# I.A.W. S. newsletter

# INDIAN ASSOCIATION FOR WOMEN'S STUDIES

NEWSLETTER NO. 6, DECEMBER 1988

# Editorial

During the last decade, Women's movement in India has been waging struggles to make women's issues and concerns as a total dimension of national development. Yet mainstream development continues to ignore women and has often adversely affected large sections among them. The recent focus by the state on the position of women and an official admission of their inferior status comes with an elaborate plan for several economic and political measures promising reduction in gender inequalities. There is no reference to the roots of women's social oppressions which the women's movement traces in the structural arrangement and demands alteration in the institutions, values and beliefs perpetuating gender disparities, The State proposes certain highly visible and sensationalized 'benefits' for women with a quick 'pay off' in eliciting political support in our five yearly rituals.

There seems to be a vested interest in women's development. However, even if political expediency has inspired these official measures, women's movement must remain vigilant and insist on implementation of what has been promised time and again over the last four decades. The continuous vigilance has paid its dividends as the debate on NPP expressed the solidarity of women's movement and its preoccupation with democratic participation in social reconstruction. A spontaneous nation-wide

debate examined every aspect of the plan and came out with not just criticism but concrete and constructive alternatives, and demanded that they be accompanied with resources earmarked for the same.

One area where allocation of resources has been made is in the setting up of centres in the Indian universities. This is a modest beginning, yet one that could revive critical analysis as the basis for knowledge construction and social transformation. The highly compartmentalized educational system will not accomodate an essentially interdisciplinary area of study, research, action and extension. There are practical problems of collective interdisciplinary teaching too, which will have to be resolved by new arrangements. This is not an easy task. Already there are sharp reactions to these efforts and Women's Studies are being pushed into 'confined spaces'. For instance, there were objections in admitting a Ph. D. thesis on the "Role of Sarojini Naidu in the Freedom Movement" in a History department. It belongs to Women's Studies, they said! This dangreous trend could lead to marginalization of women's studies. It is important to impress upon the point that the students will be trained with a firm anchorage in their own disciplines while being sensitized to women's issues. Another kind of marginalization occursas both the



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## **CERTIFICATE**

Certified that a sum of Rs.4,20,000/=(Rupees Four lakh twenty thousand only has been paid to Dr.Malavika Karlekar, Editor as Honararium for the period March-15 to February-16 and no TDS has been deducted at source.

03/08/2016

Prakash .C Accounts Officer

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# Documents

# The National Perspective Plan For Women 1988-2000 A. D.

The document prepared by the Core Group set up by the Department of Women and Child Development, Government of India is presented as "an effort at evaluating the impact of develomental plans and programmes on Indian women. It has sought to review "the policies and programmes as they exist, plan documents as they have evolved, and studies and reports have been attempted". The document covers several sectors such as rural development and agriculture, employment and training, supportive services, education, health, political participation and decision making, legislation, media and communication, voluntary action etc. The plan aims at: economic development and integration of women into the mainstream of the economy; equity and social justice for all.

The NPP makes 12 general and 136 specific recommendation. The basic recommendations are:

#### Basic Recommendations

- \* Overall approach being holistic, it is essential to have a strong inter-ministerial coordination and monitoring body alongwith its own supportive facilities services by the Department of Women and Child Development (DWCD).
- \* All ministries must reflect concern for the alround development of women. It is essential that the new policy thrust should be reflected in the Planning Commission and State Planning Boards.
- \* Financial and fiscal resources should be apportioned and preferential allocations for women's employment in mainstream programmes should be made. Higher rate of investment in women preferred industries and occupations is also necessary.
- \* At the State level, the departments/directorates of women's development should be initiated.

- \* In terms of programme implementation the two major implementing bodies envisaged are the Central Social Welfare Board (CSWB) and the Women's Development Corporation (WDC).
- \* Women should be entitled a package of services at the block level created by the convergence of schemes such as DWCRA, NORAD, ICDS, Adult Education, etc. at the grass roots administrative level.
- \* Technical inputs are needed for greater effectiveness of programmes, thus emphasis should be placed on more effective planning, monitoring and evaluation of existing programmes through a result-oriented mechanism at different levels.
- \* There is a need for training policy for women.

  Also it is urged that an apex body for women's training in the country that cuts across various departments and ministries may be created to ensure proper planning and monitoring of these programmes.
- \* Creation of a special division in DWCD for the enforcement of law for women and headed by a Commissioner of Women's Rights which must liase with special Cells in the police and department of public grievances.
- \* The 1991 Census must take into account the women's unpaid work in the household and outside as well as the value added in performing her many survival tasks for the family.
- \* As a transitory measure, to ensure opportunity to enjoy political status with men, a reservation of 30 percent seats in all elected bodies is imperative. This would be exclusive of women that have obtained positions in their own right.
- \* An essential pre-requisite for the implementation of these new policy directives would be a women's unit in the planning Commission to

redefine categories of data collection for women, modify existing terminology and identify gaps in data collection and give direction to plans and programmes of women's development.

On August 23 and 24, seven women's organizations jointly issued a statement calling for a national debate with all women's organization, trade unions and grassroot forums participating.

To this statement 27 prominent women responded by issuing a rejoinder that the NPP is a commendable effort that there should be no attempt to politicise the issue. However, they did not present any discussion or implications of the issues discussed in a thread bare manner in the debate by the seven women's organizations earlier. Some of the demands and recommendations that emerged from the debate are as under:

### Demands (by women's organisations)

In addition to 'approaches / Strategies for widening women's access to participatory and gricvance redressal opportunities suggested in another section.

- \* Establishment of statutory autonomous commission at the Centre and States as recommended by the Committee on the Status of women in India (CSWI). Most of the roles prescribed by the NPP could be performed by these bodies. The recommendation is linked to the broadbased representative composition as recommended by CSWI.
- \* Thirty percent reservation for women in Panchayat Raj institutions and planning groups at these levels with special emphasis on representation of dalit and tribal women to be filled by election, taking due care to ensure representation of the poorest.
- \* Recognition of the right to work as a fundamental right. Allocation and ear-marking of resources for women development within sectors, especially agriculture, rural development, industrialisation, education, health and

- labour protection. This, in their view, is the only way to ensure women's access to resources, gainful employment and essential support services.
- \* Circulation and translation of the draft NPP documents to stimulate a dialogue and debate at various levels.
- \* The NPP should not be placed before Parliament without such discussions and consideration by the National Development Council.
- \* Time-bound implementation of free, compulsory elementary education.
- \* Inclusion of child-care within the minimum needs programme for the 8th five year plan. This can be done by building on the foundations of the Anganwadi network.
- \* Sensitisation of policy makers, administrators including law enforcing officers and educators to women's rights and their own obligations as representatives of the States.
- \* Implementation of land reforms, ensuring women's title and extension of the integrated approach designed for the programmes Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA) and Support to Training and Employment Programmes for Women (STEP) to all districts.
- \* Recognition and association of women's organisations in enforcement of laws for protection of women and at different levels of planning.
- \* Withdrawal of anti-labour and anti-democratic bills before Parliament Viz-Historical and Other Institutions Bill, Industrial Disputes (Amendment) Act and Trade Unions (Amendment) Act.

#### Alternate Recommendations

\* A national policy on legislation for women which recognises the need for the law to recognise that women and victims of gender-based oppression and of economic exploitation. A time-bound policy to ensure that courts and legal system is made responsive to women's needs by making legal justice both accessible and cheap.

- \* Immediate and radical land reforms with proper machinery comprising representatives of organisations of women landless labourers etc. to implement them.
- \* Employment for women in all sectors, not merely in traditional and low productivity sectors of the rural economy must be encouraged.

While self-employment cannot be immediately abolished this should not form the thrust of policy direction for women's employment.

- \* A comprehensive all-India legislation for agriculturalworkers should be enacted immediately ensuring
  - (a) reasonable minimum wage rates for agricultural workers, (b) equal remuneration for agricultural workers, both men and women, (c) government pensions to old women agricultural labourers and widows of below poverty house holds, (d) four months wages paid by the government as maternity benefit to women agricultural labourers.
- \* Vocational and technical training for rural women must be integral to programmes for literacy and employment.
- \* Primary health centres at gram panchayat and subsidiary health centre at village level should form a component of the rural development package.
- \* To ensure the implementation of the recommendations, the principle of accountability of members of elected bodies at each level must be affirmed.
- \* Increased representation in decision making bodies at the district levels. Reservation of 30 percent seats for women in all Panchayat Raj Bodies at all levels should be filled with elected women representatives.

The Debate on the NPP was highly objective analysis of a document which affects the future of most of the women in this country. The dissent was not a political one but an expression of the concerns of women's organizations and women's movement. The Government has

modified several earlier statements in the wake of the recommendations of the women's organizations actually in touch with the problems that women face. The Debate on the NPP examined each aspect of the plan and came out with "A perspective from the women." It asked for publications and translation of NPP into all Indian languages to facilitate wider discussions and for the placement of the NPP before the National Development Council. It was felt that NPP should be the concern of not a single Government department but of all the relevant ministries/agencies.

#### Shram Shakti

The National Commission on self-employed women and women in the informal sector headed by Ms. Ela Bhatt has brought out its report. It is a significant document examining the present status of women in this sector and assessing the Government policies related to it. Since majority of the women work in the self-employed/unorganized sector, the report of the Commission was awaited with much interest. observations by the Commission emerge from meeting with the women workers across the country and in different sectors including agriculture, dairying, fishery, food processing, vending, construction work, etc. The women in this sector contribute half or more to the family income and at least one-third of the families are solely supported by a woman earner. There are hardly any training programmes for these women. The state policies suffer from ad-hocism. New technologies often displace women as they destroy traditional jobs employing women, while new jobs are outside the reach of women.

The report emphasises the need for health care and recommends better health care for women and children rather than heavy expenditure on birth control. Some of the recommendations of the report are:

- \* Stop to reduction in employment for women in the industrial units.
- \* A compulsory contribution to maternity benefit fund from all employers regardless of whether they employ women or not.

- \* An Equal Rights Commission at Central and State levels.
- \* Setting up of tripartite bodies with women representatives.
- \* Thirty percent plan allocation in education, health, rural and small industry, drinking water and housing for women's benefit.
- \* Thirty percent reservation in training facilities.
- \* Better facilities for credit and marketing to self-employed poor women.
- \* Women's access to productive resources: land, tree 'pattas', etc.

The report does not examine the social bases of women's oppression nor suggests any structural changes to alter the conditions that confine majority of the women into the informal sector. Nevertheless, the National Commission's report is a national survey of the poor women's condition in the country and a major document after the Report of the Committee on the Status of women in 1974-75. It is hoped that its recommendations will draw the attention of the

policy makers, without encouraging the dangerous trend of seeing the self-employed/unorganized sector as the panacea to provide women employment and strengthen Government's preferential emphasis theory.

Since 90 percent of the women workers are in the informal sector, the emphasis on these sectors as preferred ones for women's employment would not only keep them vulnerable and isolated, it will prevent their entry into the mainstream.

# Enroll as a member of the Indian Association for Women's Studies. The present membership stands as under:

Life		144	
Ordinary		162	
Student	1.8	39	
Corporate/Institutional		20	
То	tal	365	

# CENTRES/CELLS FOR WOMEN'S STUDIES (U.G.C.)

#### CENTRES.

- 1. Kerala University, Trivandrum, Kerala.
- 2. Delhi University, Delhi.
- 3. Calcutta University, Calcutta, West Bengal.
- 4. Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, U. P.
- 5. Punjab University, Chandigarh.
- 6. Poona University, Poona, Maharashtra.
- 7. Guwahati University, Guwahati, Assam.
- 8. Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra, Haryana.
- 9. Andhra University, Vishakapatnam, A. P.
- 10. Gulbarga University, Gulbarga, Karnataka.
- Rani Durgawati Vishwavidyalaya, Jabalpur, M. P.
- 12. Rajasthan University, Jaipur, Rajasthan.
- 13. Berhampur University, Berhampur, Orissa.
- 14. Nagarjuna University, Guntur, A. P.

- 15. Karnataka University, Dharwad, Karnataka.
- 16. Sri Padmavati Mahila Vishwavidyalayam, Tirupati, A. P.
- 17. Goa University, Goa.

#### CELLS.

- 1. College of Social Work, (Hyderabad Osmania University).
- 2. A. N. D. M. M. College, Kanpur (Kanpur University).
- 3. Department of Sociology, Bhopal University, Bhopal.
- 4. Department of Sociology, Jodhpur University, Jodhpur.
- 5. College for women, Trivandrum, Kerala University.
- 6. S. D. College, Muzaffarpur, Meerut University
- 7. Avadh University, Avadh, U. P.

# Conferences

# Appropriate Agricultural Technologies for Farm Women-Future Research Strategy and linkage with Development System.

\* An International Conference was organized by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research in collaboration with International Rice Research Institute from November 30-December 4, 1988. The Prime Minister inaugurated the Conference. Dr. Swaminathan in his presidential address asked the Conference to work towards suggesting more relevant technology, more equitable development and less gender discrimination for women in farming.

Some of the major recommendations of the Conference presented in two parts are as under:

## Part I General Issues in Agriculture

- 1. Awareness and Sensitization
  - Need for greater awareness of the problems of women in agriculture. The mass media could play a valuable role.
  - A course on 'Women in Agricultural Development' for being audited by all students in the agricultural Universities.
  - Attitudinal change in the approach and concept of working relationship between men and women both on farm as well as at home.

#### 2. Research Priorities & Strategies:

- S & T institutions should adopt and encourage the following ground rules in their strategy for technology development.
- Labour diversification, drudgery-reducing and income-increasing technologies.
- Strictly avoid labour displacing technologies. Job destruction and job creation should be concurrent events.
- Knowledge and skill transfer mechanisms should be tailored to women's needs.
- Women should be involved at all stages of decision making.

- Frontier and traditional technologies should be integrated.
- The specific needs of female-headed house-holds, women with land and/or livestock or wage earning women with no assets should be kept in view.

Following steps were suggested to implement the above:

- Employment and income-orientation to farming systems research.
- Setting up of at least one Krishi Vigyan Kendra in every district.
- Coordination between State Agricultural Universities, Rural Universities, Community Science Centres and Krishi Vigyan Kendras for training women in new agricultural technologies and dissemination of this knowledge in each block.
- Involvement of rural women in designing and testing of farm implements and machinery.
- Home Science/Economics institution and agricultural research institutions should develop strong feedback relationships.
   Home Science training should accord high priority to women's role as producers of wealth.
- S & T organization must attract and retain more women from peasant families in agricultural research, training and extension.

### 3. Package of Services

Education and Training

- Pedagogic methods should be tailored to women's needs.
- Mahila Mandal and similar grass-root level Women's Organizations should be used for imparting training.
- Mobilization of mass-media for spread of information.

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- M. Sc. and Ph. D. Scholars should be encouraged to work on productive role of women. They should be supported with adequate fellowships.
- Professional assistance for project preparation, institutional credit and other appropriate technical advise should be provided by agriculture related institutions.

## 4. Information System

- Need for a national data base and information network.
- Information on women-specific occupations and successful examples should be widely disseminated.

#### 5. Production Inputs

 Synchronization in time and space between knowledge and skill transfer and the supply of credit and other inputs is an imperative.

#### 6. Public Policies

- Women should have access to assets, relevant training and credit.
- The NPP contains many suggestions related to women in agriculture. These should be implemented.
- Financial institutions must increase the credit flow to women.
- Political commitment should be accompanied with appropriate political action.

## 7. Organization and Management

- Effective women's organizations and collective strength alone would help women getting a fair deal.

## 8. International collaboration

 An International Federation for Women in Agriculture could help to pool the professional resources of the world for accelerating the pace of quality of life for women in agriculture.

#### 9. Follow Up

State Agricultural Universities may convene workshops to convert this broad agenda into action plans.

 Central Government departments should make adequate provisions to implement the agenda.

## Part II Technologies for Women in Agriculture.

The General recommendations were:

- Develop women-specific technologies for reducing drudgery, improving income and employment opportunities, and for improving quality of life.
- Prepare inventory of most suitable technologies on regional basis.
- Process such information in comprehensible language for farm women.

More specific recommendations were made regarding the following:

#### 1. Crop technology

- Diversification of agriculture.
- Intensive cultivation.
- Interfarming
- Suitable technologies for women managed farms.
- 2. Farm Mechanization and post-harvest technology.
  - Encourage labour-saving alternatives in selected areas with labour scarcity.
  - Develop efficient hand tools for womenspecific activities.

#### 3. Livestock Production

- Indentify specific needs of dairy women.
- Develop simple technologies for milk processing.
- Disseminate knowledge of improved feed and fodder to women.

#### 4. Fisheries Technologies

- Encourage larger involvement of women in fish culture.
- Impart technologies for post-harvest/processing of fish.
- promote marketing cooperatives and easy access to institutional funding.

## 5. Horticulture and Forestry

- \* Involve women in development and utilization of wastelands through collaboration between voluntary agencies and such institutions like Wasteland Development Board.
- \* Encourage research in improving womenspecific operation such as seed preparation, packing, solar dehydration etc.

## 6. Home and Homestead Technologies

- \* Incorporate rural women's issues in Home Science curricula.
- \* Improve national accounting system such as Census and NSS for better enumeration of women's multiple roles.

## 7. Linkage between research and development.

- \* Integrate knowledge among social scientists, agricultural experts and extension specialists for interlinkages between theoretical and practical aspects,
- \* Develop inter-disciplinary and multi-institutional communication on R & D systems.
- \* Promote women as a linking factor and encourage their natural skill in communication.

# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SOCIAL RESEARCH DESIGNS AND METHOD FOR STUDIES ON WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE:

Undertake research in partnership with women.

- \* Multi-disciplinary approach to be encouraged.
- \* Combine secondary data with data from primary sources, with a shift from individual-centered to group-based data.
- \* Use semi-projective techniques, folk culture for social psychological understanding of women's world.
- \* Use case-studies for impact studies of women in agriculture.
- \* Action-research is another recommended research design for dissemination and assessment of the effects of new innovations.

- \* Participatory observation could be used as a method of eliciting in-depth details of women's life and living.
- \* A national workshop "Development of Women's Studies in Indta" was held at Sri Padmavati Mahila Visvavidyalayam, Tirupati from August 4-6, 1988. It was sponsored by the University Grants Commission and was attended by the Directors/Coordinators of newly created Centres and Cells in the Universities/Colleges as well by those who intend undertaking women's studies.
- \* The Indian Association for Women's Studies set up a Task Force to evaluate the National Policy on Education: Its implication for women. As a recommendation of the task force, a few studies were eommissioned on women, Science and Technology in six States. The findings of these studies and presentation from about 100 scientists, scholars on women's studies and related industry personnel were presented at a workshop on Women, Science and Technology at the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore from November \$2-5, 1988. Professor Rajeshwari Chatterjee very ably organized the Workshop,
- \* The Tata Institute of Social Sciences organized a three day Workshop on the theme "To share Experiences of Teaching Women's Studies" in the Unit on Women's Studies. It was a preliminary Workshop to identify the problems, perspective and plan of teaching women's studies. Four Vice-Chancellors were among the 40 participants in the Workshop. The discussion varied from activist conscientization to incorporation of Women's Studies into conventional teaching programme. For several participants this was a first exposure to the concept of women's Studies and thus was a great opportunity made possible by the organizers, Dr. Suma Chitnis Dr. Chaya Datar.

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- \* A three day Workshop on "Women and Economy" was organised by the Kerala Sastra Sahitya Parishad at the Centre for Development Studies, Trivandrum from 28-30 May, 1988. Thirty participants from different parts of Kerala took part in the workshop. Themes such as Women in agricultural and non-agricultural sectors, male-female differences in wages and work availability and level of technology and skills involved in work undertaken by women were discussed and highlighted.
- \* A national workshop on "Women in Agriculture" was held at the Centre for Development Studies, Trivandrum from 15-17 February, 1987.
- \* A National Seminar on Position and Status of Women in Ancient India was organized by the department of Ancient Indian History, Culture and Archaeology at the Banaras Hindu University from March 26-31, 1988. Some papers presented at the Seminar have been compiled together in a volume. For enquiries write to prof. L. K. Tripathi.

## Continued from page 1

teachers and the students in courses on women's studies remain largely women, even in co-educational institutions. This again would prove self-defeating and will lead to further dichotomization and antagonism between men and women.

Women's Studies are yet in the formative stage of conceptual definitions and methodological approaches are being examined in the light of analysis of mainstream theories and concepts and from the research experiences of those who have worked on and about women. It is hence an unconventional approach to the process of teaching and learning and thus both a challenge and an opportunity for understanding social reality. Some of us are being accused of 'feminizing' all teaching. There are confrontations in coeducational classes with male students. Yet the process of reaction would lead to heart-searching and eventual questioning of structures of gender oppression and inequalities. We do not want parallel development of education through women's studies but development of a balanced perspective in the educational system.

Women's Studies enables the University system to revitalize itself while undertaking exercises in curriculum development without gender bias. We found that the entire range of courses taught in a particular discipline got reviewed

from a fresh angle and several missing components of indegenous thought were included. Even today we depend on the West for assumptions, theories, concepts and tools of analysis of women's condition. Only empirical evidence is from our specific cultures. A beginning is however, made for examining concepts and methodological approaches for understanding women living in different social and cultural contexts.

It is an irony that on the one hand is the growing number of women entering the portals of higher education, while on the other a rigid value system refuses to give 'space' for the optimum utilization of the potentiality and creativity of this section of population. An increase in family violence, public abusing and social atrocities on educated women is a reaction to their newfound assertion and independent existence and claim to be recognized as individuals. The educational system could desocialize both men and women so that the negative values are replaced by positive ones of dignity, partnership and peace.

In this formative stage of incorporating women's studies into the educational mainstream, it is imperative to keep alive three activities: dialogue, networking and sharing experiences.

SURINDER JETLEY

# From Our Desk

Himachal is fast becoming a hub of activity with various organisations like CHETNA, ASK, GHANA HATTI Youth Association, working dedicatedly for the upliftment of women in that region of India. Workshops are being organised for nutritional awareness (Ghana Hatti) and protests launched against dowry deaths (Anju Bala case) and subjugation of women's rights. Women in desperate situations are being helped both psychologically and materially. However, the whole effort often slackens owing to the lack of initiative on the part of the administration and political meddling in the affairs. For example, on the medical front, an efficient round

the clock Ayurvedic clinic of Ghana Hatti was closed, bringing much hardship to the people in general and on women in particular. Yet the struggle continues.

On 20th July, 1988 the Kerala Sastra Sahitya Parishad staged a Dharna in front of all district headquarters in protest against posters depicting women in indecent manner. About 50-70 women participated in each district.

Women teachers of Arya Central School and Holy Angels Convent School are still continuing their struggle for better working conditions, better pay scale etc.

# Networking

International Society for Women in Agriculture (ISWA) was formed during the International Seminar on women in Agriculture at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi on December 4, 1988. The membership is open to all individuals and institutions engaged in research, education and extension workers devoted to the upliftment of farm women. Dr. M. S. Swaminathan was nominated as President of ISWA and Dr. C. Prasad as Secretary General. For enquiries regarding membership write to-

Dr. C. PRASAD,
Deputy Director General
Indian Council of Agricultural Research,
Krishi Bhawan,
New Delhi-110002

## Appeal for Research Work

All members are requested to send information about research completed or in progress such as research reports, Ph. D. and M. Phil dissertations on Women and documents recording the process of women's action towards empowerment. Write to the regional Coordinators or to Editor I.A.W.S. Newsletter, Centre for Women's Studies and Development, 228 Faculty of Social Sciences Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi-221005.

## Editorial Board

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