



IAWS

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Tribute to Dr. K. Saradamoni (1928-2021) by IAWS

In passing of Dr. K. Sardamoni today, on 25-5-2021 in the morning, IAWS and women's studies movement in general has lost a fearless stalwart in women's studies. She was a torchbearer on many feminist issues such as women's contribution in the economy, engendering science and technology, caste patriarchy and women's oppression, women's labour and household strategies. Trained in economics, Saradamoni had been active in IAWS from 1981 when the 1st conference of women's Studies was organised and when IAWS was formed she became IAWS life member and played crucial role in its deliberations.

In 1984, she was one of the mainstays of the International Conference for South Asia and Southeast Asian countries which interrogated 'the household' and 'family' through the lens of women's studies. Prof. Saradamoni was pioneer too in Dalit studies in Kerala through her study on '*Emergence of a Slave Caste- the Pulayas*' as well as the study on women and land reforms in Kerala. A social critique, Prof Saradamoni was a steadfast supporter of the Left in Kerala, even if it was critical support. She always stood by young and upcoming scholars and researchers in gender studies. She was warm hearted, grounded in her thinking and writing. She inspired younger generation in the gender studies network, and of course the Dalit related research and activist network. She lived a full life and contributed so much. We will always cherish her memory and her amazing work.

Dr. Sardamoni was so resolute in her feminist positions. Back in the 80s she spoke about women's unpaid family and production work, pushed for gender and technology program to be initiated in the Department of Science and Technology. Saradamoni's Ph. D. was from Sorbonne (Paris) on *Emergence of Slave Caste : Pulayas*. While away in Paris, her two small daughters, Asha and Arunima were taken care in India by Prof Saradamoni's late husband, N Gopinathan who was highly respected journalist. Sardamoni's study: *Divided Poor: Study of a village in Kerala* was very insightful. Her important and pioneering studies were: *Emergence of slave Caste in Kerala: the Pulayas*; *Women in Rice Cultivation* with Dr Joan Mencher; *Matriliny Transformed: Family, Law, Ideology in 20th century Travancore*; *Women's Status in Changing Agrarian Relations in Kerala: A Case Study of Palghat*; *Education, Employment and Land Ownership: Role of Caste and Economic Factors* and *Matriliny*.

During 1980s, Dr. Sardamoni actively participated in 4 National Level technical workshops on women and work, women and poverty, Occupation Changes and Women's work participation, women and technology by Economists Interested in Women's Issues Group initiated by Prof. Devaki Jain and International Conference on *Visibility of Women in Statistics and Indicators* by

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UN INSTRAW under leadership of RCWS Director, Prof. Maithreyi Krishnaraj. Her sharp interventions as a professor at Indian Statistical Institute got her a title of fire-brand feminist. Her landmark contribution to bring our labour processes and labour relations of women in rural areas as well as enumeration of women paid, and unpaid work was very important to engender economics. During 1990s, she played pivotal role in initiation of gender training for department of agriculture and sericulture and dairy. Her interventions in the planning commission meetings were taken seriously by policy makers and activists.

Sardamoni will always be remembered as a pioneer feminist economist. And for her commitment to women's studies scholarship by generations of women's studies scholars in India.

IAWS extends heartfelt condolences to her daughters Asha and Arunima.

IAWS pays warm and glorious tribute to the valuable life member Dr. K. Sardamoni.



Ishita Mukhopadhyay

President



Mini Sukumar

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