



IAWS

Indian Association for Women's Studies

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IAWS Tribute to Prof. Aparna Dutta-Mahanta (20-8-1946 to 26-1-2022)

In passing away of Prof. Aparna Dutta-Mahanta the women's studies and women's rights movement not only in the North-East region but all over India has felt an irreparable loss. Dr. Aparna Mahanta was a Retired Professor of the Department of English, Dibrugarh, a Founder Director of the Centre for Women's Studies, Dibrugarh University, a life member of Indian Association for Women's Studies and a veteran women's rights activist who kept in touch with women's studies centres and women's organisations all over India. She was a member of IAWS national executive Committee and Coordinator of North Eastern region during 2005-08. She was highly respected throughout India and represented the Northeast Region in the national gatherings. She was highly revered for her writings in Assamese and English on all contemporary challenges faced by people in general and women in particular, in the North Eastern states from the perspective of human rights and women's rights. In her highly acclaimed book entitled, *Nareebad- Part 1 and part 2*, Prof. Aparna Mahanta charted the herstory of feminist movement in its various trajectories across histories and geographies. Her another celebrated book was *Journey of Assamese Women (1836-1937)* that contextualised Assamese women's predicaments in the colonial political economy shaped by the British rulers.

Throughout her academically active life of over 50 decades, Aparnadi had been an epitome of courage, supporter of feminist praxis and powerhouse of energy. She took part in the National Conferences of IAWS and women's rights movements took a pro-active interest in the deliberations, polemics and resolutions passed by the delegates, indulged in animated debates, led rallies and addressed public meetings at the end of the conference during the 1980s and 1990s. She was a member of Mahila Samakhya Project of Government of Assam. She was actively involved in the women's movement in Assam till the end. At the seminar on 25-2-2020 on "Prevention and Abolition of the Practice of Witch Hunting" at Indira Miri Conference Hall of Dibrugarh University, she had urged the audience not to look at witch hunting as an isolated issue but within a larger web of women-related crimes as well as the property rights of women and she also pointed out how women in matrilineal societies too become victims of witch hunting.

IAWS heartfelt condolences to the family members and friends of Prof. Aparna Dutta.

Salute to this brave soul. Rest in power Prof. Aparna Dutta.

In solidarity,

Indian Association for Women's Studies

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