

Sustaining Democracy:
Challenges in the New Millennium

Call for Papers

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

Utkal University, Bhubaneshwar, Orissa.



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Xth National Conference of Women's Studies

17-20 October, 2002

Organised by
Indian Association for Women's Studies
&
Utkal University, Orissa

At
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Orissa

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Contents

Sustaining Democracy: Challenges in the New Millennium 5

Note on Conference Proceedings 7

Conference Schedule 8

Programme of Plenaries 9-12

Sub Themes 13-30

Pre Conference Workshop 31

Special Session 33

Information on Paper Presentation 34

Information on Registration to the Conference 35

Information on IAWS Membership 36

Conference Registration Form 37

IAWS Membership Form 39



SUSTAINING DEMOCRACY: CHALLENGES IN THE NEW MILLENNIUM

The Preamble of the Indian Constitution affirms that India is a secular, socialist, democratic republic. We feel that these values are crucial to achieve equity, equality and global peace. Within the democratic framework the prospect of protecting and promoting human rights in general and the rights of women, children, minorities, dalits, adivasis and other vulnerable groups in particular has more scope of being implemented, provided that people's entitlements are respected and power is effectively decentralised. This will require spaces for free discussion, right to information and redistributive justice and spaces for such groups to articulate their concerns and assert their rights.

The current face of democracy in India instead of upholding equitable and sustainable economic and social development has got mired in growing corruption, criminalisation of politics, increasing communalism and fundamentalism, identity politics and a systematic rolling back of state as a result of globalisation. The growing economic power of TNCs and MNCs and the role of international financial institutions, the unequal trade relations under the WTO regime have resulted in severe erosion of our national sovereignty, destruction of natural resources, agriculture and means of livelihood. Ironically, while the state abdicates its social responsibility it equips itself with draconian powers of control, which aims to curtail people's movements and legitimate forms of organisation and protest. Women's body is becoming a site for identity politics, ethnic cleansing and untrammeled consumer culture manifested in advertisements and other forms of media representations.

The women's movement in India has pointed out imperfections in the institutional structures of Indian democracy. The Indian family, is governed by patriarchal values and archaic family laws. Freedoms are stifled as "family honour" is used to suppress women's rights with regard to education, employment, health, marriage, reproduction and self-expression.

The past few decades have seen fundamentalist forces gain a stronghold in state and national politics. The rights of minorities, dalits, adivasis and women take the first beating in this political game. Fundamentalist forces are using the education system to try and usher in a biased agenda. The "saffornisation" of education will erode secular values and destroy the plural character of Indian Society. In the pretext of protecting "the Indian culture", critical voices, writings and struggles are more likely to be trampled upon and erased. The strides made over the years by the women's movements along with other progressive movements to promote equality and human rights are in danger of being reversed.



India, applauded as a vibrant democracy is plagued by many problems such as poverty and decline of socialist values. Since independence, elimination of poverty has been a national priority. This has remained elusive despite many years of development rhetoric. Structural adjustment policies and reforms strategies adopted since 1990, have aggravated inequalities, poverty, unemployment and violence against women. Women are facing the brunt of these negative changes. Feminisation of poverty is a daunting challenge, as poverty and economic vulnerability make the exercise of democratic rights ineffective.

The global advancements in science and technology need to be re-examined and interrogated from the perspective of human rights, class, caste and gender inequalities. The experience of sex-selective diagnostic techniques and sex-preselection procedures and fear of further discrimination through genetic technology are cases in point.

Popular participation in political processes is now deeper and wider than at any time in human history, while at the same time the world has entered an era in which the idea of democracy is threatened as never before. Women's movement and many other democratic movements have responded to these challenges, however, such critical voices are in danger of being muffled or co-opted. Growing militarisation and the threat of terrorism are being used to erode the democratic substance of these initiatives.

In this scenario women's movements and women's studies have special responsibility to not only expose these dangers but also provide corrective directions.

The Xth National Conference of the Indian Association for Women's Studies titled "Sustaining Democracy: Challenges in the New Millennium", endeavours to discuss the above mentioned issues threadbare and identify directions for future action and research.

The participants to the conference include feminist scholars, scores of feminist activist organisations, NGOs and young students. The presence of many feminists from the arts world, artists, playwrights, people from the theatre and the documentary film world reflect the multidisciplinary character of Women's Studies in India. Various crafts people, folk singers and others of that variety too grace the occasion. Rubbing shoulders with all these are the publishers and booksellers. Book and craft exhibitions are part and parcel of the conference. A number of feminist scholars from neighboring countries too attend these meetings. The conference has a south Asian panel, to examine parallel experiences of women from the region. In the recent years, a few countries from outside Asia have also been represented at these conferences.

The conference this year is being hosted by Orissa and will contain a special plenary dedicated to the state and its development.



NOTE ON CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

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The Xth IAWS National Conference will be inaugurated on 17th October at 9:30 am. The 4-day conference will host a series of plenaries and sub theme sessions. In addition, a keynote address for the Madhuri Shah Memorial Lecture shall be delivered by Mushirul Hasan. Cultural events, theatre, plays, screening of documentaries films, exhibition and street sale of handicrafts are also a part of the four day programme.

Types of Sessions

Plenaries: Plenary sessions have a panel of invited speakers who speak on specific themes related to the focus of the conference. Plenaries usually are of 3-hour duration.

Sub Themes: Sub theme sessions are sessions in which participants to the conference present papers on a common theme related to the focus of the conference. The paper presenters are identified in advance by the sub theme Coordinator on the basis of abstracts submitted by them. The sub theme Coordinator introduces the topics followed by presentation by the participants. Generally of 6-hour duration, divided into 2-hour sessions, sub theme sessions run parallel to each other on three days.

Participants interested in presenting papers in any of the 9 sub theme sessions in the Xth IAWS National Conference can obtain further information in the section of this brochure titled "Information on Paper Presentation", on page 34.

Pre Conference Workshop: the pre-conference workshop is a full-day workshop in which specific issues are discussed and stated objectives are achieved through active involvement of the participants. The responsibility of securing speakers and documenting their availability rests with the workshop coordinator/s. Any participant wishing to make presentations at the workshop may directly contact the coordinator/s.



Xth IAWS CONFERENCE

Tentative Schedule

16th October, 2002

Pre Conference Workshop:
Women's Movement in the Changing Context

17th October, 2002

Inaugural Session
President's Address
Madhuri Shah Memorial Lecture
Sub Theme Sessions I
Street Theatre/Documentaries

18th October, 2002

Theme Plenary: Challenges to Democracy
General Body Meeting
Sub Theme Sessions II
Street Theatre/Documentaries
Cultural Evening

19th October, 2002

South Asian Panel: Women and Peace
Special Session on Women and Violence in Gujarat
Sub Theme Sessions III
Peace Rally

20th October, 2002

Orissa State Panel
Sub Theme Reports
Concluding Session



CHALLENGES TO DEMOCRACY

Democracy is not just a structure for governance, but is a way of life. A democratic way of life can only be achieved by imbibing egalitarian values in all walks of life. Democracy by its very nature should do away with the demarcation between the governed and those who govern. However the operationalisation of democracy reflects the culture, history and dynamics of the society in question. If we observe that the very foundations of democracy are being challenged today, we have to enquire deeper for answers.

The speakers of this Panel shall discuss the challenges to democracy as follows:

Uma Chakravarty. Historical problems: Problems of defining nation and modernity. The historical challenges of getting away from the feudal mindset. Use and abuse of history in the modern day politics, manipulation of myths and symbols to gain control of the public mind. Use of the image of 'Indian Women' to counter women's movements.

Prabhat Patnaik. Economic problems: The paradox of the globalisation which oppress the oppressed, which does away with the transparent economic activity and marginalises and peripharalises women, dalits and adivasi tribes. The equal opportunity in education and food security remains a problem in the new set up. Displacement of people from their traditional habitat and livelihoods.

Indira Jaisingh. Legal problems: Equality before law is a fundamental principle of democracy. So one has to re-access the work of judiciary, law making in a democracy must on one-hand culturally rooted and yet must walk ahead of the masses. Are we successful in being true to our constitution? Is the legal culture in India truly democratic? Or does it carry the weight of colonial impact on one hand and caste ridden inequality on the others?

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SOUTH ASIAN PANEL ON WOMEN AND PEACE

The absence of peace is evident everywhere in South Asia, in the economic, political, communal, ethnic, class, caste, and gender arenas, all of which are interconnected. This absence is being used by South Asian governments to suspend democratic and human rights of citizens. Democracy and a democratic culture are at their worst; militarism and militarisation are at their height.

The war in Afghanistan and the global campaign against Islamic terrorism (not against US, Christian, Hindu or WTO terrorism) has only made things worse, especially in India and Pakistan. The pogrom against Muslims in Gujarat is not unconnected to this campaign.

The livelihoods and survival of millions of already very poor South Asians have been further harmed by violent conflict, wars and military and police expenditure. Entire societies and people are under siege.

The need for peace is desperate. Without peace, development and equality are not possible; without justice peace is impossible.

This South Asian panel will provide a feminist analysis of conflict, violence and war in the countries of South Asia. The focus will be on whether there is a feminist perspective on peace and on women's role in conflict-resolution, on building a culture of peace in families and all other societal institutions.

Feminist activists and scholars from Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka will speak on the following aspects of the issue:

- The extent and causes of conflicts and violence.
- The impact on different kinds of people, especially women and children, and on the development efforts being made by NGOs and governments.
- Women's involvement as perpetrators and agents of violent conflict.
- The response of the women's movement.
- Links between masculinism, militarism and violence and efforts to challenge the construction of hegemonic masculinity.
- Ongoing efforts for conflict-resolution and peace building, national and cross-border.
- Future strategies and programmes for the women's and other people's movements in South Asia to oppose divisive forces and work for justice, sustainable livelihoods, peace, diversity and democracy.

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ORISSA PLENARY

The Human Development Report, India, 1996 puts Orissa at one of the lowest positions on the Gender Development Index. Ironically the state has had a history of women rulers. A state with large natural resources and tribal population spread over a large land tract finds itself in the midst of poverty and upheaval. It has urban sex ratio patterns that necessitate serious thinking. The female literacy level is as low as 1.5% in tribal areas. There are ethnic and religio-fundamental forces which result in conflict in many parts of the State. Combined with these is an emerging woman power which leaves men behind in the process of protest against social injustice.

This plenary has two parts. The first is an academic discussion on two aspects of utmost importance to the understanding of the State of Orissa that elaborate the context of declining sex ratio and the changing work profile of women. The second part will deal with tribal problems of ethnicity and displacement due to globalisation and how women have mobilised themselves to cope with these challenges.

S. B. Agnihotri, UNICEF, Kolkata will highlight the trend of 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, 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 segments of the population. Thus Orissa may have joined the category of states where the urban and the prosperous segments of population are emerging as 'epicentres' of female deficit. This has important implications for policy, research and activism.

Tapasi Praharaj, State President, AIDWA, Orissa will address women's work and the questions of changing trends - the change in women's work in a transitional economy of Orissa in the organised and particularly the unorganised sector; the impact of external economic forces of globalisation; the effect of intervention during natural crises by national and international agencies on women's work profiles and their coping strategies and mechanisms.

Vidya Das, Agragamee, Rayagada, Orissa will elaborate how globalisation has affected women differently and variously and the implications of globalisation on both tribal and other women. What does it mean for the women on whom the burden of survival rests the heaviest? Women in rural areas confront a shrinking resource base. These resources have become scarce not just by over use, but also through commercialisation and privatisation, denying women



access which they earlier had. The state, in such a situation, debunks its role in welfare and subsidies, not just through policies but through inefficiency and corruption, thus worsening the situation of the deprived several times. This does not mean that women from the poorer sections have never raised their voices. There are instances galore where women have come together in protest. The presentation will discuss coalitions of locally embedded networks which facilitate the integration and coming together of ideas and actions .

Sandhya Naik, Ghumsur Mahila Sangathan, Kandhamal, Phulbani, Orissa will address the issue of ethnic tension in a tribal region of Orissa and its impact on women. A growing trend of communal and ethnic violence particularly in scheduled areas have considerably affected the normal life of women and children in Orissa. Among tribal communities there is no place of hatred and social discrimination in the name of religion and caste. Issues that need to be discussed concern the involvement of peace loving native communities in violence in the name of religion and ethnicity. Is ethnic tension really wide spread in the region or is it exaggerated by a biased media? Is it the out come of a long standing exploitation of one poverty-stricken socially degraded community against another community or are these strategies of third external forces attempting to cover up their exploitation of the tribal peoples? Are these conflicts incited by political power-holders?

Coordinator: Sri Satish B Agnihotri
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THE FEMALE BODY: AN ARENA OF CONTESTATION

The human body throughout history has been a terrain of struggle. In the simplest form, the exploiters in different periods have utilised the physical and mental capacities of the exploited to get work done, to produce the necessities of life and to amass wealth. In different ways, from naked use of force to operation of social 'laws', the control over the body is taken away or drastically reduced. Various ideologies of caste, of religion, of spurious sciences, of natural and social laws help this state to exist. The woman's body is subject to control in far more and multiple locations. Patriarchy makes the control more rigid and scatters it from the public up to the private sphere. The establishment denies the woman control over her body in the functions of production and reproduction, as well as in its personal utilisation and sexuality. Ideologically too the woman's body is variously demeaned. The same establishment nevertheless utilises, and at times even celebrates the woman's body. In all instances the body is treated in a peculiar way, split from the mind and then assigned specialised tasks, be they of production, reproduction, or of sexuality for the entertainment of men.

Women are not been passive victims, though subjugated by force. They use various ways to challenge the control over their bodies. Sometimes these acts of resistance are subtle, hidden, and even unconscious. In the present age, with the rise of the women's movement, and development of feminism, the struggle is conscious, open and articulate. The movement has explored and interrogated the various mechanisms and instruments of control, and challenged them. The struggle is by no means over. The system uses newer and subtler forms to control women's bodies while the movement exposes and opposes each of these.

In the first instance, this sub theme does not accept the artificial cleavage between the mind and the body. The separation however seems to operate as far as the establishment is concerned. It therefore becomes necessary to look at the body in relative isolation to explore the operations of the establishment.

The sub theme also recognises the fact that the body is not only a site of oppression and subjugation, in either ideology or practice. It realises that it is a site of contestation. The feminist movement has sought to constantly rehumanise, refeminise, repsyche the body. It has opposed all attempts to make it an alienated fetish.

In fact, the repossession of the body is one crucial area of all women's struggles.

The sub theme would seek to explore the contestation in the following areas:

- *Production:* The conversion of the woman's body into an alienated specialised production machine.



- *Reproduction*: The use of science and technology either to control the reproductive functions of the woman, in the name of population control or to let productive activities continue unhindered.
- *Sexuality*: The opposing attitudes towards women's sexuality, denying them any sexuality on the one hand, while projecting them as sexual beings on the other.
- *Commodification*: Exploration of the commodification of the body, as also of the mind and mental faculties, a feature of the contemporary system.
- *Ideology*: The traditional as well as newer, subtler ideologies that profess control of women's bodies by men, as also the examination of ideologies that can be of assistance in the women's struggle.
- *Objectification and Defeminisation*: The objectification of the woman's body – converting it into a thing for needs of production/accumulation/consumption.
- *Culture*: The need for a new non-commercial, democratic, pluralist, participatory culture that includes the exploration of the women's status including the formulations and operations about the female body.

The contestation over the female body is a prime arena of struggle for the democratisation of the mentality, behavior, institutions, and operations of the human society.

The ongoing struggle is fought against all revanchist forces, forces of orthodoxy, forces of unreason and autocracy – in short, of patriarchy, particularly in its current capitalist formation.

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PROMOTING DEMOCRACY WITHIN THE FAMILY

The idea of democracy is central to all notions of political activity and contains within itself the implication of being an ideal situation for humankind in general. Democracy is normally understood in the context of interaction in the public spheres of people's lives. The family on the other hand, is supposed to fall within the realm of the 'private' absolving it of scrutiny from the point of view of jurisprudence. However, the political spaces accorded to a person are spread across both public and private domains. It is the private political spaces that allocate status and position to members of a family and determine the placement of an individual within a structure of power in the family. Questions of rights, responsibilities and duties within the family, may not usually be the topic of public discourse; but their outcomes impact upon the lives of individuals in serious ways. In as much as a family is removed from democratic principles, members that are low in hierarchies, (as are women and girl children), face the repercussions. When people are subject to violence and neglect, issues spill over from these supposedly 'inner' worlds with repercussions for the 'outer' world at large. The ultimate understanding of the intrinsic value of human life and human existence calls for the collapse of all such barriers that allows for the perpetuation of injustice behind walls of 'privacy'. It is as much necessary for the notion of democracy to prevail within homes as it is necessary to govern public life.

Sociologists and anthropologists have long researched the family as the primary unit of human coexistence and socialisation. Within economics, the family is a 'household', a collective that consumes what is produced and sold in the market. In political science, conventionally, the family has largely remained invisible. Family functions are paid attention in as much as they are necessary to maintain a stable political society, and attention is paid only when it malfunctions and results in the socialisation of children into 'deviants'. Women's Studies on the other hand, focuses on the family as a site of power and discrimination along with being a locus of production, reproduction and distribution. It addresses the family in its complexity. The undemocratic nature of relationships within the family is complicated by the high emotive content that governs those relationships. Public policies do not recognise this and proceed to treat all that transpires within the bounds of families as sacrosanct and out-of-bounds of state intervention. On the other hand, policies in their aspiration to be gender-neutral ignore the implications of inherent gender biases that govern families. As a consequence, public policy often contributes towards intensifying gender discrimination, besides perpetuating injustices. There is a need for research to concentrate upon unpacking the family so that the links between intra-household dynamics and macro changes are understood. The interface between principles of democracy inside and outside the



home should be highlighted. The political nature of activity within the family and the ways in which it impacts upon activity in public domains has to be focused upon. Issues of human rights and linkages with gender-biased, conditioned understandings of duties need to be looked at.

The session 'Promoting Democracy Within the Family' will address issues relating to intra-household/family gender discrimination and its consequent effects. It is recognised that there is no universal form of the family and there are as many kinds of families as are cultural contexts. The session will welcome experiences across India that illustrates varying principles on the basis of which families function.

The session will also present innovations within research in Women's Studies that can assist in understanding the family better. Suggestions are to be invited, that will blur the divide between the public and private spaces allowing for the veil over family- perpetuated injustices to be removed. The question of rights and duties of members of families, and the relevance of these rights to human rights within the family will be raised. The issues outlined above will automatically throw light on intra-household gender-based discrimination relating to food, care, health services, education, physical and mental well-being and the consequences of violence and neglect. The session will also highlight the necessity of an inter-disciplinary approach to researching the family that will simultaneously rise above the lacunae within the tight boundaries of respective social sciences and also accord to Women's Studies a methodology that draws its flexibility from the strengths of the same social sciences. The ways in which the Women's Movement has contributed towards understanding of the family and bringing to light artificial demarcations that make for tyranny in the family and hypocrisy on behalf of the state will be explored. Further, in the light of contributions from the Movement, evidence of re-negotiation of spaces by women within families to bargain for more justice, will be presented.

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GIRL CHILD: A NEGLECTED AGENDA

The recognition of the girl child as an entity or a person especially at risk has somehow eluded our society and our policy makers alike. In 1950, the Constitution of India accorded special recognition to women and to children as being those parts of society for whom special provision might be required. In 1974, India adopted its first national policy on children, but made no distinction between girl and boy children and thus failed to acknowledge that they might have different status and therefore be differently distanced from equal opportunity. In 1974-75, the ground-breaking study on the status of women did not centre its attention on the age-profile of the female population. In its planning following the 1975 International Women's Year, no linkage was made between the child and adult stages of being female in India. In the same period, the beginnings of the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) programme cast women as mothers, or future mothers, and the building of citizenship did not really figure in the emerging child care/child development content. The 1979 National Perspective Plan on Children framed to meet the commitments of the International Year for Children, the 1992 National Plan of Action following the 1990 World Summit on Children, the 1995 National Plan of Action following the Beijing Conference, all the plans drawn up to meet SAARC commitments including those for the Girl Child Decade (SAARC1990-2000), followed the same trend of disconnectedness. None of these commitments were strongly embedded in Five Year Plans and their fund allocations. The girl child continues to pay the price.

The 1980s and 1990s have seen the framing of new national policies on education, health, population; all of them have weak or adverse lateral connections. A new national policy on women has been adopted, and a new national policy on children is on the anvil. So is the Tenth Five-Year Plan. A new set of international commitments to children had just been agreed. Will the disconnection persist? What is the condition and position of the girl child, as a child, as a female, as a citizen?

Indian society uses three early disposal methods to deal with daughters: getting rid of them before birth, not letting them survive early childhood, marrying them off early. At the policy theory level, the State does not condone any of these. But they persist as social answers to what is perceived a problem, and the earliest disposal technique is gaining strength. The 2001 Census highlighted the drastic decline in 0-6 child sex ratios in several states in North-West and Western India and continued declines in major Southern states. Recommendations on social policy for the Tenth Plan pinpointed this adverse ratio in the youngest demographic segment as the most critical development challenge before India. Considerations of gender justice apart, what does it imply for the demographic viability of the population?



Sub theme 3

How are we to address the present and foreseen challenges? What must be done to establish the child as citizen, and the girl child as equal to the boy in value and in status? Where does the factor of rising violence in society figure? What is the challenge to the women's movement, and has it done enough to age-scan its mandate and to lead advocacy for the youngest females? Is it State or society that can lead the change, and what must the State undertake in order to redirect social practice? What should be the linkages of policy and programming directions? What are the information gaps, and how can the research and Women's Studies constituency play a key role in bringing the facts before planners, the public and the polity? How can the politics of women's development mature and achieve the needed focus on the issue of the age-profile of gender justice? What must the National Policies on Women and on Children address? What must the Tenth Plan ensure?

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GENDER AND GOVERNANCE FOR SUSTAINING DEMOCRACY

Gender and governance and the intersection of the two with efforts to strengthen democratic practices and civil society are of ever increasing relevance in the new century. The latter has been marred by increased violence in our immediate environs as well as across the globe. Recent political, economic and social trends, not only within our country but at a global level are undermining democratic processes quite alarmingly. At the same time, people's movement and the women's movement are becoming increasingly vocal against social inequities.

In the sub theme it is proposed to examine women's experiences and interventions at the different levels of formal governance as well as in policy making. Women have made their impact in varying degrees, on the 5 tiers of formal governance - gram, taluka and zilla panchayats, state legislature as well as the National Parliament. Women's groups have raised their voices on several important issues. New alliances and solidarity networks are being forged while attempts are also being made to build bridges between women in formal governance and women's groups working outside the formal structures. Such initiatives from the field from different parts of the country can be examined to understand the varying processes that converge and strengthen democracy.

The 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments reserving a third of the seats for women in the local bodies, are showing signs of going the way of earlier pro women legislation, visionary in concept and poor in implementation.

Several critical questions have been raised by women's groups on gender and governance which have helped to take both conceptual understanding as well as practice in the field forward. It seems to be the appropriate time to take stock once more especially in view of the Constitutional Review Commission and the proposed amendments to the 73rd and 74th Amendments. Elected women representatives have made impressive gains in their struggle against patriarchal forces. However these gains are still not large enough to carry women's voices into the domain of policy-making. The odds are daunting, ranging from poor devolution of funds and authority to the local bodies, to party structures dominated by patriarchal forces.

While women's movements and peoples movements, rural and urban are gaining strength, several bridges need to be built and forums created if these forces are to bring about policy change for a more gender just and equitable dispensation.

Important areas that will be discussed:

- Building solidarity networks that have a feminist perspective.



Sub theme 4

- Finding resources for the panchayats. Can elected women show the way towards optimum use of available resources?
- The role of elected women representatives at state and national level in policy making and in representing women's interests in particular.
- Amending the Constitution to provide reservation for women at state and national level – the roles played by women's groups, by elected women representatives, by the media, by Parliament and legislatures, by political parties.
- The role of women's groups over a broad range of issues such as the Home Work Convention, CEDAW, the Domestic Violence Bill, the Sexual Harassment Guidelines and so on.
- Bridging the gaps between women in formal and informal governance.

  A sub theme devoted to these issues which are all pivoted around democratic processes will provide exciting insights into ways of strengthening and sustaining democracy with a gender perspective.

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CONFRONTING HUNGER: ISSUES OF FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION

India by all accounts appears to have attained self-sufficiency in food production with overflowing food stocks and the ability to avert large-scale famines. Yet, there is evidence that there has been little improvement in the nutritional status of vast sections of people. Persisting hunger and starvation and starvation-related deaths continue to be reported. Policy changes over the last decade – liberalisation and WTO requirements including measures such as removal of quota restrictions, changes in cropping patterns, threaten social, and especially, food security, further aggravating the situation of poverty and unemployment. This raises issues that impinge on many disciplines, and demands debate that cuts across a range of sectors and activities.

The right to food security and adequate nutrition ought to be a basic right but at present hunger and starvation is what half of the Indian population faces. Within that, women and children are a further vulnerable group. Knowing that the women carry the major burden of providing nutrition to the family, shrinking resources and growing poverty will have serious implications on their lives as small scale food producers, as providers of nutrition within the household and as consumers. The breakdown of the public distribution system and provision of substandard material also increases the strain of food production and provision within the household, thus increasing their workload and further reducing their share within the house hold.

The health implications of inadequate nutrition on women's health, apparent through widespread anemia, night blindness and the high maternal and infant mortality rates need to be connected with issues of nutrition and food security and women's participation in the interventions that are designed. It is critical to examine if existing interventions have been in that direction and how well have they connected to the larger issues of inequity of poverty and gender.

The nutrition policies of the government to a large extent have disregarded women's role in food production and management. Even though women and children are the main beneficiaries of the government nutritional schemes like the mid-day meal scheme, they have very little control over the actual management of the programmes.

The political and gender content of nutritional education too needs to be re-looked at from a perspective that covers the politics of food security and women's participation and control at the policy level and also within the house hold. There is also a need to explore the gaps in gender studies on the issue of malnutrition and under-nutrition and define the feminist agenda to confront these issues and fight for adequate nutrition for all.



Sub theme 5

The sub theme will try to raise these issues with presentations that will focus on

- Status of nutrition/malnutrition in India - evidence from recent data.
- Health impact of under-nutrition and inadequate nutrition.
- Review of nutrition interventions and related public policy issues: PDS, ICDS, Mid-Day meal schemes, employment guarantee scheme etc.; the effects of these programmes in promoting food security and issues
- Critical review of nutrition education in India and how gender focused are they.
- Right to resources and control over natural resources of communities to ensure food security.
- Gender implication and gaps that exist within women's studies on this issue.
- The effect of displacement and alienation of communities due to various developmental projects on food security.
- Politics of food and food security including impact of WTO, new technologies, and economic reforms.
- Activism for securing the right to food.

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FUNDAMENTALISM & COMMUNALISM

Fundamentalism and communalism are directly antithetical to democracy as they see human beings not as autonomous and unique individuals but only as vehicles of the grand design of a community, which is uniquely placed in the cosmic and social order. From this view point flow several consequences which challenge the whole set of values which are enshrined in the Indian Constitution: denial of individual's rights vis-à-vis community rights (which ultimately means arbitrary rights of a few "custodians" of a community), intolerance towards plurality, claim of racial superiority or exclusivity, division and hierarchisation of humanity on racial and gender basis, instrumentalisation of women and children, etc.

Not only on a theoretical plane but also in actual reality this antagonism between democracy and fundamentalism – communalism has registered itself much too concretely to be ignored. The soul of a democracy rests on the values of equality, secularism, scientific temper and fraternity. A threat to these values is a threat to democracy; weakening of any of these values would be the weakening of democracy to that extent. Unfortunately the last two decades in our country have witnessed serious assaults on these values from many quarters, the paramount being the combination of fundamentalism and communalism.

The most recent and possibly the brutal act of communalism has been witnessed in the Godhra massacre and the subsequent Gujarat riots. Yet India has seen many other communal flare-ups, be it on account of Hindu fundamentalism, Islamic fundamentalism, Sikh fundamentalism or the conflicts in Assam or Kashmir.

The worrying element in many such incidents is the indulgence of state powers in contravening constitutional obligations even as their 'power' is derived solely from the Constitution; participation of women in arson, loot and crime against women of "alien" community; the communal divide among women and their communal brutalisation; and the parasitical growth of anti-democratic politics of power within the larger democratic polity, questioning the present political structures and institutions.

Many studies have shown how the foremost victims of fundamentalism and communalism have always been women and childrens. And this victimisation comes in many ways, these ways taking on new forms according to the changing economic and political scenes. Women become victims as the bonded conservators of the patriarchal values of the community. They become victims of the dictates of the 'custodians' of the community on all the matters of life, ranging from dress to life partner and education. They become targets in revengeful fights of all kinds, ranging from family feuds to communal riots or pogroms. Worst of all, they are used as



Sub theme 6

agents in almost all anti-women agenda, creating self-destructive and self-lowering conditions of life. This last factor has surfaced in the recent riots in very complex manner, combined with the politics of identity, self-perception as actors in the public space and 'masculinisation' of public role models.

All these issues need closer scrutiny and the new complex realities need to be better understood from a gender perspective. Experiences of new realities have to be shared and interpreted to gain proper understanding of the new challenges to democracy and also to feminist agenda. It is possible that the closer scrutiny of the current experiences and realities would demand re-definition and or re-allocation and greater clarification of the basic terms of feminist discourse. It might also necessitate a critical appraisal and reformulation of feminist strategies, as would be the attempt of this sub theme.

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GENDER AND LIVELIHOODS

In India, 35% of the poor are below the poverty line of which 70% are women. The development strategies of reducing poverty need to recognise that the majority of poor are women and women friendly policies and plans need to be designed. The discourse on development places greater emphasis on the goals of development rather than the means to achieve these goals. Within this context the livelihood framework becomes relevant.

Livelihood is understood as the capabilities, assets and activities required as a means of living. It is sustainable if it can cope with and recover from stresses and maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets both now and in the future, while not undermining the natural resource base.

The important aspect about the livelihood framework is that it moves away from a compartmentalised view of development, and therefore of people's lives to a more holistic view, recognising that assets are of different kinds - natural, social, physical, financial and human. It seeks to gain an accurate and realistic understanding of people's strengths (assets or capital endowments) and how they endeavour to convert these into positive livelihood outcomes. The approach is founded on a belief that people require a range of assets to achieve positive livelihood outcomes; no single category of assets on its own is sufficient to yield all the many and varied livelihood outcomes that people seek. This is particularly true for poor people whose access to any given category of assets tends to be very limited. As a result they have to seek ways of nurturing and combining what assets they do have in innovative ways to ensure survival. Therefore, optimum utilisation and acquisition of assets is a core component of empowerment.

In India, where the populace is found mainly in the rural areas, engaged in primary economic activities, it is essential to focus on natural resources based livelihoods and non-natural resource based livelihoods, as well as migration patterns. This is necessitated with the recognition of the crucial roles women play in the rural economy, in forestry, in agriculture, in non-farm activities such as animal husbandry, dairy and in group organisations aimed at accessing micro-credit and other resources. The approaches towards livelihood options have varied from attempts to formulate exclusive gender-specific projects for women to getting women in the mainstream of rural economy. Interventions have included initiatives by the government, non-government organisations and a partnership of the two. The different approaches and initiatives have earned varying degree of successes.



Sub theme 7

This sub theme will explore the dimensions of livelihood options and their implications for women. It will inquire into the structures and processes that determine the strategies and influence the livelihood outcomes, and how an empowering process can be ensured and improved.

Proposed themes are:

- Women and forestry/fisheries/agriculture/animal husbandry
- General livelihood framework with an empowerment agenda
- Organisational issues
- Migration and livelihoods
- Micro-credit and livelihoods
- Off-farm interventions
- Food security and livelihoods
- Environment
- Land and livelihoods

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SUSTAINING DEMOCRACY: CHALLENGES FOR EDUCATION

In challenges to sustaining democracy in the new millennium education necessarily plays a vital role. At the most basic level a literate population is able to participate with better understanding in the processes of democracy. An educated and well-informed population can play an active part in steering democracy towards the ideals of secularism, equality and global peace. Education can provide the basic tools of empowerment to the marginalised and vulnerable groups with the possibility of greater access to means of livelihood and economic independence. Is our education system as it stands today meeting these challenges? Despite assurances of equality between sexes and protective discrimination under the Constitution, regional and inter group disparities in literacy and educational access exist. Male female differentials are closing in some regions but are large in rural areas and among the SC/ST groups and minorities. The overall literacy rate stands at 65%, female literacy at 54%, and rural urban divide the sharpest among females themselves (47% for rural females compared to 73% for urban females). The recent attempts at curricular reforms leaves a lot to be desired keeping in mind the already volatile situation where education instead of breeding values commensurate with a secular, democratic polity is likely to promote further divisiveness and lack of tolerance. This sub-theme proposes to address some of these issues by focusing on the following areas.

1. **Education-society linkages** – to look at the broader issue of challenges facing education in the framework of democracy. Within this we propose to focus on the following:

i) ***Education and the polity*** – specifically three contemporary areas that need to be focused on as very important moments in our democratic history and where education plays a direct role: (a) the Panchayat Raj Institutions which are the cornerstones of our democracy and where women have a 33% reservation making their education crucially important. Challenges faced by women as panchayat members, their requirements of a general education as well as specific skills are challenges for the education system. Some states where the Panchayats function relatively well and where education levels are also higher such as Kerala and Himachal Pradesh could shed light on how to face these challenges. Giving teeth to the Panchayats to make them truly local levels of government requires further reforms and that poses another set of challenges; (b) the Right to Information Campaign, spearheaded by MKSS in Rajasthan, which is an extremely important movement for effecting equitable and sustainable social and economic development needs to be extended to other areas. The importance of at least basic literacy is self-evident in this area. Papers exploring the potential of this area, highlighting the role of women in particular, would be



welcome; (c) Education in conflict-ridden areas is another particularly challenging issue in the present times. Kashmir can be made a special focus. Possibly Gujarat as well.

ii) ***Education and the economy*** – Challenges within the economics of education include those of skill deficits particularly of marginalised groups in rural areas and linkages with employment opportunities. Does the education sector face a financial crisis? What are the challenges to prioritising government spending within the education sector? What are the challenges to rationalising incentive schemes for increasing participation in education particularly of girls and other marginalised groups? How can economic costs be balanced with social benefits of education?

2. **The Education System**: The second broad area of challenges to education for preserving the democratic framework is regarding the education system and the reforms that are needed therein to reflect the concerns of marginalised groups. The educational system has remained a mute spectator to growing communalisation of the society and increasing violence against women and the girl child. The structures of education reinforce inequalities and perpetuate stereotypes. The recent reforms n the education curriculum instead of undoing these evils has actually deepened them further. The question this sub theme would address include: Can education be so designed as to create equality, peace and also provide sufficient conditions for development of all sections of society? Is education benefiting the last person? How can the education system respond to challenges of creating a secular, socialist, democratic social order based on advances in knowledge systems?

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DOING WOMEN'S STUDIES: DILEMMAS AND POSSIBILITIES

In the 1990s, many of us in women's studies programmes had turned our attention to graduate and postgraduate education. Many of us asked once again the old questions, in new ways and for new times. The 1990s has seen both the marketisation and a fundamentalist resurgence of the educational agenda. This has rendered our work more politically critical but also more vulnerable to the challenges within and without the universities. In the context of 'scarce budgets' and 'perfomativity assessments', the Women's Studies Centres and Research Institutes, we fear will be the ones to be axed or shaped in ways that we might no longer even recognise as women's studies. Some of us therefore feel the need to meet and discuss and debate these issues.

The focus will be on issues that emerge from planning and doing the teaching, research and extension programmes in women's studies, research and documentation centres. While the discussions could include issues outside those listed below- we thought it might help to delineate some questions for discussion:

- Reflecting on the past decade – how do we see the relationship between scholarship and the discipline?
- For those of us within the University structures - have we transformed in some ways the traditional disciplines or even the culture of the academia? Many of us have been anchored in a discipline - have our programmes become at best multidisciplinary but rarely interdisciplinary?
- Does an interdisciplinary programme require that we 'discipline' women's studies? What are the institutional possibilities and limitations of this? For instance – what are the kinds of jobs students with Masters or PhD in WS can look for? Why is that a JRF in WS is not eligible to do research on gender concerns within disciplines?
- What is the kind of feminism and WS that we organise in our curriculum? Do dalit, adivasi women for e.g. figure only as a token in our courses and readings? How do dalit feminist collectives view women's studies? Have we developed feminist pedagogies or do we continue with the 'tools of the Master'?
- How do the younger scholars view WS? How do they perceive its political content and issues of power and vulnerability?
- What are the different ways in which WS education, reading and research and training material in regional languages can be accelerated?

Sub theme 9



- In the context of the rich body of research and documentation that has emerged from feminist scholarship - what are the areas that need urgent addressal - the gaps? Is it possible for us to do a very broad regional, issue wise mapping of what has been done and what needs to be done? We feel that this important - not because one is trying to standardise some agenda for research. On the contrary, in times when a standard or homogenised agenda might be thrust upon us - a map of this kind would help.
- Do our teaching and extension programmes become in some ways the grounds for our specific ideological agenda? While we all agree on that all knowledge is partial- the question we are asking is the one that surfaced several times in the struggle against the 'hijacking of history'. Several arguments – suggested that we too had not allowed more plural voices to be heard on our platforms. This needs to be debated.
- What has been the experience of doing training workshops in WS from outside the academia?

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WOMEN'S MOVEMENT IN A CHANGING SOCIO-POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC CONTEXT: STRIVING FOR NEW DIRECTIONS

Since the advent of the autonomous women movement in the 1970s, feminist politics have developed in increasingly complex trajectories. This is partly because of the theoretical locations of these discourses and partly because of rapidly changing socio-political and economic milieu confronting feminist politics. At the outset, feminist political action in the country sought to ensure better legal protections for women and stringent implementation of the law while dealing with gender specific crimes of rape, domestic violence and dowry-deaths; it also aimed at enabling women to improve their rights to resources within the household and economy. The political confrontations of the women's movement aimed at making the state more accountable for the welfare of women. As evident in the landmark *Towards Equality* (1974) report from India, it also articulated a critique of the ongoing development process, which marginalises large sections of women. Addressing poverty and development issues from the standpoint of its implications for poor women, the women's movement has critiqued the trends in development that destroys the environment and denies local communities their entitlements to these resources.

In India, these confrontations of the women's movement with the state have elicited contradictory responses. The state has been quick to enact stringent amendments to the existing laws against rape and dowry deaths; but it also succumbed to political expediency and failed to take a principled stand in the Shah Bano (1985) and the Roop Kanwar sati (1987) incidents. Yet countervailing this image of a harsh patriarchal state are some gender sensitive departures and new initiatives of the state. These include: 1) the constituting of the *National Commission on Self Employed Women* (1987); 2) the enactment of the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments to enable women acquire a measure of political power in the local political bodies; and 3) the setting up the National/State Commissions for Women, the All Women Police Stations and Family Counselling Cells. This sensitivity is also reflected in the new policy on education and health known as the *Challenge of Education* (1985) which was subsequently revised as a *National Policy on Education* (1991) and in the *National Policy on Health* (1983). Simultaneously, feminist theorising acquired academic recognition: It developed clear insights into notions of power/powerlessness, sexuality and gender identities.

Today feminist politics and theorising are confronted with the challenges of the free market economies whereby the political basis for a welfare state is undermined. Along with other progressive groups, feminists are drawn to protests against these trends that erode wages for the



majority of workers, expand temporary/piece work, displace farmers/tribals by agribusiness, timber and power sectors, undermine existing labour laws and environmental regulations. For apart from the economic costs of development borne by poor women, these trends are lending credence to religious, racial and ethnic fundamentalist movements round the world. Propagating conservative values (which clearly relegate women to the home), fundamentalist movements detract attentions from the failures of the present economic processes. Additionally, the state/ international policies are also explaining their failures by resurrecting the bogie of the "population bomb" which targets women from poor developing countries in the various population control programmes.

Grappling with these diverse factors, feminist politics is in a state of flux; past political strategies are less effective. Confronted with an increasingly unresponsive state, which no longer maintains the fiction of social commitment, it needs to develop new political strategies and theories. Feminist politics must examine the implications of these changes. It requires a reexamination our beliefs and theories to develop conceptual clarity on strategies that will revive people's collective power. Central to this debate is the means of realising gender justice—can it be achieved by aligning with other oppressed groups or by retaining its distinct identity? So far documentation on the feminist movement has revolved around its history and the key issues it took up. In this workshop, we propose to examine the following areas:

- To examine the current realities and challenges in the following areas: The changing context of political economy and its implications for the women's movement, the erosion of socialist concern of making the state accountable to the welfare of its citizens and the replacement of a national agenda by factional politics (based on caste, language and regional identities).
- To understand the implications of these on-going changes for the women's movement. The focus will be as follows: the institutionalisation of feminist agenda and its associated gains and losses, the changing feminist concepts from a focus on women to gender, from equality to empowerment, from a uni-dimensional understanding of patriarchy to a pluralistic assertion of patriarchies and the impact of NGO-isation on the autonomous women's movement.
- To introspect on current strategies and examine the future needs of the autonomous women's movement. The specific focus will be to revitalise formal education and reaffirming women's collective struggles

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SPECIAL SESSION

WOMEN AND VIOLENCE IN GUJARAT

This special session attempts to examine the heinous crimes perpetrated against minority women during the post February 27, 2002 events in Gujarat. It is important to build a common understanding on the issues as well as to increase solidarity in the face of expansion of the Hindutva agenda.

The objectives of the special session are to:

1. Share experiences of those who worked amongst women in Gujarat, inform others of women's experiences and perspectives.
2. Build a common understanding of issues emerging including lessons for the rest of India.
3. Discuss agenda for longer term work with women in Gujarat at various levels: among affected women, other women including girls, advocacy and lobbying work directed at human rights groups at the national and international levels.

Several IAWS members and women's groups were/are involved in relief, rehabilitation and enquiry efforts since post 27 February, will initiate the discussions by presenting their analysis.

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INFORMATION ON PAPER PRESENTATION

Participants interested in presenting papers for any of the sub themes should note:

- An abstract of the paper should be prepared that clearly contains the following:
  - Title
  - Name of the author/s
  - Institutional affiliation (if any)
  - Full address for correspondence (of one main author in case of multiple authors)
  - Phone numbers (Residence and Office)
  - e-mail ID
- The abstract should be between 600-800 words.
- The abstract is to be sent to the sub theme coordinator whose contact information is available at the end of the sub theme write-up.
- Abstracts should preferably be sent in electronically via e-mail. The e-mail subject should be "Abstracts for IAWS Conference". The abstract should be in .doc or .rtf format.
- Paper presenters are also requested to send a hard copy to the sub theme coordinator.
- **Abstracts should reach the sub theme coordinators on or before August 1, 2002**
- Intimation of acceptance of papers for presentation at sub theme sessions will be by 15th August, 2002.
- **All participants whose papers are accepted for presentation should book their tickets to Bhubaneshwar well in advance to ensure availability of train/flight tickets.**
- **Travel Grants:** The IAWS Conference is attempting to seek travel grants for those participants who may require them. The Secretariat cannot, at this point, promise travel support, however, depending on the funding situation, it may be able to selectively fund students and activists.

PUBLICATION OF ABSTRACTS

Following the acceptance of abstracts by the sub theme coordinators, instructions will be issued regarding the full paper/presentation of the paper. The abstracts, meanwhile, shall be posted electronically on the IAWS website (www.iaws.org). In addition the abstracts will be published in the conference proceedings.



INFORMATION ON REGISTRATION TO THE CONFERENCE

- All participants are required to register for the conference. **The registration forms should be filled in clearly and completely.**
- IAWS membership is optional for local participants but compulsory for out station participants. The registration fees are as follows:

PARTICIPANTS	IAWS MEMBERSHIP	REGN. CHARGES	ENTITLEMENT
LOCAL			
National			
Registration by 30 Sept.2002	Optional	Rs. 500	Folder, lunch and tea
Spot registration	Optional	Rs. 600	Folder, lunch and tea
International			
Registration by 30 Sept.2002	Optional	Rs. 500	Folder, lunch and tea
Spot registration	Optional	Rs. 600	Folder, lunch and tea
OUTSTATION			
National			
Registration by 30 Sept.2002	Compulsory	Rs. 750	Folder, boarding and lodging
Spot registration	Compulsory	Rs. 850	Folder, boarding and lodging (subject to availability)
International			
Registration by 30 Sept.2002	Compulsory (Fee: Rupee equivalent of $100)	Rs. 750	Folder, boarding and lodging
Spot registration	Compulsory (Fee: Rupee equivalent of $100)	Rs. 850	Folder, boarding and lodging (subject to availability)



- **All participants wanting to attend pre-conference workshop should register by 30, September, 2002, indicate accordingly on the registration form and add Rs. 300 towards additional expenses.**
- Participants are requested to register for the conference before 30 September, 2002 to enable the organising committee to make adequate lodging, boarding, crèche and other conference arrangements. Accommodation on hostels will be organised on first-come first-served basis.
- Crèche facilities will be organised at an extra charge only for children below 6years, provided there is sufficient requirement. Participants desiring crèche facilities should register in advance and will then be intimated about arrangements and payments.
- Arrangement for ground floor accommodation will be made for disabled persons, senior citizens, pregnant women
- Since October is a festival period it is suggested that participants book tickets well in advance to ensure ease of travel.

INFORMATION ON IAWS MEMBERSHIP

- IAWS subscription fees are as follows:

Membership	Subscription
Ordinary	Rs. 700/- for 3 years
Life	Rs. 1500/-
Institutional (Ordinary)	Rs. 5000/- for 3 years
Institutional (Life)	Rs. 10000/-
Student	Rs. 250/- for 3 years
(Age limit 18-25 proof of age and student identification to be attached.)	
Friends of Association	$100 (in rupee equivalent)

- New Subscriptions will be valid upto 31 March, 2005.

INDIAN ASSOCIATION FOR WOMEN'S STUDIES
MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name : (in full) _____

Address for communication

_____

City _____ Pin code _____ State _____

Telephone _____ Fax _____ e-mail _____

Education: _____ **Occupation / Designation** _____

Interest in Women's Studies (Indicate categories applicable)

☐ Teaching ☐ Organisation & Activism ☐ Media & Communication

☐ Research ☐ Administration of Programmes ☐ Other (pl. specify)

_____

Type of Membership (Indicate type applicable)

☐ Ordinary ☐ Life ☐ Student ☐ Institutional (Ordinary) ☐ Institutional (Life)

Place Date Signature

The subscription may be sent in the form of Demand Draft made out to the **Indian Association for Women's Studies** and sent to the following address:

Ms. Rameshwari Varma, Treasurer, IAWS, No.46, 1st Main Road,
Jayalakshmipuram, Mysore 570 012,
Tel: 0821-510071

CONFERENCE REGISTRATION FORM

Please read the information on registration (page 35) carefully before filling in this form
Please fill in capitals

1. Participant information

Name: _____

Department/Institution: _____

Mailing Address: _____

_____

Phone/Fax/e-mail _____

2. Registration information

Details of Payment of Registration Fees: Demand Draft No. _____

Date _____ Rs. _____ Drawee Bank/Branch _____

Please note : Demand Drafts to be made out in favour of School of Women's Studies, payable at ICICI Bhubaneshwar. No other mode of payment will be accepted.

3.Type of Participant

☐ Local-National ☐ Local-International ☐ Outstation-National ☐ Outstation-International

4. Membership information (for outstation participants only)

Members prior to March 31, 2002: Membership number: _____

Members post March 31, 2002 (seeking fresh membership): Demand Draft No. _____

Date _____ Rs. _____ Drawee Bank/Branch _____

Members post March 31, 2002 who have already sent in subscription to Mysore and are awaiting confirmation please tick here ☐

5. Other information

Will you be attending the pre-conference workshop? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Do you require accommodation? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Do you require special ground floor accommodation? (for disabled persons, senior citizens & pregnant women? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Do you require Crèche Facilities? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, state number of children and their ages: _____

Date of Arrival: _____ Date of Departure: _____

Please send completed form with payment by Demand Draft to Dr. Asha Hans, Director, Political Science Department, Utkal University, Vani Vihar, Bhubaneshwar 751 004



INFORMATION ON ORISSA

Orissa is a tourist delight with beaches and age-old monuments waiting to be explored. A 'must-see' for the visitor to Orissa is the golden triangle of *Konark, Puri and Bhubaneswar*. The *Konark* temple, dedicated to the Sun God is a carved array of life's different manifestations. Konarak sculptures include those of beautiful women who inspired the Odissi dance form. They offer visual delight of open sexuality with women and men as equal partners. The seashore town of *Puri* is a place of pilgrimage which was the residence of the last *Devdasi*. The last of the golden triangle, *Bhubaneshwar*, is a historian's dream come true with its thousand temples of divine shrines devoted to Shiva and Durga in a variety of art and architectural presentations.

Twelve kilometres from Bhubaneswar off the Puri-Konark highway stands the *Chaunsat Yogini* temple that has drawn many feminists to unravel its mysteries. A circular temple with no roof and figures of beautifully sculptured goddesses, it is one of four such temples found across India.

Orissa is the land where Emperor Ashoka fought the *Kalinga* War and changed the history of many a nations by his conversion to Buddhism. Buddhist art, architecture and philosophy are revealed on a tour of the Buddhist triangle of *Udaygari Ratnagiri and Lalitgiri* with their age old *Buddhist Viharas* and statues.

For nature lovers there is *Chilika* a bird sanctuary and the beautiful *Gopalpur* beach, as also the *Simlipal sanctuary* or *Bhitarkanika* the place where the *Olive Ridley turtles* land in winter. The *Nandankanan* sanctuary in Bhubaneswar houses white tigers.

Participants wishing to travel before or after the Conference are requested to make their own travel arrangements. The Conference Secretariat may oblige by putting you in touch with an agent.

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