman cannot be raped in the presence of her husband or by the upper caste men fully expose the patriarchal, class-caste bias of the Judiciary. In fact the Judgement has come as a grave signal to us that the women's issues will have to be taken back from the government to the people. Bhanvari is here amidst us and I believe the least we can do is to assure her of all our support in her struggle.

Our Story: Twenty Years of IAWS

My presentation to day is not in the conventional manner of a President's speech; we have a full agenda where we would more like to hear the voices of women and listen to the address of our chief guest Dr. Vandna Shiva. I wish to briefly refer to some of the developments in the macro-system which have posed serious problems to all those involved in the movement. Through this exercise I wish to suggest that our search for visions is likely to be seemingly frustrating if we seek them in the conventional spheres. The glimpse of Feminist vision may not be articulated but may be hidden in the practices and alternate models we create and new ethic which we build up.

The period between the Mysore Conference and the present one has been full of dramatic events. The past president Devki Jain and the Guest speaker in the last conference referred to the enormous state the country was running into through the introduction of New Economic Policy, market as the sole determinant of the value of the products and globalization with its concomitant devastating impact on the life and behaviour of the people. During the last two years the condition has worsened. No amount of assurances about improvement in the economic situation by the Finance Minister or some of the academics can hide the stark reality of growing poverty, unemployment and destitution. Sulabha Brahme while describing the policy as anti-people, recently expressed her anxiety by stating that women across all strata of society will be the worst hit by the process of economic liberalization that is being zealously pursued by the Government. (TIO, 15 DEC, 1995). Similarly there is an alarming note coming from academics and social activists that increase of women's employment in the unorganized sector is a 'distress sale of female labour.'

The last couple of years have witnessed series of international meetings, consultations and conferences. They created an impression of debating seriously on vital issues affecting people at large, however in terms of action agenda and commitment they are extremely disappointing. The International Conference on Population and Development at Cairo where 184 Nations met and agreed on 20 year programme of action which in the final analysis throws the burden on third world countries for

coming out of the crisis is one glaring instance of imperialist attitude.

Soon after this the heads of 184 Nations met for the UN world Summit for Social Development in March 1995. They met to agree on a set of principles to alleviate poverty, generate employment and promise social integration. The conditions of people is becoming worse day by day. It has been mentioned that one out of every five people in the world—more than a billion in all live below poverty line, an estimated 13 million die every year of poverty related causes. The picture becomes darker when it is predicted that the number of those affected by extreme poverty will quadruple in one life time if the current economic and demographic trends continue. Of course all these realities were outside the scope of the Summit. There has been hardly any commitment to action. The NGO forum as it is well known had difficulties of its own with the result that the few activities and academics withdrew from the mainstream discussions and joined hands with the People's Movement.

Beijing Conference is very fresh in our memory. It was a momentous meeting of over 30,000 Women NGOs. In spite of media's silence, trivialization and quite often negative projection of the NGO deliberations, the Beijing conference has a few pay offs. It reinforced the conviction in the incessant struggles which will have to be launched against all forms of violence. The open letter of Thanks written by Asian Women's Human Rights Council and Vimochana mentions, 'We the women who came here from diverse lands and cultures write to tell you we are saying NO to all forms of violence in our societies—be it the violence born out of our own cultures not only brings women from diverse cultures together but also voices the unease about the 'stridency' and 'appropriation' or the ignorance on the part of the 'First World' where gender, race and class issues in other parts of the globe is concerned. (HUMANSCAPE) The Beijing conference has been one more evidence of the hollow and opportunistic approach to women's issues by the policy makers. The country paper which was supposed to have been jointly prepared in consultation with the social activists and academics has been seriously criticised by the women's for the non-committal stand and portrayal of the bright

picture of the women's condition in the country. As mentioned in the publication of Joint Women's Programme entitled 'Towards Beijing A Perspective from the Indian Women's Movement' 'The Paper (Country) appropriates the language of the movement while diluting its concerns.' (p.2) The wide spread feeling of distrust in the country paper subsequently led to organization of series of meetings before finalizing it. How far the changes and thrusts recommended by the women's groups will be incorporated and implemented is doubtful. The National Commission of Women established in 1990 generated a mixed reaction in the beginning about its role. However it seems to be identifying a few thrust areas for action. Strengthening of Women's Participation in the decision making structures in order to safeguard the interests of women and provide national level scrutiny and advocacy for policies if adequately followed may be able to make the Commission play the role of support institution for women's movement.

The intervening period had been witness to the strengths and tensions, rifts and differences in the Women's Movement. The time has come to accept the fact that women's movement is not a homogenous movement; feminism is not a monolithic ideology; it could have pluralistic visions and strategies. The diversities reflected in values, in analysis of socio-political scenario, in manifestations of patriarchal attitudes need to be recognised. However the commonness of concerns or commonalities of oppressive realities can not be ignored. We have to be ready to accept differences in approach and evaluations of situation provided the goal is common.

The resistance to oppression through grassroot movements has been one of the notable features of the period. In fact we have moved from the 'culture of silence' to culture of articulation and protests. The anti-arrack movement against displacement of the tribals in Easter Bihar, movement against the Bargi dam, Narmada and so many others are a few evidences of raised voices against the havoc wrought by construction of large dams, acquisition of land, deforestation and other such policies. These measures have been hitting hard the poor people but they have far more adverse impact on the life of women and children

and make them more vulnerable. The struggles undoubtedly indicate the newly gained confidence of women and their strength in resisting such formidable forces as the state, vested interests and the muscle power.

Similarly, the euphoria about the judiciary delivering justice to women has been again and again eroded. The holding of Public Hearing on Crimes against Women and the Violence of Development organised at Bangalore illustrate one such effort not merely to try the guilty but it also provided a non inhibitive atmosphere to women to give expression to the gravity of violence and indignities which they have been made to suffer. The public hearings of such accounts are not only the techniques to break the silence of centuries of acceptance of oppression but are occasions to meet out justice to them. When the established structures fail to deliver the goods parallel structures need to emerge to punish the guilty.

The scenario in the women's studies is rather baffling. Women's studies (WS) began as an alternate movement for knowledge production and knowledge dissemination. WS is not merely a subject to be studied in the class room. It attempts to understand the problems of women from a feminist perspective; it is also an instrument to change the conditions of women. The UGC by establishing centres in some of the Universities by the various departments. To day there are about 22 centres of WS in various universities and in the 9th plan some more are likely to emerge. It is necessary to note that Feminist scholarship is not only confined to the centres but the activity of knowledge production is carried on outside the Centres also. Naturally the problems of administration, dealings with other departments or answerability affect the centres more directly. Further the Centres are quite often bothered by the administrative responsibilities, getting financial support for their activities, dealing with the UGC bureaucracy and evolving strategies to survive. They find their tasks too formidable and time consuming. This situation very often comes in way of seriously making dent on the educational system through WS. Today we have a peculiar situation where knowledge is produced considerably outside the centres but for some of these scholars getting acceptance from the mainstream academic

community has high value. While there are a few centres which have been struggling to carve out a balance between theory and praxis, as usual there are a few who consider WS as a status giving discipline, providing opportunities of access to power and position; for them serious concern with the women's issues is of less significance. With the new wind blowing in the UGC it is hoped that we will have more centres with greater degree of permanence and above all more concern for developing knowledge from the feminist perspective and disseminating it not only to the academic community but making it relevant for mass of women. We have to remind ourselves constantly that when we started the movement for WS in the educational system it was not for adding one more discipline to the repertoire of disciplines. We did not plead for development of mere esoteric knowledge. We thought that it is an instrument of change. It was an effort to bring relevance to the educational process.

The scenario is also fraught with a new challenge before all of us, whether in the movement or in the studies. That challenge is the need to shake off the value free garb and be ready to take positions. The impinging of human rights is becoming a normal phenomenon. There are ecological infringements, fundamentalism is promoted through various means; instances of state violence also are increasing; there have been atrocities perpetrated on Harijan and tribal women; the uniform civil code has become a serious controversial issue. There is an urgent need to demonstrate commitment to democratic values by the policy makers, NGOs, women's groups and women's studies academics. It is in this context that commitment conference organized prior to the Beijing Conference has relevance. Concerned women are not satisfied merely with promises given by the government but they need to have assurance that they will be implemented. All of us are tired of pious policy statements which turn out to be either platitudes or instruments for political gain. The world public hearing at Hurairou was aimed at speaking out their unresolved historical grief and asked every body to grieve with them. Together they pieced together fragments of a precious collective memory. Together they dare to dream—a dreamscape.'

Thus while reviewing the situation during the last half a decade one finds that newer challenges are facing the women's movement and women's studies. There have been 'formidable forces leading quite often to frustration and pessimism. The women's movement along with other people's movement is becoming alert to the hollow statements of policy measures. With increase in violence and risk to the survival of human kind we notice a deep silence about the new visions for a better society. Visionary or utopian articulations are possible when there is some remote chance of realizing them or there is some possibility of having a better life. With the growing deprivation, erosion of ethical values, resurrection of fundamentalism and survival risks increasing the individual is exhausted in the day to day struggle with hardly any hope left for dreaming a better future. The tiredness of building utopian visions does not simply reflect a passing phase of pessimism but relates to some of the basic changes in the social system having serious impact on the people's lives and the psyche. These conditions compel one to question oneself and also to seek answers in alternate paradigms of knowledge and social behaviour. When we talk of feminist vision perhaps we may not find it expressed in clear terms. We have to locate it in the alternate structuring of organizations; in alternate ethical practices that might have been evolved; in the alternate method of sustaining relationships that might have been built up. In the introduction to the Conference theme we have referred to the pleas made by the environment and green movement for better and sustainable society; The revival of Gandhian values and the decentralised economic structure has been another alternative which seems to appeal a few. The women's movement dreams of a society which would be bereft of class and gender discriminations and where woman's dignity will be respected for its own value and not as an appendage to any other individual.

We hope that the four days we will be spending together will strengthen our endeavours for searching newer paradigms, to involve in struggles to preserve the human species and to build for a better future – may be not for us to see but for the future generation. A big thank you to all.

VII National Conference, 1995, Jaipur

Statement by the President

Fellow Members,

It gives me great joy to stand before you at the General Body Meeting which coincides with the VII National Conference of the Indian Association of Women's Studies.

From April 1981 when a decision was made to launch an Association for Women's Studies we have modest account of growth in numbers, programme thrusts and our perception of the complex milieu in which we work. During this period both Women's Studies and Women's Movement have been witness to new dilemmas.

The details about the action taken during the two year period of the Executive Committee and the financial picture will be presented by the General Secretary and the Treasurer respectively. I will make a few observations with regard to some of the new activities undertaken by the EC during the period.

We are meeting after the crucial Beijing Conference. In spite of the occasional ridicule by the Press we have to recognize that it was a momentous meeting and decades of hard work succeeded in putting women's issues at the centre stage. It has raised crucial issues especially about the role of the State vis-à-vis women's issues.

The present meeting as it has been mentioned time and again has been an effort at experimenting on organizing a conference in a different manner. It has further taken up challenges of dialoguing on a vital theme of "Alternative Visions" where not much work has been done though there has been a nebulous feeling in the minds of all of us with regard to the future we want to have. Treading on a new path has its problems but the thrill of searching for something new and doing it in a different way has its own rewards. We hope all of you found the experience exciting.

The Association during its two-year tenure took few steps to ensure larger and meaningful participation of the members. One such effort has

been to encourage regional level organizations. During the tenure of the previous EC, the Maharashtra Stree Abhyas Vyaspeeth came into existence. It recently held a successful second conference in Konkan region. Similarly the Gujarat Forum For Women's Studies and Action was formed around 1993 though it has been active since 1994, starting with organizing a workshop on "Women's Movement in Gujarat" and launching a newsletter. I am happy to inform you that there is a move to start such regional organizations in Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan. Of course what would be the nature of the link between the National and the Regional body needs to be spelt out but what is important is the desire for local initiative and local participation.

Recognizing the imperative need to grapple with various aspects of the sub-themes we mooted the idea of organizing pre-conference workshops. We were able to organize three such workshops: one relating to the "State and Women's Movement in India", second on "Issues before the Institution of Family" and third on "Feminist Economics". We are grateful to all the organizers of the workshops. The reports are available at a very nominal price.

While working on this relatively uncharted field we realized the need to have an overall coordinator who can critically and sensitively oversee the sub-theme organizations. A background volume which could put together some of the thinking and action which has gone in the past pertaining to the future visions could be very useful for long term action. We were fortunate in having a sensitive feminist scholar Dr. Maithreyi Krishnaraj to handle these complex tasks. We are immensely grateful to Maithreyi for her valuable input.

Likewise we are thankful to AKSHARA for preparing a Resource Book documenting various type of material available on the sub-themes as well as the main theme.

You are all aware that the National Election is to be held soon. Some of the States have passed through the experience of thirty percent reservation for women in the local elected bodies. We felt that a national organization like ours cannot remain outside

the momentous event. We think that there is a need to build up a relationship with the voters. The Association realizing its limitations however agreed to participate in the awareness-raising activity for women voters by providing information and enabling them to have space for discussion which could strengthen their power. The political strength thus gained could be used to press for issues and choices which women consider significant. It is with this objective that IAWS along with other bodies decided to initiate a National Campaign for Women Voters.

All the members of the previous ECs have constantly harped on the need to have some permanent office for the IAWS. With the kind cooperation of Jagori we have been able to have some terra firma which has been of tremendous help in the efficient functioning of the organization. This time we were also able to have an office co-ordinator, Juhi Jain – helping in the varied organizational work. We offer our thanks to her for all she has done and still continues to do even though she has taken up another assignment.

The editorial team this time brought out three issues of the Newsletter and the fourth one will be published after the conference. I extend my deep felt thanks to Nandita Gandhi and her team. All of us who have been involved in organizational work appreciate the fact that no organization can work fruitfully without the full cooperation of its members. I would like to put on record the willing support given to me by all the EC members. I would however like to mention the untiring zeal, dynamic approach and resourcefulness of our young General Secretary, Kamla Bhasin. The Vice President, the Treasurer and all other members deserve very warm appreciation for giving their time thus making my tasks much simpler. I specially would like to put on record our gratitude to FAO for not merely making Kamla available for all the Association work but providing full cooperation in raising resources, contacting participants for the South Asia Panel, helping communication with them which is so difficult when it is out of the country. In fact, considerable office time and services have been provided by the FAO office. Without such cooperation, efficient organization in these days of breakdown would not

have been possible. We express our grateful thanks to FAO.

Finally even at the risk of repeating myself I would say that we are here in Jaipur and have been able to pursue our deliberations and other activities comfortably and fruitfully because of the tremendous pains taken by the host women's groups, their supporters and volunteers. I extend my very best congratulations to the entire team.

The Association can only survive with the active participation of its members. In the coming years which are likely to be times of great trial, I am sure all of you will enthusiastically make the organization throbbing with women's concerns and action.

Thank you,

Neera Desai



VIII National Conference, 1999, Pune

President's Speech



It is my pleasant duty to welcome all of you, friends and fellow-members of the Indian Association for woman's studies, to this General Body Meeting of the Association. Though we had last met in December 1995, this EC did not begin functioning till June 1996. I am rather proud of the several things that we managed to do during this short period of two years and would like to briefly mention these for your information.

Right from the beginning, this EC had felt the need to expand the network of this body. We felt sure that there were many more who were interested in gender issues in different parts of this vast country, but found it difficult to build channels of communications with a centralised organisation. Because this EC had representation from almost all regions, we could begin the process. We encouraged each member of the EC to locally initiate, on behalf of the IAWS, some activity of immediate interest in her region. As a result, in 1997, as many nine such regional initiatives, quite often held in the local language, took place. They were spread all over the country from Trivandrum to Shillong to Chandigarh. This report includes at the end a list giving details about these activities, all of which apparently had got an excellent grassroots response. I am very grateful to the Ford Foundation, whose funds mainly saw us through these modestly organised activities and to my colleagues in the EC who carried out the task with great enthusiasm. They have certainly helped the Association to reach out to many more people than ever before.

We had another purpose in mind in sponsoring these regional activities. In a rapidly changing

economy and society, many times we find that the official data system is neither fast enough nor gender-sensitive enough to keep us abreast of the diverse, region-specific changes in women's positions. The regional workshops, which had involved many local workers, filled in some of the gaps in our information. Unfortunately, in the period since, we have not had the time to publish the excellent reports that the co-ordinators had prepared from the proceedings. Only the report on the reservations workshop at Calcutta was published and is available here for sale.

Our other big activity was organising the national seminar on the "Early Years of the Independence", at Baroda in August 1997. Since we have managed to give all of you a booklet commemorating that seminar, I will not talk about it except to hope that the Association will have the resources to organise many more such in future.

Kavita Panjabi, one of the very enthusiastic members of the EC, was entrusted with the task of editing and producing the newsletters of the IAWS. She promptly put together a very impressive editorial team in Calcutta which brought out four newsletters in these two years. In spite of Calcutta's reputation for poor communications, Kavita managed to get together information from many quarters of the country to make the newsletters truly readable.

Kalpna Kannabiran, our young Joint Secretary, has performed wonders co-ordinating at the apex level the work of the organiser of the large number of sub-themes for this conference. She too found that it was not always easy to establish communications across the country - but nonetheless, she did a very efficient job of putting together whatever material she got. Most of the sub-theme co-ordinators too, readily took to their work and, as you saw in the last three days, did a wonderful job of organising the papers. I feel sure that with so much young enthusiasm coming forth, the Association has a very bright future ahead of it.

Apart from these academic activities, our very efficient General Secretary, Chhaya Datar, has managed to sort out a lot of the administrative muddles, given that the Association has no

permanent office or staff. These problems are not easy to avoid. I do know however, that in cases, Chhaya has now created simple but adequate programmes to deal on a routine basis with difficulties such as renewal of memberships. I earnestly request all of you to check carefully whether or not your own membership details have been correctly entered.

In spite of Chhaya's best efforts at mobilizing friends to help us to get income tax exemption for the Association, the file is still languishing in Delhi. I hope the next EC will follow up the matter and get the clearance soon.

We are very happy to report that the elections for the next EC went off smoothly and the new EC will be able to take the reins of the Association immediately after this conference is over. I am grateful to Dr. Usha Thakkar for the very efficient and smooth "Operation Elections" that she carried out. The list of the elected members of the new EC is given.

Reports of the Secretary and the Treasurer will give you the details of the generous grants that we have received from several donors during these two years and which made our many plans for the Association's activities and for this well-provided conference a reality. I am personally very grateful to Kamla Bhasin for her role in achieving this. Without her constant help and advice, I at least would not have known how to go about this. Chhaya, with the help of the Maharashtra Stree Abhyas Vyaspeeth has managed all the details of the conference. Sitting in Calcutta, I was not of much help with any of these.

Throughout these two years, Neera Desai has been a great support for me personally. We both go back a long way in the history of Women's Studies and movement in this country. I remember the first occasion when I met her in 1978 at the IDS conference on the Subordination of Women at the Sussex University. That our ideas constantly jelled well together was perhaps due to the similarity in our ages; but it was also because we share a very live interest in the issues related to gender in India. Although Neera was not an office bearer in the EC, she has continued to put in seminal work in

the cause of the Association as witnessed by the draft she has prepared for amendments to the IAWS constitution. Rohini Gawankar, another old friend, came to this EC with considerable experience of its work. On a number of occasions, her cool common sense put the breaks on our runaway ideas. I am grateful for her continued support and friendship.

Members of the Association, I invite you to the proceedings of this general body meeting of the IAWS.

Nirmala Bannerjee



IX National Conference, 2000, Hyderabad

Presidential Address



The year 1999 was one of some very serious losses for the women's studies movement in India. Within the last five months we lost Prof. Asok Mitra, Prof. B. Shivaramayya and Prof. M.N. Srinivas. Many of the young participants may wonder why I should begin with this statement. I do so to emphasise their role as symbols of success, in the impact of women's studies on the academic and social conscience of three very senior scholars, of three different backgrounds. Asok Mitra played a major role by chairing the ICSSR's Committee on Women's Studies in the post-Emergency period and pushing a few of us into exercises in policy formulation in which we had no experience. He was also a founder of the Association for Women's Studies and in his own field, population studies, he tried to instil a gender sensitive conscience among his students and colleagues by using the declining sex ratio as a kind of a whip. Shivaramayya went on to become a gentle, but persuasive activist in highlighting the critical importance of gender issues permeating legal studies. Srinivas, while pushing the ICSSR's programme into the study of 'invisible' women i.e. women whose life experiences had remained invisible to social scientists till then, helped to strengthen the perspective and focus that enabled him years later, to acknowledge women's studies as the 'most significant development in Indian social sciences' and also as a 'challenge from below'.

This kind of open support from very senior and leading scholars from three distinct fields in the formative period of women's studies in India was a characteristic feature which provoked occasional envy among colleagues in other countries, and sometimes questioning by feminists within. Did it

demonstrate a sign of our dependence on the patriarchal establishments?

Our generation did not think so. There were also some very senior members of the governmental establishment who were equally disturbed by the report of the Committee on the Status of Women in India and became allies of our movement from the beginning. Whatever efforts were stirred up within the government to modify, change or look for alternative policies would never have taken place without the help of these insiders.

I used to refer to this generation as the freedom generation i.e. of persons who were already full adults at the time of, or a decade before independence, I believed that some of them had accepted the value of gender equality – at least at the intellectual level, and their acts of omission or commission were not worse than those of us – women in professions – academic, administrative, or political. The Constitutional promise of equality had foundered because no body including women activists, was aware of its greatest obstacle – *the social construction of gender*. Being academics ourselves, we identified the education system – **influenced as it was by social hierarchy and colonial influence – as a major culprit for directing the content of education very far away from the lives of the majority of women – thereby rendering them invisible. If the social construction of gender was to reflect Indian social reality in all its diversity and promote the values propagated by the new Constitution then the education system had to be made aware of its positive potential as well as misdeeds.**

The first National Conference on Women's Studies brought together various sections of the Indian middle class – government functionaries, voluntary organisations, trade unions, political activists, and other sections in civil society 'to initiate the long overdue process of incorporating women's roles and experience in academic studies' by promoting a pressure group of academics and activists, government functionaries and university representatives, women's organisations and trade unions, specialists and generalists from different sections of society.

Running through the massive list of 19 working group reports, desperately seeking to make concrete recommendations, was **'a rather nebulous idea that what was necessary was a transformation of structures, of ethos, of quality and behaviour through the unity of scientific studies, mobilising action, and spreading awareness – among the public, within educational, health and legal systems, among the media and the worlds of creative literature, science and technology. It is this underlying idea that made participants feel that they were taking part in a movement and not just a conference – and the decision to form the Association for Women's Studies to maintain the momentum.**

That Conference focussed on a broad range of public policies **'as they affect women and their roles in society'**. This time we are discussing women's *perspectives* on public policy. So the movement – to a considerable extent – **the creation of that 'happening' nineteen years ago, has moved in strength and ideology – from the politics of recommendations to the politics of assertion and participation.** I would call this an exercise in political responsibility in a democracy. But in the current jargon of human rights – this is part of the Right to Development.

In the decade after the Emergency, some of us working in cooperation with like-minded officials within the government produced both critiques and alternatives to existing policies with very little or no result. In the mid-80s however, while the women's movement suffered a severe defeat over the Muslim Women's (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Bill, **the Women's Studies movement scored its success in getting Education for Women's Equality incorporated in to the new National Policy on Education.** It was to take us several years to realise that getting a policy, like getting a legislative amendment, was not enough to ensure its implementation. I would however like to mention that the national goal of equality was retained within the NPE only because of this intervention, Government policy otherwise was very busy eroding the concept of equality from the education system at that point. The Chapter was forced to mention minorities, scheduled castes and

scheduled tribes having made space for women's equality as part of a new thrust.

What I am trying to emphasise through these old stories is that **in the eyes of the political establishment at least, women's studies came to acquire a political identity as well as an ideology which challenged the statusquo and vested interests, in academia and society at large – at the theoretical/philosophical – or the purpose, value or content, as well as at the operational, organisational or structural levels.**

I am not too sure how many new entrants into women's studies understood or accepted this tag at that point of time. I would however claim that *the genesis of the identity and ideology can be traced to the collective articulation of concerns at the first National Conference itself and in the selection of themes in successive National Conferences.*

The political context within which women's studies in India was born and nursed through its infancy and adolescence is however very different today. In the last three successive conferences – we tried to address the realities and implications of globalisation as a process affecting the lives of every citizen of this country, but women in particular, with increasing inequalities or negative trends at various levels. But *the situation we face today presents a clear threat to the survival of women's studies as an organised movement.*

The dream of education being the greatest catalyst for creating a new nation, a new society, and new rights for the people as a whole – including all those groups which had been excluded from any notion of rights – to equality, justice or dignity in our inherited past – looks like an illusion that cannot even qualify to be recognised as a mirage in the context of today. Within education itself, higher education is in a state of acute crisis – where academic freedom, university autonomy, or the pursuit of knowledge are all being regarded as dispensable – in the search for the highest bidder in a rapidly changing auction market. As far as the school system is concerned, particularly in the area of social studies – the whole series of recent reports in the *press* are enough indications of what is being planned. Women's Studies has been involved in

reconstructing the past to remove the barriers of invisibility and suppression of accounts of women's agency, but the process of deconstruction of history that from reports has already reached a fairly advanced stage makes it imperative for women's studies to reexamine and redefine its role and strategies in future.

Any struggle or movement has to respond to major changes in the broader environment if it wants to survive. It calls for vigilance, broad-based participation and organisational strength. **Above all it needs allies in all groups who stand to lose their dreams for a future in a world and a nation threatened by too many destructive forces and sharpening inequalities.** It is not for me to advise you of how you should deal with

these challenges. All I can say is that my life, like that of some others here was enriched and extended by the explosion of creative energy at various levels, but particularly at the grassroots unleashed by the twin movements by women in this country. In that creativity, energy and confidence I shall stake my beliefs for the future.

Veena Mazumdar

■ ■



For copies contact:

Dr. Lakshmi Lingam

General Secretary, IAWS

C/o Unit for Women's Studies

Tata Institute of Social Sciences

Sion-Trombay Road, Deonar

Mumbai - 400 088

Phone: +91-22-5567717, 5563290-96

E-mail: lakshmil@tiss.edu



Indian Association for Women's Studies
www.iaws.org



Sustaining Democracy
Challenges in the New Millennium

Orissa Plenary Session

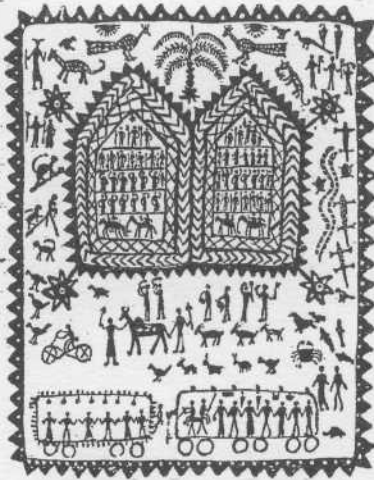
Presentations :

Vidya Das
Tapasi Praharaj
Sandhya Nayak
S. B. Agnihotri
(Coordinator)

Xth National Conference of the Indian Association for Women's Studies

17th - 20th October 2002

Utkal University, Bhubaneswar, Orissa



Sustaining Democracy

Challenges in the New Millennium

Orissa Plenary Session

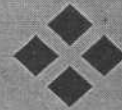
Presentations :

Vidya Das
Tapasi Praharaj
Sandhya Nayak
S. B. Agnihotri
(Coordinator)

Xth National Conference of the Indian Association for Women's Studies

17th - 20th October 2002

Utkal University, Bhubaneswar, Orissa



CHANGES IN SEX RATIO PATTERNS IN ORISSA: 1991 -2001 IS THERE AN EPI-CENTRE OF FEMALE DEFICIT?

Satish B. Agnihotri¹

ABSTRACT:

Provisional results of the 2001 population census show alarming decline in the female to male sex ratios in the child population (0-6 years). Orissa is no exception to this trend. What is disturbing in Orissa though, is an unusually strong decline in the female to male child ratio (FMR06) in the urban population in a number of districts. Further, the rural segment appears to be responding to this 'urban effect' quite significantly. Both these features are new to the state, where discrimination against girls has traditionally not been strong. In addition, the NSSO data (55th round) for the state also indicate masculine sex ratios among the prosperous households. Orissa may thus have joined the category of states where the urban and the prosperous segments of population are emerging as 'epi - centres' of female deficit. This has important implications for policy, research and activism.

Introduction: Sex ratios in the Indian population are becoming rapidly masculine. Any comfort drawn from a marginal increase in the female to male

ratios (FMRs) of the overall population; 933 in 2001 from 927 in 1991, is bound to be short-lived given an 18 point decline in the FMR among children (0-6 years); from 945 to 927 during the same period. This pattern; the RGI warns us, will continue to haunt the society for decades to come (Paper - 1 of 2001), unless of course, corrective measures are taken.

But the child sex ratio patterns for 2001 should heighten our concern for one more reason; these mark a clear change from the hitherto known and discussed 'north - south' divide. Briefly stated, district level analyses of sex ratios among children in the 0-9 or 0-6 years age have traditionally shown a clear division of the Indian landscape into the north-western and the south-eastern parts² (Sopher, 1980, Miller 1981, Agnihotri 2000). Sex ratios in the north - western parts have been distinctly more masculine than those in the southern - eastern part; a trend that has been attributed to the regressive cultural practices in the north -western region and relatively 'female - friendly' culture in the south- eastern part (Dyson and Moore, 1983).

¹ Consultant UNICEF, Kolkata, 219/2 AJC Bose Road, Kolkata 700 017; Tel. 033 287 2477 (O) 281 7606 (R), e-mail : sbagnihotri@yahoo.com While UNICEF has facilitated the analysis initiative, Views expressed are author's own.

² A rough divide along the Bharuch-Chhotanagpur line or the Narmada-Sone line.

Some scholars have also pointed out and expressed concern over the growing trend of masculinisation of sex ratios in the south-eastern region as well (Miller, 1989; Caldwell 1990). A comparison of the juvenile age - group sex ratios between 1971 and 1981 (Miller, 1989) and between 1981 and 1991 (Agnihotri, 2000) does bear this out. But this trend has become particularly sharp during the 90s and the sex ratio patterns for the 0-6 years age group show this feature unmistakably, especially in the urban segment (Agnihotri 2002). Figure - 1 shows that the pattern of low FMRs has breached the conventional divide and has intruded into different districts in the south - eastern states including a number of districts in Orissa.

Low levels of FMR in some of the districts in Orissa are disturbing. Orissa has traditionally had higher FMRs compared to the national average. Further, discrimination against girl children has not been particularly strong here. Yet FMRs in some of its urban segments are now comparable with those in the districts of Haryana or western UP, known for their adverse female to male ratios. This decline; unimaginable before the publication of 2001 census figures, provides the main motivation for the analysis below.

II

Table 1 gives the sex ratio figures for Orissa (all age group) from 1901 to 2001. However, as the overall population sex ratios are affected by sex selective migration, it is more appropriate to look at the sex ratios in the child population in the 0-6 age group available from census. Table - 2 provides the relevant details. It can be noticed that the FMRs in Orissa have been consistently higher compared to the national average.

Table - 2

Sex ratio in the 0-6 population: India and Orissa

Year	India	Orissa
1961	976	1035
1971	964	1168
1981	962	995
1991	945	967
2001	927	950

A detailed picture can be seen, however, through the sex ratio figures at the district level. This is provided in Table - 3. Orissa earlier had 13 districts. These were divided into 30 districts. The 1991 census data were available only in respect of 13 districts. However, after publication of the 2001 results, the office of the RGI has made comparable data from 1991 census available for the 30 districts of Orissa.

FMRs for the 06 age - group for the state as a whole declined by 17 points; from 967 in 1991 to 950 in 2001. In rural segment, the decline has been of a comparable 15 points; 969 in 1991 to 954 in 2001. But in the urban segment, the decline has been higher; of 22 points. The FMR06 for urban population was 949 in 1991, it has come down to 927 in 2001.

The spatial pattern of the decline merits further scrutiny. Figure 2a and 2b compare the distribution of the FMR06 in 1991 and in 2001 in 30 districts. In 1991, only two districts, Kendrapada and Jagatsingpur had low FMRs, 942 and 941 respectively. But in 2001 as many as 12 districts had FMRs below this level, lowest being in Nayagarh (901). The contiguity of these 12 districts is striking; low FMRs in 0-6 age group show a remarkable cluster and not a scatter.

A similar contiguity can be noticed in the high FMR end. Districts of Kalahandi, Koraput, Rayagada, Nabrangpur and Malkangiri, having FMRs above 980, form a contiguous belt. Even in 1991, nine out of ten districts having FMRs above 980, adjoin each other³. Quite understandably, districts with intermediate IMRs also form contiguous belt.

But it is the contiguity of districts with very low FMR06 in their urban population that is disturbing (Figure-3). First there is a set of three adjoining districts Ganjam, Nayagarh and Boudh where the FMR06 (urban) are below 860; a figure comparable to FMRs in some of the districts of Haryana and western UP. These are flanked by Kandhamal (896), Angul (898) and Dhenkanal (902), Khordha (908) and Gajapati (920). Kendrapada (916) and Jagatsingpur (889) are not contiguous as these are separated by a strip, Jajpur (926), Cuttack (948) and Puri (930). Even these FMRs are not quite high. Another arm of the low FMR belt stretches along the Bolangir (921), Bargarh (938) and Jharsuguda (931) strip.

It is plausible to argue that the low urban FMRs for the 0-6 age group could also be attributed to statistical fluctuations due to the small population size. This is especially so for urban child population of Nayagarh, Boudh and Kondhmal. It is intriguing however, as to why the 'fluctuations' should point out in the same direction. Further, even if we add the urban population of these contiguous districts, FMRs in the 0-6 age group will remain low. The 'fluctuation' argument does not therefore help.

Two points bear a mention here. District-wise FMR06 for 1991 and 2001 correlate quite strongly for the total and the rural population and the association between the two (Figures 4a and 4b) can be described as;

$$\begin{aligned} \text{FMR06}_{2001} &= \text{FMR06}_{1991} - 17.9 \quad \text{Rural population} \\ \text{FMR06}_{2001} &= 1.011 * \text{FMR06}_{1991} - 28.9 \quad \text{Total population (R+U)} \end{aligned}$$

For urban FMRs the correlation is quite weak. It can however be noted, that a sharp decline in the urban FMR06 has come from districts in a more or less contiguous belt. These are Jagatsingpur, Jajpur, Dhenkanal, Angul, Nayagarh, Khordha, Ganjam, Boudh and Kondhamal.

III

The spatially contiguous belt of coastal Orissa between Ganjam and Baleswar is known to be relatively prosperous region of the state. In a number of analyses, different researchers (Bardhan, 1971 to Premi, 2001) have voiced concern over the pattern adverse FMRs in prosperous districts. In a recent analysis (Agnihotri, 2002), I have expressed concern about emergence of 'epi-centres' of female deficit among the prosperous and the urban segments of our society. What do the Orissa data reveal on this issue?

Data on sex ratios by prosperity are not available from census. However, surveys conducted by the NSSO (National Sample Survey Organisation) provide this information indirectly through details on family composition by MPCE (monthly per capita expenditure) class, a good surrogate for prosperity. There are twelve such MPCE classes and the composition of the families within each class is available in terms of adult and 0-14 age group child population by sex. It is thus possible to estimate sex ratios of the child (0-14), adult and the total population in each MPCE class for different states. This is particularly so in respect of survey rounds that involve fairly large sample size e.g. 43rd, 50th and 55th rounds conducted in 1987-88, 1992-93 and 1997-98.

Table - 4 provides data for the three rounds described above. It provides details of the average MPCE of the households in each MPCE bracket, the number of such households and the number of adult and

3. I have argued elsewhere, however, (Agnihotri, 2000) that such high levels of FMR may not be desirable per se, for, these may be arising on account of higher male infant mortality compared to female infant mortality in a high mortality region.

young (0-14) male and female population. These details are separately provided for the rural and the urban population for each round. Figures 5a to 5c and 6a to 6c give the scatter plot of the sex ratios (adult and children) with the AMPCE levels for the Rural and the Urban areas respectively.

At first glance, the picture is not very clear. Results for the 55th round do clearly indicate that the FMRs for the 0-14 age group are significantly lower for the top three MPCE classes. For adult population this is not so clear. Similarly, for the 43rd round, while the rural data shows a clear decline in the FMRs, 0-14 as well as adults, the urban population does not show this trend for the 0-14 population. For the 50th round, the trend is quite mixed up. One reason for this mixed trend could be the fluctuations owing to the small population size involved. We can therefore have a look at the FMRs by clubbing the population of three MPCE brackets together. If this is done the combined population of the top three MPCE brackets show significantly low FMRs for adult population for all three rounds as well as among the 0-14 year population except for 43U and 50R.

However, a closer look would indicate that the trend in the 50th and the 55th round in urban areas clearly suggests a strong lowering of FMRs in the top three MPCE classes. In rural areas the overall trend is tentative, but in the 55th round, low FMR among the top three MPCE groups is evident. One may have to await the results from the next large survey round of the NSSO before drawing a firm conclusion.

IV

Highly masculine FMRs in the urban areas and among the prosperous groups is a matter of concern, for, it indicates growing discrimination against the girl children among these groups. A new and

worrying aspect of this discrimination is the use of technology to curtail the life chances of the girl child even before its birth. This practice of sex selective abortions or female foeticide has gained currency in the country during the 80s and has rapidly spread during the 90s. The sex of the foetus is identified through either amniocentesis or ultrasonography and abortions are carried out either as an 'attached' service' or independently. Compared to female infanticide, this became a more acceptable mode of disposing of the 'unwanted' girl child. Infanticide is an overtly 'barbaric' practice, carried by non - professional and less powerful persons e.g. traditional 'dai's or any old lady in the household. It does not allow parents to distance themselves from the event i.e. killing of the child, and be free of any guilt. Sex selective abortion, on the other hand, is carried out by 'professionals', superior in the power hierarchy. They use scientific techniques, hardware and skills; sanitise the process of eliminating the foetus and reduce the burden of guilt on parents.

Concentration of medical facilities and professionals in urban areas, and, more important, their absence from the rural areas is well known in our society and Orissa is no exception to this trend. Naturally, the facilities for sex selective abortions and other sex selection techniques will be available in the urban areas first. As this practice and the profit⁴ pick up, the doctor - entrepreneur starts attracting clients from rural 'catchment'. Gradually, the number of such 'foeticide service providers' increases. Large scale use of such sex selection technique, renders the sex ratio at birth and consequently the sex ratios in the child population more and more masculine.

It is plausible therefore, to anticipate the effects of this interference in urban areas first. In the initial

⁴ None of these foeticide service providers, who often claim to be rendering 'national service' provide the service free, even for some of their poor clients!

stages, the lowering of urban sex ratios will not show any significant correlation with rural sex ratios as the 'services' have not penetrated deep enough. Hence the demographic effect will become discernible only in the urban areas through child sex ratios. As the scope of the 'services' deepen and widen, the rural FMRs in the 0-6 age group will begin to decrease in tandem with the urban FMRs.

Tell - tell signs of such a response can be discerned by examining the association between the rural and the urban FMRs. Elsewhere (Agnihotri, 2002) I have examined this issue. If the association between the rural and the urban FMRs can be described through a linear relationship of the type,

$$FMR_{Rural} = FMR_0 + k \cdot FMR_{Urban}$$

Then a low value of the constant term FMR_0 and a high value of the slope k , will correspond to a strong rural response to the urban decline in FMRs, while a weak response will be characterised by a higher constant term and a lower slope value.

While most neighbouring states fall in the category of 'indifferent' to 'weak response' states for both 1991 and 2001 (Agnihotri 2002), Orissa moves from a weak response pattern in 1991 to a strong response pattern in 2001. This can be seen from the figures 7a and 7b.

$$\begin{aligned} FMR_{Rural} &= 419 + 0.583 FMR_{Urban} & R.Sq. &= 0.22 (1991) \\ FMR_{Rural} &= 367 + 0.629 FMR_{Urban} & R.Sq. &= 0.49 (2001) \end{aligned}$$

For 1991 Kendrapada (Urban) and for 2001, Ganjam and Boudh (Rural) have been excluded as outliers. In these two districts the urban FMR06 appear to have declined to unusually low level.

The decline in the FMR06 between 1991 and 2001 for urban segment is clearly discernible when we compare 7a and 7b. Similarly, the increase in the slope and decline in the constant term is also seen clearly. This reflects the declining trend in FMR06 in urban areas and the increasing tendency of the rural FMR06 to respond to this trend.

The reason for low FMR in 0-14 group among prosperous groups in urban and in rural areas is not far to seek. The urban facilities for sex selective elimination are accessible to these groups relatively easily. As mentioned above, none of these services, detection or abortion, come free. Convergence of prosperity and medical facilities thus seem to work against the survival chances of the girl child.

V

What are the implications of the patterns above? First, it shows that certain urban areas are emerging as the 'epicentres' of female deficit in the state. Among these the top three MPCE groups or the prosperous groups show lower FMRs still. While the urban set - up provides base for the 'foeticide service providers', the prosperous group provide the clientele. In terms of location, the south-eastern districts show a contiguous belt where such tendencies may be sharply rising.

Ganjam needs particular scrutiny. Whether Berhampore urban area which boasts of medical facilities, including a Medical College, have become a centre for provision of foeticide services is worth investigating. It is quite likely that it may be 'serving' a larger catchment area e.g. Boudh town. Emergence of such facilities in Angul and Jagatsinghpur also need to be watched carefully.

Above pattern throws up a challenge to the fraternity of medical professionals as well. They should take suo moto note of the role some of their members may be playing in abetting sex selective elimination of girl children. The fraternity need not wait for the society to establish the case. The onus to set their own house in order is on them and not on the society. The effect these services have on the rural areas also need investigation and efforts stepped up against such trend.

The convergence of urbanisation, prosperity and anti female bias is a matter of worry and raises questions about the pattern of 'development' we

are pursuing. Orissa needs to debate whether it should follow development of the Punjab-Haryana-Western UP type or of the type of its southern neighbours. Sex ratio patterns among children are a powerful barometer of the path we chose.

List of references:

Agnihotri 2000, Sex ratio patterns in the Indian population - A fresh exploration, N. Delhi: Sage.

--- 2002. 'Setting daughters' of Urban India: Locating the epi-centres of female deficit' Proc. of the International symposium on Girl Child - January 2002, IIPS, Mumbai

Bardhan, P.K. 1974. "On life and death questions" Economic and Political Weekly, Special Issue No. 9: 1293-1304.

Caldwell, J.C. and Caldwell, P. 1990. Gender implications for survival in South Asia Health transition working paper No. 7, Canberra: NCEPH, Australian National University.

Dyson, T. and Moore, M. 1983. 'On kinship structure, female autonomy and aemographic balance' Population and Development Review 9: 35-60.

*Miller, B.D. 1981. The Endangered Sex. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press.

--- 1989. "Changing patterns of juvenile sex ratios in rural India, 1961 to 1971" Economic and Political Weekly 24(22): 1229 - 1235.

Premi, M. K. (2001): "The missing girl child" EPW, 36(21), May 26, 1875-80

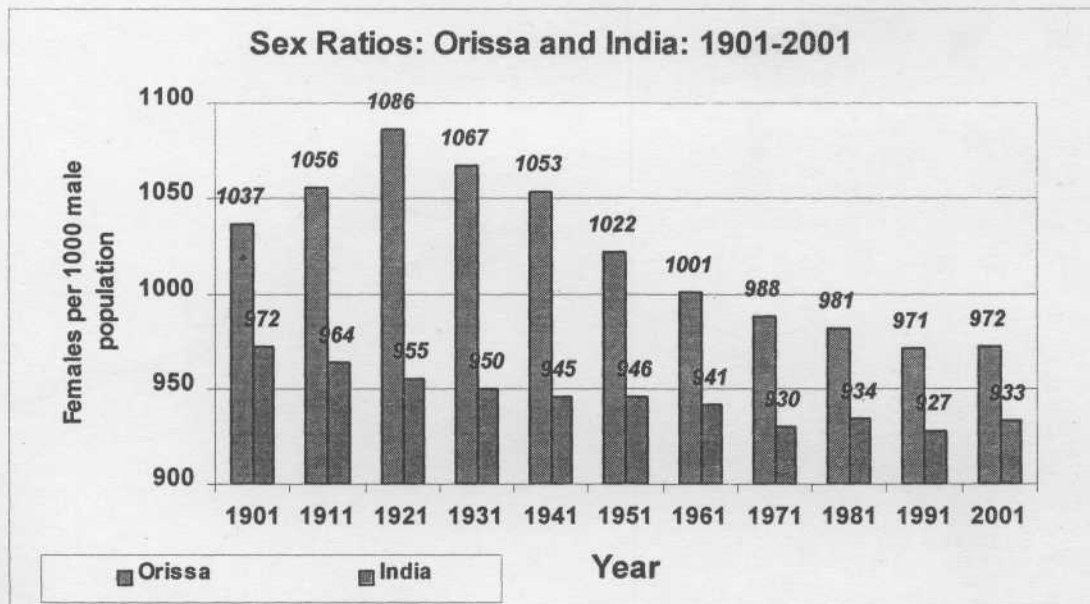
Sopher, D.E. (Ed.) 1980. An Exploration of India, London: Longman.



Table - 1

FMRs in India and in Orissa 1901 - 2001

Year	1901	1911	1921	1931	1941	1951	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001
India	972	964	955	950	945	946	941	930	934	927	933
Orissa	1037	1056	1086	1067	1053	1022	1001	988	981	971	972



**Female to Male Ratios (Urbans) among children (0-6 years)
Census 2001**

Figure 1

FMR among children 0-6 years (Girls per 1000 boys): Orissa 1991

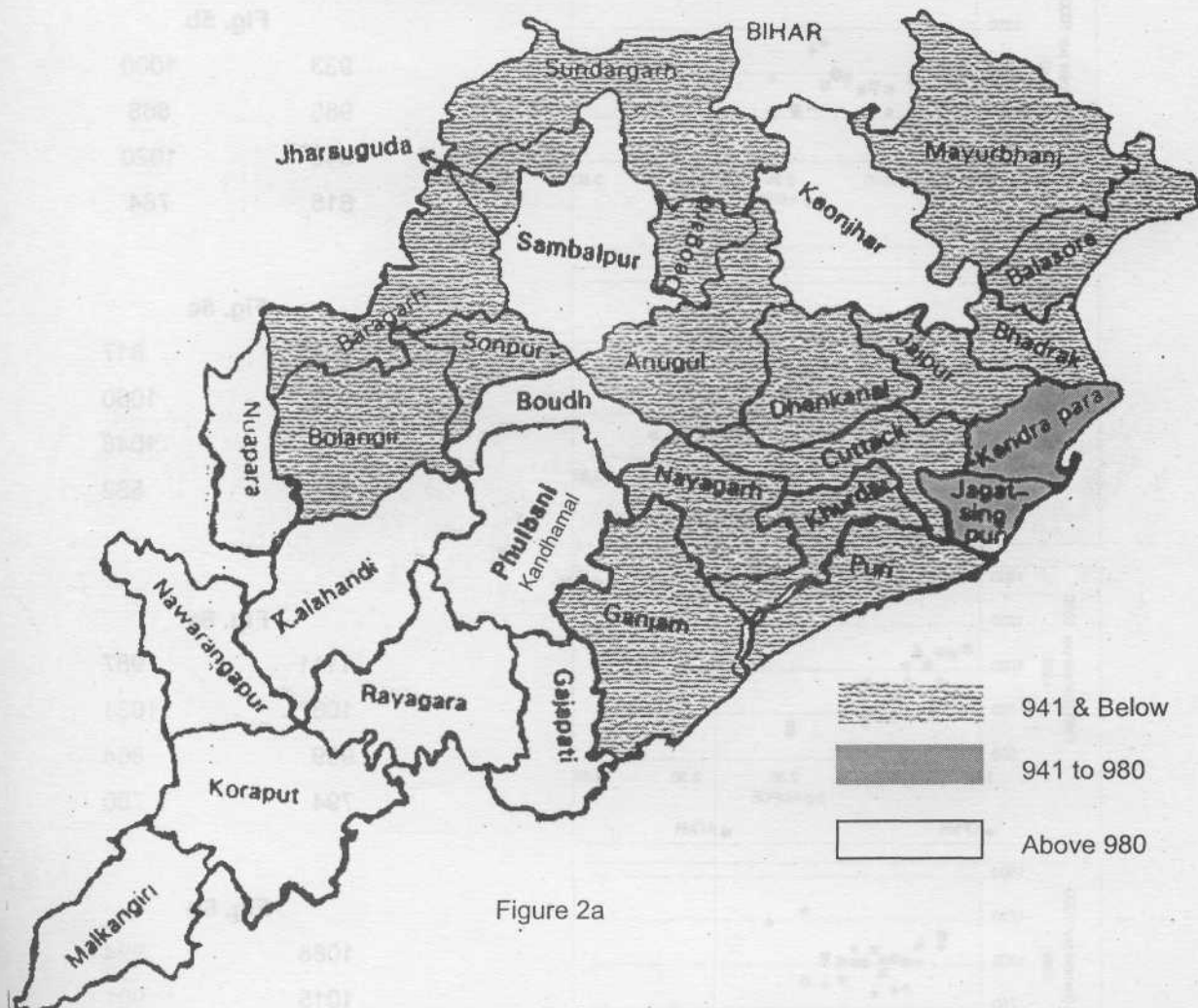


Figure 2a

Note: The boundary and the names shown and the designations used on the maps do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations

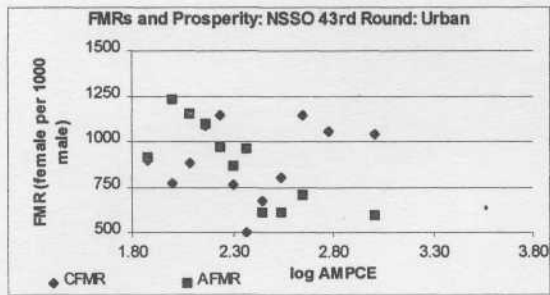


Fig. 5a

Afmr	Cfmrmr
1093	847
970	986
728	624
555	1100

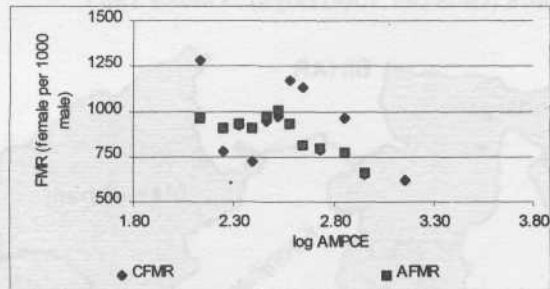


Fig. 5b

933	1000
965	868
848	1020
615	784

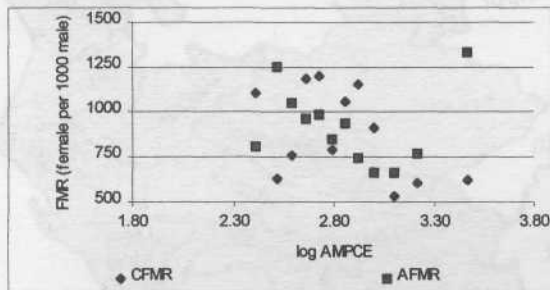


Fig. 5c

1013	817
930	1060
788	1048
862	582

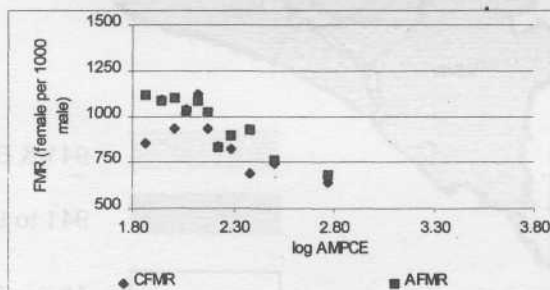


Fig. 6a

1111	987
1067	1031
909	864
794	700

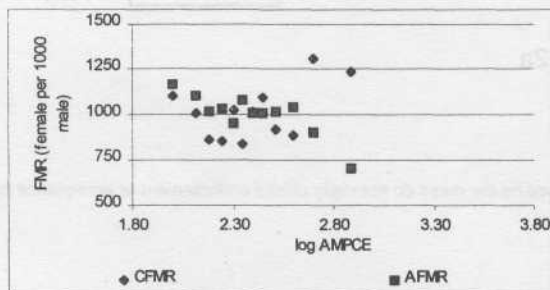


Fig. 6b

1088	994
1015	901
1005	1002
873	1106

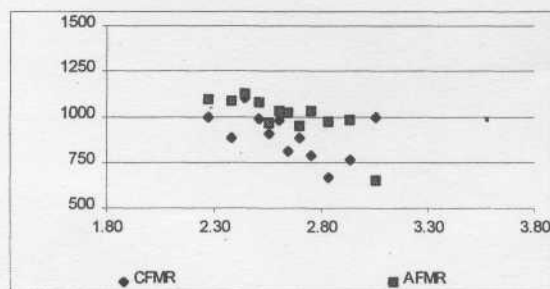


Fig. 6c

1100	985
1021	958
994	828
865	760

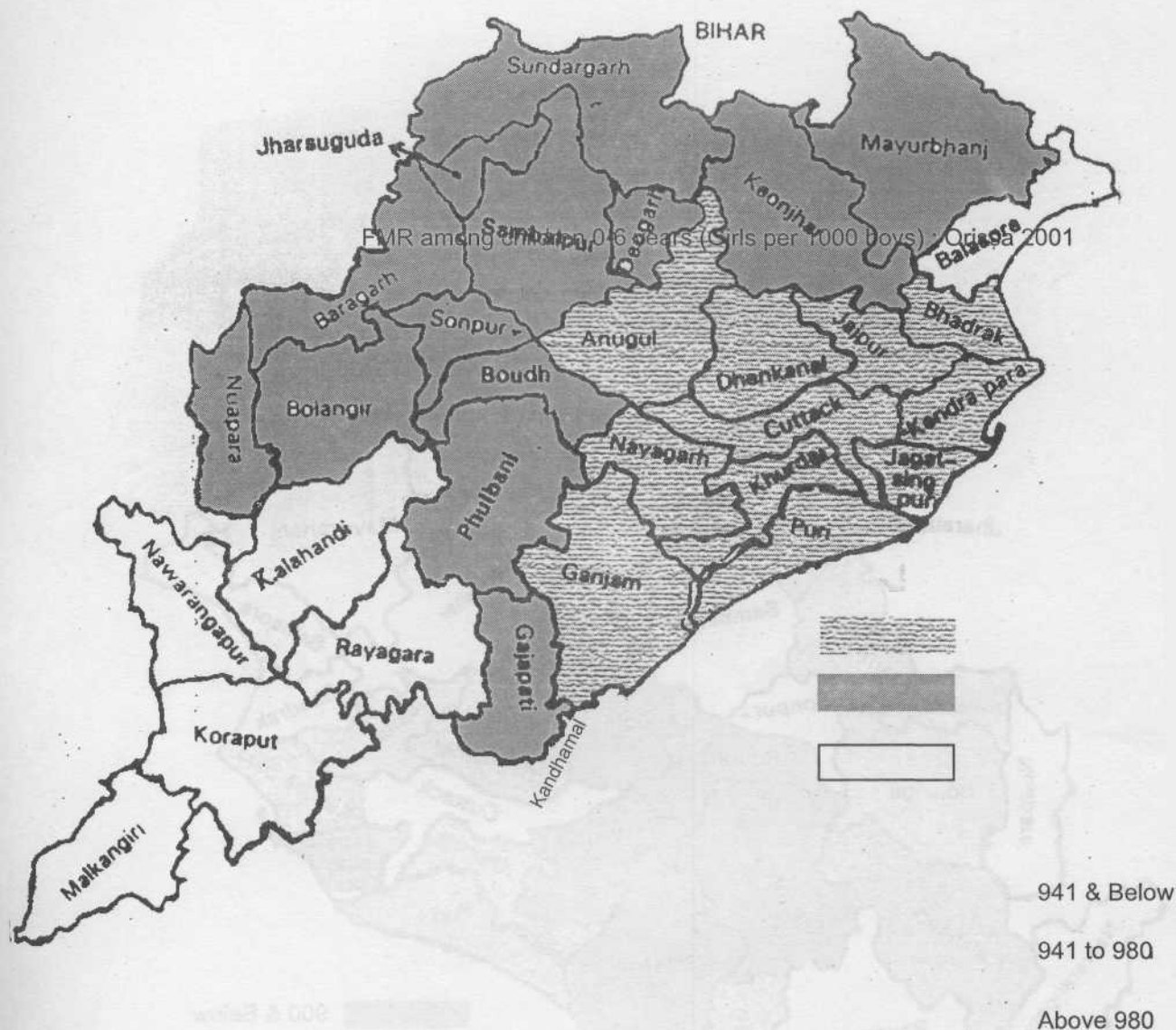


Figure 2b

Note: The boundary and the names shown and the designations used on the maps do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations

Urban FMR among children 0-6 years (Girls per 1000 boys) : Orissa 2001

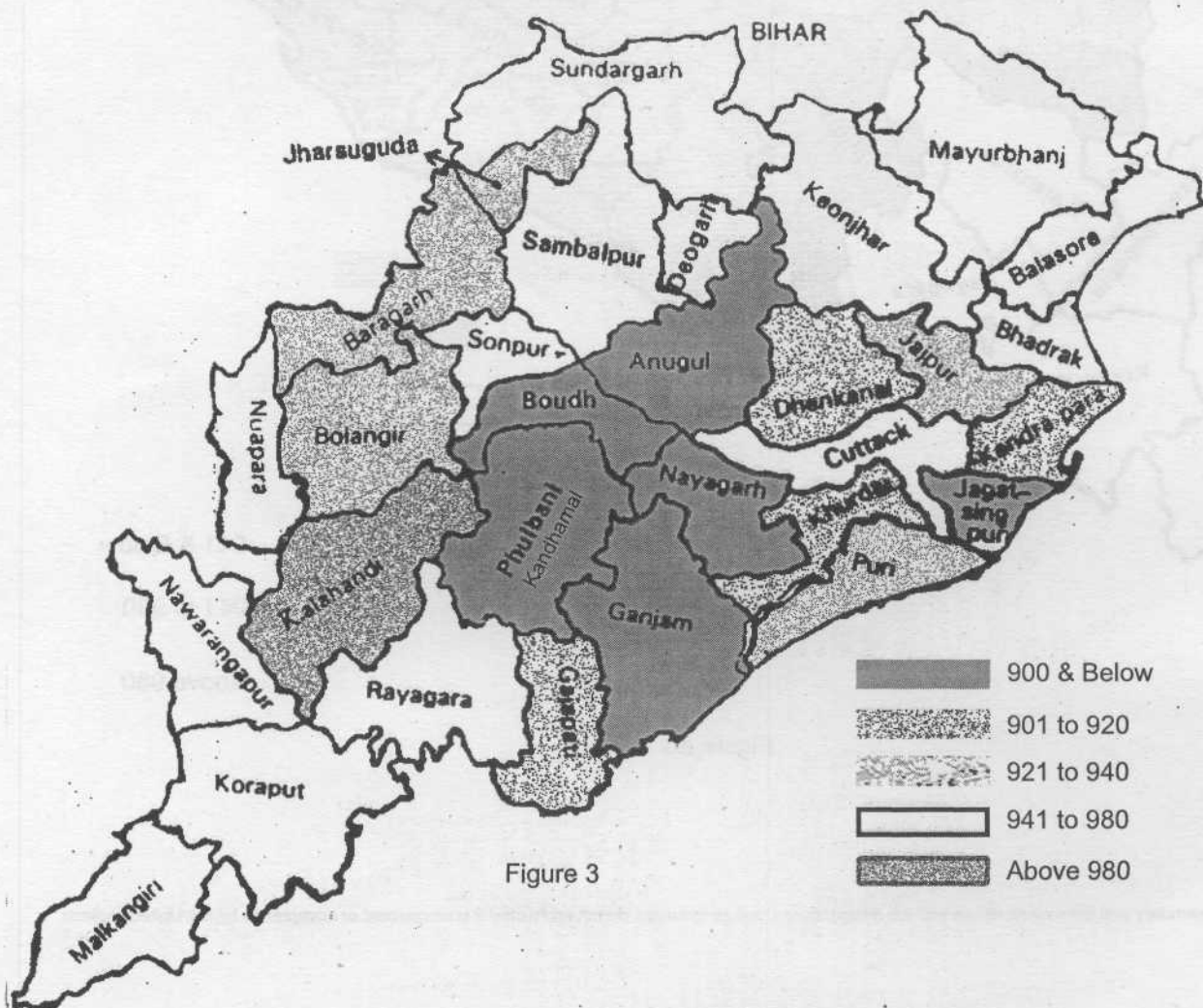


Figure 3

Note: The boundary and the names shown and the designations used on the maps do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations

Table - 3
FMRs (Females per 1000 males) among children (0-6 years)
Orissa - 1991 and 2001: Urban and Rural

DistCode	District	FMR06 in 2001			FMR06 in 1991		
		Urban	Rural	Total	Urban	Rural	Total
1	Bargarh	938	955	954	957	972	971
2	Jharsuguda	931	960	950	954	974	967
3	Sambalpur	946	969	963	964	977	974
4	Debagarh	952	963	962	946	966	965
5	Sundargarh	947	985	974	930	983	967
6	Kendujhar	959	963	963	964	983	981
7	Mayurbhanj	958	954	954	948	963	962
8	Baleshwar	945	933	934	947	966	965
9	Bhadrak	947	939	940	969	954	955
10	Kendrapara	916	936	935	892	945	942
11	Jagatsinghapur	889	920	917	958	939	941
12	Cuttack	948	939	941	944	946	945
13	Jajapur	926	932	932	961	946	946
14	Dhenkanal	902	920	919	940	958	957
15	Anugul	898	939	934	960	961	961
16	Nayagarh	856	902	901	938	951	950
17	Khordha	908	928	920	945	951	949
18	Puri	930	920	921	930	946	945
19	Ganjam	845	942	928	950	952	952
20	Gajapati	920	966	963	928	983	979
21	Kandhamal	896	977	973	947	992	990
22	Baudh	848	967	962	971	1006	1004
23	Sonapur	963	961	961	914	977	972
24	Balangir	921	972	967	936	981	976
25	Nuapada	974	970	970	972	1000	999
26	Kalahandi	981	990	990	946	1008	1003
27	Rayagada	953	986	983	989	1007	1005
28	Nabarangapur	971	1004	1002	971	1000	999
29	Koraput	968	997	993	990	1024	1019
30	Malkangiri	961	992	990	983	1001	1000
0	Orissa	927	954	950	949	969	967

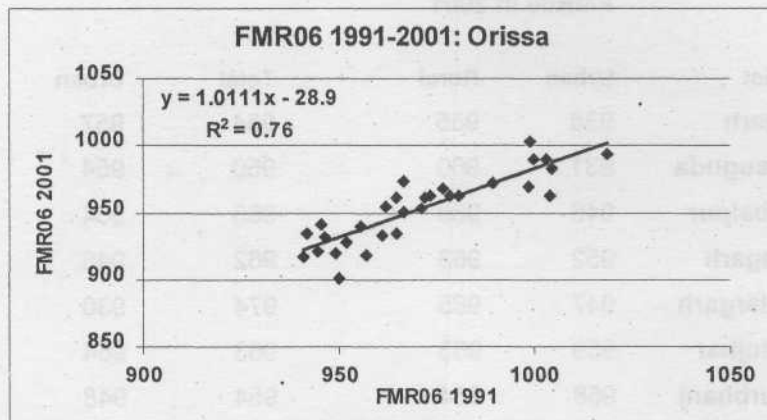


Figure - 4a

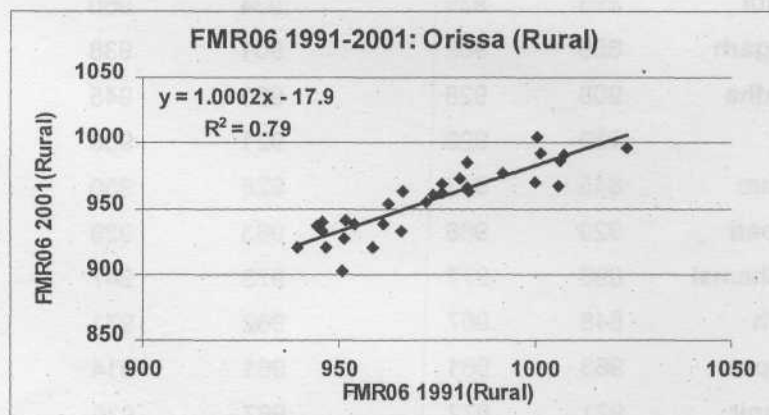


Figure - 4b

Table - 4

Prosperity and FMRs: URBAN Orissa NSSO 43rd, 50th & 55th Round

STATE NAME	Round	PCE CLASS	AMPCE	LgAMPCE	AM	AF	CM	CF	CFMR	AFMR	TFMR
ORISSA	43rd	0-90	75.66	1.88	1367	1251	1573	1414	899	915	906
		90-110	100.83	2.00	1271	1559	1560	1204	772	1227	976
		110-135	121.51	2.08	1190	1374	1128	992	879	1155	1021
		135-160	146.43	2.17	1300	1427	1068	1161	1087	1098	1093
		160-185	172.39	2.24	1596	1545	801	913	1140	968	1025
		185-215	200.40	2.30	1589	1378	1033	786	761	867	825
		215-255	233.84	2.37	1433	1373	847	423	499	958	788
		255-310	281.37	2.45	1487	913	762	514	675	614	635
		310-385	348.18	2.54	1324	804	387	309	798	607	650
		385-520	442.65	2.65	1548	1093	522	597	1144	706	816
		520-700	605.26	2.78	1167	359	171	180	1053	308	403
		700 & Above	1021.86	3.01	1293	772	224	232	1036	597	662

STATE NAME	Round	PCE CLASS	AMPCE	LgAMPCE	AM	AF	CM	CF	CFMR	AFMR	
ORISSA	50th	0-160	136	2.13	1474	1423	1255	1611	1284	965	1112
		160-190	176	2.25	1665	1509	1256	982	782	906	853
		190-230	213	2.33	1795	1673	1066	985	924	932	929
		230-265	246	2.39	1503	1366	937	675	720	909	836
		265-310	289	2.46	1607	1564	925	874	945	973	963
		310-355	333	2.52	1891	1895	653	634	971	1002	994
		355-410	382	2.58	1715	1595	529	621	1174	930	988
		410-490	441	2.64	1716	1400	530	602	1136	816	891
		490-605	538	2.73	1685	1344	616	486	789	798	795
		605-825	713	2.85	1386	1071	438	421	961	773	818
		825-1055	908	2.96	1237	814	329	215	653	658	657
		1055 & Above	1426	3.15	1113	412	206	127	617	370	409

STATE NAME	Round	PCE CLASS	AMPCE	LgAMPCE	AM	AF	CM	CF	CFMR	AFMR	
ORISSA	55th	00 - 300	257	2.41	1850	1493	1024	1132	1105	807	913
		300 - 350	328	2.52	1382	1727	1247	782	627	1250	954
		350 - 425	389	2.59	1538	1611	1071	816	762	1047	930
		425 - 500	462	2.66	1752	1675	739	879	1189	956	1025
		500 - 575	537	2.73	1749	1720	572	686	1199	983	1037
		575 - 665	622	2.79	1659	1405	650	513	789	847	831
		665 - 775	716	2.85	1776	1658	627	663	1057	934	966
		775 - 915	843	2.93	1626	1207	358	412	1151	742	816
		915 - 1120	1008	3.00	1509	1003	316	289	915	665	708
		1120 - 1500	1258	3.10	1424	947	335	178	531	665	640
		1500 - 1925	1645	3.22	1392	1068	507	305	602	767	723
		> 1925	2928	3.47	883	1173	172	107	622	1328	1213

Prosperity and FMRs: RURAL Orissa NSSO 43rd, 50th & 55th Round

STATE	Round	PCE CLASS	AMPCE	LgAMPCE	AM	AF	CM	CF	CFMR	AFMR	
ORISSA	43r	0-65	52.46	1.72	1334	1521	1161	1208	1040	1140	1094
		65-80	72.74	1.86	1353	1506	1264	1080	854	1113	988
		80-95	87.51	1.94	1474	1595	1006	1099	1092	1082	1086
		95-110	101.95	2.01	1496	1644	869	814	937	1099	1039
		110-125	116.84	2.07	1660	1705	898	928	1033	1027	1029
		125-140	132.91	2.12	1476	1594	864	970	1123	1080	1096
		140-160	148.56	2.17	1580	1606	800	749	936	1016	989
		160-180	168.85	2.23	1850	1544	876	732	836	835	835
		180-215	195.28	2.29	1697	1511	763	627	822	890	869
		215-280	242.28	2.38	1694	1572	662	455	687	928	860
		280-385	320.96	2.51	1702	1297	612	457	747	762	758
		385&ABOVE	586.36	2.77	1557	1066	345	221	641	685	677

STATE	Round	PCE CLASS	AMPCE	LgAMPCE	AM	AF	CM	CF	CFMR	AFMR	
ORISSA	50r	0-120	99.87	2.00	1342	1559	1164	1285	1104	1162	1135
		120-140	130.24	2.11	1438	1585	1136	1139	1003	1102	1058
		140-165	152.74	2.18	1602	1622	1017	873	858	1012	953
		165-190	176.87	2.25	1495	1533	1048	891	850	1025	953
		190-210	200.21	2.30	1662	1576	858	872	1016	948	971
		210-235	221.8	2.35	1541	1659	753	632	839	1077	999
		235-265	248.08	2.39	1550	1554	655	662	1011	1003	1005
		265-300	281.87	2.45	1540	1541	587	640	1090	1001	1025
		300-355	323.41	2.51	1480	1497	637	581	912	1011	982
		355-455	396.25	2.60	1350	1402	522	462	885	1039	996
		455-560	501.9	2.70	1605	1439	411	537	1307	897	980
		560 & Above	770.27	2.89	1494	1043	247	306	1239	698	775

STATE	Round	PCE CLASS	AMPCE	LgAMPCE	AM	AF	CM	CF	CFMR	AFMR	
ORISSA	55r	0-225	188	2.27	1352	1481	1225	1216	993	1095	1047
		225-255	240	2.38	1392	1509	1100	973	885	1084	996
		255-300	278	2.44	1441	1615	844	931	1103	1121	1114
		300-340	321	2.51	1424	1534	726	717	988	1077	1047
		340-380	360	2.56	1737	1676	717	651	908	965	948
		380-420	400	2.60	1644	1694	633	620	979	1030	1016
		420-470	443	2.65	1524	1552	696	564	810	1018	953
		470-525	498	2.70	1729	1635	641	568	886	946	930
		525-615	570	2.76	1601	1640	552	433	784	1024	963
		615-775	681	2.83	1559	1516	667	445	667	972	881
		775-950	861	2.94	1547	1518	388	296	763	981	937
		950-more	1147	3.06	1658	1085	253	253	1000	654	700

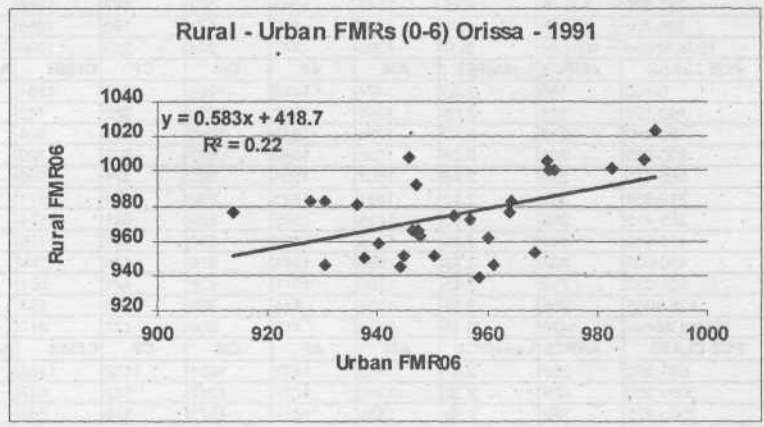


Figure - 7a

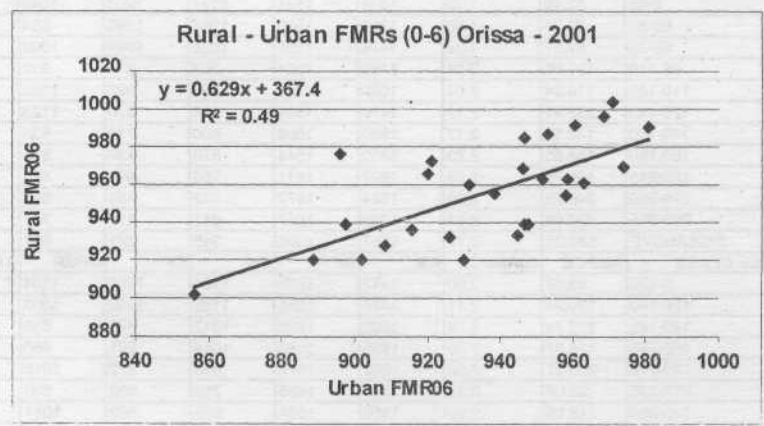


Figure - 7b

Table 2 : Population, population in the age group 0-6 and literates by residence and sex- India, States/Union territories and Districts : 2001

Code No.	India/State /Union territory/Di	Total Rural Urban	Population			0-6 Population			Literates			FMR06	CFMR
			Person	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12		
21	Orissa	Total	36,706,920	18,612,340	18,094,580	5,180,551	2,656,046	2,524,505	20,053,785	12,118,256	7,935,529	950	972
		Rural	31,210,602	15,711,853	15,498,749	4,551,134	2,329,380	2,221,754	16,113,928	9,845,113	6,268,815	954	986
		Urban	5,496,318	2,900,487	2,595,831	629,417	326,666	302,751	3,939,857	2,273,143	1,666,714	927	895
1	Bargarh	Total	1,345,601	681,012	664,589	167,861	85,915	81,946	755,245	463,767	291,478	954	976
		Rural	1,242,101	627,549	614,552	155,991	79,791	76,200	682,124	421,956	260,168	955	979
		Urban	103,500	53,463	50,037	11,870	6,124	5,746	73,121	41,811	31,310	938	936
2	Jharsugud	Total	509,056	261,555	247,501	64,229	32,936	31,293	317,920	189,856	128,064	950	946
		Rural	323,738	163,898	159,840	41,836	21,342	20,494	190,085	114,490	75,595	960	975
		Urban	185,318	97,657	87,661	22,393	11,594	10,799	127,835	75,366	52,469	931	898
3	Sambalpur	Total	928,889	471,555	457,334	117,953	60,085	57,868	543,377	324,515	218,862	963	970
		Rural	674,617	339,420	335,197	89,348	45,388	43,960	371,327	224,647	146,680	969	988
		Urban	254,272	132,135	122,137	28,605	14,697	13,908	172,050	99,868	72,182	946	924
4	Debagarh	Total	274,095	138,425	135,670	41,496	21,151	20,345	141,384	86,535	54,849	962	980
		Rural	254,010	127,913	126,097	38,990	19,867	19,123	127,872	78,715	49,157	963	986
		Urban	20,085	10,512	9,573	2,506	1,284	1,222	13,512	7,820	5,692	952	911
5	Sundargar	Total	1,829,412	934,902	894,510	255,989	129,709	126,280	1,026,220	609,440	416,780	974	957
		Rural	1,200,520	602,043	598,477	181,227	91,308	89,919	566,504	345,936	220,568	985	994
		Urban	628,892	332,859	296,033	74,762	38,401	36,361	459,716	263,504	196,212	947	889
6	Kendujhar	Total	1,561,521	789,826	771,695	237,224	120,870	116,354	791,306	485,224	306,082	963	977
		Rural	1,348,577	678,239	670,338	208,097	105,999	102,098	654,296	404,355	249,941	963	988
		Urban	212,944	111,587	101,357	29,127	14,871	14,256	137,010	80,869	56,141	959	908
7	Mayurbha	Total	2,221,782	1,121,982	1,099,800	355,281	181,818	173,463	978,652	624,088	354,564	954	980
		Rural	2,066,375	1,039,952	1,026,423	337,962	172,973	164,989	863,557	558,403	305,154	954	987
		Urban	155,407	82,030	73,377	17,319	8,845	8,474	115,095	65,685	49,410	958	895
8	Baleshwar	Total	2,023,056	1,037,938	985,118	285,080	147,376	137,704	1,232,838	728,008	504,830	934	949
		Rural	1,802,862	923,220	879,642	257,973	133,439	124,534	1,078,959	640,803	438,156	933	953
		Urban	220,194	114,718	105,476	27,107	13,937	13,170	153,879	87,205	66,674	945	919
9	Bhadrak	Total	1,332,249	675,162	657,087	184,336	95,040	89,296	856,852	495,639	361,213	940	973
		Rural	1,191,299	602,176	589,123	165,144	85,182	79,962	769,323	444,989	324,334	939	978
		Urban	140,950	72,986	67,964	19,192	9,858	9,334	87,529	50,650	36,879	947	931
10	Kendrapar	Total	1,301,856	646,356	655,500	170,005	87,848	82,157	875,212	489,382	385,830	935	1,014
		Rural	1,227,728	608,287	619,441	161,082	83,190	77,892	821,019	459,268	361,751	936	1,018
		Urban	74,128	38,069	36,059	8,923	4,658	4,265	54,193	30,114	24,079	916	947

11	Jagatsingh	Total	1,056,556	538,542	518,014	119,102	62,125	56,977	746,275	423,840	322,435	917	962
		Rural	952,235	480,211	472,024	107,448	55,955	51,493	669,509	377,504	292,005	920	983
		Urban	104,321	58,331	45,990	11,654	6,170	5,484	76,766	46,336	30,430	889	788
12	Cuttack	Total	2,340,686	1,207,569	1,133,117	273,665	140,976	132,689	1,573,646	911,467	662,179	941	938
		Rural	1,699,109	865,051	834,058	209,422	107,995	101,427	1,093,324	636,567	456,757	939	964
		Urban	641,577	342,518	299,059	64,243	32,981	31,262	480,322	274,900	205,422	948	873
13	Jajapur	Total	1,622,868	822,638	800,230	209,370	108,362	101,008	1,020,337	590,647	429,690	932	973
		Rural	1,549,923	784,360	765,563	201,073	104,054	97,019	967,089	560,384	406,705	932	976
		Urban	72,945	38,278	34,667	8,297	4,308	3,989	53,248	30,263	22,985	926	906
14	Dhankanal	Total	1,065,983	543,439	522,544	141,053	73,516	67,537	648,511	382,100	266,411	919	962
		Rural	973,196	494,582	478,614	131,075	68,270	62,805	578,260	342,205	236,055	920	968
		Urban	92,787	48,857	43,930	9,978	5,246	4,732	70,251	39,895	30,356	902	899
15	Anugul	Total	1,139,341	586,903	552,438	158,529	81,979	76,550	680,718	414,163	286,555	934	941
		Rural	980,954	501,012	479,942	140,027	72,230	67,797	561,063	344,239	216,824	939	958
		Urban	158,387	85,891	72,496	18,502	9,749	8,753	119,655	69,924	49,731	898	844
16	Nayagarh	Total	863,934	445,658	418,276	110,112	57,938	52,174	535,385	322,686	212,699	901	939
		Rural	826,882	426,277	400,605	106,242	55,853	50,389	506,849	306,665	200,184	902	940
		Urban	37,052	19,381	17,671	3,870	2,085	1,785	28,536	16,021	12,515	856	912
17	Khordha	Total	1,874,405	986,003	888,402	222,141	115,686	106,455	1,324,892	769,202	555,690	920	901
		Rural	1,069,630	543,066	526,564	136,368	70,738	65,630	696,086	403,020	293,066	928	970
		Urban	804,775	442,937	361,838	85,773	44,948	40,825	628,806	366,182	262,624	908	817
18	Puri	Total	1,498,604	761,397	737,207	181,751	94,615	87,136	1,032,352	591,627	440,725	921	968
		Rural	1,294,802	655,256	639,546	160,360	83,531	76,829	882,236	508,046	374,190	920	976
		Urban	203,802	106,141	97,661	21,391	11,084	10,307	150,116	83,581	66,535	930	920
19	Ganjam	Total	3,136,937	1,568,568	1,568,369	468,557	242,971	225,586	1,679,600	1,039,075	640,525	928	1,000
		Rural	2,598,746	1,291,991	1,306,755	407,181	209,713	197,468	1,303,914	820,527	483,387	942	1,011
		Urban	538,191	276,577	261,614	61,376	33,258	28,118	375,686	218,548	157,138	845	946
20	Gajapati	Total	518,448	255,288	263,160	89,752	45,731	44,021	178,891	115,547	63,344	963	1,031
		Rural	465,675	228,760	236,915	83,770	42,616	41,154	145,120	96,338	48,782	966	1,036
		Urban	52,773	26,528	26,245	5,982	3,115	2,867	33,771	19,209	14,562	920	989

Population, Population 0-6 and Literate population by sex and residence—India, State/Union territory/District : 1991

Sl.No.	India, State/ Union	Total/ Rural/	Population			Population 0-6			FMR06		
			Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9			
0 INDIA	Total		846,387,888	439,333,058	407,054,830	150,080,925	77,145,662	72,935,263	945		
	Rural		628,836,078	324,433,305	304,402,771	116,583,514	59,836,203	56,747,311	948		
	Urban		217,551,812	114,899,753	102,652,059	33,497,411	17,309,459	16,187,952	935		
21 Orissa	Total		31,659,736	16,064,146	15,595,590	5,347,501	2,719,219	2,628,282	967	Orissa	969 Rural
	Rural		27,424,753	13,794,955	13,629,798	4,712,217	2,393,321	2,318,896	969	Bargarh	972 Rural
	Urban		4,234,983	2,269,191	1,965,792	635,284	325,898	309,386	949	Jharsuguda	974 Rural
01 Bargarh	Total		1,207,172	609,916	597,256	186,041	94,390	91,651	#DIV/0!	Sambalpur	977 Rural
	Rural		1,126,625	567,990	558,635	173,093	87,773	85,320	971	Debagarh	966 Rural
	Urban		80,547	41,926	38,621	12,948	6,617	6,331	972	Sundargarh	983 Rural
02 Jharsuguda	Total		442,154	228,188	213,966	72,508	36,868	35,640	957	Kendujhar	983 Rural
	Rural		282,826	142,979	139,847	46,126	23,366	22,760	#DIV/0!	Mayurbhanj	963 Rural
	Urban		159,328	85,209	74,119	26,382	13,502	12,880	967	Baleshwar	966 Rural
03 Sambalpur	Total		813,589	415,864	397,725	130,322	66,033	64,289	974	Bhadrak	954 Rural
	Rural		608,131	306,956	301,175	99,725	50,455	49,270	974	Kendrapara	945 Rural
	Urban		205,458	108,908	96,550	30,597	15,578	15,019	977	Jagatsinghap	939 Rural
04 Debagarh	Total		234,238	118,172	116,066	41,638	21,191	20,447	964	Cuttack	946 Rural
	Rural		216,963	109,016	107,947	38,989	19,830	19,159	964	Jajapur	946 Rural
	Urban		17,275	9,156	8,119	2,649	1,361	1,288	#DIV/0!	Dhenkanal	958 Rural
05 Sundargarh	Total		1,573,617	812,707	760,910	263,819	134,143	129,676	965	Anugul	961 Rural
	Rural		1,048,612	527,647	520,965	185,212	93,419	91,793	966	Nayagarh	951 Rural
	Urban		525,005	285,060	239,945	78,607	40,724	37,883	966	Khordha	951 Rural
06 Kendujhar	Total		1,337,026	677,480	659,546	239,445	120,878	118,567	946	Puri	946 Rural
	Rural		1,170,152	588,129	582,023	211,894	106,853	105,041	#DIV/0!	Ganjam	952 Rural
	Urban		166,874	89,351	77,523	27,551	14,025	13,526	967	Gajapati	983 Rural
07 Mayurbhanj	Total		1,884,580	952,183	932,397	355,960	181,413	174,547	930	Kandhamal	992 Rural
	Rural		1,768,331	890,093	878,238	339,378	172,900	166,478	981	Baudh	1006 Rural
	Urban		116,249	62,090	54,159	16,582	8,513	8,069	983	Sonapur	977 Rural
									964	Balangir	981 Rural
									#DIV/0!	Nuapada	1000 Rural
									962	Kalahandi	1008 Rural
									963	Rayagada	1007 Rural
									948	Nabarangapur	1000 Rural
									#DIV/0!	Koraput	1024 Rural
									948	Maikangiri	1001 Rural
									#DIV/0!	Orissa	967 Total

08 Baleshwar	Total	1,696,583	867,641	828,942	297,039	151,202	145,837	965	Bargarh	971 Total
	Rural	1,542,431	786,278	756,153	272,536	138,620	133,916	966	Jharsuguda	967 Total
	Urban	154,152	81,363	72,789	24,503	12,582	11,921	947	Sambalpur	974 Total
09 Bhadrak	Total	1,105,834	557,017	548,817	197,461	100,984	96,477	#DIV/0!	Debagarh	965 Total
	Rural	995,993	499,368	496,625	177,307	90,747	86,560	955	Sundargarh	967 Total
	Urban	109,841	57,649	52,192	20,154	10,237	9,917	954	Kendujhar	981 Total
10 Kendrapara	Total	1,149,501	572,703	576,798	188,518	97,090	91,428	969	Mayurbhanj	962 Total
	Rural	1,086,266	540,061	546,205	178,528	91,811	86,717	#DIV/0!	Baleshwar	965 Total
	Urban	63,235	32,642	30,593	9,990	5,279	4,711	942	Bhadrak	955 Total
11 Jagatsingh	Total	933,789	472,412	461,377	143,178	73,768	69,410	945	Kendrapara	942 Total
	Rural	857,697	429,471	428,226	129,976	67,027	62,949	892	Jagatsinghap	941 Total
	Urban	76,092	42,941	33,151	13,202	6,741	6,461	#DIV/0!	Cuttack	945 Total
12 Cuttack	Total	2,053,192	1,068,469	984,723	308,208	158,439	149,769	941	Jajapur	946 Total
	Rural	1,567,331	799,458	767,873	243,750	125,285	118,465	939	Dhenkanal	957 Total
	Urban	485,861	269,011	216,850	64,458	33,154	31,304	958	Anugul	961 Total
13 Jajapur	Total	1,386,177	701,005	685,172	237,609	122,092	115,517	#DIV/0!	Nayagarh	950 Total
	Rural	1,332,746	672,570	660,176	229,213	117,811	111,402	945	Khordha	949 Total
	Urban	53,431	28,435	24,996	8,396	4,281	4,115	946	Puri	945 Total
14 Dhenkanal	Total	947,870	485,176	462,694	153,744	78,562	75,182	944	Ganjam	952 Total
	Rural	869,758	443,358	426,400	142,229	72,627	69,602	#DIV/0!	Gajapati	979 Total
	Urban	78,112	41,818	36,294	11,515	5,935	5,580	946	Kandhamal	990 Total
15 Anugul	Total	961,037	494,901	466,136	168,763	86,055	82,708	961	Baudh	1004 Total
	Rural	850,914	433,514	417,400	150,386	76,679	73,707	961	Sonapur	972 Total
	Urban	110,123	61,387	48,736	18,377	9,376	9,001	960	Balangir	976 Total
								#DIV/0!	Nuapada	999 Total
								961	Kalahandi	1003 Total
								961	Rayagada	1005 Total
								960	Nabarangapur	999 Total
								960	Koraput	1019 Total
								960	Malkangiri	1000 Total
								960	Orissa	949 Urban
								960	Bargarh	957 Urban

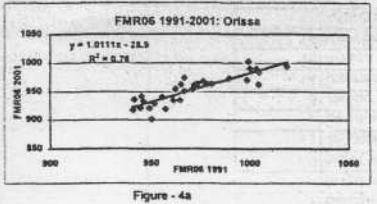
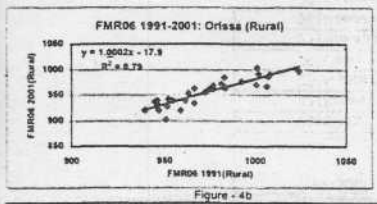
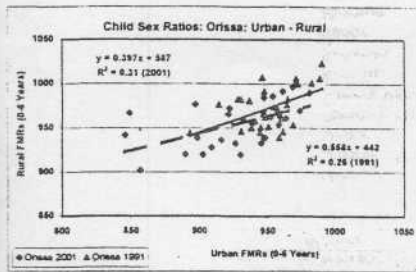
16	Nayagarh	Total	782,647	399,701	382,946	120,244	61,658	58,586	950	Jharsuguda	954	Urban
		Rural	756,403	385,807	370,596	116,758	59,859	56,899	951	Sambalpur	964	Urban
		Urban	26,244	13,894	12,350	3,486	1,799	1,687	938	Debagarh	946	Urban
17	Khordha	Total	1,502,014	789,334	712,680	230,061	118,033	112,028	#DIV/0!	Sundargarh	930	Urban
		Rural	985,733	499,538	486,195	159,843	81,924	77,919	949	Kendujhar	964	Urban
		Urban	516,281	289,796	226,485	70,218	36,109	34,109	945	Mayurbhanj	948	Urban
18	Puri	Total	1,305,365	662,764	642,601	200,421	103,065	97,356	#DIV/0!	Baleshwar	947	Urban
		Rural	1,141,886	576,392	565,494	177,339	91,107	86,232	945	Bhadrak	969	Urban
		Urban	163,479	86,372	77,107	23,082	11,958	11,124	946	Kendrapara	892	Urban
19	Ganjam	Total	2,704,056	1,348,042	1,356,014	464,905	238,216	226,689	#DIV/0!	Jagatsinghap	958	Urban
		Rural	2,280,303	1,129,831	1,150,472	402,477	206,208	196,269	952	Cuttack	944	Urban
		Urban	423,753	218,211	205,542	62,428	32,008	30,420	950	Jajapur	961	Urban
20	Gajapati	Total	454,708	224,329	230,379	84,462	42,687	41,775	#DIV/0!	Dhenkanal	940	Urban
		Rural	407,939	200,738	207,201	78,031	39,351	38,680	952	Anugul	960	Urban
		Urban	46,769	23,591	23,178	6,431	3,336	3,095	928	Nayagarh	938	Urban
21	Kandhamal	Total	546,281	273,234	273,047	103,450	51,995	51,455	#DIV/0!	Khordha	945	Urban
		Rural	510,819	254,240	256,379	98,084	49,239	48,845	979	Puri	930	Urban
		Urban	35,662	18,994	16,668	5,366	2,756	2,610	983	Ganjam	950	Urban
22	Baudh	Total	317,622	159,860	157,762	51,918	25,903	26,015	928	Gajapati	928	Urban
		Rural	302,164	151,888	150,276	49,547	24,700	24,847	990	Kandhamal	947	Urban
		Urban	15,458	7,972	7,486	2,371	1,203	1,168	992	Baudh	971	Urban
23	Sonapur	Total	476,815	240,985	235,830	80,622	40,881	39,741	#DIV/0!	Sonapur	914	Urban
		Rural	441,985	222,942	219,043	75,099	37,995	37,104	947	Balangir	936	Urban
		Urban	34,830	18,043	16,787	5,523	2,886	2,637	971	Nuapada	972	Urban
									1004	Kalahandi	946	Urban
									1006	Rayagada	989	Urban
									971	Nabarangapur	971	Urban
									972	Koraput	990	Urban
									977	Malkangiri	983	Urban
									914			
									#DIV/0!			

24 Balangir	Total	1,230,938	621,486	609,452	198,514	100,439	98,075	976
	Rural	1,101,518	553,736	547,782	179,224	90,476	88,748	981
	Urban	129,420	67,750	61,670	19,290	9,963	9,327	936
							#DIV/0!	
25 Nuapada	Total	469,482	234,462	235,020	81,891	40,973	40,918	999
	Rural	443,717	221,271	222,446	77,548	38,771	38,777	1000
	Urban	25,765	13,191	12,574	4,343	2,202	2,141	972
							#DIV/0!	
26 Kalahandi	Total	1,130,903	565,595	565,308	182,914	91,309	91,605	1003
	Rural	1,052,740	524,842	527,898	170,642	85,002	85,640	1008
	Urban	78,163	40,753	37,410	12,272	6,307	5,965	946
						1	#DIV/0!	
27 Rayagada	Total	713,984	354,911	359,073	126,379	63,042	63,337	1005
	Rural	624,658	309,229	315,429	112,842	56,235	56,607	1007
	Urban	89,326	45,682	43,644	13,537	6,807	6,730	989
							#DIV/0!	
28 Nabarangana	Total	846,659	425,759	420,900	168,047	84,057	83,990	999
	Rural	804,542	404,417	400,125	160,813	80,387	80,426	1000
	Urban	42,117	21,342	20,775	7,234	3,670	3,564	971
							#DIV/0!	
29 Koraput	Total	1,029,577	517,074	512,503	186,111	92,198	93,913	1019
	Rural	857,872	428,275	429,597	158,317	78,234	80,083	1024
	Urban	171,705	88,799	82,906	27,794	13,964	13,830	990
							#DIV/0!	
30 Malkangiri	Total	422,326	212,776	209,550	83,309	41,655	41,654	1000
	Rural	387,898	194,921	192,977	77,311	38,630	38,681	1001
	Urban	34,428	17,855	16,573	5,998	3,025	2,973	983

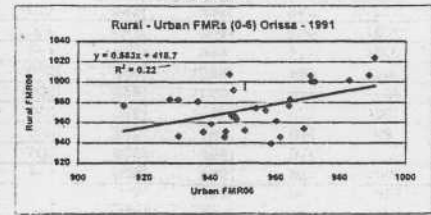
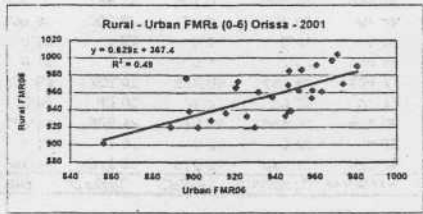
FMRs (Females per 1000 males) among children (0-6 years) :Orissa - 1991 and 2001: Urban and Rural

DistCo	District	FMR06U2k1	FMR06ru2k1	FMR06T2k1	CFMRru	CFMRU	CFMRT	fmr0691U	fmr0691R	fmr0691T	%Urban06
1	Bargarh	938	955	954	979	936	976	957	972	971	7
2	Jharsuguda	931	960	950	975	898	946	954	974	967	35
3	Sambalpur	946	969	963	988	924	970	964	977	974	24
4	Debagarh	952	963	962	986	911	980	946	966	965	6
5	Sundargarh	947	985	974	994	889	957	930	983	967	29
6	Kenduihar	959	963	963	988	908	977	964	983	981	12
7	Mavurbhanj	958	954	954	987	895	980	948	963	962	5
8	Baleshwar	945	933	934	953	919	949	947	966	965	10
9	Bhadrak	947	939	940	978	931	973	969	954	955	10
10	Kendrapara	916	936	935	1018	947	1014	892	945	942	5
11	Jagatsinghpur	889	920	917	983	788	962	958	939	941	10
12	Cuttack	948	939	941	964	873	938	944	946	945	23
13	Jajapur	926	932	932	976	906	973	961	946	946	4
14	Dhenkanal	902	920	919	968	899	962	940	958	957	7
15	Anugul	898	939	934	958	844	941	960	961	961	12
16	Navagarh	856	902	901	940	912	939	938	951	950	4
17	Khordha	908	928	920	970	817	901	945	951	949	39
18	Puri	930	920	921	976	920	968	930	946	945	12
19	Ganjam	845	942	928	1011	946	1000	950	952	952	13
20	Gajapati	920	966	963	1036	989	1031	928	983	979	7
21	Kandhamal	896	977	973	1011	928	1008	947	992	990	5
22	Baudh	848	967	962	987	938	985	971	1006	1004	4
23	Sonapur	963	961	961	969	926	966	914	977	972	6
24	Balangir	921	972	967	990	930	983	936	981	976	9
25	Nuapada	974	970	970	1008	969	1006	972	1000	999	5
26	Kalahandi	981	990	990	1006	929	1000	946	1008	1003	6
27	Rayagada	953	986	983	1039	969	1029	989	1007	1005	10
28	Nabarangapur	971	1004	1002	997	928	992	971	1000	999	4
29	Koraput	968	997	993	1009	948	998	990	1024	1019	12
30	Malkangiri	961	992	990	1002	933	996	983	1001	1000	6
0	Orissa	927	954	950	986	895	972	949	969	967	12

	FMR06U2k1	FMR06ru2k1	FMR06T2k1	CFMRru	CFMRU	CFMRT	fmr0691U	fmr0691R	fmr0691T	%Urban06
Mean	929.95	955.97	953.19	988.29	915.05	976.68	951.53	973.66	971.30	11.35
Standard Error	6.66	4.75	4.70	4.19	7.67	5.24	3.88	4.22	4.05	1.70
Median	941.62	960.72	957.68	987.11	925.18	976.46	949.12	973.06	966.70	8.17
Standard Devia	36.45	26.03	25.73	22.97	42.02	28.72	21.25	23.12	22.17	9.30
Sample Varian	1328.94	677.55	662.00	527.63	1766.07	825.09	451.49	534.71	491.35	86.49
Kurtosis	0.28	-0.76	-0.69	0.10	2.51	0.47	1.01	-0.89	-0.85	2.52
Skewness	-0.94	-0.07	-0.04	0.27	-1.28	-0.31	-0.49	0.36	0.48	1.80
Range	135.18	101.75	101.97	99.38	200.90	129.82	98.00	84.48	77.68	35.10
Minimum	845.45	902.17	900.51	939.78	788.43	901.01	892.40	939.16	940.92	3.51
Maximum	980.63	1003.92	1002.49	1039.16	989.33	1030.84	990.40	1023.63	1018.60	38.61
Sum	27898.44	28679.11	28595.80	29648.60	27451.41	29300.48	28546.04	29209.66	29138.92	340.43
Count	30.00	30.00	30.00	30.00	30.00	30.00	30.00	30.00	30.00	30.00
Largest(2)	973.75	996.63	993.14	1035.65	968.99	1028.98	988.69	1007.51	1004.68	34.86
Smallest(2)	848.35	919.77	917.13	952.80	816.91	938.35	913.72	944.52	941.68	3.51
Confidence Lev	13.61	9.72	9.61	8.58	15.69	10.73	7.93	8.63	8.28	3.47



DistCode	District	FMR06U2k1	FMR06R2k1
0	Orissa	927	954
19	Ganjam	845	942
22	Baoudh	848	967
16	Nayagam	856	902
11	Jagatsing	889	920
21	Kancham	896	977
15	Anugul	898	939
14	Dhenkana	902	920
17	Khordha	906	923
10	Kendrapara	916	936
20	Galapati	920	966
24	Balangur	921	972
13	Jajapur	926	932
18	Pun	930	920
2	Jharsugudi	931	960
1	Bargam	938	955
8	Baleswar	945	933
3	Sambalpu	946	969
9	Bhadrak	947	939
5	Sundargar	947	985
12	Cuttack	949	939
4	Debagarh	952	963
27	Ravagada	953	986
7	Mayuraha	958	954
6	Kenujhar	959	963
30	Malkangon	961	992
23	Sonapur	963	961
29	Koraput	968	997
28	Nabarang	971	1004
25	Nuapada	974	970
26	Kalahand	981	990



fmr0691U	fmr0691R	District
892	945	Kendrapara
914	977	Sonapur
928	983	Galapati
930	983	Sundargarh
930	946	Pun
936	961	Balangur
938	951	Nayagam
940	958	Dhenkanal
944	946	Cuttack
945	951	Khordha
946	1008	Kalahandi
946	956	Debagam
947	992	Kanchamal
947	966	Baleswar
948	963	Mayurbhanj
950	952	Ganjam
954	974	Jharsuguda
957	972	Bargam
958	939	Jagatsinghpur
960	961	Anugul
961	946	Jajapur
964	977	Sambalpur
964	983	Kendujhar
969	954	Bhadrak
971	1008	Baoudh
971	1008	Nabarangapur
972	1000	Nuapada
983	1001	Malkangiri
989	1007	Ravagada
990	1024	Koraput
949	959	Orissa

Figure - 7b

Figure - 7a

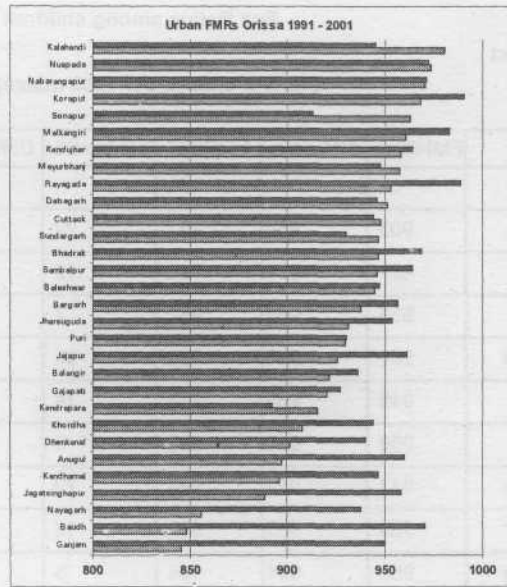
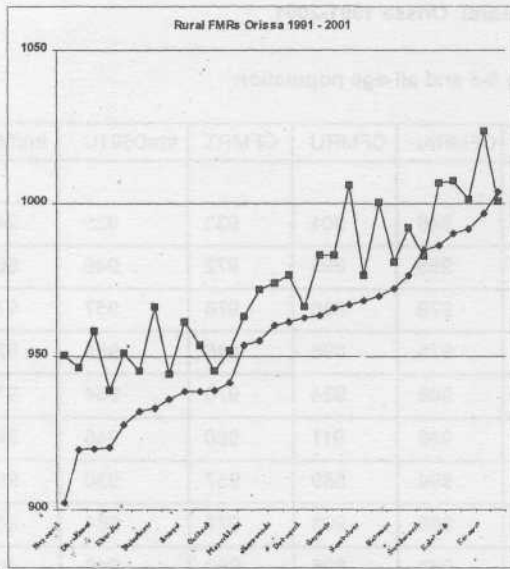
Figure - 4a

Sex Ratios among children (0-6 Years): Orissa 1991-2001

State/District

FMRs (Females per 1000 males) in the 0-6 and all-age population

	FMR06U	FMR06ru	FMR06T	%Urban06	Diff06R-U	CFMRru	CFMRU	CFMRT	fmr0691U	fmr0691R
2										
INDIA	903	934	927	22	31	946	901	933	935	948
Orissa	927	954	950	12	27	986	895	972	949	969
Bargarh	938	955	954	7	17	979	936	976	957	972
Jharsuguda	931	960	950	35	29	975	898	946	954	974
Sambalpur	946	969	963	24	22	988	924	970	964	977
Debagarh	952	963	962	6	11	986	911	980	946	966
Sundargarh	947	985	974	29	38	994	889	957	930	983
Kendujhar	959	963	963	12	5	988	908	977	964	983
Mayurbhanj	958	954	954	5	-4	987	895	980	948	963
Baleshwar	945	933	934	10	-12	953	919	949	947	966
Bhadrak	947	939	940	10	-8	978	931	973	969	954
Kendrapara	916	936	935	5	21	1018	947	1014	892	945
Jagatsinghapur	889	920	917	10	31	983	788	962	958	939
Cuttack	948	939	941	23	-9	964	873	938	944	946
Jajapur	926	932	932	4	6	976	906	973	961	946
Dhenkanal	902	920	919	7	18	968	899	962	940	958
Anugul	898	939	934	12	41	958	844	941	960	961
Nayagarh	856	902	901	4	46	940	912	939	938	951
Khordha	908	928	920	39	20	970	817	901	945	951
Puri	930	920	921	12	-10	976	920	968	930	946
Ganjam	845	942	928	13	96	1011	946	1000	950	952
Gajapati	920	966	963	7	45	1036	989	1031	928	983
Kandhamal	896	977	973	5	80	1014	928	1008	947	992
Baudh	848	967	962	4	118	987	938	985	971	1006
Sonapur	963	961	961	6	-2	969	926	966	914	977
Balangir	921	972	967	9	51	990	930	983	936	981
Nuapada	974	970	970	5	-4	1008	969	1006	972	1000
Kalahandi	981	990	990	6	10	1006	929	1000	946	1008
Rayagada	953	986	983	10	33	1039	969	1029	989	1007
Nabarangapur	971	1004	1002	4	33	997	928	992	971	1000
Koraput	968	997	993	12	28	1009	948	998	990	1024
Malkangiri	961	992	990	6	31	1002	933	996	983	1001



FMR 91	FMR 01	District	FMR 91	FMR 01
927	949	Orissa	954	969
845	950	Nayagarh	902	951
848	971	Puri	920	946
856	938	Dhenkanal	920	958
869	958	Jagatsinghpur	920	939
896	947	Kandhamal	928	951
898	960	Jajpur	932	946
902	940	Baleswar	933	968
908	945	Kandhamal	936	945
916	892	Anugul	939	961
920	928	Bhadrak	939	954
921	936	Cuttack	939	946
926	961	Ganjam	942	952
930	930	Majurbhanj	954	963
931	954	Bargarh	956	972
938	957	Jharsuguda	960	974
945	947	Sonapur	961	977
946	964	Dahalah	963	966
947	969	Kandhamal	963	963
947	930	Gajapati	966	963
948	944	Boudh	967	1006
952	946	Sambalpur	969	977
953	969	Nuapada	970	1000
958	948	Majurbhanj	972	981
959	964	Kandhamal	977	992
961	963	Sambalpur	986	983
963	914	Rajagada	986	1007
968	990	Koraput	990	1008
971	971	Nabarangpur	992	1001
974	972	Nuapada	997	1024
981	946	Kandhamal	1004	1000



WOMEN IN A GLOBALISING WORLD: SATI IN A NEW GARB

Vidya Das

INTRODUCTION :

The sunshade was the baby cot, in fact, half the family, the two youngest along with the mother slept on the sun shade, the rest of them, a slightly older child, and two men, perhaps brothers, slept on the roof. In the morning, when the mother had to go away for nearly an hour for her ablutions, the infant would be left with a toddler to keep it from falling off the sunshade. There was little other place to sleep, the rooms were half constructed, and full of grit, and cement and splintered boards, and nails. That ofcourse did not affect the play of the children, who happily picked their way in the middle of all the grit and grime, and alternated between the sand heap at the bottom of the building, and the sun shade in their rough and tumble games. Their mother, was joined by another woman during the day, and they did most of the heavy back breaking work including carrying bricks and sand to the top floor of the triple storied house. This, a scene from our capital city of Bhubaneswar, could be repeated with variations in almost every city in the country today. This paper is an attempt to understand the implications of globalisation as it affects the women from the poorer communities and the unorganised sector, which includes by far the majority of women and men in this country. It does not purport to be an exhaustive analysis, but more exploratory in nature, seeking to identify the major concerns.

Globalisation has affected different people in different ways, but perhaps where it has been most successful is in creating a global network of indifference. There are signs of growing disparity all around us. Even as we, the educated elite go around with our hectic schedules, the growing divide hits us in the little children who scrounge around in dumps that make us shudder even to pass by, in the increasingly shabby dwellings, and even the lack of it for more and more people, in the increasing number of famished half starved people who have nothing to look forward that we see everywhere around us. Perhaps this is the ultimate success of globalisation, and those who support it, should be proud: of the way globalisation has ultimately prioritised commerce and material success over almost everything human.

In this race for commerce and economic gains, women are losing out. They are loosing out, as are other classes of the underprivileged and exploited. The women's tragedy is not a unique story, it is going in tandem with the stories of several thousands of other communities, and we need not pity ourselves any more than we pity the others. Within the state of Orissa, reforms and liberalisations have lead to a progressive deterioration of the economy. The state has moved from a revenue surplus in 1983-84 to a revenue deficit of Rs.1583 crores in 1998-99. Orissa

Govt. laments that 'General Education' soaks up 1166.7 crores, but does not look at the fact that its interest payment liabilities on debt siphons of 1292 crores of the states revenue expenditure as per 1997-98 figures. The total loan burden on the state at the end of 1999-2000 was 18100 Crores, which was 46% of the GSDP. By the end of 2001-2002 this is expected to go upto 51% of the GSDP. The interest liability of the state at 2317.60 Crores is 5.6% of the GSDP, as compared to 1.85% during 1985-86. One of the major reasons for the increasing deficit is the poor returns from Capital investment. Government reports admit that Returns from expenditure in irrigation, power projects, water supply is too meagre to meet even the organisation and management costs. Yet more expenditure in such areas is planned as you will see subsequently.

The state has been identified as one of the priority states for DFID support. DFID prioritises reforms and foreign direct investment. One needs to ask if this is what the state needs. DFID admits that their presence in Orissa for around 20 years now has not had much impact on critical development indicators. They hope to continue their interventions in the state, using the lessons from the past. Based on these lessons from the past, the first steps they have taken for the state are the power sector reforms. That they have learnt little from the past is underlined by a GOO report, which points out that the objective to make power available to industries and consumers at a competitive price has not yet materialised, despite the power sector reforms. The uninterrupted power supply by system improvement has totally failed. Despite heavy investment of Rs.2964.66 crores, the GRIDCO which is responsible for power supply is incurring loss from year to year.

In the last decade and more, when the country has embraced the principles of globalisation, and liberalisation, and taken structural adjustment to be its gospel, there is little to show in terms of a human scale of development. The visible signs of affluence are there

for all to see, whether they care to or not, in the surfeit sleek shiny automobiles that clog the urban roads, in the ease of virtual communication even in remote places in the country, in the unending choices that our markets offer us today in almost all things from rice varieties to clothes to electronic equipment that can do magical things. But, equally strident are the signs that things are falling apart. Several economists and sociologists have been insistently pointing out to the writings on the wall, the increasing malnourishment, the increase in absolute numbers of people below the poverty line, the decrease in percapita expenditure on the social sector. In his paper on the impact of the textile mill closures and subsequent policies of deregulation of labour on the poor in Ahemdabad, Jan Breman almost predicts the February carnage in Gujarat as he describes the growing tensions as also the processes which forced women to become part of the paid labour force in the city: "Social ties based on other principles than class solidarity play a leading role in the articulation of identities in the informal sector milieu. Caste and faith operate as signposts in seeking and finding work. Entitlements to favours and protection or support in the event of misfortune are also channelled along these lines. .. The suggestion that these are forms of false consciousness over emphasises their ideological aspect while denying the practical significance of caste and religion to the way in which people try to reduce their vulnerability in daily life. Such identities also permit collective action..Strengthening identities within a closed group can shift the focus of attention away from solidarity with 'others'". (Breman Jan in 'An Informalised Labour System', EPW, Dec.29, 2001). While it is not the intention here to attribute all socio-economic change to globalisation and reforms, it needs to be emphasised that the policies and practices over the last ten years have increased the debt burden of the entire country and of each state enormously, while they have done little if anything to improve the living conditions of the poor, and specially poor women.

WOMEN & WORK :

Figures indicate, the Indian work force participation rate is 37.7% (1991 census). The rate for women is 22.7%, which is less than half the rate of 51.6% for men. The rural female participation rate is 27.2%, nearly thrice as much as the urban female participation rate of 9.7%. The percentage of labourers employed as main workers is higher among men than among women. In the case of marginal workers, this proportion is larger among women than among men. The majority of the main workers (66.8%) are employed in agricultural and allied industrial sectors. The proportion of women employed in this sector is 80.7%, compared to 62.7% for men. In rural areas 89.5% of the total female employed are engaged in the agricultural and allied industrial sector. (FAO). In Orissa, 27.28% of the total workers are women. Main workers constitute 58.2% and marginal workers 41.8% of the total. The unorganised primary sector absorbs as much as 82.7% of the female work force, and agriculture accounts for 80.9% out of this. This is according to 1991 census. (Economic Survey 1999-2000, Government of Orissa.)

It has been widely argued that globalisation and reforms will increase employment opportunities, and create more jobs, but over the years, one finds that there has been an increasing casualisation of employment, and the percentage of casual workers has gone up significantly for men as well as for women. At the All India level, estimates indicate that casual employment fell by 1.1% per annum in the period from 1983 to 1990-91, and then rose by 3.3% per annum in the period 1990-91 to 1996-97, indicating that the deregulation of labour markets has led to increased casualisation in the post-reform period ('Casualisation of Urban Labour Force' by Jesim Pais, EPW, Feb.16.). The workforce participation figures for 2001 have not been published as yet. But if we look at the organised sector employment figures for women in Orissa, we find that a total of 93276 women are employed in the organised sector in the year 1998 as against, 72301 in the year 1991 (Economic Survey of Orissa, 1999-

2000). The percentage of women employed in the organised sector has gone up by 0.1% in the 1991-98 period, as against a decennial population growth of 15.4%. The decade long commitment to globalisation has done little then to address the question of increasing number of women in the unorganised sector, as in absolute terms, their number would have increased by several lakhs.

This is as far as statistics takes us. But, if we peer behind statistics, into the real life issues of working women, we find the situation more alarming than ever. In the rural and tribal regions, globalisation has led to rise in the prices of essential commodities, including rice and kerosene. Thus even those who have BPL cards are by and large unable to buy food as they do not have the money for it. On the other hand, there has been little corresponding change in the prices of agricultural produce. Wage labour rates have been officially raised, but, there has been no increase in employment opportunities in the rural and tribal hinterlands. In the tribal regions, people continue to eke out a living depending on various forms of migration, within the state or district, often times outside, and slogging it out in a buyers' wage market at pitifully low rates of wage employment.

This, even after the outcry regarding surplus food stocks in the godowns. Thus actual wages earned by the labourer have hardly shown any significant improvement. Despite all legislation, women continue to get lower wages than men. The continuing practise of awarding employment works to private contractors ensures that the landless labourers, or even the small and marginal farmers who depend largely on wage labour never get paid the minimum wages that is due to them. In the processes of globalisation and reforms that have been set into motion, the voice of the people has been weakened more than ever before. The diminishing returns from agriculture forces larger and larger out of state migration on the rural population. Entire families migrate to the urban centres for employment. In the urban centres, wages are higher,

and employment more easily available. But all this is offset by the insecurity of general living conditions. Entire families become mobile colonies of labourers, trailing after a contractor. Their homes are the half constructed buildings that they are employed to construct. The plight of women in these situations is the worst, as they are doubly burdened by their vulnerability, and by having to look after the children. Sexual abuse and forced prostitution becomes rampant in these cases but, entire communities have little options, as they seek refuge from acute situations of scarcity in their own villages.

There are more than 200000 workers in just the textile mills in Surat from Orissa. most of them (85%) stay away from their families for years on end, and work in the most deplorable conditions. 'More than half (of the workforce in the textile industry) is in the 15-25 age group. Only one in ten powerloom operators is older than forty. The labour process is so exhausting that very few are able to perform adequately after middle age. Once the ability to maintain production drops below the required level, older workers are discharged without mercy. Women and children are also present in the workshops in roughly equal proportions, and together represent 12-15 percent of the workforce in the powerloom sector. Working and living conditions are wretched. The workers derive no security at all from their employment. Only a quarter of them are listed in their employer's administration under their true names. They are paid on a piece work basis and their monthly income is dependent on the degree of self-exploitation that they achieve during a 12 hour day or night shift'. (Breman, Jan; Das, Arvind in 'Down & Out' OUP, 2000)

This work in the mills has a predominance of males. But, when one realises that it is the conditions back

home that force young people to such inhuman work situations, in places far away then perhaps one would get a feeling of the acute situation of poverty that people suffer in the villages. Such conditions of poverty would be affecting women, children and men alike. It is not only to Surat that men migrate, from the districts of Gajapati, Bolangir, Kalahandi, people migrate to places as far away as Assam. One needs to really question policies which usher in an age of so-called progress, but force an increasing number of people to seek livelihoods outside their homes in the most dehumanising conditions.

An estimated equal number of women and men (200000) migrate every year from Nuapada and Bloangir, to work in brick kilns, or pull rickshaws or do odd jobs in Raipur and Andhrapradesh. To state that the conditions in the brick kilns are inhuman is to put it mildly. The linking of wages to production in a situation of acute labour scarcity forces the labourers to push themselves beyond all human limits. Often people die before they can return home. Nobody has any count of how many people left, and how many people returned. Even pregnant women and children migrate. (Max Martin from the Inter Press Service, Bolangir, India - November 17, 1999)

When women are left behind, they face multiple burden of looking after the family and the fields, and making ends meet single-handedly, while the money coming in from men in far away places is extremely irregular, and scarcely adequate. In a study on food security, we came across several cases where men had come back from more than 6 months of almost forced labour in places like Assam, with barely Rs.2000. often times, women are forced into debt, and the money brought back by their spouses is scarcely enough for repayment of these loans!

THE HEALTH IMPLICATIONS :

Sarathi Sabara's wife had gone to lift the PDS rations from Ghati Tala, 8 km downhill from Tilli in the Lailai Panchayat of Gajapati District. Sarathi himself had gone for wage labour and so she had little options. She was 9 months pregnant with her third child. A couple of days after undertaking this difficult task, she went into labour and was unable to recover following the delivery of the child. Sarathi went to Narayanpur, 23 kms away. The private doctor from Narayanpur refused to come and sent his compounder instead. On seeing her condition, the compounder declared that he was helpless, and suggested that Sarathi take his wife to Rayagada, the Block headquarters, 40kms away. However, she was in no condition to be moved, as she was in too much pain, and eventually died.

This is not a unique occurrence. In the tribal districts of Orissa, people suffer, and very often die for want of medical attention. As distances to health centres are high and medical functionaries few and far between, people have little options. One also needs to realise however that the problems of ill-health in the tribal regions are compounded by poverty and, chronic food shortage leading to malnourishment. Health is not just a matter of services at the right time, but of helping to ensure the quality of life necessary for good living. There is little literature on how the policies of globalisation affect the health of populations and of the vulnerable sections in the population. Are displaced communities at least as healthy as they were before displacement, has people's food intake improved over the last decade of globalisation. There are several studies that indicate poverty levels have actually gone up all over the country, as also in Orissa. Infant mortality, considered one of the most sensitive indicators of the well-being of a community also continues to be high in the country, as also in Orissa.

Trends in Infant Mortality Rate in Different States in India Over Three Years

State/UT	1996	1997	1998
Andhra Pradesh	65	63	66
Assam	74	76	78
Bihar	71	71	67
Gujarat	61	62	64
Haryana	68	68	69
Karnataka	53	53	58
Kerala	14	12	16
Madhya Pradesh	94	94	97
Maharashtra	48	47	49
Orissa	96	96	98
Punjab	51	51	54
Rajasthan	85	85	83
Tamil Nadu	53	53	53
Uttar Pradesh	85	85	85
West Bengal	55	55	53
All India	72	71	72

Source : SRS India.

Orissa is getting significant quantum of external assistance for health and family welfare. The World Bank provides a loan assistance of 348.8 crores for the The Orissa Health Systems Development Project. Nearly a third of the outlay for the project is to be utilised for the building programmes. The third phase of Orissa Health & Family Welfare Reform Project is under implementation in the State with assistance from DFID. With already an overwhelming burden of debt on the state, the wisdom of going in for further loans for its welfare programmes is highly questionable. The stated focus of the health sector in Orissa is to "improve access to health care for the underserved segments of the population." The objectives of the health sector prioritise "provision of adequate and qualitative preventive and curative health care to the people of the State; improvement of maternal and child health and in particular reduction in maternal and infant mortality. In the light of the recent statistics

which indicate Orissa has the highest infant mortality amongst the 15 major states in the country, and this rate has shown a rising trend, the objectives outlined by the Health Sector have an extremely hollow ring. One also needs to examine the role of external aid in this light, and question its efficacy. Apart from the regular programmes, the Health Sector has a multiplicity of programmes for the prevention and control and eradication of communicable diseases including TB, malaria, aids, filaria and leprosy. The regular primary health programme provides for a doctor population ratio of 1:7440 and a bed population ratio or 1:2637, as per 1998-99 figures. With 567 medical institutions functioning in 118 Blocks in 12 tribal districts, the total number of medical institution in the state has gone up from 1448 in 1990 to 1702 in 1999. On the ground, however, there is little succour for the sick. In the tribal regions, apart from the lone ANM running around toting up figures for sterilisation, euphemistically called 'family planning' there is little help in the time of acute health crisis. In such situations, women become doubly vulnerable with complications arising from pregnancy and child birth. There is a continuing emphasis on birth control and 'family planning' in the health programme of the state, and essential programmes of control and elimination of chronic disease is getting lesser and lesser support.

The increasing tendency toward privatisation of health services has also been a major factor affecting the health of vulnerable sections of the population including women and children, specially of marginalized communities in the tribal hinterlands. The present 'trends of not only gradual disinvestments in the public sector, but of subsidising the private sector reveals that the state is abdicating its own responsibility, and by undermining the public sector and strengthening the private is pushing the poor into a more vulnerable position.' This is already visible in the increasingly acute health situation in the tribal regions of Orissa. The inability of the poor to buy the necessary drugs for their treatment, as the prices of more and more drugs are de-controlled is reflected in the reluctance

of people to go to PHCs for treatment, and an increasing return to traditional systems.

NATURAL RESOURCES :

More than two years back, the State Government conceded a major right to the tribal communities in the 5th Schedule [1] Areas of the State. The tribal women in Kshipur had struggled long and hard for the right to buy, process and sell minor forest produce. In 1993, the Chief Minister, Biju Patnaik had agreed to allow tribal women's groups which had formally registered to buy and sell minor forest produce. However, this right was a long time in being put into practise as the forest department was loathe to concede even this small concession to tribal groups. [2]. Then, in 1997, The Ama Sangathan in Kshipur Block of Rayagada, District, Orissa obtained the lease for the Kshipur Forest range to buy, process and sell hill brooms. Perhaps for the first time in Orissa, a tribal women's group had broken into the domain of what was till then exclusively that of the businessmen. The women of Ama Sangathan valiantly took on the challenge of producing brooms for the market, and struggled against stiff royalties of the forest department, huge delays in permits and slowly learnt the tricks of the trade. Then, on 1st April 2000, under the new Naveen Patnaik Government, the rights over minor forest produce were finally handed to the Panchayats and all systems of royalties, permits, etc. were lifted within the state[3]. This was a major policy change, which seemed to affirm the commitment of the State Government towards the welfare and development of its poorest communities. The policy did have several drawbacks still. It was not supported by any appropriate pricing systems, so tribals were selling their products at as low rates as ever. Moreover, the Panchayats were having the power, and there was apprehension that people would be entrapped by the Panchayats which would take bribes and play fowl.[4] However, in Kshipur, where Ama Sangathan was very much in the race, the prices of minor forest produce went up way beyond the support prices, and stabilised at nearly

double those rates. This was a clear indication of the need for constructive intervention, whereby people could get due supports for their products[5].

Globalisation is primarily about resources. It is an effort by a few institutions, including some Governments, financial institutions and corporations to have an increasing control over the world's resources. It is a co-option of weaker national governments by this handful of institutions to have un-hindered access to the resources of these nations, whether it be land, forests or water, or oil, and other minerals below the surface. To this end, local governments, steeped as they are in self-interest and corruption are manipulated and coerced into changing laws and policies, subverting progressive legislations that might empower the people, and giving in to international treaties. All this is done in the name of economic development, while we see that the poverty of the people in the country is on the rise. Clearly, economic development does not mean people. But how justified is it for a democratic Government to pursue a path of development that leads to increasing impoverishment of its people?

Women as also the tribal community in general in Kashipur soon realised, that the very same state which had showed some sensitivity on the issue of minor forest produce was quite indifferent when the issue of concern was something as crucial as land and livelihoods. Eager for foreign investments the government was selling away their survival resources to mining corporations. The people were horrified. It was not just a question of their survival either. An entire way of life would be destroyed. The beautiful plateaus from which rose hundreds of life-sustaining streams and which are home to some of the most powerful deities of the tribal people would be dug up, and mined. The people started a collective movement to resist the land acquisition by the mining corporations. Women got together with the men, in an effort to protect their land and forests and homes from destruction. The women did not look at gender specific issues, though as members of a patriarchal community,

they do face discrimination, and injustice. A community has to survive first as a community, if the women have to assert. As women, they perceived much more acutely, the problems of subsistence and survival they would have to face if evicted from this land, which has been their home for centuries. Thus, their voices and energies provided much more strength to the movement. They have gone for public meetings and rallies, addressed public gatherings, and faced the wrath of the police and the administration. The state in its blind high handed fashion has refused time and again to look at the legitimacy of this struggle, and has come down with repressive measures, false cases, arrests lathi-charge, and outright intimidation. The people have met in the Gram Sabhas, and passed resolutions that they would not give up their land for the Utkal Alumina Project, they have appealed time and again to authorities in the state and the central governments to listen to them. The state has come back with accusations: these people are violent, they are criminals, they are dacoits. Joining hands with Utkal Alumina International, it has encouraged criminal elements in the region, and fanned conflict between tribal and non-tribal groups. One needs to ask who is violent: a state that ignores the legitimate demands of a people and provides amnesty to lumpen elements with known criminal records, despite reports and appeals by the people, or a tribal people who have no record or history of violence, except in false police cases over the last two years as the mining companies grow desperate to start work, and try to pump money into the region?

There is no lack of recognition of the issues of displacement. Several studies by various institutions and departments to assess the problems of displacement have been taken up, and reports produced on the problems displaced communities face. Leading among them is the World Bank, whose loans have perhaps engendered the maximum displacement in the state and the country. Apart from studies, the tangible suffering of communities is there for all to see.

Even several officers and bureaucrats have commented on the sufferings of the displaced, and produced entire books on the issue. Training programmes initiated by the World Bank and other funding agencies have produced volumes on R&R. There are no clear statistics on the extent of displacement in the country and the state. Even worse is the status of information on resettlement. Studies indicate that less than 30% of the displaced have been resettled. As one can see, even more than the picture of displacement, what is horrifying is the estimate of the backlog of the people who are yet to be settled as of 1994, which include projects which started in the late 1940s.

Studies on displacement indicate a dismal picture of resettlement and rehabilitation. In fact, there is little concrete data on the number of people displaced or rehabilitated. This is even more true of the projects taken up in the undivided Koraput districts, and if one tries to probe the number of people or families resettled and rehabilitated, then one is even more confounded. When the first major irrigation projects were taken post independence, the state did not have a policy of resettlement and rehabilitation. This was the case with the first major irrigation projects like the Machkund hydel project on river Duduma, completed in 1960, the Hirakud river valley project completed in 1957, the Balimela dam project, completed in 1977. It was only with the Rengali Multi-purpose irrigation project in 1973 that an R&R policy was articulated, and any kind of system introduced in the displacement of local communities in the state.

Reports of conditions of local communities of earlier displacements are horrifying to say the least. The following is a description of the situation of the Salandi dam oustees in the border regions of Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj and Baleswar Districts: "The Government rehabilitate the Dam oustees in 7 colonies near and around Hadgarh township (with) assurance that the Government would provide them with houses, reclaimed

land for agriculture, school, medical facilities and irrigation facilities in the new resettlement colonies..

"During occupation at the new resettlement there were high uplands filled with rocks and no irrigation facilities; hence they could not cultivate the little land given by the government. Only 25% of their land was reclaimed against the assurance to reclaim all their land. They had to fall back on day labour for construction of the canals and other government public works. They also took to labour in the chromite mines about 15 kms away. In these days of privation, many sold their household assets like utensils and went to the forest for roots. Tubers fruits etc. in the meantime, these villagers were affected by cyclone. Many people died due to lack of food and due to various types of dangerous diseases. according to our collected data, 1079 people died during 1971 to 1979 (in the new resettlement out of 546 families resettled)". (Mahapatra L.K.; in Development Induced Displacement, 1998, Pg.62).

But even in the projects taken up after the formulation of a clearly articulated policy, things are dismal. "The settlements around the Indravati reservoir are a deprived and marginalised lot. Though, they have sacrificed much for the reservoir, luxuries like electricity, or even irrigation is not their lot. They are still encroachers eking out a precarious living on hill slopes that the state still classifies as Government land, and will not part with even for the sake of the displaced. The worst plight is that of the displaced communities amongst these settlements. More than a decade after displacement, they still have not been recognised for government welfare. The boundaries of administration have been entirely messed up for these settlements because of the reservoir, and several of them are cut off by more than a days's journey to their Block and District Head quarters. Yet, the state has not bothered to look at these people, once it got them out of its way of development. No effort has been made to bring them into the folds of the nearer district and

block units to enable them to access Government facilities and supports. The people cannot even make a complaint to the police station if they have any problems, as the police station they can access will not accept their complaint, as it is in a different district. Hardly any of the displaced families have been able to use the compensation amount for any benefit, as land availability decreased with the huge scale of land acquisition for the dam and the reservoir, and consequent upward swing in land prices made it almost impossible for those displaced to buy land close to the sites of their new settlements. Most of the oustees have been forced to buy land several miles away, with the result, that they have not been able to make proper use of their land." (Das Vidhya in *At the Edge of Development*).

Even in the instance of the Rengali project, which had the benefit of a newly formed R&R package, reports indicate that the displaced communities have been extremely impoverished. "In the old Khemla village, all residents had either a direct or indirect stake in agriculture. There were large land holders who could engage the landless in their agricultural operation on payment of wages.. the landholders in the old village could absorb the unemployed people of the village to a significant extent.

"in the resettlement, every family has been allotted 6 acres of unirrigated infertile and uncultivable land. The yields from these lands is very low, and therefore, there is general deficit in every household. The scope of wage earning opportunity within the village as well as in the neighbouring villages is inadequate as against the demand. (This) has forced villagers to go outside the village in search of wage-earning. 17 persons have left the village and have gone to distant places for earning a meagre living. (Behura N.K. in *"The Uprooted"*, 1990).

The NALCO project, over the privatisation of which there is so much hue and cry, outlines the callousness of project authorities once they have managed to get

people out the way. The 522 families displaced have all been re-located to Anlabadi colony. One permanent job was supposed to be given for each displaced family. But only 389 families have been given jobs. The worst part of the package, however, is perhaps the deplorable amenities in the Anlabadi colony. The plight of the women in this colony is the most pitiable, come summer. The water supply is one meagre pipeline and two tubewells. The water in the pipelines are at the leakage points rather than the spouts. The scarce supply in the summer leads to several tensions within the inhabitants, who perhaps even after having realised who is the real culprit behind this problem are unable to do anything about it. The arrangements for bathing are even poorer, and drainage is conspicuous by its absence. With no toilets, and no forests near the resettlement site, people are forced to use the open spaces. But, we need to take special note of the women's status in these situations, as the displacement and the package provided by the company have pushed them into a quasi-middle-class situation, without granting them the amenities for the middle-class. Once active contributors to the family economy, they are now devoid of avenues of work, and have become dependent on the sole nominee of the family for the job provided by NALCO. This forced unemployment, has led to a degradation of the importance of women within the household, and created a dependence where none existed before. [10]

Thus the loss to women is much more than a place to live in. That in fact is the least of their worries. But what happens when access to survival resources has been cut off, what happens when one's means of livelihood is taken away. What productive asset can you buy with twenty thousand or even fifty thousand rupees, which you will be able to use in a sustainable manner, when you do not have any experience of entrepreneurship? What productive assets can 5000 people buy at the same time, which will enable them to use it in any profitable manner, all at the same time, even if you do have experience and skills for entrepreneurship, if it is not land? Displacement forces

women to look outside their homes and villages for employment, which goes up in a sudden spurt during the project construction period. With the end of this phase, however, these women are left high and dry. The result: prostitution, destitution, disorientation almost to the point of madness. These are very real outcomes, visible in many a resettled population, but our Government ignores them all.[12]

AGRICULTURE:

In 1996, Orissa, according to its policy document on agriculture, "adopted a bold and unique Agriculture Policy during the year. for the first time in the country to increase investment in agriculture, bring in a shift from subsistence agriculture to commercial agriculture and accorded status of industry to agriculture." The thrust areas of this policy have been identified as follows:

- ❖ Dry land agriculture on watershed basis
- ❖ Production of commercial crops - cotton, sugarcane, potato
- ❖ Argil. Intensification with water management in irrigation command
- ❖ Quality seed production through seed village approach
- ❖ Small farm mechanization & agro service centre
- ❖ Creation of farmer's market (Kissan mandi)
- ❖ Information Technology in Agriculture
- ❖ Infrastructure development (Agro-processing, Cold storage, Seed processing etc.)

True to this policy, the state has made giant strides in commercialisation of agricultural lands, and weaning cultivators away from subsistence cropping to cash cropping. A striking example is cotton. In just the last three years, the area under cotton has gone up from 8205 to 10194 in Rayagada, from 5675 to 24010 hectares in Kalahandi, and from 3306 to 16060 hectares in Bolangir. In other districts, agricultural land has been converted to commercial eucalyptus plantations, like the JK Corps in Rayagada, Koraput and Nabrangpur,

taken up for commercial mint and tea cultivation in Keonjhar, ginger has been introduced extensively in Koraput to give just a few examples. The state has also set up an "exclusive organization The Agricultural Promotion & Investment Corporation of Orissa Limited (APICOL)" with the objective of translating the above objectives into reality through undertaking various promotional roles such as providing counselling and escort services, entrepreneurship building, extending consultancy services, disseminating information amongst entrepreneurs and above all act as a single window channelizing agency for various incentives under Agriculture Policy. Capital Investment Subsidy to commercial agri-enterprises @ 20% of the capital cost subject to a limit of Rs.20.00 lakhs is one amongst other incentives under this policy".

In all this, the state seems to have overlooked some of the essential components that should perhaps influence agricultural policy, things like food security, livelihoods, production, and sustainability. The fact of reaching near self-sufficiency in paddy production, has motivated the state to turn away from food crops and promote commercial agriculture. In Bolangir and Kalahandi, where true to this policy, more than 25 thousand hectares have been brought under cotton cultivation, unemployment and loss of livelihoods continues so rampant that people have left their homes in lakhs looking for work elsewhere. In other districts where commercial cropping has been introduced, food stress has gone up manifold. Studies and past experience indicates that commercial cropping does little for enhancing the livelihoods of the local communities. Very often, commercial cropping requires much larger investments, and a scale of operation that very few people in underdeveloped regions can afford. It also involves mechanisation on a large scale, depriving the small, marginal farmer and the land less labourer of supplementary employment as wage labourers. Women would be amongst the most affected groups, as their areas of work would be taken over by mechanisation.

The subsidies that organisations like APICOL would give would benefit the better off, who could once again use it to deny the poorer sections what little benefits they had out of agricultural labour. Such processes have been initiated in almost all places within the state, in a small or big scale with introduction of high yielding varieties of seeds, subsidies for mechanisation, and have caused the alienation of the poorer sections, and minority groups like the tribals more and more. All this would result in decrease in self-employment, and increased casualisation. This is corroborated by macro-level studies which indicates an over-all decline in employment in agro-industries, accompanied by a considerable increase in capital investment. It has been found that in most traditional communities, women play a significant role in agriculture. However, with growing commercialisation of agriculture, the role of women declines, as does the role of labour on the whole, leading to increasing marginalisation of the labour class. The need to seek alternate forms of employment often forces large sections of the community to migrate, with serious implications for women and children

ISSUES OF GOVERNANCE AND POLICY :

Tribal communities have traditionally shared subsistence and survival resources, recognizing basic needs as basic rights. The colonial laws made sustained effort to change this and had to face a series of uprisings and revolts from the tribal regions for long periods of time. Toward the end of their rule, they realized the fallacy of trying to impose restrictions and controls on tribal communities, and their laws were modified recognizing the rights of tribal communities. When India became independent, some of the most restrictive laws of the colonial rulers were accepted for governance. The most draconian of them is perhaps the Land Acquisition Act, which has been further modified to render it proof against all human interests. Why should there be a bill that permits a state to acquire people's lands, when the state has never had

a history of providing these people with any benefits. What is public purpose? Who is the public that the state is acquiring the land for? In the four districts which formed the undivided Koraput formerly, more than sixty thousand people have been displaced, through the Land Acquisition Act through dams, factories and mines, how has the public in these districts benefited in anyway from this displacement? Even if we are to forget the displaced for the moment, what have the people who have not been displaced from these projects, got? The Indravati power project has an installed capacity of 600-mw power. The villages around the Indravati have no electricity while power cables stretch overhead to supply power to industries in and around Rayagada. But, then, even the basics of human needs like viable educational facilities, drinking water, access to essential commodities, and health services, even food security have not been met for people in these districts, so why jump to luxuries like electric connections? And of course, they have no entitlements. The land that the tribal people in these areas cultivate is classified mostly as uncultivable wastes, and no record of rights is given to anybody on these lands, even if they have been in possession of the land for the last hundred years[14]. But, that does not stop the state from leasing out these lands over which the tribal can have no rights, other than to cultivate forever as 'encroacher', to private mining corporations, paper mill owners, and other interested parties. At which point of time, even the right to encroach is snatched away from the tribal cultivator, and he has now the sole right to be displaced under the shadow of high sounding policies for resettlement and rehabilitation, which are conspicuous by their non-implementation. Critiquing the Land Acquisition Act, Ambrose Pinto points out that it is the people and not the Government who should be permitted to define what is development for them. "The Public purpose as understood by the state or the business classes or the TNCs . Mega dams, industries and irrigation projects are beneficial to the elite in society, but they are bound to destroy the culture of indigenous people" [15].

As the demands on scarce resources go up, there is enormous anxiety expressed over putting the right sounding policies in place. Policies that would help dispense with the unwanted people, while we get on with the job of nation building. Shut up don't ask what's a nation without people, we want the right kind of people! Thus, even several civil society groups have got into the boat (aeroplane?) and suggest a policy of Rehabilitation and Land Acquisition. These policies have several progressive suggestions like resettlement before the project comes up, land for land, etc. Nobody however has answered two crucial questions: what happens when the policy is not followed? And 2. what is going to happen to those already displaced, can we try out this policy for them first before we run merrily along with further projects that grab the resources and throw the unwanted, in this case local communities of people, out?

In this country, everybody knows laws and policies exist more in their breach, rather than in their implementation. So far, we have had mostly restrictive laws apart from the Land Acquisition Act to prevent

people groups and institutions from destroying, damaging lives and properties and to control other kinds of crimes. The Land Acquisition Act which is an enabling act has come in for much criticism, and is being widely decried as a colonial legacy. Thus, we need this much better sounding reformulation of a Land Acquisition and Rehabilitation Bill which would be an enormously enabling provision that would allow Governments and markets to get away with destruction of livelihoods and entire traditional communities. Once communities have been displaced, and left with an ill-implemented re-habilitation policy, they will have little strength to fight back, and make any kind of effective demands. The situation of the people displaced by the Rengali project, the Upper Indravati project, as also the NALCO indicate that policies have little meaning, other than being nice and convenient pieces of paper.

Globalisation maybe about having local communities to sacrifice to ensure enough, which means endless supply of automobiles and limousines for the rich, and to ensure enough power supply for urban

A CONSERVATIVE ESTIMATE OF THE DPS PROJECTS, 1951-1990

Total Displaced Tribals Displaced

No.	Project	Total DPs	Resettled	Backlog	Total DPs	Resettled	Backlog
01.	Mines	2,550.000	630.000	1,920.000	13,30.000	330.000	1,000.000
02.	Dams	16,400.000	4,300.000	12,300.000	63,21.000	15,81.000	47,40.000
03.	Industries	1,250.000	375.000	875.000	331.000	100.000	233.000
04.	Wildlife	600.000	125.000	475.000	450.000	100.000	350.000
05.	Others	500.000	150.000	350.000	125.000	25.000	100.000
	Total	21,300.000	5,380.000	15,920.000	8,539.000	2,116,000	6,423.000

Source: Fernandes 1994, in Involuntary Displacement In Dam Projects,

agglomerates to keep the selected few in a permanent and never-interrupted state of extreme luxury, but, civil society groups should not fall into that trap. The displaced in this state, and in this country have not even been properly accounted for. Till date, exact figures do not exist about the number of communities displaced by the large dam projects. Lost in the wave of developmental history, the numerical precision may elude us, but the communities with their difficult almost impossible living conditions are still there. It is common knowledge now that entire villages in these districts have been displaced not once but several times, as project after project has been planned with no thought for the local inhabitants. The cry of one old woman in a settlement that just has a number now in the district of Koraput, tares me apart:

"why did the van that was taking us to our colony not dump us in the dam, that would have ended our miseries then and there !" the settlements in Koraput are now given numbers. And people identify themselves from colony numbers, rather than villages. If we find this strange in a place where even the hills and groves are given a name and worshipped, it should make us wonder how much stranger must be the weary lives of peasant communities who are not allowed to settle down and build their homes. Who knows when the next project will come and displace them?

There is anxiety to get the gender issues articulated in policy documents on resettlement and rehabilitation. This is understandable given the extreme concern of people who want to and most often get away with doing exactly what they want, to atleast sound right. But, what are the 'gender' issues when people's lives are torn apart. From the cosy laps of high profile financial and multi-lateral institutions, the Michael Cerneas of this world have articulated much more than I can ever on the problems of displaced women and men. It makes me sick in the stomach to add to this verbosity, and I shall not do so.

What we need to look at really are issues of Governance. Everybody knows by now that Governance in the tribal regions is a disaster, that people could happily do without. By the people, I mean the tribal and other poor inhabitants of the tribal regions who live mostly through wage labour, and food gathering in the forests, who are the majority population of the region, and not the handful of vested interests who have decided that they shall for ever be the prime and only beneficiaries of all development and welfare funding. Despite progressive policies and legislations, despite several regulations and facilities Governance in the tribal regions is by and large an anarchy with the rule of the survival of the fittest.

There are already enabling laws and provisions for local self-governance. It is essential that state and national governments which are centralised megaliths which cannot be sensitive to the needs of the people and the situation on the ground devolved power to local bodies and allowed them to make their decisions. This is the women's issue that we need to look at. Budgetary allocation for welfare and health, reservations in various tiers of the Governance are ok to play around with. But, these are just sops to appease a screaming child. If we are really interested to make a dent on the women's situation, then, we have to start looking at much more essential and central issues. Welfare is essential, but, we need to realise that without land, and productive resources, without the right to work, without an education that enables one to learn skills for survival, without the facility to make development decisions, welfare is like trying to keep a starving man alive on vitamins and medicines.

Even at the Ministerial level, it is recognised that the Acts for decentralisations have remained just Acts, and have not empowered village communities, or even Sarpanches. "Most State Acts provide two major significant powers of acting as a 'watch-dog' of the working of the village Panchayat and of facilitating people's participation in development decision-making. However, barring these, in most cases we have stopped

short of the last vital steps towards empowerment. The gram sabha has no doubt been given a statutory entity, but its role is largely advisory" (Yashwant Sinha as Union Minister of Finance in Strengthening Village Democracy, NIRD, 1999). As women who are concerned about the well-being of our communities, and about the well-being of women, we need to ensure that the provisions of these enabling amendments the 73rd Amendment, and the PESA Act are actually a reality on the ground. Women can play a crucial role in functionalising democracy, and ensuring that the crucial needs of the poorest and the most vulnerable sections of the population are met. Where ever, in rural communities, women have been given the room and the space to step out of the confines of their work and homes, they have proved their ability and improved the quality of politics markedly. As educated women we need to ensure more and more such space is provided, not just through reservations, which according to me is more of a subversion of the real issues, but through processes and facilities in which women can hold their own in an equal playing fields. Even today, women in villages are not aware of the provisions and powers of the Gram Sabhas. They think those are forums for position holders, formally, and social tabbos ofcourse debar women from active participation, even if they happen to make their way to these forums.

And again, we need to think how we can lessen the hold of officialdom on processes of self governance. Till today, it is the VLW who controls the meetings and decisions of the Gram Sabha, as most of the funds are routed through the Block, and people have no information of allocations and schemes save what the VLW chooses to let them know.

But ofcourse, in the more important and crucial issues, the higher level officers can also come down to the Gram Sabhas. To circumvent the provisions of the PESA Act, and help private corporations have access to local land, there are instances of very recent times where the district magistrate has organised and attended

Gram Sabhas, and ensured that appropriate resolutions are passed. Needless to say, these forums are completely staged, and have no participation of the actual members of the Gram Sabha in question, neither women nor men. But, then with video camera evidence, who is asking questions!

In a globalising world, subtle processes of disempowerment undermine efforts and strivings of local communities. The Samatha judgement was a land mark judgement for the Scheduled Areas, which effectively checked processes of land acquisition on a mass scale for private corporations. There is a move on the nullify the Samatha judgement by amending the Fifth Schedule to the Constitution. A recent Supreme Court judgement restraining the Central Government from regularising the encroachments in the country has resulted in the MoEF circular for a time bound action plan to evict all encroachments on forest lands and has gone counter to all the outcry about rights of forest communities (i.e. communities living in reserved forest tracts). This juxtaposed to State Governments anxieties to work out policies of industrialisation that will bring in more FDI, while they sell away the rights of local communities should make us all sit up and realise how much globalisation is about denying local communities the rights to their resources. The Government of Orissa Industrial Policy resolution aims at actively encouraging investments in large industrial units by taking steps to 'hasten clearances and eliminate factors causing delays'. Amongst other provisions and facilities, including increasing efforts to provide infrastructure including communication, and power, it hopes to provide 'land banks' which would be lease barred for other purposes and made available to entrepreneurs to establish industrial units. Today, the major obstacle in most natural resource development programmes is the control over land resources by the poor. Watersheds suffer greatly on this account, as a piece of commons cannot be leased in by a community of landless for long-term use. The majority of the displaced in the state are yet to be settled as revenue laws prohibit sanction of private property rights on upland slopes in the tribal regions.

Ofcourse, there is much more to the implications of globalisation for women. As I mentioned earlier, more than anything else, it is the insidious march of the global mind-set that prioritises economic growth and commerce over almost all human values. It is the sacrifice of all things human, including women, and foetuses that will emerge as women. Everybody has noted the alarming, nay horrifying fall in sex ratios of the 0-6 all over the country in the last decade, that is the decade of globalisation. The more modernising the region, the greater the fall in the sex ratios, Mr. Agnihotri's studies on missing women, and girls all underline that. It is inevitable. everyone says. Let us sacrifice, and let us develop. As maybe expected, it is the sacrifice of the other. Those who make the decisions today cannot dream of a sacrifice for themselves. They cannot sacrifice a single air-conditioned trip to air-conditioned conference halls, they cannot sacrifice one bit of their consultancies for ensuring the necessary

luxuries of their lives the list is endless, and one need not go on. Sati was a glorification of the ultimate sacrifice of woman. Today, the glorification of all values that force sacrifice of the lives of women, tribals, voiceless foetuses continues. It is time we all got together to put an end to this sacrifice of the 'other' and began to take urgent steps to usher in a more humane society, where people can decide for themselves the course of their development, and not have development decisions thrust on them by an exclusive few who are too protected by the multiple layers of globalisation to be affected in anyway by any decisions they make; where women too can be an organic part of decision making processes, instead of having to stand on the fringes and cry out for sops, where human beings, women and men can live with dignity as human beings, and not be treated as unwanted rocks and boulders in the path of economic growth.



ETHNIC CONFLICT AND ITS IMPACT ON THE WOMEN AND COMMUNITY

Sandhyarani Naik

INTRODUCTION :

Growing trend of communal and ethnic violence particularly in scheduled areas have considerably affected the normal life of women and children in Orissa. In tribal culture and spirituality there is no place of hatred and social discrimination in the name of religion and caste. Every sensible citizen, social scientists and scholars concerned with the issues of tribals, scheduled castes and ethnic communities must try to find out the root causes of violence amongst the peace loving native communities in the name of religion and ethnicity. One who is closely associated with these ethnic communities and observed the socio-economic, political and cultural changes at least for last three decades, definitely of the opinion that the evidence of hatred and conflicts are the recent phenomenon. The hatred and terrorism is engineered by the fundamentalists and their supporters mostly infiltrated from different parts of Orissa, in an uninterrupted manner with an ulterior political motif and vested interest.

Ever since the ethnic fight took place amongst the two major ethnic groups in Kandhamals in 1994 between Kandhas and panos the trend continued and reflected in some form or the other. The mastermind behind all the conflicts were the petty businessmen,

moneylenders and sahuikars coming from the plains very recently. The native Kuing, Domang, Pano, sitarang and Gahing have strong age old pre-colonial bond, socio-cultural harmony, economic inter dependence, symbiotic relation and closeness inspite of their official divisions as STs and SCs by the Govt.

The out side dominant caste populations used to exploit the natives socio-economically, but blame mainly the Dalit panos who were in fact poor, land less and treated as untouchables. Even many universities have come out with research findings that Scheduled Castes exploit tribals. Media also some times played a biased role by projecting the ill feeling and hatred between the native communities without exposing the external forces, those who are really responsible for the problem. Further the egalitarian values of the indigenous communities were slowly being replaced by the alien caste values due to the sanskritisation process resulting in gender and social inequality. Consequently the status of women in the region has been degraded a lot. The freedom of women in the domestic and social life has been restricted.

The 1994 caste and communal fights subjected many Pano families to flee from Khajuripada, Linepada, Bujulimundi and other areas of Phulbani Subdivision.

There has not been any attempt to assess how many such conflict affected families have been uprooted from their native places lost their Kith and Kin, landed property, household belonging and continue to suffer till today. In 1999 series of communal clashes were flared up in all over South Orissa may be because of some obvious social and political reasons.

Whether it is communal or ethnic conflict women and children are the worst victims. It creates trauma in their minds, prevents free movements of women on the roads, forests and work fields. Men flee away leaving women and children behind with all burden. Further, more than 90% of the population in these scheduled areas are steeped in to endemic poverty, loss of livelihood and illiteracy. Here we are reminded of Dr. Amartya Sen who believes that if a country globalizes fast and pays no attention to lack of social opportunities and Health Care it ends up creating serious problems for itself like Brazil and perhaps India.

The Kandhamals and different ethnic groups

To understand the whole issue of ethnic and communal conflict, more focus has been given on Kandhamals and South Orissa in this paper.

As we are concentrating on the ethnic conflicts between the inhabitants experienced since some past years, it is worthy enough to briefly narrate the different ethnic groups and their common traits, i.e. belief, spirituality, language, region and race. It is often argued that sharing of biological or cultural traits may not itself give rise to ethnicity. It must also be accompanied by a consciousness of sharing for ethnicity to gain social significance. Ethnic groups are socially recognized as distinct groups.

The Kuing (The Kuis)

The aborigine Kuis constitute the Kuis, Kui Domas and Sitaras. They are culturally identified as Kuis, Kui Domang and Sitarang. The Kui Domang and Sitarang share common ancestry with the Kuis and form an

indispensable segment of Kui community. The Kuinga, Kuidomang, and Sitaranga have been traditionally assigned with specific responsibility for over all protection and maintenance of Kui country. The relationship with each other is symbiotic, profound, spiritual and emotional. In the process of scheduling they were wrongly categorized as scheduled castes Pano in spite of the fact that they share common ancestry, totemic culture, spirituality and language. Only recently the Kui Sitarang were treated as scheduled tribes and enjoying reservation facilities. Inter group marriage between these groups is a wide spread phenomena. It is almost difficult task to find pure Kuing, pure Kui Domang or pure Sitarang as almost every household inter group marriage have taken place since long.

Whatever may be the categorization done by the Ghumusara Kings, Britishers and rulers of independent India, culturally they belong to one community and share the territorial identity. The historian Dr. Atul Pradhan in his book titled "The emergence of depressed class of India mentioned that Kui Domangs were a tribe in Kandhamals, Sambalpur and the areas transferred to Orissa under the provision of Govt. of India order 1936 (Constitution of Orissa) from the Vizagpatnam and Ganjan agency in the presidency of Madras. The Kuinga, Kuidomang, and Sitaranga also inhabit the Koraput, Kalahandi, Ganjam of Orissa, Visakha Patnam, Vizayanagaram and Srikakulum of Andrapradesh, Reigarh of Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra regions.

The legends, folklore, folk tales and verses chanted in the rituals in Kandhamals also widely reflect that the Kuing and Domang have originated from a common root.

The Bhanja king employed the Bisoi and patros in each Mutas as his representatives mainly to collect taxes from the aborigines. From then onwards the alien system of governance and social values were imposed on these people slowly eroding some of the vital indigenous socio-cultural values. The Kuinga and

Kui domang have different totems. Marriage between same totem is near impossible, if any body violates this is excommunicated from the community.

The Kui Domas are the spiritual leaders having profound commitment towards maintaining the spirituality. The Kui women (both Kui and Kui doma) were tatoed on their faces to scare the enemies (Kings officers and Marathas) to be protected from the sexual abuse. The outsiders gradually penetrated into the land with caste culture. The Kuingas were made superior to Kuidomangs resulting in social distance from each other. But the natives identify themselves as 'Kuiloku'.

The Panos

They are distributed in all most all the regions of Orissa. The present study however, The study concentrate on the Panos of Kandhamals and Gajapati who constitute a principal ethnic group next to Kuinga. Panos are the schedule caste community from among the 93 SCs groups in the state of Orissa. They are the Dalits most hated ones, people of low material culture mainly engaged in manual service such as disposing of the corpses. They speak a precursor language of Oriya, practice animism. They are exterior groups to Hindu society. The very touch of them leads to defilement, and pollution of upper caste people. Hence do not have access to Hindu temples and Hindu households.

The Panos are the aborigines of India. They have been crushed to loose their original identity, language and culture by infliction of severe caste rules. Earlier they were identified as Harijans, but now they have a self-asserting nomenclature "Dalit" which is sociologically relevant to their status. The present state of the Pano people can be compared to Masai peoples in Africa who are landless, nomadic tribe and suffer from similar disadvantages as Pano. As they are nomadic in nature and hence cannot claim a particular region as their territory.

The Panos feel very happy, secured and protected

with the Kondh brothers. Their women folk are also engaged in Kandh house hold works. The simplicity, sense of humour, tremendous knowledge on herbs and healing and blessed with capacity to sense impending danger, wonderful sense of music and heavenly skill on artifacts and handicrafts of the Panos have always been an attraction for the Kondh people. Both populations together make a nationality of their own domain, which is understood as Kui Dina. The traditional councils and muttas consist of Kondh and Pan leaders, the Kondh being the head of the councils. Being greatly satisfied with the services and loyalty of Panos, traditional the Kondhs had integrated the Panos in to their territory.

The relationship of the aborigines

The Kondhs and Panos constantly demonstrate an unfounded fear for the alien populations and hence with a feeling to defend themselves they want to co-exist with other communities equally suffering and wandering in search of a permanent solution to their unending misery. The subjugation, suppression and depression are the under currents constantly passing through the nerves of these people find _expression in their age old relationship- political, social and symbolic in nature. The ethnic bonds are manifested through rituals, friendship and solidarity and kinship links.

The natives coexisted in Boudh-Kandhamals and Gajapati regions with mutually benefiting terms for centuries and also have become the traditional occupants of the forest and land sharing pre-colonial bond with each other. Kandha and Pano Community have built up a society interwoven with common values and shared feelings for each other. The situation can be compared with the Amerindians and the black slaves co-existed in America maintaining Pre-colonial bond among them. They consider the mainstream communities as alien or Saasinga 'Kaalaprahpa' is a common term in Kandhamals, which gives enough evidence of war longs year back between the Saasinga (alien) and the aborigines. The Kuis sing:
Gasa maadi drungi drungi saatete

Kui loku treji treji saaterude

Kumuda mrahundi tari juuga bihede

The external people in order to get political control attach undue importance to one group and make responsible for all ills to other group to create ethnic rift deliberately. Over the past decades the external people have been attempting to colour the Dalit Panos as the exploiters of the Kondhs. But if we have a look deep in to the livelihood process of both these groups, we find that it is very much interrelated and if one's occupation gets any set back then the other is affected. The Panos principally give labour for agriculture of Kondhs and contribute in the process of selling of agricultural produces.

The outside settlers

The recently arrived population or the Oriya settlers those who came as service holders, contractors, traders, mostly belonging to higher caste category with lot of influence and power in the local administration maintained distance and practised discrimination against the indigenous STs/SCs. They have concrete houses mainly on the road sides with modern amenities. They nurture in them caste ideologies, doctrine of superiority and exhibit hateful sentiments towards the aborigines. Untouchability and discrimination is practiced in schools, marketplaces and govt. officials. They never officiate in any of the functions, rituals or festivities of the natives. The Oriya settlers have progressively appropriated most of the fertile lands suitable for cultivation and allowed more lucrative exodus of youth to infiltrate in to the land. The natives have been pushed back to the forested high lands less favourable for agriculture. Expecting any impending conflict with the Kondhs they introduce permanent settlement and individual ownership in the little republics and autonomous areas. The Kui peoples' lands were declared as Govt. or Anabadi land. As a result of which the Govt. enter to any part of the region to expand its institution and establishment further owned and controlled by the upper caste men.

Inter-marriage between the natives and the outsiders are next to impossible. But on the contrary, the shopkeepers, the moneylenders had been enticed the Kondh and Pano women and Keep them as temporary wives.

During the early 1960s the Phulbani district underwent drastic changes due to government development interventions and more exterior population infiltrated into the land. The flesh trade, immoral trafficking, prostitution and alcoholism grew at an alarming rate victimizing the Kondhs and Panos together. Some parts of Phulbani District (earlier name for Boudh Kandhmals) became in famous as " Prem Nagar " named by the dominant castes. They looked down upon the native women and took them for granted as cheap, exotic, sexually available, and of low integrity without understanding the gender sensitive and egalitarian lifestyle of the indigenous women. During early 70s (1970) under the leadership of Maka Aja an indigenous women leader of Kandhamal women raised voice against the sexual abuse of indigenous native women by the exterior populations including the Govt. officials. Then gradually the survival issues like land alienation, loss of livelihood, extreme poverty, socio-economic exploitation by the outside traders and land grabbing gathered momentum. The bad name "Prem Nagar" was abolished with constantly chasing the miscreants, conducting raids on the hotels, lodgings in Berhampur, Paradeep and Cuttack township, rescuing the girls from the pimps and the brokers.

Socio-economic status

The Kui peoples have been divided into two categories as a result of Sanskritisation. The sanskritised groups prefer to be identified as "Kondha" keeping in conformity with the Govt. categorization. But traditionally or in Kui language the term "Kondh" is not used by the Kui people. The western side Kondhs particularly from Khajuripada, Chakapad and Phulbani area maintain that they belong to "Burma Kuing" group. They have fully changed their life styles, rituals and aspire to be assimilated into caste category to escape low status.

They had made continuous effort and rigorous journey to learn Oriya language. They keep distance from the Kuing and Pano community practising Kui Culture. Marriage between Kandhas and Kuing and Kandha and Pano are not generally practiced.

Ever since the VHP took a mission to assimilate the Kui people into Hinduism, there had been increasing feeling for social upward mobility among them. The Kandhas and Panos intended for higher degree of purity in taking the form of a Jati through observance of vegetarianism, by changing their customs, language, rituals and spirituality, abstaining from earlier polluting practices.

Constantly instructing people to forget their own past, accept the alien things results mental depression. Sanskritisation leads to creation of caste society. The natives are increasingly controlled by the caste norms and subjected to caste disabilities. It is not an individual experience, but a collective suffering.

The out side business community invest money as loan during lean seasons and collect the agricultural produces during the harvest with high rate of interest. In the past years most of the Kuing owed to the creditors inspite of selling the produces. The interest against the loan multiplied and the illiterate Kandhas being unable to handle the credit compelled to sold their land to Oriya settlers. This unfair credit system had made the Kandhas socio-economically subjugated for decades.

So they have been able to control the tribal economy and manage to get high profit year after year. The Kui people have become gradually dependent on loan.

The land & its relationship to the native people
According Kui culture land is treated as a free gift of nature, source of energy and fertility and considered as mother earth. All kind of spiritual functions are based on mother earth. Land or Earth is indispensable part of tribal culture and survival system. Traditionally

it is not owned by anybody neither purchased nor sold in strictly commercial terms. Since the indigenous communities are mobile in nature. They make use of the land and shift the place to allow the used land to come up with new fertility. The native people in villages as a group used to make use of the land for agricultural purposes and shared the produce equally. Many of the terraced paddy fields were ancient and needed constant maintenance. The Kondhs and Panos together leveled the ancient fields for preparation of new fields. Both of them followed the traditional pattern of land tenure procedure.

Traditionally some land under individual possession were transferred among themselves by publicly swearing, and exchange of pigs for clearing the land and embankment and brass vessels for the settling the boundary. Fear of supernatural consequences prevents the families to break the agreement in transfer or making any subsequent claim. The traditional methods are exclusively used till today for the Kondhs and Panos not on individual basis but on group basis. But transactions with upper caste and back ward castes involved stamped document. In some cases in selling or transferring the land to higher caste non tribals permissions were managed to obtained as per the provision of Regulation-II.h

The Kandhamal territory is culturally known as Kuidina. It was a self-governed land of Kuis consisting of various indigenous groups. The Kui people have had their own administrative and land tenure system. The oral history and culture of the peoples give accounts of protecting their land against the attacks from Marhathas, Pathans and Britishers.

Mostly the problem started after the 1970s when land survey and settlement started in Kandhamal district. Large areas of scheduled land was alienated to the government, leased out to the companies for commercial plantations used in the name of development and recorded in the name of outsiders particularly the business class people. In the process though mostly the Kondhs managed to get a small piece of homestead

and backyard land. Rather the Panos were the losers and could not record the land in their favour due to their mobility though they have been staying with the Kondhs from time immemorial.

The district statistical hand book of Phulbani 1976-77 observed that "The produces of their land are taken by moneylenders from the threshing floor towards the repayment of loans. All fertile lands of this area are in procession of the outsiders where as Kondhs have taken Podu Cultivation as their hereditary cultivation. The illiteracy, ignorance, indebtedness of the Kondhs lead them to be exploited by local merchants and money lenders. ".. Some cooperative societies and fair price stores have been opened by Government agency which are not sufficient and attractive as a result the exploitation by sahkars is still continuing"

The Govt. statistics of 1997 maintained that out of total population of Kandhamals, 51.51% belongs to Adivasis, 18.21% Dalits and 30.28% were recently arrived populations from the coasts. The total land holding was 1,68,563 Hector. Out of which 49.26% were under the occupation of 51.51% Adivasis, 9.0% possessed by 18.21% Dalits, 41.73% are under the control of 30.28% other castes.

Owing to the land settlement from 1970-1980, the community ownership of land was changed to individual ownership, altogether a striking contrast to the existing culture of Kondhs. This was a transitional period drifting these communities away from each other.

Traditional the Kuing, Sitarnag and Kui Domang practice sifting cultivation and their principal source of living is collection and gathering of minor forest produces. With the process of land alienation they moved to higher slopes of the mountains for slashing and burning the trees for agricultural operations.

The eminent social scientist and writer Dr. Barbara M.Boal in her book "Fire is easy" narrates that inspite of the Govt. effort to restore the lands lost to the Oriya settlers, the drink loving Kuing have lost their lands for a pot of alcohol. During settlements in early seventies there was a strong move to get back the land. But the illiterate Kuis found it very difficult to deal with even the simplest official correspondence in the post cards, necessarily conducted in unknown Oriya language. They had to run miles to the literate persons for elucidation of the matter. Most of the Kondh and Pano people are poor, possessing no land at all and entirely dependent on labour markets.

As per the standing rule of Orissa Schedule Area Transfer of Immovable Property Act, 1956, regulation 2, the traditionally occupied lands of Kondhs can not be transferred to schedule castes and upper castes. The purchase a land from ST/SC people one has to obtain prior permission from the competent authority. Moreover the loopholes concerning the land laws have made the land grabbing process easier. The external people occupy the tribal land by means of mortgage, lease, encroachment, fraud land settlement, marrying tribal women, recording the land in the name of tribal servants, fake adoption of tribal youths and unlawful land transfers.

During land settlement in 1972 in some parts Pano families got their land recorded in their favour customarily donated by the Kandhas to their past generations / in return of their services to Kandh families. The government officials also have distributed some traditional lands of the Kondhs to the Dalit Panos. In some case the Panos fore fathers have been adopted by childless Kandha couples. The Oriya settlers have challenged this customary practices and deep-rooted social bondage. Now being provoked by the outside upper caste people, the Kondhs want to get back the miniscule holdings of Dalit Panos.

The Conflict

Ambedkar understood that casteism is an unequal social system and tried his best to elucidate to the innocent Dalit masses. He was emphasizing on the liberation of Dalits and Adivasis from the clutches of unequal caste system. Jyotiba Phule also attempted to sensitise the people on the socio-economic exploitation of casteist forces and wanted to relate class-consciousness with social inequalities. The Adivasi and Dalit population never know about the philosophical discourses of their own leaders but for them they would have enjoyed the constitutional benefits. They join the politics and small movement without collective consciousness consequently falling into the divisive policies of the high caste forces.

Our experience says that in Kandhamal, Kandh and Pano usually run in to conflict over marrying a woman where both the men want to have the woman. Loosing the woman becomes a very big insult for both of them. So they keep on fighting involving their kith and clan. The conflict comes to an end when the woman expresses her desire with who she wants to live. During 1957, similar incident occurred and it became a very big issue, but finally it was resolve by the people themselves.

The communal and caste conflict started upon the entry of Digambar, a Dalit into Baruda Balunkeswar Siv Temple on 14 January 1994. The temple was demanded to be the Sanskritised Kandhas of Chakapad area a One brahmin priest was in-charge of worship and management of the temple. An upper caste political leader of Bihar having his establishments in Kandhamals organised the Kondhs of the western Kandhamals for gaining his political interest and attacking the Pano political leaders of that area. He agitated the Kondhs on the temple entry issue. On 20 May 1994, one innocent Dalit boy was butchered like an animal in Tandiguda on the issue of temple entry and his body was dragged along the Dalit habitations to threaten them. Just after 4 days of these incidents the Kandhas reclaimed the fruit bearing tamarind trees customarily

leased out to Panos. This led to killing of more than 42 Panos and 18 other Kandhas subsequently.

Contributing factors

Kandhas and Sauras have been subjected to deprivation and injustice even 55 years after independence. This led to frustration

The miseries of Kui Domas are invisible. Though they share belong to Kuis, they have been categorized as SC Panos. Upon the conversion of Kui people in to Christianity, the Kui Domangs have lost their tribal status and lost their traditional land as they no more remained Kui in Govt. record. They were deprived of the provisions of constitution applicable to tribals. During 1950s, the Kui Domang were persuaded and misled by the government officials to be enlisted in schedule caste category. The complexities involved in the scheduling of these aborigines in alien terms of reference and replacing their original names in Sanskritised way like Kondh and Pano have led to more social distance.

Having been driven to a sense of despair, they wanted to raise their voice against the unjust social order. Knowing this, the outsiders divert their mind from the real enemy. When they attempted to assert socio, economic and political rights there has been backlash from the upper caste trading communities. In fact, the Dalit - Adivasi mass always stand divided by deliberate working of dominant caste leaders. As a result the strength and solidarity required to fight against the real enemy is lacking. The businessmen give them wrong impression against Dalits that they are land grabbers, antisocial, responsible for women atrocities, and prospering at the cost of Adivasis.

On 15th June Late Biju Patnaik, the then Chief Minister of Orissa on his visit to Kandhamals declared reclaiming of Kandha lands from the Pano occupation and on 16th June named the former Phulbani District as Kandhamals. On the pressure he also accused the local Dalits. Soon after this tensions spread allover.

The outsiders framed allegations against the Panos for enjoying the political power in assembly and parliament seats in Phulbani leading to their material and intellectual progress. But the Dalit Panos have not been able to alleviate their lot on account of the political representation of the political leaders.

The Kandhas were brainwashed to avenge the Panos more aggressively for failure of the police to bring back their land to them. Every little matter was fabricated to give communal and caste colour. Sanskritised Kandhas were led to think that Dalit Panos being inferior to them should not get any fair deal either from the society or administration.

Allied Push Factors:

There are other important Push factors which are equally responsible for creating social unrest and conflicts in the name of ethnicity and religion in the scheduled areas particularly in Kandhamals which are never taken in to consideration or highlighted by the media and research scholars. Role of different Political parties, local political leaders, social organisations, religious leaders both from Hinduism and Christianity were never been taken in to account. Their actions and sometimes indifferent attitude to the problem contributed a lot in igniting and perpetuating this kind of violence of Socio-Political and communal in nature. For example whether the conflict was due to the longstanding exploitation, deprivation and denial of privileges and rights to the tribals by the govt. machinery. Was it due to the corruption in bureaucracy and non-implementation of welfare and development programs adequately by the Govt.?

In Kandhamals the communal violence and disturbances started in 1980 by some radical Hindutva forces who aggressively attempted to counter the ongoing Christian Missionary activities in Kandhamals.

The origin of the ethnic conflict in 1994 was on the entry of a Harijan young man in to the Shiv temple of

Chakapad which was purely a Socio-religious issue and based on caste discrimination and hatred. This was further aggravated and given a political dimension by the non-ST/SC local politicians. They tried to catch fish out of the troubled water and also take political vengeance on the leaders of the dalit communities. The issue and the situation were handled in different ways and the reasons of the disturbance was projected by the media differently as a outcome of the long standing exploitation. Initially it was created due to Socio-religious reason. But it was colored that due to the criminal activities of Panos like stealing, misbehaving the Kondh girls and harassing the tribals in different ways was the main cause of the disturbances. etc. Since it could not be established properly from the available police records, the issue was further diverted and the harijans were accused as tribal "land grabbers" and "exploiters".

Nearly 50% of Dalits have no land record in their favour where as more than 98% Kondhs have land holdings and pattas in their names. Regarding the question of exploitation by the Dalits, they are the poorest of the poor without many material resources even household properties. They often manage the trading of the produces of the tribal produces for certain amount of commission given by their Kondhs brethren. This dealings of organising the sale of the produce of the tribals was termed as an "act of exploitation". The process does not bring much economic benefit to the dalit with visible result in change in the socio-economic condition and life style. But on the other hand the Sahukars who happen to be the persons from the different districts are the real exploiters enjoying the maximum economic benefit in trading the tribal produces. Finally the issue was turned in to political i.e. claiming the parliament seat for the tribals. The seat reservations are made on the basis of number of population of different communities. Though in Phulbani tribals are a majority, but if other parts of the Parliamentary constituency is included the dalits becomes the majority and also it is a central Govt.'s concern as a matter of policy. Hence it is clear that

all the issues raised during the period 1994 - 1995 were not placed properly by the leaders of agitation. The history and the status of land holding in Kandhamals, ownership and the alienation process, agencies involved in the process and responsible for alienation were not discussed properly and highlighted with adequate revenue data. The religious and the social issues were not at all touched. The main actors of the 1994-1995 tribal unrest never raised the issues of "economic exploitation" genuinely as mainly the higher caste trading community people took the leadership of the so called tribal unrest / movement. Hence purposefully they never raised the issues of trading and land grabbing properly with facts and figures.

On the basis of the report given by the members of the Tribal Women's Advisory Committee to the Chief Minister Mr. Biju Pattnaik on July 15th 1995 through Mr. Aurobinda Behera IAS, the then Principal Secretary to the Chief Minister, the violence and unrest was controlled due to the able leadership of the District Collector Mr. Suresh Ch .Mohapatra and Superintendent of Police, Mr Manoj Chabra. The tribal women were awarded for the report.

After that there was no ethnic conflict of this nature till 1999 until some disturbance again started in Christian dominated areas of Daringibadi and Kotagarh. This time the Churches were divided on the ground of caste and mass attacks were organised on the Dalits and the paddy fields were forcibly ploughed which were under the occupation of some dalits.

One needs to take in to account the allegations and reports given by Mr. Anadi Sahu M.P,(BJP) who had visited the area along with other political members and also Mr. Nakul Nayak former M.P. (BSP) who categorically blamed some social organisations, church leaders and some local political leaders for creating the problem. The NGOs who worked for long to develop the ST/SC people in those area concentrated

on economic issues land and forest issues and use to put all the blame to the local Sahukars and Business men and accused them as land grabbers and responsible for all kind of exploitation till 1999. But strangely some of the social organisations suddenly changed their approach and blamed the dalits as exploiters and land grabbers in the later period. Why did not they equally point their fingers to the non-ST/SC business class people and the Govt. agencies who are responsible for the suffering of the people to a great extent.

Interestingly, many outsiders head some of these organisations. Some of them are church based or indirectly related to the Churches. The church leadership in these areas is mostly controlled and managed by the non-ST/SC and non-Oriya Priests from South India. Generally, it is the Govt. Officials in the administration or the leaders from different people's organisations particularly from higher caste background ventilate their ideas and opinions on behalf of the tribals and Dalits. But no scope was created so far to hear from the affected people and leaders from both the peace loving communities including the local political leaders of the affected areas.

At this point, rightly the ST/SC women delegation of the District who were on the Peace Campaign blamed the third forces and out side organisations responsible for creating the unrest. It may be noted that the statement given by the central ST/SC Commissioner who visited the area commented in the same manner. Further regarding the cultural unity and value system of the tribals of Kandhamal relating to the ethnic conflict of 1994-1995 Prof. Ajit Mohanty of Deptt. of Psychology organised a study in the district. In his paper, "The Psychology of poverty" he had found out that language, cultural degeneration are the important factors in dividing the people of the area and pushing them into social differences and hatred.

The irrelevant education system and development programmes also responsible to a great extent to

perpetuate the poverty in the area. There is no scope of genuine people's participation in planning, monitoring and implementation of the development programmes. They are never involved in decision making process in real sense. Development programmes are not really based on the basic issues of the local ST/SC people. Hence the efforts do not really empower the local native people to combat their own socio-economic and political problems.

The ongoing education system does not address the problems of the local ST/SC child. So far as the language, culture & value system is concerned. Hence in the process the hard working tribal child is alienated from his culture, life style, Knowledge on existing survival system, dependency on forest, nature and environment. An educated tribal youth is finally prepared to work on a govt. job or remain unemployed and idle being a burden to the family without any physical labour. This has created a sense of insecurity, frustration and helplessness in mind of the unemployed youth. Many politicians and antisocial forces engage these youth in creating mass violence, terrorism and instability to satisfy their own purpose and evil design.

Leadership crisis

The dominant caste members have been attending the traditional councils. This is such a crisis to Interfere into the internal and private matters of these exterior social groups. Earlier Panos attended it. The upper caste leaders attempt to appropriate the traditional role of the Panos in the tribal councils. Now the upper caste men lead and advice the social organisation of Kondhs. This is an act of infringement into the privacy and confidentiality of the Tribal Councils. The upper caste men say to boy cot Panos into the councils, as they are inferior by caste and responsible for deprivation and all ills of Kandhas.

The symbol of status is not attached necessarily to the traditional headmen, but Oriya men, Govt. officials

and politician who are shrewd enough to exploit the opportunity. They know how to deal with lowborn persons.

The communal riots led to formation of some offshoots with the leadership of upper class people. The Kondh and Pano leaders lacked critical understanding of the issue. The outside leaderships were revivalist and obscurantist. The native leaders did not follow liberational, educative, agitational and organisational approach. This leadership achieves no social goals. There were no conscious efforts to guard against the danger of leadership coming from the upper caste people. Just imagine the upper caste leaders safeguarding the interest of Kondhs.

The people have not started analysing the forces responsible for long socio-economic exploitation .It shows that the dalits and Adivasis have not made any constructive effort for their social development. It is not their fault. Struggling for survival for decades have weakened the back bones of these the peoples. They did not ever have any time for building up their communities.

Cultural Imperialism

Cultural imperialism is an instrument for destroying the identity, unity, and strength of the indigenous communities. The bright example is ethnic and communal conflicts in the tribal areas of Orissa. The ethnic groups co-exist together with symbiotic relationship, dependency and social harmony. The infiltrators brought caste culture to these lands. The people were victims of the alien culture. Earlier egalitarian cultures were now on the verge of extinction caste, Birth, Origin and heredity plays an important role in day to day interaction with the outsiders. Adivasis have developed a wrong notion about themselves. They think that they are superior to Dalits by birth and origin. This creates hindrance on the away to Dalit Adivasi unity. For the upper-caste people, the Adivasis are the so called Mlechha , Asura, Banaras and Rakhyasas or semi humans. Condemned by a

social system as impure and polluted, they are economically exploited, politically used as vote banks. Even after 55 years of independence safe drinking water, health and education benefits have not reached to many inaccessible areas they live.

The imposition of alien cultural values on the Adivasi culture and lifestyle is a great issue, which can not be avoided. The struggle for social justice and cultural rights leads to a direction where the Adivasis find their well being. The Adivasis in many parts of the Orissa live in solidarity with other Dalit communities sharing pre-colonial bond between them. The relationship between the Dalits and Adivasis are culturally defined. Feeling of togetherness respect for diversity, co-operation, sustainable development practices one the essence of this relationship. The groups derive morality from these social interactions within their own social positions. Cultural identity and self-determination are the under currents of these relationships. Every social group is conscious of their identity and hence extends support and solidarity for the other suffering groups to strive for self-determination and human rights.

The Dalits ST/SC together lack territoriality and holistic ethnic ideology. They do not have a documented / recorded history about their past. The lack of historical back drop, and clean understanding of the social system of the exterior castes or out caste or fifth colour people will lead to more division and more atrocities amongst themselves inviting all ills to Indian development process. People are more exposed to mainstream belief systems and fundamental religion. Total disregard to democratic egalitarian value is found through the Sanskritisation and indoctrination process. By showing their superiority of race, caste class and religion they dominate Kondh and Pano people. Pano are considered to be the cause of all social ills and against them all hate, aggression and violence is committed. Through the attempt to destroy culture, they introduced an economic system permitting exploitation without obligation.

Rise in casteism and communalism

The external forces destroys the unity of this people by setting one against the other or by co-opting some people to their side as they need support in their evil intention to exploit the people by cheating and trickery. Whenever and wherever there is any Adivasi Dalit rise for any social cause, the casteist forces try to foil this with their nasty tactics. The men and women activist leaders working on the issues of alcoholism, women atrocities, right to land and forest, right to dignified living is implicated with false Charges. The state never gives any support or respect to the Dalit and Adivasi leaders. Even if the fight is related for their own survival and rights they are dragged into custody.

An article titled "Kanduchhi Kandhamal" published in Sambad, an Oriya daily on 17, December 2000 revealed the interview conducted with the District Administration. The District Collector Mr. Chandra Sekhar Kumar has reported that even the people run into conflict inspite of professing the same religion and expressed that there has been specific allegations against some voluntary organisations and the District administration is vigilant on their activities. The then police superintendent of Kandhamals P.S. Ranpise has also reported to the same paper that behind all the communal riots the outsiders play a major role. They mastermind these marginalised peoples with fundamental religion ideologies. In fact the Adivasis and the Dalits are nature worshipers. The Dalits want to maintain their distinct spiritual identity and therefore subjected to various atrocities.

The conflicts are the manifestations of provocation by external dominant caste people, as a reflection of anti dalit and anti Adivasi mind set. The setting ablaze of the dalit houses, threatening to rape the soft target, the dalit women and preventing access to public places like schools and temples are the strategies of upper caste Oriya settlers to subjugate the exterior castes.

Questions are raised automatically, is the feeling of landlessness among the Kondhs so acute? Are the Panos the only ones to dispossess the Kondhs of their own land? Why don't the people raise single voice against the upper caste men or the Govt., knowing that vast areas have been transferred unlawfully? Why do the media only condemn Panos? Why do the university research findings come out with bias against Panos? Govt has leased out land in Kandhamals, Koraput and Gajapati areas, declared 400 SQ Km area of Daringbadi and kotagarh as sanctuary. Why do the disadvantage people keep fighting against each other? This is indeed a humanitarian and human right question. Adivasi awakening does not means expelling and exterminating Dalit Panos. We also have evidence of Ganda and Kollar tribes of Umarkote set ablaze 23 houses of Kondhs protesting against the practices of shifting cultivation of Kondhs. Can we also call it Adivasi awakening?

Kondhs don't dare to regain their land from the upper caste men least they may be dragged into police custody. This further empowers the Oriya settlers for land grabbing at a greater rate.

The riots are no specific cause than the outsiders engaging the poor people in infighting. This is clear from the incidences happened in many parts of the District. On June 20th 2000, early morning at 5am at about 1500 Kondhs of Godma and Sangadama of Brahmunigaon Panchayat of Daringbadi Tahasil forcibly ploughed 5717 areas of cultivable land of 7 Dalit Panos in Sangodoma village with sixty pairs of bullocks. After ploughing, they posted red flags in the land and warned the Dalits not to enter the land and the land was settled also in their favor, as prominent from the revenue records. As such one Pabitra mantri lodged complaints in Brahmunigaon Police station. The police authority registered the case under section 147, 148, 149, 294, 447 and 506 IPC wide PS No. 17. Police arrested 8 rebellions that resulted into a dreadful scenario. On the way 500 tribals armed with traditional weapons demanding release of 8 people. Obstructed

by the people the district collector, the police and other government officers released the tribals.

On the next day, the Kondh again forcibly ploughed 5019 acres of land in Baghpada village. Since then Daringbadi tehsil became the tense zone. Similarly in Atinibadi village the conflict arose between Catholics Panos and Protestant Kondhs. The Pano Christians were threatened to vacate the villages. Conflicts also surfaced in Shromagudi and Kaalingi village. It was suspected that some local politicians, fundamentalists and naxalites were behind the conflicts.

In another instance the Kondhs of Gajapati hired some Pano families to work in their fields. During settlement in 1975, the panos could know that they had no right over the land they lived so long. After a long process of settling themselves in return of the hard work, naturally the Pano were not willing to move out from their land. Some of them changed their titles to be identified as Kondhs for fear of removal from the village. The Kondhs were organized under the leadership and guidance of the outsiders to expel the Panos. In this incidence 7 innocent tribal lost their lives in police firing and six including women were severely injured. On 31st December 1999 the Kondhs set ablaze all the houses of Panos in Mankadpadar and Majiguda so that they would not return to their villages. The panos from the other village also fled out of fear.

Geographically Adova and Mohna of Gajapati district are adjacent to Daringbadi. The consequences of Pano-Kondh tension of Majiguda and mandrabaju in Gajapati were transmitted to Daringbadi region. It was apprehended that some outsiders caste people in Gajapati were agitating the Kondhs against the Panos. The government claims to have lot of proofs with them.

Further Kotgarh, Tumudibandh, Baliguda and Phiringia were also not free from ethnic tensions. The Dalit Panos also attacked the Adivasis with bombs in

jubaguda village while they were forcibly cutting the paddy of Dalits. The Kondhs destroyed the household things, animal stocks, houses, and shouted anti Pano slogans to threaten them to evacuate the villages or face dire consequences.

Bitterness raised in Sept.2000 when some member of the Hindu Community opposed the construction of a prayer house by Christians in Doblekia Village under Bataguda Panchayat. Hate campaigns were organised in Konia near Phulbani, at Sabaribata, manospadar & Sadanmendi villages due to strong opposition against the construction of churches. Tension erupted in Oct. 2000 when some members of the Christian Community forcibly ploughed the land of one Damodar patra of Bondapipili who was reportedly involved in the series of such incidents including burning of prayer houses and attacking the Christian communities.

Tension again sparked off when Christians were threatened by Hindus not to carry on the construction of a prayer cottage on the Anabadi plot at Doblekia village (under Bataguda gram Panchayat in Baliguda division). The delay in settling disputes between communities by the government, some tribal organisations planned to start an armed revolution to get their rights for their self-protection. Similarly the Christians in the district also started an organisation called Rastriya Surakhya Vahini (RSV) to protect the rights of Christians.

The misery of the women and children

SC and ST women constitute about 20% of the total population of the state. As per 1991 census the literacy rate of the tribal and Dalit women was 10.21% and 20.74% respectively whereas the literacy rate of women of the state was 34.7%. The literacy rate of the tribal women in some interior parts of the state was much below the state and district average. The tribal women literacy in Malkangiri was 2.32% only and the literacy rate of Dalit women in Koraput was 9.25% only.

The wide spread poverty, illiteracy, malnutrition, hostile environment, absence of sanitary living conditions and

lack of health services the high Infant Mortality Rate and Mothers Mortality Rate have traced out in several studies as possible contributing factors for the deplorable conditions prevailing among the Dalit and tribal groups. The crucial issues were forgotten by all.

The women of these communities enjoy some amount of gender equality who are sanskritised. The forms of marriages, family institutions, finest surviving primordial institutions of the world like Dhangidi Ghar (Youth Institution), Gramsabha, Kula Panchayat (elders council) have always shown fullest respect to its women. Sati, Dowry, bride burning, widow discrimination, child marriage, gender discrimination and various other social evils and black spots of Hindu Society is almost non-existent amongst them. So they enjoy great amount of freedom and equality in their own cultural set-up.

The Dalit Pano women continue to suffer multiple disabilities being born as women, being poor and member of a discriminated society. They are discriminated by the dominant upper caste society on the ground of their birth, origin and descent. Wherever they go discrimination does not end whether they change their spirituality to mainstream religions or not, they are looked down upon as sub humans. Change in spirituality has not made any difference in their lives.

The Kondh women also suffer discrimination in the same manner as a result of the frequent interaction with the upper caste people. They are discriminated on the basis of language, looks and food habit. Moreover, the freedom of Kondh women subjects them various criticism. In spite of their deep suffering they don't get sympathy from any corner. They have always remained a discriminated group in the Indian social order.

In 1994 riots, there is no accurate data with any body as to how many Pano families fled to jungles and other areas, how many women and children suffered during the conflict and post conflict situation. How

many pregnant women delivered their babies in the jungle. How many children were driven out from the school.

The marriage of Kandha and Pano was declared punishable. Panos were accused of rape, outraging modesty of the women although the union of Kandha Pano couple was voluntary. Even the Pano children were not allowed to sit in the schools lest their education will lead to development. The Pano women were not allowed to share the common water bodies which they earlier shared.

In villages where the Panos are a minority, the practice of untouchability is even more severely enforced. They are made to render service in times of death, marriage or any village functions. They perform duty of the messengers in rain and sun whatever may be distance and heights of areas surrounding the villages.

Communal and ethnic conflicts in Kotagarh, Bondapipili and Daringibadi are the worst examples of atrocities against Dalit populations deliberately spearheaded by the outside forces for their vested interest. Large areas of paddy fields were forcibly destroyed, houses were set fire and demolished, live stocks were killed and women were attacked, threatened to be raped and meet with dire consequences if not leave the area. Many conflict-affected families took shelter in Kotagarh Police station in severe cold days of December in 2000 after the tensions erupted there. The affected families including women and children had to leave their houses walking down the ghat areas to Kotghar covering more than 20 kms..

In August 2000 a tribal nun was allegedly assaulted near Bondapipili by a group of miscreants. Jhunu Pradhan and her husband of Kotagarh were beaten up mercilessly by a fanatic religious leader.

The measures taken up by the Govt. and administration to end up the ethnic tensions were not sincere and

affective. Provocative religious speeches and aggressive ethnic declarations were made by the radical non-St/Sc leaders mostly from the out side of the district in open public meetings in the presence of the govt. officials and the police. Many peacekeeping police forces were deployed in these disturbed areas to maintain the law and order were very often reported to have abused the young girls.

The situation of women during conflicts can be compared with war victims. No sincere preventive measures were taken up by the local Govt. authorities to control the violent action and terrorism of these external forces with true enforcement of legal protective measures like the use of prevention of scheduled caste and scheduled tribe atrocities Act 1989 and the Rule 1995.

From the incidences one can imagine the horrible situation that the Dalit women had to encounter with when they were prevented to take water from the water bases and the Dalit children were not allowed to sit in the class rooms. The conflicts in the South Orissa have been pushing the women towards extreme poverty by denial of their livelihoods. Especially the young adolescent girls, pregnant mothers spent their days with the utmost insecurity during tensions and post conflict situations. The big challenge for them was to protect the family from the impending attacks and at the same time collect food to feed the starving children. Physical assaults, out raging modesty and living under constant fear, the situation can be, compared with that of war victims.

The women of Kandhamal have been experiencing socio cultural and religious aggressions aimed at attacking the indigenous value system. Consequently there has been considerable increase in crime in crimes committed against women and conflicts in different ethnic communities in the name of religion and ethnicity. Women and children are the worst

victims of this social unrest organised violence. To add to the misery the social and economical gap between the rich and poor is in increase. The poor There is a policy of divide and rule by the outsiders to perpetuate the exploitation and make the native people more and more helpless.

Impact on women and the community

The Dalit Panos with their families left their native places and migrated to adjoining town. There is no account where these people have gone. The women fearing rape and murder escaped to jungles and near by village during the conflict and later moved to town areas. Most of the conflict victims have been engaged in flesh trade in many cities of Orissa.

In Kotgarh the miscreants threatened to rape the Dalit women. It was severe chilly winter. The families including women and children fled into the jungles. With much difficulty they came down the ghats of kotagarh to reach police station. After some days some people wanted to return back their homes But they were not given any entry to the bus running from to Kotagarh to the ghat areas .The Govt relief process was inadequate for the affected people . the Adivasis rallied around Ora and Srirampur village of Kotagarh.

The Pano children have lost their schooling. Many of them have been reduced to child labourers.

Communal forces advocate for vegetarianism as a symbol of high purity. The IMR and MMR have increased alarmingly in these areas according to the Govt. report against the Infant Mortality Rate of Orissa that is 97%.

The women have been gradually deprived of enjoyment of equality with their male counter parts. The radical Hindutva outfit have entered to the spiritual places and started interpreting about the tribal spirituality in Hindutva way. As a result the people is getting to

believe in mysticism and fatalism.

Women are looked down upon. The Kondha and Pano widows are suspected to practice witchcraft. Entire Pano families are driven out from a village called Talarimaha for allegedly practicing witchcraft. Opium and other narcotic drug intake have increased amongst the unemployed youth.

Lot many Pano and Kondh youth have migrated to town areas and other states in search of livelihoods and they did not agree to join the anti Pano outfits. They women and children in Kandhamal went hungry for months together. Yet the casteist and communal forces did not refrain in their attempt to engage them in conflict. These outfits constantly terrorized both Kondh and Pano communities. Everybody thought that Kondhs were very happy for the attacks on panos. In fact the kondhs were extremely concerned for the Pano people.

The present generations was striving towards social development, if not for themselves at least for the generation that would follow.

The Dalits and Adivasis have been fragmented into different groups like Kandha Surakhya Mancha and Pano Surakhya Mancha. The Church organisations have been also maintaining silence in this issue. We have come across many complaints from the Dalits in Christianity. They say there should not be any caste feeling because in the eyes of Church all are equal. Hatred for Dalits is practiced in Church organisations too. The Christian leaders never attempt for peaceful settlement of Kandha Pano conflict. Rather non-Oriya South Indian Church leadership seemed to be biased and taking a divisive stand.

Now a days the small villages are also tremendously influenced by any incidence that take place in any region of India. Radical ideas are being imposed on the people.

In all these scheduled areas Dalit are also equally sufferer like Adivasis. They are the land less ones. Both the groups have been subjected to inequality and cannot take their lawful place in the society. The right to equality is continuously violated in every sphere of life. The people do not enjoy the constitutional provisions because they are all written principles but not made workable and functional.

Article 17 has abolished untouchability and the practice of it is an offence punishable under law. Article 17 has given Adivasis to protect them from indignities and atrocities. The legislation is protection of Civil Right Act, 1955 (PCR) and the schedule caste and scheduled tribe prevention of Atrocities Act., 1989 (POA) The Govt. has not taken any step to popularize these legislation. Even the law practitioners and the police never did any attempt to use the legislation in favor of the Dalits and Adivasis. Article 10 of the POA says that if any non-Dalit Adivasis person is responsible for any disturbance or cause any harm to these people may be expelled from the area and sent to his original place to restore peace and save the lives of Dalits. In the conflicts that we discussed so long, it was evident that a third group is instigating against the others. But they move scot-free and continue their evil action. The people have lost all hopes as the laws for them have failed to give them security. The Govt. brought the reserve forces and police to control the violence. Intervention of police or central reserve force is dangerous for the innocent women moving freely in the forests for their livelihood. The CRP police raped one minor girl in Kotgarh. The case was also suppressed.

In Kui culture, the women enjoy a great amount freedom and equality. This is demonstrated in the merry making and celebration of the birth of the girl child. The Patriarchal society cannot even understand what it means to the aborigines. The egalitarian relationship of women with the men exhibited in all social interactions is of course a matter of astonishment to the Patriarchal communities.

Decades back they have raised their voices to do away with the indignities inflicted on them. The struggle for peace, equality and enjoyment of human rights should not go waste in the hand of the patriarchal and parochial elements. The government acknowledges that the Kondhals women have risen to the course of women and come forward to build their community. This has been exhibited in their formation of association and organisations taking up community issues to assert their right to forest, land and livelihood resources.

Analysis

Where the upper caste failed in their attempt to engage people in ethnic conflicts, they provoke the non-Christian Kondhs against the Christian Panos. We have never heard of people fighting over caste and communal issue. In every household there are believers in own spirituality and Christianity. The Kuloku have their own distinct spirituality and Cosmvision distinct from the Hindu and Christian religion. Among tribal communities there is no place of hatred and social discrimination in the name of religion and caste.

The political parties have utilised the ST/SC people as vote banks by making rhetoric speeches in election campaigns and manifestos. The casteist forces mainly the traders have been accumulating wealth by using their land.

The natives have entered into Christianity from their own spirituality, the Hindu fundamentalist demand to bring back the Christians into Hinduism. The people resists to this idea. The failure to realise that the Kuis and panos are not Hindus leads to the accusation that the Kuis and Panos have changed their religion from Hinduism to Christianity. The process of Sanskritisation is meant for racially low born and low origin people to purify them. They are recorded as Hindus without their knowledge, but positioned practically outside the caste hierarchy. So they always remain independent of Hinduism by thought and action. Even the native Christians maintain their dual identity as distinct peoples and practiced Christianity with their own cultural norms.

Christianity is connected with transferring into new individual entity forgetting the past, and Hinduism is related to purify the lowborn, defiler, polluted impure person. But the traditional spirituality and belief system is connected with social and biological environment and their social role at home and community inculcating a sense of belongingness or losing oneself in the group of the Kin folks.

The Hindu religion focuses on Kandhas and Panos as two separate caste entities. But Kui consciousness embraces the diverse ethnicities and kinfolk exterior to caste system. The communication in Hindu religion is hardly intelligible to the community loving egalitarian people. Keeping away from community obligations is a dangerous attribute. Spiritual unity between living and non-living things is the core element in their belief system. Spiritual and cultural informations acquired at home is directly related to life in community, where as Hinduism and Christianity consists of changing behaviors, forget about past, accept others as leaders and memorizing matters Quite small unrelated to Kui life and ideology. The fear of getting disqualified from getting govt. jobs, land title deeds, and political seats compels them to accept Hinduism blindly.

The Indigenous Christians and Hindus eagerly respond to the sermons and teachings of different cultural frame of reference. They fail to fulfil adequately the traditional kinship obligations important for solidarity amongst the native populations by changing into different religion practices. Modern education together has eroded respect for the traditional social functions. People run into conflict where solidarity evades.

Though the Dalit Adivasis of Orissa has been enlightened to receive education, literacy and health from Christianity, It is noticed that the lifestyle of the people has been changed. The village system of Adivasis and Dalits are distinct from the mainstream populations. They do not believe in heaven, hell and cause and effect and Karma theory. The essence of their spirituality is related to worshipping sun, trees, mountains and

ancestors. With the advent of modern culture they have been inclined towards Hinduism to achieve social wellbeing. But Hinduism has failed to achieve this goal.

In all the communal conflicts occurred in Orissa was the brainchild of the outsiders to cripple the indigenous peoples socially and psychologically. The burning of churches, killing of Christian preachers, harassing the women have further devalued the natives subjecting them to more lower economic and educational opportunities. The Kondhs and Panos have suffered a irreparable loss of self esteem because they don't have definite accepted spiritual and social status. Conflict in the name of communalism is totally alien concept for them. They are not any way related to any Ayodhya, or Babrimasjid. As they were utilised as vote banks in past several decades, now they are used for radical religious groups for their political power.

The Kondhs were never given a chance to feel how their territory is rapaciously destroyed by the Govt. policies and upon the entry of the dominant communities into the area. They are worried for little amount of produces fulfilling the survival needs of the Pano neighbors. But they are not conscious about the fact that tons and tons of agricultural produces are being sold at a cheap rate, some times on distress sale to the outside trading community.

The ST/SC commissioner, New Delhi visited the conflict affected areas and he gave his note in a press conference saying that the Kandhas have lost their lands to Oriya settlers. The Panos are land less.

Our late Chief Minister Biju Pattnaik visited the Kondhmals soon after the conflict. He made a statement against Pano in a public gathering consequently aggravating the situation. The kondhs and Pano fought more fiercely killing more than 42 lives. Again Mr. Biju Pattnaik ordered for a probe into the matter. He instructed his Adivasi women consultants for a thorough inquiry.

The Dalits and Adivasis have been continuously utilised as Vote Banks by exploiting their leadership. The peoples struggle without any direction. The issues of marginalised peoples and their deprivation always loose its focus in the hands of upper caste politicians and economic policy makers.

The Adivasi and Dalit have never come in good terms. Their relationship has been shattered and reduced to suspicion and hatred. The infighting and conflicts perpetuate the statuesque of the dominant caste people. The Brahminism and casteism have been able to control the mindset of Adivasis and made them to think themselves as higher caste and hate the Dalits. They have been able to break into pieces the great values of community living, caste less society, egalitarian relationship with other communities equally sufferer like them. Therefore these communities can not derive any strength to fight against Brahminical and caste values. They try to perpetuate the hatred against Dalits to accelerate their economic exploitation.

But if we see the history of Kandhamals during post independence period, during 60s the women irrespective of their diverse ethnicities have joined their hands to eliminate the indignities inflicted on them. And they have been continuously making their effort to eliminate their sufferings as well as addressing the serious concerns of the community. This is evident in the organization building and their voices in all community process.

We also find that the conflicts have been resolved by the peoples them selves with great respect for the traditional councils. Had the fight against Panos been organised by the Kondhs alone, the strategies would not have been burning the house, targeting the women and children. This definitely would have been discussion, dialogue and exchange of words and judgement by the traditional leaders. These are the democratic ways of conflict resolution by the tribal councils. The question arises without any past history of ethnic and communal conflict how all of a sudden the Kondhs took and went craze to kill panos.

The conflicts have been an _expression of severe stress, exposing the victims to a wider range of psychological impairment. Inferior social status, political powerlessness, destruction of culture ,economic slavery, exclusion from right to speak freely, right to practice religion and social exclusion are the major contributing factors to conflict.

The conflict in Kandhamals moves horizontally amongst the poor while the enemy stands vertically with much strength. The Dalits are engaged in infighting and have no time with the real enemy.

The role of media

It is most unfortunate to say that the media failed to address the realities encountered by the natives of scheduled areas. In many cases the media played certainly a biased role by attaching undue importance to Kondhs and depicting Panos as trading communities, exploiters and antisocial. It also accused the indigenous Christian leaders of forceful conversion even it is a case of the youths of Christian families solemnised for baptism as a matter of Christian religious practice. It never raised questions how caste and communal questions occurred in the minds of the exterior out caste, fifth colour, Antajya people. Never did it attempt to address the history and past discrimination of the Dalits. The conclusive statements were not made basing on adequate survey, study and collection of facts and figures.

The intellectuals even fail to understand the spiritual and cultural crisis of the aborigines - Dalits and Adivasis. Normally the young family members of Christian families have to under go Baptism. But the media put it in altogether different way as material inducement is the principal reason for conversion. After being conversion also the Dalit Adivasi Christians languish at the lowest bottom of the society. In fact the spirituality of the Adivasis are understood to be Hinduism. As Santals have Sarna, the Kondhas have also distinct spirituality.

When they enter into Christianity, they are accused of casting away Hinduism and entering into alien religion. This is not true.

Never the media have attempted to bring back peace in the region, rather the tone was always provocative. Wide spread poverty, gender based discrimination, lack of access to equal opportunities were dealt with mildly. The age-old relationship between the Dalit communities was never attempted to revive.

The studies of different journals dealt the whole issue in their own prospective. There has not been sufficient attempt for in depth study of the root cause of the issues. Anti-Pano feeling was evident through out the analysis. The land less Pano was described as land grabbers and exploiters of Adivasi. It maintained silence on the whole issue and the process of land alienation, nationalization of forests, and land grabbing by outsiders. The Dalit Pano have also never raised any voice to defend them selves seemingly making them selves to be part of the accusations. The accounts of their occupation in Adivasi land were pictured superfluously. The socio-cultural background of the Dalits and their relationship with Adivasis has never highlighted in any of the writings. The earlier criminal tribes or the Panos became mute on the misgivings by the non-Dalit writings.

Coping mechanism between the ethnicity never given importance. Rather helplessness, weaknesses, disharmony amongst the marginalised people became more explicit. The Kondhs joining the negative militia like naxals and taking to arms and Panos fleeing here and there have occupied a major place in the media. This has further encouraged the exploiters to strengthen their base while the poor people keep fighting each other.

Of course some media have rightly observed that during the first settlement from 1970-1982, the Adivasis have been alienated from their ancestral land, and land grabbing by the outsiders was rampant.

Now the question automatically comes to mind whether the Dalits have any land in any part of the country. Do they belong to any part of Orissa originally. Which is their original place? Where should they go back. The media and other writings have never made any attempt to raise public awareness for the rehabilitation of these riot-affected families, women, children or aged.

The roles associated with the traditional forms of agriculture and the transfer of surplus produces for selling and exchange for the daily necessities are performed by the panos. For example when the Kuis walk their cattle herds and buffaloes to the plains down the Ghats covering long miles, the Panos assist them. These duties are culturally bound and obligatory. They have more sharing of life among themselves. The Panos are happy and contented with whatever remuneration they receive from the Kuis. But the depiction of panos as trading communities and middlemen give entirely a wrong picture. This type of obligatory systems has many meaning to the indigenous communities. By using such pragmatic languages for describing any situation lack enormous correct information. This relationship is not only found in Orissa, but in various continents where the indigenous peoples have their presence.

Evil discourse is being produced against the Kondhs and Panos as a result of this conflict. The worlds get a different image about them. The most generous, hospitable and resilient people on earth are increasingly made to involve with criminal activities deliberately. The media has almost neglected all these factors and most often the reality has been twisted. Moreover it never tried to unite this suffering lots together.

Towards reconciliation / peace building

On 14.05.1994 the Adivasi women advisors of Chief Minister Orissa, Late Mr. Biju Pattnaik reported to the government that this conflicts have been provoked by some upper caste businessman and petty politicians. On their recommendation on peace restoration process

the caste and communal riot was put to an end. The history of Kandhamals will remember the women's effort for peace restoration for all time to come.

A 6 member women delegation met His Excellency, Mr. M.M. Rajendran on 15th of March 2001 to urge the Governor for direct intervention in to the conflict affected areas to bring peace.

The article 10 and 11 of the prevention of Atrocities against SCs and STs Act say about removal of persons from the schedule area or tribal dominated areas likely to commit offence. Procedures and actions are mentioned against failure of person to remove him from the area and entered there on after removal. This act could have been used to restore peace in the area.

As indigenous people of India the Dalit and Adivasi are in search of their lost pride and injured glory and want to build up solidarity. Now -a- days the Adivasi and Harijans assert their new identity as Dalits. The people are now looking up for a solution where they can find peace and pride.

Cultural imperialism weakens the solidarity of the people, destroys language culture, and age-old egalitarian values. Let people preserve their own intellectual assets, spirituality and Cosmvision. The Dalit and Adivasi should find oneness in their outlook, attitude and social values. The Dalits panos have lost their primitive language and unable to express themselves in modern Oriya language. They speak a precursor language of Oriya. yet their spirituality remains intact.

Let people condemn the process of converting the people into Christianity or Hinduism and at the same time the earlier converts should not be forcefully threatened to enter into any religion.

People should have their right to practice their own spirituality. The Santals demanded for their spirituality (Sarna). The belief systems should not be assimilated of the Kuis.

Let people demand for their own language to be taught in the schools. The languages contains rich egalitarian Culture in them. People get explorations about their own values free from casteism and communalism. The basic components of the education should be based on the Human Rights Conventions (UDHR), Convention on Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), Child Right Convention (CRC) and National Educational Policy.

Let people try for their own media literature, and philosophical discourses. The real role models of Dalit / Adivasis in freedom struggle, literature, politics and enterprise may be given a chance to get introduced and disseminated. Let the culture be revived keeping in view the gender sensitive elements in it. The forms of marriages may be given due recognition and further registration be done. The sacred grooves like Dandas and Dabas and the family institutions like Maada and Seedi should be protected. The collective living and symbiotic relationship of Panos with Kondh, Kuing with Kui Domanga and Sitarang and Sauras with Panos may be revived again.

The then minister and Adivasi political leader Shri Duryodhan Majhhi on his visit to Kandhamal made his statement that the Adivasis and Dalit should come out of their narrow thinking. They should get organised along the spirit of sisterhood and brotherhood and engage their potential for building up of social organisations and cultural actions. Some Adivasi writers also express their concern in their writings and try to invoke sense of solidarity to fight back the real enemy responsible for their long miseries.

People should condemn the forces responsible for killing and displacement of innocent peoples. The perpetrators of crime should be nabbed.

Innocent Christian minorities be given a sense of security because they are Dalit people and belong to the own blood of Kondhs and Panos.

The Kuis and Souras have always recognized the simplicity and broadmindedness of the Panos. It is evident from their long co-existence for centuries together in almost all the scheduled areas of Orissa. In the Kondh together and revive this relationship the ill filling will be transferred to mutual cooperation.

Human beings are natural inheritor of earth. Astonishingly the Dalit and Adivasis have no right to inherit the earth. The Dalit Panos have no demarcated territory. But their presence is felt in almost all the scheduled areas and they have been continuously subjected to more disabilities with flaring up of anti Pano feelings all over. They are discriminated in Hinduism as well as in Christianity. A strong sense of hatred towards the Panos is being spread day by day with the conscious effort of anti Dalit out fits. Moreover when the Dalits are converted to any other religion, just to escape from the discrimination, torture and perennial degradation, they are not allowed to enjoy the government reserved quota benefits provided to the scheduled castes.

Let Dalit Adivasi people try to reclaim their land territory and forests. Let people start discussions on the validity and appropriateness of the Nationalization of forest and post implementation consequences.

Any layperson can speculate that the divisive forces will continue to play with the lives and resources of Adivasis. Dalit common persons and intellectuals should start thinking at this point to combat these casteist and communal elements. They should sharpen their intellect to relate such riots at the local level to the national level and understand the nexus between local and national actions. Such riots have local and national dimensions.

The Communal riots have direct connection with the rise in fundamental groups in the country. These groups have chosen these fields, as they have been lying vacant. The political parties also have never given a

thought to prevent the people from the hands of radical religions. Both the secular and communal ideologies are responsible forever increasing communalism in the region. Both the ideologies outrightly disregard the belief systems of the Adivasis and Dalits. More over, with an intention to further utilize them in vote politics they have been dragged into communalism. The public exhibition of religiosity in an organised and spectacular manner has increased in the schedule areas. The Adivasi lack experience to differentiate between the religious action and communal action. Even many educated people fail to understand this basic difference.

The purpose of strengthening the age-old relationship and strengthening the Dalit unity therefore to influence and change the character of the casteist and communal ideas generated by casteist and communal forces. This can only happen by inculcating a sense of belongingness amongst the Dalits and invoking the age-old culture that binds them together in one thread. The Dalit intellectuals are in search of solution but whenever they settle a counter force is operating closely behind them to disturb their action. Their energy and collective action is wasted way in the issues where they are not directly affected. They are not given a chance for prioritizing their own issues. Let the Dalit women and men came along to revive the indigenous culture free from obscurantism or revivalism. Let people talk about their own past own history in about their own past history in their own genius capacity.

Conclusion

The report of the National Commission for SCs and STs 1996-1996 & 1997-1998 rightly observed "Land is an important factor determining socio-economic status and power in the society. Making the SC/ST people owners of land can be the most important and effective way of empowering them. Possession of land gives status, stability and determines their life style, social, economic and political equation, Land ownership by SC/ST enables them to stand on their own feet and also deprives the rich of their or cheap labour."

The parliamentary and legislative assembly seats for Phulbani have been reserved for dalit Panos from 1974. The Phulbani constituency was extended to Sonpur, Binka, keeping in view the dalit majority excluding the tribal dominated places like Kalahandi and Norla. The Kondhs of Phulbani are greatly disappointed because they wanted the seats to be reserved for Kondhs. In fact late Biju Pattnaik had assured them to change the seats for Kondhs. It may be noted that in the parliament seat was reserved for the Kondhs till 1967 and the legislative seat till 1974. The Kondhs reclaim for this political power.

To days generations are led to think that it is the Panos exploiting the Kandhas. But infact they divisive forces want to diminish both Panos and Kondhs to highly vulnerable wage labours by creating chronic economic dependency. It is not only in Kondhmals, in other parts of Orissa also there are formal societal laws prohibiting ownership of the SCs and STs to cultivate the land by their own account and promote their traditional land tenure system. The Kondhs have been deprived of their own ancestral land and the land tenure system also got lost in the process.

Many Adivasi and Dalit thinkers have come out with their independent views for unity amongst the STs and SCs. They are increasingly becoming aware of the long socio-economic exploitation by the outsiders. Fear of getting exposed as real cause of socio-economic exploitation, the outsiders try to cover up their misdoing by creating hatred and despise against Panos. The Kandha and Pano fighting will lead to further manipulation of the land.

Kondhs and Panos together are brothers and sisters in the millennial suffering. They are only a subject of description by the elites. They have never started the search into the past. Knowing about their own origin will reduce suffering. In 2001 in Durban world conference Against Racism, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance was organised to eliminate racial discrimination in the World. Not only the Dalit SCs

and STs of Orissa keep infighting, Mallas and Madiga in Andrapradesh, Bodo and Santals, Nagas and Kukis also fight for reclaiming land and gaining material prosperity. Conflicting situation is an opportunity for the exploiters. Dalit should understand this. Caste is more dangerous than racial discrimination. By reducing them to serfdom they want them to continue the menial jobs and continue to suffer disabilities for centuries without being heard.

In 1999, a memorandum signed by the Ministers, M.L.As, representatives of PRIs of Phulbani and local leaders of kandhamals to Chief Minister, Orissa Shri Giridhar Gomang on the issues of poverty, illiteracy, sexual abuse of women, alcoholism and particularly the increasing trend of violence in the name of caste and religion by the religious fundamentalists. It said to take stringent action against the external forces responsible for ethnic and communal conflict.

The Governor of Orissa Mr. M.M. Rajendran on his visit to Kandhamals addressed the huge gathering in the Dalit Adivasi Women Convention on 2nd May 2001. He stated that "One of the unfortunate developments in recent years is the violence that is being perpetrated in the name of caste and religion. This is very foreign to our culture and more so, to Tribal culture".

The whites are admitting that their forefathers had given birth to slave system, the Amerindians resisted the 500-year anniversary of discovery of America by Columbus the aborigines of Australia have reclaimed their territories. But the Dalit and Adivasi question in India is a sensitive issue. The state is no way obligatory to them.

The convergence of economic interest of the international economic forces and the dominant class has made an unholy alliance to exploit the last frontiers of natural resources of our country. They control the lives of the local people to explore these resources. Therefore the state action against the criminals behinds

such incidents is negligible. As a result injustice is being meted out to the Dalits. And the perpetrators get acquitted for lack of evidence.

Finally it is realized that conflict can be resolved and it is possible to restore the peace in these disturbed areas provided government in power intervenes into the issues and concerns of Dalits and Adivasis whole heartedly and sincerely involving the peace loving people of the communities and act upon as per their

advice. Further the prevention of SC and ST Atrocities Act 1989 and Rule may be enforced strictly and the vigilance and monitoring committees be constituted in state and district levels taking the local people with their due representation as per the provision. Certainly it is possible to solve all the basic issues of Adivasis and Dalits by capacitating them with correct information, relevant education and creating a scope to take part in descion making process in relating to their development and survival.



IMPACT OF
GLOBALISATION ON
WOMEN EMPLOYMENT
IN UN ORGANISED
SECTOR AND RURAL
WOMEN - WITH SPECIAL
REFERENCE TO ORISSA

Tapasi Praharaj

Workingwomen in India are mainly found in agriculture and unorganized sector. In agriculture rural women formed the major part of work force. The working-women are the backbone of million of house-hold economies across the country. New forms of organization such as women's cooperatives, self-help producers groups and so on have also marked the efforts of women to improve their conditions. The industrial development in India with a narrow base has provided employment only to a small portion of India's working people including women. Out of 25 millions who are working in organized sector, the large majority belongs to the Governments at Centre and State and working-women only form a small portion i.e. less than 10 % in that sector. Thus the majority-working women are without protective legislature. Consequently the general conditions of the women workers have become deplorable, more particularly the situation has worsened due to the recent change in economic policy with the adoption of privatization, liberalization, globalization for which millions of women seek to work at any price and under any conditions. To appreciate the impact of changing economy on the workingwomen, it is necessary to draw the framework within which the changes are taking place with special reference to our State.

As per 1991 census over one-third of India's population is working. Among males, more than half are workers while among females nearly one in four is engaged in some kind of work. The percentage of women workers in the total worker population in urban and rural areas is respectively 9.73 per cent and 27.06 per cent. The majority of women workers are in rural areas and 87 per cent of them are employed in agriculture as cultivators and laboureres. Therefore, 90 per cent of women are in unorganized sector in small trades and services, construction works, etc. In organized sector women work force is 10 per cent, 8 per cent in mines, 51 per cent in plantation work. The average annual rate of growth of employment amongst educated women was 11.08 per cent during the period 1983 to 1987-88, compared to only 6.58 per cent during the period 1977-78 to 1983. However, in the nineties it has come down to below two per cent. Moreover, the women who are even engaged in the productive work within the family are not taken into consideration and are very often underestimated although a large per cent of female population are the main workers within the family and this has not been taken in the official calculation. Women workers working in unorganized sectors most of them used to work in most deplorable condition without having

any basic amenities and are subjected to various harassments.

In Orissa where people mostly depend upon agriculture the percentage of working women is 55 per cent as against 45 per cent of male in the agricultural sector.

A study conducted recently reveals that out of 79,770 central Government employees in the State, the number of women employees is 3,753 and most of them work in Class-III and Class-IV posts. As such, this constitute only 4.70 per cent of the total central Government employees working in Orissa.

At the end of the year 2000 there are 4,03,896 regular State Government employees out of which 67,511 are women, which amounts 16.46 per cent and most of the women employees are Primary School teachers and Nurses/ Mid-wives. Otherwise this percentage of women employees would have been less than 10 per cent. Similarly, in different corporations and Government Undertakings out of 2,07,685 employees women employees constitute a mere 7 per cent i.e. only 14,546. In urban local bodies, out of 90,346 employees, 4,025 are women and this number is decreasing day by day. It is also relevant to note here, as large number of women are engaged as sweepers, the percentage remains 20 per cent, otherwise, the presence of working women in Class-I and Class-II posts is very negligible.

As per the Government statistics by the end of the year 2000 in private sectors there are total 87,916 employees out of which women employees are 10,10,002 i.e. only 11.5 per cent. Despite all declaration for reservation for women the number of women employees in different organizations has been decreasing.

General Problems

Although the law provides that women are to be given equal wage, even today in the industrial, construction work, agricultural sector and in small

business the women are paid less compared to their male counter-parts.

Women work in production of goods and the services in the family for its own consumption is not considered in the calculation of National income. Even when women are producing for the market their work often does not get computed in the market-oriented concept of income and employment. It is estimated that invisible work of housewives contribute merely 1/3rd of India's gross national product. The most unfortunate part is that the household activities of the workmen are not considered as economic activity and therefore, not counted as employment leaving a large number of workingwomen from the scope of estimation.

There is also reluctance to employ women in different fields and in different works. This is a very common trend with certain employers, resulting in hostile discrimination. A further study has revealed that since a large part of working women are not organized in Trade Unions they fall to insecurity and they lack bargaining power. Although the Government of India has ratified the ILO convention resolution for legislation for home based workers, yet there is no action on the score. A comprehensive legislation promised for agriculture workers which includes a vast number of women work force is yet to see the light of the day.

Another important aspect of the matter is the sexual exploitation of women by the employers, contractors, middleman, forest guards, etc. which is a very serious issue relating to the working women. The role of middleman and traffickers has become rampant in this regard. The landmark judgment of the Hon'ble Apex in the case of Visakha v. State of Rajasthan reported in AIR 1997 Supreme Court, page 3011 with clear cut directions to deal with the sexual harassment and gender discrimination in the work places has not yet yielded much result in the field.

Impact of globalisation and liberalization of economy on working women

Due to the recent policy of globalization and structural adjustment programmes (SAP) the jobs in the organized sectors are shrinking drastically. The Center and State Governments have declared ban on new recruitment, which is the main source of women employment. This also includes the recruitment in schools and hospitals. Due to privatization of insurance sectors where 40 per cent of the employees are women their jobs are now under threat. Over 5 lakhs of industries have closed down during last few years. Traditional industries like Textiles and Handlooms have faced big crises with thousands of workers losing their jobs and the women workers having lost the jobs are forced to seek employment at low wages.

Last year, large scale of retrenchment of non-formal facilitators in Orissa has rendered many women who come from poor families are jobless. The plight of Anganwadi workers in our State as well as throughout the Country needs no explanation as about 1.2 millions of Anganwadi workers and helpers are getting the wages known as 'honourarium' ranging from Rs.260/- to Rs.650/- a month. Now it is contemplated to handover the Anganwadi projects to N.G.Os. Even women skilled workers like midwives do not get the proper wage.

Liberalisation has also affected adversely. Thousands of fisher workers families with mechanized trawling by big vessels being allowed in many coastal areas monopolizing the catch. Practice of many of the big fishing companies includes fishing during breeding time, which also reduces the catch.

As it is already mentioned that a major part of working women are in the field of agriculture and construction work. The impact of globalisation has adversely affected the agricultural sector and they have suffered due to increased mechanization of agricultural operations as well as due to switch over to cash crops decreasing the work days. The

women workers being out of job has resulted in increase of poverties in their families and the poverty alleviation programmes have not given any remarkable result to mitigate the plight of women workers.

In Orissa due to the Fiscal & Administrative reforms and in presence of the World Bank- D.F.I.D. dictating the terms the women workers are the worst sufferers. The per capital food production has decreased. The situation in the districts of Kalahandi and Koraput is the latest example where the women being the weaker section in the society the food protection is very low for them and about 70 per cent of the women do not get two square of meals for a day resulting in mal-nutrition and anemia. The reduction of food subsidy due to the effect of the policy of globalisation has a greater impact directly on the women leaving the conclusion that structural adjustment programmes adversely affect the majority of women in every sphere at work in the home and in the society.

The policy of self-help group and micro credit though an instrument for the betterment of economic condition of women, but it has yet to take any remarkable position in that regard.

Remedial measures

It is now the high time to pay attention to the plight of women community and the working women in particular, with reference to the general conditions of the Society and think about the remedial measures which according to me may be summerised as follows :

- Reversal of policies of SAP and protect the workers' interest. Right to work be made a fundamental right;
- Equal wages for women and participation of women's representatives in all monitoring bodies to be set up;
- Provision of social security benefits including child care and insurance;

- Protective legislation for home based worker, agricultural workers and for the unorganized sectors;
- Easy credit to self-employed women & market guaranty;
- Strict implementation of reservation policies for women;

- Effective implementation of Supreme Court guideline against sexual harassment of women by enactment of legislation;
- Formation of self-help groups and micro credit organizations among the women;



Special Plenary Session

Women and Violence in Gujarat

Presentations

Renu Khanna Trupti Shah
Coordinators

Xth National Conference of the
Indian Association for Women's Studies
17th - 20th October 2002

Utkal University, Bhubaneswar, Orissa

Special Plenary Session

**Women and Violence
in Gujarat**

Presentations

Renu Khanna And Trupti Shah

Coordinators

**Indian Association for Women's Studies
October 2002**

WOMEN IN A FRACTURED SOCIETY : THE GUJARAT POGROM AND AFTER

**Bina Srinivasan,
Nandini Manjrekar,
Renu Khanna ,
Trupti Shah
and Deeptha Achar**

Women and the Hindu Right

Violence against women has always been a primary concern within the women's movement in India. Particularly since the 1980s when a court verdict acquitted those accused of rape in the case of an adivasi woman on the basis of her sexual history (the landmark Mathura rape case). Wave after wave of protest followed; this also led to an effort to understand the structural causes of violence against women, the forms of patriarchy used to invoke and socially sanction the use of violence and the role of women's collective agency in bringing about social change in this context.

The silence around rape, sexual assault and other forms of violence against women had finally broken and the country witnessed an outpouring of both protest as well as feminist literature. Violence against women was now firmly placed within the public realm, and it was through this that the state, law, society, community and family came under

a sustained feminist critique. In that Mathura's case was important as it revealed the powerful play of a combination of forces: the judiciary, the law, the police, caste and ethnicity, social sanction and the justification of the use of violence 'to control women's sexuality.

It was also the eighties that saw a re-configuring of rightwing forces in the political arena. With the strengthening of Hindutva forces there has been a conscious and systematic focus on women over the years. The focus has been twofold; it has addressed both Hindu women as well as women from the minority communities, in particular Muslim women. In building up an iconography of 'them' and 'us' the ideal womanhood and the 'enemy' have both been shaped and re-shaped. Several studies reveal how Hindu women have been trained to become the designated cultural reproducers within the Hindutva framework, how through this they have been given a space in the public

realm and how they have received instructions on proper social and domestic behaviour where any transgressions from patriarchal, Brahminical norms are frowned upon. This instruction has served the Hindutva purposes very well, as is obvious by the increasing participation of women in communal violence particularly since the 1990s.

In contrast to the ideal Hindu woman is the Muslim woman. While rightwing ideology builds up a vocabulary to describe and locate women from all minority communities, it is Muslim women who are central to the creation of this vocabulary, given their specific historical position. The Muslim woman is seen as the medium through which the community consolidates itself; she plays a key role in the reproduction of the community. The increasing numbers of the 'enemy' is then ascribed to her, and therefore she bears the brunt of the enmity in more ways than one. Unlike her Hindu counterpart who is de-sexualised and therefore pure and pristine, the Muslim woman is over-sexed (undoubtedly aided by her 'meat-eating' habits) and therefore unclean. A similar imagery is created for Hindu men, who are effeminate, tolerant and passive, whereas Muslim men are macho, fanatical and aggressive. This highly sexualised imagery is used to demonise the Muslim community and then serves to create fear which in turn leads to hatred and a justification of any means of violence to annihilate the community.

Feminist political analysis and action often leads to a confrontation with rightwing politics, as is quite well known. Rightwing groups in India have often taken up all issues central to women's interests, ranging from personal laws to beauty contests. In the process women's groups have been hard pressed to explain how they are different from rightwing groups, how feminist politics is premised on principles that are often antithetical to the rightwing project. This has been very much part of the struggle for women's groups and for the women's movement in India as a whole. However, the recent spate of violence in Gujarat, with its specific and widespread targeting of women has made the difference sharply visible.

Women's Bodies as Sites of Violence

Various fact-finding teams have documented the central role of Sangh Parivar outfits acting with impunity in their hate-filled mission against the Muslim community, under the indulgent gaze and in many cases with the active participation of a partisan state machinery. The Vishwa Hindu Parishad and Bajrang Dal have been widely accepted to be key perpetrators in the well-planned and systematic attacks on Muslim lives and property in cities, towns and villages. As in Partition, and more recently in Rwanda and Bosnia, in Gujarat too, women's bodies were sites of violence in this masculinist,

hegemonic project of subjugation. Unimaginable acts of sexual violence were perpetrated on women - young and old and even pregnant women - in Ahmedabad and villages in Panchmahals. (Survivors Speak and PUDR Reports). The scale of sexual violence against women in these areas remains inestimable, given the silencing of their voices through fear, trauma, threat of reprisal and no real hope of justice. Vadodara, also severely affected in the violence, did not report any case of rape, but Muslim women here nonetheless lived with the omnipresent threat of sexual violence as mobs (and the police) harassed and intimidated them both physically and through explicitly sexual abuse over the entire phase of the violence.

As victims, perpetrators and as key ideological focal points, women have been central to the violence in Gujarat. To begin with it has been justified in the name of women: in the war against the 'enemy' women's bodies have become the battleground. Rumours regarding minority attacks on and rape of Hindu women were routinely used to whip up anti-minority sentiment. On 27th February, 2002 itself there were rumours of women who were trying to save themselves from the burning bogie at Godhra being abducted and raped was instrumental in the attack on Muslim women en masse in various parts of the State. This rumour acquired added legitimacy on account of wide media coverage.

In adivasi areas rumours were spread about the abduction of adivasi girls to mobilise the adivasi community in large numbers to kill Muslims and burn and loot their property. This is particularly true of Panchmahals where non-adivasi Sangh Parivar leaders have been known to have been particularly active on this count. Fact-finding teams report that in Sanjeli-Randhikpur the issue of a Muslim youth marrying an adivasi woman was used to stir up communal frenzy in 1998 by Hindu communalist forces. The PUDR report states clearly that: 'Hindu communal leaders of the mobilisation campaigns in the adivasi areas have been successful in part in presenting attacks on Muslims to the tribal populace as a necessity to 'save adivasi women' and 'recover tribal honour' (See, 'Maaro! Kaapo! Baalo!' State, society and communalism in Gujarat, PUDR, Delhi, 2002 for details on violence in rural Gujarat)

Hindutva organisations have systematically used anti-Muslim propaganda that is designed to provoke. For example, in 1997 the Durga Vahini had distributed pamphlets that said, "Beware Hindus! There is an international plot using Muslim goondas to tempt and trap young college-going Hindu girls with love and marriage. Prevent your ward from mixing with boys of other religions, or else you can't prevent your sister, daughter from becoming Fatima or Julia." In July- August

1998, the Vishwa Hindu Parishad launched a vicious campaign on inter-religious marriages in Bodeli, Sanjeli and other places, attacking couples who had married across religious lines, and terrorising Muslim residents, in one case forcing them to flee their villages. Following this campaign, the BJP-led state government set up a cell to monitor inter-religious marriages, which would be responsible for 'rescuing' Hindu girls from such so-called 'forcible' marriages. This move had little to do with concern for women's rights, being much more an aggressive stance to instil fear in any potential 'violators' of the Hindutva ideology and create a moral panic about innocent Hindu women being exploited by minority men. In fact, it was the VHP which 'abducted' one of these girls and kept her in an unidentified location to 'save' her from her Muslim partner. This girl later came out against their terror tactics, claiming that she had eloped out of love and not under coercion; another girl who had been allegedly 'abducted' also had to move the High Court to get justice. (Ref: fact-finding reports on the Sanjeli-Randhikpur incident by Sahiyar Stree Sanghathan and others.) While resources of the state were marshalled against the enemies (read minorities) of the Hindu Rashtra through creation of such monitoring mechanisms, women's safety cells which had been set up by the previous government to look into violence cases at all levels, were dismantled

by the BJP government when it came to power.

As the above incidents indicate, women are very much part of a systematic hate-the-Muslims campaign that has been in place for the last few years. They feel threatened by Muslims, economically and socially: "They have 4 wives and 20 children, they will overrun us, they don't use contraception etc. They are taking away all our business, we are becoming poor."¹¹

Yet another widely circulated rightwing pamphlet said

in the Godhra episode the Muslim 'gundas' had abducted about 25 to 30 women, then raped them, after which cut their breasts and inserted burning rods into their private parts. If we take the total of all the incidents that take place every day at various places, then, in Gujarat alone, there are at least 10 thousand cases of defrauding Hindu girls and as many cases of Hindu girls being raped, every year. Even after the Godhra episode they will continue to do the same with the same method but with a double intensity. They have murdered thousands of Hindus in Kashmir. Right in front of the eyes of the brothers and fathers, the Muslim terrorists raped their sisters and daughters and then killed them. On account of this hundreds of thousands of Hindus had to

flee from Kashmir. Hindus, wake up! If you want to save your sisters-daughters and if you want to save Gujarat and the rest of India from becoming another Kashmir then, from today onwards, keep a watch on your girls that they don't keep any sort of relationship with Muslims.

(Gujarat Carnage, 2002, A report to the Nation, Annexure 2)

Another leaflet called "Jihad" has characterised the attack on Muslim life and property as a just and triumphant rape of the Muslim community. The least objectionable of the couplets says, "The sleeping volcano has woken today/ The Muslim people have been well and truly f..d."

These pamphlets lay bare the ideological building blocks of the Sangh Parivar. Women are clearly central to the entire project, and it is in attacking women that the Hindu Rashtra can become a reality. It is as repositories of community honour and child-bearers that Muslim women's bodies have been specifically targeted in the post-Godhra violence. On the other hand Hindu women have been given an unprecedented visibility both in terms of creating a fear psychosis in anticipation of an attack by the 'other', in terms of foregrounding them as the guardians of Hindu culture, and by extension, the Hindu Rashtra.

Women as Colluders

According to eyewitness accounts women's participation in the violence took many forms. They included valorising and justifying the acts of violence, stripping women before they were sexually assaulted by mobs, dousing women, children and others with petrol before they were burnt to death, gathering and collecting stones and other weapons, participating in night-long vigils providing tea and snacks and looting shops and homes. Although many of these women owed allegiance to Sangh Parivar organisations (and included BJP leaders), there were others as well, such as erstwhile friendly neighbours - which makes the participation of women in the violence that much more disturbing.

Thus as active participants in the violence in Gujarat women have certainly traversed a full circle fulfilling their multiple roles as ideal housewives, mothers, daughters and equally as defenders of Hindutva. In this context it is significant that rightwing women's groups have also been 'empowered' to make representations to state bodies like the NHRC, the Parliamentary Committee for Women's Empowerment and the National Commission for Women. In some cases they have also managed to influence the reports of these institutions. Another interesting twist is added when these groups also claim to

work in camps holding trauma counseling sessions or distributing relief.

Gujarat represents a turning point in the history of the country. It is not only the unprecedented violence; it is also the method behind the execution of a plan that has been long in the making. Additionally, it is the long-term nature of the impacts on women's lives, regardless of caste, class and community. In an atmosphere vitiated by fear and insecurity, all women are affected. Also, when one section of women can be demonised, another section can come in for similar treatment at a later point. Hindu fundamentalism has clearly laid down the rules for all women; there is a real danger that all women can come under the ambit of these rules at some point in time as and when the Hindutva project unfolds. Any woman who transgresses these rules can be targeted. For instance, in Gujarat, in 1998 in Vadodara Bajrang Dal led a protest against a fashion show leading to the mob physically attacking the models. The ABVP in 1999 tried to pressurise the university authorities to introduce a dress code for girl students. If Hindutva has to retain its cutting edge, it would have to create a continuous stream of enemies. The enemy from within is very much part of its agenda.

Dalit and adivasi women have, more or less, allied with the upper castes during the violence, although for different reasons. This

alliance has increased in the Hinduisation of these women on a scale never before witnessed in Gujarat. However, Dalit women, frequently working class, have been badly hit by the post-Godhra violence. Continuous curfew as well as the atmosphere of fear has resulted in acute economic distress. Many women who worked as daily wagers or domestic help could not reach their places of work, and many have lost employment. Loss of earnings has resulted in a rising incidence of impoverishment and hunger.

Dalit women have expressed greater anxieties regarding life and property as compared to upper caste women at least partly because Dalit bastis lie almost always alongside Muslim bastis: Further, longstanding alliances forged by Dalit and Muslim women on the basis of shared socio-economic concerns, as also neighbourhood spaces, seem to have broken down. Reports of mass suicides among Dalits in Ahmedabad indicate acute insecurity and the breakdown of social support. It is an alarming trend also indicating a near-complete rupture of society.

In exceptional cases some women have also shown great personal bravery in order to safeguard life and property of their Muslim neighbours. Dalit bastis, have also been more prone to "combing operations"¹¹ conducted by the police, and many women

have been beaten and injured by the police, though the scale bears no comparison with that of Muslim women.

Some Key Issues

The aftermath

While all communities have been affected by violence, the position of Muslim households is not comparable to that of any other group. With their life and property under systematic attack, contending with unresponsive and biased police and administrative personnel, Muslim women have been facing a grim situation. Hundreds of families have been displaced and rehabilitation is a distant possibility. The social tensions of living in unsafe times is exacerbated by the deep sense of betrayal experienced by the women especially when they have suffered attacks by neighbours and children who 'grew up in front of our eyes'. In addition, a hostile state exacerbates the situation considerably. In particular for those women who have been either subject to or witnessed sexual assault. Insecurity and fear haunt their lives as they see the perpetrators of the violence being let off, and in some cases even threatening them with a repeat performance if they were to try to get back to their homes.

Women are consistently concerned for the effect the violence was having on their children's lives. On one hand, they are worried about the effects of uncertainty and

dislocation on children as well as about the psychological fallout on children who witnessed violence and experienced arrest. On the other hand, they are deeply distressed at the way their children's education was affected. Women feel that the insecurity felt by the Muslim community as a whole would also have ramifications not just on education, but even on the individual liberty of their children, especially daughters in the long run.

A marked feature of the post-Godhra violence has been the systematic targeting of livelihood resources of the Muslim community. An economic boycott of the Muslim community is also in place. Future livelihood options are severely curtailed. Firstly, as rehabilitation does not seem to be forthcoming and secondly, because they lack the confidence that their businesses would be safe after being rebuilt from scratch.

The violence meant that daily wage work, petty business and self-employed work came to a standstill. Both men and women have been unable to work and earn. Long-term prospects are grim ~ the well planned attack on the livelihood resources of Muslims, whether large industry/business or the humblest laari, has rendered economic rehabilitation a daunting task. This has been aggravated by the call for economic boycott of Muslims. It is in this context that productive economic activity of Muslim

women takes on a new urgency. We have reports of Muslim women, hitherto employed in home and small-scale industries, not being taken back to work, post-violence. Many erstwhile employers of these women feel threatened by the current call for a blanket economic boycott of Muslims given by the extreme right. The shrinking avenues for employment faced by the women take on added significance in the face of the present recession coupled with systematic destruction of livelihood assets of the community as a whole during the violence.

Trauma and Mental Health

Overriding fear has become a part and parcel of life for women. Most women display a fear of future for themselves, their families and community. Although fear and insecurity has permeated society at large, women contend with additional fears about sexual assault and abuse as well as with fear for safety of family members, particularly children. Most women express fear for a future where even a basic guarantee to life and property could not be taken for granted. Even women who had not suffered personal loss felt caught in the violence, merely by virtue of belonging to the minority community.

Muslim women have been traumatised by multiple betrayals. Corrosion of trust is most apparent in women who have been directly affected by the violence and arson. At one

level, women acutely feel betrayed by people in their neighbourhood. Witness to the fact that neighbours with whom they have lived all their lives, participated in and sometimes led, the attack on their community and the looting of property, has undermined their belief in a common humanity. The communalisation of neighbourhood spaces has also hit women very hard. They live in constant anxiety that children or livestock will cross the "border." They are sometimes unable to access civic amenities such as medical facilities, water etc. which lie on the "other" side. Tragically, suspicion has entered relationships that have lasted for decades, and it is very doubtful if the common cause that women have forged across communities can be rebuilt.

The effect of verbal abuse on women is stark, and members of the fact-finding teams believe that this arena of violence against women is, perhaps underrated. Humiliation, as a result of verbal abuse, rankled for long and carried almost as much weight as physical abuse. In almost all testimonies, women have remembered abuse and slogan shouting very vividly. Many are unable to even talk about it. Abuse involving their sexual relations with Allah humiliated them the most.

The women suffer from a range of psychosocial impacts including symptoms of post-traumatic shock syndrome. Sleeplessness,

recurrence of nightmares, reactions to sounds, fear of crowds are common experiences. Some of the more serious symptoms like withdrawal are also evident. The real challenge is addressing feelings of guilt, self-blame and low self-esteem. At a superficial level it is possible to work through these emotions. These women are placed within the context of the community, they need the protection of the community. The experience of violence has shamed them, and shamed the community too. It is important to understand that short term trauma counselling can only work if there is a long term process of deconstructing these feelings of shame.

This is also an ideological struggle which would challenge the secondary status of women, question gendered power equations that sanctions the use of violence against women to control and monitor them. The larger social and political context in Gujarat will also impinge on emotional rehabilitation. With this is tied up the issue of justice. Unless the survivors see a process of justice delivery, trauma will remain heightened. There will be some recurrence of trauma; there will be trigger points everywhere. Encountering some of the perpetrators of violence who live in the same locality will definitely have an impact. Justice, is therefore the real challenge. The state will obviously have to be involved in this process.

The women survivors are faced with a series of realities. Each one of them is tied up with the other and each one brings its own anxieties. Without a house it is difficult for them to feel secure. And without a means of livelihood, it is difficult to run a house. As physical security is a key issue and is not presently assured in their places of residence, they preferred to remain in camps. In camps the situation is far from ideal. There is no privacy and there is the danger of sexual molestation in camps too.

The camps were important as they were the only places that provided security. However, living in camps for extended periods has bound to have exacerbated problems. This is linked to proper and quick rehabilitation. Without rehabilitation the women are not going to be able to get on with their

lives. Currently their major anxiety is around safety, housing and livelihood. All these issues are interlinked and will have to be taken up simultaneously. Trauma counselling in this context also means that these issues have to be addressed.

Women are not victims of gender alone. They also bear the brunt of a patriarchal system that operates at the level of the community too, even a besieged community. The very same community which stuck together in terrified solidarity for its survival has also sometimes turned its back to women

who have been 'defiled' by the enemy. Women's rights activists have seen this prejudice in operation before and this should not come as a surprise. Yet it does seem rather unfortunate that a community that has intimate knowledge of large scale violations does not hesitate to further marginalise its women. It is therefore a complex motif.

Leadership and Organising

Many women have taken the lead in protecting themselves and their families. Key decisions regarding safety of the family, including determining places to hide, length of time of concealment, flight, its mode and direction, etc. have often been made by women.

During curfew, women have had to play dual roles. Since curfew was often lifted for women alone, many women managed important work outside the home in addition to their household chores. Irrespective of the tension between the two communities, some women of both communities took grave risks to save lives. Many women helped each other out in terms of everyday necessities.

The situation has also forced women to collectivise. Women have also got together to protest police atrocities against themselves and the arrests of underage sons. They have led initiatives to meet the Commissioner of Police and register FIRs. Despite enormous

pressures, women have protected their neighbours, menfolk and others in vulnerable and sensitive areas. Women have also been active in organising relief for those in camps or sheltering with families.

Role of the State

The cynical manipulation of the state machinery for the express purpose of terrorising and brutalising Muslim women is shocking and portends ill for the future of a society that is based on mutual dependence for its survival. The state in Gujarat has been involved at every level: from using electoral rolls to identify Muslim families, spreading anti-Muslim propaganda, ignoring/instigating mobs, complicity in the violence, refusal to set up relief camps or refusing to provide ration, making a mockery of compensation and rehabilitation and refusing to provide security to families wanting to return. It is clear that the state is out to erase the citizenship of the Muslim community in Gujarat, chilling evidence of which is provided by the fact that thousands of Muslim names have been deleted from electoral rolls according to recent newspaper reports. The erosion of democratic institutions in the state has been so complete that the usual mechanisms of justice have failed. In effect, the state as a democratic instrument of governance has collapsed completely. In its place is a de facto Hindu Rashtra.

Women feel deeply let down by state institutions, particularly the police. The partisan attitude of the police has dismayed them. Apart from suffering excesses at the hands of the police, many women have seen police indifferent and inactive, sometimes even colluding with mobs attacking them, conducting arbitrary combing operations in their localities, even though their localities were the ones under attack. They have watched innocent family members, old men, underage boys arrested while perpetrators of violence roamed free despite being named in FIRs. Women have lost faith in the fairness of almost all government institutions, and the ruling party, including the Chief Minister is held responsible for the current crisis in their lives. At the present moment, women feel secure only in the midst of their own community. One fears that this would lead further into the ghettoisation of the community.

Women have consistently complained about police brutality during "combing operations." Women were also deeply distraught regarding menfolk arrested in often arbitrary "combing operations" of the police. Their vulnerability, individually and as a community, both physically and economically, amplified their fear for their menfolk, particularly since they had themselves observed the partisan attitude of the police. There have been instances where discriminatory 'combing' has taken place, where police forces have selectively

combed areas and bastis of the minority community alone. This arbitrary combing has taken place despite the fact that it was the minority community that has been under attack. Some of their excesses are listed below.

- Pulling women from their homes, sometimes dragging them by the hair.
- Abusing, using curse words with reiiigio-sexual connotations.
- Beating women, including old, widowed women; sometimes so severely that medical treatment was required.
- Hitting pregnant women on their stomachs with butts of guns.
- Violating the right to practice religion by bursting into homes during prayer timings and treating the Qu'ran Sharief with disrespect.

Various women in oral and written complaints to the police have identified many police personnel involved in these atrocities, but no FIRs have been registered, nor has any action been initiated.

In some cases in villages in Baroda, Panchmahals and Dahod there has been intense pressure on the victims to withdraw the names of the accused from complaints filed with the police. Most cases of sexual assault have in fact not been recorded because of fear and because of social pressure.

Where do we go from here?

It is important to note that while economic rehabilitation needs to be undertaken on an urgent footing, it is imperative that economic rehabilitation should not be equated to interim relief alone. Although interim relief is crucial in the short term, the State has to address concerns about long-term employment opportunities for women. We have reports of Muslim women, hitherto employed in home and small-scale industries, not being taken back to work, post-violence. Many erstwhile employers of these women feel threatened by the current call for a blanket economic boycott of Muslims given by the extreme right. The shrinking avenues for employment faced by the women take on added significance in the face of the present recession coupled with systematic destruction of livelihood assets of the community as a whole during the March 2002 violence.

Social rehabilitation is an issue that has been totally ignored by the State. Many women are grappling with a collapse of their social order and loss of security in mixed neighbourhoods and are traumatised by a sense of betrayal by erstwhile neighbours, police and the State. Their fears regarding the safety of their children and concerns over their education would need to be addressed. Safe housing is also a central concern. The insecurity felt by the

Muslim community as whole, we fear would also have ramifications on the individual liberty of Muslim women in the long run.

There is a real need to reach out to all women with information de-bunking stereo types perpetuated by right-wing forces (about Muslims and bigamy, family size etc.), and economic indicators that show Muslims are among the poorest in the country. But at the same time, there is a need for reaching out at an emotional level too.

In conclusion, the Gujarat violence has rudely de-mythologised the 'women as peace keepers' notion. We need to urgently understand the development of the communal psyche in women, recruitment by right wing forces, and the appeal that these forces have for women. The so-called 'empowerment' many Hindu women (probably genuinely) experience through their involvement in the public sphere of militant Hindutva actions is actually accommodated within an aggressive majoritarian patriarchy which will unhesitatingly turn back on them. The discernible increase in violence against women in Gujarat can be seen to be a direct fallout of the breakdown of the social and moral order over the many months of communal violence. The economic distress due to the violence is reflected in increasing cases of domestic violence and incidents of collective suicides by the whole family including children. Most of the reported cases have

occurred in non-Muslim households - tribal, dalit or caste Hindu. We need to ask ourselves what strategies to adopt in this grim environment to work towards the possibility of a 'contradictory consciousness' among all women. We also need to understand the role of religion in people's, especially women's, lives. This is an area which secular/non-religious people have tended to ignore, in the hope that focusing on material conditions will make toiling people see the 'real' issues. How far we can go with such an understanding in the present scenario, however, remains another question.

References

1. State Sponsored Carnage in Gujarat. Report of a CPI(M)-AIDWA Delegation. March 2002-09-10
2. Survivors Speak. Citizen's Initiative. March 2002-09-10
3. Genocide in Gujarat. A Report on Violence in Dahod and Panchmahals. Forum Against Oppression of Women and Aawaz-e- Niswan. June 2002.
4. Violence in Vadodara: A report. PUCL-Shanti Abhiyan. May 2002
5. At the Receiving End. Women's Experiences of Violence in Vadodara. PUCL_Shanti-Abhiyan. May 2002.
6. When the State Turns Fascist. Gujarat Genocide: A Women's Movement Perspective. Ad-Hoc Committee against Violence on women. June 2002.
7. National Human Rights Commission. May 2002.
8. National Women's Commission. May 2002.
9. Fact-finding and Documentation in the Riot Affected Districts of Gujarat. Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative. April-May 2002.
10. Gujarat Carnage. A report to the Nation. April 2002 Dr. Kamal Mitra Chenoy; S.P.Shukla; K.S. Subramanian; Achin Vanaik,
11. Carnage in Gujarat. A Public Health Crisis. Medico Friend Circle. May 2002
12. Gujarat: Laboratory of Hindu Rashtra. INSAF June 2002
13. 'Maaro! Kaapo! Baalo! State, Society and Communalism in Gujarat. PUDR. May 2002
14. Hard Facts. Citizen's Initiative. June 2002
15. Fact-finding Reports into Sanjeli-Randhikpur Incidents by Sahiyar, Gujarat Forum for Women's Studies and Action, NAWO, Movement for Secular Democracy and PUCL, August-September 1998.

Understanding Violence on Women Post Godhara in Panchmahal .& Dahod Rural Areas

JANHVI ANDHARIA AND NAWAZ KOTWAL

Women are always the worst affected in times of communal carnage/riots and used as tools to serve the cause of violators. Not only has the (Hindu) male ego been satisfied but there is an ever strong belief that subjugation of women's body belonging to a particular faith directly indirectly brings humiliation/insult to the community as whole. Along with the life-long trauma that the women have to face, there is the feeling of guilt and helplessness in a certain percentage of the male members of the community.

Pattern:

Starting from February 28th, gang rapes, mass rapes, molestation were committed across Panchmahals and Dahod. Irrespective of age women were targeted. Even pregnant women were not spared.

In the villages of Anjanwa, Pandarwa, Kalol, Fatehpura, Sanjeli, the incidents were heinous, gruesome and the participation of majority women as spectators hurts all human sensibilities.

What is constantly talked about is mob fury and the sequence of events. But in this mob fury perpetrators of the violence did not forget to destroy all evidence of these crimes. Women were raped, cut and burnt. This was a conscious effort to deny the very commitment of such crimes.

Community Reaction:

Community leaders in the initial stages showed tremendous concern. Incidents were spoken of by them again due to the awkward and uncomfortable position that a man faces to talk and address a rape has always been there. In this situation all leaders have taken the help of woman volunteers/NGOs to talk to the victims and one cannot deny the support that was provided by them.

On the other hand rape within a family is being handled very differently. The support provided is very tentative, the reasons much complex than what we believe and needs much debate.

The NGO reaction has not been uniform and ranges from providing monetary support to judicial redressal and confidence building.

Legal Redressal :

The complexity of it stems from the denial of the crime. Manipulation of FIRs, statements, chargesheets and medico-legal cases leaves very little scope for a single conviction.

Social Rehabilitation :

A range of issues need to be tackled. Some survivors are single women and young children and therefore a need arises to address livelihood support and children education. Most victims have been displaced from their original residence and thus have to practically start life afresh. Besides handling the trauma. Where women whose husbands are with them there is renegotiation of the relationship with the husband.

Gujarat - India's Laboratory of Fascism

SOPHIA KHAN
Ahmedabad Office,
Vikas Adhyayan Kendra,
Mumbai

Introduction

In 1947 we acquired our independence, with a price tag of partition which took place on religious grounds. Unaware of the gravity of price that we were to pay in the future we celebrated our independence. Some 60 million Muslims became the citizens of state of Pakistan. The remaining 35 million Muslims were left inside India, representing the largest minority in the country.

Creation of Pakistan proved to be the biggest blunder of the 20th century as far as Muslims of democratic India are concerned. After partition an average Hindu acquired the conviction that Muslims in India are solely responsible for the creation of Pakistan. So, at the root of Hindu-Muslim conflicts, the hostility, projected fears and historic prejudices of an average Hindu towards Muslims should be considered worth mentioning. Even today, slogans like 'Muslims are pro-Pakistani, anti-nationals, they must go to Pakistan or kabristan (graveyard)' etc. are heard throughout India, during Hindu-Muslim conflicts. At times such slogans themselves create such clashes. At such times, any anti-Pakistan issue instantly transforms into anti-Muslim.

With increasing religious intolerance in India, the condition of minority is becoming exceedingly distressing. States like Gujarat are highly vulnerable towards religious fanaticism. Gujarat is situated in far west of India. It is one of the most prosperous states housing various industries and Gujaratis have earned the name worldwide for being successful business persons.

A part of Gujarat's border touches the now Islamic State of Pakistan. This geographical neighbourhood has also been reason enough for the frequent news of Pakistan in Gujarati newspapers. The communal feeling in Gujarat has intensified after Indo-Pak war in 1965. The act of Pakistan shooting down the plane carrying the then chief minister Mr. Balvantrai Mehta, killing him instantly, had particularly disturbed the otherwise peaceful fabric of the state. The attitude of Hindus became very sharp and open during the war. Rumours flowed about the espionage activities of Muslim government officers. No one was above suspicion. So much so, there was a wide spread rumour, not verified by any-

one, that Mr. Mehndi Nawaz Jung, the then Governor of Gujarat was a Pakistani spy. The arrest of several hundreds of Muslims under the Defense of India rule, as a preventive measure during war, further confirmed the Hindus in their suspicion of Muslims' loyalty to India. The gallant role that Muslim soldiers played in the war against Pakistan evoked lukewarm response in Gujarat.

These feelings of 1965 were equally echoed in 1999. Loyalty of Muslims was questioned during the Kargil issue. The news of Muslim soldiers having died or wounded were not noted anywhere in any Gujarati newspapers (except "Gujarat Today"¹¹, run by a Muslim trust). Many programmes were organised by Muslims like anti-Pakistani demonstration, burning the effigy of Pakistani Prime Minister, fasting, blood donation camps etc. in numerous towns and small villages of Gujarat. These were not noted by any Gujarati dailies, except Gujarat Today. At times they were given news value by the English dailies, yet these appeared in the form that these programmes were conducted by 'Muslims' (the word was inducted with underline). Muslims organising such programmes are considered especially noteworthy, and not as natural as organised by any other citizens of India. This is the general attitude towards Muslim minority in India.

Context

The recent genocide of Muslims in Gujarat raises several questions about the structural changes in the harmonious intricate social fabric of Gujarat. Without getting into the economic history of Gujarat I take the position that a society whose main occupation has been trade and commerce instead of agriculture tended to be non-violent for centuries together. All the violence that is witnessed in the recent decades is a manifestation of the economic insecurity of the labour force alongside the quest of the national bourgeoisie to survive under the camouflage of nationalism. It is essential to understand the problems of Gujarat in this context of the changing economic structures. After its recognition as a separate state in 1960, its biggest city, Ahmedabad, was well known as the Manchester of India because it housed largest number of textile mills in India. Gujarat, even today in the race of industrialisation, stands third in the country for luring foreign investments. (It was second some time back, but has lagged behind due to political instability and ever increasing caste/communal conflicts.) While profit maximisation and de-industrialisation might be a good sign for macro economic analysts, the micro aspects in terms of hijacking the unemployed labour class by different narrow-minded communal groups, is very distressing.

The experiences of Gujarat make a point in this case. Because of the closing of textile mills casual labour have increased very sharply. Approximately 50,000 mill workers were rendered jobless by 1982. Another estimate based on the data from the Textile Labour Association suggests that in the early 80's there were 170-thousand full workers in the mills. By 1995 100-thousand of them were retrenched, affecting 550-thousand of the 3 million (18%) population of the city. The elite's hounding to capture political and economic power identifies their despair. They have created a design to mobilise the unemployed labour class. It has eroded the secular democratic fabric of the state and led to other common problems of urbanisation like migration, nuclearisation of the family, increasing unemployment, social alienation, mental stress etc. New shocking dimensions of caste and communal politics were added in Gujarat. The manifestations of stress in inter-personal, as well as intra-personal relations are evident in the form of caste/communal and gender conflicts. Every individual, and if put collectively, every community is striving to find their identity in this area of free market and satellite invasion. To withstand the process of globalisation people are turning to localisation in the social sphere. Ahmedabad being the largest and most important city of Gujarat, all these manifestations are seen here. It has been the pioneer of many conflicts. In

normal circumstances, the city is generally peace loving, safe and leads to development. It was tranquil up to 1980, after the initial communal riots in 1969. After 1980 it underwent a sudden political change and a chain of communal conflicts took place in the years 1981, 82, 84, 85, 86, 87, 89, 90, 91 and continued till the demolition of Babri Mosque in 1992-93. Surprisingly the whole country, sans, Ahmedabad and Mumbai, was peaceful after the Babri Masjid demolition. An uneasy lull followed after that, which did not last long. In 1998-99 Muslims and Christians in Gujarat were subjected to a series of attacks by RSS outfits in the name of conversion. Various programmes were initiated to instigate Muslims and Christians during various public and religious functions. The atmosphere was also very hostile towards Muslims during Kargil conflict in July 1999

Hindu - Hindutva - Hindusthan

The onset of present extremism in Hindus was born in 1920 with the launching of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), popularly known as Sangh Parivar. Their main objective was to look into the interest of Hinduism. They remained publicly dormant for a long time and continued propagating their mal-intentions through various sister organisations. In 80's their movement gained momentum. In Gujarat also they were active in anti-Muslim propaganda.

Major points for propaganda against Muslims have been

- They are responsible for dividing India.
- They tend to be patriotic towards Pakistan against India. So, their patriotism is highly questionable.
- They have invaded India and destroyed our culture.
- They want to increase their population and can do so because they keep four wives. They also resort to conversion to achieve this.
- The major political party of India, Congress, appeases them.
- They are involved in smuggling, bootlegging and other illegal activities.
- Islam is a highly militant religion. It has been spread at the point of sword.
- They are violent by nature because they slaughter animals and eat non-vegetarian food.

Using such venomous propaganda, the RSS outfits could mobilise the minds of Gujarat's average Hindus. They considered it to be a great success. Having tasted this success in Gujarat for their anti-Muslim propaganda, the RSS planned their strategies to Hinduise the whole region and started implementing them. They said, "Gujarat is the laboratory for a Hindu Rashtra (country of Hindus)"

This was done through its various wings like Bharatiya Janta Party -BJP (political wing), Vishwa Hindu Parishad -VHP (outfit for popularising and guarding Hinduism), Bajrang Dal (outfit of youth) and Durga Vahini (outfit of women). They organised one programme or another in the name of Ram. This kept the issue alive in the minds of people and at times also got translated into violence. Such were the reasons for riots in Gujarat during 1989 and 1990.

Primary agenda RSS declared was of Hindu - Hindutva - Hindusthan (Hindu - Hinduism - Hindusthan, as a name of this country, which indicates place of Hindus). They are one of the most organised outfits, almost a role model for any administration. Under RSS they have various outfits for looking into various issues. The VHP wing, looking after guarding and popularising Hinduism has made their presence felt in many localities of Gujarat. A locality level branch is called Prakhanda. Information from each level moves swiftly, whether from the top stalwarts to the last level person or vice versa. This dangerous networking is being used for plotting and targeting plans/strategies that will achieve their malicious objectives set from time to time.

In 1990 Mr. LK Advani, a stalwart in RSS and now Home Minister of India and the country's Deputy Prime Minister, took out a Rath Yatra (Pilgrim on Chariot) and traveled

across the country in an air-conditioned van that was given look of a chariot. The purpose of this pilgrim was to accelerate the Ayodhya movement and mobilise Hindus. The starting point of the pilgrim was Somnath, a holy place of Hindus in western Gujarat. BJP has succeeded politically in its endeavour to ridicule the idea of secularism in India. After having taken the reigns of Gujarat in their hands, it initially created an illusion in the state that communal tension and riots have dissolved under their rule. However, the recent genocide disproved all their claims. The communal riots are the end product of communal politics, in the same manner genocide of Muslims in Gujarat is fascism in totality. In fact, this politics closely resembles the rise of fascism in 1930s Europe.

Recent Violence -A Genocide of Muslims

The series of brutal inhuman incidents that took place in Gujarat in the name of Hindutva after February 27, 2002 were publicised worldwide. Official reports on almost all the incidents are yet to be made public, but let us swiftly overview the facts.

On the morning of February 27, a group of Muslims attacked and burnt a coach of Sabarmati Express train killing 58 persons, most of them were claimed to be 'karsevaks' (members belonging to Hindu extremists Group) returning from Ayodhya town. More than one hypothesis have been put forward as a reason for this condemnable attack.

Government and Hindu extremists claim it to be an attack well planned. Even initial reports claimed involvement of Pakistani agency ISI. Other hypothesis claims that since last couple of months a huge crowd of such Karsevaks has been travelling to-and-from Ayodhya by this train. They harassed all Muslims on their way at every station. The burning of the coach was outcome of such harassment.

News of this attack traveled fast and Ahmedabad was gripped by an atmosphere of fear by the afternoon, as shops started closing down and people rushed back home. Yet, not a single untoward incident took place till morning of February 28. A very senior Ahmedabad based member of RSS was reported to have claimed that they took time for reacting because counter-action needed to be planned based on the data they had collected. All the isolated Muslim resident locality and business houses were attacked. A call of "Gujarat bandh on February 28" given by Hindu rightwing organisation was supported by the government so as to give a free hand to the hooligans.

They attacked even stray restaurants in huge complexes, whether solely owned by Muslims or, having even one Muslim business partner. Muslim families residing in Hindu apartments were attacked and burnt. Care was taken not to harm shops or houses of Hindus in the immediate neighbourhood while burning those of Muslims'.

All the army of the state, its ministers, the police, the administration (hospitals, fire brigades) choose to look the other way when violent forces were attacking Muslims. Reports

pour in even now that many ministers from the present state assembly spearheaded such attacks. This continued for many days and the toll of this is as detailed below:

The statistics from February 28 to March 30, 2002 are starkly chilling	
Hindus killed (in Godhra train Massacre)	58
Muslims killed in the so-called reaction to it (Govt. of India statistics)	900
Muslims killed (compiled from government and other organisations' fact-finding reports)	2,000
Missing persons	2,500
Relief camps for Muslims	103
Displaced Muslims in relief camps	1,13,697

Courtesy: Pamphlets by Women's Vigil Against Violence in Gujarat (network of various women's organisation of Mumbai)

Sexual violence against women has been grossly under reported. Many Muslim women have suffered the most bestial forms of sexual violence including rape, gang rape, mass-rape, stripping, insertion of objects in the body, molestation etc. Many, many rape victims have been burnt alive.

Based on some of the above evidence we can say that what has happened is nothing short of genocide of Muslims. The pattern of violence does not indicate spontaneous actions. The targeted nature of killings, destruction of economic establishments and the kinds of brutality that has taken place

indicate careful organisational planning and implementation by civil militia. These simultaneous timings of the attack and uniform pattern from Ahmedabad to far-flung rural areas imply a larger conspiracy of ethnic cleansing of Muslims.

As mentioned in the report "The Survivors Speak" a fact finding by a women's panel notes: "The singular targeting of only Muslims' homes, shops and businesses - and complete absence of damage to properties belonging to any other community' gives evidence of intent to destroy a particular religious group. Having ratified the UN Convention on the

Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in 1959 India committed itself to enacting the necessary legislation. It was also expected to institutionalise mechanisms for proper implementation. Today India appears to have violated the convention of which it was a prime mover in 1948.

Lessons Learnt

I have hypothesised that Gujarat is one of the most communalised states in India. This characteristic is often hidden under the garb of industrialisation, development and prosperity. Not many people will believe that caste and community consciousness could be used so successfully as a means of achieving supremacy over certain communities. Communalism has been a tool for establishing supremacy - social, economical and political, of upper caste Hindu groups. They have strategically involved Dalits, tribal communities and OBCs in the process of communal mobilisation. Evidence of their involvement has emerged very clearly in the recent violence in Gujarat. Communal hatred has thus spread and taken root among hitherto non-communal communities and areas in the state. It is therefore ever more imperative that social movements of dalits, adivasis, women, labour, environment and others resist communalisation of their respective constituencies and work towards promoting secular politics and exposing communal elements. Anything short of this

would lead to a situation when "nobody was left when they came to get me."¹¹

To check this inherent use of communal politics, economic and social interventions have to be made to differentiate economic development from the vested interests of certain castes and communities. The involvement of minority community in the economic process has to be encouraged. The Government must ensure that no investments are made where sectarian considerations exist. One of the ways to combat the massive and total communal divide of the society would be to resist it at the economic level. The responsibility therefore rests not only with movements but on all economic activity groups like the business community, the professionals, the educational institutions, the civil servants, the bureaucracy to say a resounding 'NO' to communal politics being practised in any way within their respective sphere of influence and activity. Business communities should refrain from doing business with those that believe in and propagate communal hatred, from employing individuals who are communal in their offices or factories or making it a ground of disciplinary action. Professionals and educational institutions should adopt similar policies.

Over last two decades, there has been a shift in the political power structure in Gujarat. Leadership that was in the hands

of OBCs and Dalits has now gone to the hands of upper-castes. Policies of economic liberalisation and globalisation adopted in the state that began with the closure of textile mills in Ahmedabad and which continues unabated are among the main reasons of the loss of power and leadership of the marginalised sections and the growth of right-wing politics.

The government should not allow any group to subvert the process of law and distort the economy. Any individual or group that works against the spirit of the Constitution should be isolated and marginalised in favour of promoting the secular character of the Constitution. Special efforts such as those mentioned above enforced by the government are required to check the economic ghettoisation in addition to social ghettoisation of the minority communities. (After 1980, distress sale of houses increased so enormously that to stop social ghettoisation, the government had to pass an act named "The Gujarat Prohibition of Transfer of Immovable Property and Provisions for Protection of Tenant from Eviction from the Premises in Disturbed Areas Act, 1986¹¹.)

The law enforcement machinery of police and judiciary has not escaped the process of communalisation. There is an urgent need therefore to re-orient the police functioning with respect to secular values of the state

and make them independent of political character of the Government machinery. In this matter, the recommendations of the Third Report of National Police Commission is relevant where it suggests the creation of a security commission that can act as a buffer between the political wing of the Government and the police. In recent years, there have been several instances where the police have either been found influenced by the Hindu fundamentalist groups or have acted under political influence of the ruling party. In order to restore the credibility of the administration at the law enforcement level, the police should strive to create an image of impartial institution committed to the secular character of the Constitution of India. The Police should be made absolutely accountable to the rule of law.

The rise of communal politics has undermined the city's pride in common heritage. While moving around the city of Ahmedabad, during the recent communal violence, I came across many structures of Muslim origin and cultural background that are of great monumental value and grandeur. However, these monuments are not considered as a part of our history and common heritage. Not many in our society are even aware of the existence of such monuments. The feelings of common greatness of our history, society and culture can only be emphasised if we project such monuments as common heritage of our society as a whole, instead of

treating them as belonging to either Hindus or Muslims.

Participation of the minority community in government and political power has been steadily marginalised. In the present Gujarat Legislative Assembly of 182 members, there are only three Muslim members. Even the Congress Party that claims to be a secular party have not encouraged Muslims to share political power. There is only one Congress member in the Assembly from the minority community. Such lack of representation in the political structures has resulted in dilution of the aspiration of the minority communities and has increased the level of alienation amongst them. Without any prospects of representing the community at the administrative and government level, minority leadership has become inward looking with the result that many in the minority community are falling prey to educational backwardness. Civil society must recognise

this phenomenon and realise the potential danger this could cause in society as a whole. It is therefore in the interest of the civil society to promote and encourage the emergence of secular, progressive and forward-looking leadership of women and men in the minority community.

Over a period of several years, history textbooks have been communalised and distorted. These distortions should be removed and history itself should be analysed objectively with emphasis on secular character of our ancient and medieval society. Only then can students have exposure to a pluralistic culture of India and may be motivated to work towards preserving the same. Our history ought to be a matter of pride and respect for all cultures and religions should be the basis of interactions in our society.

Women in the Crossfire of the Relentless Siege on a Religious Minority

"Are we going to be 'allowed'⁷ to forget"

SHEBA GEORGE

SAHR WARU: *Women's Act/on and Resource Unit*

Part of Citizen's Initiative and NAWO (National Alliance of Women) - India

Time and again, we are reminded that conflicts based on race, ethnicity, religion, gender, color, languages are not reconciled with. It smolders within the human race time and again erupting in more and more perverse manifestations each time; giving each new generation, a legacy of pain, sense of wrong, violation and* hate.

On the other side are the "us"; constantly struggling to sustain, build and expand those segments of our society who believe and practice co-existence, even accommodation in all our differences and diversities to preserve equality and the human dignity of life.

Each time, if we flip the pages of our history and look at the writings of our own feminist thinkers, activists and writers, who have tried to research and document the repercussions of violent conflict, their silence, or words exhibit a myriad of pain, disbelief and a cry for lasting change at the way women have been treated worse than cattle as the properties of men and societies, to display supremacy and vindication over the other.

As daughters, sisters, and generation "next" we have, like it or not inherited our violent histories, divides and intolerances. We are being compelled to play out roles of being harbingers of "peace, tolerance and co-existence"; when actually we want to really go ahead working for the indivisibility of Women's Human Rights. We are willing to work with the recognition; that we are not at the "same levels" as women and some of us face different denials added to our engendered identity; but the vastness and periodicity with which women as systematically being repressed and undermined through brutal and barbaric Violence at the individual level; by custodians of civil society and "allowed to be" terrorised sexually by the state so systematically and determinedly on the basis of differences due to religion, caste and other factors; is bringing us to an impasse; where our responses and efforts of the last two decades of what the Women's Movement has "enabled" for women has fallen through.

Our engagement with National bodies for Women's Advancement, National Commission for Women, our National Policy on Women; enhanced presence in decision making and political participation and work with United Nations processes have been put to the severest of test and failed. It needs a serious review for us to decide how and where we are going and who is determining the course of our today and tomorrow.

In Gujarat, many of us part of the Women's rights and civil liberties movement, were hapless witnesses to one of the most horrific, nauseating and dehumanised holocaust and genocide against a people holding an unacceptable religious identity. Though the political machinations are to capture and retain state power defined by the dominant and the paradigms of the dominant - the shocking ugliness played; has been widely written, condemned, publicised and whatever else.

Two hundred and fifty (mostly traceable) Women Raped, brutalised, mutilated and mostly killed; with no scope of evidence. Numbers of women who were stripped, burnt, had wooden pieces stuffed in their vaginas and cut up still alive - living stories; left as reminders to the communities; not to dare to "rise^M again. Hundreds of young children carrying vivid scars of having seen stripping, rape and gang rape, mutilation, burn-

ing, kerosene being given to drink instead of water; wombs being slit open - so close to the partition stories and matching figures (3000 dead and / or missing in Gujarat Carnage in two days) the reminder of Sikh riots. The riots of 1993 had the report by AIDWA/CWDS/HDS/NFIW of the Women's Delegation findings reporting the vulgarised behaviours of Hindu Rightwing Terrorist groups on women in Ahmedabad and Surat. The advancement in Gujarat between 1993-2002 of the Hindu Terrorist frontal organisations, of the party in power; was what we saw of in the steady rise of women's active participation and mobilisation in rioting and looting in shilanyas, roles in electoral politics as well as provoking men of their community to sexually assaulting women of minority community (then it was "Surat ka scene banayenge" this time it was "Naroda Patia aur Chamanpura jaisa hal kar diya hota") in full display, also with this time women seen in Danilimda and Millatnagar - Shah-e-Alam areas, in Sarees - saffron bands and open swords "swearing abuses against Muslims"; areas of Gomtipur and Bapunagar had women helping men in preparing bombs etc. (for attack, not defence as would be claimed) and what makes us go over the brink was, even young girls themselves pushing other girls from the minority community into the fire.

The state completely capitulated and were co-actors in the Violence Against Women;

may it have been the politicians or law enforcing agencies; (the military went for a spin; when they saw how the civil society for which they gave their lives on the border; treated each other as enemies!)

Minority women were beaten black and blue; regardless of age or class and "shot to kill" by the police. Molestation, self-exposure and verbal abuse by law enforcing agencies was common place for Minority women to have to deal with. Midnight knocking, insinuations and insults to women and their young daughters was the lot to be faced "being Muslims". Rich women and college going girls from the Hindu majority; also did not fail us in looting Pantaloon's (a huge departmental store) and shoe shops; "they did not mind wearing 'shoes' from Muslim stores". There are cases of abducted women too who are not traceable (Randhikpur and Chamanpura).

So we in Gujarat are dealing with a "conscienceless" society. A society that simply does not understand the other's grief, humiliation or horrific experience - 'Where they do not feel they did any wrong; ("Muslim deserved it; they had it coming for a long time anyway". "This is the answer for 1000 years of oppression Hindus faced and "their" (read Muslim minority) being pampered." "Even if it's true, they were Muslim

women, where it came to rape or sexual assault". It was said that "they must have been characterless anyway". So, where is the scope for remorse, repentance. where is the scope for hope?

The status of the process of Relief and Rehabilitation, recourse to indictments, and prosecution, compensations, displacement - all of these are continuing punishments and humiliation that minority women and the community continue to struggle with; the wounds are fostering - to date; there are more Muslims in jails, thousands out of job, many victims of torture, women running from pillar to post for death certificates and other proofs - not having the luxury even to feel their pain and sense of loss. Allegations and whisper campaigns of embezzlement, and compliance of women for sexual abuse as prevailing - today. Already victims of the worst ghettoisation they are being further pushed back into holes - vindication for the dominant majority. "Muslims ya to Pakistan mein raho ya kabrastan mein ya to ghettos aur slums mein". For now, that is the verdict for Gujarat's Minorities.

We are really broken in spirit and the rubble is worse than that of the Earthquake of January 26th 2001; from under which we have to rise.