

Globalization and the Women's Movement in India

Concept Note

From the early 1990s, the principal economic, social and political problems experienced by the mass of Indian women have, in one way or another, become inextricably linked with the processes and policies of liberalisation led globalization. Struggles around basic food security, health, education, women's employment, livelihood and conditions of work, declining child sex ratios, commoditisation of women and human relations with attendant growth in violence against women, expansion of dowry, etc. have all necessitated a degree of confrontation between the women's movement and economic and social practices being established by globalization. And yet, while an implicit consensus on these key issues exists virtually across the spectrum of women's organisations, approaches and positions on globalization itself have often been quite divergent.

It is often assumed that such divergences merely reflect democratic differences among the various ideologies within the movement – a movement whose growth and advance has in part been based on its ability to hold several ideologies within common platforms of united action. And yet, any hesitancy to clearly debate and oppose a phenomenon that is steadily rolling back the decolonisation process, would reflect a tacit suppression of the several freedom loving ideologies that gave strength and voice to women's issues during the first women's upsurge associated with the national movement as well as during the second wave from the seventies.

One of the methods of suppression of meaningful debate within the women's movement has been the practice of fragmenting the issues before women, a trajectory that carries the danger of blurring and dissipation of perspective when confronting the hegemonic character of globalization. At the same time, it is increasingly becoming obvious that approaches confined to either the purely local or individual plane, or focused only on narrow sectional or niche benefits, or confined to single issues, are running aground. In the changed global context local situations are being pitchforked into the increasingly volatile workings of the larger world economy and social order at a pace that tends to quickly erode much of the benefits achieved by local, sectional or issue based action. The impact of wider crises are also immediately and acutely felt at all levels, particularly since as part of the advancing agenda of globalization, most existing protection mechanisms of the state are being withdrawn. In such a situation, there is urgent need for welding together of the several strands of movements and struggles into a stronger political force to confront the erosion of the anti-imperialist protective functions of the Indian state.

From the early nineties, when 'economic reforms' ushered in the open accession of the Indian government to the neo-liberal prescription of globalization, the women's movement did respond with widespread agitation focused largely on the PDS and withdrawal of the state from the social sector. It is largely to the credit of the women's movement that the issue of the erosion of food security in India that has accompanied the policy pathway set by globalization has remained a central issue that cannot be ignored.

However, at the level of women's work and employment issues, the movement has yet to work out a strategic perspective. At one level it has been engaged with organised interventions which, often with the backing of the international financial institutions associated with the globalization project, have been promoting perceptual divorce between the local or individual economic interests of women and the wider movements of the oppressed and exploited classes and communities. The retarding effects of such interventions on sections of the movement can be seen in the tendency to focus on perceived economic 'opportunities' for some very few women in 'global markets', a reluctance to analyse or address the macro-processes driving globalization, and equivocation and evasion from taking a stand against economic imperialism. In consequence a distancing from the fundamental social and political agendas of the Indian women's movement has insidiously inserted itself into several discourses claiming to advance gender equity.

On the other hand, many issue based or local interest based movements and organisations involved with women's economic activities have also started giving voice to their experience based need for wider and more forceful political intervention and movement against the larger processes associated with globalization. This was strikingly evident in the wide ranging participation of such movements, and large numbers of women in the World Social Forum 2004 which provided a meeting ground for peasant, workers', women's, dalit and environmental movements to come together against what was termed "capitalist led globalization".

In March 2000, at the initiative of six national level women's organisations including the CWDS, some ninety women's groups and organisations were signatory to a document prepared for the Global March 2000. This document, *Womenspeak*, United Voices against Globalization, Poverty and Violence in India, was the first attempt at a comprehensive analysis of the adverse effects of IMF and World Bank dictated Structural Adjustment Policies (SAP) and globalization on women in India, by the principal national platform of the united women's movement. Since then, the processes of globalization have continued and deepened, with consequent effects of rising urban and rural unemployment, a fall in the share of women's employment in manufacturing and services, increasing migration particularly of women, deepening agrarian crisis – mass suicides of farmers accompanied by rising proportions of women in the embattled peasantry, increasing non-availability of employment in agriculture particularly for women, falls in per capita agricultural output, dangerous levels of erosion of food security, etc. The 2001 census has brought to light the shocking decline in sex ratio in the 0-6 age group between 1991 and 2001, largely a product of spread of sex selective abortions. Research and experience have pointed to its intimate connection with the exponential expansion of medical technologies for private profit, associated with liberalisation and privatisation and the enhanced commercialisation of human relations which is a hallmark of globalization. Women's organisations also have to engage with the consequences of a globalization induced or international demonstration effect based wave of consumerism. Once again research and experience has shown that this has facilitated the expansion of dowry on an unprecedented scale, socially and culturally rolling back some of the advances made by the anti-dowry movement of the eighties. Old, new, and expanded forms of violence against women have clearly found powerful stimulus from the cultural environment created by an unchecked drive towards commodification of women, with neo-liberal market fundamentalism establishing itself as the dominant source of social regulation and policy.

In such a situation, the women's movement is faced with the urgent task of consolidating and expanding its strength against, and understanding of the nature and consequences of globalization. For this, the experiences, issues and increasingly dire conditions of the majority of Indian women under globalization require to be given greater voice. But we have to also bring more faculties to bear on understanding the anatomy of globalization, and to make visible the motivations behind the hands that have guided its advance, at national and international levels, and the interests they represent.

With the dual objective of integrating the experiences of women's movement with a wider analysis of the workings of globalization, and advancing research and analysis of the new areas and issues that have emerged, the CWDS proposes to organise a three day all India seminar/conference bringing together activists and leaders of the movement with scholars and other analysts on 20th, 21st, 22nd January 2005. This seminar is a part of the 25th anniversary of the CWDS, whose foundation and history runs alongside the second wave of the women's movement in India.

Inaugural Session

Chair: N.K. Banerjee

Prabhat Patnaik

It is really a matter of honour for me to have been asked to give an introductory speech at this gathering. Typically globalization is supposed to refer to a process of benign cosmopolitanism that is apparently enveloping the world. As a matter of fact however, within the process of globalization there are very serious issues of domination, of hegemony, and it is these issues which have prompted many to refer to this process as one of

imperialist globalization. The fact that the world coming together is something that has historically been achieved under the aegis of certain hegemonic powers was the case in situations of colonialism, and is still the case today. The point at issue is very clearly brought out by a U.S commerce department official who (after 9/11) said that those states, which are actually opposed to liberalisation, should also be branded as terrorist states. There is obviously and very clearly some kind of a relationship between the pushing of this entire liberal agenda that is supposed to underlie globalization and the question of imperialist hegemony.

The question to begin with is - what is the driving force behind contemporary globalization? In particular what are the changes that have taken place in the structure of world capitalism, which have actually, in a sense, brought this new phase of globalization on the agenda? To my mind a fruitful answer to this would be given by emphasising the fact that the driving force behind contemporary globalization is what I would call international finance capital. Let me try and explain exactly what I have in mind when I talk about this concept. If you look at the world economy today - there is an enormous amount of finance, which is moving around. Many people have written about it and I need not elaborate on it here. This finance, which is moving around in enormous amounts, is not related to any trade activities; it is not related to any movement of goods. But it is moving about in the economy, and it is doing so in quest of speculative gains wherever they are available and possible. We in India should be clearly aware of this fact, as in the course of the last year alone we have had about 50 billion dollars of this finance flowing into our country, which is held as reserves, and which is not involved in an iota of any kind of productive activity.

This enormous amount of finance, which is moving around, is not related necessarily to the strategic objectives of any particular nation. Earlier when people used to talk about finance capital - whether Lenin, Hobson or Hilferding - they were talking about German finance capital or British finance capital or French finance capital. In other words, they were talking of finance linked to industry and the interests of a particular metropolitan nation state. But today, when we talk of finance - that is not necessarily the case. You actually have enormous amounts of funds, which are not necessarily promoting any particular nation state's interests, moving around the world in quest of speculative gains. Now it is that entity that I call international finance capital. It includes two very different elements, which are normally not thought of as belonging to that entity. Sometimes people draw a distinction between finance and multinational corporations (MNCs). Of course MNC's are very important. But the structure of finance is superimposed on the world of MNC's in a way whereby the MNC'S themselves are engaged in a very substantial amount of speculative activity in today's world. In other words, there is no watertight division between production and speculation. Productive units are themselves speculative - engaged in a whole range of speculative activities. The implications of this - I shall come to in a moment.

The second thing is that insofar as this entity of international finance capital is not necessarily tied to the interests of any particular metropolitan nation state, it also does not have the stamp of its national origin on it. You actually have this world in which there are finance capitals arising from different countries, which actually do very similar kinds of activity. So in that case it is not necessarily true that it is marked by the country of its origin. This implies in some sense therefore, that the interests of finance capital are not necessarily the interests of a particular country but are actually interests of finance

belonging to a whole range of countries, which of course has very important political implications.

What is the implication of this? So what if the world today is characterised by finance occupying a very important position? Firstly, it would like to open up the world to its free unfettered movements so that it can go in quest of speculative profits anywhere. Secondly, if you look at finance - if you look at the interests that are moving around in such a manner in quest of financial gains - you will find that they essentially represent what one would call rentier interests. In other words they are functionless investors. When we have 50 billion dollars coming into the Indian economy during the course of the last one year - these investors are playing no role in promoting productive activities. All such functionless investors in particular, but also capitalists in general - are in a way always chary of state intervention, of state activism. If the state plays the role that the capitalists are supposed to play, then that de-legitimises the basis of capitalism. If you have a public sector that can go on producing, if the public sector can go on expanding - then you don't really need a bunch of capitalists. So capitalism is always extremely sensitive to the existence of state intervention - especially in spheres of production, generation of employment and so on. And this becomes particularly true of functionless investors because the functionless investor is particularly sensitive to the fact that the social legitimacy of their kind of role gets undermined to the extent that you have production activities taken over by the state. As a result finance of all descriptions typically has an enormous objection to state intervention - to state activism in matters of production, in matters of generating employment, in matters of providing welfare etc. (On the other hand it of course has no objection to the state acting in interests of the finance capital itself).

This objection to state activism acquires a spontaneous effectiveness when finance is global - when it is moving around the world. If in any particular country the state becomes active in promoting productive activities, in employment generation or in welfare activities - then finance can always quit that country and go elsewhere. As a result - there is a spontaneous effectiveness that a world of globalized finance gives to the opposition to state activism, which finance typically always, has. This is of course why John Maynard Keynes, the well known economist of the 20th century, had asked for the euthanasia of the rentier interest for capitalism to survive close to some kind of full employment level of activity. Therefore in order to impose this kind of retreat from certain spheres upon the state, you find typically that there is what economists call a deflation of the economy - there is a reduction in state expenditure, there is a reduction in state taxation. In India for instance the tax GDP ratio has gone down dramatically and this is true everywhere.

This lowering of the tax GDP ratio is almost always accompanied by reduction in state expenditures, which has at least three serious consequences. Firstly it creates recessionary conditions as it has done in the bulk of the capitalist world. As you know, unemployment rates in the OECD as a whole, are today much higher than they were in the two or two and a half decades after the Second World War. Secondly, when you have recessionary conditions - typically recession tends to turn the terms of trade against the peasantry. All over the world today you have this situation today where the agricultural sector or the peasantry is having much lower levels of income (in terms of command over commodities) than it did in the earlier period. So you find the terms of trade have moved against the peasantry and agrarian crisis is rampant. We know of it in our country but this is also a

general phenomenon. Thirdly, it accentuates poverty, cuts in social wages etc., together with unemployment.

I would like to take this opportunity to critique an argument often put forward. Some people, even most distinguished economists (in fact the most distinguished economist of our country) put forward the argument that - if you have the state not spending on investment in the public sector and so on, neoliberal policies will allow the state to concentrate on welfare activities - therefore, it would be a good idea to have neo-liberalism since it would serve to release the state from its obligations to undertake public sector investment etc. and instead concentrate on education, health and so on. Now the logic of neoliberalism is of course a reduction in the resources of the state, therefore a reduction in expenditure of the state and therefore a reduction also of the welfare activities of the state.

The second feature of this period, apart from deflation and its implications for the peasantry, cuts in social wage and so on, is the following: The enormous superstructure of finance is such that it would obviously collapse if there are high rates of inflation. For people would then prefer to hold physical rather than financial assets. Financial assets make sense only if in real terms you are not making losses by holding those assets that are denominated in money. Therefore the need to prevent inflation becomes very important. You can ask yourself the question - why is Tony Blair saying that a 0% rate of inflation is what we should be aiming at. This is not what capitalism said for years and years after the Second World War. Why is everybody suddenly worried about keeping inflation down to 0%? This sudden obsession with controlling inflation is symptomatic of the kind of era we live in.

Now a related implication of this is that in so far as primary commodity producers might actually get together and increase their prices (due to shortages of various kinds or formation of various cartels etc) - there may be a threat to the stability of the financial structure arising from the world of primary commodity prices - because of which it becomes incumbent on the leading capitalist power to ensure that primary commodity prices in terms of its currency do not rise, contrary to what's happening today. Hence it becomes very important to control primary commodities. Of course such control has always been a goal of imperialism all through history, but now an additional cause for such control is introduced. As a result you find that all over the world now there is a massive effort on the part of the advanced capitalist countries, the US in particular, to ensure this control - especially over oil - and there is a drama of oil going on all over the world. In Angola an effort is being made to capture Angolan oil. You know - sometime ago Margaret Thatcher's son was involved in a coup d'etat attempt in Equatorial Guinea. Why? What is there in Equatorial Guinea? Because Equatorial Guinea has oil! You find in Central Asia, the United States is propping up one government after another: Ukraine was the latest. Why? Because of the fact that it will have some kind of strategic role to play in getting hold of Central Asian oil. The same is true of Iraq, of Afghanistan through which a pipeline was supposed to run. Wherever there is oil, you find that a real serious effort is being made to capture this resource back again into imperialist control.

This is really a reversal of earlier decolonization. In the decolonization process, even more significant than simply the change in the political nature of the government - was the control that the new nation acquired over natural resources through the instrumentality of the nation state. It was a bitter struggle. When Gamal Abdel Nasser nationalized the Suez

Canal, the French and the British actually attacked Egypt. When Iran nationalised its oil, the CIA staged a coup d'état in order to get rid of the Mossadegh government. In India, where huge amounts of transfer pricing was being done by oil multinationals, there was a very bitter struggle between the government and the oil MNC's (propped up by the World Bank and so on), before India started its own refining and also going in for its own oil exploration. In country after country therefore (in Algeria the same thing happened), getting hold or control of your own natural resources was the real act of decolonisation, of course facilitated by the political change in power. This central act of decolonisation is being sought to be reversed.

The question arises - how is this taking place? The third world bourgeoisie itself – the leading elements of the third world bourgeoisie are themselves complicit in this process. The process of autonomous capitalist development, which many third world capitalists tried to start after independence, has now run into a kind of cul-de-sac. And you find that under pressure of the newly emerging international finance capital (whose parts are located within the third world countries themselves) there is an alternative strategy which much of the third world bourgeoisie is trying out – namely a strategy of actually being a part of this process of globalization. They gain to the extent that the state withdraws from areas of production because they can actually get hold of the public sector resources for a song, which is actually happening in most of these countries. You have an enormous process of primitive accumulation of capital going on in which public enterprises built on the basis of tax revenues collected from ordinary persons are now being handed over to MNC's or the domestic bourgeoisie for a song. In an essential sense, this is an act of primitive accumulation. Huge amounts of resources snatched from ordinary people are now simply concentrated and handed over, virtually gratis, to a few favoured rich. In addition, the third world bourgeoisie is in fact complicit in this process of globalization because it sees possibilities for itself in a situation where the autonomous national strategy of capitalist development has run into a cul-de-sac.

This also suggests that a very basic change now comes about in the nature of the third world nation state. In the beginning, with independence, the third world bourgeoisie used the nation state as a bulwark against metropolitan capital. It used the state to acquire control over natural resources, to protect domestic markets, to build up financial institutions - in order to have its own strategy of national capitalistic development. Now to the extent that that phase is over - you now actually find the same sections of the third world bourgeoisie (complicit with international finance capital) now use the same state in order to keep opposition to liberalisation (to neoliberal policies) at bay - in order to ensure that the challenge from below - of the peasantry suffering from agrarian crisis, of the agricultural labourers, of the workers suffering from unemployment and cuts in social wage – those challenges are kept in check.

There are several mechanisms being used to achieve this, which makes a fascinating area of study. One mechanism is of course a large-scale infiltration of state personnel. Look at our own country. Elections took place recently, which was decisively a rejection of neoliberal policies. In the elections one particular formation led by one person, with one particular programme and one particular agenda came into power. After elections you find the government being formed led by another set of persons pursuing a completely different agenda, which has nothing to do with the original agenda, which is nothing but the neoliberal agenda, and with not a single change in basic bureaucracy, in the financial

bureaucracy or the foreign service bureaucracy, etc. More or less the same persons continue in power. It's almost as if the elections were a minor interruption in a certain neoliberal process, which was going on.

The other mechanism, which is quite important, is that of spontaneous capital flight. If it is the case that you attempt to try an alternative agenda, then you would find that there would be a capital flight - and immediately the government would actually therefore fall back and say that it wants to reassure the investors that it would carry forward the same earlier agenda. For if pursuit of the neoliberal agenda is painful, the transitional difficulties of getting out of that agenda (arising due to capital flight), are even more painful for the people. This, in a sense, keeps you tied down to this agenda.

In addition of course, there is the use of force when none of this works. And finally of course there is this enormous use of ideology. There is a destruction of thought that takes place in much of third world countries. Places of learning are in shambles. You find huge cuts in education budgets leading to privatisation and commodification of education, because of which (to borrow a Gramscian term) the organic intellectuals of the people are no longer appearing on the horizon. What you have are basically people who are going through higher education or learning only for a certain job on the market. And therefore there is no tendency to basic thinking, for all of which then you have to get experts from the World Bank, from the IMF, from the U.S, etc., and that being the case - of course there is an ideological control.

The last point I'd like to make is the following: At the same time, quite apart from what has been already outlined, there is a tendency towards a fracturing of a nation. You find that unemployment in any case is a situation that is conducive to the growth of ethnic, religious, communal kind of tendencies that break up the nation. Additionally imperialism has a direct interest in breaking up large countries. We have seen this in the case of Yugoslavia - because large countries represent a potential threat. We know that similar thoughts have actually been put into practice in the case of Iraq, where a Shia-Sunni divide has emerged, which never existed before. As a result, you find that there is a tendency towards the fracturing of a nation. In this process, in the so called internationalism of the current process of globalization, there is actually a strengthening of all kinds of sub-nationalist tendencies which results in the fracturing of the inclusive concept of the nation that came into being in the context of the anti imperialist struggle. Within this however, there is a decimation (or an attempt at decimation) of the progressive forces - decimating the left, decimating the communists, revolutionaries and so on. But paradoxically and ironically this often gives rise to a situation where the only challenges to imperialism are in fact the fundamentalists. Look at any country: Indonesia had the third largest communist party in the world after Soviet Union and China and the Indonesian communist party was decimated - half a million people were killed and now you have an Indonesia where Muslim fundamentalists present the main kind of threat to imperialism. The same is true of Iran - where I referred to the coup against Mossadegh. It is true of Afghanistan, of Sudan, etc. All the countries that are today the bastions of Muslim fundamentalism are countries in which the progressive forces were decimated by the forces of imperialism. Now, in the process of decimating the progressive forces you leave a seam open, in which the only possible challenges are actually posed by the fundamentalists who really do not have an alternative vision.

Lenin had once said that finance capital always breeds reaction. Globalized finance capital breeds globalized reaction. Thank you.

Globalization and women in India: Some macro considerations

Jayati Ghosh

It's a great pleasure to be here and I think looking at the audience its possibly not necessary for me to say very much because I think most of what I have to say are things that all of you already know. But let me try and link the excellent survey that Prof. Patnaik has just provided of the current tendencies in the international economy with what I see as some of the important changes that have taken place for women in India, over the past say about 14 -15 years. If I had to summarise - or do a quick snapshot of what are the big changes that happened for women - I would say that there are really two tendencies that have mattered since the early 90's.

The first is the sheer fact of change itself, and I think we have experienced change at a rate that is unprecedented and to a degree which is unprecedented - in patterns of work, in nature of consumption, in access to goods and services, in cultural forms. We have change of an extent and rapidity which is historically unprecedented and really creates implications which we really don't even have time to study - because the process is over before we even realise that it's occurred. I think that's one very important tendency.

The second very broad tendency (again if I have to summarise very dramatically) would be increasing insecurity which again takes many forms. There is a volatility of incomes. There is a collapse of what used to be seen as stable livelihoods lets say among the peasantry. There is a change in the patterns of work that need to be indulged in to achieve the minimal levels of income. There is a decline in earlier more traditional forms of protection based on family and community groups and also simultaneously decline in public forms of protection, which were built up over the decades since independence. So you have an increase in insecurity - in terms of access to incomes, access to the kind of work, access to the kinds of consumption you may have, access to health and other services - which also is possibly one of the broad tendencies - given what we observe. These are really things we see around us.

The question is - how are these related to the kind of forces that Prof. Patnaik was describing? How is this in fact part of imperialism? In a sense - how does this relate to the international forces of capitalism which had created the deflationary tendencies that he has just described and the inequalizing processes? I think the first important area in which this is very evident is the direct impact in terms of employment and livelihoods and let me first concentrate on that. (I am not sticking to the paper because I know you all know it already, so I am going to try and present it slightly differently). In terms of employment and livelihood there are in fact international tendencies. In international labour markets (of which we are a part of course and so in a sense its not only because of what's happening in India), there is a broad tendency across the world.

There are some major tendencies in international labour markets, which we can see reflected also in our own country. Firstly there is a significant increase in open unemployment. Now this is really important because in poor countries like India this phenomenon hardly existed because the poor can't afford to be unemployed - there is no social security, there is no form of unemployment insurance. You can't actually survive if you are not employed. Despite this, across developing countries - across developing Asia in particular - we have over the past decade a very significant increase in open unemployment rates, which is again historically unprecedented. People are declaring themselves to be absolutely unable to find any kind of job, which includes part time, subsidiary as well as very- very minor activities.

According to our National Sample Survey definitions, if you milk a cow once a day you are employed, or if you shine shoes once a day you are employed. Even that kind of employment is now not available. We have 14% open unemployment in the current daily status in rural areas which is really quite something. Again vis-à-vis international trends - there is a decline in formal sector employment across the world. There is in fact a significant decline in organised sector or formal sector employment, and India is very much a part of that. Part of this is associated with the fact that increasingly production of both goods and services uses less and less labour. As economists we state this fact by saying there is decline in employment elasticities of production, i.e., you can produce more output using less labour per unit, so that you can really get jobless growth as it is now called. You can get a situation where income increases apparently, where production is more - but you don't actually employ more people as a result of that.

A big change really beginning in the mid 80's, but accelerating now, is the emergence of global production chains, not only in manufacturing, but also increasingly in services which are dependent on outsourcing. By this, I don't mean just cross border outsourcing - that's getting a lot of publicity these days. But the fact that there's substantial subcontracting by large companies (not just multinational but domestic large companies as well) - subcontracting often down to the home based level.

Finally, something, which is very important also in India, is that there is a very large increase in international migration and also internal migration for which we have much less evidence. We actually have data for international migration, which suggests an absolute explosion, especially within Asia - and in Asia from one country to another rather than from Asia to the north as is often perceived by the middle classes (everyone seems to be going to California!). In fact however, most Indians are going to West Asia or to the Gulf and Arab countries. Most Indonesians are going to Malaysia and so on and so forth. There's a lot of cross border movement. What's important here is not only that there is explosion in the last two decades or more, but that women are moving more than ever before. We actually have women moving for work on their own, which is again historically unprecedented. Historically in Asia women didn't move for work alone. They moved with their husbands if at all, and usually the male members sent remittances home. We now have women moving to the extent that in some Asian countries women outnumber men migrants - to the ratio of 12:1 in the Philippines, 8:1 in Sri Lanka and so on. It's really the migrants who are keeping or propping up Asian economies. Whether you talk of Kerala and the impact of remittances into India, or the impact of Sri Lankan maids' remittances into the Sri Lankan economy, or of Philippine maids into their country's economy - its really this

phenomenon which is propping up the balance of payments, therefore allowing these economies to survive in the last decade.

These international tendencies reflect some of the things that Prof. Patnaik has mentioned. The tendency to deflation that international finance has imposed, and the particular form that imperialism takes today, has sort of accelerated. Within India we see the evidence of this tendency to deflation very clearly. He's already pointed out the contradictions of that whole structure whereby you have resources, which you don't spend. The govt. refuses to spend more to generate income when there is in fact not just the need to do so but the enhanced ability to do so. So you have a collapse of employment generation in the past decade and particularly in the rural areas (as is clear from the data). It's not just that public expenditure going to the rural areas has come down very dramatically (it is one third per capita of the level it was a decade ago). It is really that you have had a significant decline in a whole range of protection, which would have allowed even domestic economic private activities to survive.

You have import liberalisation which reduces the ability of small scale producers to survive - you have relaxation of other controls which basically means that small scale producers lose out to large scale producers within the country and so on. The combination of these has meant rural employment growth has grown on only by 0.6% per annum. That's one third the growth rate of rural population, and this includes as I mentioned all kinds of employment (it includes working one day a week, one hour a day, any kind of work you do and so on). If you take proper employment growth, i.e., what we would call genuine employment where there is some degree of permanence (say 15- 20 days of work per month even on a daily wage rate), you don't get any increase at all. There is no increase in this kind of work available in the rural areas, and that explains the kinds of things which are very evident to people who actually see this in the villages, which are that every where you go people say 'kam do', there is no work. Everywhere people say, 'we get 10-16 days of work per month at most in the main crop season, i.e., during the harvest, and in the off season period 5-10 days of work'. That's why wage rates have actually collapsed, not just in real terms, but even in money terms - through the expedient of deriving the half wage rate, half day wage. Where you earlier paid 50-60 rupees for a day, you now employ people for full 6 hours - call it a half day - and pay them 25 rupees and so on. All of this is a reflection of the collapse of rural employment generation, and this is part of the more general collapse of livelihoods in agriculture and the crisis in the peasantry, which again is something possibly well known to this audience, and at least for a brief few months was on the antennae of the national policy makers. It seems to have gone again.

The crisis of the peasantry again is a combination of a reduction of public protection and an opening up to forces of trade which are inherently unequal, and which reflect the nature of the imperialism that Prof. Patnaik talked about. It is a crisis which has been determined by throwing farmers open to international - not competitive and free market prices - but highly distorted prices - which reflect not only the large subsidies provided by the governments of the north but also major control by large oligopolistic buyers, major multinational companies, grain trade companies and so on, which control something like 80% of the world market today. This is throwing farmers open to that kind of pressure, creating exposure to price volatilities which again are historically unprecedented. Everybody knows that world crop prices fluctuate, but they fluctuated more dramatically in the 90's than ever before. In fact, prices in India have fluctuated more dramatically than

at anytime after independence. In other words since the great depression we have not had this kind of volatility of crop prices that we've had in 1990's, and this is combined with a situation where farmers are encouraged to shift to cash crops - encouraged to shift to more monetized inputs - and therefore have to spend more on the process of cultivation and production, which means that their input prices are going up, prices are volatile and in general falling, and therefore they're caught in this terrible crunch and of course women farmers are also affected by this. The point is you see that's it's a generalized rural depression which has then been created so that its not only say the women peasant or the agricultural labourer who's affected. Every one is affected. Carpenters are affected, weavers are affected - anyone who provides services is affected. There is generalized rural economic depression.

In the urban areas too we find there is deceleration of employment. But in urban areas it's a slightly different thing going on. Here the process of rapid change that I mentioned earlier is quite marked, which could be understood for example in terms of this whole process of feminisation of export oriented employment (that was much talked about) and the subsequent de-feminisation. Again its been very rapid in India. Some of you who've also looked at the large metro areas and the working patterns there have noticed how factory employment in export oriented garments industries for example lasted for 5-6 years and moved then to homebased or cottage industry type of work. There has been a very rapid shift - very volatile changes in terms of urban employment.

There's a significant increase in unpaid labour, and that has to do again with the decline in public expenditure on basic social services, on sanitation, and the shift towards greater private health expenditure. The average ratio of public to private spending on health and GDP in most developing countries is 60- 40. In India its 30-70, i.e., public spending is only 30% of the total health expenditure, private spending is 70%. Its not only that we started out badly - things have gotten worse over this period, have actually degenerated, and now in fact private spending is around 75%, i.e., three fourths of the spending on the health care is private. This really means that for the poor it is unpaid labour which is doing it because you don't have anything else you can spend in a sense. So there is a substantial increase in unpaid labour related to a whole lot of other things. In fact its often not only decline in public services, sometimes its also things that are done, supposedly for good purpose. For example afforestation drives, which have forced women to go longer and longer distances to collect fuel wood, have meant substantive increases in unpaid labour.

Finally there is the point which I was making earlier which is about migration. We know about cross border migration because you still need passports. And except for trafficking and some of the illegal movements, you do get some idea of the movement. We don't have adequate information on internal migration, but all the people who go to the field come back with evidence that there is a massive increase. Unfortunately our statistical systems do not capture it. They are not designed to capture it. I think one of the things we need to do is to push our statistical system and try and capture this effect, especially of seasonal migrations because there are villages where entire households move amongst the poor simply because there is nothing to do there. And they don't necessarily go to cities. They go to other rural areas and when they don't find the work there, they go to yet another rural area and so on. Now this is very important not only because distress migration of this sort has very ravaging effects on household life. Its important because all of the public protection systems you set up have no weight. The people who move have no access to fair

prices or ration shops. They don't have access to any of the social security measures you set up. There is no form of public protection available to migrants, whether they move to urban or rural areas, and this is part of that very dramatic increase in insecurity which I had talked about.

In terms of consumption pattern also we've had very major shifts. The nutrition indicators suggest a very substantial decline in terms of not just food grains consumption but also in terms of aggregate calorie consumption. There are clearly shifts in the pattern of consumption, which are often induced not merely by sheer wants, but also by the whole structure of market creation - even in rural areas, which is very different from earlier times. We really have a penetration by multinationals into rural areas creating shifts in consumption which are affecting the poor in all kind of ways. I think this is again something which we don't study enough and we need to look at how this is affecting women, at how this is affecting girl children. This decline in patterns of consumption is now evident even in NSS surveys. At the urban level too a complex intermingling of patriarchal culture and cosmopolitan capitalism has resulted in several disturbing trends vis-à-vis the question of gender, be it increased commodification of women especially in case of the 'beauty trade', where women serve dual purposes both as consumers and as objects to be used in selling goods, or be it the sex ratio decline, or the rise of communal traditionalist forces, or a phenomenal rise in material insecurities. However if I was asked to highlight one broad positive trend in recent times I would say it could be expressed in terms of greater articulation and intensification of the struggles being waged by women all over the country. There is in fact - possibly because of the role played by the women's movement and a whole range of other factors - there is not merely much greater awareness, but much greater confidence amongst women to work to do something about the situation they find themselves in. Thank You.

Reflections on the Women's Movement in the Era of Globalisation

Indu Agnihotri

I think the context in which the women's movement functions has been laid out very well by the previous speakers and I am not going to elaborate on any of those aspects. I think what's important for the women's movement to realize is that the very context of the retreat of the nation, or the withdrawal of the state through abdication of its responsibilities in terms of advancing and adopting policies which would advance equality, poses a challenge to the women's movement. One of the basic stand points of the movement is to advance the struggle for equality. This struggle for equality, as we all know, is not just in terms of gender equality but also in terms of social, economic and political equality. What is happening with the retreat of the nation state, which is reflected in policies at the governmental level, is that in fact attempts have been made to qualify rights in terms of exclusion - in terms of limitations, in terms of setting conditions on the basis of which you may assert your rights. This is creating a problem in terms of both the political and the philosophical aspects of questions such as - what are your rights as citizens? What is citizenship and how is autonomy or sovereignty both in an individual and in a political sense to be understood within this changing context? I think that brings the women's movement directly into conflict with this evolving paradigm of reforms, economic policies,

and governance - and my paper tries to look upon these in terms of understanding what is the context because it seems to be a directly contradictory process.

On the one hand the state is making a retreat from its responsibilities. On the other hand the women's movement is trying to pressurize the state to say that - look you have certain commitments and those commitments must be honored, that the rights of citizens must be guaranteed and they must not just be guaranteed in terms of the written constitution but that an enabling environment must be provided. The struggle in fact becomes sharper because of this changing context. So to my mind, the women's movement stands in opposition to the policies that we see unfolding in front of us, not just because of what some people like to pose as a political or an ideological predilection or a commitment, but the women's movement by its own experience - by the experience of women at the ground level, necessarily has to represent women's voices which are in opposition to the processes of globalization which, as Prof. Patnaik just elaborated on, actually represent the forces of imperialism and of finance capital.

In my paper which is still very much in the stage of being written, I was actually trying to look at the question of how to understand how the movement is evolving. So the idea is not just to record, but also to try and look at how and what is happening, which needs to be understood in different ways. Now I find that this poses several dilemmas. Firstly, as a student of history, the processes that Prof. Patnaik just outlined before us pose a real dilemma. All over the place we have this pro-globalization environment, and one is left wondering whether one's understanding of history is wrong\redundant\archaic. Does it need to be thrown out? The discipline I come from is rooted in a certain discourse on what is democracy, what is citizenship, what is the nation state, what is history. And that entire process is being challenged and then you encounter people who will stand up (who may even choose to speak on behalf of the movement or on behalf of women's rights), who may say or write that 'no, there is hardly any need to bemoan the fact of the retreat of the nation state'. There are people who try to deride the entire experience of the women's movement by just branding it and just brushing it aside as some kind of a crazy 'anti-globalisation brigade' as if it is some kind of a hoodlum force which is being unleashed. I think that attack - that onslaught is part of the ideology of globalization - where it tells you that there is 'no other way to think, you have to accept this' - this is what is going on.

One of my old friends put it directly as, 'Indu, if a hundred countries have become signatories to the last Uruguay round, what are you going to oppose it for?' The fact that simply because the whole world's being subjected to the forces of Imperialism still doesn't justify the forces of imperialism per se, is not even considered in such arguments that are put before one. There are others who persist in calling those participating in WSF 'some 'jhola' carrying people'. This kind of running down of an intellectual perception as well as a political ideology is amazing - especially considering that the women's movement has inherited an ideology and a history of anti-imperialism. To my mind it is important to continue to critique globalization within the movement because even when you hold a seminar, people say 'Now what more will you say on globalization?' I think it is part of the struggle to continue to critique the policy, to continue to critique the ideology, to continue to critique the effort that is on to numb you into silence - to numb you into giving up your tools of analysis which make you understand concepts in social science and history in a better way. So I think it is both an intellectual struggle (it is a personal struggle also at times) as well as a struggle of the movement.

Now something similar happens when you look at the movement. If you look at the movement at the international level, there is a sort of invisibility coming up in the movement - that is related to de-politicization on a large scale in the west, and de-politicization of the women's movement in particular. So what happens then is you get statements saying 'where is the women's movement', and comments saying that 'it ceases to have any basis', etc. And then this kind of thinking gets percolated to people who work with us also. What happens is that several questions are raised such as 'where's the women's movement? There is a lull, it doesn't exist, there is no activity, it is stagnating, it's fragmented,' and so on and so forth. Hence in the process of writing this paper, I was trying to look at how to understand what was happening. And the best way to do that was to begin by looking at what was actually happening. When I sat down to do just that, not do it as a record of or a history of the movement (I don't think that can be achieved in short paper like this), but to just look at what were the kind of issues that were taken up, I was confronted with a mind-boggling plethora of details. It was mind-boggling even for a person like me who has had a very live link with the movement all these years. When you look into it all (and what is present in the short section in my paper is not even a fraction of the kinds of struggles that are going on), what you actually see is that maybe the visibility of the movement in urban areas - on issues that we thought were primary issues or which gave visibility to the women's movement - is less. The nature of that focus maybe is changing - is shifting. In fact the protests, the mobilization, the activities, street protests or things of that sort (and they're not just some sort of engineered mobilizations), the spread of the movement actually speaks for the intensification of the struggle. It is a much more intense struggle (as the previous speakers have said) in the rural areas. In fact it is being waged in regions, in places whose names can't even be pronounced by some of us because we haven't heard of them or we don't relate to them. These are the places where women are struggling.

There is a huge spread of the movement. The kind of struggles that are going on, the areas and the regions in which the struggles are going on, and the scale at which they're going on is amazing. For instance take the case of an organization like the AIDWA: Its report says that in the last so many years there has probably not been a single day when some activity has not been on, and the focus of those activities again has been very diverse. I've not been able to even talk in my paper about a whole lot of activities related to the post seventy third- seventy fourth amendment bill - demand for representation in state or at parliament level - or those related to other areas which are coming up in a big way such as micro credit.

If I just look at what's happening in terms of the entire issue of dowry or declining sex ratio, there is a very intense sort of onslaught on women which is linked to their devaluation. In the case of migration and trafficking - the nature and the scale of migration, the sort of causal factors which are pushing women out of their homes - is simply not captured by our data. There's a reflection of it in our crime data (which I am sure Preet is going to talk about). In the last so many years, while other crimes have been going down, crimes against women have been continuously rising. I didn't even have time to calculate the variation myself. However the NCRB data itself says that between 1996 and 2001 there was an increase of around 24.2% in crimes against women. The 2002 data on suicides and accidental deaths suggests that economic stress, sudden bankruptcy, poverty, unemployment etc have come up as important factors behind deaths due to accidents, suicide etc.

If we look at some of the struggles which are not being necessarily waged under trade unions or class based organization but under activities of various women's organizations - I mean for instance if we look at the sectors and the section amongst which they're being carried out such as the match industry in Tamilnadu, the 'beedi' in Maharashtra, anganwadi all over, the sathins in Rajasthan, the intense struggles carried out by the now dying textile industry, the handloom industry, cashew workers, those in prawn peeling activity, quarry workers in Haryana, vegetables sellers in Delhi and Maharashtra, street vendors, domestic workers organizing themselves, tailors, teachers and particularly teachers in the non-formal sectors, women working with DWCRA, women working with micro credit schemes, the urban industrial sectors where retrenchment and voluntary retirement have worked havoc with women in particular and workers in general, in Delhi women massively affected by industrial pollution control and relocation policies, slum women first becoming organized due to total withdrawal of state and its spending on infrastructure facilities and absolute decline in civic amenities available to families and its direct impact on the life and activities of concerned women, issues based on provision of power, electricity, water which have seen women becoming involved in huge mobilizations in just about every state (Andhra Pradesh alone had some 9000 women participating in mass mobilizations, getting arrested and even facing being physically targeted) - all these facts just go to show how this whole theory about people being mobilized from the top really needs to be questioned. People just don't go and die because somebody is giving them a call to come out and protest, people don't go and land up in jails for months. Indrani can tell you about the worker who delivered a baby behind bars because she had been taken in custody due to her involvement in a struggle against closure of a factory.

Violence against women has definitely increased but then the area and the arena in which that violence is being confronted has also increased. There are huge struggles against privatization of resources, particularly natural resources and women have very actively resisted the setting up of bottling plants like Coca Cola in one state after another. One of the pamphlets taken out by them very clearly outlined how a plant took away water which was meant for some seventy-five thousand families, and that was the case with just one plant. One can just imagine the scale of resources that are being transferred to the multinationals at the ground level.

Struggles and activities include against atrocities on Dalits, especially dalit women, issues of home based workers, sexual harassment, displacement related land struggles (the repression faced in land related struggles is perhaps the most severe in terms of police repression), also in terms of state repression with the state being in collusion with landed groups as well as politicians with local elites appropriating common lands. New issues are also emerging - health, media where there've been massive discussions and debates on the whole question of beauty contest and the whole projection of the beauty business as part of the hegemonising ideology of globalization and consumerism. Another issue which has been extensively discussed and debated upon is anti-alcoholism. Interestingly the debate has not been in terms of some kind of prohibitionist approach but in terms its impact and its correlation with loss of livelihood, loss of income and earning and what it means for families. There has been both a debate on the issue as well as large scale activities around that issue. Another issue related to all the talk about women's representation in decision making bodies, deals with the pressures faced by the elected women representatives from various quarters such as terrorists and local elites trying to corner funds. There are several such cases of women being pressurised: Lilavati in Madurai was killed for instance, in

Assam a female panchayat member was being pressurized by militants to give up funds meant for panchayats, a mayor was humiliated and beaten up, all kinds of things are happening on that front.

Now the point that I want us to think about is that in the context of this kind of an overall situation, where does the women's movement stand? In terms of its strength, in terms of its organizational activity, in terms of its ability to reach out to large sections of women – it has definitely grown and spread, and the scale of its activities has expanded enormously. However it does face several challenges and one of the biggest emerging challenges is the threat of NGO-isation - of funded activity leading to a de-politicization of the struggle. Finally, I think the women's movement has a crucial role to play in meeting the challenges posed by globalization because it cuts across a large section of society and goes into the very homes of people, cutting across class, caste and religious barriers. There's been a history of different women's organizations coming together on joint platforms at the national level and recently the same encouraging trends seem to be emerging at the state levels too.

Discussion

◆ *Vina Mazumdar* (CWDS)

I want to thank Prof. Patnaik on behalf of Lotikadi's and my generation for being here and for reassuring us that it is not beyond our capacity to understand forces at work in contemporary times. Thank you for very much for restoring our courage and our hope.

◆ *Meera Velayudhan* (Representing a network on all women and land rights in Gujarat).

I would like to respond to both what Indu and Prof. Patnaik have said. The complications, expectations and contradictions that have arisen - with the left in the government and certain sections of the women's movement occupying the space that was earlier occupied by the B.J.P. and R.S.S. Gujarat really represents a kind of contradiction. In Gujarat the whole nature of the women's movement, and the kind of struggles being waged by it have taken a totally different kind of form. There are a whole lot of struggles going on. They come in the forms of networks - networks of violence against women, networks on communalism, networks on sex ratio issue - and when they sort of coalesce together in certain platforms, various political aspects of the movement emerge. Like when the women and land rights network and the women and violence networks as well as women and communalism network came together as a platform, we found that the common issues confronting us were issues of dispossessions going on in tribal areas - dispossession due to communal violence, with whole lots of properties being destroyed, and the different kinds of violence that women were facing - its spread, its extent and its depth, the kind of changes that are taking place etc. But political articulations on these are definitely changing too. Another emerging issue is the impact of multilateral agencies and the way multilateral agencies are increasingly defining civil society etc.

◆ *Mary Khemchand* (YWCA, India)

I was very interested in what Indu had to say about the role of the women's movement in future. The way I see it now is that there has been such a polarization of the women's

movement in different directions that sometimes one gets to feel that we are all working at cross purposes. There are lots of women in different networks who are using the movement for furthering their own private agendas.

Another point I'd like to make is how to focus and bring together these different disparate section of the women's movement which are simply not able to now focus as strongly as they used to, and that is something that is worrying. The women's movement needs to become stronger. It needs to play a greater role for people not just at the domestic level but right up to the national level, and we have to understand that we all have a role to play in it.

◆ ***Malini Bhattacharya***

I just want to make a very brief comment on what Prof. Patnaik has described as the destruction of thought, which is a very important issue for women's movement today - particularly when we take up an example like the recent attempt of the U.G.C. to transform all women studies centres. Here we find how the global and the re-evangelist agenda come together to ensure the de-politicization of women's studies itself (which has in our country served as a very important political background for women's movement). I think that this is an important issue that we need to take up.

◆ ***Vibhuti Patel***

I think aging process has set in the women's movement and it's very important to do cadre building activity. That is why consciousness raising exercises - workshops, culture of summer schools where ideological issues were discussed - I think that culture has to be revived. Because, at present we are just shifting from one issue to another and no one is bothered about the political economy aspect and the institutional factors which create this kind of reality which Indu described. So I think we need to get our act together. We have to repeat the history of the 70's and the early 80's. Secondly about NGO-isation, we must understand the political context, in which most of the social activists gave their energy in institution building after the breaking of the Babri Mosque. The Hindu right didn't give them any avenues - even the meeting places were not there. So small- small little groups functioning in the social movement had to form their institutions, and we lost so many street fighters and foot soldiers to this whole process of NGOisation. All this led to commercialization, with feudal elements emerging too also. NGO's are given as dowry in rural Maharashtra and the Bihar states which is really very shocking.

◆ ***Sujata Madhok***

This whole issue of overemphasis on crime and violence is taking us away from where the struggle has to be today. And this is really just the point which I want to make. I have been to too many meetings of NGOs at the Delhi level where the entire issue being discussed is violence. Every time its rape, its dowry, its murder of this kind, and we don't seem to move beyond that this. At the general level there is very little understanding of the economic issues. There is very little analysis and I am not talking of a few of us in a group like this.

◆ ***Indu Agnihotri***

Well I think the comments that have come on the women's movement are part of our debate. They are part of our movement, and we really just need to think more about them. It's true that there is a process of polarization but I think in any such struggle there will be tendencies and turns towards polarization, and this may not necessarily be a weakness. It may in fact emerge as our strength. I don't think we should be disturbed at that so long as the debate continues, and so long as we continue to think about those issues and push for identification of issues, and strategies of working around those issues. The paper tries to show there is a real strength to the movement which is however not to say there are no weaknesses out there or that there are no problem areas. There are many issues on which there are very strong differences, very strong polarization as Mary was saying, but I think that's part of any movement. Any movement will have to contend with that. But the fact that it is growing, that it is trying to speak up on behalf of the mass of women, and that it is trying to reach out to the mass in an organized manner – is also I think important. Generally there is a tendency to sort of glorify spontaneity and project that as the real voice but the fact is that in a struggle against such powerful forces - to think that spontaneous groups of women in villages or wherever will be able to take on the might of the global forces would be living in a fools paradise.

WORK, LIVELIHOOD, EMPLOYMENT (Rural)

Opening comments on Agrarian Crisis and Food Security

Utsa Patnaik

Welcome to this session. The last time I met many of you was in the very momentous year 1998, when the N.D.A. government had just come to power and many of us met in Pune. We had just witnessed the famous nuclear bomb explosion and we'd met to participate in a silent protest march of about four to five hundred participants. At that time I'd talked about the agrarian crisis which was brewing, pointing out that food security for the rural population was in the process of being severely undermined by the fact of the opening up of our agriculture to the pull of global demand patterns, the fact that there had already been very substantial diversion of food producing land to commercial crops, and I had also related this to a new process of 're-colonization of our agriculture'. That is the phrase that I had used because there were very strong parallels in the present situation with what was happening in the colonial period.

Since 1998 the developments in the agrarian sphere have been far worse than even my worst predictions. I will run through (very quickly), the particular sets of neo-liberal policies which have contributed to the adverse outcomes, to the deep agrarian crisis that we have seen today. The first is of course the deflationary policies which are inherent in the entire neo-liberal agenda and here while I agree with Prabhat and Jayati, I think the way they formulated it is far too soft. It's far too civilized to say there are only deflationary tendencies. I don't see it as a tendency. I see it as a very systematic and very ruthless set of policies to reduce development expenditure, and it amounts to nothing less than being a systematic attack on the majority of our population - particularly the majority which lives in villages.

You just need to look at the figures. (I am sorry I keep repeating the same figures again and again. Many of you have heard all this but one has to get down to concrete details).

The average spending on development during the 7th plan period before the reforms began was 14½ % of GDP. This included all the rural employment generation programmes, it included the spending on power and on irrigation (both very vital for agriculture output). It included special areas programme, small scale village industry etc. Of course that was at an unusual high because of the 1987 drought which resulted in large expansion in expenditure. From 14½ % of GDP, by 1993 it had been slashed to 8% of GDP. By 2000 it had gone down to less than 6% of GDP. Now what do you expect when you have such an enormous cut in a development spending? Every 100 rupees that the government spends less in rural areas means a loss of income of about 400-500 rupees, via the operation of the multiplier effect.

The earlier definition of the poverty line stated that the poor are those, the food component of whose total expenditure doesn't allow them to access 2400 calories. That was the definition. So if they cannot access 2400 calories through the food component of the total expenditure, that total expenditure will be taken as the poverty line. Now without telling us anything about it, the planning commission, the government, and a large number of individual academics have quietly given up this definition. They have used a different method of calculating poverty: Consumption expenditure data has been collected since 1973-74. You've also had large sample surveys for 1978-1983, 1987-88, 1993-94 and finally the 55th round (1999-2000). Over the last thirty years not an iota of this rich consumption expenditure data has been used to arrive at a new estimate of poverty. All that has been done is that thirty year old poverty line,... per capita per month in rural areas and 56 rupees per capita per month in urban areas, has been simply been multiplied by a price index to arrive at the current poverty line.

Now in the year 2004 the government's official poverty line is 344 rupees per capita per month in rural areas. It works out to less than 12 rupees per day. There is a man called Angus Deaton who's got a big project in Princeton University, who has managed to reduce the poverty line for 1999-2000 to 303 rupees, and his poverty line would probably be around 320 rupees for 2004. So this is a poverty line which is again some 10 rupees or so per day. Now you just don't need to go into all these calculations that these economists and econometricians have made. It's a matter of simple common sense - can a person access all requirements on an expenditure of 12 rupees a day, even in a village? And this means not only food but fuel, clothing, shelter, education, transport, housing. Can all these requirement be accessed in 12 rupees a day? Now I've come to the conclusion that this kind of crass stupidity and idiocy can only be committed by men. I have come to this conclusion because women at least go out and shop. Even middle class women go out and shop - they have some contact with the real world. But the people who are making these estimates (whether it is Mr. Surjit Bhalla who of course is even more optimistic, he thinks 8 rupees per day is enough, and poverty has gone down to 12% of the rural population) are all men. So they have artificially reduced the poverty line and - starting from the planning commission - every academic who uses his method is cheating you because they have artificially reduced or manipulated the statistics to reduce the poverty percentage simply by pushing down consumption standards without telling people about it. And let me tell you a majority of economists also don't know that the consumption standard has been pushed down. They still think it's the old 2400 calories figure which is being employed.

I am saying all this because I think this is a very important issue, and the trade unions particularly should pay particular attention, because this is a bogus calculation on the basis

of which employment guarantees are being targeted and the PDS has already being targeted. Now what are the correct poverty percentages? This can be calculated. If you can just look up the data, you can calculate it. On the basis of 1999-2000 data, 75 % of the rural population was in poverty - was below the 2400 calorie level, which is the definition that the government used earlier. And I have a rather detailed calculation for the different states of India, by different calorie levels as well. In a paper I presented at another conference for urban India, the official figure is I think 23%, when the actual figure is 45% in poverty. So even urban areas have a substantial degree of poverty which is much higher than what the official figures are suggesting.

Now I think what's important here is that so far - the arguments for employment guarantee, the arguments for universal PDS, have been put forward by bodies and groups which include people who are giving you these bogus poverty estimates. So you don't have a strong, consistent argument being put forward either for a universal PDS or for a universal EGA. Why should it not be targeted? You cannot have a strong and consistent argument unless you attack this poverty estimate. You have to do it, and its not enough if one or two academics do it. I think it is the women's movement which has to take it up. And please don't be intimidated by economists. Let me assure you that they are so removed from reality that they are capable of committing very gross errors and these estimates of poverty are a very clear example of this. I mean it can only be done by the people who are using it in numbers as though they are x's and y's and z's, which have no empirical references. And I would say these economists are frivolous and they are irresponsible. Because it is one thing sitting in your study and building up models which have no policy relevance. It is quite another to do these estimates because these are being implemented as policy and they are going to adversely affect the lives of millions and millions people. So unless you take up this very important part of the ideological struggle as well as the practical struggle, unless we take it up - nothing is going to prevent further assault on the living standards of our people. We are very good at postmortems. We are very good when bad things have happened, in sitting back and lamenting the facts, but the important thing is that a doctor is not a doctor if he simply gives a death certificate. A doctor's task is to diagnose a disease and prescribe some action, and scholars and activists have the same duty. They are failing in their duty if they simply do postmortems. They have to anticipate what is going to happen, and they have to prevent it. That's all I wanted to say.

Neo-liberal Agendas and Rural Women's Concerns

Brinda Karat

I have heard Utsa so often but today she was just fantastic, and today she reflected everything that all of us have been feeling. The paper that I am presenting is based on my experiences as an activist and as a worker in the AIDWA, and I believe the name of this session is 'overview'. I am supposed to be presenting an overview, but I am not doing that. In line with what Utsa has said - clearly all sections of women in rural India, or the larger section of women in rural India, including women who belong to landed households and landless women too, have all been affected, in one way or another, by this agrarian distress or the agrarian crisis. But in this paper I am really concentrating on the most acute distress faced by the larger section of the female rural population which is landless women, agriculture workers, small artisans - that section of women who are really bearing the

brunt of the neo-liberal agenda. And the reason I am doing so is because today in women's movement when we talk about strategies of neoliberal advance - I believe that given the realities of the impact of the neo-liberal agendas on the vast mass of rural women who are landless - the issue of class, and the use of class as a major means of social analysis to understand women's status, has to be brought right back in the centre of women's movement, and in the centre of our analysis and understanding of the real issues facing Indian women's movement. And I believe that the huge increase in class inequalities - consequent to neo-liberal policies - has not been as appreciated as it should be in our movement. So the issues that I am raising are certainly not a comprehensive overview, but rather, certain issues which I feel are most crucial if we accept that we have a specific responsibility in fighting these agendas which are decimating the life of women in this country.

Starting from the last of Utsa's points which is also one of the points which I have raised, and that is - the huge increase in poverty. In the last five years, we in AIDWA have sort of turned our face so to speak to rural India. Our main work in the last five or six years has been among poor rural women. One aspect which comes out clearly, is the huge struggle of women in rural India today just to get identified as being poor. Because what is happening is that any access to any kind of benefit depends on that. (taken that there's a Rupees 30,000 crore annual cut in rural development and public expenditures and all the other impacts of policy decisions and taking it for granted that in this group today we understand that poverty levels of women has really grown enormously). It just seems to be so ironic and tragic that what this whole issue of targeting has actually meant for a large section of women today (who are well below the poverty line) - a part of their struggle just to survive and access even the limited benefits which are available is to prove they are poor. And one of the big issues which AIDWA has been working on is this whole aspect of poverty estimates and this complete fraud of the below poverty line indexes.

We have seen in meeting after meeting, in state after state, women are saying 'we are eating much less than what we were eating 10 years ago'. I have with me documents of such meetings. For example - in Uttar Pradesh 20 meetings of say an average about 80-100 women - in each meeting in which at least 15-20 women say that we are eating one meal a day. The anger which comes out clearly when talking about diversification of diet is evident when they say 'the diversification you are talking about is that we are eating one roti with red chillies to burn our hunger'. We have got the documents of minutes of meetings in which women are saying all this. What is happening is that because of the collapse of purchasing power and the huge increase in the prices of ration goods, and because of the collapse of the PDS, there has been total exclusion of the poor and poor women in particular. We found in many areas, because of the existence of collective ration cards, if the male members have migrated there are very often problems of accessing whatever ration is there. We've often found that as a result of bureaucratic hassles, absence of the male head of the family leads to denial of such access. However, the biggest problem is in accessing even the highly circumscribed right to ration. Even with the most limited subsidies, the fact is of the huge exclusion of the poor from BPL identification which is now going to happen everywhere as Utsa has just said. In fact, your BPL card is your only passport to get any benefit.

Now we have just studied (with the CWDS) a draft which is going to be the 'Rural Health Mission' document. Even in the rural health mission document they are talking about

targeting poor families. In the employment guarantee scheme, which should automatically be a self targeted scheme (as we're talking about manual labour), but here also they are 'targeting' poor families. There are similar repercussions in terms of almost all programmes of the government. As a result of which you're excluding huge sections of poor people who do not even manage to get that BPL card. Therefore, I believe that one of the most important demands of our movement today should be to go back to universal rights. Not that we ever really had universal rights in that sense in India in any case. But in the struggle against targeting, the struggle for universal rights is part of the whole dialogue and discourse on basic human rights. Just looking at it from the angle of the women and from the limited experience that I have in AIDWA, this is one of the crucial aspects we have to take up in our women's movement. And I feel that we are not being able to give it the kind of attention that we need to give, because sometimes we also get caught up by the line of reasoning that 'the money meant for the poor is not getting to the poor'. This is an ostensible reason to have targeting, when in actual fact the agenda behind such measures is something entirely different - which is a retreat of the state from its basic responsibilities.

There are a few other aspects which I would just very briefly like to touch upon. One is the fundamental issue of land and land rights. I think, in India it is one of the strengths of our movements that we have not limited our analysis of the status of women to a very narrow framework in terms of merely the male female divide. Many other movements in many other parts of the world have done that, and are therefore falling into a really serious morass. In India we've always linked the access to land, and the need for land and property rights, with women's advancement. I am not going into the whole property rights issue now but it is certainly an issue generally for rural woman, and the amendments to the Hindu Succession Act coming up now are now dealing with this issue. I'd like to basically go into the whole issue of surplus land - the whole issue of land ceiling, and the way in which the neo-liberal agenda has totally sabotaged that and gone in the opposite direction. While talking about the development of the Indian economy one can point out that even in the development of the other economies that are today taken as a models, land reforms have been very important, and it just doesn't have to be a socialist agenda. For the development of capitalism itself and for the release of purchasing power, the whole issue of breaking monopolies of land is crucial. However, what we are seeing is a total reversal of the land reform agenda. In its stead we have the corporatisation of land - the sale of a huge section of peasants' land who are being forced out by these policies, and who're made to believe that their landholdings are no longer viable for them, and therefore they are selling there lands to M.N.C.s, the big corporation, to commercial interests.

This has directly impacted on one of the core demands of our movement - which is women rights to land, women's rights to demand land - the basis of the demand being the implementation of the land ceilings. Of course we have states like Maharashtra and Karnataka where the land ceiling itself has been amended. You have states where the land ceiling laws are being totally bypassed. You have states where even forest lands have been given to multinational corporations. So the crucial issue of land reforms, of land distribution and joint titles to men and women in land is something which needs to be taken up in a big way.

The second aspect relates to what is happening to shamlati land, as it is called in some parts of India, or common land. We are working in some parts of Haryana on this issue of

common land (mainly with Dalit women who are also landless women in those areas) and the huge impact on the daily lives and the daily work schedule of landless women with the takeover of shamlati land - with the takeover of common land by commercial interest through the panchayats which are dominated by the rural elites or the proxies of rural elites. Its not a case of females being male proxies, but people being proxies of the rural elite which exist in many parts, and about whom nobody talks when they talk about political participation. The point here is the direct impact of all this on work schedules. The issue of fodder, the issue of fuel, the issue of cattle grazing; animal husbandry or dairy industry is one of the biggest areas where women are involved and these are very closely linked to access to land. With the takeover of this land, what is going to happen to women's role in animal husbandry? This is reflected in the many more hours they are spending just for cattle grazing, just for find fodder, and the impact of all this on fodder markets.

Another very- very important thing which is happening with the takeover of the common land is that women have no place to go and relieve themselves. There are 20 villages just in Panipat district where there are big struggles being waged by women on the issue of common land. One of the most crucial issues women raised is that 'what do we do, where do we go? Where do we go to relieve ourselves?' And they have been instances (this is not only in Haryana but also in Rajasthan, in Punjab), where upper caste women members of landed families have come out aggressively to prevent dalit women from using private as well as common land to relieve themselves. So this aspect of how this affects women's life - their dignity (the most private of bodily function you have to carry out in public places), is directly linked to the fact that one's access to land is decreasing because of these policies. This is something I feel we have to focus on when we talk about the issues of rural women.

The third aspect which I want to talk about is working wages where I just want to raise another issue. This whole term 'feminisation' - nowadays of course is a catchword term. It means lots of things to lots of people just as feminism does. The point that I want to make here is that the use of that term in India in relation to poor rural women's work is completely misleading. Because what is actually happening, which is what we have to understand, is that totally opposite and contradictory to what is being said about women getting so much of work, is the fact that work days for women have been greatly decreased. This becomes quite obvious where you see that food grain cultivation has stopped, where you see rice cultivation, paddy cultivation has stopped. These are where women got the most work. If you look at any microstudies done - wheat for example, which also gives certain amount of work to women during season, and if you are saying this is shrinking and cash crops are growing which require decreased work days, and if you are also saying there is a huge crisis, with the government itself saying so much land is being left fallow, then clearly the issue of work in agriculture as far as women are concerned, is not a question of women getting more work in agriculture. I am not saying this in relative terms to males. Women might be increasing relative to males because of increasing male migration as a result of agrarian distress. But to try and capture that in terms of feminization means something entirely different, because you have to carry out such analysis relative to women. And women were getting more work earlier than now.

I don't want to glorify earlier times, but today the biggest problem in rural India is exactly what Jayati said, and that is that women are not getting work. Now for example, if you see the census, this whole disjuncture in what they're saying: They are saying that in Punjab and Haryana there is a big increase in women's work. One thing that they accept is that

only marginal work is increasing. That is correct, but it is not for 6 months. It's actually less than 3 months - around 2 months a year to put it correctly. We did a very detailed survey in the research center affiliated to AIDWA in two villages in Haryana (you may have seen that work done by Vikas Rawal). We did a survey of 445 households, and you will be shocked to hear that in Haryana, as far as agricultural work is concerned, both men and women's work has come down to around 35 days a year. And in non- agricultural work, women are getting just six to nine days! Men are getting more, though it's still just about 100 or 105 days, but look at women's work! So where is this work they are getting? My main point is if you're using the term 'feminisation of labour', please remember that it will conceal what is actually happening. And that is decreasing work available for women, which is very crucial.

Along with that whole patterns of women's work have changed – there's contract work, group work, half day work etc. But the point that I want to raise here is that so far, we are talking about women at national level. We all know that women are getting much getting lesser wages, getting further circumscribed by the vulnerability they face because of the huge numbers of women in the market. But today laws don't address the changing patterns of labour hire and in particular they do not address what is happening to women in contract work. How is the work within a group measured? If it's family labour we need to address the issue separately. In group work, they are not doing piece rated work, they are doing contract work. So how do you address individual work or differential workloads within the group? And what women are telling us is that 'where we are doing all the work, we can't even stop to have bidi', and I am not blaming the male workers. But the fact of the matter is that there is unequal distribution of work. Contract work is also excluding (in a big way) middle aged women, because the preference is for younger, stronger women who can work harder. These are aspects of wages and work that, as women activists, we have to address. Even as we demand minimum wage, we have to see what these new patterns of labour hire are, which impact women in a particular way, and are we able to address it through our demands. Definitely this feminisation business doesn't address increased class exploitation. It does not address decreased work days for women. It's a social term which conceals the class realities.

I also want to raise the migration issue that Jayati touch upon it earlier. Now what we are seeing is that no government document addresses the most crucial new phenomena which is happening for rural women. With food insecurity and decrease in work days, the suicides of farmers including women farmers, you have one face of agrarian distress. But you do not have in any way documented, researched, spoken, or raised even by us as a crucial slogan - the other face of agrarian distress, which is a mass polarization of rural women and the armies of women on the move for work. It is not captured anywhere. Here even a period of four days constitutes migration. You are going for four days and coming back home looking at the children going out again, and in this paper I have documented the kind of reports which have come from surveys of AIDWA activists in Andhra Pradesh, in Karnataka, in Uttar Pradesh in Bihar.

The other aspect is because male migration is increasing, because of insecurity of the male, migrants in the traditional areas to where they are migrating, because of the lack of money orders sent home, because of the decrease in savings of even male migrant workers - the burden on female headed families has become so much the greater, and increased the whole push towards female migration which is taking place in different levels, short term

migration, intra-district migration, intra- state migration, village to village migration, etc. There are different issues that emerge in the course of that migration, apart from the economic aspect of low wages.

There are other aspects which are often ignored by even us women activists, when we talk about issues such as violence. Sujata said we only talk about violence. We do have to talk about violence, but I agree with her, in the sense that the framework of analysis of violence has to also take into account these other aspects, and one aspect of violence today is the increased violence on poor rural women. We are talking about laws on sexual harassment at the work place. You cannot do only this, because women themselves out of sheer necessity are putting themselves daily, hourly, every minute into situations where sexual harassment is intrinsic. They our getting on to the trains without tickets to travel, they are waiting at the bus stops for somebody to give them a lift in the bus, they are hitching lifts with trucks, they are hitching lifts with lorries. They are sitting on the roads when they have no place or way to sleep. In a spot sample that we did in the temple town of Tirupati, at one bus stop there were 100 women in a line from neighbouring areas of Andhra Pradesh. 90 women said they have faced some form or the other sexual abuse. How do we capture that? The other aspect is the indignity, the daily humiliation of it.

We have to take into account that these women are already facing the triple burden because there are very large sections of women who are really at the bottom of the ladder. We have to take into account then that caste, gender, class all work against them. Only then can we get an idea of an important aspect of agrarian distress prevailing to a great extent in rural India today. Therefore policies for migrant workers, policies for the women, how to access PDS, how to access health, - these are some of the basic things I believe we have to take up in the women movement. And when we talk about violence also, we have to turn our faces to the reality of the violence in the daily life of poor rural women. I believe that for the Indian women's movement to advance, we have to centralize, the issues of the majorities of the population which are precisely these sections.

Thank you.

Experiences from Peasants and Agricultural Workers' movement in South India

Krishna Prasad

I feel this audience is very familiar with the general theoretical aspect of this issue so I don't want to go into any data based formulations. From the experience of the people in Wyanad, one of the southern districts, I'll be able to give you some aspects of globalization - of how it hits agriculture. We know that one of its manifestations is the large scale suicides committed by the farmers. It is generally propagated that the debt trap is one of the major reasons for these suicides. However behind these debt traps, the real reasons are the massive cuts in incomes. For example, take the case of Wyanad district: this is an area where cash crops are grown widely, and the main cash crop grown there is coffee. Through the story of these coffee growers we can arrive at an understanding of the impact of 'reforms' on the peasants. For example, till 1996 coffee was pooled in the coffee bowl. But from 1996 onwards the government released it and gave coffee growers the freedom to pool it or sell it in the open market, and also to export it. And then the coffee prices went up. Coffee prices at that time were around 33 Rupees per kg., and then went up in 1998-99 to

something like 90 Rupees per kilo. These were definitely attractive prices. But then after 2000 they came down to 40 Rupees and in 2001 it fell further to 22 Rupees per kilo ! So if we take the 1999 price as the base, then per year in that tiny district of seven lakh population only, the coffee growers were losing an amount of 224 crore Rupees and this situation is due to the onslaught of the global forces - actually cartels. Multinationals as well as domestic cartels are now controlling this coffee market.

The other aspect of it is that while we were getting 33 Rupees to 90 Rupees from 1996 to 1999 as coffee growers, the price of 1 kg of Nescafe coffee was between 450 Rupees to 900 Rupees, and now this has gone up to 900-1000 Rupees. This means that primary product prices have been crushed and at the same time consumer product prices have gone up. This is leading to exploitation of the peasantry as well as the consumers. The market is a free run for these MNC's, as also domestic cartels. This is the story of the coffee growers in Wyanad.

It is not a single isolated story: Take the case of pepper - the second largest crop in Wyanad. Pepper always had a higher price compared to the average international level of market prices. In the 80's and 90's too it had a good price, and in 1999-2000 one quintal of pepper had a price of around 27,000 Rs. However after 2000, especially after the removal of quantitative restrictions by the NDA government, pepper prices came down to 11,000 Rs in 2000. Then in 2001 they again fell to 6,500 Rs. Now the price is approximately between 6500-7000 Rs. a quintal. A similar situation exists in the case of other crops too - whether it be coconut or cardamom. We have made calculations in the district for three crops - coffee, pepper and tea. Per year that district is losing around 1,003 crore Rs. At the same time the bank overdues in that district were 136 crore Rs in March, 2004. What the peasantry is losing as overdue is a very small fraction of the total loss faced by them. From the All India Coffee Board's data, we gathered that per year on an average the central government is earning around 381 crores as foreign exchange through the export of coffee from that district alone. So in such a situation, isn't it the responsibility of the govt. to come to the help of the peasants?

The other thing I wanted to discuss is the credit problem. You see, in earlier periods we were saying that at the general as well as at the state level the Credit Deposit (CD) ratio is something like 56- 46 in general. But in Wyanad it was 188 % CD ratio, which means that the farmers were getting more as loans than they were depositing. The reason behind this was that all these cash crops had a very high price - 25,000 per quintal for pepper, 90 Rs per kg for coffee so farmers were very prompt in their repayments, as a result of which till 2001 it was a very lucrative district for bankers. However after 2001 when these prices crashed, banks started compelling the farmers to pay back, which contributed to the current situation where farmers are being forced to commit suicide.

Another area which I would like to focus upon is the emergence of movements. There were widespread movements against globalization - spontaneous as well as those organized by the left, by the All India Kisan Sabha (AIKS), organized by the Farmers Release Forum (FRF, a local level organization), by INFARM . In the beginning FRF and INFARM were raising slogans against banks. However when we (AIKS) intervened, we made this point that the bad debts of the farmers should be written off, and government should take over this responsibility. At the same time, we pointed out that the main culprits were the import policy and economic reforms which should be resisted by everybody and this line of

reasoning was caught on by all sections and the leadership of INFARM and FRF also came to this consensus that their real slogans were against globalization per se. Hence the real situation at the ground level belies the argument put forward by the right regarding the growing belief in the irreversibility of the globalization process. The consistent positions taken by the left, as well as by other concerned progressive sections - especially the women's movement, as also the intelligentsia, have been against globalization from the beginning and the situation is becoming pretty volatile in the rural areas. People there are ready to come out to the streets. Here we can take the example of the adivasi movement in Kerala, in Wyanad, that Brinda had mentioned, about the forceful occupation of about 5000 acres of land in Wyanad district alone. These women have forcefully occupied the land, and are living in huts built over there. In March 2002, 1400 adivasis were put in jail for more than 900 days with newborn babies dying in between. However, nothing would dampen their participation, courage and determination. Simultaneously there have been many more cases and there are many more such stories of grassroots struggles that could be recounted. There has been a continuous process of growing consciousness, class organization, and gender activism with the growth of the movement. Thank you.

Discussion

Discussant: Madhura Swaminathan

I'm not even going to attempt to summarise the very rich presentations made this afternoon. Rather, I'd just like to briefly raise a few points. Firstly, coming to the question of employment and the composition of employment - let me give you a very concrete example from a village in Tamilnadu, Gokilapuram (familiar I think to many of you), where there were two surveys: one in 1977, and a big resurvey in 1999. So we have quite long gap between them. You find that in the work calendar of the women (I'm talking about actual days of the employment available to women workers, primarily about landless workers), two-thirds of their work calendar was in agricultural and one-third was in non-agricultural employment in 1977. The situation was exactly reversed in 1999 - two-thirds of their time (again whether out of choice or out of force - there are many factors at work there) is now spend in non- agricultural employment, and only one third of their time in agricultural employment. So there is really a collapse of agricultural employment available to them, and this being a paddy area, the decline in female absorption in paddy agriculture is one of the major factors. In this particular village we found that non- agricultural employment is actually a lower paid one as compared to agricultural employment.

This shift, that is often portrayed as diversification of employment (just like a diversification of diets), is not necessarily a good thing. The situation can vary in different parts of India so I don't want to generalize on the basis of this one village, but we have to be careful when we talk about diversification of employment. I'd just like to raise this as something I'm concerned about. What you have seen historically in the process of development is specialisation of work. So when you talk about diversification, it's at the level of a family or a household: one worker becomes an urban or a salaried worker, another worker concentrates on cultivation and so on. Now what we are seeing is not specialization but actually diversification in one individual's work calendar, which is something quite different. This has many implications. Just to give you an example (I think some of this is mentioned in Brinda's paper), that when you're doing agricultural work for 30 days in a year, you are doing construction work for another 20 days, then for another 20 days you

are going and looking for some other piece rated contract work, then whether its for mobilizing women, or organizing, or legislation, or fighting for wages, or any other struggle - it becomes much more difficult. All this arises because there is a multiplicity of tasks that a rural worker is doing. A rural worker is not an agricultural labourer or an artisan, but a carpenter, or someone doing other very different things, at different times, in different places. Some people have been characterizing this as miscellaneous work, affecting classifications of workers in the rural areas as a result of people no longer remaining agricultural labourers throughout the year. I think this has implications for academic understanding and analysis as also for people on the ground - who are working with these workers, especially women workers.

A related point I want to make on wages - is that again you have different forms of wages and different practices of labour hiring, depending on the different kinds of tasks you are doing. But what you are also seeing is again contrary to earlier experiences where historically for particular tasks - through struggle you come to uniformity of wages. Now you are seeing that for the same work and in the same village, you have different wage rates. The Haryana study that has been mentioned brings this out. In contract work wage variations are easier because the employer can say that one contract is slightly different from another contract and therefore give a different wage - but even for time rated daily wages you will see variation in wages within the same village, in the same season, for the same activity - which is again a new phenomenon, and something I would like to draw your attention to.

I think I'll make one more point which has come out very interestingly in the presentation made by Krishna Prasad, and that is the role of rural credit. I think we've heard about food and fully support what has been said regarding food deprivation, but what has happened also (particularly since 1991), as part of this whole neo-liberal economic policy, is really credit starvation of the rural areas. Its not that before 1991 we had a very happy situation. The case of the district he mentions is quite surprising (where there was a 188% credit deposit ratio), but in general, whatever little access that rural peasant households or workers had (to credit), even that has been decimated. And here I think there are interesting implications for women, because one of the components of the neo-liberal policies vis-à-vis banking is that since the earlier banking practices of giving subsidies to rural households and poor didn't work - lets now go for microcredit. I am glad to see that there's another session on that and won't go into details here, but the point I'd like to make is regarding this whole policy of - lets target microcredit particularly to self help groups and women. Though SHGs are not without any positive features, the policy also has this big drawback - that these loans which are coming for microcredit are a minuscule amount of loans we were giving earlier, and hence are not a substitute for earlier kind of banking policies. It really is just trying to pacify people by saying - look here we are withdrawing the older benefits, but we are actually giving you lots of microcredit, particularly to women. I think we have again got an area where we have to be very careful and see what there is in the policy in terms of its impact on rural women. Thank you

◆ *Surinder Jaitly*

My reaction is to Brinda Karat's paper because my work is mainly in Uttar Pradesh and I am talking of 1990, when there was a huge foreign aid coming from the World Bank, -about

100 crores for latrines - in collaboration with an earlier programme which was brought in with Dutch help to provide safe drinking water. We worked in 24 villages of about 9000 population and what we found was that there was a claim that safe drinking water reached every household in the village. Now because they have running water with them they could look after the household latrines also. This was you know not dry conservancy (where you use less water - a bucket of water is necessary for one person), and of course the time period was 10 years and by no stretch of imagination the state could have used all the money and therefore 80% of their money was used for building infrastructure in Lucknow and Agra and other places, for making buildings, air conditioned offices and all that. But the remainder was for household latrines, and also there was a major share to be claimed by the department who was given the responsibility. This was Jal Nigam of all the departments - it should have gone to health or to some other relevant department. However the cost of the latrine in U.P. was 3000 Rs. which was much more than cemented latrines in Kerala where it was 1900 Rs. and in Gujarat where it came to 2000 Rs. Now the reason is difficult to find because the labour is cheaper in U.P. than in Kerala for example, but besides that what happened was that the university was brought in for motivating them to use the household latrines and persuading the other family members. As you said there is squeezing out of other areas where women can go and ease themselves.

What happened was a trough of water had to be filled, from where every member of a family could go and fill a bucket. This had to be filled by the women because none of the other family members would agreed to bring water for them, and this was an added burden on them besides agricultural work or whatever. There was a falling hut where she was living, and there was a swanky new household latrine, where even the board put on the latrine was so strong as if some treasure was inside.

The second impact of this was that there was a kind of a feeling among the men in the village especially, that this new kind of a latrine was going to pollute the household. So they did not like members to use it. They said - now there is a brand new place for storage of their grains and for tying up their animals etc., so one should keep going outside only to relieve oneself, and that there was no need to use the new latrines. So it was such a difficult situation. Here was something which they could use, something meant for women - because the chief minister Mulayam Singh Yadav was quoted as saying, 'I am so pained to see the women of my region carrying this in their stomach so long and their having to wait for dusk'. The point I want to make here is regarding, all this funding which comes from outside and this global modernization process which requires the rural poor to use modern amenities which they're unable to use because of various cultural differences. Gandhiji said that this is the best soil - take a khurpi, go to the fields and cover it with mud and that becomes useful manure for the village. I think for the mass of the rural people, there are open lands - the shrubs and the marshes - and there are other places to go to there which make excellent manure for a rural people. Why should we be going for these kinds of structures? Thank you

◆ *Utsa Patnaik*

Well, thank you very much I think it's a comment on our society that more than 50 years ago Gandhi ji had to carry out the struggle on the basis of these latrines and even today we

have not succeeded. The situation is getting worse, so that is something we need to think about.

◆ *Indra Munshi*

This question is to Brinda: I think forest rights have been some what neglected. I think forests in general (being very far from the contested area of activists and academics), have to be taken quite seriously because it's impact on tribal women is far more vital than we have realized. Not only are the survival bases being eroded, commercialized de-forestation is taking place, knowledge systems are being destroyed and this is related to apparently such unrelated things as witch-hunting for example. And both issues - forests and land - are problematic issues because there are differences within the communities of men and women as to how they see the solution to these. Thank you.

◆ *Unidentified participant*

I think I would like to add one point to the development process that is taking place since economic reforms and that is about systematic destruction of environment, since natural capital is not considered as important capital in the neo-liberal paradigm. We focus more on growth and we treat our natural resources without any consideration. For example, in Orissa, when they consider forest just for consumption or for mining etc. then their economic growth process is something which doesn't take care of the forest resources. In other words, sustainable development needs to strengthen the relationship between natural capital and the economic growth and not lead to exploitation of natural resources. That kind of thing is happening in a very systematic manner and the same is happening in Gujarat in the coastal area because the coastal area is seen as a source for economic growth. Destruction of coastal resources is something which has been done and the same kinds of things are happening all over the country. So this kind of relationship between natural growth and capital is something which is creating lot of problems. Here I would like to say, in India - particularly in rural areas - where livelihood of people and employment of people are closely related to environmental resources, this kind of destruction is really creating a problem. A large number of problems are emerging for the livelihood of poor people. As far as common property resources which are affecting women very badly are concerned, the issue of water is often neglected. Even in irrigated areas, we have shortage of water because women's needs are not considered while planning. Thank you.

◆ *Utsa Patnaik*

Yes the point which you raised relates to this private appropriation of social resources. So its very fundamental, and how you address it within our kind of system is again quite problematic.

◆ *Mohan Rao*

I just want to say - the 10th plan document - in its nutrition section - talks of and I quote, "paradigm force shift from food security to nutrition security. Public policy priorities are to be obesity and micronutrient deficiency". Instead of 'health for all' what they are talking

about is 'zinc for all'. So I think since now there is a mid term review of the document, we must call for a scrapping of this policy.

◆ *Unidentified participant*

When we are talking about the distress in the rural areas, I would just like to extend the picture to whatever has been said about women and migration. Less food in the house should also stretch to recognition of the distress which is naturally falling on the children. That means not only natural resources, but what we are doing is destroying our human resources. And yet our mid term reviews and policies are talking about reduction of malnutrition, reduction of IMR, increasing of breast feeding (at least six months of breast feeding). In this picture I would like this to be just recognized and added.

◆ *Subhashini Ali*

I just want to add a point to what we are saying about how privatization of land and corporatisation of land is taking place. I just wanted to bring a point about how things are being done actually without anybody coming to know about it. For example, out of all functions of jal nigam (now there is move in Uttar Pradesh to privatize it), one very important function is that it is supposed to tap all ground water resources through setting up or putting in tube wells. Now that is going to be handed over to Reliance! That's the proposal being put forward in Uttar Pradesh. So its not just land, but the water below the land which is going to be handed over.

◆ *Soma Parthasarthi*

I was really happy that Brinda brought up the issue of common lands. In our discourse around property we use the Hindu Succession Act to have discussions around how women perceive property and the issues of succession. And it's not the issues of succession that we really put in the centre. It's the issues of access to common land, and how livelihood and entire identities - especially amongst dalit women, women from marginalized communities, are centred around the commons as a resource base. We have recently done a study of what the joint forest management programme (much touted as a very successful model) has done in Uttaranchal. In the study, which some of you might have seen written up by Martin Sareen, we found that the *van panchayats* that were in fact being used by the joint forest management programme, are being used to appropriate community lands by the state and to then make them available to private holders such as the paper industry to plant bamboos. So it was really a collusion of the state with private hands and I really want to make that connection. We actually found that the larger print was about the money going into the *van panchayats* for their development, which the elite in the villages who control the panchayats took hold of. But the smaller print said that the state would install its own bureaucracy within the *van panchayat* which was so far community managed, that only 40% of the returns would come back to the village while 60 % would go to the state coffers or to anyone who has invested in those lands. And the corporates have come forward in the region to invest in these common land because they are infact the best managed forest resources of the region. So there is this issue of collusions and this we find even in the studies that Nirantar has undertaken on self help groups around the country - to look at the education process. Within the cities however (which I will be talking about

tomorrow), there's privatization of resources women hold even as credit. I mean there are small amounts of savings that women are putting into the banking system and even which bank they put it into is defined by state policy because that's the only way you can get credit . So we found that huge amounts of resources that women are putting into savings are not actually available to be rotated even as their own credit, what to say about getting a dose of credit from the state. So there is an appropriation and privatization of women's resources which they consider as their common pool by the banking system and women are even articulating this now: 'why don't we have access even to our own savings?' We're not even talking about credit from outside here.

◆ *Rami Chhabra*

While there has been a searing analysis of pauperisation and the push factors that are taking women out of their home, into migration and other situations I think we also need to look at what Brinda has just tangentially touched upon. A very crucial issue which is that we need to look at is what is happening to push women into prostitution which is now being called work. The degradation and the loss of personal dignity that is coming from those positions of sexual abuse and sexual violence, and the tremendous force that is coming in with globalization to recognize this as work is, I think, a critical area the women's movement needs to focus on and unite to say that this can't possibly at any point be considered as work. It is pure exploitation .

◆ *Brinda Karat*

About tribal women and right to forests, I have actually a full section on it my paper and I would like to speak on two aspects of that. One is the right to forest land, and the second important thing that I have addressed in that section is that the present government has actually just repeated the tribal policy which was moved by the NDA government. Therefore, a very crucial issue which we are now going to have to address is the so called tribal policy of the government. There is no mention of women at all in the policy, and it talks in the same way as the BJP did - about assimilation of tribes. Thirdly a crucial aspect of it is that in the name of development they are prepared to give forest land to non-tribals including commercial interests. This is the core of this policy and we're in the process of critiquing the whole policy.

Just one thing on Uttaranchal - for your information, as far as right to minor forest produce is concerned Uttaranchal has a most draconian law in operation at present. It is not being implemented, so there has not been the kind of protest that we would expect. But when Uttaranchal was formed, the BJP government at that time had put in a clause in the legislation concerning right to minor forest produce which is similar to the POTA legislation, and which says that if you are arrested trespassing into what is defined as forest land (and 67% of Uttaranchal is defined as forest area including even those areas where there are no forests, where the forests have already been denuded and cut by the timber lobbies), women and men arrested will have to prove their innocence. This is exactly shifting of the burden proof of innocence on to vulnerable sections. Obviously mostly it will be the hill women who'd be using them.

The second point we have to add is about rural credit which is there in my paper. I do have a section on SHG's as many of us have worked with SHG's and we have got both positive and negative critiques. But just to mention one figure which we have got - they say there are one million SHG's now working with NABARD the main agency. They say that they've disbursed around 39000 crore rupees worth of loans. So we'd just calculated that given an SHG of about 15 women, the maximum credit that a woman on an average gets is 3900 Rs. And this is being put forward as a major avenue of credit now! So this figure really shows the huge gap and the fraud behind this whole project which has been touted as the main avenue of giving credit and financing women. And the second point which is very crucial, is the differential interest rate on women savings. Where women's saving are getting very low rate of interest - 7-8%, when the same women are asking for loans they have to pay 15-16% in many cases. So this is also one aspect we really need to critique (apart from the other point made by my colleague when she says that money is being used for speculative reasons by banks). and the way dalit women and tribal women SHGs have really become functional because of the whole intensity of agrarian distress

I think the point made about water is very correct. I do believe it is a very critical issue as is the issue of girl children. Certainly the increasing burden falling on girl children is a very worrisome trend. About Rami's point, there is a brief section in my paper on increased trafficking, prostitution, development of mafia etc. though I haven't discussed the legalisation debate which could be taken up separately.

◆ *Utsa Patnaik*

Before winding up the session I would just like to make a few comments on some of the points that have been made. Regarding this whole question of migration, insecurity and so on - it is not just the fact that agrarian distress has led to a huge increase in both male and female migration in search of work and increase in insecurity including the kind of sexual abuse that Brinda was describing. But it is a fact that it has also induced a reign of terror perpetuated by the employers as far as migrant workers are concerned. For example, when I was in Baroda last year, while talking to some sociologists whose work is based in Surat, I happened to ask them why it was that with extensive retrenchment in the textile mills of Gujarat we have only one brave man called Jan Breman who has come all the way from Netherlands to write about it. Why don't they write about such issues? So they told me this really horrendous story which I want to share with you. They said, 'we had a study project on textile mills in Surat as part of which we tried to talk to the workers, a majority of whom were migrant Oriya workers as the regular workers had been thrown out of their jobs. They simply refused to talk. Finally one worker opened her mouth and said that basically 'the boiler factor' was behind the silence. On further probing it was found out that the story behind the boiler factor was that anybody who tried to organize labour or ask for improved conditions, was thrown into a boiler within the textile mills premises.'. There have to be just two or three people meeting that fate for it to have a very strong deterrent effect on the rest of the labour force. One doesn't need many- many cases When I said, 'look why don't you guys write about it as people don't know about such things,' they said, 'we are academics. We're used to writing papers with footnotes and references and so on. All this is hearsay and we are not able to verify such things.' As a result, they kept quiet about the facts due to their academic training!

Now the second thing I want to say is that very correct points have been made about diversionary tactics being employed, like this whole point about microcredit and a lot of things have been ideologically constructed by people who seem to be making progressive points but which actually have a diversionary effect. For example this whole business of unequal sharing of food within the family due to the operation of a gender bias, which Amartya Sen has been writing about. A whole lot of students, including university economics students working under me personally, are now making complicated mathematical models about the inequality of sharing within the family. But none of them talk about the actual fact that there is not much to share. All this does have a diversionary effect. There has been massive reduction in work available both for men as well as women and as far as National Nutrition Monitoring Bureau data is concerned, they have categorically stated that though there seemed to be a lot of discrimination against small children, between adult men and women, they have not found any evidence of systematic discrimination. Whether one accepts this as a fact or not is a matter of a debate. But this is something which is now been constructed as a diversionary tactic to talk about unfair distribution within the family with any number of people working on it - much more than the number of people talking about the lack of basic food for entire family for men, women as well as children - within the academic world .

Now there is a third point which I wanted to make vis-avis what Dr. Mohan Rao rightly pointed out as an absolutely disgusting government policy regarding nutrition in the 10th plan document which is in the process of being formulated. The point is however - why don't more people in the medical profession take up this whole issue of dilution of nutrient standards at all levels in the Planning Commission estimates ? This is a very widespread intellectual cancer which is spreading. Amongst our friends, acquaintances, radical members of the medical profession, no one has even bothered to place these facts in a form which is accessible to a lot of people. I will end with this suggestion that it is very necessary now to take up the cudgels regarding these facts rather than cite these as important facts in just seminars. Thank you.

Section II (Rural)

Looking back on the developing feminist perspectives in the fishworkers' movement

Nalini Nayak

I will place before you my perspective on the development of the fish workers' movement in over the last two decades. Women have been an integral part of the coastal fisheries. Modern development has marginalized them in more ways than one. Particularly technology has overfished resources. And in the present form of aquaculture, what is happening is a complete export oriented production. Fish for export, rather than fish for food. These have many negative effects, and in this paper I will try to give you a perspective that I have developed through my engagement with the fish workers' movement, though in 2000 I had withdrawn from this in protest against the marginalisation of women within the movement.

The fish workers' movement in India had started from the late 70s with an objective to defend the rights of the fish workers in the coastal areas. Women were the first to get mobilised in this struggle, in order to demand their rights in the market and so on. In fact before men started the movement, women were already there. Therefore the question that was raised eventually was - should the women's movement be integrated in the larger struggle of the fish workers per se. Personally I had wanted a union, because that would provide a united front. But over the next 15 years we saw that women were increasingly being marginalized in the united larger movement, and their demands were being sidelined or opposed directly. The main issues that were marginalizing women were mainly four: firstly, the leadership within the movement was being monopolised by the men. I had wanted a rotational process of leadership, but the democratic method was increasingly being overshadowed and the women thrown out. The second issue was around the choice of species to be exported. The species specification had a crucial impact on food security. The third issue was the modernization of the artisanal sector, which was making it more and more aggressive. Women had protested, but were not allowed to raise the issue. The fourth and final issue was that of the use of petrol, which I felt should never be done in fishery, because it can never help its development. We therefore need to have a feminist perspective in fish workers movement in order to conserve women's bases in the fisheries.

Coastal fisheries in the western countries were already being threatened, and women in those countries were learning to raise different kinds of demand in their movements and their unions in the western world, from the struggle in India. We all know that fisheries were globalised long before the globalisation that we see in the 90s. But the manner in which the fisheries modernised globally also meant that northern fleets are now fishing in southern waters, thereby not only finishing the resources that exist here, but taking away jobs of women even there. Due to the fact that we have cheaper labour here, fish are being moved all the way to the southern world - only to be processed. For example countries like Thailand, which do not catch a single tuna, are the biggest tuna exporters (of tinned tuna) in the world. This is because the fish is sent to these modern processing zones by the northern countries. These are all the complications through which women in the west were losing their jobs, and therefore began asking questions.

In the early 90s we had asked them why at all were they talking about fishing agreements in the south - what had happened to the fish in their countries? And they said that they had a technology which had exhausted all the fish in their own countries, and therefore they had to turn to the south. This is the way the whole technology impact in both the north and the south leads gradually to women losing their jobs, finishing the resource, and destroying the sea. In India there is an increasing proposition to look at the sea for its oil and non-living resources rather than bother about the fish and fishing. So that's the basic problem in the whole process.

In the fish workers' movement here, because we had started very deep input programs for the cadre in the movement - on what the feminist perspective was all about, there was a big

awareness in the movement through the 90s. When this got linked up with the international world to create an international fish workers' forum (a collective of fish harvesters and fish workers), they demanded at that point that there should be 50% representation of women constitutionally - in the leadership and within the movement. So any trade union that took membership within this larger body had to have this 50% representation of women. This is what came from the Indian movement, and that too by the men of our movement. Not by the women - because we knew that 50% at one shot was going to be very exaggerated because there were no women in the western countries who would take membership, because they have no women in the Western Union. So it was our radicals who took the initiative in the movement, while at the same time actually marginalizing all of us women who were more vocal and raising precisely these issues - about leadership, rotation of roles, autonomy within the movement, and fish for food, rather than fish for export - and challenging the oil based industry that even our small sector was getting very much integrated into. So from 1997, many of the active local women were thrown out - marginalized, squeezed out. I stayed till 2000, but finally when I saw what happened at the international level, I also pulled out. Thus the movement broke up at the international level too. It was said that in its birth it was born as twins, the north and the south. There are two world forums with almost similar constitutions, and there are very nominal people sitting in the Committee. The constitution is very radical, but only in name. We had a huge movement at the international level to see to see to it that women then joined the movement. But then the whole international meet broke up because there was a tug of war between men at the international level - on representation, on percentage of votes, and also because the people who came from the West were also representing not only an in-shore sector but also an off-shore sector.

The issues I want to raise here are at two levels. At the level of strategies, movements, and of course the National Fishworkers' Forum is also trade union - so in this framework of a trade union there are two issues. One is the issue of the organisational strategies, and the other is the issue of this entire feminist perspective in the movement. It is important for us to understand as to what is a feminist perspective in production? And how do we focus this into the larger struggle we are involved in. Relating to the organisational strategies, some of the issues that have come up in course of our movement are - the autonomy of women within the movement, the other is the rigid structure of the trade union leading to power politics within. So long as it was a mass based organisation, there was a lot of democracy and participation. But the moment it became institutionalised, then the rigidity of power politics came into the movement. Thirdly the mere presence of 50% women in the movement does not imply the presence of any feminist perspective. This is what we have seen, because other women replaced us, but no more issues were raised on these questions. The other aspect of people of the informal sector like the fisheries, is the need for the whole approach of 'Sangharsh' meaning struggle, and 'Nirman' which is reconstruction. The question is - since the sector is in our hands, are we able to reconstruct the fisheries in a perspective that we think is important.

The other important point is the anti-patriarchal development paradigm that we women talk and write about, and how it develops within the movement. To what extent are we able to develop this within the movement. One is of course the development of democracy within the movement; second, the technologies that our movement supports; third, the problem of the propulsion fuel in the entire sector being oil based; and lastly, the point as to whether we produce for the export market or the local market. There is a huge demand for fish in the local market, but then it is airlifted to other countries especially with the liberalisation of trade. Certain contradictory signals from the women's perspective emerge from this. There's this whole aspect of gender rather than a feminist logic, and the idea of mainstreaming - that we are supposed to mainstream or malestream women so that they can take decisions. But the question is - what happens when they reach that point, and then often give in to decisions that actually counter us? The last point is of course the economic empowerment of women, but outside the mainstream production, outside the working class movement. These points were raised earlier, while talking about how today in the informal sector women are being targeted with economic programmes, but they are completely out of real production. And so developing this base in a very marginal framework, actually ousts them much more than integrates them.

Garment workers (translated from Hindi)

Mita Parekh

I will present here a perspective on globalisation and the women's movement in the garment industry based on the experience of SEWA in garment industry and the informal sector. In the age of globalisation and liberalisation, with the various technological developments, the informal sector and the unorganised sector have been affected deeply. SEWA has studied the garment sector and I will present here the outcome of the research undertaken by SEWA.

In Gujarat there are almost 1,50,000 garment workers, out of whom in Ahmedabad there are almost 20,000 readymade garment workers. In 1988, SEWA had conducted a survey, which showed that as much as 50% of these are women. These are women who worked from home and used to get a daily wage of fifteen to twenty rupees. Mostly they made frocks and petticoats. This used to be done at home, but they were largely underpaid. In 1999, we found that those workers who were working in small factories, part time or full time, had no contract whatsoever and were paid at piece rate, which could be either daily, or weekly, sometimes even monthly. There were no provisions of social security, or bonus or provident fund. In fact only 5% of them had accident insurance. In 1999, there was another study conducted, which showed that the retailers kept 40% margin of the profit procured by selling the products made by these workers, whereas the latter got merely 5% margin.

I would like to talk a bit on the working patterns in the garment manufacturing industry. September to February is the usual season, and from March to August they get very little

work. Therefore in that period, they look for other kinds of work, like beedi making, candle making etc. In the demand for garments, there have been constant shifts. Gradually demand came for synthetic, velvets etc, and with their sewing machines (that worked well for cotton), these workers could not tackle the new materials. Also it was expensive to procure new developed machines. Thus in the absence of the skill to tackle the new machines, the informal sector was affected badly as their production rate fell along with the quality of the produce. Thus globalisation affected the informal sector very badly as far as these workers were concerned.

I will now look at what SEWA did when it came to this sector. To begin with SEWA arranged for bank loans to buy sewing machines. More than 300 workers availed of this. However, the returns out of these loans were often meagre, because the shift in markets affected the demand, and therefore the income generated out of the produce. Secondly, SEWA tried to open employment centres to develop specialised skills to provide for the demands in factories. In this way many women got employment opportunities. SEWA has also given training for stitching different kinds of garments, and workers say that this has given them 50% more production capacity. NIFT, Gandhinagar is associated with SEWA, and helps train the workers as experts. Every year almost 50 women from SEWA get export oriented training at NIFT. SEWA also has a Trade Facilitation Centre that takes care of the employment of affected women, in case of any natural disaster. This has been effective in the 2001 earthquake, and even in the 2002 riots. There has been a 300% rise in the exports in this sector due to the efforts of SEWA. There are plans of setting up Community Learning Centres around Ahmedabad, Shahpur etc. SEWA also plans to set up a garment workshed, where under one roof there are around 20 machines, and women work at piece rates. Orders come from NIFT too to help the informal sector, even from outside. In this way we at SEWA have tried to help women earn a decent livelihood, and the tackle the challenges of globalisation.

Hansa (translated from Gujrati)

Hansa has come from Khera. She was a weaver first, and initially she, like many other women in this sector, had no organisation, as well as information. She used to take sixty kilos of cotton thread from the master after depositing Rs 6000, for weaving. SEWA gave these women clear information, as well as helped in order to realise their rights as weavers in this sector. In the cutting work, they learned how to save from the waste thread, and used them for extra income. With the coming of SEWA, these women could now save upto Rs15-20 in a month. Gradually they started getting loans from the Gujarat Handloom Cooperation Fund in lieu of depositing Rs750. These weavers used to make a particular kind of saree, which was called the Nehru saree, because it was plain in colour. With the beginning of globalisation, however, the demand for these Nehru sarees fell flat, and they are now lying in godowns. Thus work was stopped for Hansa and her co-workers. She then took a grant of Rs25,000 from SEWA, and started weaving independently, and now she has Rs1,00,000 balance in her name. When work was stopped in between, before SEWA came

along, there was no fixed work for these women. They had very little money, and would earn an amount as meagre of Rs5/- per day. Now there is insurance for them, thus providing them with a social security. Now she gets wages, even when there is no work, and in a month she earns as much as Rs 2000.

Work, Livelihood, and Employment in the Beedi Sector

Arun Daur

Over the last three to four years I have been working with the beedi workers in a project, and what I will say here is based on my experiences over there. Beedi is largely a symbol of poverty and desperation in an area. If there is any other option available, then the beedi contractor will not come to those places. What has been happening over the past few years, could be because of globalisation or changing consumer preferences. In recent times with public health concerns - anti-smoking etc, it has become really difficult to speak in support of the beedi women workers. Trade unions have been insisting that women in beedi be given more work, but that would basically mean encouraging people to smoke more beedi. Smoking cannot possibly be a public policy, and this thereby creates a very peculiar kind of a problem.

There is a lot of controversy around exactly how many beedi workers are there in our country. The Labour ministry says there are about 4.5 million beedi workers, according to the NSS data - there are even less numbers; trade unions claim that there are about 8 to 10 million. Anybody who has seen the beedi industry should know that the government usually takes one head per family, whereas usually there are three people from each family who are engaged in beedi making, thus making the number as high as 12 or 13 million people, who are dependant on beedi making for livelihood. Almost 40-50% these are women headed households. Often beedi becomes the mainstay of subsistence livelihood because in most cases the husbands of the beedi workers are alcoholics or unemployed.

There is an argument that says that beedi rolling hardly gives women any money, so why should they roll beedis. But the fact is that beedi over the last 100 years has provided livelihood and subsistence for women, and also cash incomes. In some traditional areas of beedi rolling like Vellore, Sagar, Thirunellveli, Mangalore, beedi workers used to get cash incomes. Now these incomes have come down drastically. Earlier these women used to roll about five to six thousand beedis per week, now they roll about 1000 beedis per week, which basically means that they get about Rs20-40 per week for rolling 1000 beedis. Official wages are much more than that but nobody gets those rates.

This fall in the cash incomes has also affected the other economic activities in these areas. The beedi industry manufacturers say that this is happening because of globalisation, because the government has brought about changes in the excise policy by which they have brought the beedi in competition with mini cigarettes. The smoking habits of the people strangely do not reflect the increasing poverty in the country, because interestingly enough

even in the rural areas, it seems that the people are increasingly trying to shift from beedi to cigarettes. Thus the beedi producers feel that their client base is not increasing. Whether the actual number of women employed in this sector is coming down or not is not very clear at this point of time, but what is certainly happening is that the women who are organised, and are basically cardholders are not getting the work.

The beedi contractors are now shifting from traditional beedi rolling areas to more and more desperate areas in search of cheaper and more unorganised kind of labour. So the crisis is growing in all the traditional beedi rolling households, where workloads as well as incomes have come down. It was in this context that ILO was running a pilot project to see if alternative sources of income could be generated. Frankly, there cannot be an alternative to beedi, because there is no other industry that can support so many people. These women were never dependant on the Government for their livelihoods; in fact they were never included under the government's BPL list, because they were earning cash incomes. Now the Government's anti-poverty measures actually exclude these areas.

The beedi industry came under the trade unions in the 1920s. There are two special funding laws for them that cover almost 4 million women. But the problem is of access to this fund. There is a housing scheme, but to get a loan from this fund, you have to have land in your name, and very few women have land in their names. Thus land condition becomes a bottleneck in the way of getting loans for women. A lot of Government schemes are actually dependant on the ownership of land, and this is exactly what most women do not have.

Thus changing consumer preferences, and the lessening excise duty on the cigarettes are factors affecting the beedi industry, apart from the overall globalisation process. The last point which I would like to make is that the cigarette industry has a vested interest in killing this industry and the MNCs are trying to shift consumer preferences towards cigarettes. 54% of India's tobacco gets consumed in the form of beedi, and the cigarette companies feel that there is a great scope for them to increase their market, but as long as beedi is there they cannot do that.

Among the various problems that cripple this industry, is of course the issue of health; the women who roll these beedis have complained of certain kinds of problems, from reproductive to respiratory. The doctors in beedi manufacturing localities say that this is not due to the beedi but due to the bad sanitary conditions and lack of nutrition. No study of women beedi workers' health has been done, and nobody seems to encourage such a study. The last point that I would like to mention is that earlier politically this industry used to be very powerful. The beedi manufacturers controlled Madhya Pradesh politics, and other state government politics to a large extent. In fact the whole issue about the Tendu leaf forests getting nationalised by Arjun Singh's Government in 1989 was basically to undercut the financial base of the BJP, because BJP's traders controlled the Tendu leaf forests. The result of that has been pretty hard on the workers all over the country because

all of a sudden it raised the price of the Tendu leaves for the workers. Earlier these leaves used to be free, but now they required tenders to be bought.

Thus the beedi industry workers are increasingly being subjected to a joint exploitation resulting from policies of the state, the changing consumer market, as well as from some of the inherent complications within the industry.

Discussion

◆ *Ranjana Nirula*

I would like to make a few points on the Beedi industry that Arun was talking about. First is that the extent of work has gone down alarmingly in the beedi sector. Sometimes women in this sector get only three to four days of work per week. But another feature of this industry, which in a way is similar to the mobility of finance capital, is that it is a footloose industry. Where you try to organise the workers and get a higher piece rate for them, the employers just take the work and shift to the next state where the wages are lower since there really is no machinery involved and therefore no fixed investment. I think there are very few states where the statutory minimum wage fixed by the state government is actually implemented. Between states there is a lot of variation in the rates that are paid, and even within a state where the workers are organised, they get something closer the statutory rate fixed by the state; where they are not organised, they don't even get that. Another very interesting feature that exists here is related to the level of education. If children are educated, they do not want to do this work any more. There is again a very definite gender bias in this industry. The men do not want to do this kind of work. Previously, when this work was not predominantly home based, men were involved, but now it's only women who do the work, and among children - it's the girls who work, not the boys, because it is just considered the lowest of the low work which is to be done.

In relation to housing, I just want to give an example which is just the positive part of it. In Sholapur where we (CITU) have a very large union of beedi workers, we have a society and after a long struggle of the beedi workers, 20,000 houses have been constructed for beedi workers there, and all the houses have been given in the name of members of the society who are all women. It is also stated clearly that the houses cannot pass into the names of the husbands or the man.

There is one question I had for Nalini. I am not sure whether I misunderstood, but you said that from your autonomous women's organisation within the fishery, you decided to go along with the other fisherfolk, and when the women got represented in the committees the women's issues were not taken up. Can you please elaborate on that a bit more?

◆ *Vasanthi Raman*

I just wanted to seek a clarification from Nalini. You used the term artisanal at several points. Could you just clarify what you mean.

◆ *Madhura Swaminathan*

I must say of Nalini's paper, that you were really trying to give us a lot of information very briefly. My question was about the feminist perspective being that of conserving resources. I have a real problem with this, because starting from the Chipko period and so on there has been this idea of women as conservationists. I do not think that women necessarily can be better choosers of technology than men. Can you kindly clarify this point, because I think we have to be careful about modern and traditional technology. I am not against modern technology and not necessarily for linking up a feminist perspective with one of conserving or a traditional technology.

On the beedi presentation, I think there is no contradiction between what you said and what was said in the morning about globalisation increasing poverty. The change in the tax structure, which has reduced the gap between beedi and the mini cigarettes, is in fact what is leading people to shift from beedi to cigarettes, even if it is at the expense of or cut back in calorie intakes. This shows the shift in expenditure patterns. You have to investigate how much of this is choice, and how much is the result of changing economic structure, and in this case - tax policy.

◆ *Indira Hirway*

I have a question for Nalini. You had said the fishery in the North is over, and in the South also it is over now. I know that there is overfishing, but can you just explain what you mean by this, because there are large number of coastal areas where fishing communities are doing very well and fish seems to be available. My second question is that as far as fishery is concerned, one of the problems is that fish processing is a women dominated activity. Women are exploited very badly there, and in fact this was one of the major issues in the Gujarat fisheries some years ago. Isn't that a major issue of women in fisheries?

◆ *Soma Parthasarthi*

In the context of the aquaculture industry, in my exposure to that in Andhra Pradesh, we found that in this area, a lot of the land has gone into aquaculture. What is happening is that a lot of the agricultural labour that was earlier working in the paddy fields there, are not required any more. And so there is a lot of displacement of the agricultural workers. One person often owns that one plot of land used for aquaculture, and he may be an outsider to the locality, and as a result of this a large section of local labour is getting displaced. The Dalit Women's Federation there actually spoke about how because of the displacement from agriculture, large numbers of women are now looking at alternate

avenues of domestic work, often in Bombay or Dubai. This connects therefore to the whole issue of aquaculture being brought in, leading to a displacement of agricultural labourers.

◆ *Vibhuti Patel*

I would like to ask to Nalini - in the fish processing industry, in what way is modernisation affecting the workers in terms of labour standards and their right to collective bargaining? In fact in Mikhapur, any time the workers get unionised, and these are all migrant workers, POTA is used against the leaders, and they are arrested. To Arun Daur, my question is - what is the impact of mechanisation in tobacco industry?

◆ *Sujata Gothoskar*

My question is to Nalini. You spoke about mainstreaming as equivalent to malestreaming. Is it possible to identify other factors that lead to men taking over the place of women in the fishing industry? This is a trend in various other industries too. The male domination, which is built within the production process, is something that we need to look at more carefully.

◆ *Nalini Nayak*

I will begin with the definition of 'artisanal'. I have used it interchangeably with traditional. These are skills that are acquired through training and practice, and this whole industry is extremely skill oriented. Now, with the coming of technology, people who are not skilled, and are from other sectors, can also come in. Secondly, in the context of the autonomy of women, there were many reasons why we raised this issue - because when the women were in the forefront, they were taking the decisions. When they became a part of the larger movement, they still did all the work, but they had very little space to have their voices heard at decision making level, because there were always larger issues that had to be discussed rather than issues relating to women.

About the feminist perspective, and conservation, I need to state that when I say feminist perspective, it definitely doesn't mean that this is only to be done by women. It is a perspective for the development of the fishery per se. At an international gathering of the women of the fisheries, we had come up with this slogan, which said that 'without women in the fisheries there will be no fish in the sea'. This means a lot of things, like for example, the kinds of net that is used. We can use aggressive, destructive nets as well as passive nets, which also catch fish, and which were used traditionally. Again there are seasons for catching fish. For example, you should not catch fish when their stomachs are full of babies, also you should put your nets down not in the high tide, but in the low tide. So these are all issues of conservation, which need to be done by men who are fishers. I do not mean to say that these are all women's work; this should rather be the perspective on how you will conserve the resource because this is the process by which your resource is sustained.

The issue of technology too is related to all this. The more you have an aggressive technology, of course you become much more destructive on the resources. This relates to the other question about how men marginalized women in this sector. There are heaps of examples, right from the banks coming in to give loans for buying equipments. Many of the fishing communities were in fact matrilineal communities, and it was the woman who inherited the fishing gear and net. She had her share of the fish catch. They used to get these in dowry, and their men came to live in their villages after marriage. When the banks came into the sector, they started recognising the fisherman, and gave him the loan to procure his needs. Thus women lost their rights. Then we come to the whole vending business. The minute you had a new technology in a boat, and it became larger, you would need a centralised landing place for your fish. Thus harbours and landing centres were built and there were no more any beach landing crafts. Thus women lost access to the harbours, where the government let the male merchants come into the vending of fish. Women in the past never got this kind of support - to buy lorries, or trucks or ice-making machines, though all this used to be their domain.

As far as my comment on the fishes being finished is concerned, it was certainly a radical statement. But if you look at the cod fishery, which sustained 40,000 workers in eastern Canada, it was closed in 1992 and never regained. This industry was then transferred to the south. Now our government is trading the fish resources with the excessive fishing fleets of the north to come and fish in the south. In many of our fisheries lots of species do not exist any more. Now we are catching squid, which is supposed to be high value in the export market. Squid is the last in the food chain in the fishery, so once you catch squid, there is nothing more that is left. So now we are going into bio-technology. A large portion of the fish we get today come from aquaculture. These figures are largely camouflaged in the official data. The bio-technology which has entered has even changed the behaviour of the fish. So now it is hard to make out a difference between male and a female salmon. All these mutations caused by bio-technology are very dangerous.

In terms of the women workers in the fish processing, I agree that they are highly exploited. Since they are mostly migrant workers, they have no rights. Gujarat has to a large extent changed its approach to women in the fish processing plants, but it is terrible in Maharashtra, even worse in Orissa and Andhra Pradesh. Now the ILO is discussing labour standards for the workers in the fisheries, and there they re not going to include the right of the women fish workers in these new standards. So this is far more problematic, because once you introduce the standards, which the countries will be asked to ratify, the rights of the women will get badly sidelined.

◆ *Arun Daur*

In response to Ranjana I would like to say that as far as the mechanisation of the beedi industry is concerned, government's excise policy has been to discourage it. While the excise

duty on hand rolled beedi is about Rs7 per thousand, those rolled by the machines are Rs15. Nobody really rose because labour is the cheapest thing. And as far as the mini cigarettes are concerned I am not too sure whether mini cigarettes have really posed any competition, because mini cigarettes would still be ten in a packet for Rs3, while beedi would be 22 beedis at the same price. And even the client base is different. But there has been an attempt for sure to sideline the beedi industry. This is evident in the way the Tobacco Institute of India has been lobbying with the government, trying to highlight two things - one is the revenue that the government gets out of the beedi industry as well as the health problem. According to the cigarette manufacturers in our country as well in the US where the youth took to beedi in recent times in a major way, beedi is seen as more harmful than cigarettes, and in fact the import of beedi has been stopped in the US.

Session III (Rural)

Work, Livelihood and Employment in Plantations

Zia-ul Alam

I would like to begin by expressing my appreciation for the agenda that the Centre for Women's Development Studies has set for itself on its 25th Anniversary. My presentation is about the work being done by the All India Plantation Workers Federation. Plantation sectors all over the world emerged with the development of colonial economy, mostly in third world countries. In India it took a very particular form. Every plantation is essentially characterised by employment being tilted towards female workers. In India the plantation sector also initially emerged in the same form. Through the direct intervention of the colonial government, labourers were recruited for the plantations by shifting populations away from their roots into the remote and peripheral sites of the plantations, where conditions were extremely hazardous. In its origin this migration was family based and had two aspects - to suit the economy of the plantation sector, and to serve the colonial interest. This family based system of migration when coupled with the indentured form of labour, deprived the plantation workers of basic human rights. It was especially adverse to the development of women, be it physical, mental, cultural or political.

In most parts of India, the plantation workers had little or no contribution to the struggle for freedom. The colonial planters succeeded in keeping the plantation work force isolated from the freedom movement. Therefore the ideology of human rights and freedom which were disseminated widely through the freedom struggle, did not reach the plantation workers. Even today, political consciousness regarding issues of rights is very low amongst the plantation workers. In the post-independence period, the entire attention went towards ensuring the basic rights as a worker. It failed to develop an understanding of the human rights of plantation workers. The trade unions and political parties could impose a plethora of acts and rules to establish the workers rights however, and within this broad canvas women workers also had the opportunity of addressing their needs or rights.

One of the major acts in this sphere is the Plantation Labour Act. It mostly deals with the issues of work, employment and livelihood. However, the Act, by making very concrete demands, actually moved much beyond addressing the rights of labourers as an abstraction.

The Indian Government, or the State Governments did not themselves step in to take up the development of the lives of the plantation workers. Instead, they chose to impose the Act on the planters. This method suited the requirements of the planters, as it did not challenge the basic requirement of the planters, i.e. the absence of free labour in and around the plantations. The planters could thus continue to suppress the wage rates of the plantation workers and prevent them from getting involved in mainstream social, cultural and political activities. Not surprisingly, the planters accepted the Plantation Labour Act. Nevertheless, during the last 50 years it is the Plantation Labour Act that has played a major role in developing every aspect of the lives of the plantation workers, including women, who constitute more than 50% of the plantations' workforce.

The forces of globalisation have penetrated the plantation sector quite deeply due to the failure of the political parties and trade unions to understand the nature of its impact. During the first 15 years of globalisation, between 1985 and 2000, the plantation sector expanded at a remarkable rate both in the northern and southern states. The associations who were working with the plantation workers read this as a positive. They predicted that the increase in the area of employment would make room for an increase in the bargaining capacity of the workforce in general, and women in particular. They were also optimistic about Indian tea taking up a major place in the world market. In the last five years it has become evident that the demand and supply philosophy of the market do not apply to the expansion of the plantation sector in India.

Thousands of hectares of land in Assam, West Bengal and Tamil Nadu and a few other unconventional areas were affected by this vast growth, especially in tea. On the one hand it displaced the agricultural and rural populations of the areas brought under plantation. These rural people who were deprived of their land rights mostly belonged to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Almost one and half lakh people have been turned into landless wage labourers through this process, of whom 55% are women. As the plantation sector expanded, the planters who had invested their capital in the erstwhile form of plantations, i.e. the state recognised (state/straight) plantations were bound to comply with the Plantations Labour Act, but the new growers remained outside the operation of the Act. This led to random lockouts and closures in the state/straight plantations, which started in the organised sector and then spread to the unorganised sector.

A self-critical analysis of the entire scenario from the trade union point of view reveals that very few trade unions have been involved in the plantation sector in either putting forward economic demands or in protecting the hard-earned rights of plantation workers. Initially, there was no democratic women's organisation functioning in the plantation sector. They have just started entering the field in the last 20-25 years from. But women's needs and concerns within plantations are yet to be chalked out, keeping in mind the fact that the women in plantations are mostly socio-economically and politically backward. In conclusion I would like to emphasize the need to devise a strategy that can effectively halt the course of capitalist globalisation in the plantation sector. If allowed to proceed unimpeded, it will not only deprive women of their rights, but also destabilise all the democratic values, which have been established within the plantation sector over the last fifty years.

Peasants' and workers' movements in Madhya Pradesh

I work with the Narmada Bachao Andolan and with an emerging farmer and workers' organisation called the Nimad Malwa Kisan Mazdoor Sangathan. I would like to begin my presentation with two quotations. The first is from Kamalabai who is a farmer and a woman heeler in village Pithar in Maheshwar in Madhya Pradesh. "The last time we struggled for our independence it was the men who went to the gallows. This time around thousands of women, women like me, want to be in the forefront of the independence struggle against foreign slavery and climb the gallows." The second quotation is by a 10-year-old girl whom we found late in the night looking for food in the garbage. We asked her what she was doing there at two in the morning. She said that "Well, there is no food in my house. Four five days ago, my mother stopped eating; two days ago I stopped eating and today, my father has stopped eating. My father is a landless labourer and there is no work."

Basically in the course of this paper I'd like to talk about four or five issues. The first thing I would like to talk about is the movements in Madhya Pradesh that I have witnessed, or have participated in, during the last one and half decade, specially the various types of peasants' and workers' movements. The second is what is the course and direction of corporate globalization and imperialism in Madhya Pradesh and in India, as although there are specificities, Madhya Pradesh does not stand alone. The third is the role of the women in some of the movements that I have seen and participated in. The fourth issue I would like to elaborate on is why peasant and worker women need to struggle against imperialism and fifthly, what are the limitations and possibilities of the struggles that I have seen in Madhya Pradesh. This paper is limited by the fact that I am speaking from an individual vantage point. There is no data to hold up the paper and I have not done any historical research to look at the trends of peasants' and workers' movements.

There are four types of peasants' and rural workers' movements in Madhya Pradesh. The first is the oldest type of movement, i.e. the movements of the adivasis and the forest dwellers - for ownership and use of forest land, and for being able to secure the use of ancillary forest produce, such as fodder, fuel, goods etc. There is a long recorded history of such movements in Madhya Pradesh, dating back to the first time that the Forest Act was brought into place, around the time of the Mutiny. There have been huge battles whether in Panchmadi or Bhabutsingh in the Western Malwa, where I work. Tantiya Tope was often joined by the adivasis. So basically, there was a huge movement of adivasis of different parts of Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh because the forest laws were suddenly being changed. It would be wrong to see it merely as a Mutiny as obviously, the local issues of survival fueled it. This was brutally repressed.

Two decades before independence again there was a whole spate of new movements for forest land. These agitations now took socialist forms. There was a movement across Madhya Pradesh called the Lal Topi Movement. All Lal Topiwalas tell us that 'whenever we went to the collector's office, we never went in through the door- we would always go in through the window'. This indicates the spirit of the Lal Topi Movement. Immediately after independence, for the first two decades in many parts of Madhya Pradesh, for the first two terms of legislative assembly and the parliament, it was people from the Lal Topi Movement who were elected. It was a huge movement that spread into Gujarat and

Rajasthan as well. Here too, the whole question of control over the forest land was one of the major issues. However after they went into the Parliament and the Assemblies, they lost their appeal to the people.

A lapse of a period of time brings us to the last two decades. There are a number of organizations that have worked specifically on land issues. This includes Kheruth Mazdoor Chetna Sangathan which began working from 1982 and with which I have been associated. In the 1990s, several other organisations followed- Adivasi Mukti Sangathan, Adivasi Sakti Sangathan and Adivasi Ekta Sangathan. The most important issue for all these tribals was to either get new forest lands or (since most of these organizations took a stand against cutting into new forest land) to retain their lands that were not titled. For the forest dweller or adivasi, forest produce and forest land are not separate things. In fact, because of the position of women in the division of labour - fuel wood, and fodder etc. were things that tribal women collected. Thus, she was open to being harassed by the forest department officials. In fact when the work started in the late 80s, just like Shramik Sangathan in Maharashtra, even here the activists found that the forest officials often claimed the right of the first night. There was a lot of exploitation of the tribal women.

Not all struggles for forest land or of the tribal to be a peasant can be contained in the organizations that have been mentioned. In the last two decades in Madhya Pradesh we have also seen a lot of movements against displacement. There has been work under the aegis of the Narmada Bachao Andolan, over the issue of the Bargi dam in Jabalpur, or Maan dam. In the latter cases, the dams were already built or partially built, and rehabilitation was the main concern. In Sardar Sarovar the issue began with rehabilitation but went into a larger critique of the dam, and after the adverse Supreme Court judgment, attempted to secure land for the ousted. At Maheshwar, on the other hand, the struggle was not only to secure rehabilitation or to not allow the dam to be built, but rather to struggle against the first privatized dam in India. This was going to be SKumar's, which has power purchasing agreements very much like that of Enron's and which had foreign equity of about 49%. So the struggle was against both privatization and displacement. The dam has been stopped now and the land has been auctioned. The people have a temporarily fragile victory on their hands. This is the second type of movement waged mainly to keep their lands. Apart from the Narmada Bachao Andolan there are also other movements like Kisan Adivasi Sangathan in Hoshangabad and other movements that have worked with displaced people, not only from dams but also from sanctuaries and national parks.

The third type of movement is perhaps what I was expected to focus upon. The recent organization, which I have been involved with for the last two years, is the Nimar Malwa Kisan Mazdoor Sangathan. They are raising issues which deal with power sector reforms, increase in cost of inputs, decrease in cost of price of commodities because of removal of quantitative restrictions, import of agricultural commodities, debt, deficit, etc. On the whole, it is very clear that surplus farmers have become deficit farmers and subsistence farmers have reached zero levels. There are several other movements around these issues. Some of the parties have also raised some of these issues. Whether they intend to carry the issues to some logical end or whether its just election time rhetoric remains to be seen.

The fourth type of movement that is there is very nascent because Madhya Pradesh has by and large been quite a resource intensive state. Everybody had a bit of resource. But now, especially from ecological ravaged areas, people are asking for rural employment. For

example, the Jagrit Adivasi Dalit Sangathan in Badwani is now asking for an Employment Guarantee Act and fighting for full rural employment. These are the four types of movement in Madhya Pradesh as far as I can see.

The second broad issue is how corporate globalization is coming into Madhya Pradesh. These are not just processes which we cannot see or cannot hear. We can even read them. Everything is directed and written. All the conditions, whether it pertains to the WTO and how it is to come in, or whether it is the treatment of states of India like Madhya Pradesh as sub-national entities, which can then have projects from the World Bank or the ADB, are evident. I'll just very briefly mention some of these projects. One of the projects that came in around 1996 was the World Bank forestry project. For three years new organizations like ours, which came together in a forum of organizations called the 'Jan Sangharsh Morcha', fought against the World Bank forestry project. Basically the World Bank forestry project funded sanctuaries and parks and brought in almost 22 parks and sanctuaries and displaced people. On the other hand it affected tribal areas where in the name of JFM or Joint Forestry Management they set up forest protection committees, which were basically institutions of the World Bank to alienate the forest of the tribals and to seek control themselves. The whole question of nawaar and forest produce became very important. We were able to stop the second entry of a similar project. Subsequently the World Bank tried again in 2000 and now it is trying again. The terror and repression on the people continues. There have been some 20-30 firings in the last three years. Firearms have been bought with the World Bank money and recently last month they gave immunity to the forest officials in the same manner that armed forces have. If they commit an offense they can't be taken to court easily, i.e. you need a number of permissions. The World Bank has come in this year with a water sector-restructuring project in which it intends to build an ambience towards the privatization of water resources. Basically they intend to hand over all minor irrigation work to the people for repair and maintenance, with the state withdrawing from its responsibility. The bulk water storages, like Indira Sagar, which actually will produce more electricity and waterlog 30% of its command area, will be very important because water will be taken from these for industries. This creates room for water users' associations and increased user fees.

The other major player in the corporate globalization agenda of Madhya Pradesh has been the Asia Development Bank. The Asia Development Bank came in 1991 with a 1200 crores public sector reforms loan. We still don't know how the money was spent, because the loan expected them to close down 17 of the 32 industries of the public sector corporation in Madhya Pradesh and throw out 17000 workers and bring in an independent regulatory commission for the electricity boards. Basically it's a road map towards full privatization, full closure of all public sector corporations including the Electricity Board and the State Transport Corporation. This was largely implemented. There have been progress reports from their favorite firms such as Pricewater House saying that everything is on line. This loan even had conditions stipulating what was to be announced in the budget speech in the Madhya Pradesh legislature. In 2001 there was a power sector loan which had equally stringent conditions attached. Tariffs were to be increased and an independent commission was to be set up which would basically take away all decisions regarding electricity from the sphere of popular control. It was once more a move towards privatization, though in this phase it was called corporatization and unbundling. After that the ADB has given a loan for six urban cities of Madhya Pradesh including Bhopal, Indore, Jabalpur and Gwalior. One of the conditions for these cities to obtain the money for water and sanitation is that by

2007, all public taps in these six cities have to be closed down. The result would be that the poor would be left with no water to drink. This paves the ground for privatization of water resources because as long as there is a leak somewhere in the system, private interest can't enter the water market.

Both limitations and possibilities characterize these movements. A positive development in recent years is the broad alliances that the rural movements are building up. Ties are being forged with trade unions and city workers. Now there are also plans of making alliances with education workers and transport workers as these sectors are also getting privatized. Secondly, the question of cleavages in the rural sector is a burning problem. I don't think either farmers or rural workers can fight imperialism unless they take a stand on feudalism and other cleavages that exist in the rural polity and economy, namely caste and the central contradiction between farmers and workers. The programme for fighting caste divisions and a programme for workers has to be chalked out. Thirdly, as a person working in the movement, I feel that contrary to the general belief that there is too much talk; we actually talk too little. We need to talk much more about these issues and also to think a lot. Unless we can build up political and ideological leadership at a very broad level, no movement against imperialism from the rural areas can succeed. Fourthly, it is very important for all of us to realize that there is no easy alternative to direct agitation. We can no longer negotiate at the high table for any gains for any sector. We are compelled now to have a head on battle. Unless this decision is taken once and for all, it won't be possible for all of us to unite in a fight against imperialism.

Session IV

WORK, LIVELIHOOD, EMPLOYMENT (Urban)

Opening Comments

Sabyasachi Bhattacharya

The chief reason why I'm here today is that I've a very strong interest in labour studies and we started an association to promote labour studies just 10 years back. We have held several conferences and when it was proposed to me that there would be a panel on work, livelihood, and employment at this conference, I was happy that some attention has been given to labour question. I believe that it is a somewhat neglected area, although there are very significant developments which have taken place over the last two or three decades in the area of gender studies as well as the women's movement as a social movement. I believe that it may be useful to look at the questions of labour and more particularly women's engagement in work in the context of globalization and I propose to you that perhaps some amount of rethinking has to be done on the labour question in the light of the development we call globalization.

If we look at it in historical context, you do see certain differences between the kind of capitalism that prevailed in the world and hegemonised the world in the first six or seven decades of the 20th century. You will recall not only Lenin in 1916 in his work on *Imperialism the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, but also Rosa Luxemburg in her work on *Accumulation of Capital* three years before that in the year 1913, and again Ruth Rudolph Hilferding in his work on *Finance Capitalism* in 1910, analysed the nature of capitalism

which they thought was chiefly based on finance capitalist monopoly. And if you recall their analysis, their emphasis was very much on the emerging conflict between nation states in the developed world, in the countries which had reached a high stage of capitalism, and in fact when Lenin was writing, the first world war was already a strong endorsement of Marxian analysis of imperialist conflict arising out of struggle between national monopolists. I think that between that stage and the stage that you see today, especially from the 1970s & the 1980s, there are certain major differences; and I propose to begin with that because it provides the historical context in which we have to look at the question of women's engagement in labour and work.

If you look at the sequence that Marxian literature has depicted in capitalism - industrial capitalism followed by finance capitalism, you might notice that in the finance capitalist stage there were certain salient features, which distinguished it from earlier stages. One was obviously the fact that the nation state was the locus of the industrial financial capitalist hegemony. When Hilferding, Luxemburg or Lenin were writing, it was very much a stage of national capitalism struggling with each other for a kind of global hegemony. Secondly, there was at that time in the first six or seven decades of the 20th cc, a socialist alternative. From 1917 onwards there was an alternative to capitalism, another way of structuring the economy and people's life. Thirdly, there was another thing that distinguished it from the earlier phase, which was that there was a very strong anti imperialist movement in third world in the colonies of the Great Powers.

Now this scene contrasts sharply with what we have today. In fact from the 1970s and particularly from the 1980s onwards, the scene changed radically. First, the anti imperialist struggle had ended up with decolonization in slow degrees over Asian and African continents. Second, the Soviet Union began to disintegrate and thus in the perception of some people (I do not agree with them), this was the end of the socialist agenda. But certainly the disintegration of the Soviet Union was a great difference between the stage of Finance Capitalist imperialism till 1970s and what we see today. Third, in the new phase we also see the emergence of transactional corporatism of a kind different from that which you saw in the early 20th cc till the 1970s. Capitalist interest, promoted earlier by the individual nation state - the Great Powers in particular, now receive the support of the international agencies in a very big way. And today, as you know, it is not one particular Great Power, which necessarily controls the decisions, which determines our fate in economic domain. You have international agencies - the World Bank, IMF, WTO and the like, and a kind of internationalization of the control system.

At the same time that transnational corporatism spilled well beyond the boundaries of the nation state, simultaneously the globe shrank in size on account of emergence of new information technology. The former colonial countries were decolonized, but increasingly, from the 1970s they came under the so-called economic discipline of international agencies. India has increasingly become a part of that so called economic discipline, dating from the Cancun Summit in Mexico in 1982 onwards, mainly under the auspices of the U.S in alliance with other major developed countries. There has been the enforcement of the so-called structural adjustment policies on the Third world countries. Further, some of the Asian countries began to be a part of this expansion of transnational capitalism. If we think of Daewoo or South Korea, or Venezuela, or even our Mittal Steel Enterprise and so on, there was some amount of participation of native capital of the former Third world countries in the expansion of multinational companies. Now these are the differences

between the kind of scenes that one encountered in the sixth and seventh decades of the 20th century and what we have before us today.

Economists have analyzed much of this, in terms of international trade and international flows of capital, - where FDI goes, etc. You can look up the UNCTAD reports and get material easily. On trade flows the data are easily accessible but as a Marxist (if you are a Marxist), you would also raise the question as to what is happening to production relations. It is not entirely a matter of expansion of the market, but certainly market mergers play a very important role. If you look at the ECM for instance, it was an astounding achievement in merging markets to enable capital to expand over a very large part of the world without hindrance. Even the emergence of the Euro replacing the national currencies is an enormous achievement for capitalists in that it saves the transaction costs of exchange from one currency to another. This too is a part of transnational capitalism. Economists have studied all these things in great detail - which I have called transnational capitalism, which is sometimes called globalization. Many of them are technical economists, not interested in the kind of things you and I might be interested in, but nevertheless valuable work has been done. But if you think of production relations and how that was impacted by globalization, if you look at how the nature of work has changed, the conditions under which labour is employed - these are the questions which are often somewhat neglected in the discourse of high economics.

I am happy to see that today we have among the papers to be presented in this session, papers by people who have studied in fair detail - in personal field research - the conditions under which women have been employed. The question of women emerges as important because women are the first victims if there is any food shortage. Within the family, often it is the women who go without food, the girl children suffer more than the male children, and so on. Opportunity for women's employment also shrinks much more than that of the men. Therefore its important for us to look at this transnational capitalism and its modus operandi, such as outsourcing, such as use of capital intensive technology to reduce labour cost, and various other means that world capitalism or transnational capitalism employs today to access cheap labour in the less developed countries. We need to understand how all this has impacted the condition of women who work in these less developed countries - in countries such as ours - and this has not been something that the discourse of economics has favoured with much attention. Some work has been done but I think the kind of work that has to be presented today is of great value because this is something that emerges out of the personal experience of many of those who have written these papers.

New developments in labour hiring and employment in urban India *Indrani Mazumdar (presenting paper written jointly with N.Neetha)*

Professor Bhattacharya has laid quite a lot of ground and I'm afraid that the paper that is before you does not address all the issues that he has raised. They are of course very important, and in the written paper before you summarized case studies dealing with some of these questions - particularly in relation to the globalised industries of garment exports and electronics - have been given. But in the presentation today, because there'll not be enough time to cover all aspects, I'll be focussing only on some of the emerging issues and trends in urban women's employment in the country. The paper is, as has been told, on the urban workers. What we try to do is to outline some of the new developments and changes

taking place in labour relations or hiring patterns governing paid work for women, and in the forms of exploitation that are growing there. But before we go into this, from the general employment data there are some particular features of the liberalization period that are apparent from a comparison between the two rounds of NSS in 1993-94 and 1999-2000, which I just want to highlight and present before you.

The first of course is the sharp fall in the work participation rates of women, that is actually the face of growing unemployment. Of course it has been steeper in the rural India, but it is quite sharp in urban India also, where it has fallen from 155 to 139 per thousand. The second is the decline in share of women workers in all major sectors other than retail trade and some sub sectors of services. The third is the absolute fall in agricultural employment (really driven by the absolute fall for women), and a general sign of stagnation in manufacturing employment, with an absolute and major fall in the core sector of textiles. There has also been an absolute fall in what is called personal services, which is largely speaking domestic work. And the fifth is the substantially increased presence of trade in employment, and in urban India - the emergence of wholesale and retail trade as the largest sector of employment.

These are some of the features, which Neetha and I in our discussions have noted as trends that have emerged in employment data. Within women's employment, we can see that in overall (combined rural and urban) manufacturing - beedi has emerged as the largest sector, for the first time overtaking textiles and textile products in share of employment. In urban India, we are seeing the rise of retail trade, again having overtaken personal services for the first time in urban women's employment. The conclusion that both of us came to from this data (of course it may not reflect everything but the point is) that there has been in these years, a crowding of women into beedi and retail trade because of falling shares and falling employment in other sectors - in agriculture and manufacturing. Naturally this means that there are additional pressures on the conditions of workers in these particular sectors into which women are being crowded.

In relation to urban India, there are some long-standing features in women's employment which need to be borne in mind. One is of course, as everyone knows, that urban areas always had a substantially lower work participation rate for women in comparison to rural India. Just to briefly go over the reasons for this: the first is that the nature of industrial development that took place earlier did not favour greater employment for women. In the early stages of the development of modern industry -during colonial times, there was initially a use of family labour, and women did come into such industry in this process. But as the wage contracts became individual, this avenue of women's entry into modern industrial employment (however patriarchal) became closed, without the opening up of other opportunities. This trend continued in post independent India because of technological change also. Even in sectors such as textiles, etc., where women did have a critical mass in employment, technological change - which rendered redundant several functions performed by women - led to their removal from modern textile employment, and we saw a continuous declining share of women's employment in textiles. Thus, modern industry based urbanization had not led to any great expansion of employment for women.

On the other hand, services, growing around administration and other white collared services, were also initially completely male-dominated, primarily because they were largely upper caste dominated, and because traditionally in the upper castes women were

denied the right to outside labour or employment. Of course, from the Second World War onwards and following independence and its constitutional mandate for equality, and because of government policies (particularly of expansion of higher education), we did have a relatively greater mass entry of educated women in employment, particularly in teaching. Later as the public sectors in banking and insurance etc. grew - you had increases in women's employment in such sectors. But such developments bypassed the poorer classes of women and women workers from these sections were concentrated in low-income cottage industry (the declining sectors of industry) and of course in personal services, which increasingly over time - through the years following independence, became increasingly feminized.

If you look at the data on urban India, agriculture has always occupied a very high proportion of the female urban work force. This is because of the developments I have mentioned. Agriculture, otherwise peripheral to urban employment, throughout continues to have a very large share of women's employment. I should also mention also that where the area of growth in the first phase of post independence industrial development was large scale organized industry which really increased its number and proportions of industrial employment very substantially up to the 1970s, from the 1970s we actually saw the rise of unorganized manufacturing. It was in this unorganized manufacturing sector, where increasing numbers of poorer women were then able to find some degree of employment.

In the 90s however, some changes in the urban scenario have to be noted. One is that the precipitous fall in women's employment in agriculture and the stagnation or crisis in unorganized manufacturing is obviously pushing women into retail trade on the one hand, on the other hand large numbers of women are actually also being pushed out of the urban work force. Another notable aspect as far as the urban data is concerned is that employment in education has obviously increased substantially (though not as substantially as people think), and women's employment in education has also grown. At the same time personal services, although declining in proportion, continues to remain the largest employer of women in services.

In such an overall context, there are three related aspects, which I want to discuss with all of you. First - the question of trade in urban society today. While there has been crowding of workers, particularly into petty retail trade for women workers, overall employment in wholesale trade has also grown substantially in this period. Now what has happened in wholesale trade is that there has been a net fall in the employment of women. This is despite the fact that the additional employment in wholesale trade constitutes something close to 13% of the net additions to the urban workforce. What it means therefore, is that there is an increased presence and role of wholesale merchants as employers. It also implies an increased volume of commodities that these merchants are now controlling. This is something that needs to be borne in mind when we examine the nature and forms of labour relations that are growing in urban India.

Second - the expansion of employment in education, and to a lesser degree in health, has obviously primarily been driven in the 1990s by the private sector, part and parcel of the privatization process. Apart from the corporates (who are probably more visible in health than in education) and the relations of employment of corporate style service industry, there has also been a substantial growth of an unorganized sector - both in education and health. These are now sectors in which profits are being extracted from service labour, and

the issues of such forms of exploitation of service labour, including the low wages that prevail there, requires some greater foregrounding today than perhaps was there in the past.

Third - in relation to personal services or domestic workers (I'm sure Kiran is going to deal with it in great depth), the point I wish to make is that there are different levels of issues involved. There is a trend of growth of employment or placement agencies which veer around to extraction of profit through placement, and sometimes continue to profit from a share of the domestic worker's wage - perhaps more in the major metropolitan cities than in the smaller towns, but the larger number of part time domestic workers obviously have a direct relationship with the consumer of their services who is also their employer. In that sense you do not have profit extraction in the latter category, but you have a direct relationship. Although I'm not sure about this, and we could discuss it, but there does seem to be a shrinking of employment and a pressure in this part time area. There are strains coming because of lack of any great other opportunities of expanding employment. This is particularly apparent from the fall in subsidiary status employment of women in personal services. Even in the sphere of menial service employment (which might cushion situations of economic distress, however poor the quality of employment), there seems to be some pressure or shrinkage of women's employment opportunities. There may be greater competition for jobs among them - this may be truer for the smaller towns than the larger cities. This is something that we have to investigate further.

Another area, which I would like to foreground - is the question of home-based workers. Now as regards home based workers, beedi of course is the largest employer. But the trend has been towards ruralising beedi manufacture, of movement of beedi employment into rural areas. So in urban areas, the aggregate share of beedi employment has been falling, even as the share of women and numbers of women in beedi have increased. Yesterday we had a lot of discussion on the poor quality and nature of beedi employment and what has been happening to workers there. So I'll not go into that. What I would like to raise is the issue of other home-based workers in miscellaneous industries, the relations that are developing around such forms of home-based work in urban areas, and to apply our minds as to how the issues and demands of home-based workers may be raised in the coming years.

For this I'd just like to present a few of the findings of a survey done in Delhi. I don't want to repeat some of the commonly known aspects, which everybody knows - i.e., that homebased work is largely piece rated, with low income (although the finding of an average rate of just a little above 2/- per hour is quite shocking), it involves self exploiting hours of work, a large range of intermediaries and contractors, use of particularly girl children in the work, and low productivity. All these are fairly well known but the points I wish to add are the following: first - in today's situation most of these home-based workers are not working in (or rather their work has not grown out of) traditional craft based cottage industry. They are actually increasingly becoming part process workers in a wider and more socialized mode of manufacture. They are employed in work farmed out by factories and workshops (largely from the unorganized sector and mostly for the domestic market), and of course by wholesale traders. In almost no case - given the kind of commodities they are producing (especially where it is a part product and not a final consumer good), in almost no case would establishment of a direct relation between the worker and the market lead to even subsistence incomes. Profit margins are low and they accrue of course to

factories and traders. Second, even such lowpaid workers have seen a decline in work availability and the tendency (because both margins and productivity are low) is for reasonable incomes to accrue to only those who deal in volume, i.e., to the larger traders. I feel that the centre of gravity in capital accumulation from home-based production in urban areas, is actually shifting from workshop and factory to wholesale traders in a movement of regression towards a form of primitive accumulation. This definitely means that when we are going to be raising the issues of home-based workers, when we are going to be picking up the question of fighting for legislation for them, the role of these merchant sections, who are actually profiting from the labour of the women workers must and have to be incorporated into our understanding when approaching issues of employer liability. I will conclude at this point. So as far as the other more globalized sectors are concerned - such as garment exports and electronics, they are there in the paper. Thank you.

Issues crucial to women's work: Some aspects of an agenda for the women's and labour movement

Sujata Gothoskar

I would try to make my presentation a little more inward looking as opposed to looking at more macro issues. Some of the issues that I have tried to raise in my paper have arisen partly due to globalization, some of them have acquired graver proportions due to globalization, and some of the issues have been long-standing and they just give us a new opportunity today to look back and try to be more critical of our practices. The informal economy was one of the issues that I was supposed to speak on and the informal economy has very wide dimensions. It includes relationships with micro economy, with international capital, as well as with families and how women are discriminated within families – and how entire communities are discriminated against vis-à-vis education and skills, and how certain types of employment are blocked to certain communities. So the whole issue of informal economy has very wide dimensions and I try to touch upon a few of them here.

What I tried to do in the paper, although I'll not follow the same order, is to look at only five aspects of women's employment, first, the quality of employment, second, quantity of employment, third, issues around the working poor, fourth, issues around vulnerable sections within women, and fifth, migration/trafficking and sex work. So these are the 5 issues that I am looking at. We have done a lot of work yesterday on the entire issue of quantity and quality of employment, about the entire issue of working poor. So what I'll do is to basically look at the vulnerable sections of women workers, and migration/trafficking and sex workers as two issues. To start with - a little bit of backdrop in terms of the earlier issues - when you look at data in the 70s, 80, and 90s whether it is NSS, or factory returns, or the census - you see a lot of very interesting and very disturbing elements coming up. One of the things coming up very sharply is that the average education of a women worker in India is 1.9 years (even less than 2 years). The corresponding figure for men workers is 4.6 (this too is not terribly high or very heartening but its more than for women workers). 62% of women workers in India have not gone to school. (Women workers means all the women who work). The average education of women who are not employed is much higher than the women who are workers, and this has very many implications in terms of the sort of work that women get into, and that I think is something of very serious concern. Because

you enter the labour market with a very serious disadvantage, and then if you are in the informal economy (more than 90% of women are in the informal economy) the disadvantages suffered by the women workers is not a very surprising aspect of the employment scenario.

Coming to quality of employment of women - they constituted 84% of marginal workers in 1981 and 90% of marginal workers in 1991. This is a global trend. Its not something particular to India. With the entire equation of education, it gives a very disturbing picture where even after 1991 also you see a trend where main workers are not women. If you compare in terms of quality of employment, quality of life, wages etc. of marginal workers and regular workers, then you have a picture where the average casual worker in rural areas earns 32% of the average regular worker and in the urban areas its 34%, with women in rural and urban areas its 25%. That in a way sums up the picture of the sort of employment scenario that women are involved in over last 20 to 25 years. (Data: it is from several articles in EPW, which base themselves on NSSO – Nov Dec. 2004)

The other aspect is the complete uncertainty that one needs to factor in when we are talking about strategy. Just to give an example - the MFA expired last month and one really does not know what the scenario is going to be like. In the last two years when the MFA was being phased out in different products - for example, when women's bras were phased out in 2002, what you see is a very sharp decline in exports from Bangladesh and the Philippines. (18 to 17% decline) and 232% increase where bras were concerned, and in baby clothes 862% increase in exports from China. We really don't know what this means. It's a scenario where some economists are saying that India would not be as good as China but they would gain from Bangladesh, Philippines and Sri Lanka. In Bangladesh, over the last two years there have been over 180 factories that have been closed down. Just a little less than a million women have lost their jobs. Sri Lankan unions are fearing the same. Indian women have also lost jobs. But, for instance, if you look at factory returns in women's employment in Maharashtra, you have an increase from 10% to 16% in last 10 years. But for adolescent girls the increase is from 77% to 85%. These are girls in the 16 to 18 years age group - possibly in garment industry but may also be elsewhere. I am not saying it's a good thing for these girls to be in these industries but there are a whole lot of grey areas that one needs to be very aware of. This situation really calls for a very active live network when one discusses and monitors what's happening in the economy or society.

Among other issues that I really wish to raise, there is this entire issue of marginalized section of women, and one of the things that there has been a lot of discussion on is Dalit women. There isn't a lot of data about such aspects. You have a whole section in South where you had economic boycott. Also, one of the main sections which the women's movement and the labour movement has neglected completely is what we called decriminalized or denotified tribes. There is absolutely no data on this other than autobiographies and biographies that men write (because women do not write in those communities). You realize how even men from these sections find it so difficult to enter into fourth standard or fifth standard or to go up to the seventh standard. So there is this complete exclusion of certain sections within the labour force; and for those sections even the informal economy is a very big advancement. They are pushed into the criminal economy although they want to be in the formal or the informal economy. This whole nexus is something that we need to look at.

Another marginalized community where we do not have any data is sexuality minorities – the lesbians, the gays, and the trans-gendered. What happens to their employment; where they live, etc., is completely out of the terrain of the women's movement and the labour movement. This is something that we really need to address. Then in my paper I have gone into some of the data on the Muslim community and the Dalit community, but I just could not find any data on the exclusion that is practiced on the denotified and the decriminalized tribes and I think it is extremely important that we take that on board.

The last point I want to raise, that has been looked at by the women's movement and where a lot of NGO's too have come in, is the issue of trafficking, migration and sex work. We did talk a little about the migration yesterday. I really feel that we need to look at this whole phenomenon with a very different perspective. Where I work there are a whole lot of construction workers and domestic workers who are into part time sex work, and there is complete obliteration of any recognition of this and the issues they face in that work. There are some little support systems, where some NGO's are working, but how one looks at the entire issue is important. Trafficking is something that one needs to completely oppose and organize against. But in the name of opposing trafficking, restrictions are raised on women's migration and travelling. In fact, this leads to more trafficking. Most of the studies in this area are of Burma and Thailand, but they cut across rural and urban sectors. So while we oppose globalization of commodities, globalization of capital, finance etc. and the way it is happening, we should totally support globalization of labour so that there is no restriction on women if they want to travel. But we must create conditions so that they are not forced into it. I would like end at that, and I think we need to take all these issues on board. I have been a little introspective rather than looking at macroeconomics. I feel that this violence of globalization and globalization of violence that is going on has also to be addressed internally, because we have been a part of it by perpetuating some of the discrepancies and discrimination that globalization has brought into focus. Thank you.

Shouldering the double burden; Experience of organizing domestic workers in Pune city Kiran Moghe (AIDWA, Maharashtra)

Friends, we just had two presentations on what is happening to the world of work in the whole era of globalization and I think they have really thrown up a lot of issues. I think that our experience at the ground level (as far as what is happening to work is concerned) seems to be a little in contrast to the kind of points that have been raised both by Indrani and well as Sujata. There is this whole question of what's happening to women's work. One thing that Jayati pointed out yesterday is the complete lack of opportunities. This is not just there in rural areas but urban areas as well. Secondly the whole issue of migration that was raised yesterday by Brinda and several others about what was happening in the rural areas. The whole question of the concept of work participation has to be dealt with very severely by all of us because the data seems to be showing something and our experience at the grass root level seems to showing something else. The whole question of how you define marginal workers also has to be now dealt with because the census data seems to be showing one thing and our experience another thing.

How do you define marginal worker? What is part time work? And the whole question of informalisation and feminisation also needs to be looked into. What is feminisation? And is it a positive thing as far as the experience of women is concerned? Also feminisation

relative to whom (a question that Brinda raised yesterday), also needs attention. I think these are the issues that I'm going to be looking at in our experience of organising domestic workers in Pune city in particular because that's where I work and also overall in the state of Maharashtra.

As you know AIDWA is an area based organisation and we have been working in the slum areas of Pune and in other parts of Maharashtra for a long time. One of the things that we have observed over the last few years is that a larger and larger number of women who have become members of AIDWA, are actually working as domestic workers. Now part of this came out of the very practical experience of organising. For instance when you plan a meeting or a *juloos* or something like that, what's the best time to do it? We found many of our women telling us that it cannot be done before 3:00 and 4:00 in the evening because that's the time when these women finish their domestic work and come home. Secondly, while working in our areas, we found several women coming to us with complaints about how they were treated by their employers. We have a case where an employer had beaten up and abused (not sexually, but physically) a 12 year old girl, and her mother (who's a member of AIDWA) came to us and wanted us to intervene. So we find ourselves increasingly intervening in their issues at the work place. And that's how we really decided in our organisation that we needed to look at their issues more carefully, and also to organise them, and last year we actually registered a union under the Trade Union Act.

Now what are the types of issues that come up in this process? The first point is in relation to the kind of domestic workers that we have organised. I think that there are two types of domestic workers really. One is what we call "live in" or the "whole time" domestic worker, and there are both male and female domestic workers in that category. But we are not looking at that section really. I don't like to use the term part time for the type of domestic workers we have organised, because I'm questioning that categorisation itself. They are not part time workers though they may work for one to two hours in a particular household but if you really add up the total hours of work and the time, one can find them working much more than a whole time worker. We also need to look at how the census is actually enumerating these workers who do heterogeneous types of work - one type of task in one home, another type of task in another and perhaps a package of tasks in the third home - altogether working may be 8 to 10 or even 12 hours in a day. So we are looking at this section of workers. I have given them another nomenclature and call them daily help workers because in a sense, though they are paid a monthly wage, they are liable to be removed anytime. Their jobs are very insecure. Also, if they do not go to work on a particular day, their wages are cut for that particular day. In a sense they are daily workers paid on a monthly basis. So I would not like to call them part time.

Even in the census data, they are called regular employees. But how many of these kinds of workers are actually getting enumerated is the question, because there is a lot of shifting and insecurity in this whole sector. If you look at the 1991 census data, which was available, it says that there were a total number of 7.4 lakh persons employed in the domestic services (this is according to the occupational classification). Out of that 2.7 lakh were males and 4.6 lakh were females. In the corresponding 1981 data, you find that there were 4.4 lakh females. So there seems to be an increase from 4.4 lakh in 1981 to 4.6 lakhs in 1991, but of course we do not have the 2001 data at this point of time to tell whether there has been a change. Interestingly there is the NSS 1999-2000 round which shows that

there are now 12 lakh total domestic workers. So this is something that we have to now examine. This seems to be in contrast to what Indrani had presented in her paper.

Now Let us look at the factors why more and more women are entering domestic work: Migration is one major factor that we have to take into consideration. In our work in Pune for instance, we found that all the women who are now living on fringes of the city; (in the new slum that has been developed there) actually have their roots in rural areas around Pune city. In fact in my paper I mention that in the CSWI report in 1974, the section on domestic workers refers to what the report calls an “odd feature” of the group of women that the team had met in Calcutta, where it said that these women were actually working in the urban areas and their husbands were in rural areas. Now I would like to say that it is not an “odd feature” anymore. I think we are finding more and more women, who are now migrating independently to come and live in urban areas and take up this kind of work.

Another interesting feature that we found was the rise of domestic workers in what you call semi urban areas or almost rural areas like Talukas. For instance, after we had our programme in Pune city, with the publicity that we got in the newspapers about our organisation and the kind of programme that we are taking up, there were several women from Taluka areas who contacted us and told us they are domestic workers and wanted to be a part of our organisation. So this is a new phenomenon that is growing. It's reflected to a certain extent in the data when you look at the urban rural break up of domestic workers that's available. I think it's largely because of the fact that in the rural areas there is also a growing elite now (which is also the beneficiary of the globalization process), and they are the ones who have started employing women who were formerly working as agricultural labour and are now moving into domestic services.

The third thing is of course that in the urban areas, with the decline in general industrial employment caused again by the globalization policies, Pune city which was once the centre of engineering industry is now in decline. You find first that when men lost their jobs, women went out to work. A large section of the domestic workers that we have been working with are actually in that sense new entrants into the labour force. It is seen also from our sample data, which shows that it's a much younger selection of women which is working, and also that they have been working since the last 10 years. We have asked them that question and they have said (almost 85% of them) that they have been working as domestic worker since the last 10 years. So that's another factor that's driving them into domestic work.

The fourth point is (which has of course been raised earlier) that there are actually no other avenues available for women. So what do you do especially if you are poor, and (as Sujata pointed out) if you are uneducated? Our data shows 57% are completely illiterate. There are no other options but to move into this kind of work. I'm not saying its unskilled. There is definitely a skill involved. But many women see it as an extension of the kind of work they are doing in their own homes and so find it relatively easier to start working as domestic workers. So these are some of the factors that I think are driving women into the domestic work.

Their work conditions have been documented by many. Briefly speaking - they are very poorly paid - 47% of our sample shows that their total household income is less than Rs 1000. It's no wonder that they choose to do domestic work. What are the other alternatives

available? One alternative in the urban areas is construction work. But in our sample for instance, the women who were formerly in construction work are now moving to home-based work or domestic work. One of the reasons is that compared to construction work this is not as hard a form of labour. Secondly, the construction industry is itself subject to ups and downs and domestic work is slightly better paying. Another thing is that it allows them to manage their own double burden. Because here the work is often in shifts, so even with working outside, you can do a little bit of outside work in the morning then go home complete your own household work and then go back. So this helps to a certain extent. You can't do that if you are a construction worker or doing piece rate work.

Secondly, if you are working in a home where there are women who go out to work, it gives you relative autonomy as far as your working conditions are concerned and perhaps you can also find somebody to substitute for you. These are some of the factors that make women prefer to work as domestic workers. But of course if you look at their work conditions, they are terrible. One thing is the complete insecurity that they have to face. For very small reasons they are dismissed. They are often accused of stealing. Then there are cases of sexual harassment at the work place. And the other point is the whole complexity of their wage structure. I'm making this appeal here also to the academics, because I think as an activist when we have to deal with the question of how wages are to be determined we really will need some help on how to build a model to determine what a fair wage should be for different types of activities. Some factors on which it will be based is on the number of people in the household, or on the floor area of the home, etc.. The fact is that there is a service involved, there are number of years of experience, there are different types of tasks – all making for a very complex manner in which the whole wage is determined. I think we need to look at some of these areas and also the paying capacity of the employer because even the employers themselves are stratified into various categories. So that's something we need to look at.

Regarding the fact that there is absolutely no social security - there are some of our members who are between 60-65 years old, and when they stop working as domestic workers there's absolutely nothing for them- no pension, health insurance or any such thing. One should not forget the kind of demeaning treatment and the vulnerability that comes out from accepting this kind of lowly paid work. A lot of women that we met after the whole unionization process has taken place, feel that now - knowing that they are a part of union - their employers treat them with a little more respect. The fact that they are organized - that very fact by itself enforces empowerment (I don't like to use that word usually but in this context it's important).

We have also studied the social profile. We have a very small sample but there is a lot of data available. We are actually getting everyone who's becoming a member to fill a form with some personal details as well as details about their work and working hours. Briefly - 15% of the sample are widowed, 16% deserted and very importantly, 25% of them are sole earners. Around 51% of them are contributing more than half of the income of the total household. Many have problems with their husbands being addicted. 22% of them are Dalit women, 24% OBC women, and 3% minority women. However, we have to look at the last category a little more carefully because we do find that there are pockets where the minority community was the middle class as well as the working class community. There might be many more minority women who are working as domestic workers. We have also tried to look at whether there are any forms of caste discrimination. There is an

occupational segregation that you can see because we have asked the kind of tasks that are done in our questionnaire. One can see very clearly that the more menial kind of chores (like cleaning bathrooms) are done by the Dalit women, whereas the cooking is definitely done by the upper caste women. You don't see Dalit women cooking or making chapattis, but you do see her going to a non-Dalit household and a kind of mixing is taking place. Nevertheless discrimination is an important point that we have to take into consideration.

There are just two more points that I need to make. The first is that these women are themselves living in slum areas and feel the impact of the policies of globalization in terms of the other issues that they face like water, sanitation, housing, etc. All that is affecting them. So in a sense, their own burden of work is becoming more intense and that's also an issue. As an organisation we have not just been unionising them on their issues at the work place but also been taking up their issues where they live. Being an area-based organisation, AIDWA is able to do that kind of work.

The second point is that there is a growing demand for paid domestic work. I think it comes from two sections. One is of course as I have said, the beneficiaries of globalization policies i.e. the growing rich elite class who are employing more and more paid domestic workers to do their work. An interesting experience we had was on 31st December, when we were trying to have an anti liquor agitation in a different context and calling them to be a part of it. Many of them said 'its not possible for us to come today because our employers are busy having parties and we all have to do much more work this evening than any other day'.

There's also a phenomenon in Pune where the parents of people who have migrated out of the country (NRIs) are increasingly being looked after by paid domestic workers. The third important point I want to make is that there is a demand for paid domestic work coming from working women (who again are stratified – some of them very highly paid and some very lowly paid), who have no other avenue for their own double burden to be taken care of. And there's this whole question of socialisation of housework being substituted by the privatisation of housework through the medium of the domestic workers? Where the domestic worker is available, she is shouldering the burden that the state should be taking over, which is actually what we have demanded for a long time. This is an important point that we should take into consideration. Thus, if we are calling it feminisation in the sense that there are more women in relation to men who are domestic workers, it can be called feminisation. But given the kind of work they do and the demeaning conditions in which its done, I don't think that its a positive experience in any sense

Just one last point and then I'll stop. Within the informal sector we need to look at the different sections. Especially with the NDA Government there was this move to have this so-called umbrella legislation for the unorganised sector. I think within the unorganised sector there are various categories like self employed, domestic workers, home based workers, etc. and I think we need to study each of these sections properly and then formulate their demands so that it reflects the reality in which they are working. I must say that our experience shows that there is a tremendous upsurge and that there is a great enthusiasm within them also to get organised. I think it's up to all of us to go out there and start doing it. Thank you.

Commercial Sex Trade

At the very outset, I would like to make it clear that my presentation is based entirely on the specific experiences of Goa. I am not attempting to derive any general conclusions as that would make me guilty of the kind of generalisations that are popular with those very forces of globalisation, which we are trying to criticise. I would like to approach the issue of commercial sex trade in Goa through the journey of the organisation, which has been grappling with it.

There are four seemingly different, but interlinked forms of commercial sex trade in Goa. One is the brothel based commercial sex trade functioning in what is popularly called red light areas. The other major type is tourism. By this, I do not mean tourism related trafficking but tourism per se. For far too long commercial sex trade has been seen as an offshoot of tourism. In reality, it is an intrinsic part of the present model of tourism development. The third is paedophilia. Here the politics of language is very important, which I will explain in depth later. The fourth category consists of women workers who are neither organised, nor in the sex trade, but are vulnerable to demands of sexual services being made at the work place. There has been a tendency to break up women being affected in this sector into separate categories, such as migrants, women of Goan origin, etc.; and to look at their experiences separately. But I think it is more important to take into account the experiences of all the different sections of women in Goa. Even as their experiences differ, there are deeper linkages.

Our organisation's entry into this scenario dates back to 1986 and was born out of our personal experiences of abuse by domestic tourists. There were at that time no women's rights organisations in Goa and none of the existing social movements felt the need to address gender issues. In fact the tendency was to harp on the fact that Goa showed all the indicators of progress of women, such as a uniform civil code and a high level of literacy amongst women. In this context, raising gender-based issues, or forming a women's rights organisation was regarded as both unnecessary and impractical. On the other hand, if a dowry death occurred, it would not be on the agenda of the civil liberties organisations, the trade unions or the students' organisations. The paradox was that we, i.e., the people talking about forming an organisation for women's rights, were part of these organisations.

When we started looking for reasons why women in Goa were being harassed by tourists, the answer stared us in the face - the commercial Carnival Festival held every year in Goa. The Carnival is actually a festival of Pagan origins, celebrated by the Catholics in Goa during Lent. Like Holi, it is a festival of colours. It was brought in by the Portuguese, but has been adopted locally and is characterised by a certain level of spontaneity. The moment it got commercialised, women began to be used to sell the Carnival as a tourist attraction. In the floats of the commercial carnival parade women were used to sell tourism, cigarettes and liquor. It was easy to see that this parade was portraying women in Goa in a certain light, i.e. as easily available. The Carnival served as our entry point into questioning the imagery of women. From there we moved on to advertisements for tourism.

The standard format of advertisements promoting tourism in Goa would have a bikini-clad woman in the beach. When we started opposing this image, we unwittingly found ourselves on the same boat as the Shiv Sena. To differentiate our stand from that of the Shiv Sena,

we had to make our reasons for opposition very clear. Our opposition of the carnival was not because of its pagan or western nature, but arose from the commodification and use of women's bodies in it. It was not a question of the image of our women versus theirs. In this context, a slide show organised by the Government of India at the International Tourism Festival in Berlin becomes relevant. In a slide promoting a beach, a woman's breasts had been superimposed onto the scenery. When we questioned the Government of India's tourism office in Goa on this issue, they told us that it was a German woman's breasts to placate our anger. Once they realised that our objection lay with the image itself, the excuse now changed to the beach being in Kerala and not in Goa. Finally, they conceded our point and withdrew that particular slide. I mention this incident in order to illustrate the dilemmas and contradictions faced by activists in the age of globalisation and the so-called global citizen.

This issue of using the image of scantily clad women was raised in the Assembly by the three nominated women members. (The Goan Assembly reflects the real status of women in Goa. At that time, in an assembly of forty members, women's participation was restricted three nominated members. Today, it has come down to a single woman). Our objections were countered by the familiar protest that women can't be expected to wear saris on the beach. But our point was that neither could a bikini clad woman's body be advertised as representing the main attraction of Goa along with the catch-line- "Come to Goa. It's a therapy for jaded nerves and tired eyes."

An issue related to the commodification of women was the commodification of local culture. The Carnival was being taken out of its cultural context and packaged for tourists at the cost of its spontaneity. We also began to question the accepted notion of tourism promoting the development of an area. This assumption does not go into the real picture of who were gaining employment and profits out of the tourism industry. The land taken up by the tourism industry, though portrayed as barren land, is actually the land used for grazing cattle. It is also the land where women ease themselves. The water utilised by hotels, even if it is transported, has to be pumped out from some region taking down the level of ground water in that area. The development of tourism actually orients the entire economy of a region towards seasonal and uncertain sectors. The fickle nature of tourists has been illustrated only too well by the impact of the recent tsunami on various Asian tourist destinations. The Chief Minister of Goa has however chosen to capitalise even on this mammoth human tragedy by coming up with '365 days of calamity free tourism' as the unique selling point of Goa !

Tourism, just like the model of development of which it is a manifestation, consistently marginalises women. The marginalisation of women by the development of tourism takes place in several forms. They are displaced from their lands, which are acquired by five star hotels. They are also displaced from their livelihoods. This point is difficult to push through, as tourism, like globalisation, often brings with it immediate short term gains. The issue is further complicated by the bleak lives women working in the agrarian sector led prior to the advent of tourism. They were underpaid and often exploited sexually by the landlords. This situation was conducive for tourism. But the tourism industry is inherently fickle. Even within the coast of Goa, it has already shifted from the old conquests of Portuguese to the hinterland and interior regions that constitute the new conquests. The areas that have gone out of fashion are left in a mess economically. Local people, having already lost their lands, have very little to fall back upon.

The money order economy of Goa has been greatly accentuated by tourism. An increasing number of women are migrating as men are finding it more difficult migrate. Many of these women are becoming vulnerable to prostitution abroad. On the other hand while reviewing the Immoral Traffic Prevention Act, we discovered that the police were talking about the legalisation of prostitution. We were wary of this seemingly liberal stance of the police. Our past experiences of the slogan of the Uniform Civil Code being appropriated by the right had taught us that whenever a slogan is appropriated, there is more to it than meets the eye. The legalisation debate was taken up by the state from the standpoint of health, where concern over the spread of HIV and AIDS was a major factor. Legalisation would enable the state machinery to impose a system of health cards on sex workers. Thus, while playing lip service to the rights of sex-workers, the government could actually completely ignore their health issues and needs.

Simultaneously, there was talk of dismantling the brothels. The brothel-based commercial sex trade was, until recently, located in prime land, which could be used for tourism. Today, consumer preferences have changed and the rich tourists seldom visit the brothels. Thus, these have now become redundant as far as the tourism industry is concerned. The government for its project of port expansion also requires the land. Port expansion and privatisation have turned Goa into a corridor for the passage of container traffic. Extremely wide highways are the need of the day and dismantling the brothels would also free land for construction of such highways. It is not difficult to spot the vested interests involved in the proposal to raze the brothels to the ground, as part and parcel of the process of legalisation of prostitution. There is an utter disregard for the conditions of life and work of the sex workers in such schemes.

Globalisation plays a very important role in accentuating the problems discussed. Earning foreign exchange to fuel the repayment of debts has become increasingly important. As tourism provides an easy means of earning foreign exchange, over the years - the economy of Goa has been more and more oriented towards the growth of tourism. The result is the marginalisation of women based in Goa. This process has to be located within the larger canvas of globalisation that has marginalised women in other sectors too, most notably in agriculture. This has led to the migration of women from Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh into Goa. Some of them come in search for work, but most become involved in the commercial sex trade. The Konkan Railway, by providing a direct rail link between Goa and Hyderabad has made it easier to transport women from Andhra Pradesh to Goa. To cut a long story short, globalisation has created an atmosphere conducive to commercial sex trade.

We have refused to get drawn into the legalisation debate because in the given circumstances, it is an easy means of avoiding the real issue. The point of reference has to be the prostituted woman and her human rights. Legalisation can mean different things and we have chosen to look at it from the rights point of view.

Lastly, I would like to share with you the dilemmas we have faced over the choice of strategies in our struggle. The schemes drawn up for the legalisation of prostitution and the dismantling of the brothels seem to address every need of the evicted commercial sex workers, including their rehabilitation. However, in practice, very little is actually implemented. This façade of political correctness is an integral part of the changes ushered

in by globalisation which in effect, marginalise the poor and the women. The problem is further complicated by the entry of organisations like USAID, which are prepared to donate huge amounts of money to specific organisations for implementing this agenda. UNIFEM is also being used by USAID as a front to enhance its acceptability amongst women's organisations. This is the range of issues and problems, which need to be addressed in our fight to secure the rights of the commercial sex workers of Goa in the era of globalisation.

Tourism and Gender Relations: issues for exploration and intervention. *Indra Munshi (Bombay University)*

“From the world of work to the world of pleasure” - well that's what tourism is supposed to be. Anyway, a very hurried thank you to the organizers for having me here today and their wonderful hospitality but this is now my turn to deal with the tourism industry and how gender bias shows in the tourism process, in tourism promotion and in tourism consumption. This is a relatively unexplored area. In fact in India there are very few institutions, which have taken up tourism for serious understanding whether from a women's perspective or otherwise. But its developed elsewhere in the world. Although the issue of gender bias is relatively absent in the literature, nevertheless there are pointers to the existence of a very clear male view, which subsumes the way women experience and are impacted by tourism processes. So I'll try to delineate some of these issues and draw your attention to what ought to be considered seriously in social sciences research as well as women's activism.

Now why is a gender perspective necessary to tourism? I mean first of all one is very apologetic that one is taking tourism so seriously! It's for pleasure, it is supposed to give fun, then why are you sitting and tearing your head over how tourism works? But I think it's worth at least focusing on. First, because it takes place in a gendered society. Second, gender relations both inform and are informed socially by tourism processes. Social, cultural, environmental factors are not divorced from tourism activity. The third important point being that development, and the whole agenda of development, is so much linked with tourism activity in the recent decades. So therefore all this requires some attention.

I'll look at three issues today. First, is the kind of employment generated by tourism related activities and the very clear gender bias in that. I'll look at sex tourism, child prostitution, in that wider field. I'll also come to something which is relatively less visible - that is how images which tourism promotes are created and how women are used in this. This is much less visible and gets clear only when we begin to look at it more closely. Do you really see gender working in the very sexualized sort of images that are used to promote places, cultures and products? I think this requires some serious understanding.

Now before I go into these three issues, very briefly let us realize that tourism is an activity, which is expanding extremely fast. It is in fact, as the sociologists say - 'a marker of status'. It's like having a good car or a good house. However there is a difference between pre modern tourism and modern tourism. Without going into details, I want to point out that it is very much an activity of modern times. There is a Chinese sociologist who has done a lot of work and he says that with touristic consumerism expanding worldwide, and with tourists traveling further, various people, nations, and places are becoming involved in

this touristic globalization and being exposed to its positive and negative consequences. No longer can people or culture be really insular. So this is part of our expanding world. Now where does tourism come into development? Well, during the 60s tourism was and continues to be considered a passport to development. Several underdeveloped or developing countries were looking to tourism as a soft option. It required no major capital investment and it was considered environmentally safer. To have more and more guests was not seen as an intrusion in one's country. One of the major expectations was that it would create more employment and foreign exchange. This was of course a quick means to development and we know that several countries adopted this. I'm very soon going to touch upon it.

Now, criticisms have of course come after 60s. Economists are telling us that it's not such a major earner of foreign exchange. It's not a stable industry, and it destroys much of culture and environment. All but the third world countries are extremely enthusiastic about it. In fact a major criticism comes from dependency and world system theorists who in fact call these systems 'pleasure peripheries'. They, in fact, use the core periphery metaphor to define certain parts of the world as developing in a highly exploitative global system to provide pleasure. And you'll soon see - this pleasure is not so innocent.

Talking about employment and gender bias – looking at some studies from different parts of the world, it's quite clear that there is a gender bias. There are indeed gender differences in the type of work, the seasonality of employment, wage structure, and so on. What is interesting to note is - bed and breakfast tourism, that families (particularly women) have begun, in which a part of the household is given to the tourist. Now one sees that it certainly brings an income. I'm now trying to explore what this income does to women. Does it really expand her area of choices and freedom or does it go into the family pool while her burden (such as of course the quite essential mother feeding, cleaning and washing also now for the stranger) merely increase. Now it certainly enhances the family income - but to what extent it enhances women's control over the income that comes in - is something that needs to be looked at much more closely. What does happen is that the site associated with nurture and care - for family, is transformed into one of the commercial activity - for a stranger. Interestingly the stranger is also looking for a home away from home. And the woman of course provides all the comforts of a mother or a sister or an aunt or whatever. Now there are instances in Greece, Mexico, and Barbados, where, for example, women have certainly enhanced their position within the family because their income has increased from various things - either from the sale of handicrafts, or from bed and breakfast guests at home, and in fact their changed behaviour within the family is also noted. But many more cases of the other experience are placed on record.

The other thing that I want to discuss is the practice of turning certain countries (in fact the third world countries) into pleasure peripheries, precisely because they offer cheaper holidays and the four S's i.e. sun, sand, sea, and sex. So all this is available in the pleasure peripheries, and of course the pleasure seeking, adventurous tourist from affluent developed countries and the stereotypical submissive feminine female in the third world country complete the picture. In fact most of these women come into this kind of industry because they are poor, and work has been done to show how no other job is available to them. Besides, there is a growth in this industry, which encourages women to travel to these destinations. Some work has been done to suggest that the post war development of the New International Division of Labour (which radically reconstructed the economies of

south East Asia through their closer integration within the global economy), has in fact further aggravated the situation. The influx of rural women to urban areas to support their families, the overall marginalisation of female participation in labour market, and their exclusion from the industrial sector, have been among the factors responsible for women's entry into the industry.

I have to read out to you an absolutely disgusting piece of information. In Korea "Kisaeng" tourism is synonymous with Japanese oriented tourism prostitution. In 1985, some 260,000 prostitutes were estimated to operate in South Korea, the majority of whom came from economically backward rural areas. The Korean govt. even congratulated them for their 'heroic' patriotism in contributing to the nation's development. Now although Korean women's groups have protested, their govt. does not want to spoil their relations with Japan. Its also common knowledge that this type of prostitution exists in other destinations - like Thailand, Philippines, Sri Lanka, and several other countries. Now some of these women even accompany men to European countries because they are supposed to be submissive. They provide the kind of services their own 'empowered' women don't. Much of it is female prostitution but much is also child prostitution.

In the paper, I've written about how Korean and Philippines women's groups have protested. One Philipino said, " We would like to forget Japanese military imperialism. But now instead of military uniforms, the men come in business suits dominating Asia through a pernicious form of socio economic imperialism which tramples on the Asian people's right to human dignity." There are also ethnic aspects, but I'm not going into that. There is a horrendous increase in "paedophilia", and Goa is fast emerging in this area. The paedophile fears that things are getting 'hot' in Thailand now, not because the government is now sensitive to women's issues, but because of the fear of AIDS. So therefore there is a sort of coming down on paedophiles there, and they are now shifting their attention to Goa and Kerala. So these are 'safe places' for child abuse, and of course the Internet and other communication systems make such information much more readily available to domestic and foreign tourists. I'm not attributing all of it to tourism, but there is a distinct rise, which is very much a part of the unequal relations - the power relations - between the first and third world, and of patriarchal values in the societies within the third world. That is the perspective from which we'll understand, for example, tourism of this kind.

Now in tourism - images are crucial. Tourism advertising invariably represents the male view. The masculine and feminine attributes for example are very distinct. The male tourist is the 'macho', the 'adventurous' man, who wants to come to a sort of unexplored terrain, in contrast to the passive 'sensuous' submissive women of the third world. Tourist advertising material is replete with the images of the 'exotic' and the 'erotic' woman. These are extremely important terms that ought to be explored in understanding tourism activity. Both 'exotic' and 'erotic' are played upon in tourism promotion. They light up the fantasy world of male tourists from first world. For example, Caribbean women are presented in tourist literature as sexual mulattos with free time to enjoy the beaches and the male visitors. The dominant images of women from tourism generating countries are of scantily clad young women in exotic surrounding appealing to fantasies of middle aged businessmen who are feeling threatened by the improvement of women in North. The dominant image of women in tourism material in India is that of young women, traditionally dressed in all their finery, submissively welcoming the tourist with folded hands. In contrast tribal

women are shown sexily dressed - both 'exotic' and 'erotic'. In all these instances women are represented as the object of men's desire, of male tourist consumption.

In most cases the sexual image is quite explicit. As for example, 'Thailand is a world full of extremes and the possibilities are limitless. Anything goes in this exotic country especially when it comes to girls'. Or 'Vietnam awaits you'...and 'is as alluring as ever' or 'India awaits you...the timeless mystery and beauty of India has been waiting for you for 5000 years'. A Frankfurt advertisement stated 'Asian women are without desire for emancipation but full of warm sensuality and the softness of velvet'. A recent advertisement, which was hastily withdrawn, said 'Go to Goa, everything included'. Sexualized imagery is then transferred to landscape. Something as gigantic as Nigeria is described as 'seductively restless and tries to win your heart through its beauty' or Jamaica is 'tempting and innocent, sensuous, seductive'. Fiji offers 'waterfalls tumbling through virgin forests'. Seychelles offers 'seas that were made for pleasure'. Tahiti is finally, the 'island of love'.

Now for me the important thing is actually to look at two important ideas. I'm not going to explore them here. But what I do intend to do is to see what is intrinsic to tourism. For example, two ideas, i.e., hospitality (it's more than a hospitality industry and of course women are associated with hospitality), and the fact that you travel for pleasure are intrinsic. And of course in every tourist there is an inversion of norms that are followed at home. Why does one travel unless there is relaxation of norms that are followed at home? Otherwise why should he go away from his everyday life? I think it is these two ideas that I would like to explore in my ongoing study. You just heard that there is an organization in Goa that is fighting against this. But I think that like the issue of environment, tourism issues have to be taken globally. For example, if you oppose sex tourism in India, it's not a question of just the Indian govt. It also involves the places of origin, from where people come - looking for sex. Of course, our govt. sees it as a means to development. All these issues have to be taken up by women, social scientists, researchers, policy makers and women's organizations. Thank you.

- *Amarjeet Kaur (AITUC/NFIW) – Discussant*

Looking at the paucity of time I'll try to just bullet the issues which emanated from the discussion. I would like to begin with Sujata's last sentence - 'the violence of globalization and the globalization of violence'. What I could see from the last paper on the tourist industry as well as the other papers, is that in the larger context we can say that globalization is increasing violence in all walks of life and there is globalization of violence. This sums up many presentations. I would also say that what comes out from the presentations is that this whole process seems to be a process of exclusion. More and more sections are being excluded from the development paradigm which is being pursued in the whole process of globalization and privatization. This process of exclusion definitely harms more and impacts more on those sections that are already vulnerable. They may be dalits, marginalized communities, people in the informal sector, or women who have always been at the receiving end. So this process of exclusion can be seen from the various presentations made.

This whole growth in GDPs and GNPs is generally talked about. We are being told that inflation is being controlled and deficit budgets are being handled and growth is on rise. But actually if one looks closely, it's jobless growth. That is what emerges from the papers.

Such concerns and the anxiety of various organizations, movements, individual researchers, and mass activists have found reflection in the debate on this whole bill - about employment guarantee. Since its jobless growth, the whole issue is to ensure jobs for people and to look at issues of diverse jobs, change in jobs flexible jobs etc. and a kind of uncertainty and variation in forms of jobs can also be seen. There is uncertainty of livelihood itself, and among the examples being quoted are that of some of the export promotion zones being closed down and certain women being thrown out, whereas we were being told that EPZs, SEZs, are going to give a great boost to job opportunities. People were told call centres would give a lot of jobs in the IT industry. Even in all these so-called new areas, where jobs were supposed to be there, uncertainty, stagnation and saturation have actually reduced jobs. Then a shifting of places and industrial activities has started taking place, and this is largely the whole picture.

I agree with the point being raised about uncertainty and the whole process of this jobless growth. A shrinking of the formal sector and an increasing informal sector, along with casualization, is becoming more of a phenomenon. Besides this whole issue of feminization of work which was being talked about as taking place, there is another term being used often - 'feminization of poverty'. I think if we look at both these terms together then we get a better understanding. If we say that more women are getting jobs, then the facts are that they are getting less in formal sectors. In fact there is a reduction in the name of voluntary retirement and downsizing. In the sector enjoying job security - the numbers have started reducing, and in unprotected sectors - their work is increasing. Many women are opting for domestic work and many women from rural areas can be found in the construction industry. But then the construction industry is itself becoming more and more modernized and automated. In the beginning of the '80s, when construction was taking place in Delhi, there were many more women in the work force of construction. Now due to the whole process of automation, mechanization, and modernization of these activities, women are being thrown out. As comes out from the various papers, women are, from the very entry point itself, at a level of lesser education and skill. Globalization has further perpetuated such a situation.

I would rather say that we could definitely characterize this Neoliberal globalization as actually a new form, a new way and a new method of colonization. Whether you call it colonization, recolonization, or control of natural resources of country, the fact remains that the control of industry and agricultural land and throwing people into the category of sales persons and consumers, but depriving them of their own resources, is the process that has been thrown open by this market oriented neoliberal globalization and its free market philosophy. This kind of format is getting authenticated through papers. It is nothing but jobless growth. When my friends were talking about Export Promotion Zones, our studies also show that there is a rise in the number of employment of girls in export promotion zones, be it in garments or in fish processing. The number of adolescent unmarried girls, migrating from one state to another is on rise. These are the areas where unionization is prohibited. It's a very difficult area. This has been the experience of AITUC in Gujrat, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu. Field studies show all this. It's thought that it's easier to handle these young girls who have been told that they have to arrange their own your marriage expenses and dowries. Thus they are thrown into this area.

On the issue of migration, our friend Indra was telling us that tourism in 1960s was different from what it is today. All sectors are now designed from the point of view of

market profit. In a way migration provides a better avenue or better opportunity, but only for a few. Actually migration today is in general terms, a migration out of distress. When migration occurs out of distress or destitution, it leads to situations which are most exploitative. Some studies have been quoted here and this situation has also been pointed out by Sujata. When we were in WSF in Bombay, we had some presentations by women from the construction sector, who said that they get contracts on the condition that they sleep with the contractors. So it's not as if the new avenues have improved things for women. One can look at the call centres and the kind of problems that are there. Most of these youngsters working in call centres, are in fact computer engineers, MBAs, and highly qualified. So the real question to ask is what kind of opportunities or employments have been provided by this process of globalization?

On the point raised about Goa, what I would like to add is that its not just selling of artifacts and craft products by those young girls on the beaches. Many of the girls through this are actually looking for 'clients'. One advocate activist told me about a conversation she had overheard – a conversation between a 12-year-old Rajasthani and an Andhraite girl. The Rajasthani girl told the other girl that “you will not go to him. I'll go. You are dark. He'll not take you, he'll take me”!! Never before did we see so many young children migrating to Goa - something which has become very common now. I have been in Goa during my student days, but now the condition there is really pathetic.

So globalization of violence is of course taking place and this globalization is perpetuating violence in several forms, both in the world of work as well as at a social level or in situations of handling the other sectors of our lives. The papers were very good with lots of examples. The experience is a shared one. When you go to any regional or international seminar, similar experiences and stories from the grassroots are coming up. References have been made in some papers to what has happened in Philippines and Korea not only in terms of sex tourism but also in other forms. The whole experience of EPZs, SEZs in the Latin American continent and in South Asia those experiences have been compiled and can be taken up. They were first studied in Latin America and then in South East Asia, and finally in South Asia. Recently when some Sri Lankan friends (trade unionists) had come to Delhi, they also told similar stories of uncertainty related to whatever employment that has come up in recent times. I would like to sum up by saying I agree with the comments made by the Chair that commodification of women has always been a part and parcel of capitalist growth. But this has worsened so much in this phase of globalization that we should be able to foresee the extent of damage caused to the person and the society and question this kind of development. Thank you.

◆ *Sabyasachi Bhattacharya*

You missed the first few minutes when I did talk about how this phase is distinct, the phase which I have called the transnational capitalism. I have learned a great deal from the presentation made today. Indrani and Sujata gave us a kind of macro perspective and Kiran and Indra drew upon their own field experiences and research experiences to tell us how in everyday life, globalization is impacting women's work. I think both these approaches, which are complementary to each other need to be employed in order to understand what happens to women at work in the era of globalization. I would now open the session for discussion and questions on the presentation.

◆ *Ranjana (SAHELI)*

I think all the presentations were too overwhelming. I would just like to add another category of workers in the unconventional area that people have spoken about. We often get cases of NGO workers and in a year, at least two to three cases come just because of the faith and confidence they place in us. We have no experience of dealing with NGO workers as a labour issue. But it is such a large recruiting force of labour that all of us need to take cognizance of it. Even if you don't see them as profit making organizations, you should at least see the kind of social capital that they accumulate in terms of the goodwill and faith that they enjoy from funders and from the govt. What happens is that there are absolutely no labour practices. The policy of arbitrary dismissals and hire and fire policy are often much more subjective and much more arbitrary than those practiced by conventional shopkeepers and factory owners in Delhi. Also sometimes the termination letter is not given or may be given without any notice. There is absolutely no social security. The image of the victim changes because often the victims are English-speaking people like us. The worst cases are from places like Garhwal and Orissa, where there is absolute denial of minimum wages to the workers. In Orissa NGO employees earn anything between 450 to 200 rupees. In Garhwal, from Kamla Pant we got to hear that after the army NGOs are the only ones who recruit. So a kind of reprisal poverty that is taking place needs to be seen.

The second point I want to make is what Sujata said about there being very little experience that we come across, that we do not have the tools of analysis to deal with. This meeting therefore, becomes very interesting. Over one lakh people were dismissed on the banks of river Yamuna Pushta for Delhites between January and May last year. There was a total loss of livelihood, the numbers staggering - almost 27000 families. What however, was ignored (even by people like us, and there was no protest also in Delhi) was the presence of young sex workers in their late teens, who were daughters of closed factory workers and of those auto drivers who were not able to take loans to have the CNG engine. Their daughters entered sex work out of need for a livelihood. The second category of people were the Hijras who worked in Chandini Chawk and Kashmiri Gate and around Jama Masjid; again they were traditionally removed from these areas because the police denied them work over there. Both these categories of people didn't know where to go. They did not want relocation. They wanted to work in the same area and they were ready to bear the brunt of more police repression. Thank you.

◆ *Jayati Ghosh*

I just wanted to make a comment. I missed Indrani's presentation. I was just looking at the paper. This is really a dilemma that a lot of us who use secondary data on a regular basis have faced. So I wanted to share this dilemma in general, which is that just as in the past there was a situation where both the Census and the NSS did not capture women's work particularly living in the rural areas, likewise, we are now not (through secondary data) being able to capture women's work in the urban areas. I think this is why we keep coming across aggregate data which are somehow at odds with the reality we perceive. To give an example in Kanpur (refer to Chitra Joshi's work) there is a massive increase in women's work in homes where men are no longer working. It is not captured by Census or NSS or any of the aggregate data that we have. I think it has to do with the nature of the questions. In the NSS data, we were able to get questions put in regarding agricultural

work. So we are now able to capture a little bit more of women's work in agriculture, which is why we observe the shift. We do not have the equivalent proving questions in the urban areas. As a result of this, I think, we are often getting in the Census or in the NSS data, either self contradictory results or results which contradict our own perceptions of the world. I think this is the problem all of us, certainly I face, because I work essentially with the secondary data. I think this is something that we need to take up again, in order to rectify the statistical system. Just as it's not capturing migration, a whole lot of work in urban areas too is not visible. Indrani has done so excellent work in services and in home based work, she will probably be aware of this difficulty in working in this area.

◆ *Sabyasachi Bhattacharya*

Jayati, this is for you. Is it possible to throw samples to establish margin of error in the NSS data and then extrapolate that so that you get some macro data?

◆ *Jayati*

Yes, but the trouble is that all of this also relates to self-perception. Now the probing is designed to make people perceive their own work but if you compare any of these, you can see the huge difference that emerges in the actual work and the perceived work of the subject herself. So there is a fundamental problem in women's work and I think this is something which Indira will surely talk about.

◆ *Surinder Jaitly*

I have to bring you down to the empirical realities. For Indrani and Kiran's papers, I have a few observations; you can see if these can be included in the continuation of your work, and then probably we will get more varied picture of what is emerging in relation to domestic workers. I'm referring to the newly found cities like Gurgaon where there are large numbers of Bangladeshi women workers and all of them seem to be coming from Malda district of West Bengal. There is no scope for organizing these women because there is a lot of conflict between the Haryanvi workers and the Bangladeshi workers. The Bangladeshi women are ready to do any kind of work in the household from toilet cleaning but the Haryanvi women have a certain kind of prioritization that they will do only cooking and cleaning and not other chores. Both these kinds of female domestic workers are replacing the male workers, and there is large number of working women today, who prefer to have a woman in the house in their absence rather than a male domestic worker. As a result the Nepali domestic workers who are probably also labeled as thieves start entering into another kind of service which is the security agencies, mostly without any training. Now these classes of workers are going to stay as numbers of working women in middle and upper classes increase. Domestic workers are therefore also going to increase. But there is no beginning even in training these workers in housework. If it's taken as profession and they are trained, they will have much greater bargaining power while going out to look for work. If you go to the Middle East or South East Asia, you find that these are very highly trained workers. So in order to increase their bargaining power, they must have some kind of training and if the government does not provide, the NGOs should start some kind of a training process in this sphere. Thank you.

◆ *Rajni Palriwala*

One of the issues that were raised in the papers vis-à-vis globalization and labour is that of economics of globalization in terms of the pressure - due to an increase in unemployment, pressures due to possibilities of well paid work which are not the real possibilities, and the increasing inequalities. I was wondering if there is a little bit more which can be drawn out of that, including whether we can see new forms in domestic work. What we have is actually in a sense old and new forms coming together, but to me it seems in a certain sense that this issue is the crux of the problem we face today, not just in terms of how many workers but which sectors they are in etc. This is one point through which we can confront globalization. If we were able to address these issues and the forms through which labour is disciplined, then we can perhaps address the forms through which we can counter that.

◆ *Brinda Karat*

I just want to take the points raised by Jayati just one step further and see how we can include this in the conclusion of this conference. I feel that the disjuncture between official collections of data, which is then used to inform official policies, is something we see across the board starting from poverty estimates to everything else. Therefore, I feel it has to be one of the most crucial issues raised by women's movement in a very comprehensive way - to question official data as part of our movement. It's not just an academic issue now, because given the whole squeeze on state resources and this whole thing of misusing official data and collections, this is a very important issue for the movement. If at the end of the conference we can take it up as a very strong recommendation and work on it, it will be really good. The second thing that I would like to address is about unemployment rates of women and I think that this is not captured anywhere. So how do we capture the huge number of women who are coming into the labour market? This is also very important as far as putting pressure on the government regarding women's employment is concerned. There is really no statistical data on this. This is also an aspect that academically should be looked at and be included in our critique of data collection.

◆ *Sabyasachi Bhattacharya*

The point raised by Brinda has had a very great impact already. What she said was in fact anticipated in earlier debates in India on the poverty line and it did have some effect on the collection of data. Likewise if you remember, the UN and UNDP estimates of national incomes of various countries, was totally changed with the quality of life indexes which has now been introduced. So what you suggest may have an impact on the manner in which statistics would be collected. So there should be a resolution for some kind of action around this.

◆ *Indira Hirway*

I would just like to point out that the survey, which Jayati was referring to, had computed workforce participation rate for women and this was made comparable to current statistics of the NSS using the data etc. because survey was conducted in four rounds and then again the WPRs were much higher than the NSS or Census data. In fact, we had a seminar where we discussed all three estimates simultaneously and it proved the time used estimates are

much higher and there are reasons for that which I'll not go into. But the kind of problem you were talking about perceptions and those kinds of things are not captured by NSS data or Census, which can be captured by the Time Use estimates. Another thing, which I would like to say, is that this probing question scene would not answer the problem because in agriculture for instance, we have started probing questions but in Time Use we see even in agriculture, work force participation of women is much higher. The advantage of time use is you are collecting data on how people are using time without reference to any question, which can create bias or anything like that. So it's a kind of comprehensive picture on Time Use, which helps you in analyzing the data with good classification of time, and I think Govt. of India has taken it up. It's a new thing, which is not easily acceptable, but again there is an expert committee trying to work on it and I'm sure it will be mainstreamed in the near future. Thank you.

◆ *Indrani*

There is no dispute between all of us as far as the question of the inability of data to capture several things is concerned. But I want to stress one thing and that is we are failing to understand the effect of deindustrialization on urban employment, and that is why even in personal services where there is some increase and the data (faulty as it is) shows that in the category of principal status, women's employment in personal services has increased in urban India, which indicates a regularization and consolidation of domestic work as regular work for women. That much is there. But we are also not seeing the fact that there are several women who are not even getting this type of employment. There is no one more invisible in urban areas than the unemployed, employment denied, income denied poor - working class housewives, and that is a serious issue. So therefore when we are talking about these aspects this has to be borne in mind.

Secondly regarding home based workers, I did not refer to any of the data because the data does not capture the home-based worker and that is quite clear by now. It's a very large section and their levels of incomes are terribly low, which is why I feel that the home based worker question should be given some greater visibility. As far as factory employment is concerned, I have been arguing for several years that this business of feminization is not taking place in manufacturing employment. In garment export manufacturing, women's absolute employment has fallen as well as in share of total employment. Even the data is showing that. Export manufacturing has not generated that kind of employment. Deindustrialization is taking place. We have to understand the new relations which are emerging out of this process.

Session V: (Unpaid Work and Micro-credit)

Chair: Indira Hirway

We are discussing two more dimensions of the impact of globalization. One is unpaid work and the other is micro credit. We will start with unpaid work.

Women's Unpaid Work and Globalization

Kalyani Menon (Jagori)

Everybody said women's work is completely invisible excepting to feminists. Even women themselves- statisticians, economists, NGO workers- everybody pretends that women's unpaid work is not happening in the exploitative way in which it is actually happening. The reason for that I think is very obvious to everybody. There are very clear, very distinct and very material pay offs. First of all there are pay offs to the family. This whole construction of notions like love, care, virtue, goodness, what a women should do to be happy or to go to heaven or to be a man in her next birth, or whatever. All those are hugely bound up with the fact that women have to continue to do certain kinds of work - completely unpaid, completely unrecognised, and in whatever condition - as part of their being women. The vested interest there is clear because this unpaid work is really the basis for the physical well being - of men definitely, but also of children and others in the family - practically everybody except for the person who is actually doing that unpaid work. So there is a very clear material pay off.

There is also an ideological pay off in as much as the fact that the women who are doing this unpaid work, are not only doing it without questioning or without protesting against the conditions and terms of that work, but are actually feeling good about doing it. Ironically, this actual feeling of being valued for doing something which is not valued, is what perpetuates the framework in which women are the right people to do unpaid work. It is therefore a very critical and key mechanism for perpetuating patriarchy. There are also very clear pay offs to the economy. As several speakers have said yesterday and this morning - its women's unpaid work which actually subsidises the costs of globalization - the costs in terms of money, the costs in terms of health, the costs in terms of welfare. It produces and reproduces a willing workforce. It cushions the impact of cuts in social sector, which many of us have talked about. So even though water may become privatised, even though we may have to pay for every bucket of water, you will not see millions of people dying of thirst in India. Somebody will still ensure that everybody in the family gets water. This is invisible cost. It's covered through an invisible subsidy, and it's extremely convenient for all concerned. It enables the households to contribute to markets without being a drain on nation's resource pool.

I would like to explain what I mean by that. I'm not an economist but I can explain in the common sense way in which one understands it. There is a goods and services market where firms or somebody is producing goods, and Government and households are buying the goods. There is an input market into which households are contributing. They are putting in their labour, and firms (and maybe governments) are buying that labour. There is a financial assets market into which households are putting their savings, and firms, the Government and other households are borrowing and using those savings. Now all the inputs that the households are giving into this market are completely subsidised by women's unpaid labour. We don't need to go into details because the previous panel talked about it very specifically.

So the point or the issue really is that we have to recognise that households don't only consume and save. They also produce. They produce goods and services and they produce and reproduce labour power. Unfortunately standard macro economic models don't even recognise it. Brinda and others in the last session talked about the fact that official data don't reflect what women are doing even in the market which that data is designed to capture. So when we are talking about the realm which the data is not designed to capture, it's understandable why it's completely invisible, and statistics is a big issue here. Much

has been made of all this discussion around national production boundaries. At several levels the way the production and consumption is defined is completely ridiculous. To somebody who is not a trained economist and who is looking at it with a common sense eye, it makes no sense at all.

How would an economist see a typical day in the life of a woman in a country like India, in a subsistence economy? To quote a description: “She wakes up and breast feeds her child, which is unproductive inactive primary production as it is consumed by a member of the household and therefore it will not enter the national account. “She then goes to collect water and she uses some of that water to wash dishes from the previous night’s meal (unproductive work because it’s been generated and consumed within the household and thus stays outside the boundary of national accounts). She uses some of the water also to wash the pots in which she has cooked some food for sale in the market (that becomes informal work because it goes to the market).” One half of the same bucket and water is informal and visible and the other half of it is unproductive and invisible. If she goes to the forest to collect wood to cook the food that she has to sell in market, it comes within the boundaries of production and consumption. If she uses that same wood to heat water to bathe her child, that is invisible and not work! In doing all this, if she is carrying that baby on her back, she is breast feeding her child whenever - that is inactivity.” To anybody with common sense this sounds completely ridiculous. But this is the system that is internationally followed, and very seriously used to compute the amount of work that women contribute to economy.

We have a major problem here – and its not surprising that domestic work and domestic workers are the ones most likely to be invisible in counting of work that enters the market. It’s not surprising that migrant workers who provide domestic services are the least likely to be counted. The ideology of domestic work, the ideology of patriarchy - which makes caring and looking after others a primary virtue - also raises a strange contradiction when that virtue is transferred to the market. You have an employer getting angry because the ayah she pays to look after her child doesn’t seem to genuinely love that child. So you have ayahs being fired because, although they might be doing everything fine, but ‘they don’t seem to love the baby in the way you should love a baby that you take care of’. So you have very strange application of such moral values and moral virtues to a market situation where a woman is being paid to give some of her time to do a job. For some weird reason everyone - economists, planners, statisticians - everyone seems to accept this. That is what is really strange.

The reason behind this is that obviously the people who are doing that planning or policy making, are guided as much by patriarchal assumptions about women - about the place of women in society, and about women’s work - as much as we ourselves are. I certainly take to heart the point that Sujata made in the end - which is that we also need to reflect on how much our own analyses buy into these assumptions. Often when we try to apply tools of economic analysis to the reality we live and see around us, we are prepared to change our interpretations of reality rather than change our tools. I think that is the problem with a lot of economics. It’s a problem for the kind of economics that people who aren’t trained as economists are looking for when trying to simply make sense out of their reality.

These assumptions are the same old ones that we talk about in every seminar - the assumption that ‘the family is sacred’, the assumption that whatever is done for the family out of love is therefore sacred and good and cannot be questioned, the household is a realm

of 'privacy', the state should not interfere in it, etc. People might be beaten, killed, exploited within that physical and ideological boundary, but it is considered outside the sphere of intervention! Cultural traditions and social ideals are all geared to protect this space.

Women's time is also assumed to be infinitely elastic! So you can actually have a state policy that justifies paying less than minimum wage to an ICDS worker. Enshrined in such policy is the assumption that she is a woman who is doing this work in her 'free time' and if she was at home, she wouldn't earn anything, so even if she earns Rs 2 in her 'free time', it's better than 0. The 36 hours of work packed into a 24-hour day is something that we are all aware of and we don't need to go into these calculations.

Finally, comes the most fundamental assumption - that caring and looking after, the entire domain of care and unpaid work is somehow essential to women's own self worth - that she's not doing it for anybody else. She is doing it because she wants to do it, she wants to do it because she feels good about it and no one is exploiting her - you are making her happy by giving her that work to do, by giving her a meaning in life, somebody to care for, somebody to love etc. etc. These are heavily protected assumptions. They are protected by ideology, by tradition, by our own inertia, by our own difficulties in rocking the boat. So all of this is the armour, which allows these assumptions to go unchallenged. It allows such assumptions to actually be written into policy, in language that flouts every commitment made in the constitution or to human rights.

For more on these assumptions and how they guide policy, we'll just take example of home-based work because that has been talked about so much. If you look at economic policies, the one sector of work, which they are actually encouraging and facilitating, is home-based work. Whether it's home-based work through contract chains, SHGs or traditional crafts - the whole idea of women sitting at home and using their spare time to earn money for the family is extremely attractive. So if women are doing that (i.e., working at home), there is absolutely no cost for infrastructure or worker's welfare that the state has to bear; there is absolutely no liability that the state has to bear for the rights of these workers - infinite flexibility, infinite adaptability. Today you are straining beads; tomorrow you are stitching buttons on clothes- whatever comes along. Because the woman is at home and able to do all her other work along with economic work, it is considered to be infinitely adaptable. Best of all - there is no challenge to any kind of status quo, no challenge to patriarchal or economic ideologies because you have this huge mass of workers who will continue to work, who are kind of self targeted, who'll move to the least paid sections out of some notion of convenience and who will continue to be flexible, to adapt, and to produce in whichever sector. So this is an assumption with huge benefits for policies.

It's not a coincidence that these assumptions survive for years and go unchallenged. Because if one recognises unpaid work, I think we should be very honest and list the risks not just for the state, not just for policy makers - but also admit that somewhere it impinges on the domestic, it impinges on the realm of the private and the family. Looking at the unpaid work will reveal the whole cost of globalization, it would expose the economics of SHGs and the faulty thinking in economics of home-based production. It would question the anti-poverty programmes, which are based on this thinking. It will really uncover the child labour figures and it would legitimise women's claims to rights as workers. And these are hugely risky for the state to consider.

So I would like to end by saying that the challenge is also for the women's movement. Precisely because it holds such risks, it's also an arena where interventions by the movement can have huge impact. All of us have been saying this for years, but somehow it has not come together as a movement agenda. We have not struggled as much on unpaid work as much as we have struggled on paid work. We have not raised the issue of unpaid work as an issue of workers. We have not put it in the same arena as rights of workers and maybe that is what we need to do. We are not saying that this work has to be subsidised by the state through childcare, through care of the elderly, through food or social sector inputs like that. These are not being demanded as worker's rights and like Brinda, I would also like to request that the resolution that comes out of this workshop frontstages unpaid work in a way that we have not done for 20 years and which we need to start doing now. Thank you.

SHGs and Micro Credit

Kalpana (MIDS)

I want to start by saying something, which has become the obvious now. Micro Credit and Micro Enterprise development initiatives have become extremely central to anti poverty initiatives the world over. In fact this year, 2005, has been declared by the U.N as the international year for micro-credit. So we are going to be hearing a lot more about micro-credit specifically in this year.

What I'm going to be doing in the course of this paper is to review the changing representation of micro-credit as an antipoverty initiative within the dominant development paradigm. Basically I'm going to look at why the shift has happened and what the shift is all about. The shift is basically from an emphasis on *promotional* ability of micro-finance (promotional being the ability of micro-finance to promote people's income or to enhance income, to lift people above the poverty line) towards an emphasis on *protectional* capacity of micro-finance. Subtly, slowly and steadily the emphasis on promotional ability of micro-finance has shifted into what the literature calls – 'the ability of micro-finance to prevent people's income and livelihood from slipping below a certain threshold level of poverty' or to protect income and livelihood and the critical words are 'to mitigate risk and reduce vulnerability'. I'll be discussing why this shift has happened and in light of all this, I'm going to add some comments on the practice of Indian Self Help Groups based micro-finance.

A starting point will be to ask why has micro-finance come to be so celebrated in recent times, and what explains its appeal to a diversity of powerful institutional actors (including powerful donor agencies - the World Bank, the Government, the international media, as well as private commercial institutions). Partly it's because of the advantages that micro-credit programmes hold not just for borrowers but also for lending institutions. For borrowers, the advantages are obvious and well known - that the poor needed to organise themselves into collectives in order to be able to transact and negotiate with the formal lending institutions, needed this peer group lending structure or collectivisation of a kind in order to be able to bang on the doors of banks. But for lenders, what it has meant is reduced defaults in several programmes. It has been the worldwide experience that defaults have gone down in micro-credit programmes because intra-group peer pressure (that also spills over to community level sanctions) does the jobs that bankers used to do earlier. So there

has been a substantial transfer of the time and the cost of energy involved in screening, of inducing repayments, of monitoring borrowers, of coercing etc. from former lending institutions to groups of poor women borrowers. Therefore higher repayment coupled with the lower transaction cost for lending agencies have suggested the possibility of a viable lending institution - a financially self-sustainable lending institution that covers its cost to a substantial degree. This appeal of lender viability is what explains the appeal of micro-credit programmes in an age dominated by neo-liberal economic policy.

What is central to the dominant paradigm of micro-finance is the notion of “win win”, which means- 1) you address poverty by financing enterprises of the poor, 2) you not only address poverty, you empower women by routing credit to the woman in the family, thereby enhancing (it is presumed) her status in the family, and 3) you address the concerns of lender viability. So in a sense, this helps us to understand this global dissemination of micro-credit programme. The support of agencies like the World Bank can be explained by the fact that micro-credit programmes don't entail the structural changes that redistribution of non-renewable assets like land (for example) would. Micro-credit is primarily a tinkering arrangement, but at the same time its programmes are an anti poverty intervention of huge public visibility as they have organised the rural and urban poor (and especially poor women) into massive federations the world over.

But what does critical literature on poverty and micro-finance say? Much of this is based on the Grameen model. Grameen is not just one bank in Bangladesh. It has become a hegemonic model and there has been pressure on micro-credit programmes the world over (from the World Bank, USAID, DFID, and so on) to conform to the Grameen model. So by Grameen, I mean the model, which covers hundreds of similar programmes. One critical research finding has been that “win win” is a myth. Conflicts and tensions are invariably generated when different objectives of the same programme conflict with each other. So the objective of lender viability conflicts with the objective of reaching core poor sections and of ensuring or retaining membership of poorer sections in micro-credit programmes. There has been growing pressure on micro-credit programmes in the 1990s (from agencies like World Bank, from powerful donor organisations) to increasingly concentrate on the viability of the programme as against the viability of the community they are working with. Now this means that repayment performance and lender viability have become markers of a programme's success. So there has been a pressure on micro-finance institutions (MFI) to expand the scale of programmes, which means to pursue targets to increase the number of loans given to each individual borrower so as to reduce their own cost of operation, and to increase interest rates on loans so as to increase their own interest incomes and to tighten repayment pressures.

Now what has all this meant? To sum it up - cost cutting compulsions have made it economically non-viable for micro-credit programmes to work with poorer sections. Even older programmes like the Grameen and BRAC (started in early 1970s) have been shifting in terms of the class constituency of their membership. There is data to show this Minimalist credit only programmes have been offered, increasingly by organisations that used to work with a comprehensive rural development perspective earlier, because of the need to focus on lender viability. Larger loan sizes and multiple loans per borrower without enhancing the capacity of the borrower to productively absorb that loan have put many poor families on a treadmill of increasing debt. Punitive repayment pressures from programme staff have meant shaming poorer women borrowers, humiliating them by the male staff of

programmes like Grameen. There have been cases of Grameen suicides reported in the Bangladeshi media and cases of very severe intra-group peer pressure, as the poor turn on each other, and towards eviction of the poorer member by the route of group dynamic. So researchers have been asking, and we need to ask - are micro-credit programmes protecting the poor or disciplining the poor? For of course, what is central to all this is the imagery - the ideological construction- of the disciplined female borrower who makes her loans and repays them on time. Programmes designed largely of the Grameen model have been non-participatory; with credit packages standardised and decided by the top-level management of the NGO and the donor, not the poor. Repayment schedules have been inflexible. The poor have had little access to their own savings – they have not been able to withdraw from their savings at times of need. So while these features made the programme easier to monitor for MFIs, it made the micro-credit project a harsh terrain to negotiate for many sections of the poor.

Now apart from the issues of organisational structures and programme design, a very key finding of global level research on micro-finance programmes has been that micro-enterprise credit is not necessarily appropriate for all sections of the poor and certainly not for the poorest. Among the poor (and the poor are extremely heterogeneous), upper and middle sections have been better able to seize enterprise opportunities because of their access to skills, to contacts, literacy and so on. Because this research has demonstrated the structural limitations that thwart the ability of micro-finance to enhance income and to serve as a promotional strategy, and since these research findings have also been finding their way into dominant discourse around micro-finance, the World Bank etc. have effected the subtle shift. Now researchers (especially in World Bank commissioned studies) are talking about what an excellent *protectional* strategy micro-credit is – for protecting incomes and consumption of the poor from falling below a certain threshold level. If you look at the 2001 World Development Report, micro-credit attacking poverty is a critical component on the section on security. So it's become household level risk management strategy. Now this is something we need to critique – this shifting construction - because what it has meant is that the obsession of the micro-finance sector with lender viability continues to be unaddressed by the shifting construction. Nobody is willing to touch that, and uncomfortable research findings have been conveniently accommodated by the shifting discourse. So where earlier it was promotional, now it's not promotional- not because we need to look at structural issues of redistribution but because it's protectional!

Now what does all this mean for the Indian experience of micro-finance? I just want to first say that the Indian experience represents a certain departure organisationally from the Grameen model. What we have done instead, is to organise the poor into rural collectives who directly access the formal lending structure, i.e., the banks. So rather than setting up a parallel MFI, we are in a sense organising the poor to knock at doors of banks. Here the poor save with and borrow from the SHGs. Terms of lending are usually decided by the group. Interest income remains with the group. This is a clear departure from the Grameen model in which the poor save with and borrow from the MFI, the terms of lending are determined by the MFI, and the interest income is an income of the MFI. What this means is something I am addressing as part of my as yet not concluded research. Does this mean that protectional financial strategies are better offered by Indian SHGs since there is more empathetic peer action support within the SHG than we have seen in the Grameen model? Structurally, there seems to be greater autonomy of SHGs in India from the sponsoring agency than in the case of Grameen model. The sponsoring agency could be a bank directly

as in case of ICICI in Tamil Nadu, it could be a variety of NGOs working from a diversity of perspectives or it could be Government agencies like the BDO and the DRDA.

A hypothesis that we need to test is that the SHGs are better able to meet the saving and the credit needs of the poor in a user controlled and set up with more flexibility for protectional financial services. We need much more engaged field research for this. Part of this would be to consider two institutional actors of great significance for the Indian SHGs – the NGOs who are sponsoring groups and the commercial banks who are financing groups. Look at what is happening with the bank-SHG linkage programme. In theory, an SHG saves with the bank and then the bank is supposed to lend four times the amount it has saved. But the experience from Tamil Nadu has been that bankers have been extremely recalcitrant in giving loans to a group if even a single member has defaulted on an intra group loan. Bankers have been actually throwing out account books of women on their face and saying that your books are badly maintained and therefore you are not eligible for a group loan. In fact SHG women have often sought the help of an NGO to fudge their accounts and to create a semblance of timely repayment because in reality they can't make timely repayment due to the condition of poverty. So, despite the fact that the bankers are in the arena of SHGs, obviously they have not become either pro poor or gender just, and you still need to work around the practices of formal lending institutions.

The other problem with the bankers, particularly with the introduction of programmes like Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY), is that they use SHGs as an organisational channel of delivery of Government assistance. Bankers are now exerting pressures on SHGs to return older loans like IRDP, which were taken by the male relatives of these women. So if your husband, your father, or father in law, or son, etc., took an IRDP loan 10 years back and you return it, then your group will get a loan. If you don't, you would not get the SGSY loan. This has meant that poor women have often turned against each other - accusing each other of queering the pitch for rest of the group. So exclusionary and disciplinary pressures similar to what we have seen in Grameen context are also surfacing in the Indian context.

Where NGOs are concerned - even where the NGOs are only sponsoring agencies - there are pressures from the NGOs as well. An NGO sees it as proof of its own managerial abilities that the SHG it sponsors has an excellent repayment performance. I would also like to make a statement here that women, especially the Dalit women have repeatedly stated that on account of the crushing burden of landlessness, social exclusion etc. there is more erratic repayment within Dalit women groups (I recently attended a meeting of Dalit women headed NGOs in Tamil Nadu). Bankers have then used that as a weapon to exclude Dalit women's groups or SHGs from bank loans. So this is another dimension of exclusion we need to be addressing.

I have referred earlier to the experience of global Micro-finance programmes, in which I had said that the impact of micro-enterprise credit is always class differentiated with upper income groups among the poor being better able to utilise these opportunities. Now looking at that finding what does it mean to have converted our SHGs into organisational channels for distributing SGSY package. The SGSY was introduced in April 1999 - it replaces the IRDP, the DWCRA, the SUMI and a number of self-employment programmes. It is targeted primarily at women in SHGs. It's a credit cum subsidy assistance just like the IRDP except that now it's not for individuals (largely men in earlier programmes) but it is for groups of women now. So what does this mean? I am saying that the SGSY is essentially a

promotional strategy because it is premised on the facile assumption that all a household needs to make this upward transition from BPL to APL status is one credit boost, and usually it is only one because the booster also doesn't appear.

Unfortunately, what the SGSY has also meant that is that the flexibility under the earlier SHG bank linkage programme is also being threatened. The earlier SHG bank linkage programme was not tied lending - it was lending for whatever a family required it for. SGSY is tied lending - only for economic activities. Earlier it was for groups of women, now it is for BPL sections within groups which has generated new tensions within SHGs. I would just like to make the point here that we don't even need to look at the global experience. Our own rich legacy of scholarship on the IRDP (Prof. Indira Hirway has contributed so much to enrich that) shows that what you require is a very fine tuned employment programme in which specific components of the employment programme are dovetailed to differently endowed sections of the poor. This was one of the points reiterated in the wage versus self-employment debates of the 1970s and early '80s. So we need self-employment along with wage employment along with wage plus social security schemes.

I just want to make the point that the existence of SHGs per se, or the successful functioning of SHGs in the repayment of loans etc. does not indicate that we have arrived at the planned approach to employment needs of the poor that our scholars were talking about. Although this may sound commonplace, it needs to be stated because in the official literature - in Government documents - there is a tendency to project the expansion of SHGs itself as a solution to rural poverty and that is something we need to contest and challenge. Now distributing the SGSY loans to SHGs has meant that we have actually mandated that bank officials distribute their annual quota of SGSY loans through SHGs. So bank staff could be forcing enterprise loans upon women who are neither willing nor able to engage in loan financed income generation. Field experience has shown that enterprise loans are not really sought after or needed. What happens is that either non-viable enterprise are being established or SGSY loans are just subverted for consumption purposes and this happens with the knowledge of bankers, NGOs and block officials. In fact one banker in Madurai district told a group of women "I don't care what you do with SGSY loans. You can use it to make and sell liquor so long as you repay my loan".

We also find imposition of activities by block officials (BDO). Women's groups complain of imposition of specific enterprise activities on them by block officials who are eager to demonstrate variety and diversity in the choice of enterprises, such as toy making, embroidery, candle making, handicrafts, small decorative items etc. Women are saying that this is accompanied by little training and no guarantee of markets. It often leads to the case of enterprise without markets.

I have to deal with all these govt documents as well as media reports that are extolling the growth of 'women entrepreneurs'. Now who are these women entrepreneurs? These are all informal sector women workers - labouring away without employment security, without minimum wages or access to protective schemes. The Government has resolved to start one SHG in each rural habitation. And they say that they are going to start 14 lakh rural SHGs and draw 80 lakh women into self employment. But what is the support structure that you have for these informal sector women labourers? SHGs have proved that they can be instruments of great mobilisational potential. Everywhere women that I interviewed were saying that this is the first all women organisational structure in our village. But at

the same time the Government is using the SGSY loan package to browbeat SHGs into disciplinary behaviour. So if you want the loan, then you don't agitate on arrack, on police inaction, on ration shops. So you have to be a good group and a good woman. So, where on the one hand there is this emergence of grassroots mobilisation of women, are we also seeing a co-optation by the state on the other hand? I'll end on this note. Thank you.

Discussion

◆ *Arun Daur (HMS)*

I just want to make this point regarding how savings mobilised by poor women actually turn out to be more than the loans disbursed to them under various schemes such as the ones discussed here. There is a need to recirculate savings amongst women themselves rather than to think merely in terms of provisions of bank loans.

◆ *Jaya (Nirantar)*

Where this whole business of SHG's and microcredit is concerned, it's not easy to take any clear cut positions. It's not just NGO's but also women's organisations which are and should be involved in this whole process and there is a need to make a more nuanced analysis of the role played by microcredit schemes in order to move forward. The second point I want to make is regarding the need to discuss and incorporate the gross violations and silencing of sexual minorities that is taking place where the assumption of heterosexual norms doesn't provide any space to those amongst women workers who have different sexual orientations.

◆ *Kumkum Sangari*

I just wanted to raise this whole issue of domestic labour as a source of capitalist accumulation. Recently (1990's) the World Bank, IMF have recognised the role played by women's work (filling water) etc to buffer inflation. K. Delphi had commented on how 'domestic mode of production' is the last stage of the Industrial mode of production. There is increasingly this growing contradiction where essentially the same kind of labour is involved, where one is paid while the other remains unpaid. Though by default there is an implicit costing of such unpaid domestic work, it needs to be valued and its costs understood in relation to its invisibility.

◆ *Nirmala Buch*

I think there is a need to provide increased access to other sources of credit besides microfinance which involve a kind of social mobilization where unlike the case of MFI's (which are increasingly becoming mere credit chains), there is group involvement and greater consideration of group interests.

◆ *Soma (Nirantar)*

These SAG's are increasingly becoming sites where issues are being played out in context of unpaid labor and in economic terms there is an ongoing simplification of larger complex issues of livelihood where this whole SAG based microcredit paradigm is not helping.

These SAG's are also becoming sites where issues surrounding the questions of health and hygiene are increasingly coming out.

◆ *Gurpreet*

I want to make a few points. First is regarding the unfolding of patriarchal tendencies where women are not encouraged to come out of their homes in the interests of child rearing. Secondly, recently Bangladeshi trade unions agitating on certain basic issues were told to be backward not forward in their outlook, the implication being they should adapt in line with the latest neoliberal philosophy which virtually amounts to prescribing the removal of the poor while pointing towards the failure of development models to remove poverty.

ISSUES OF SOCIAL POLICY

Session I:

Addressing Illfare through 'Social Policy': Are we Reconciled to the Exclusionary Character of 'Development'?

Padmini Swaminathan

I would like to start by thanking CWDS for giving me this opportunity and by wishing them many more jubilees in the future. I have been asked to give an overview on social policy and I would like to start with the gist of what I have been trying to say in my paper. When we look at social policy in the context of India, we find a complete disjuncture between what is broadly called the social sector, and economic development. We are trying to solve every ill of the economy through some welfare scheme, which has no relation to the pattern of overall economic development. Based on this disjuncture, I agree with many of the other speakers on the need to question our development paradigm. While focusing on India, I have also tried to look at the experience of other developing countries in addressing similar issues.

This paper is structured in a manner so as to attempt an overview of what passes for 'Social Policy' in India. The first section provides a brief discussion of the welfare models outlined in Steven Pinch's excellent book, 'Worlds of Welfare', based on the experience of a few of the industrialised countries. This foray into the Welfare experience of developed nations is important, in our opinion, for several reasons. Firstly, it immediately lays bare the standards of 'decent' living that these countries have set for themselves. Secondly, it gives us an idea of the responsibility that the citizens of these countries expect their states to shoulder in order not only to maintain a set of services but also to improve the quality and delivery of such services. Thirdly, it also outlines the kind of problems that the continued provision of these services (at a particular scale and of a particular quality) has begun to throw up in a changing global and demographic context and, more important and related to this, is the nature of state response in these countries to these problems and to welfarism in general. Dwelling on the experiences of the developed countries is very important as it clearly shows that though many terms which we use are borrowed from there, the original contexts were very different.

In Section two we discuss in some detail the ‘employment’ scenario in India where ‘employment’ is used as a proxy for ‘economic development’ and therefore is regarded as the major, nay, only source of livelihood for most people. The inability of the Indian economy to generate employment and quality employment at that, has to be juxtaposed along with discussions that argue against increasing budgets for the ‘social sector’ allegedly because it weans away scarce resources from ‘productive sectors’ into ‘unproductive ones’ and because of the fiscal burden it supposedly poses for the economy.

Section three is in two parts. Part 1 discusses the scope and array of Social Sector Policies that are high on objectives- from poverty alleviation to women’s empowerment to abolition of child labour, etc., but low on budgets. Worse, almost all these policies remain unanchored and outside the main ‘development’ objective, namely, that of increasing the growth rate of the economy. In the last part of section III, I have reproduced my observations from visits to several villages in Tamil Nadu. These observations bring out very starkly that the havoc that the disjuncture between ‘growth’ and ‘welfare’ has caused to the lives of rural households. While specific interventions such as the provision of drinking water, electricity, PDS, Balwadis, Mid-day meals, etc. have to some extent mitigated the severity of crises caused by loss of livelihoods, they can neither substitute for sustained livelihood options nor can they enable households to make the transition from these low levels of living to a better ‘quality’ of life.

Section II

Without going into the details of my findings regarding the welfare scenario in the developed countries, I would like to point out that even in developed countries, different models of welfare can be discerned. There are models where welfare is integrated into economic development, and there are countries like UK where welfare provisions is distinct from their economic development. It had earlier been an integrated scenario and this disjuncture came later. The model which is particularly relevant for us is that of a **differentiated** or **pluralist** welfare state where the social policy is distinctive from and unrelated to economic and industrial policy. This is the model that is operational in India, as our economic development has no relation to our social policy. This contrasts with the **integrated** or **corporatist** welfare state where social welfare is seen to be closely related to industrial sectors. Based on these models, the developed countries can be classified under three or four different categories.

The western European countries can be seen as one category, though this is not to deny that differences can also be found between different countries and even within the same country, in different periods of time. According to Pinch, it is in Western Europe that the state is regarded as having a major responsibility for caring for its citizens through income maintenance and the provision of welfare services such as health and education. In most parts of Western Europe, the state is seen as the means of ensuring the highest rather than the lowest quality standards.

In contrast to this scenario, where the state is expected to provide the highest standards of welfare, you have the United States, which is completely dependent on the individual. In the latter case, welfare has a very pejorative sense of being unable to look after yourself. In

general, in the US, there is a strong preference for programmes for those who are regarded as self-reliant and independent. Recent attacks upon welfare in the US have been on residual policies for the poor rather than those dealing with pension and education that affect a larger proportion of the population. Thus even when the government cuts down on welfare, it does so selectively. It is wary of touching areas such as education and health, where the middle classes have a big stake. Japan offers a different kind of a contrast. Here the state entered into welfare much later. In Japan, the sense of collective responsibility is very strong and the various companies played an important role in promoting this. As a part of their lifetime employment schemes, the company was expected to provide housing and various services. The standard of services you enjoyed varied widely and depended upon the kind of company (i.e. large or small) that you belonged to.

All these models are premised upon the core issue of how much the state should intervene. What varies from one model to the other is the degree and intensity of state intervention in providing various services.

However, the most important point that I want to flag off here is that now there is much talk about a crisis in the developed countries and welfare there is taking a beating. The right wings in these countries argue that ageing is becoming a major problem because longevity of life has increased. Pinch talks of a disproportionate emphasis being laid on ageing, which even now accounts for only 16% of the population. The most important reason for the crisis is the failure of the state to provide full employment, even in West European countries. As a result, the unemployment dole in these states is increasing. The right there does not want to admit or address this failure.

Pinch points out that in the developed countries, when they started talking about welfare, it was in a context of near full employment. Welfare was supposed to supplement your main livelihood and not a substitute for it. This is in sharp contrast to a country like ours where we never had a situation of full employment. Yet, from day one, we have provided welfare and today it has become a substitute for livelihood options that our economic development can provide.

In the process of dismantling the Welfare State or cutting down on welfare, lots of terms are being used in Western Europe. Some of these are also used in our context. One of these is '**rationalisation**'. It is a term borrowed from industries, where one talks of 'rationalisation of production'. In the context of developed countries, it means the closure of certain facilities because they are becoming unproductive, inefficient, etc. In theory, it is supposed to free money for investment in more productive sectors, but in practice, this automatic transfer of money does not really happen. Everybody has heard about '**privatisation**'. There are two ways in which privatisation can take place. One is where public sector assets are sold to the private sector. The other way is when you are promoting services to be provided by the private sector. Some other terms are '**voluntarism**', '**deinstitutionalisation**', '**deregulation**', '**decentralisation**', etc. All these terms are used in many ways in the developed countries. But in essence, they are means of cutting down on the welfare services provided. For example, deregulation is most used in the context of labour. Deinstitutionalisation involves the transfer of the state's responsibility to care for certain groups, such as the aged and the mentally challenged, to the community. Whenever they

say community, it means households in general and the women in their respective households in particular.

After flagging off these various issues, I would like to conclude this section with Pinch's statement on this whole scenario that welfare had evolved in a context where it was merely supposed to complement employment. But when we talk of the social sector, especially in the case of India, we often forget that the context is entirely different now.

Section II

The second section of my paper is on the employment scenario in India that has already been discussed at length in this seminar. I have used statistics provided by two recent task force reports of prepared by Committees set up by the Government of India. For the first time in our data systems, these reports take into account the 'quality' of employment. One important way of assessing the quality of employment is in terms of the level of income generated.

These latest statistics classify a mere 7.3% of the population as unemployed. This is an impossible figure, which is contradicted by the official statistics of 26% to 30% of the population below the poverty line. In a country which has roughly 93% of its population employed, such high percentage of people living below the poverty line can only be possible if the employment does not generate sufficient income to enable people to rise above the poverty line. Another feature is the increasing numbers of the educated unemployed. A state-wise break-up of the employment scenario is even more revealing. Three major states- Kerala, West Bengal and Tamil Nadu have shown economic growth without employment generation. This once again illustrates the central point of my paper; i.e. economic growth in India has been divorced from employment generation.

Section III

In my analysis of the social sector in India, I have drawn heavily from a very good study by Mahendra Dev and Jos Mooij. They have analysed both the social sector budgets as well as the administrative part of it. Their study clearly shows that merely 6% to 7% of our GDP is spent on the social sector. This paltry sum is supposed to cover everything from rural development to health to education and so on. So basically, all that we have been talking about in the last one and half days comes under this 6 to 7%.

In the administrative part of social sector policies, we have to understand that there is a serious problem in the way our federal structure works. The centrally sponsored schemes have really encroached upon the state powers, as many of the areas to which the schemes apply come under the State List. An ideal example is the Mid-Day Meal Scheme. There are several conditions, which have to be fulfilled by the state, for the operationalisation of Centrally Sponsored Schemes. The ability to provide a certain level of infrastructure and the ability to meet 20% of the cost are some typical examples of the kind of conditions that states have to meet. There are many states that are unable to fulfil all or one of these pre-conditions. As a result, the poorer states suffer, even though the Centre is prepared to allocate funds to them. Thus, in India, on one hand we have budgeted expenditure, while on the other hand, a large part of that expenditure remains unspent. The reason why a large part of our inadequate budget for the social sector remains unspent is to be found in the

mechanisms used to operationalise various schemes. There is also a reluctance to change the system as politicians as well as bureaucrats are unwilling to let go of their power. Control over even 5% of the budget amounts to control over large sums of money.

Dev and Mooij's analysis of our budgets bring out another important point that I would like to flag off. They have analysed the budget speeches of India from 1988-89 to 2000. They have found that over this period, and particularly after the 90's reforms, there is no mention of employment in our budget speeches. There is discussion of poverty and poverty alleviation but the sole method of tackling it has become through schemes. There is no mention of employment generation. Rural development has also disappeared. It has been replaced by special employment schemes.

Thus the social sector in India, including employment, which is the livelihood concern of the people has been reduced to welfare. The state has thus shaken off its responsibility of providing employment through economic development. It now merely promises welfare, if and when it has money, if it suits the budget and if the particular state is able to meet the pre-conditions for accessing resources from the Centre.

To conclude, I would like to discuss what I observed at the local level in Tamil Nadu while recently travelling through it for a different purpose. I found that at the local level, the people are able to make clear connections between the micro and the macro. These connections between the macro-level policies and local and micro-level effects are however, not reflected in our planning, in our budgets or in the various schemes which are drawn up. I found the local people of Tamil Nadu clearly saying that the bad rainfall for last five years has led to depletion of groundwater and agriculture has suffered. As a result the major source of livelihood of the people has failed. They are able to get employment only for two or three days in a week, which means reduced levels of income. The PDS scheme in Tamil Nadu operates on the basis of an assumption of monthly wages. As result, in spite of a scheme being in place, the majority of rural people are not able to access it. The implication of reduced income on schemes is very clear from their refusal to take more loans from the SHGs on the grounds that they will not be able to return it. A problem of access also affects health and education. Village schools operate at subsidised rates only up to the eighth standard beyond which most people cannot bear the cost of education. Rising costs and falling incomes actually encourages people to make a gendered choice regarding which child to send for higher education. There is a palpable insecurity in Tamil Nadu amongst all sections of people regarding how to make the transition to a better standard of life given the kind of income they have and the kind of education system in place. There is a clear consensus that welfare cannot do this and there is also a very real anxiety regarding the future of their children.

Discussion

◆ *Indira Hirway*

I would like to comment on Padmini's excellent analysis of social policies from a macro perspective by bringing in some evidence from Gujarat, which we have discovered in our Human Development Report. Surprisingly, Gujarat has experienced very high rate of growth in the 90s when compared to the 80s. But at the same time there has been either

stagnation or deceleration in human development in all sectors including health, education, literacy, sex ratio, population growth and poverty. This indicates that the relationship between human development and growth has become very weak in the 90s. Stagnant long-term agricultural policies coupled with fluctuating agricultural yield, the depletion of the environment and natural resources, and the considerable decrease in the government's expenditure on the social sector are some factors behind this situation. In short, in Gujarat, the over-all macro level policies have failed to support human development.

◆ *Nirmala Buch*

I would like to comment on Padmini's observation regarding some states being unable to access centrally sponsored schemes. There is a deeper issue at stake here. Even if centrally sponsored schemes are abolished and the money is transferred to the states, it would not reach the social sector. A particular state will not channel funds into the social sector for the same reason that it fails to raise the required 20% or 30%, i.e. the de-prioritisation of the social sector. In such a situation, the centrally sponsored schemes actually ensure that some attempt is made to develop the social sector. Instead of abolishing the centrally sponsored schemes, the states should be pressurised to meet the conditions for making these schemes operational.

◆ *Indrani Mazumdar*

From Padmini's paper it seems that many of the schemes pertaining to the social sector are implemented to a large extent in Tamil Nadu. Is there a connection between this and the fact that Tamil Nadu today is leading the urban work participation rate as far as women are concerned, in all sectors? The urban WPR for women there is as high as nearly 20%.

◆ *Padmini Swaminathan*

When I raised the issue of the centrally sponsored schemes I was actually trying to draw attention to the mechanisms of implementation of schemes and policies. At present, we mostly tend to analyse budgets without focusing on the actual performance of states in the social sector, which varies widely. This aspect needs to be subjected to serious academic research and analysis. I also flagged off this issue to demonstrate how while there is a demand for increased spending on the social sector, a large part of the allocated budget remains unspent.

At this moment, I do not have any information that can link up the functioning of certain schemes and women's work force participation; but it is true that in Tamil Nadu it has always been higher than the all-India average. However, when I carried out an age-wise analysis for the period between 1981 and 1991, I found that the increase in work participation was among adolescent girls. Simultaneously, there were a large number of dropouts amongst adolescent girls, i.e. in the age group of 15 - 19 years olds. Therefore, a lot more analysis is required before we can even start making these kinds of linkages.

A related point is the fact that much of the more nuanced data of the later census reports, such as the age-wise break-up of work force statistics, are not being published. Here too, there is a certain politics involved.

Education and Organisation

Soma KP

At the outset I would like to thank the organisers for asking me to speak on education and organisation. The title itself suggests that they have already moved away from the globalization paradigm and the neo-liberal paradigm, which looks at education as merely a service or a product. What I will be sharing with you today is the collective experiences of Nirantar.

I would like to start by laying out the major approaches to education that I will be discussing from a feminist perspective. People are looking at education as a site in different ways. The most overwhelming approach to education is the cognitive approach where the focus remains on reading and writing skills. The desired universality of education in terms of reading and writing becomes the overwhelming paradigm and the individual emerges as the focus. Amongst alternative approaches which people and movements have found more appealing, the primary is the educational approach. Here there is a focus on the reality of the people and their engagement with writing. It talks more about critical analysis and reflective spaces, which can feed into action and impact in peoples' lives. The third aspect is the social practice of learning itself, which includes both of these - the paradigm of reflexivity leading to action and reading and writing.

I would like to share with you the evidences, which we have been able to collect in the sphere of education. The Committee on the Status of Women in India marked a high point in the realm of education for women in India. First, it showed that opportunities for education are neglected for women. Second, it pushed for addressing the concerns around access and content of education. It articulated the transformatory potential of education, which was what informed and carried forward the debates on women and education. Finally it made the connection between education in peoples' lives and development as a paradigm. The debates that ensued at that time and informed policy marked a threshold. After that, there has been a significant shift and various players have viewed literacy and learning in different and even fragment ways. We find that the state, the civil society and NGOs that claim to be part of the Women's Movement, have chosen different parts of their understanding of education for working it out. Focus has largely been either on girl's education or on women's education, or on women's education and learning together. Increasing fragmentation has characterised the field in the last decade and a half. Often the framework evolved for focusing on one of these three aspects, such as girl's education - neglects the other two. This fragmentation is evident in how education today is being viewed as service deliverable for girls or for women.

In the context of girls' education we find that the focus has primarily been, especially in case of the state on access. Women have been seen as monitors of school education, with women increasingly being expected to subsidise the state in the sphere of education. This is seen as an extension of her reproductive roles and does not give her any added say in decision making.

As far as the women's movement is concerned, contributions have mainly been made in terms of knowledge creation. They have mainly concentrated on critiquing the nature of

portrayal of women, pushing the boundaries of women's visibility and challenging stereotyping. Discussions on education within the realm of Women's Studies, which has emerged as a significant discipline, has been limited by the absence of interface with gender, especially in terms of its engagement with schools. It has primarily talked about the access to education for girls, without questioning the content.

If we look at how the state has looked at girl's education, we find that girls have primarily been seen as recipients of education and as subjects for socialisation. The focus has mainly been on cognitive skills of learning rather than the content. Even within the DPEP, the state talks about gender more in the context of participation rather than trying to understand how education might influence girls and their self-perception, which is reflected in their engagement with society as citizens.

An investigation of the level and terms of involvement of the state in the realm of women's literacy reveals that the emphasis has primarily been on education and literacy. But this has been low following the initiation of the Mahila Samakhya Programme. I say this because the Mahila Samakhya, in the way that it is formulated, run and in the way that it delivered, took a lot of energy off the Women's Movement. It continues to be informed by the Women's Movement. However, the focus on literacy as a part of the larger continuum of education has been very low within the Programme. On the other hand, the engagement with women's status seems to have given way increasingly to messages related to the state's development goals. This has been an area of concern for us.

The Total Literacy Campaign, when launched, had generated tremendous energy, which engulfed many of us. More importantly, it created a space for learners. It actually achieved a paradigmatic shift in the understanding of literacy. From a merely functional play of words literacy came to include within its scope the determining of the content of education based on experiences of oppression. Admittedly, this was not informed by the experiences of oppression of women, but the very fact that it was located in the paradigm of the marginalised made it more relevant. However, the terminal nature of the Total Literacy Campaign has led to a sense of betrayal amongst many women who were involved with it. Many women have lamented the loss of the space and opportunity that it had provided for them to engage with themselves, their lives and the world outside. The de-prioritisation of literacy within the women's movement has increased over the years. The reasons that we have found include the fear that literacy would further marginalise poor rural women, it would be used as an instrument to distance women from their own issues, the lack of expertise and resources to actually conduct literacy programmes, the tedious and intensive process that it involves and lastly, that women don't come. Those who work with women specially stress upon the last factor. However, it might be a mistake to causally tie-up the non-participation of women with literacy. The reasons why women don't come are often located elsewhere, and not in literacy itself.

What the women who stand to benefit from literacy say about it has really been a revelation for me. In fact, it converted me into strongly believing that literacy needs to be included within the empowerment and rights framework for women. Women have constantly and repeatedly told us in our interactions how literacy is imperative in creating access to the "world of the word". Literacy is a major instrument in enabling them to obtain information, construct knowledge and engage with the whole realm of the outside. According to them, literacy contributes to an improved sense of self-esteem. The terms on

which they are perceived within their own families also changes with literacy, even if that is in effect confined to the ability to sign their own names. Many women in Himachal shared with us how just learning to sign their names had led their families to perceive them as literate. This improved their status dramatically in a world, which gives so much value to literacy and the written word. In the course of our work we have also come across women expressing how literacy has enabled them to challenge exploitation and oppression in different fields- for instance, as workers. They say that literacy enables them to make their own decisions instead of relying on other people to take decisions for them, in proxy. Most importantly it enhances autonomy. The dependencies that come with illiteracy, starting from the simple act of boarding a bus, are removed. The frequent references that women make of being able to read the board of a bus are actually an articulation of their ability to make independent decisions about their own mobility. Similarly, literacy would give women the power to seek out information for themselves in self-help groups instead of being told what to do. Thus literacy becomes a very important component of women's lives in various contexts.

The record of the state, of the women's movement and of various organisations has been problematic in the sphere of women's education. Not much evidence can be found to validate the state's claim of actually empowering women through programmes like Mahila Samakhya. The women's movement has also not actively engaged with the paradigm within which schemes or policies regarding education for girls and women are framed. There are progressive groups, which are using education for reflection, analysis and collective action. But there are many more organisations that are just looking at micro-credit as the means of getting women into spaces without first attempting to provide them the learning process that should inform such groups. I have already mentioned how state programs use women's groups as instrumentality for developing girl's education. Continuing education is now being seen in terms of Self Help Groups and as an efficient means of linking women with the global market and the economy. There is no attempt to carry forward the democratisation of education.

In conclusion, I would like to focus on the challenges for women posed by this scenario. The forces of globalization, the market and the agenda of the nation state are all played out in the sphere of education. This process has reduced the accountability of the nation state and other major players in education. It has been largely unhindered, as the Women's Movement has made very little demands in the sphere of education. False claims have been made regarding the ground reality of literacy and education in our country and these have allowed to pass unchallenged. While the state and its agencies are using our language, what it actually means in the context of education schemes located within the current development paradigm is very different. Moreover, education is increasingly being positioned as a service rather than looking at it as a site for creating opportunities and providing knowledge. There is an adverse impact of all this on women and girls. On the one hand, they are being socialised to perpetuate the norms that patriarchy has prescribed and they are being used as instruments by the state on the other hand. They are also being denied the transformatory learning opportunities, which are essential for their empowerment.

The real challenge for us is to reclaim the space of education. We need to look at education as a site where we can challenge the current paradigm of socialisation of girls and the construction of different identities including gender identities of girls and women. It is

essential to look reclaim education as a space for reflection that can provide the learning opportunities to the poor and marginalised women to challenge processes in their own interest. Finally, we must see education as a lens for challenging the development discourse and role of the state and demand accountability. The usurpation and distortion of our agendas of education by the nation state needs to be challenged. Education is the common space, which allows us to see the manner in which these different issues intersect.

Discussion

◆ *Malini Bhattacharya*

There has been a great increase in foreign funding, particularly in the sectors of education and health, in recent years. India has enjoyed for a long time a constitutional promise of public education for the poor and the ordinary citizens. This promise has also been partially met for quite some time through the public education system. Today, this public education system is being systematically destroyed, accompanied by the proliferation of projects enjoying foreign funding, such as the district primary education project. How these schemes, including the Sarva Shikshya Abhiyan, are formulated is not known. NGOs are involved only at the stage of implementation and are often content merely following instructions. The Women's Movement, while studying the impact of globalization on the social sector, a vital part of which is education, needs to focus much more on this surreptitious change. There is a hidden violence in the way the public education system is being destroyed and replaced by so-called alternatives.

◆ *Jayati Ghosh*

Another aspect of the privatisation of primary education is the growth of education based on religion, such as the Saraswati Shishu Mandirs, especially in rural areas. What would be the impact of this on girl children- their motivations and aspirations?

◆ *Vibhuti Patel*

What should be done to promote women's component within educational schemes and programmes? There is a distinct pattern in which the states express concern for women's education. For example, In Maharashtra, free education is provided for girls till the twelfth standard, and 30% of the seats in all engineering colleges are reserved for girls. Can such measures be replicated in other states?

◆ *Primila Loomba*

Adding to what Soma has already said, I would like to point out that vocational training is being introduced into literacy in the name of addressing livelihood issues. Large numbers of these training programmes are on beauty culture, which is being promoted by NGOs who cite a large demand for it as justification. Thus, Beauty Culture has replaced personal development and health in women's literacy programmes.

◆ *Jaya Sharma*

Programmes like DPEP make the lack of transparency in the current schemes and programmes evident. This is especially true about foreign funding. Most of us don't know the amount or nature; i.e. the fact that these are soft loans and not grants. The trend of recruiting para teachers instead of professional teachers that can be seen in several states is extremely disturbing. It amounts to providing low-quality education to the poor, at low cost. We need to challenge the kinds of claims that the state had made and got away with in the educational sphere. In the last CEDAW meeting, the NDA Government claimed, in its report, that it has managed to eliminate all gender biases from school textbooks. While women's groups came together to write a shadow CEDAW report, the section on education was the weakest part of it. Thus, the issue of women's education was not only neglected by the CEDAW committee, but also by the Women's Movement.

◆ *Soma*

I think it's about time that we took control of what education is doing within our societies and our economies. While the engagement of the Women's Movement with the questions that have been raised today is minimal, most of the literature and reports on education that are coming out are actually from projects that are donor-driven. The limited engagement of civil society organisations with the educational sector perpetuates ignorance regarding the formulation of schemes. Inefficiency is being created in the public sector, and then being used as an excuse to privatise education.

DPEP's rhetoric of engendering content and participation in education is being repeated by the SSA-s. The suggestions made remain at a superficial level with little actual work done. Nirantar is currently engaged in a workshop that is attempting to deconstruct the class, caste, gender and other identities, which are projected within text books. However, in the sphere of women's education, there are very few takers. It is my appeal to the Women's Movement to take up the issue of education.

Through the window of CEDAW we have tried to find out how these concerns are currently being played out in the sphere of education. It reveals similar and even harsher construction of gender.

Our study on micro-credit groups ties up well with the issue of vocational education. Micro-credit groups are today operating within a capitalist mindset where enterprise and profit is desirable, irrespective of the nature of the work. To challenge this paradigm, we first need to substantially broaden our information base.

◆ *Chair: Vina Mazumdar*

Singling out a few issues from the presentations of this session, I would like to pose certain questions to the gathering here and specifically to the Women's Movement those require greater attention. Has the Women's Movement adequately addressed the dichotomy between social welfare and economic growth that is today projected primarily by the educated intelligentsia – by the scholars, the planners and the bureaucrats? There is a need to view this historically and to understand how far the current phase of globalization has contributed to it.

There is a need to look at the increasing use of the politics of language; evident in the nomenclature used, in the era of globalization. The department of welfare that had always been a part of the Ministry of Education was first renamed the Women's Bureau and currently, it is called Department for Women and Children. The Ministry itself has been renamed the Ministry of Human Resource Development. Are these changes in nomenclature indicators of change, or should we regard them as propelling certain changes?

In the sphere of literacy and schemes like Sarva Shikshya Abhiyan in rural areas, the issue is not one of access, but of control. With globalization, access - whether it is to education or to health services, is increasingly characterised by control, especially by the funding agencies. This emphasises the difference between the Women's Movement's engagement with these issues and the NGO-isation of the social sector.

Right to Development

Joy Ranadive

My paper draws itself from my ongoing research on economic, social and cultural rights, particularly the right to food, housing and health. The specific issue I wish to discuss in this paper is what we call the Right to Development. Some of the questions I would raise and address are - what we mean by right to development, how it originated and what value a rights based approach might have in looking at development. I will also talk about the reservations, which are there around the question of the right to development. Most importantly I will try to look at the women's movement from this perspective of the right to development.

It was the Charter of the United Nations that had for the first time, talked about the concept of promoting social progress. Eleanor Roosevelt, leading the U.S. Delegation in drafting the United Resolution in Human Rights in 1948, introduced the concept of "opportunity for development". This was an integrated approach to development with the social, economic, civil and political rights integrated. However, in the Fifties, with the beginning of the Cold War, the approach to rights got divided into two channels. While the First World advocated the political and civil rights, the Socialist World upheld economic, social and cultural rights. This split led the issue of rights in two different directions, with the actual question not being addressed in its entirety. A series of resolutions were passed between 1977 and 1981. In the year 1986 the United Nations General Assembly passed the Declaration of the Right to Development, but the US Government cast an opposing vote. However, at the Vienna Conference in 1983, the right to development was called an inalienable right.

The 1986 Declaration saw development as a comprehensive social, economic and cultural process mean for the well being of the individual as well as the entire population on the basis of active meaningful participation in development. I will outline here some the cardinal points in the Declaration. The primary responsibility for development, particularly national development, was seen to rest in the state. Access to basic resources including education, housing, food etc. was stressed. It was also maintained that the state should encourage popular participation in the collective responsibility for food, housing and other developmental measures. What was seen as development had to be a local initiative,

formulated at the local level. No discrimination should be made on the basis of birth, religion and sex. It was thought that an elimination of racism, colonialism, apartheid, etc. would contribute to the development of ideal circumstances conducive to the realisation and fulfilment of rights. International peace and security was stressed as a necessary condition for the promotion of developmental measures. Another crucial point stressed was that the state should have full control over its natural resources.

These bring us to some of the problems around the right to development issue. The question that is often posed is that - we already have the separate rights to food, health, housing etc., so what is the need to have a separate Right to Development? We must consider here the essential difference between the ESC rights and the Right to Development. The thing that makes the latter different is the fair distribution of resources. It is this justice that demarcates it from the other ESC rights. The other often posed question that I would like to raise here is that why do we need to take a rights based approach. Now the primary responsibility for development, as I have said lies with the state. But the individual and international community is also responsible for its realisation. This is the majority theory of the rights based approach. Thus the state is the dutyholder, while the citizen is the claimholder. The state has several functions here; firstly, it has to respect the rights of the citizens and secondly, it protects those rights. While human rights is something one is born with and cannot be taken away in that sense, yet what can happen is a possible violation, either by the state, or by anybody other than the state. It is the responsibility of the state then to protect those rights. The third function of the state is to fulfil the rights of the citizens. In this again the functions bifurcate into two – firstly, it has the duty of provision, in case of a dire emergency, and second and the most important is that of facilitating the access to food, water, health services or state facilitated income. The focus is on facilitation rather than provision.

As long as the ESC rights and the Right to Development are a basket of goods and services, it is easier for the state to realise rights, but the issue of social access makes things different altogether, for social access is more than a basket of goods. For example, health is often seen as the provision of health services. But we need to consider that health is a social issue and therefore social access is important. But though financial and physical access is discussed at great lengths in documents, social access is hardly talked about. The question we may pose here is that how do we make the state accountable? Is a right justifiable? The point is we really cannot reduce this to legal rights; we are talking about more than a mere going to the court. The scope of the state therefore widens in this context, as far as facilitating social access is concerned.

I will now discuss briefly some of the reservations we have around the issue the Right to Development. One is, that a human rights based approach ultimately talks about the individual, and thereby hides behind its rhetoric of rights an assertion of the overall ideology of globalization. The counter argument to this could be that a human rights based approach (that makes us focus on individuals) also helps us to concentrate on marginal groups more closely. The second objection around the Right to Development is a direct head on between individual and collective rights. The question that is often posed is that - are collective rights an aggregate of individual rights or are they separate. The answer to this would be that an individual rights based approach is necessary within a collective rights approach. Otherwise the individual is sacrificed before the collective, and the rights and interests of the women are the first to be subsumed. Personally, I prefer a reconciliation

between the individual and the collective, rather than conflict. Martha Nussbaum, in her study has called the human rights as an important right. The individual functions within a society and has to receive within that special attention. But what really worries me is that in the right to self-determination, the people or the community decide. But the question is that who in the collective can decide for the whole? Is it democratic to decide what is good for everybody? This, I would say is a double-edged sword, and we have to look at the composition of the community to come to the question of who decides. For example in a country like India, where culture is already determined, who will decide what cultural rights are?

Another problem that surfaces is a kind of a circular reasoning around globalization and human rights. Globalization creates a recession of state, while the human rights issue brings it to the centre. But globalization also talks about self-help and the development of the individual, and the state has the responsibility of providing that within the human rights framework. Thus this basically brings us to square one, and we can see here a similarity and synchrony between the philosophy of the state and the philosophy of globalization. What is required I think is a clearer understanding of the facilitating processes in development, and a concentration on the margins. A more nuanced conception of power is needed. We ought to look at the positive rather than the negative aspects of power. This also calls for a change in the value system; in other words, a value-based approach to power would be particularly fruitful. I would like to conclude here by pointing out that in the development dialogue there exists an artificial divide between economic development and social development. This is reflected in the rights and development dialogue too. This problem needs to be addressed. Basically everything boils down to life. Therefore it is necessary to collapse the economic and the social. We need to understand that there is a politics of language that feeds into such artificial divides, and we need to erase that. Only then will the totality of the matter be addressed.

Discussion

◆ *Padmini Swaminathan*

My question is to Joy, and I would like to comment on the right to development, which is now being seen as an organising principle behind the whole development paradigm. Actually, right from the second plan onwards, every issue of EPW would carry articles on the different problems we face around development, how people are being marginalized by the development paradigm, how it is doing violence on the people, what kind of development it has generated or not generated, etc. So a huge body of material is already available to us around the issues of development and the problems around it. So my question is why is it that today we are talking about right to development as if it is something new, and what is it that's new when we are talking about the rights dialogue?

◆ *Ranjana (Saheli)*

I would like to repeat what Padmini has said. Today many of us are engaged in questioning the very paradigm of development as it is given to us. So when we talk about the right to development what is it that people want, and how do they voice it, and how do they face it. How do we see the state as the facilitator? This is because one of the crucial components of

globalization has been the maintenance and the perpetuation of an extremely repressive machinery to be able to push the policies of globalization whether you want it or not. This is what makes it anti-people; and when people want their demands, some of them die in their protest. For example we see the anti-displacement protests of the slum dwellers of Yamuna Pushta, or people of Narmada or Kashipur or Raigarh, where people are giving their lives in protesting against a particular form of development being pushed by the state, the capital and the ruling class. Then how do we look at the state as the facilitator, because it is also the facilitator of repression?

◆ *Utsa Patnaik*

I just wanted to make two very brief points. The first is on this whole question of why the emphasis on development and what is new about it. Now as far as that is concerned, the entire program of LPG - Liberalisation-Privatisation-Globalization is essentially an anti-people agenda; it is in the interests of a very tiny minority of finance capitalists, who are in league with the military industrial complex. The dominance of the interest of this minority, not only in India, but also in the countries of the advanced West, has led to the imposition of neo-liberal policies which have hit the livelihoods of the people, including the capitalist countries, and that is why anti-globalization movement is a global movement, as is the anti-war movement. There is huge literature on this accessible to non-economists by now. The movement is already there. The second point, which I would like to state, is that the role of the media in promoting globalization has been extremely bad. Actually those who want to promote these policies, kept their people in handpicked places, in crucial places in the media. There is also a creeping destruction of liberal values, cutting out people with whom you refuse to agree with. This kind of censorship is problematic, and it is only through separate websites created by some of our enterprising students, that we are able to reach out our articles to the people.

◆ *Joy Ranadive*

I am not really championing the Right to Development here. As I have said, I am still in the questioning mode. I do not think that this is old wine in a new bottle, neither do I think that it is new. I agree that the existing material needs to be used. But what I would like to say here is that today this is being used more vociferously, because there is a certain legitimacy to the nature of the demand. It is backed by law, which is generated outside your country, it is also backed by a range of options that you have for state accountability. Otherwise you would not have people like Jean Dreze who spend so much time with the right to food campaign. I am not saying that he is meeting with a great success with the campaign, but I must say that there is some value in addressing it as a right, rather than seeing it as something that you should be doing because it is linked with a programme. This concept of right to development is in fact a double-edged sword - the state is the facilitator as well as the repressor. But then the state is not an amorphous whole, it has arms. So there are little doorways, which can be used to address the problem. The state has signed documents, which can be taken up in the context of critiquing the policies that the state has approved of. The role of the media is very important here, in trying to ask for state accountability.

Changing Paradigms of Governance

I intend to locate my presentation in the current context of globalization and also the Indian state's abilities / inabilities to fulfil its role as mandated in the constitution. From my background in the service, I would like to present some insights of how the paradigms function, how they are operationalised, and see how the state is responding at present to the challenge, which is there. I believe that even when we discuss the changing paradigms of governance (where governance comes across as a very wide concept), ultimately the state must remain or should be made to remain as the most important partner or effective partner of governance.

As we all know, the discourse on governance has not been there very long. As a stated discourse, it started very recently with a shift from public affairs to governance, and from public administration to governance. I also believe that the moment you make a concept wider, there is also a politics of giving it less teeth by diffusing it. At present governance is seen at three levels - national governance, local governance and global governance. It's also supposed to be more broad-based because it includes processes, mechanisms, state, society, interaction, partnerships and includes a lot of organisations right from grassroots to the national level and international level. Now you know that the definitions of governance - in fact the whole discourse of governance - has started with the multilateral and bilateral agencies. We cannot ignore the fact that this is where it originates because it lays down the parameters of governance.

The World Bank's definition is more limited and talks in terms of governance being the manner of exercising power in the management of countries economic resources and development. Then comes UNDP with a much wider definition that also includes mechanisms, processes, and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations and their differences - so it includes a lot of human and civil rights issues. As we see now - this includes a plurality of actors and there is emphasis on 'participation', 'accountability', 'decentralisation', 'responsiveness' and at the same time issues of social justice and equity are also taken up. Now one view is that this is really based on a changed understanding of the development process (that's a benign way of looking at the discourse of governance). The other issue is that even when all these aspects of participation, accountability, etc. are talked about, they are really seen by agencies as instruments to have more effective implementation of 'projects' and 'schemes'. They are not seen as important ends in themselves, which is how the civil society would like to see them.

What it really leads to is a shifting of the focus from management and control to what is called 'enabling skills' to 'engage partners', and also talks about not doing but 'facilitating', 'arranging', 'forging' - managing but not doing, and its intellectual origins are in neo-liberal theories, which brings us to the question of what actually happens in the new paradigms of governance. This discourse of governance leads to what is called 'good governance', and the interests of good government and organised business are seen together. 'Efficiency' and 'accountability' are highlighted and attempts made to move the state from its primary focus - arguing that there has been a crisis of governing ability because the state in the past was doing too much - it was overloaded, there were too many demands which it was not

able to cope with leading to a crisis in its legitimacy. In this context, the discourse criticises what was called welfarism and basically attempts at moving states away from doing things. I don't want to go into the origin of the World Bank sub-Sahara report etc., but all this leads to a push for what is called 'sound development management' and 'policy reforms' and other non-economic aspects are highlighted, including 'public sector management', 'accountability', the 'legal framework for development', 'transparency and information'. In itself highlighting transparency and information is something very good, but in practice there are limitations to what citizens can get out of it.

Coming to what is going on in India, in fact I'll quote from the Indian 10th Five Year Plan and that makes the position very clear. It says that government relates to 'the management in all these processes that in any society define the environment, which permits and the enables individuals to raise their capability levels on the one hand, and provide opportunities to realise their potential and enlarge the set of choices on the other'. It explains subsequently, that the state is responsible for creating a conducive political legal and economic environment for building individual capabilities and encouraging private initiatives. The market is expected to create opportunities for people, not the state, but the market and the civil society facilitates the mobilisation of public opinion and people's participation in economic, social and political activities. This is what spells out the role and the goal of governance today much more than the first definition. And then it also goes on to say that with the acceptance of market liberalism and globalization it is expected that the state yield to the market and civil society in many areas where so far it has had a direct but 'distortionary' and 'inefficient' presence. So it really amounts to a rolling back of the state and also to a retreat from its redistributive commitments.

The notion of participation which I referred to just now is taken as a means to an end, and a citizen is really made to become a client and a recipient of rights and benefits. As I see it, in the whole discourse on 'good governance' - good governance is seen just in terms of efficiency parameters. But in our country we can't leave out the values and cultural norms of the society and the desired economic and social outcomes, and therefore in the Indian context we have to see the goals and values enshrined in the constitution are important.

Coming to 'gender and governance' - by and large when you look at things from a gender perspective, the focus is generally to see gender gap in women's participation. But this is really limited today to one actor of governance, mainly the state. There are efforts to see things in terms of human development perspective - HDR GDI, GEM and all that. But then if a critical mass of women in the state is the only issue, we can't really say that it will make a difference. It will not unless the gender perspective is across the board. Given that in the discourse it is said that opportunities are created by the market, the question is - who uses these opportunities which are usually created by the market? Who has the skill and other resources to use them? How does the state act from such a perspective?

We find that the state ends up laying user charges on services hurt the poor more. It creates institutions without changing the existing institutions, leading to a crisis in locating the seats of power or responsibility. In fact if you see the power sector, you find state regulatory commissions who are regulating the state agencies with each other and then you see others at the central level who are supposed to give a level playing field. However consistently it's been the case that it's the public sector unit that is the one to give in. I have not seen any action taking place that supports a public sector unit on the so called level

playing ground. Now coming to the case of 'transparency' - it assumes that people will get information and they will be able to use it, thereby in a way assuming that there is reasonable egalitarianism and reasonable equality, so that people will get a chance to use it. In an unequal society, even if you give people such access, they will not be able to use it. This discourse talks about a lot of things - right to information, citizens charter and so on, but just try to enter any part of state and try to use that right, you'll realise how difficult it is to use.

Then there are policies, new institutions, allegedly for women, for human rights, for vulnerable sections. But I think one needs to examine how effective they are, who makes them, how they are ultimately developed and what happens to them. We find that when we look at the policies - the agenda is again set by funding agencies. Even in the social sector, with this discourse on governance and funding from multilateral bilateral agencies who call the shots - so you will have para teachers and para health workers who will be working at below subsistence level wages. So when you are talking of the new discourse of governance, what we actually have is a state that has signed away its sovereignty and has bound itself by certain commitments. In such a context how can the state become more effective as a really 'doing state'? It should not be only a facilitating state because in my view this facilitating idea is really giving the state a lesser role than what it should have. You can't have a state that is not providing, which is only enabling. And particularly when you see it from the point of women and vulnerable sections. So we have to use the space which is available to pressurize the state to provide. There are a number of things, which the state *has to* provide. We also have to work for prevention of NGOisation of movements which is again part of the discourse on governance, for today civil society gets equated with NGOs. Thank you.

Gender Audit of Budgets

Vibhuti Patel

Thank you for giving me an opportunity for expressing my views on gender impact of budget. I started this exercise in 1991 when community organisations, and especially elected representatives in the Bombay Municipal Corporation (BMC) asked me to demystify all the economic jargons and stated how the male corporators were not allowing them to use budgetary allocation of the BMC. Yuva was the organisation, which started this exercise of capacity building for the elected representatives in the local self-government bodies. As has come out in the first session, we all know how budgetary cuts reduce opportunities for women, how the structural adjustment programme and globalization process driven by the TNC's and MNCs have increased unpaid work burden of women. The impact of devaluation, price rise and erosion of PDS on women's livelihood, women's nutrition, women's health and women's survival chances have been reported extensively in last two days of deliberation.

To understand the context of budgetary allocations, it is very important to understand how the planning process has evaluated women's contribution in the economy. In the first Five Year Plan, the formation of Central Social Welfare Board was promoted and that was the time when women were seen as beneficiaries of welfare programmes. In the second five year plan, nearly 30,000 mahila mandals were sponsored by the state, and budgetary allocation was given for that. By the third Five Year Plan, a targeted programme for

women's education and MCH (mother and child development) was also put forward, and India became the first country to implement a family planning programme. In the first Five Year Plan male sterilisation was sponsored while in the second Five Year Plan barrier methods of contraception was sought to be implemented but because of the method of Unisuchita, they didn't succeed. So by the third Five Year Plan, when it came to MCH, there was introduction of IUD's and other female targeted contraception and doctor controlled contraception.

In the fourth Five Year Plan, which also coincided with the publication of 'Towards Equality', there was a paradigm shift from welfare to development, and we see its reflection in the planning process in the budgetary allocation for women targeted programmes. By the sixth Five Year Plan 'women and development' was accepted as a separate analytical category with a special component for health, education and employment due to the mid decade (International Women's Decade) review where women from the developing world wanted development to be qualified and the indicators of development to be defined. By the 7th Five Year Plan the question of integrating women into the mainstream was accepted, and we had a separate chapter also. From the sixth Five Year Plan far onwards we have had a separate chapter on women and development in the plan documents. By the 8th Five Year Plan we had shifted the whole concept of development to 'empowerment' of women.

The outlay of plans between this first and eighth Five Year Plan increased from 4 crores to 2000 crores and by the 9th Five Year Plan, the women's empowerment policy was accepted and promoted by the Govt. of India; the women's component plan and the idea of 30% of all development oriented funds to be allocated for women was also accepted in theory. Yet no state government implemented it. By the tenth Five Year Plan gender budgeting as a concept had also been accepted and state governments were given a mandate to promote women's component. There have been several critiques of the budget over the past 11 years, by AIDWA from the women's movement as well as by some of the gender economists. The UNDP meanwhile has also started the exercise of providing a gender audit of panchayat, state, and union budgets. They have done it sector wise, category wise and year wise, covered extra expenditure, estimated expenditure and actual budgetary allocations. But these have been defacto exercises and what we need now is a kind of alternate budget. In the women's empowerment policy also there is a section where gender audit of budget is given prime importance. Now if we look at the budget of women empowerment year in theory, we see that they have been talking about women empowerment policy, talking about the greater empowerment of women: but actually in case of the budget of the department of women and child development, and in case of important areas like education - we see the amount itself is very limited - 5 crores only as assistance for hostels. So mostly the tribal girls have suffered a lot for many ashramshalas have closed because of reduction in budgetary allocation. There are national programmes for women's education where first the promise was an allocation of 160 crores. But we see actually it was 10 crores. Reproductive and child health is one area where we have a very massive amount being allocated - around 951 crores and this also has increased. For sterilisation of beds, there is reduction in the bed allocation. As it is the amount was limited, so now it is treated as outpatient service for ICDS which is supported by the World Bank shelling out a further 160 crores. There was an increase in budgetary allocation for day care centres also, but the amount is quite inadequate for all other programmes like nutrition, early childhood education and all.

You can see that the amount is very limited and that there has also been a decrease in the budgetary allocation. In hostels for working women, there has been a slight increase because there is a demand for hostels in the districts as also in the many new economic and special economic zones. Exports processing zones and even male dominated trade unions are demanding working women's hostels. For Mahila Samridhi Yojana, for social economic programme, training and production centres and also for short stay home there was a decline in the budgetary allocation. For awareness generation there were only 1.8 crores given and there was an increase to 4 crore rupees. For National Commission for Women the grant went up from 3.5 cores to 5 crores. In Rashtriya Mahila Kosh there has been a decline from 3 crores to 1 crore while in other's there was a slight increase. The amount is very limited in programmes which affect women in the labour and employment sector, i.e.: 2 crores and in that also there has been a decline. In tribal affairs there has been a decline in the over all budgetary allocation. At a monetary level there is a slight increase but the kind of policies they are pursuing there is a decline in the allocation. Budgets that indirectly benefit women such as agriculture or environment, fuel collection, water, sanitation have also seen massive declines. Now these are the statistics that are there in my paper. But if we see the subsequent 2003 –2004 budget, there also the development oriented budget is nothing compared to the budget for defence expenditure which is 65,000 crores. On nutrition you have only Rs 1 crore. In the budget of the department of women and child we also see a decline in budget for the national nutrient mission. Dr Mohan Rao's presentation and many of his writings highlights these problems. For monitoring on the quality of water a very limited amount has been allocated. If you compare the budget with the previous year you can see in most of the categories there is a reduction- only in working women's hostel and the food for training and employment programme there has been an increase. If you see the cuts in budgetary allocations and compare to the previous years in most of the areas like labour and social security, reproductive and child health and family welfare services, you will find major cuts.

Women's groups have demanded there should be separate listing of women-specific items in the budget. There should be no diversion of women component funds in different ministries and departments and there should be transparency about allocation and funding and about right to information. They have also demanded the inclusion of gender economists in the pre-budget workshop that should be held around October, so that by February one can have enough discussion and all the inputs can be included. Now there are 4 categories of programmes- women specific scheme which are targeted 100% to women, pro- women's scheme where you have 30% allocation of facilities for women, gender neutral schemes like employment guarantee schemes where too women get benefits and the residual space specific programmes with profound effect on women's position and conditions. Several states have come up with women's bodies to deal with panchayat budgets, like Maharashtra has ' Mahila Rajsata Andolan'. They are also coming up with gender audit and alternative budgets. The main problem is with the utilisation of funds, yesterday it came up that in so many departments and schemes there are allocation of funds which remain unutilised. For girls' education or adolescent girls' nutrition you have allocations but there are no schemes. Conversely, where there are schemes there is no allocation. So these kinds of anomalies also create lots of problems. There have been many reviews by National Centre for Budget Advocacy where they have done reviews of MPLADS. Parliament committees have also been appointed consisting of some of the well known parliamentary dignitaries who have not suggested or recommended a single development scheme in their constituency for area development. MPs have to balance the allocations for

development. Middle classes want more schools, libraries, teachers, toilets, community centres and auditoriums and in the prosperous areas they need road repairs and schools and some of them also want banks and hospitals and shopping plazas. Now if you see the utilisation pattern of budget in 2002, around one-third of the budget has remain unutilised. States like the North-Eastern states have been effecting better utilisation of funds. Meghalaya is a state where utilisation is very high. Mizoram has a deficit budget. A fund for the creation of a tribal area so that tribal people could get the basic necessities in exchange for whatever they have collected from the forest and whatever they produced failed completely. Grain banks were created mainly to deal with the starvation diet in tribal areas. Some of the MP's didn't suggest a single scheme for development in the area where the collectors and district commissioners use their discretion to divert the funds for SAG'S instead of returning them back to the state govt.

Food subsidy is another area, which has created lot of controversy. Many economist including development economists and mainstream economists have criticised the fact that on one hand we have such a huge buffer stock but on the other hand we cannot come up with effective disbursement schemes. All schools of thought agree that there should be a more effective approach to the issue, be it from an instrumentalist or from the distributive justice perspective. Gender sensitive bureaucrats have played an important role in utilisation of funds. There have been many such cases. NIRD has done a study about how PRI'S have been starved of funds and there is a lobby now. Women and panchayti raj institutions are also lobbying for more funding for their developmental agendas. In Supreme Court many PIL'S have been filed for non-diversion of any funds that have been allocated for poverty groups or for food security. NIRD has also criticised the state govt. starving people of the PRI'S of finances. UNDP study has summed up this whole situation of budgetary allocation over last 10 years. Elected women in panchayti raj institutions and legislative bodies of parliament have played a positive role in addressing or attempting to address a range of practical gender needs, for example, inadequacies in living conditions, fuel, fodder, health care, employment, etc. But their impact on strategic gender needs has come mostly out of affirmative action by the states or pro-active role of employers to enhance women's position in the economy or that of NGO. So many NGOs are crorepati NGOs functioning like corporate houses. So there is a need for composite programme for women workers and they have to be specifically targeted at girls and women as principal beneficiaries and disaggregated within the total allocation. There is also a need to place restrictions on appropriation for any other purposes.

Now while summing up this whole presentation it's very important that we link the macro and micro reality and local and global implications of pro-poor and pro-women budgeting. There are macro scenario's that are emerging out of the alternative budgets exercises done by say those who have come up with the green budget, child audit budget, SC budget, tribal budget, water budget which are some of the sectoral studies. Lobbying and advocacy, and impact analysis of which in terms of their inter linkages with gender sensitive budgeting and women empowerment also need to be highlighted. There is a need to seriously demand greater transparency in the budgetary processes and there is also the need to provide training and capacity building workshop for the decisions makers in the government structures, Gram Sabhas , parliament and also for the audio visual media . Thank You.

Discussion

◆ *Rajni Palriwala, Sociology department, Delhi school of Economics.*

A short comment on what Nirmala had to say - actually to add to what she was describing, there is a study which has been done in Andhra Pradesh in pani panchayats and one of the things which that study brought out was that basically ever since these pani panchayats have been established, they have much more money in their hands than the local panchayats have and there had been a shift which has taken place where members of the dominant casts who haven't even been drawn from the elected local panchayats are nominated to the pani panchayats and through the pani panchayats are now exercising this control over resources and in a sense just re-enforcing what you were saying in terms of the ways in which there is in the name of NGOs in a certain sense, you can have certain sections of the so-called civil society being empowered.

◆ *Madhura Swaminathan, ISI*

A very brief comment on the gender budgeting. What the paper showed is very interesting but I think it's very important to portray it in the perspective of the overall structure of the budget and just to give an example from the work of a young scholar Smriti Rao who has done her PhD on Andhra Pradesh - she was examining the policies of Chandrababu Naidu Government who was talking about all these programmes on women and if you looked at the percentage of development budget going to women it was increasing. But if you looked at the total budget for development, it was just going down every year. So I think one has to have an overall perspective. Secondly, just a very minor point about this 'rotting food grains business'. I object to all food grains being kept in the Food Corporation of India's godowns being termed 'rotting food grains.' I would like to say this here because there are a lot of people here involved with the Media, activists, and I think we have to be very careful. If we criticise the govt. for keeping these food grains and not giving them to the people we can't at the same time call them rotting for they are not rotting. There is a small percentage, which is rotting just 1% or less.

◆ *Soma, Nirantar*

I just want to connect the issues of governance and gender budgeting with the specific access of RMK (Rashtriya Mahila Kosh), in the process of our inquiry for the study on self-help groups and the educational processes within SAGs. We didn't have the occasion to meet the RMK director who very proudly said that the RMK is the only organisation of the government that is profit-making. That's what justified the reduction in the budget of the RMK and what that implies is really very significant. This shows that women's money is being rotated and then is coming back as profit to be lent further, so that the government can cut back on its own allocation. I mean, I am just making the connection between the allocations and where the resources, which are subsidising the state finance, are really coming from, and that was a real area of concern. This is also indicated in the education budget. I mean you did have a slight section on education, I just wanted to point out that the allocation within that for women's education has been very low. The funds have been unutilised and under-utilised. So while we are talking about increasing allocation on education we really need to track very seriously what exactly they are allocating money for. Over all in the budget they are also talking about increasing women's component in plan

allocations happening across sectors. I was involved in the tenth plan exercise of the planning commission, and what we found was much of that was actually from the health department and was on the family planning programme. So if you take that out, then the percentage dropped significantly. So I think it's useful to be careful when we are giving the macro picture.

◆ *Vina Mazumdar, CWDS*

In both the papers there are very clear indications of the role of structures and institutions created for the purpose all of us have in mind. In your analysis those structures and the expenditures on them, the behaviour and the compulsions generated by those structures are not brought within the analytical framework. Vibhuti's data make it very clear the bulk of the so called gender budgeted accounts have gone on non plan expenditure, so there is sufficient evidence that bulk of their expenditure is going on maintaining certain institutions. And that brings me to my last question, something for which I have earned a great deal of anger and criticism over the decades - how long are we going to go on investing the resources of this poor country on maintaining the commissions for women from the national to the state level instead of empowering the local self government agencies, where women have come in through election. I have been critiqued all down the line 'No, your committee recommended the commission and we are going to demand the commission.' I pleaded, and Vibhuti you are a witness, I pleaded with everybody not to recommend commissions. The committee wrote its report prior to the Emergency when statutory national commissions had autonomy. I worked for one of them. During the Emergency those same statutory commissions lost all their autonomy. Today I have lost count, how many bodies have been created in the interest of gendering governance. What purpose do they serve?

◆ *Imrana Qadeer*

I think there is a need to clarify the terms 'state' and 'government' and to say that the state is withdrawing is the understatement of the year. The state is becoming more vicious, more aggressive, and what is being rolled back is the government and therefore please look at the roll back as the strategy of a very aggressive state which is becoming more and more anti poor. The second point, which I would like to make, is that while talking about women please remember that women within the capitalist imperialist economy are very valuable resources. They are needed. When there's economic crisis - then we celebrate families because women take care. When you are going through crisis - you push them into casual labour, and when you can't manage your economies - you blame the population and then they are targeted as agencies of population control.

Session II (Health)

Privatisation in the Health Sector

Amit Sengupta

I will be talking about privatisation in the health sector. For the residents of Delhi, the best possible representative snapshot of the ongoing privatisation is to walk down the road from

All India Institute of Medical Sciences and compare the sights encountered today with the situation fifteen years ago. AIIMS is the premier institute of public health care in the country. Yet, within half a kilometre radius of the institute there are at least fifty shops providing all kinds of diagnostic services. This typifies the trend that we have been seeing in the health care sector during the last two decades.

It is important to understand that this trend is neither accidental, nor specific to India. This is a global phenomenon and a lot of planning, spread over the last two and a half decades, has gone into bringing about the current state of affairs. It all started with the infamous Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAP). A crucial feature of the structural adjustment programmes in India, like similar programmes in America and Africa, was the privatisation of services and the decrease in government spending. There are absolute horror stories of the results of SAP in Africa. The most potent example is the Somalian famine, which we were led to believe, was due to civil war. In reality, it was brought about by the Structural Adjustment Programme coupled with the introduction of beef by the USA and dairy products by EU, which killed off the local economy. In the last two-three decades of peace, many more people have died than in the two World Wars put together. It is estimated that every year, since 1982, six million children have died additionally due to SAP induced programmes.

The biggest victory of globalization in the sector of health care has been the legitimisation of privatisation. It has been done so intelligently that there are many amongst us who have stopped questioning the legitimacy of privatisation in the health sector. First the public sector has been killed off and then privatisation has been introduced on the grounds that the public sector cannot deliver. This process and the logic of it have crept up on all of us in the past two or three decades. It has been on the agenda of the World Bank since 1987 when they circulated a paper promoting this pattern of change. Then came the infamous 1993 World Bank Report on Investing in Health, a more appropriate name for which would be Dis-investing in Health. A World Bank economist, while talking about lending by the World Bank in policy areas, said “when countries really have their backs against the wall, they can be pushed into reforming things at a broad policy level which normally, in the context of projects, they cannot.” The agenda is extremely clear.

The issues facing us today in the private health sector have to be discussed within this context. Firstly, it is important to make a distinction between health and medical care. At its best, the private sector can provide medical care and not health care, which involves much more than just doctors prescribing medicines. Public health is essentially a public good that cannot be apportioned privately. There is a contradiction between the very concept of public health and neo-liberal economics, which does not even see this as an issue. This contradiction is reflected in the social sector of Kerala, which has one of the lowest per capita incomes in the country and one of the best human development indicators. The neo-liberal economists have consistently failed to understand this problem.

In the private medical sector, which is distinct from the health sector, there is an infinite demand for health care. The demand for health will always outstrip the supply. If the usual laws of demand and supply were applied to the health sector, it would imply a constant increase in prices of medical services and goods. Therefore, it is globally acknowledged that the most inefficient way of providing health care is through the private sector. The only country amongst the developed nations to do so is the United States of America. It is also a

well-known fact that USA has one of the worst track records in providing health care. Very few people realise that the Indian health sector is already one of the most privatised in the world. Public spending accounts for only 16% of the health sector. Even in the United States, the public sector provides 44% of the total health care.

Another important trend, which we need to be aware of, is the inroads being made by the corporate sector into health. Medical care in India is being increasingly determined and driven by technology. Twenty years ago professionals or trusts ran most hospitals. Now we have entrepreneurs whose chief expertise lies in running petrol pumps or manufacturing tractors also running hospitals. There is a divorce between professional knowledge and commercial profit in the medical care sector. The disastrous results of commercially determined and technologically driven medical care is best illustrated in the rising incidents of female foeticide.

A third new development in the medical sector is medical tourism- the hobbyhorse of Renuka Chowdhury, our Minister of Tourism. This is a global phenomenon, which combines selling the exotica of the orient along with the cost advantages that our private hospitals can provide to first world customers. There are two main implications of this development. As this trend grows, the private hospitals are going to demand more subsidies from the government. This will come on top of various hidden subsidies, which the private health sector in India already enjoys. Secondly, medical tourism will lead to an internal brain drain with more and more doctors treating patients who would be coming from outside the country, while our own people would be neglected.

Finally, I would like to talk about the implications of General Agreement on Trade and Services (GATS) under WTO for the health sector. Though it is still being negotiated, it is important to understand that GATS is basically a drive towards opening up the entire area of services, including health services, to penetration by foreign corporate houses.

I would like to conclude by touching upon the impact of these developments in the health sector on women. It is worthwhile to repeat the truism that for women, any withdrawal of services provided by the government amounts to a loss of access to medical services. In a technology driven context, women's health concerns are the most compromised. In India, this is reflected in the alarming rise in female foeticides and by the increase of cesarean sections to comprise 50% of deliveries from a mere 15% or 20% two decades ago. In the current context of globalization and privatisation of the health sector, we are likely to witness the further development of these trends.

Population Policy and Sex Ratio

Mohan Rao

I'd like to thank CWDS for inviting me to participate in this excellent seminar. I must confess that I have been working with CWDS for quite some time now, and have nothing to say which is not familiar to the people here.

On the 30th of July 2003, a three judge bench of the Supreme Court of India upheld a Haryana government law prohibiting a person from contesting or holding a post of a panch or sarpanch in the Panchayati Raj institutions of the state if he or she had more than two

children. The bench observed “disqualification on the right to contest an election for having more than two children does not contravene any fundamental right, nor does it cross the limits of reasonability. Rather, it is a disqualification conceptually devised in the national interest.” 2003 being a very rainy year in Delhi, the Supreme Court talked about the “torrential increase in population”. Earlier, the Rajasthan High Court, hearing a similar set of petitions had argued that “these provisions have been enacted by the legislature to control the menace of population explosion... The government is spending large sums of money propagating family planning. One of the agencies to which the project of family planning has been entrusted for implementation is the gram panchayat. The panchs and sarpanchs are to set the example and maintain the norm of two children. Otherwise, what examples can they set before the public?”

Haryana is not the only state that has a population policy with such features, which are not only at variance with the national population policy, but also strike at the heart of the commitments to reproductive health and rights made at by the Government of India at Cairo. Other states such as Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh, also carry similar proscriptions in their population policies. Between them, they advocate a mind-boggling host of incentives and disincentives. Some examples are restricting schooling in government schools to two children, restricting employment in public services to those with two children, linking financial assistance to panchayati raj institutions for developmental activity and anti-poverty programmes with performance in family planning, linking assessment of public health staff to performance in family planning, etc. The two-child norm for panchayati raj institutions now also exists in Maharashtra, Chattisgarh and Orissa in addition to the above states.

The Supreme Court ruling has come in for widespread middle class approbation and it perhaps renders redundant the 21 odd private members bills pending in parliament. Two of them, the Population Stabilisation Bill, 1999 and The Population Control Bill, 2000, moot the idea of a one-child norm, along with a number of incentives and disincentives, including disqualification of persons with more than one child from contesting elections. Yet another bill, The Bachelors Allowance Bill, 2000, suggests incentives to those men who remain bachelors. Men, who taking advantage of these incentives, subsequently get married, are to be fined and imprisoned. The Ministry of Health had an even more ridiculous reason for striking down this proposal, saying that they did not have adequate finances to implement it. These proposals came from Members cutting across political lines from South Indian states. Yet another Bill, the Population Control Bill 2000, seeks to punish people who violate the small family norm, with rigorous imprisonment for a term of five years and a fine not less than Rs 50,000. The Population Control and Family Welfare Bill, 1999, proposes in addition to incentives and disincentives, the compulsory sterilisation of every married couple having two or more living children. Uttar Pradesh brought out a Population Control Bill, 2002, which talks about disqualification from employment, from promotion, from membership in a co-operative union, self-help group, housing society, public corporation and so on, denial of bonus, honorarium or any other benefit, denial of increments, denial of housing loans, etc. Failure to inform the authorities of the birth of a child in violation of the norms would invite disciplinary action including dismissal from employment.

These efforts at prescribing a two-child norm seem to be found in surprisingly unlikely quarters. The Tamil Nadu Agricultural Labourers’ Insurance bill stipulates that labourers

losing their limbs can only receive insurance compensation if they have no more than two children.

Many of us here went and met the National Human Rights Commission and requested the commission to intervene against such practices. The NHRC organised national colloquium, and gave notices to these state governments. They issued a declaration at the end of this colloquium saying that these are all violative of human rights. The two-child norm is particularly harsh on women and those from marginalised communities. It appears that the Supreme Court Judgment was unaware of the concerns of the NHRC.

We do have a Lok Sabha Constitution 79th Amendment Bill seeking to restrict persons with more than two children from contesting elections to the Parliament. The UPA government coming to power had initially filled all of us with hope. But, those hopes were belied. The UPA Government has unveiled a population policy that is supposed to focus on 209 high fertility districts, with all the terrible features of population policy which we saw not just over the last 10-15 years, but during the emergency. I will not go into the details of this policy, but would like to comment upon it. Nirmala Butch has done a study in 5 states, which indicates the fallout of the imposition of the two-child norm on panchayat. It has been exactly as anticipated. The largest number of cases of disqualification from contesting election was with reference to this law, and not criminality or any other criteria. Women formed 41% of those disqualified, Dalits, Adivasis and OBC-s formed an overwhelming 80% of those disqualified. The study also found no evidence to support the contention that the law induced the adoption of the small family norm, nor indeed that members of the panchayati raj institutions were seen as role models. Instead it found evidence of desertion of wives, denial of paternity, donation of girls in adoption, neglect of female infants, non-registration of births, non-immunisation of daughters to avoid registration. Equally significantly, there was evidence of forced abortion and pre-birth elimination of females.

Policies of this nature are not only morally compromised, they also violate the principle of natural justice by creating two sets of citizenship rights on the basis of fertility. Such policies are a throwback to the days before universal suffrage when property rights decided citizenship. These are also demographically unnecessary, as there is a substantial fall in birth rates across the country. Infact, the fertility rate that is currently sought, is almost at par with the replacement level of fertility. In other words, if the unmet need for health services and contraceptives in the country could be met, there is no need for any of these laws. So the real problem in this sector is the dominating mindset, which is yet to change.

One reason for these kind of policies is the feeling that things are not working fast enough on the population front and that the family planning programme has reached an impasse. The fundamental reason for this is the state led collapse of primary health care systems. Over the 90s the rate of decline in infant mortality rate and child mortality rate has come down substantially. There is a great deal of evidence to indicate that the health care system is completely dysfunctional. Medical expenditure has emerged as a leading cause of indebtedness in the country and there are reports of starvation deaths etc. As I said to you yesterday, we have the obscenity in the 10th plan document of a paradigm shift from food security to nutrition security. The new policy focuses on zinc for all, instead of health for all.

It is evident that the family planning programme contributes substantially to the imbalance in the gender ratio in the population. There has been a lot of concern even in

official circles about the sharply anti-female rates of child sex ratios and various reasons have been discussed. However, what is significant is that this is moving beyond areas of traditional anti-female bias into populations, which had hitherto slightly better ratios. Sharpest decline has been amongst the Dalits. It has also started declining in Kerala. Sabu, who should ideally be talking about this, was telling me that between 1st January and 30th June this year, there were 716 females born for every 1000 males in South Delhi, which is a population that obviously, has stabilised. So what we have now is stable and unbalanced populations.

A recent study of abortion in Maharashtra found that a large number of doctors were performing pre-birth elimination of females, even though they knew it was banned. While talking of the wonders of the private sector in healthcare- its efficiency, competence, and so on and so forth- it has to be acknowledged that the sex-ratio is one clear indication of the contribution that the private sector has made towards health care in the country. The reasons put forward by the doctors were many- that it was for the woman's own sake, that it empowered her, it saved her from illegal abortions, that if they didn't do it, somebody else would, and above all, that it was for the good of the country. I would like to conclude on this point.

Discussion

◆ *Nirmala Buch*

There is a widespread belief across different social sections and occupational groups that laws enforcing the two-child norm are essential. An individual attempting to question this norm is immediately judged to be in the wrong. As long as this mindset continues to prevail, especially amongst the lawyers and the judiciary, we will continue to witness such draconian bills in the parliament. We have to question this mindset.

The current worldwide model of development being unable to remove poverty seems to have fallen back on removing the poor. The health policies reviving methods of the emergency period are also designed with the same objective. I think this is a very serious issue that needs to be taken up by the women's movement.

◆ *Malini Bhattacharya*

I would like to make two very brief comments on Mohan Rao's presentation. Firstly, so far as the 79th Constitution Amendment Bill is concerned, there is no need to be happy because the NDA has been replaced by the UPA. This bill was first introduced in 1995-96, during the regime of the late P.V. Narasimha Rao. My second point is that for a very long time now, from the women's movement, we have been talking about these coercive and repressive population policies. However, both women's studies and the women's movement need to focus more on the way in which the health departments of national and state governments are being penetrated by pharmaceutical companies.

Health Issues before the Women's Movement

C. Sathyamala

The participation of Indian women in the health issues facing the country, which started in the late 70s and the early 80s, was the coming together of two streams. One was the fiercely independent, non-affiliated women's groups, many of which could be traced back to the fierce agitation following the Mathura rape case. The other was the liberal stream from the voluntary health sector, which was trying to shrug off its white missionary image. The Western Women in Health Movement and particularly, the North American Women in Health Movement that had reached its peak in the late 70s had influenced both these groups. The latter had its origins in the civil rights movement and the anti-Vietnam movement in America. There was, however, a stark difference between the Western movement and the movement inspired by it in India. The different contexts of the two movements need to be taken into consideration.

The North American groups comprised mostly of white, middle-class educated women. The objective context of this movement arose from several specific factors. Health in America was highly medicalised and women by virtue of being the bearer of children, made up 30% of all those who were interacting with the medical system. Over 90% of the gynaecologists were men and medical procedures tended to be highly invasive. Women were thus forced to rely on men for their gynaecological problems. Contraceptives and facilities for abortion were also withheld and controlled by men. The Thalidomide disaster of the 60s brought these issues to a head in North America. Thalidomide, if ingested by pregnant women, resulted in the birth of malformed babies. An American woman who had ingested Thalidomide and wanted to terminate her pregnancy was legally prevented from doing so. She had to go outside USA to get an abortion. This incident provided the spark to the whole agitation. There was also an epidemic of German measles resulting in more than 20,000 malformed babies. Once more, women were denied the option of an abortion.

This was the context of the politicisation of women's health issues in America. Women met in small groups to raise consciousness, to form study circles, etc. They decided to document their own experiences of menstruation on the grounds that men were making pronouncements on menstruation without having menstruated even once in their lives. In the 60s the Boston Women's Health Book Collective was formed and produced the all-time classic 'Our Bodies Our Selves', which has continued to inspire generations of women and feminists. The major focus of these groups was on the demystification of medicine. The role of medicine in providing an ideological basis for the suppression of women was criticised. It was also recognised that medicine was strategic to women's empowerment as it held the key to reproductive freedom. Reclaiming our bodies was the rallying cry. The whole movement had a profound impact on the practice of medicine, particularly, Gynaecology and Psychiatry, which were prime among the disciplines used in the subjugation of women.

However, the movement in the West did not involve women who were struggling for their daily needs or for survival. So the issues in India were bound to be different. The influence of the Western movement initially led to similar groups and study circles being formed in India. There was a lot of excitement about sharing personal experiences of menstruation and sexuality. Self-Groups, where a woman examined her own vagina with a speculum and a mirror, was also talked about. But in India, these groups and discussions were confined to a very small section of women. The main demand raised by women in India was for safe deliveries, in contrast to the demand for home deliveries in the West. There, contraceptives were conceived as empowering for women as it gave them reproductive freedom. But in

India, the eugenic and imperialistic agenda was actually forcing women to undergo very harsh measures of birth control, including sterilisation. Diseases brought on by conditions of poverty, which equally affected working class men and women, was another burning issue in India. Women's health issues in India were thus located within a context of class.

The Women in Health Movement in India was largely issue-based. The banning of Estrogen and Progesterone drugs, or EP drugs, was the first issue taken up. These drugs were both hazardous and useless. They were being used in India to cater mainly to the uniquely Indian need of delaying menses during religious rituals. The issue was not taken up by the women's movement, but by those of us within the medical profession who had linkages with the women's movement. The campaign against EP drugs was launched on 8th March, the International Women's Day. It was a highly successful campaign as it was largely led by the media. The issue was taken up not only by Health Groups, but also by the Women's Movement and the Left as it fitted in with their critique of the pharmaceutical industry. Though the demand raised by the campaign was for warnings of larger size and in local languages on the drug packets, the drug controller went ahead and banned it. This led to a series of public hearings, which exposed many of us to the nexus between the pharmaceutical industry and the private medical lobby. The second major campaign taken up was over the issue of sexual pre-determination and pre-selection of children.

The Indian Women in Health Movement is known for its opposition to the introduction of hazardous contraceptives in the country. Three autonomous women's groups, namely, the Stree Shakti Sangathana in Hyderabad, Saheli in Delhi and Chingari in Ahmedabad, along with private individuals and doctors who joined the campaign were the main protagonists. The strategy adopted was to file public interest litigations. The people filing the case were not directly affected by the use of these contraceptives, but fought on behalf of the poor on whom it was being used. This legal remedy is unique to India. In this sphere too the difference between the Western and the Indian movement stood out. In the West, injectible contraceptives were not used on the grounds that they could cause breast cancer. However, the same reason was shrugged off in the Indian context saying that Indian women don't live long enough to get breast cancer, forcing us to look for other reasons. The focus was shifted to the short-term side effects of the contraceptives, i.e. the chaos in the menstrual cycle and more importantly, to the question of return of fertility. The threat of possible sterility was not a major issue in the West, but had an enormous impact in India. So the campaign against injectible contraceptives in India raised three main objections. Firstly, it was not safe. Secondly, it was often used without the consent of the woman. Thirdly, the target-oriented family planning programmes functional in our country heightens the risk of abuse in applying this contraceptive method.

This movement became the distinguishing feature of the Indian Women in Health Movement. We were criticised at every level- national, international and even at the WHO – as middle class feminists, who were obstructing the introduction of contraceptives that could benefit poorer women, into the market. This movement brought forth two different schools of thought within the women's groups involved. One section favoured clinical trials, as an opposition to it would become unscientific. The second group believed that the hazardous nature of the drug was mainly due to the lack of adequate infrastructure and facilities to screen and handle complications. In terms of results, though there was no hearing, the movement achieved two very important changes. The first was the introduction of schedule Y in the Drugs and Cosmetic Act which, for the first time in India,

spoke of clinical trials. The second change involved Sherring, the parent company manufacturing the contraceptives. It decided not to put it in the market because the case against it was watertight.

In the 90s, with liberalisation, the drug laws in the country changed. The drug controller decided to allow Upjohn Company to market Depo Provera into the country without having gone through the mandatory phase three trial. Simultaneously, the drug controller had also, in a clear case of contempt of court, granted permission to Sherring to market its drug, while the case was still pending in the court. However, in 2000 the case was dismissed mainly due to a difference of opinion within the movement regarding what should be the priority of the movement. The court's logic was that injectible contraceptives could be used in Medical Colleges that have good gynaecological departments. This missed the crux of the issue, that once this drug was injected into the body, nobody could remove it for three months. During this period, if the woman developed a thrombo-embolic phenomena, or a blood clot, she would die. The case had also raised the related questions of unethical testing as there was no legal remedy for the women who had been tested upon, nor were there any accepted norms set up for clinical trials. On the whole, this was a very big opportunity to push for some essential changes, which was lost.

The state continuously attempts to put the drug into its family planning programme. In India, it is a very expensive drug as each vial costs Rs 150 or more. Women of the working class can use it only if the state provides it at a subsidised rate or free. Yet, every successive government tries to push this drug into family planning. Its tactics involve calling in international specialists to tell the women's groups in India how wonderful the drug is.

The Quinacrine case was the next issue to be taken up. In this case, the Supreme Court banned the drug. It is important to understand why the campaign against Quinacrine succeeded in court while that against injectible contraceptives floundered. Quinacrine was not linked to any large market, whereas the potential market for Depo Provera is one of thousand million dollars in India alone. The possibility of realising even a fraction of it is a huge profit motivation. Thus, though Depo Provera works at all levels, adversely affects the progeny and is much more hazardous when compared to Quinacrine, it was not banned while Quinacrine was.

The last ten years has witnessed the fallouts of this huge success story. In 1991-92, we witnessed the entry of the Women's Health Advocates. In a meeting in Delhi, women's groups were called in to get an agreement on allowing Norplan, another hazardous drug, to proceed onto phase four trials without completing the mandatory phase three trials. For the first time the farming out of contraceptive research by women's groups was discussed. The proposal to let women's groups take responsibility for clinical testing led to another area of contention between the various women's groups involved. There were those who were open to the idea while many others felt that the women's groups should not get involved in executing clinical trials at all. Though nothing came out of this proposal, women's groups have been involved in carrying out user perspective studies. Such studies, however, have a very clear politics. Its methodology can be compared to going to a group of drug addicts and inquiring whether they like the drug or not. There will always be a section of women who do not have any problems. If all the respondents of a user perspective study come from this section, it leads to the obviously false statistics of 100% user satisfaction amongst women.

These are the kinds of studies, which are today being funded by UNFP and many other organisations.

The rhetoric of reproductive rights has also been used to promote the hazardous injectible contraceptives. They are characterised as liberating the woman from dependence on or control by her husband or in-laws, in the sphere of reproductive decisions. Her ability to surreptitiously get herself injected at a hospital or a primary health centre is constructed as a freedom of choice. We have questioned this construction as it ignores the wider context of oppression where the woman has no choice at all. Paradoxically, by using the language of woman's rights groups, there has been an increasing tendency to reduce women's health needs to reproductive rights. Once again, a woman is reduced to her uterus and her ovaries, which also become the sole focus of women's reproductive rights advocates.

The donor foundations have exercised increasing control through philanthropy. The foundation supported intellectuals and organisations come to hold prominent places in public policy debates in the areas of health, population control, and law and human rights. Simultaneously, there is the NGO-isation of the Women in Health Movement, which is linked to a process of leadership formation through funding. Groups with little or no grass roots grounding get funding and exercise an authority to make pronouncements on the needs of working class women. There is also a strange situation of donors funding both the camps in the ongoing debate. Thus, the Ford Foundation, exhibiting its completely non-partisan nature, funds NGOs who participate in the social marketing of Depo Provera, those who oppose its use and the organisations involved in the unethical testing of Depo Provera.

Research has become a major focus of women's groups and organisations in the last decade. Infact, through funding it has become a virtual epidemic. In 1992, the famous paper on RTA was published where 92% of rural women were diagnosed to suffer from reproductory tract infection. Within this declaration three streams met. The feminists had already said that women have gynaecological problems such as problems of vaginal discharge, which the medical establishment does not recognise. This was also the period when heterosexual intercourse was becoming the dominant mode of spread of HIV. Here too, RTA became an important factor. The third group was the population lobby, which saw the issue as yet another means of entering into the private domain of sexual behaviour and understanding it, so as to help in the promotion of contraceptives. There are several methodological problems with the paper that these three streams got together to produced. Recently, a project worth four crores on abortion study has been carried out which had no links with the epistemological perspective gained from the grass roots. The findings of this study is being used in support of various schemes, including abortion services in rural areas, training of nurses to carry out abortions and even to bring back the menstrual regulation canela that had been abandoned in 1978 due to complications. Lack of funding makes it impossible for us to match the scale of research.

There has also been a shift in the strategy of protest. Earlier, needs were translated into political demands through social protest movements. Now, advocacy has become the chosen method for bringing about change. I call this the fact-sheet paradox. Earlier, while writing a fact sheet we could pronounce a drug hazardous at the end. But today, fact sheets give the same information to tell women that the drugs can be used once the side effects are

understood. The population lobby is piggybacking on the reproductive rights and health issues.

I would like to stress on the issue of funding once more. Raising the question does not amount to questioning the personal integrity of the people involved in a certain project. But the very fact that many of the people involved are above reproach is what gives credibility to donor-directed studies. The critique of a report often becomes confabulated with a criticism of the individuals, leading to complications. This is the main reason why, till date, there has been no proper criticism of the 1992 report on gynaecological problems. Nevertheless, it is important to talk about conflict of research and clash of interests. It is vital to mention the source of funding, as there is invariably some interest involved. Explicitly stating the source of funding is an established procedure within the health industry, in recognition of the strength of the pharmaceutical industry. Adopting a similar practice in the sphere of research regarding women and health in India can greatly increase transparency regarding the conflict of interests and of research objectives in the field.

I would like to conclude by saying that the Women in Health Movement in India is still a force to reckon with, though it has undergone great changes over time. The earlier collective has been replaced by organisations, which are sustained largely through external funding. There are very few organisations like Saheli that continue to revoke external funding to maintain their integrity. These organisations are also developing a definite hierarchy. There has been a decline in the level of academic and political rigour. In the last decade, the effects of globalization have led to a massive transformation of the health sector. The public sector is being dismantled, private insurance has entered the field in a big way, and diagnostic and therapeutic medical practices have become more interventionist. Outsourcing of clinical testing is going to be a major issue in the coming years. Already, the press has started talking about the wonders of outsourcing clinical trials in India. The problem is that the testing will mostly be carried out on the poor and the uneducated, who are incapable of giving informed consent. The structural adjustment programmes are going to increase disparities that are going to adversely impact the health of both men and women from the working class. Incidents of violence and specially suicides amongst both men and women are already on the rise. The women's movement will have to take up the challenge posed by these developments.

As a result of these changes two very different sections of women have emerged. On one hand there are the upper middle class and middle class women to whom the health sector offers interventionist technologies ranging from sex determination, pre-selection and hormonal therapies to cesareans, hysterectomies and fertility treatment. On the other hand there are the working class women who are dying for want of medical attention. Only time will tell how the Women's Movement will respond to these changes.

◆ *Vibhuti Patel*

I would like to know what is happening to the debate around RU486 because after the passing away of Dr. Malini Karkel it is not being discussed or written about in any public forum. There is also no information on the anti-pregnancy vaccine. Another growing concern is that of mental health. There is pressure on the women's movement from the community workers to take up mental health. Multi-tasking along with the structural adjustment

programme has put a very heavy burden on women. There is a growing trend in all public hospitals in Mumbai of women being admitted and sedated for long periods. There is an alarming rise in the use of ECT or Electro-Convulsive Therapy. Medical social workers and psychiatric social workers in training programmes are glorifying ECT and bio-medical approach to mental health.

◆ *C. Sathyamala*

The ongoing dismantling of the public health sector is the biggest challenge before us today. We have to issue from campaigns based on single issues to a more comprehensive plan of action. Even the anti-fertility vaccine is linked to the much more dangerous clinical trial of HIV vaccine, which nobody is talking about. Phase one of these trials has already started. But to take up the issue of clinical trial successfully, we have to shift into a broader critique of the entire health sector.

City Plans and Housing

Dunu Roy

The broad theme I would like to discuss is the impact of globalization on cities. Based on my study of 25 odd cities across India in the last three four years, there seems to be three main developments. There is a movement from formal to non-formal, i.e. from regular work to contractual work. When privatisation of electricity boards takes place, the regular workers are retrenched. Contractors move into the picture who employ similar people for similar work but on a temporary basis. The second broad change is the shift from manufacturing to services. Value-addition is increasingly measured in terms of commodities being bought and sold, instead of in terms of goods being produced. The environmental movement is supporting this transformation in all cities as a part of its opposition to pollution. The rhetoric seems to be in support of closure of manufacturing industries to ensure a green and beautiful city. The third shift that is happening on a very large scale, but is inadequately documented, is that from formal/semi-formal/informal modes into illegal modes. This is being accomplished through practices like city zoning and regulations. For example, inner cities are being declared out of bounds for rickshaw-pullers and vendors, walled settlements with guards are allowing entry to maidservants only if they have ID cards, etc. This illegalisation is taking place everywhere. The illegal circumstances being imposed on the urban working classes makes it easier to evict or remove them at the behest of authority.

This change in the character of the city is being accompanied and aided by planning processes. The correlation becomes evident in the Master Plans, which usually make provisions for the growth of the city during the next 20 years. The character of Master Plans is changing. The first Master Plan of Delhi mentioned cycle tracks. The third Master Plan does not even acknowledge that the cycle exists in the city. The pedestrian of course was never acknowledged in any of the three plans. Now, the Master Plan is being supplanted by the City Development Plan that does not even cater to the whole city. For the implementation of these, autonomous institutions such as the DMRC, which is a corporation and Special Development Authorities are being set up. Most of these bodies do not have a codified system of laws within which they operate and enjoy huge discretionary powers. The DDA, for example, can declare that the Yamuna bed will be used for Commonwealth Games. To make matters worse, 60 hectares of land acquired for the

purpose was later given off for the construction of the Akshardham Temple. When this was challenged in the Supreme Court on the grounds that the land belonged to the Uttar Pradesh Irrigation Department and not to DDA, the petition was dismissed because it came four years after the transgression. This kind of discretionary power is increasing in the period of globalization.

When we discuss housing within this context, the issues that come to the fore are also different from earlier patterns. The earlier issue of eviction from land or housing has been replaced by eviction from shelter being accompanied by eviction from work. The city no longer has space, formal or even informal, for those who service the city. The contours of protest and agitation have to necessarily change to accommodate this new reality. Olga Teles's case can no longer provide adequate protection. The case, while recognising the pavement dwellers' right to the pavement also acknowledged the pedestrian's right to it. Using the right of the pedestrian as an excuse, today the car has encroached on to the pavement. The need for an alternative paradigm of development, which has already been voiced in this seminar with respect to other issues, is equally felt in city planning.

Two recent developments have augured well for the development of an alternative development paradigm. Firstly, there is increasing public discourse on these issues. The Right to Information has been increasingly used along with Public Interest Litigations by the Residents' Welfare Associations. These associations have sprung up in every city and are busy filing petitions in the name of public interest to evict people. We have tracked down at least 36 such Public Interest Litigations all over the country. Consequently, there is an increased public discourse on who exactly is participating in the planning of the city. For instance, the Delhi Bhagidari Scheme is actually a forum for the middle class Resident Welfare Associations. The trade unions, the women's groups, the slum associations or any other forum representing the poor, has no place in it. Consequently, there is some exploration of what are the legitimate institutions, which should be allowed to participate in the planning of a city in the public space meant for public discourse, as per the 74th amendment. This is a welcome move as it represents a process of democratisation, which challenges the prevalent, essentially bourgeoisie, parliamentary democracy.

The second trend is of the state being increasingly held accountable for its actions. The right to information has played a crucial part in this process which actually transcends the city. There is not only the demand to know who plans; there is also a critique of how the state defines public interest. The latter is a crucial issue because at the moment, public purpose is a discretionary function of government where the court cannot intervene. The ongoing attempt to tie up the scope of public purpose to the constitution is extremely important. There is an argument, which suggests that public purpose should be defined in terms of the fundamental rights, and directive principles of the constitution. Following this, education for all would be considered public purpose, but land for industry would not. This amounts to an effort to challenge arbitrary decisions taken by the government. This process can be linked up to the development of an alternative paradigm, which might seek to satisfactorily answer the basic questions of who decides, what and for whom.

The basic tenet of globalization, as with all forms of capitalism is the maximisation of profit. As long as development is dominated and informed by this basic tenet, it can never be pro human beings, or pro women. This aspect of development needs much greater attention than it has received so far. To some extent this debate has already started in

circles concerned with ecology and disaster management. An article on Cuba's method of disaster management has been circulating via e-mail. The pattern there seems to be of minimisation of losses rather than maximisation of profit. Human life and not property is given prime value and the prevention of loss of life is of the first priority. If this tenet of minimisation of losses can be incorporated into the process of production, then we can challenge the whole capitalist ethos that we have consciously or unconsciously borrowed, regarding how production should operate. This is a largely unexplored point of debate. The Women's Movement seems particularly suited to take this up as domestic work already operates on this principle.

I have, in my presentation, moved far beyond the ambit of city planning and housing. But I hope that in doing so; I have been able to better illustrate the inter-connectivity between city planning and the broader issue of development paradigms. I would like to conclude with the hope that this debate is carried forward beyond the confines of such seminars.

Discussion

◆ *Imrana Qadeer : Discussant*

Putting the whole days work together, it seems that we have had a reasonably comprehensive discussion on health. We have talked of macro economic policies, Structural Adjustment Programmes and the resultant marginalisation of the poor. It has also become eminently clear that a discussion on health has to include issues of employment, housing, nutrition and the issue of access to services, which the poor are increasingly being denied.

As analysts, we need to have a clear comprehension of what is meant by health. When we talk of health some use it in the sense of medical care, others in the sense of public health and yet others talk of the clinical practice of individual doctors. What is often missed in this confusion is that public health is inclusive of all this. Medical care is very much a part of public health and the way you practice medicine decides whether you are transforming it into a commodity, or you are contributing to public health. Public health means using your expertise at the population level to intervene in the historical pattern of disease. Clinical medicine, in contrast, merely provides relief to an individual. Over time it has been very easy for planners to shift from the collective approach to the individual approach. This shift is reflected in WHO saying that their major mistake in the 70s and the 80s was to only address the collective and not the individual. Today, WHO has transformed the notion of equity in health from a collective class perspective to an individualistic approach. So the WHO reports now talk of things like patient satisfaction, client orientation, etc. The point missed here is that clients are those who reach the hospital, which does not include 60% of the population. The NSS data shows people who do not access health are increasing in numbers. Despite the fact that 60% to 70% of the poor are going to public sector hospitals, it is neglected. The pattern is to stop investment in public sector, render it inefficient and then to bring in privatisation on the grounds of this inefficiency.

It is vital to have a clear understanding of this pattern to comprehend what is happening in the health sector in India. We have already shifted from comprehensive primary health care to selective primary health care; from there we moved on to primary level care; and today we talk of essential health care. This essential health care is nothing more than

giving a free run to donor driven priorities that neither question status quo, nor talk about the social and economic determinants of health. Instead, the focus is on those technological interventions that are available, which the states can buy, and on which global public-private partnerships are working in the form of vaccines. While earning popularity through generous funding in dollars, Will and Wellinda are also making guinea pigs out of our own people. The goals of global partnerships are increasingly coming to dominate the personnel, the policies and the perspectives of WHO, which is pushing national governments to fall in line.

Third world governments are being told to become stewards to shape the future of the private sector, and we are increasingly becoming housekeepers of the private sector. The taxes of the middle class are low. Having subsidised lifestyles they fall sick less and go to the hospitals less. The poor through the user fee pay more but do not have the protection of the public sector. These issues must be taken into account by the women's movement, along with urban housing, employment and nutrition, which to me constitute health.

◆ *Debolina Mukherjee*

As a result of health being understood in the context of an individual instead of in a collective context, it has become possible today to shift the blame on the individual. This will have an extremely adverse effect on women who will increasingly be placed in situations where even doctors will hold them responsible for their own illness. The risk of this happening is particularly high with AIDS patients. The poor women who have AIDS are already being blamed for being carriers of the virus.

◆ *C.Sathyamala*

I really don't think that women's being blamed for being ill is a new development. Women have always been blamed and so have the poor, the ignorant and the illiterate. The theoretical underpinning to this shift from the collective to the individual is of much greater importance. Once the individual becomes the focus, there is no longer any need to address the social and economic issues within the ambit of health. This makes it much easier for the World Bank to push through its alternative policy of self-help groups into the health sector too. From the perspective of the forces of globalization, this shift is seen as a vital theoretical substratum on which they can base their strategies.

◆ *Vibhuti Patel*

I would like Dunu to comment on the gender issues in housing policy. In the massive displacement of the poor, which accompanies the construction of fly-overs, car parks and shopping malls, women are also de-housed. But in the site and service scheme and in the slum rehabilitation programmes, the needs of women have been totally undermined. In Vindoshi, after a lot of agitation by Nivara Hak Sangathak Samiti, alternative plots were given to the displaced pavement-dwellers. But here too MARA did not accept any of the suggestions of women's organisations. Women did not want a wall between kitchen and dining room or the toilet adjacent to the kitchen. They wanted a U-shaped housing colony that would create room for community space; a workshop for home based workers, children's reading room and a common saanjha chula for making chapatis. Non of these

suggestions were accepted. Shiv Sahi Prakash, for shortage of horizontal space has come up with an eight-storey structure. There are no lifts and inadequate safety measures. Children are constantly getting injured and even dying. The fear of the Shiv Sena has led to a complete self-imposed censorship and the no journalists are writing about it. There has also been a long-standing demand by the women's organisations to reserve 10% of the houses in all housing schemes, LIG, HIG and MIG, for female-headed households.

◆ *Dunu Roy*

I agree that the whole process of eviction is especially harsh on the women because the gender dimension is never recognised. However, the harshness of the process of displacement also creates an opportunity for its articulation. Infact, the gender dimension has been taken up in two ways. First is in the manner of housing. While it might be true that in Gujarat women preferred U-shaped housing, in Delhi they preferred the line. In Delhi, your neighbours tend to be complete strangers because houses are allotted by lottery. Women naturally did not want U-shaped housing, focusing on shared common spaces in such circumstances. So for the gender dimension to play a productive role in housing, it has to engage with the people taking decisions and the procedures being followed. Secondly, in city after city, the women's groups have come forward to oppose eviction most militantly. The lack of participation of men in these movements is largely because they have never been organised. In this sphere, there is a large section, which is not being mobilised largely as a result of the gendered perspective. Even as globalization individualises us, it simultaneously creates opportunities of collectivisation, which should not be missed.

CHANGING SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

Chair: Ratna Sudarshan

Violence Against Women: Some Crime Statistics and Issues

Preet Rustagi

My paper seeks to bring forth some of the vital crime statistics on violence against women, and I will look at the NCRB data to illuminate on the subject, and some of the problems associated with it. Violence in society is not new; our societies have resorted to violence in pursuit of civilisation, for property control, for expansion, ownership, and even in the course of day-to-day existential disciplining and training. Violence assumes various forms, and not all forms are criminalised. Thus violence is practised covertly or overtly, at the physical, mental or psychological plane, and can serve as patriotism - of safeguarding the nation, as in case of wars; in policing and corrective measures, as in case of the torturing of criminals, and prisoners; in flexing communal identity and the enforcement of religious and caste hierarchies, as in case of communal riots and caste based violence; or just as honour killings, like the sati pratha, non acceptance of marriages out of own choice or will, etc. These are all defended on account of socio-cultural traditions. However crime against women takes on a different connotation due to a number of factors. Violence against women has always been there. However, in recent times it has only increased more, and the heightened levels of depravity and perversion are borne out by the facts and figures.

The question we need to address is that what defines crime against women. Fundamentally, what makes violence of any action is the perception prevalent among the people. Violence works with or against public morality. In the context of the women's movement it becomes all the more important to consider as to whose viewpoint is informing public morality, because often this is what shapes crime and violence against women. We need to remember that violence can assume various forms, and not all forms are criminalised. While we certainly do not want that, the fact remains that there are certain domains that require special attention as far as violence against women is concerned. Such violence can be physical or mental. A lot of violence is justified in the name of tradition, patriotism, honour etc. What distinguishes crime against women is the gender aspect of the violence, which is related to regression and sexuality. Often caste and class discriminations confound the gender dimension thereby making the entire patriarchal character of the oppression more complicated. Added to this is the hierarchical status of women, which is perpetrated by the physical aspect as well as the socio-economic location, placing women at the bottom of the gender hierarchy and subjecting them to greater violence. Women are also the sites for the cultural protestations in a society. Thus their agency is superimposed by other social identities. Women do not have any control over their own bodies or sex, and are treated as commodities. Their individual identity and agency gets defined via other identities of family, community, caste, religion, region, language and so on. Women's complacency on one hand, and their treatment as property in need of protection and in control of male domination on the other, is actually strengthened through legislative provisions, which in fact institutionalise their subject positions as property with no control over their bodies and sexuality. In this manner the State perpetuates patriarchy, denying desire, and pushing women through the imposition of repressive forces, into being treated as asexual beings. It limits their legitimate role to be within conjugal relationships, for reproduction, thereby utilising their labour power purposively for preservation, protection and perpetuation of patriarchy within families, kinship ties and economic relations. These are forms of commodification that suit and are agreeable within the prevailing patriarchal ideologies. This commodification gets further institutionalised, thereby facilitating the control of the state. A further problem is that there is a kind of an asexualisation of women. Sex is treated as dirty work, and anything related to the depiction of sexual aspect of women is stopped or curbed turning women into asexual beings. There is basically a double approach, a deployment of double or multiple standards to subjugate women and preserve the male oriented dominant position. There is an attempt to contain women within the institutional structure of the heterosexual conjugal family, cultural traditions, and protect them at the same time from the ugly, dirty 'public' world that men negotiate to be breadwinners. This constructed docility of women is seen as a patriarchal tool to curb the negative energy of women's sexuality.

Violence against women, especially the criminalised forms most often relate to sexual assaults in varying degrees of intensity or to the conflict in gender relations oriented towards demanding more equitable sharing of power and authority, questioning the existing tilt of balance. The Indian Penal Code provides for violence relating to conflict in gender relations, and many of this is within the private space of the household. Section 498A relates to violence perpetrated by husband or his relatives. This constitutes the largest single share of the crimes committed against women, for which the NCRB provides data accounts for more than one third of all crimes against women (CAW). In fact, in 89% of the rape cases, the victim, as per the 2002 crime statistics, knows the offender. Incest cases registered during the year were 369 in number. The crimes against women identified in the

IPC are, rape (Sec.376 IPC); kidnapping and abduction for different purposes (Sec.366-373 IPC), within which only crimes towards women and girls are considered; homicide for dowry, dowry deaths, or attempts at that (Sec.302/304B IPC), and here only dowry deaths are considered; torture, both mental and physical (Sec. 498A IPC), molestation (Sec. 354 IPC), sexual harassment (Sec. 509 IPC), often referred to as eve-teasing in the past, importation of girls up to 21 years of age (Sec.366B IPC). Various crimes are identified under the special and local laws (SLL) that are enacted from time to time to deal with specific social and economic problems, reviewed periodically and amended. Among these are the Dowry Prohibitions Act, 1961, Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act, 1987, Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956 and the Indecent Representations of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986. The proportion of crimes against women as a share of the total IPC crimes in the year 1998 was 6.7%, and in 2002, it has risen to 7.4%. Rape has increased phenomenally, and so has cases of sexual harassment, molestation and cruelties by husbands. One of the crucial points that I wish to raise here is that, in the data recorded, almost 40% of the total cases of crimes against women, were rape cases, and in 89% of the rape cases (recorded), the victim is supposed to have known the offender. This is a point I think we need to consider more carefully. Among the Crimes Against Women as identified by the IPC, Section 376, which deals with rape, sees it as just penetration or more. I feel that it is absolutely crucial for us to step away from the overtly sexual aspect of rape, and concentrate on the violence aspect more carefully.

There is a problem with the crime statistics, and this is concentrated largely around the problem of a large number of cases not getting recorded. We need to be extremely careful before using this data. CWDS has studied the data more carefully to point out the lacuna, to study the statistics, and analyse the steady rise of crime against women. More work needs to go into this particular area. The point is that if in a particular district there are high rates of violence against women, the rate cannot be undermined, because it can only be higher. However, under-reporting is a serious problem, and thus what is needed is a relative analysis. Most cases of Indecent Representations of Women Act are from Andhra Pradesh. Child rape cases are increasing day by day. The Dowry Prohibitions Act is also not implemented in most cases, because the officers who are supposed to prohibit dowry are often not aware of their own responsibilities and specific duties; dowry is often an insignificant part of the overall functions. A huge number of cases of rape are actually occurring in the home of the victim. Crimes against children is a new category per the NCRB Records, which over the past few years has been providing data on crimes against children and against the SC/STs at the district level. In crimes against children in 2001, which is the first year that they had given us the data, kidnapping and abduction had the highest share. In 2002, rape has superseded that, as the highest category. But what is significant to me is the category of exposure and abandonment, where the parents intentionally have left the children; and although the number is not very significant, what is intriguing was that almost 44% of the cases are coming from Maharashtra. This could be because of the increasing effectiveness of foeticide laws, and the awareness that one cannot resort to measures like this. The NCRB, unfortunately doesn't have gender disaggregated data for the exposure and abandonment, and thus the exact boy/girl ratio within this category of exposure and abandonment is not known. In terms of the cases of child rape the highest rates are in Sikkim, Meghalaya, Chandigarh.

Now I will come to the question of the disposal of cases, the cases for the year 2002, which were disposed by police. In terms of a comparative picture, the police are now performing at

a much more efficient level, as far as their basic functions of actually investigating the cases or charge-sheeting the cases are concerned. Pending cases every year remain at the ratio of about 20 as a total of all crimes against women, but more or less many of the cases are actually disposed throughout the year. The courts are abysmally pathetic. 80% of all crimes against women across categories remain pending every year, accumulating the cases to lakhs. The trials completed are somewhere around 20 at an average, out of which acquittal and discharging is almost three fourth. This leaves a very minuscule number of convictions. This has a lot to do with the patriarchal values with which a number of these cases actually get evaluated by the jurisprudence.

Given the sexualised nature of crimes against women and the overwhelming hold of patriarchal morals, the police and judiciary often falter in delivering justice. We must therefore take gender, patriarchy and sexuality on board if we want to address violence against women effectively. I will end this paper by a quote from Michel Foucault, *A History of Sexuality*, "... we are informed that if repression has indeed been the fundamental link between power, knowledge and sexuality since the classical age, it stands to reason that we will not be able to free ourselves from it except at a considerable cost. Nothing less than a transgression of laws, a lifting of prohibitions, and eruption of speech, a reinstating of pleasure within reality and a whole new economy in the mechanisms of power will be required."

Movement Experiences in Haryana (Translated from Hindi)

Jagmati Sangwan

Jagmati presented before the house a perspective of the women's movement and its engagement with the globalization from the ground level experiences of the AIDWA workers in Haryana. The context of globalization, and the Structural Adjustment Policies that have come in its wake, have affected not just the society outside but also the inner world, and the world of individual and social relations. It has affected the consciousness of people themselves, the way they see things. Further, it has resulted in a dispersal and fragmentation of the elements within the civil society. The democratic forces have been crushed at the ground level and this is also in a sense making people insensitive in terms of their own consciousness to the processes that strengthen democracy.

This being the general effects of globalization, we now come to the question of the falling sex ratio and son preference in Haryana, which has increased over the past few years. In a society where maleness is seen as the carrier of power and capital, women are themselves preferring sons to daughters. This has direct links with the extreme insecurity and devaluation women are in general facing in the changing context of globalization. Thus women are themselves seeing sons as saviours or protectors. This problem of a falling sex ratio, is connected to the whole phenomenon of bought wives. In almost every village in Haryana there are 20-25 young men who do not have wives, and therefore, they go and buy wives from other states. The status of these bought wives is extremely problematic. While the women themselves suffer from isolation and inability to adjust to a different cultural milieu, and thus there's resultant insecurity, the attitude of the husband is extremely demeaning too. The relation between the couple is often merely sexual. The society, and the family members see them as lesser wives and lesser husbands, and often there is a sense of

suspicion among the women of the household around the bought wives, regarding property matters. The children of these bought wives are also looked down upon. Thus the son preference and the resultant social problems around the bought wives is linked up with the larger atmosphere of insecurity brought about by globalization.

The next issue that has to be addressed is that of caste. We have seen the growth in the influence and interventions of the by now notorious caste panchayats in Haryana. These bodies had existed in the past, however, in the present times, with the state administration increasingly abdicating its role in the village, the caste panchayats have gained autonomous power. To cite a few instances – there was the Dulina incident, where there was a public lynching of a Dalit. The state turned a completely blind eye to the matter, and because of the utter lack of political will, the perpetrators were rendered free. This only emboldened the panchayats all the more. In fact these self-styled panchayats often identify the households against whom they have verdicts, and then publicly and symbolically humiliate the people who disobey the norms set by the panchayats heads. Often they take off the veil of the women to assault and insult them. Such acts of humiliation, were earlier never tolerated in Haryana; in fact they were condemned. But at present not only have they become the norm, but extend even to the prosecution and killing of offenders.

Such interventions by the caste panchayats have been particularly directed against instances of choice marriage, which is condemned as being directly against the traditions of Haryana, and therefore to be suppressed through any arbitrary action by these panchayats. Another thing that is becoming particularly notorious in Haryana is that particularly in instances of sexual violence against women, what is seen is an absolute collusion between the state and these panchayats, particularly in the arbitration of cases of rape. The result is that the panchayats, who are left to decide in such cases, end up imposing a monetary compensation on the victim, instead of punishing the offender. And what is more appalling is that even the compensation is not to be paid to the woman, but to the village goshala or the cowshed. The woman has practically no voice, and is forced to succumb to the dictates of the panchayat's heads. These kinds of violence are mostly directed against Dalit women, and their nature is one of stark upper class repression. Use of the law enforcing machinery is entirely denied to the poor low caste women, while the state and the government are happily overlooking these issues.

In recent times often the fundamentalist forces like the Bajrang Dal support the panchayat in attacking the low caste Dalits. The state protects these panchayats in more ways than one, and there are visible links between the reactionary and caste forces on one hand, and the main political parties on the other. In fact these caste panchayats act as potential vote banks for the dominant political parties, and in the election season, the panchayat supports the political parties in their campaign. Some of the panchayat members are seen putting the pagri or turban on the politicians, as a clear mark of political support.

The third issue is the fact of the social repercussions of jobless growth. In Haryana, the weaker sections, and mainly the women workers get work for only 42 days in a year. Landless agricultural labourers get almost no work, driving them to borrow money from the moneylenders, resulting in indebtedness, and mortgaging of house and belongings. Often the baniya comes and uproots them completely from their homes, making the family take shelter in the village chaupal or the village square, without any protection. Such a place is particularly unsafe for the women of the family, but they do not have any other option.

These uprooted families then come to the towns. Such migrations are not in search for work, but as a result of ruthless uprooting, dispossession and desperation, that leave the migrants with only three choices, either they resort to criminal activities, or begging or prostitution.

Another crucial issue is how the effects of globalization and the resultant privatisation percolate to the levels of health services. The withdrawal of the state has resulted in a curious phenomenon of 'bonded patients' in Haryana. Health services have become so expensive that poor people cannot afford it, and in case they cannot foot the required amount, which is often as high as Rs 80,000, the hospital authorities hold the patient almost as a prisoner till the family of the patient arranges for the money. The sheer inhumanity that is associated with this kind of act is appalling.

The mobility and freedom of the women's movement in Haryana is increasingly getting checked by the growth of such trends and forces. And there it seems that there is a decreasing faith in sustained and organised collective movement. Physical prowess and force is lionised and is replacing collective organised action in many places, and this is further compounded with an increasing economic distress of the women, which directly affects that strength of the movement at large.

Dowry and Globalised Capitalism

Rajni Palriwala

The giving and receiving of ritualised wedding gifts to seal the marital alliance between the young couple and the families is not unique to our locale and times, nor is the critique and attempts to restrain its practice. While dowry as a sign of control of women, and an instrument of their devaluation is not a result of colonialism, there have indeed been qualitative and quantitative shifts with colonialism, with independent capitalist development, and with globalization. I will outline here some of the practices of dowry, and the implications and the factors behind them.

In relation to globalization, the links are both direct and indirect. Globalised capitalism affects dowry and social practices more generally, but we have to investigate how the latter can support and encourage global capital. To understand them, we have to understand the relation between political economy, cultural politics, and social practices. Another problem that comes in here is that when we look at dowry practices and its implications, we are entering the field of intra-community and intra-family household relationships. This is not an area, as is true of much gender relations, where we see the sort of data the economists, the demographers and the positivists ask for; nor is this data easily gathered at all. It is very difficult to collect and work with dry quantitative data, when we get to the area of the personal or the qualitative, or that, which is barely understood by those who are immersed in it. The questions, which generate quantitative data, tend to be either so tight that they give us very little, or people do not respond, or give a politically correct or socially correct responses, or whatever comes first in mind. Such surveys had to be undertaken in the context of a deeper relationship, between researcher, and researched persons and areas. This emerges clearly from the surveys conducted by AIDWA on the giving of and attitudes to dowry, covering nearly 10,000 respondents across 18 states all over the country.

Respondents were broadly of two categories, parents or guardians of daughters, and young girls of marriageable age. It covered a cross section of class, caste, income, region, religion, education, and the major focus was on the poor, the Dalits and religious minorities. In many parts, specially in regions where there has been a history of radical, and social movements, people were not ready to admit that they themselves had taken or given dowry, certainly not that they had demanded dowry. However, gossip, and the discussion of dowry demanded by their kin and neighbours, or demanded by their son-in-law, easily entered the conversation. In many places, the respondents cried as soon as there was a mention of the dowry. What is important over here is that the survey was conducted by activists, who had a long experience of organising poor women on a range of gender issues, on legal counselling, and on interventions in cases of dowry and dowry deaths. Thus there was a familiarity between the researcher and the researched. For the researcher there was knowledge of the area in which they were conducting the survey, which gave a clear depth to the survey. This makes the data particularly useful for us, and most of my paper is based on this survey. I will also use data from some recent papers on dowry practices among aspirant NRIs, which are based on small samples of qualitative data.

Protest against dowry is not new. What we have to keep in mind is that post the 70s movement, there was a popular angst, which was created, but this was around the distortions of dowry, rather than a critique of dowry itself. It was the burning bride rather than the bride and her parents as the bearers of gifts, which was seen as problematic; and, we see this coming up again and again in cases that separate voluntary dowry from demands of dowry. I will briefly go over the shifts we see in dowry practices today, and then look at the relation between globalization and dowry. In the 70s, the CSWI Report revealed the spread of dowry wider into the middle and upper castes, across classes, religions and economic backgrounds, almost across the board. Even communities, who earlier practised bride price, and bride wealth, were engaging in dowry practices. But what we find among them is a change in the structure of the dowry practised. There is a uni-directionality, rather than bi-directionality in the practice. Dowry is increasingly becoming critical to a match being made or rejected. It is also becoming significant in terms of community identity, and status, and we see differences in terms of class and caste. Another trend that can be seen is that in the current practices of dowry, it is the modernity and liquidity of consumption, that is being displayed, rather than old wealth. In the last 10- 15 years there has been a spiralling, and this is largely due to the correlation between the effects of globalization/liberalisation, and dowry. These two processes are growing simultaneously, and we need to probe this more closely. This is spreading even into the communities at the margins. For example, in Assam, which had started off from the idea of giving gifts, and legitimate right to parental property - even here competition in dowry is leading to divorce. Giving of cash is a rather new phenomenon here. In Andhra Pradesh, the SC/ST groups are also showing an increasing new trend of dowry. In Uttar Pradesh, dowry is being practised even by the Dalits. Demands have heightened in Delhi, while in West Bengal the rate is as high as 59%. In Maharashtra too figures show an increasing trend towards dowry. While the already prevalent practices of bride price and bride wealth is on a steady rise, dowry is increasingly becoming mandatory in most cases.

From the late 1980s onwards, particularly after the anti-dowry agitation of the late 70s and the early 80s, liberalisation and the world of capitalist consumption has engulfed India. To understand what is old and new in dowry, we have seven critical trends in contemporary India, which form the context, the description and immediate causality of dowry. The first

is the vast growth in the middle class in terms of number. The second is the vast growth in the disposable income in the hands of those at the top of the income table, which is only as much as 20%. This leads us to the third trend, which shows a growing disparity in consumption level between the top 20% and the rest of the populace. This 20% consists of mainly the salaried and professional classes in the government and the private sector, and of course the entrepreneurial class. This goes along with the fourth trend, which is an increasing volatility of class place and instability of economic positions. Thus there is an upward and downward mobility relative to where they were and their community of reference. Some have lost their land, some employment, while there are others who have moved up the economic ladder, but are not secure over there. There are some others who had status, but no longer have wealth, whose economic assets can no longer support their family members and dowry can be an avenue for the acquisition of consumer goods, capital for investment or bribes to buy jobs. For example in Punjab and Haryana, as the pressure on the land has grown, and non-agricultural employment has grown in importance, dowry has become much more important.

The fifth and sixth trends relate to the growth of consumerism and the media. With globalization, the growth and availability of consumer goods and consumer culture has become central to class positions and class status. There is an increased visibility of the practices of the middle class and the elite, and the immediate access to the presentation of these practices through the marketing strategies and the media. So we see the styles of the rich and the beautiful, the growth of an advertisement based mass media, which displays what is available; and dowry implicitly or explicitly frames many advertisement campaigns for luxury and consumer goods. Dowry then is in a sense critical for the consumer market. The last and the most crucial point is the renewed affirmation of what are cast as traditional identities and values through reifying domestic rituals, and display practices, particularly around marriage and gender. Critical in all these is the gendered inequality in value and access to economic, political and social resources among men and women. It is through these trends that we should look at the expansion of dowry and the mutations of wedding display.

We can ask why these trends should lead to an intensification of dowry. I would say that this is related to the manner in which globalization of capital and globalization of labour, to whatever extent it has come, has built on structural inequalities between nations and between national communities and families. This is tied closely to the cultural politics of globalization also, an assertion of your place in the world order, through a renewed claim of traditional identities, and a validation of tradition as national heritage, as well as racial pride, with a simultaneous assertion of modernity through lifestyle. So what we have is a simultaneous affirmation of inequality, along with caste identity, kinship networks, and the norms of tradition gaining a further significance in social life, and the expression of status. As an example of this I would like to site the case of the research done among the IT professionals of Andhra Pradesh, which reflects the relation between globalization and dowry. These IT professionals are highly successful, modern, wealthy, well travelled individuals, getting astronomical salaries. But not only do we find among these people, intra-caste marriage as the asserted norm, but high dowry too is asserted. What the research shows is that, dowry is paid directly for education in the mushrooming private teaching shops in India, which help support young men in their higher education at the universities in US or Australia. Dowry is often paid as compensation for huge amounts paid by the groom's parents; at time dowry comes even before the money is spent by the groom's

parents. Dowry is paid for the visas, and also for the waiting periods for the benching of body shops. The IT professional then pays a high dowry for his sister, and gets an even higher dowry for himself, thereby asserting through this both his caste and family pride. In another study of middle class Tamil international migrants done by Kalpakkam, while demands for dowry were not clearly articulated among the Tamil Brahmins, not only was the marriage necessarily within the same caste, and horoscopes matched, the expectation was often articulated in the language of 'just give us a decent marriage'. And this 'decent marriage' includes gold, silk, diamonds, a tastefully decorated wedding hall, and a generous hospitality, including as much as three meals for 200 guests. In this then what we feel again is political ideology celebrating primordial identities and their continuity over centuries, reclaiming and marketing of traditional ceremonies. Thus dowry marriage is tied up to the sustaining of caste and of sex and generation hierarchies. Given the insecurities of globalised economy the assertion of control over the young, and even women, through proper marriage has become even more critical, and the availability of dowry has taken on an increased significance in this context in various ways.

We have to accept one point, that there is no voluntary dowry. The AIDWA survey and many such surveys like that have shown that as dowry has spread, so has its obligatory character. In India, marriage is almost universally important. For young people, particularly girls, it is a way of gaining social adulthood, a freedom from parental constraint. They want dowry because a marriage has to have a dowry. Parents, no matter how poor they are have to marry off their daughter. If they are poor, they either sell their daughter, and if not that, then marry them off to a distant place where they have no support networks; and the third option for them is to get into debt. Figures show that huge numbers mortgage their lands and houses, to manage dowry money. Through this we can also see an expansion of the consumer market, and the bank loan market. Parallely there is an increasing pauperisation. This extends all the way down to the agricultural labourers who at times even mortgage their BPL cards in order to get money to pay for dowry.

The linkage between dowry and the denial of productive property to women in their natal homes, the devaluation of their labour and the devaluation of their person is well known, and I will not go into the details of that. But one thing we have to note is that dowry has become in more ways than one, a way to affirm the correct marriage through this public display, and through that the community and the family. The last point, which I would like to say and which emerged in the survey, was that people time and again assert that they do not want dowry, and time and again they say that they cannot marry without dowry. It is interesting to note that the concept of dowry too is a very classist notion. For example there was this young girl working in somebody's field who said that just because she was poor it doesn't mean that she was not capable of paying dowry; if the rich can afford dowry, so can the poor. Thus the concept of dowry often has a prestige angle associated to it. The last point that I will mention here is that it is often said that love marriage can take us beyond dowry. The point is that dowry will be curbed as long as people do not demand it or offer it. Yet we can harbour the hope that this will take us towards an increasing erasure of the practice at large.

Gendering of Media in the Era of Globalization

Malini Bhattacharya

In the early 70s there was an Argentinean director called Solanas who made a film called *The Hours of the Furnaces*, where he described the penetration of the neo-colonial forces in the economy and cultural life of his country. One sentence he had used in that said “when the Vietnamese peasant looks up towards the sky he knows who his enemy is, but for us the enemy is invisible.” So I would like to start with this quotation, because over the past few days when we discussed material changes affecting material changes affecting the lives of women, we have also been discussing ideology. I want to look at the innards of ideology, and see what means ideology uses to work its way to the consciousness of men and women, how it does violence to them in order to assert certain kinds of dominance - sometimes called hegemony. We already know the difference between coercive forms of domination and hegemonic forms of domination, but it is more difficult to talk about the ways in which hegemony keeps in control our thoughts and ideas. So I will talk about thoughts, ideas, images, texts and representations.

In our organisation, we have tried to capture the problems that arise out of the globalization of the media, the way in which women are represented in the media. We have our media monitoring cells in our central body and also in some of the states. We have been able to intervene in areas where we have been protesting against some objectionable images, and demanding their withdrawal. But censorship does not really answer the question we are asking of the media. The way in which patterns of dominance work through the media, cannot be tackled simply by asking for the withdrawal of certain images from public consumption. Therefore it is important for us to develop a culture of resistance and a culture of criticality. At the same time we also have to think of how to use the gaps and spaces within the commercialised media, forms of popular culture, which are being co-opted by this dominant culture, and use them as alternative modes of communication.

Media codes and gender codes in them have been here for quite some time. Globalised media has not come in a kind of a vacuum. The television and the Internet are not the only kinds of media. There are other forms of media, which have been the vehicles of hegemony no doubt, but have also been vehicles of resistance. Within these gender codes as they are embedded in media it is not simply that a world is presented to you, but you are being made a part of that world. The reader is also constructed by the texts that are produced by the media. In others words the subject position is also assumed by the kind of representation by the media. However these meanings are neither absolute nor stable, and are subject to change. There maybe a multiplicity of stereotypes within the same language system. Thus we have the golden-hearted prostitute and the ordinary heroine. These are some of the variations through which the subject position is given some kind of flexibility. For the sake of variety, but media does not have any stability. It is constantly subjected to pressures from the constantly changing outside world. Therefore although these flexibilities often signify mere readjustments of power relationships that construct the gender codes, the gendered reading of media text has to take these variations into account to explore why such adjustments in the gender codes become necessary. This happens because these codes are not monolithic but are internally scarred by the sign of disruption and the subject herself is a divided subject. This is why it becomes necessary for the producers of TV serials to invent a Jassi even when there are glam dolls galore to be shown on all the channels.

We cannot talk about the media and the changes in it without talking about the issue of who owns the media. In the era of globalization it has become very clear who owns the

media, and there is no doubt that there is a close connection between the growth of television and computer technologies and the spread of finance capital beyond the national boundaries as well as the rapid evolution of war technologies. This huge world-wide network of communications, was started by owners of finance capital for their world-wide financial transaction of hot money, transmitting news of share market fluctuations and so on. Also of course it started for military purposes. This was later extended as a means of transmitting cultural messages. This started the commercialisation of media and their dominance by huge trans-national media companies and ad companies. These are all an essential part of their globalization whereby they are today able to cross all borders to enter the domain of culture coming to constitute a world-wide culture consciousness industry. This further means that media do not merely produce cultural products, but also generate a consensus about these cultural products. Therefore media on one hand are a manifestation of technical developments on one hand, and on the other, they produce a multiplicity of images and text that define advancement and modernity. The politics of global financial capital works in very complex ways and is not necessarily overt. That is why I have said that the concept of cultural imperialism is a hypothesis that we have to consider in this connection very seriously but not uncritically. Sometimes this term is used to explain de-traditionalization of any kind, and also to accommodate a kind of paranoia about westernisation and paranoia about the destruction of indigenous values. This is why I suggest that while it is good to have this term in readiness, we should use it more analytically.

In fact we need to look at certain specificities. The vastness of India ensures a multiplicity of economic, social and cultural formations, and practices, the kind of uniformity that would have suited the agenda of global domination by finance capital cannot be enforced easily. In spite of the wide network established by satellite technology, communication codes remain multifarious, thus globalised media do not operate in a vacuum but have to contend with pre-existing entrenched forms of cultural operations. In the last decades of the twentieth century the perceived synonymity of globalization with modernisation and development has sometimes been putting intolerable pressures on existing patriarchal constructs disseminated through media because of which these constructs had to modify themselves. But the question we have to ask is that to what extent does the globalised media in India act as a modernising agency, what opportunities do they offer for the women, as traditional objects of the male gaze to gain subject positions through which these traditionalises may be questioned. Are these new subject positions uniformly liberating for women.

I would summarise here for shortage of time. There are three points that need to be made. The first is that there has been a great proliferation of images: women and women's issues have a visibility like never before, and these become an important signature of modernity and development. Even the housewife who participates in a certain game show gains a kind of a visibility that gives her a certain power. But we also most understand that this visibility is very selective. Out of the vast range of images, not all women are represented; it is only those women who are already empowered who are represented. On the other hand people who have been victims of globalization, are highlighted only when something dramatic and spectacular like starvation deaths happen and the image of the empowered woman is that of a star or a role model, the woman of substance, the achiever or the decision maker at home or workplace. This means that women do have a visibility, but that happens within selected parameters.

The other question that I would raise here is that if these are the households that are visible, what happens to the poor women. Middle class activists say that when you have these consumer-oriented images being presented in media, what happens to poor women is that their aspirations is increased. I think that is a good thing and I am not against it. But what should concern us is that while their aspirations to become consumers is increased, in reality the means have been taken away from them, this means that their real concerns are being sealed out by these images that are being continuously flashed to them. Like religion these media images are becoming the opium for the people, but yet the image becomes the heart of the heartless world for her.

The other point is that the newspapers today, in their attempt to follow a pattern of changes at the global level are undergoing certain imitative changes in production, for instance these days we see the progressive tabloidisation of the newspapers. Giant advertising companies are sponsoring the media events as well as the pages covering these media events in newspapers and magazines. So there is a self-reflexivity in the way newspapers today create certain events and then they report those events. One result of this corporatisation of media is that the message of modernity and development which had been projected mainly by the state through the media in post independence India has been replaced by images of modernity and development as perceived by this corporatised media. Thus there has been a privatisation of development aspirations as projected by these media images. For example public works and civil and military installations in the government and non-government sector continue, but in media development is represented as inhering not so much in state sponsored large scale public assets like railways, dams, factories, fighter-planes, tractors etc. through government ads and documentaries. But now development seems to inhere in individual private possessions like houses, car, jewellery, goods and product packages associated with a lifestyle. Dams and railways of course have a largely masculine significance; women are only represented as passive beneficiaries of such huge public work. On the other hand when it comes to consumer goods, relating to private pleasure and personal lifestyle, it is seen as much more feminine. So some women may be projected as having a special role to play in their use or consumption. This is how the images of gender empowerment are constructed.

Parallel to the tabloidisation of newspapers another change is happening. This is the idea of news-worthiness are changing and events in the private domain now become public news. Private lives of stars, political leaders, media personalities, marriages, divorces, births are constructed, packaged and disseminated by the media for public consumption. Here too the image of the woman constitutes the focal point of attraction, not only at the daily life of starlets, models, disk jockeys invented a on the pages of newspapers, but we also have interventions into what they call 'makeovers' of real life. For example the Gudia case, where a private crisis is turned into a public spectacle. Now this complex context of the market in which the woman generally seen as representing the private domain is invested with a tremendous publicity value also makes imperative the selectivity, mind you these images are very selective. Gudia is the selected one because in her two marriages a crisis in the domestic life of a family belonging to a minority community becomes exposed. Gudia, however is not empowered through this exposure. The sequel to her narrative is constructed and narrated wholly by Zee TV. Similarly we have other role models that are in no way the common woman, but always the woman achiever. So the issue of empowerment of women through media needs to be looked at more carefully.

In the traditionalist, moralistic approach to modernity the modernisation of women very often becomes the sign of the ultimate demise of traditional values. Nationalist historians in our country have often related the destruction of the purity of the indigenous tradition with westernisation. The need for modernising the lives of women, giving them access to education, right to work, etc., has been an important theme in the development debate in our country. Globalization has of course led to multiplication of westernised images and aspirations. Standardisation of female beauty often follows western models. There are so many regional and local cultural practices in India that complete homogenisation is never possible, and this is why it becomes necessary to include within the global, the indigenous, and the ethnic. Therefore Indianness is to be reinvented. In this context I would like to refer you to the publicity campaign that preceded the release of the movie *Bride and Prejudice*. It shows the trans-national excitement generated in the world of the media over such self-reflexive exercises. The image of the woman is retraditionalised through these images, and I think what we call modernity in global media, does not exclude retraditionalisation, and this is another issue that the women's movement needs to concern itself with.

Discussion

◆ *Swapna Mukhopadyay*

I would first like to congratulate the speakers in this session for their incredibly rich presentations. In ISST when we were researching among the agricultural settled households in Haryana, we found similar experiences, and problems as stated so clearly by Jagmati. I would like to comment briefly on what Malini had called in her presentation, the enemy who cannot be seen. We have a tendency of making globalization the enemy, something we have to go for and attack. But the reality is that we cannot stop it. We therefore need to know what is it that is making globalization manifest itself in all kinds of ways. I would request this group of researchers who are extremely rich in terms of ideas and also activism, to start thinking in terms of what we should do.

◆ *Mary John*

I really appreciate Malini's quotation about the invisibility of the enemy. But what struck me was the fact that the enemy is so ambivalent, so conflicted, so contradictory, and this may be true in a number of ways. One actually needs to disaggregate what globalization has done across classes, among the gainers as well as the losers, and build up an understanding of the process through these aggregated accounts of cross-groups on the changes, their perception of the changes, and the solution of the problems faced by the various sections. Even at the level of meanings, my favourite in terms of the media is the Valentine's Day phenomenon. Initially we were all opposed to and bothered about this entirely alien culture. However, in smaller towns, this had nonetheless succeeded in bringing forth what has been called 'choices' in marriages and partnerships, in a way an assertion of the young in places where, as Jagmati was saying, choice marriages are repressed. So this is something we also need to keep in mind.

◆ *Nalini Nayak*

It is important for us to question as to what is it that is really pushing the agenda of globalization. Prof. Patnaik in his opening speech had talked about how finance capital all over the world is now trying to push its agenda through the control over primary resources, particularly oil. We really have to talk about technology much more, because that is what is controlling our entire life. It is actually making air out of everything solid, true to what Marx had said about 'all that is solid will melt into air'. Today technology is just pushing society out of everywhere, just to construct something new. Thus all growth we see around us is jobless growth. And all this technology, be it in medicine, communication, everywhere, is a spill out of war technology, which was meant to crush all the Socialist MNCs. We also have to talk about what technology has done to nature. Calling nature capital, as Indira Hirway said in her presentation, I think is highly problematic, because it implies an ultimate commodification of nature. Thus I would like to highlight the point that talking about technology is absolutely essential and this is probably the missing link that we are somehow unwilling to face.

◆ *Uma Chakravarty*

I actually wanted to look at this question of the whole media, and also partly to entertain you. I will also in a sense to respond to Mary in the context of the capacity for the media to create space for resistance. What I want to say is that while there is resistance, let's also be very clear that the media tries to control and anchor the ideological message that it sends out. The capacity for the global market to work with indigenous patriarchy is extremely interesting. It is not just marriages that are being privileged on the indigenous television; it is the arranged marriage, which is privileged. In one advertisement after the other it is the boy who is coming to see the girl, and what is constantly highlighted is the status of the girls family, the beauty of the girl etc. Also we have the arranged marriage turning into a love marriage in ads of the solitaire diamond. Significantly enough there are suggestive ads where punitive measures against love marriage are shown. For example in an ad of some paint, the father is seen locking up a girl who is in love with this boy called Rahul. In protest she writes his name all over the wall. Later when she is off to college, the mother comes, and paints the wall with the fresh paint. The whole problem is solved when the girl comes home to see the painted walls, and next time when Rahul calls she puts down the receiver calling it a wrong number. Through strategic ads, and the use of images, what is reasserted is the traditional ideology of arranged marriage. We need to look at the capacity of the market to give us the traditional format. So while there is resistance, there is also a constant attempt to peg the hegemonic ideological norms that patriarchy produces out here.

◆ *Sujata Madhok*

On media that was an excellent paper, but I would also like to point out certain important things. We need to recall here that who was the major persuader behind globalization, apart from the World Bank, and the government. It was the media, particularly the print media. After the late 80s, we begin to see the Murdochisation of the media and the whole philosophy of seeing the media as the product, which has to be sold. Thus all can be sold, ideas, ideologies, and eventually women's bodies. The whole notion of journalism as the conscience keeper, as the watchdog disappears. In fact with the onset of globalization the

media served as the tool, which would forward the penetration of the market for the products of the huge MNCs, which in turn would finance the newspapers at large. That is how finance capital controls the media today. Thus there has been a complete corporatisation of the newspaper industry, the entire structure has changed, and there has been technological change, which has also facilitated the corporatisation. There has been the introduction of MBAs as brand managers, etc. into the service, there has been a casualisation of the rest of the work force, and contract journalism introduced. We no longer have wage boards. It will be important for us to look at the revenues and the accumulation of capital in this industry.

◆ *Brinda Karat*

My point is in response to Preet's very interesting presentation. There are two three point which I think need to be considered here with regard to the AIDWA experience around police investigation and the low conviction rates. I am not very happy with Preet's analysis of the registration figures. If we look at the states like Uttar Pradesh, Bihar etc., what really comes down is the absolute low registration. Sometimes when we follow it up in a concrete way, the kind of blocks that are still there as far as just registration is concerned, I think is captured in a way by the low registration. The difference is too much. The second point that I would like to make is the link between police investigation and conviction. In fact the judicial bias of the court is coming up more and more clearly, and the very poor processes of investigation are sabotaging the laws that we have today. This is something that needs to be looked at. The third point is this whole thing about the police trying to emphasise the point that the rape victim in most cases knows the aggressor. That's okay at a level and we have to investigate that. In fact we remember you might remember the comment of the Police Commissioner of Delhi who had said that this could imply consent. This is a real problem. We had questioned him, and asked him to show us the relationship, then apart from the point of family abuse, the other thing that came up is a really nebulous so called relationship. For example, if you travel by the same bus route, and your copassenger sees you everyday, then he is registered as somebody you know. Similarly, a child girl passing through a market with her mother who is a domestic servant, and the shopkeeper on the way, the police say becomes somebody you know. So the whole understanding of the relationship, and the way the police are actually trying to highlight this, needs to be questioned. Today crime statistics are also being used politically to show how safe a particular state or a region might be. While this shows the strength of our movement that these have become a part of some kind of a political agenda, but on the other hand, this is also being used. So I think we need to be much more sceptical about what is being dished out to us.

◆ *Ranjana (Saheli)*

The connections Jagmati made are absolutely crucial before the women's movement, and in fact are the essence of the challenges in front of the movement at large.

◆ *Vibhuti Patel*

There is need to evaluate critically, the alternate media generated by social movements and the political economy behind it. We need to look at what kind of media gets funded. In the

past 30 years, alternate media has really come up in an impressive manner. It has gone beyond street theatre, and singing songs in the conferences. Documentaries are increasingly becoming a very powerful tool. For example on the Gujarat riots, we have as many as 32 documentaries. Secondly we also need to look at the political economy of NRT, the politics of eugenics that Jagmati was talking about.

◆ *Malini Bhattacharya*

I cannot stop using the word enemy in spite of its religious connotations, because I think I have made it clear is that the enemies that we are considering here are the owners of the media. The kind of negative role the media often plays is very much due to the dominance of this big trans-national capital, which is almost holding media as hostage. At the same time, media depends on languages, codes of various kinds. These codes are always public property. It is very difficult to privatise codes, because different people use them at different levels. That is why there are certain possibilities, certain chinks in the armour, which perhaps activists can explore.

◆ *Preet Rustagi*

I just want to clarify, maybe I was not understood because I did not give enough caveats to the NCRB data. In no way does the data vouch for its authenticity. But it is indicative. It is true that the registration cases are far lower and there is a huge disparity. The snags in the police investigation of course is an issue that Brinda will be able to tell us better. The point on the victim knowing the aggressor, and the police pushing that up, and of course, the consent in rape cases, are all very important points, and I was precisely trying to put those on board, because these relate to the entire debate around sexuality. For example in the US there has been a recent change in the law at Illinois, where it has been specified that in the instance of a sexual activity between a man and a woman, at any juncture the woman has a right to say no and any sexual act otherwise should be recognised as rape. There are a number of cases when the police says that there is this incidence or increasing permissiveness in society, because of which relationship between man and woman is developing and that allows an increase in the instances of rape which is not easy for them to investigate. What is being negated over here is the right of the woman to take a decision about her own body and sexuality. This is the fundamental point that I am trying to highlight; for instance, way back in 1983, when the rape laws were being recommended, the committee did suggest marital rape very categorically. The women's movement needs to take this up more rigorously. Given the magnitude of the number of women who are affected by an issue of this of not having any say over their own body, I think this issue has to be put on board. It is very critical for us to recognise the problem of marital rape. The woman's body, labour power, all are not the property of her husband, and this needs to be asserted at a higher level.

◆ *Jagmati (translated)*

In response to the idea of a culture of resistance provided by idea of the young people in small towns asserting their choice through Valentine's Day cards, Jagmati commented that the men who offer cards to their girlfriends on Valentine's Day and want a love marriage for themselves are the people who will ruthlessly punish their own sisters had they been

found offering Valentine's Day cards to anybody. Their sisters will never be able exercise the rights of choice marriage or love marriage. Therefore this is nowhere near honouring choice marriage, but an exercise of display, and show of modernity.

◆ *Rajni Palriwala*

I will translate what Jagmati just said, because I was in a way trying to come to the same point. The point was raised in the debate that maybe there are more forms of resistance which are being made available to young people, through the new forms which globalization was presenting, through the giving of roses or cards or whatever, and what Jagmati pointed out is the experience in Haryana is that the very boy who will give roses to his woman, will suppress his own sister, if she does the same. They will ensure that their own sisters are not allowed such love marriages. They will also take the initiative to attack those who are not their sisters and their husbands, who have gone for a cross caste choice marriage. So what Jagmati has said, and I fully agree to that is that for these young men, the valentine card is not a right for choice of marriage, or an indication of a right of resistance to norms, but an exercise in a certain modernity. We have to look at the way modernity in terms of the lifestyle and the assertion of structures of inequality between castes, classes and gender, through traditions and rituals, in a very ritualised assertion are coming together and if we try to map out who the gainers or losers are, we may be able to map out certain clear gainers at the top, the leaders of globalization, as well as at the bottom, certain very clear losers of globalization in terms of the young and women. But at the middle level, let us be very clear that there is a lot of both gain and loss, and these are the people who are in a way providing the support to globalization as it is taking place today. Among them there are also voices of dissent. When we are looking at the enemy, I think one of the things that surfaced through these presentations is that there are at least three enemies, and we just cannot say that they are just out there, and we cannot do anything about them. These are the enemies of global capital, monopoly capital, and their supporters.

◆ *Ratna Sudarshan (Chair)*

Thank you, and that brings us to the end of this session, and I would like to round up by reasserting what Jayati had said in her opening speech yesterday, that the pace of social change in India is something, which is much more than people, both men and women, can cope with. This is an unprecedented rate of change, and this is one point we really need to consider. The sort of frameworks we have in place, like those on development and so on, don't really touch the basic things that are bothering people. So this is an issue that I think we need to build into our discussions, whether we talk about opposing globalization or slowing down the pace of change, or even attempt to understand the manners in which globalization affects individuals.

Concluding Session

Chair – Kumud Sharma

I don't believe in a false effort at trying to summarise the two and a half day rich discussion that we have had along the two trajectories that we have been exploring – globalization and

the women's movement. A whole range of issues have been raised by the participants in the last two and half days. What I am going to do is to just raise a few points or rather collect the wisdom around this theme - perhaps focusing on what we do now, or how we can look forward to meeting the challenges that the women's movement is facing, and what are the issues that we should now be focusing on.

I think that globalization remains a very contested term. I remember in 1990s when the women's movement began its engagement with the globalization discourse, there were three major issues that it focused on. The first was the whole question of how the processes unleashed were going to impact the whole area of women's work, and particularly women of poorer households. The second area of concern in the early nineties was the social development sectors and what was going to be the role of state/government structures. And the third area of concern was of course - how we were going to challenge the kind of ideological constructions that accompanied the processes that had been unleashed by global capital.

Over the last three days we have been discussing that we are facing powerful protagonists of globalization - the TNCs, IFIs, the state - many a time in collusion with the elites within the country. I think we saw that the ideology of globalization dressed up in economic terms has had a powerful impact. But I think what we saw coming to the fore in the last few days - was the globalization process itself and the kind of ideological constructions that go along with it. All of us have critiqued the state - whether rolling back or not rolling back. Several areas were discussed - what is happening to governance structures, what is happening to state institutions, and what are the new institutions which have been created for women's empowerment (so called) under these processes? The question before us is - what are the kinds of spaces that have been left for the women's movement to negotiate with various institutions, particularly the state, in a situation where the role of these institutions is changing?

We have discussed the issue of women's work participation, particularly in the agrarian sector which remains a large sector for women's employment. We have talked about the whole area of unpaid work, of home-based workers, of SHGs - and, I think, covered so many and so varied a range of serious issues that need to be addressed. On the one hand we talked about deregulation in many spheres and the lessening of state control. At the same time we have seen contradictory processes also happening where state controls persists and is not let go of. So in some spheres regulations and mechanisms of state control remain in place.

We have talked about production processes - of how international capital is reconfiguring many of these. Trade issues - the whole question of GATT and other issues were put before the House. I think that what is happening is that these several kinds of disruptive processes are eroding the social capital of people - eroding that which people used to fall back upon during times of small or personal emergencies. Regarding integration with market forces in services as well as goods, and the whole question of technology which was raised, of labour, of finance, etc. - the question is - what are the implications of all these for growth on the one hand (because its not as if we have abandoned that model), and for poverty on the other?

I am not going to all the sectoral issues which were raised – from agriculture to manufacturing to sectors like fisheries – for a whole range of these sectors very effective analyses brought out the kind of changes that are coming in these sectors. The basic thing is that more and more women are being pushed into the informal sector or pushed out of the kind of work which was available to them earlier. Also, I think that there is a dilution of the form of protection which was available to women earlier, and there is nothing which is taking its place to ensure some kind of social protection to women.

On the issue of growing violence which was discussed today, and also came up earlier in other discussions, and the stress created by the kind of developments taking place – it all indicates a kind of discretionary failure of the state apparatuses and of the non-state mechanisms which had been created. I remember in early 1980s there were very celebratory accounts of the NGO movement, but today we no longer talk in the same manner. We talk about what is happening to civil society groups, and NGOisation has become quite a derogatory term. The role and dynamics of civil society in this kind of a changed scenario is one of the major areas of concern for all of us and have been particularly and specifically brought out by many presentations. The new interests which have been created, the role of funding agencies in creating those new interests – and as Madhura said - the corporatisation of NGOs which have become so big and huge, the kind of funds they are receiving, and the agendas they are putting on board – all this is something that needs to be questioned.

Linked to this, I think, is the whole issue of contemporary movements of workers, of peasants, women's movements, forest workers and a whole lot of what could be called specific interest based movements. What are the kinds of spaces available to them and what are the negotiating mechanisms that they are using? Often what happens is that when state-created institutions, structures and apparatuses talk about 'women's empowerment', they then start projecting this whole SHG movement as economic empowerment for women, or equate 33% reservation with political empowerment of women - without ensuring that processes that bring about real change (or the kind of change that we visualised when we argued for such measures) have really been put in place.

Another area to be looked into is the kind of community alternatives that have developed. Somewhere in 1990s, when this whole discourse on globalization, international finance, and what it is doing to the country - to its workers, to women in the poverty sector, - had begun to dominate, then the movement for alternatives in development somehow receded. But it is not as if people are not trying to create alternatives for themselves. I think many community alternatives have been developed, whether it is in the sector of health, housing or education. But what is happening is that many of these ideologically grounded programmes (that were put in place in the 1980s) are getting diluted. Many of us were quite celebratory when, for example, the National Policy on Education included a section on education for women's equality (and the Mahila Samakhya Programme was a translation of that ideologically grounded programme). Similarly, in the 80s women's studies programmes came in Universities, which again were questioning the structures of knowledge, the way knowledge was created, and what the whole higher education system was doing. But in the 90s, there has been a dilution of these programmes which the women's movement tried to put in place and which the movement fought for. For example, we all know of the attempts to dilute women's studies, of how the UGC tried to change the name of Women's Studies Centres to Family Studies Centres. Similarly, the Mahila Samakhya Programme in some of

the states has been hitched on to 'DPEP' and most of time these Mahila Samakhya workers, who were trained in mobilising women, who were trained in a very different kind of ideological orientation, are now mostly fulfilling targets of literacy and other programmes of the government. I think that such depoliticisation of many of these programmes is something that is of major concern to the women's movement.

I think a concern, which was related to all these debates over the last three decades on questions of women's work participation, poverty issues, and the whole nutrition area, was regarding the data sources that we are using – whether it is on the area of work participation rate, nutrition or violence. Problems remain despite the fact that the women's movement did try to sensitise census operations and census data collectors on making data collection more sensitive. Also, as I said earlier, there are certain ideological constructions which need to be looked into, analysed and challenged. We have been using many terms like mainstreaming gender, gender budgeting, feminisation of poverty, and all these constructs. What needs to be very critically looked at is how we are using them and what are the kind of issues that need to be raised particularly in these constructions.

There is this whole issue of collective assertion of rights. At one level we are using all these community initiatives of women who are struggling at different levels - for water rights, housing rights, right to work, right to food. At the same time SHGs are promoted through government programmes with all these targets and are also called a kind of collective empowerment of women. So even the term 'collective' has got depoliticised in the process and one has to look at these layers of contradictions and conflicts which are appearing and think about how the women's movement will address many of these challenges.

I'll stop here and give the floor to those who think that some issues have not been covered and want to raise them now, and to those who wish to respond or to contribute further to the exploration of the issues and trajectories that have been discussed.

◆ *Madhura Swaminathan*

I would first like to congratulate and thank CWDS for organising this workshop, which has been very successful. I'd just like to make one appeal in this closing session that has been discussed on the first day, i.e. the demystification of official statistics. We talked particularly about official statistics of poverty and work. I think what was surprising to me is that despite all this debate about women's work and so on, many of these concepts and terms are even unclear to us. What is marginal work? Is it in census or is it in NSS, and so on? If it is confusing to academics, I can quite imagine how confusing it would be to others. I think that CWDS can take a lead to clarify to all those who are in the women's movement- who are involved with women workers- that what are the official statistics really telling us. what are their limitations and to what extent can we use them.

Second part of it is the struggle to change or improve the statistics and here, what came out in discussion on rural women's work is that under-employment and migration are the crucial things which are not being captured. It is not as if a person is either an agricultural labourer or a cultivator. In many cases, an individual would be an agricultural labourer for 30 days and not so for 300 days. These 30 days would show up only in micro studies. That's one thing and the other issue is migration, which really seems to be quantitatively and

qualitatively different in the 1990s as far as women are concerned. I think for urban workers again there are problems in capturing unemployment which Indrani brought out so clearly, and the different kinds of self-employment, home-based employment etc. So I think we need another major movement, both to understand what official statistics tell us today and at the same time to try and struggle for improvements on the concepts and methodology of data collection.

◆ *Nirmala Buch*

I wanted to raise two issues. The first is that you find a lot of documentation is done; reports are prepared, human development report, gender budget, etc. One's expectation is that after the State or the Centre produces an HDR, they will act on it. It can't be only an act of catharsis - that we have analysed and we have said we are so good or so bad, or whatever. Most of such analysis seems to be a response to UNDP wanting them. But what happens after that? Such reports should be at least some basis for subsequent policies or programmes. That does not happen. The same thing applies to gender budgeting. It remains an exercise and we don't know what is actually happening. I think that we should perhaps ask for a document which should explain what is exactly being done on gender after it is presented in the budget. Just looking at the budget will not enable us to do anything. If there is more information and more transparency, it will make a huge difference to the women's movement, which will be able to respond to it.

◆ *Rami Chhabra*

I would also like to add my thanks for the last 3 days. It's been a rich feast. I find myself reminiscing back to the early 70s, when so much energy was generated in the women's movement. But, I felt that in the last two and a half days while the economic analysis has been very strong, which is anyway a forte of the women's movement; think there are other sociological issues which we have somehow embraced but not as frontally as the economic ones. This morning, the presentation made by our comrade from Haryana was absolutely first grade. She made all the necessary connections between the media, violence, and all kinds of other issues in women's lives based on her work at the grass roots work, and did so very powerfully. Malini has given us an excellent framework on media. But I still want to add two points. First, I think we are shirking in confronting the whole sexualisation of media. I think we are either too uncomfortable or still confused about sexualisation. Media has emerged as one of the major predatory actors in the globalised scenario, but I don't think we are strong enough in calling it that. For far too long we have felt that media is such an important ally in the movement that we have tended to shy away from stating the unpleasant truth about what exactly has happened in the media, the kind of forces of distortion that have come into play there, and also the kind of confusion that it creates. While the media may take up very serious analysis in the print media or project issues that are of great concern to us in the electronic media, it is simultaneously guilty of what is being termed as a trivialisation and tabloidisation. I would like to hear see a lot more of what Malini started her paper with, i.e. a discussion on the invisible forces that she referred to - the ways in which media penetrates our consciousness and distorts it. I think it links up very strongly to what Jagmati from Haryana said regarding the violence faced by women. That's a whole area that I suggest that the women's movement should take up, investigate, and build a stronger thesis on.

A complete gap in our discussions, which I think is a very serious omission is the whole discussion of the AIDS programme. On the one hand it typifies all that has been said of donor driven agendas, and on the other hand it elaborates what has been done to the entire primary health care system (its verticalisation that has contributed to throwing it into disarray) through the sheer force of money that has been brought in. I feel that even regarding health issues, we had powerful but partial discussions of the population and RCH. Imrana did very gently try to bring focus onto a holistic health paradigm, which I think is a very critical part of women's movements and also very critical to women's overall well being. Mohan Rao said health for all has become 'zinc for all'. But I would go further to say that if you look at the AIDS program; it has actually become condoms for all, which is far more deadly. In looking at the gender budgeting exercises, we have seen the paltry sums that are available for very crucial health issues. At the same time, in the last ten years, we have had some 400 million dollars coming into the AIDS programme. This has been one of the frontal attacks of the phenomenon of globalization, with a hundred million dollars to begin with in the first AIDS project.

But the issue here is not merely of a donor driven agenda dictating terms, although this half a billion dollars sounds huge and it is huge, especially when a lot of it is going into NGOisation of society and the creation of certain co-opted bodies that will speak for that particular agenda. But more importantly, we also need to realise that even if half a billion dollars is small change compared to what Government's own resources are, it can lead to enormous subversion of public resources by catalysing a huge diversion of government expenditure into a different direction. We have not looked into this trend at all. The AIDS programme is formulated saying that it is in the interest of women and even the World Bank has it star-marked as a project in the interest of women. These projects have been created along with a whole dialogue which says that it is in answer to women's needs that certain strategies are being formulated. As a result, you see a kind of violence being done to women through a process which combines excellent analysis of the situation that exists with mechanistic strategies. On the one hand there is displacement of resources that are badly needed in other areas, on the other hand psychological and psychical damage is also being done.

I think it is one of the greatest failures of the women's movement that while we are very strong in recognising the ailments that can come from hormonal contraceptive technologies, we don't look at the play of the same forces when it comes to the barrier contraceptive movement. For instance, even when sexual abuse, sexual harassment, male failure, male gaze etc. are documented at great length in AIDS research, at the end the simplistic solution of condom use is projected for protecting the health of women. Incidentally, much of the research and its methodologies are extremely questionable. A classic example of this is the Sonagachi Project in Calcutta that has become a model in the AIDS programme. An amount close to Rs 30 crores went into creating the model, while in the West Bengal Government's budget the amount available for health of the same women - for their reintegration into society, etc.- was not beyond a lakh or two spread over a number of years. I have been saying for many years that in Sonagachi, despite this project, AIDS has spiralled. Finally, now it is being officially acknowledged that as many as a quarter of women there are AIDS infected; there are rampant STDs, rampant abortions, gang rapes, group sex - all kinds of problems. But the rhetoric of the women's movement has been totally co-opted in such projects. It is said that these kinds of programs are put up for

women's empowerment. Now while we are anguished by the displacement of women that is taking place – the push factors that are throwing them to the wolves outside - why are we quiet when attempts are made to legitimise their being pushed into prostitution and sexual exploitation, calling these work, and when the demand for legalisation of prostitution is made into a symbol for women's empowerment.

These are very serious issues. The whole dialogue going on around AIDS has become so twisted, that there are fundamental perversions of society that are taking place under its aegis. My very final point is that democratic debate on this is completely censored out - in the media, in women's groups, in NGOs - there is no place where one can say these things and be heard. Thank you!

◆ *Vina Mazumdar*

But Rami, in India it is only the trafficking that is illegal not prostitution per se.

◆ *Rami Chhabra*

Vina-di, I would ask Lotika-di to sit down and look at it again with me. I would be happy to present you with a paper that has also been done by Lotika. Let me put it on record now that it is in fact a serious distortion to say that prostitution is legal in this country. At the point at which that Act was amended there was a great deal of debate within the women's movement to say that it cannot be made so stringent that individual women get harassed by the Police or society, and therefore, where there is consensual sex which is outside the bound of society's thinking we don't want the police force to be walking in. So a certain amount of ambiguity was built into the law. But there is no doubt that brothels, pimping, procuring is all illegal. Therefore, prostitution itself in such settings (other than an individual woman) is illegal.

◆ *Swapna Mukhopadhyay*

• First let me say that this has been a tremendously enjoyable and also a learning one for me. I was not able to attend the first two days and I really regret it and congratulate the CWDS team for getting all these extraordinary people together. While listening to Madhura, something occurred to me, i.e. the importance of looking at official statistics very carefully. Now after about 10-12 years I have gone back to the economics discipline. I am trying to do some economic work and I realised for the first time that the NSS data, which is supposed to be the best ever source of data for women's work, is also the only source of data which looks at code 92/93. Code 93 deals with women's work in the fuzzy zone which is expenditure saving activities. These include things that should be part of the labour force, as per the UN and to which the Govt. of India has agreed, and NSS is supposedly doing all this through Code 92/93. When I started looking the latest set of data of NSS, I realised the need to look at Code 92/93. In examining the NSS questionnaire, I realised for the first time that 92/93 questions are asked to women only if they are not recorded as a part of the labour force - even in the marginal category. This means that if you are a woman who is breaking her back in the labour force and if you are regarded as a labour force participant, then you will not be asked Code 92/93 questions, which are regarding domestic work. In other words this means that the baby is being thrown out with the bath water. Let me tell

you, the NSS is the best source of countrywide data that we have on women's work. It is true that a lot of micro studies are also there but micro studies don't add up to something concrete because people will accuse micro studies of having a particular agenda, of seeing things in a specific way in a small space, which may not be the case elsewhere. So this is what the NSS data is all about.

I really was very happy when Madhura brought it up. But I have a bigger question for this group, and especially for a sub set of this group – the sociologists. Since morning I have been hearing that women do not have any spaces left, that we lack the information, that we are being bombarded from MNCs who are very dirty because they are supposed to make profits. But damn it, they are supposed to make profit. We know that is all they are interested in. But we seem to be assuming that women are passive receivers of things. What are we doing? There are still so many of us and the women's movement is not yet dead. If it were dead, then we would not have such great interest and attendance here. There are a whole lot of people who are now working on women's research - economists, political scientists, literature experts, media experts, sociologists- and a lot of data and a lot of research is being produced. There are also a lot of women specific policies. A lot of things are happening and although the donors have an agenda of pushing women in however silly a manner, there are some trickle down effects. There are agreements that the Government of India signed under the ECOSOC and they are being hauled up for not doing something that they have agreed to do. All this means that there are a whole lot of things still working but they don't seem to add up to something very strong. We are saying that things are going from bad to worse. That one doesn't know because things were bad earlier also. So wallowing in this nostalgia is also not very good. We need to have some very concrete ways of combining credible research with credible activism and to find that place within the state policy which will work. I don't see a framework. So I think it is a challenge for this group to try to develop that framework and to see exactly how things can move instead of going away in a mode of passive submission, stating that 'we are being bombarded from every place'. Why is this happening?

Now this brings me to my last question to my sociologist friends, whom I have great admiration for. Although I have been trained as an economist, I have always felt very unhappy with the kind of straight-jacketed way in which economists tend to look at things. But now that I have greater opportunity of listening to sociologists, again I think a whole lot of questions are unanswered. Rajni's exposition was just excellent. It was so rich but then they stop there. They don't ask why it is happening. Why is it that globalization is taking over? I will bring it down to very simple things. Why it is that American culture is so attractive? Why is money so attractive? Why is it that young kids, when you take them out to eat, would much rather have McDonald's hamburgers? Why is it that they like pop songs so much? In other words, what is there in globalization? What attractions does it hold for adults? Are we really that greedy? If so, where is that greed coming from? I wish sociologists (after having done an excellent job of looking at what is happening to social change) would now look at why is it happening.

◆ *Kumud*

I don't think we should have another dialogue of economists vs. sociologists.

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◆ *Kiran Moghe*

At the cost of being repetitive, I would like to thank CWDS for organising this seminar because of the richness of the issues and the debates in last three days. I'm saying this as an activist. (Which I would hope is a credible activism). It's necessary to have such dialogues, between movement and women's studies since it's the experience of movement through dowry that motivated the studies to come up. The same can be said of the question of unpaid work, issues of migration, informalisation, feminisation etc. However, I do feel that there is one very important area which did get left out in this whole seminar and that is the linkage between global finance capital on one hand and communalism on the other. So that's an area where we would like more interaction and more debate. The whole deconstruction of terminology by MNCs, which is infiltrating the women's movement, also needs to be taken up.

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◆ *Soma Parthasarthi*

At the cost of being repetitive, I would really like to make this an opportunity for re-iterating what I take back into my engagement, struggling between research and activism. I think it is very important to look at how we actually extend our discussions and arguments around grass root levels and talk about depoliticisation of women's struggle within groups that we are already engaging with. Even when in the avatar of SHGs, they are nevertheless a group of women and the fact that they have been invisible as members is something that we need to claim. So I see that as an agenda for myself; and Nirantar also plans to act on that. I really think we need to address ourselves more to claiming the spaces for political education around the issues that we have been talking about. We need to look at organisations and formulations give us ways of doing that. While at one level there is a whole process of construction of knowledge going on, understanding how these constructs are formed, strengthened and reinforced and actually challenging them at field level is where I feel the understanding of globalization and how it is growing in people's life is most critical. That's where the movement is and I think it's important to make those connections and then to even put out the information. We need to make those connections with the realities that our friend from Haryana has made and then evolve the strategies we can adopt as collectives. These are the spaces that we are going to create and I find that very challenging. Thank you.

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◆ *Chittaroopa Palit*

This is the first time that I have come to a women's study conference and it's been very enriching. At the end of this meeting, we are we going away with a deeper realisation of the many layered-ness of the issues and the effects of globalization on different sectors I was in fact wondering why the seminar was not called women and imperialism instead of women and globalization. Presumably there are reasons, I don't know whether they have been discussed. But how are we, as a group going to initiate also to some extent the struggle against imperialism, being both women and citizens. I think we have to look at it much more frontally than we are doing now. We are at present tracing and looking at the impact of imperialism on the various sectors of the economy, on women, on education, health and so on. But what are the structures of power that is creating all this and how do we confront those. The central impact of imperialism is coming through certain structures. It is

effecting policies, finances and therefore destroying the entire economy. It is also destroying institutions and creating a whole set of pseudo institutions like SHGs or JFM or water user institutions that we have discussed. We are spending a lot of time analysing whether these are gender sensitive. How much crumbs are we getting, are those crumbs adequate and so on. But what do we see when it is placed in the larger picture? 1.5 lakh crores is the bad debt of a clutch of institutions in this country. How much money is going into SHGs? Somebody said yesterday that there is more money coming in from women than is actually going out to her. You and I, or other middle class people can go and take a loan from HDFC to buy a house. Who is paying the highest rate of interest and what for? All this is very clearly planned. You have the World Bank clearly saying that you don't need the banking sector. Non-banking financial sectors exist for the poor. So all this is following this policy. We really have to trace that.

I'm very uncomfortable with the use of the term donor driven, because donor driven sounds as if there is some benevolent person whose agenda we are following unwittingly. There is no such thing as a benevolent donor. They are not donating, they are looting and I think the guys who are looting are in control. This process is clear at the state level in Madhya Pradesh. We know and our research shows how the World Bank, the Asia Development Bank are systematically laying down conditions for several sectors. Their interventions in law, in budget speeches, which are written out by their favourite agencies such as the Pricewater House can all be seen on paper. They also have progress reports by Adam Smith Institute and by several of their consulting organs. So I think one of the main things that women's movement should do is to name all this, put all this together, and then attack those institutions. Therefore, women have to be at the forefront of fighting imperialism. Finally the ADB, the WB, etc. have to quit India. That is the sort of stand that we have to take. We must concentrate on how to build up the basis for saying this, because the basis exists in reality. Another thing I mentioned was this whole issue of governance. Panchayats are not governing anything. They are democratic institutions but they do not amount to organs of governance. The governance is taking place at Manila and Washington. So how long will we keep discussing what's happening at the Panchayat level and criticising laws at the Panchayat level. We know it's being done deliberately. So these questions need to be looked into and elaborated. I was delighted to see this set of politically serious and committed group and I'm sure there are so many circles of women activists and researchers who are similarly looking at the issues.

◆ *Ranjana (CITU)*

I just have one or two very simple points to make. First of all I wouldn't wish to repeat, but if I say I want to thank CWDS, it's coming from all of us. It has been an excellent learning experience. Working in the trade union we often don't get the opportunity to get this kind of information or raise these kinds of questions, which really makes us think about our work and how we are really doing it. I think that is what is necessary in the women's movement. However, I have two suggestions. I do think that CWDS has started this process of discussions between academics and some activists, or maybe you have been doing this for many years. I feel that it is very necessary for us to take these debates and issues across to other sections of the people and especially the men. I am so happy that Dunu is still here! There are men who have supported us in our movement; but I think we need to reach out to a vast number in different sections of men. I know there is a Centre of Women Development

Studies, but we also need to reach out to the vast number of students, young people, the peasantry and the working classes. I think it is very very important. I don't know within the structure of the CWDS how far it is possible, but I think that seminars or workshops on such issues and the kind of inputs that we have received here with men from the other organisations would be very useful for them and our movement will strengthen tremendously this way.

The other thing is that though I know there might have been some problems, but let's not do seminars on Eid and if we are having a session on Eid let's at least eat Biryani! Since we do live in that kind of society where there are different sections, I think we should try to prevent having a meeting like this when there is a very important festival on for a particular section of our society.

◆ *Indu Agnihotri*

I am not going to be self-congratulatory for the CWDS. I think that we have had a very good seminar. But I have two points. Since so much of input has come due to the experience gathered at ground level, if possible we should think of taking this forward through a process of wider dissemination. Maybe we could do something along the lines of what had been done for Beijing and the 2000 Global March. We could think in terms of a program much later where some of it could go across in other languages also. I think this small but large group has been very effective, but it would be very useful to take this forward to other people. This is 2005 and we know that in the West many of the women's organisations have said they are not engaging with Beijing etc.; but I think we could use some of the information we gathered to generate our own resource base, which is what we have been doing in the past. Secondly, I just have a small point. We have had some rapporteurs who have been silent throughout. I think it would be useful to get a little bit of feedback from them. This is probably their first exposure to these kinds of seminars at this level and I think it would be useful.

◆ *Debalina Mukherjee*

One of the things that strike me after having sat through two and a half days of just absolutely marvellous ideas and words and suggestions is that we are seeing a massive change in the forms of control that women are experiencing. Control is becoming more insidious because we are being able to see less of it visibly. One good example would be the changes in terms of geographical space. If we look at it in terms of the traditional public/private divide, we realise that reproduction, which was traditionally private, is moving into or is being controlled from the public sphere and work is increasingly being controlled from the private sphere. I think what might be important is a kind of holistic framework to understand these forms of change and more importantly the way in which the change is moving. Because, I think it is safe to assume that these forms of controls will keep changing as situations change. However, I have no idea what this sort of framework would look like. Thank you.

◆ *Nalini Nayak*

I too am very grateful to CWDS for having me here. Of course, the interesting part is the interaction between a group of researchers and a group of activists. That has been the tradition of CWDS, I know. Therefore, I was looking forward to much more discussion on organisation itself, because, if we at all want to react to this globalization, we need a huge mass base where the reaction actually takes place. While reactions at the level of ideas are no doubt important, at the level of the mass base it definitely has to be done. I think we may have missed out on this point. What is the form of organisation or what are the forms of struggles that we need to engage in, if we want to counteract these tendencies that are attacking us today? For AIDWA, the organisation related to CWDS, some kind of inward looking process of discussion on whether the strategies that have been used till now have arrived somewhere or not is required. That kind of inward looking-ness would definitely come up from the kind of people who are here. This would give us an idea regarding how the struggle can be carried on, as that is the main point. I think what Jagmati said this morning was fantastic because it illustrates how somebody at field level is able to make these connections so easily and seize them directly. This reflects the richness of work being done at the base. But then what form will the macro organisation take? Has our existing form been enough - especially because the existence of AIDWA for a long time has mainly been in the sector of organisation- but with more and more informalisation, what are the forms of struggles that will be able to take this movement ahead in the informal sector? I think informal setups have a different dynamics and maybe it would have been good to look at some of these things too.

◆ *Rajni Palriwala*

There are two-three things that I want to say. First, I would like to add on to all the remarks of appreciation. One of the things that used to often happen in women's group conferences in between was that political correctness was considered sufficient i.e. you didn't have to go much further. I think one of the things which one has seen in this seminar is that it's not sufficient. We have been forced to argue and in a sense to go beyond the statement and that is what I think is very rich and livening over here. I know Veena-di is giving me a very dirty look and wondering how can I say that this was the case at any moment in time. But I think this was the situation for quite sometime, even though we would try not to do so. Second, there was a point made by Chittaroopa regarding naming when she asked why do we talk of stakeholders and best practices and advocacy and globalization - let us name things directly. But I think we can make a mistake. Imperialism, we have to remember, does not act in a vacuum and I think this goes back to what I had said in the end of our discussion. It is not as if governance takes place in Manila or Washington only. Governance does take place through Panchayats at the local level also, which was coming through in the presentations. For example, upper class and upper caste reaffirms their dominance, governs the people from within their village and then ties up to higher and higher levels. Let us not forget the landlords and monopoly bourgeoisie in our country who are not sitting in Manila and Washington. Let us not forget what we have always discussed- that patriarchy operates in insidious ways. The struggle against imperialism is critical and just as our struggle against our local oppressors is not going to get us anywhere if we don't confront imperialism, nor will the reverse happen. We might fall into the same trap. In a sense this is what has been suggested in terms of the whole advocacy of civil society - that civil society acts without being driven by caste and class divisions. As my third point I would like to thank Swapna as it gives me an opportunity to

develop something, which I was trying to argue. Essentially the argument that I was presenting in terms of seven trends of globalization was - there are new economies of desire being created and these are the ones where you have the coming-together of the so-called modern forms along with traditional forms, which reassert in a very ritualised way both old and new social relationships. So this refers to what I guess sociologists take for granted when they think in terms of hegemonic culture, reference groups, etc. I didn't go into an elaboration of that whole framework because its something we accept in terms of the way societies function. But what I would like to point out is that there are new hegemonic cultures and new reference groups being created. That is also what Malini's presentation was all about. While it's definitely true that on one hand spaces for resistance has been shrinking, simultaneously women have been finding new spaces. In a sense and this goes back to the issue I had raised yesterday - that if you are going to take those new spaces further you will have to look at ways disciplinary mechanism of globalization are operating today. A last minor point I wanted to raise is that from what I know in terms of its work, documents and experience, AIDWA being an area based organisation was not at all focused on the organised sector. In fact, one of the problems we could have raised in terms of AIDWA was that because it's been an area based organisation, at times work related issues did not get the centrality which they could have, whether in the organised or unorganised sector. But because it's an area based organisation both these issues kept coming up, whether one looked at the dowry surveys, for example, or the other works.

◆ *Dunu Roy*

I am personally very grateful to CWDS for inviting me here. It's always a very illuminating experience to listen to some very alert perspectives - particularly if you are a man! I think it forces you to reflect and think a lot more than one would normally do in any other forum. Just to elaborate a little more on some of the spaces that are opening up regarding what we want to do in future or at least what I would want to do in future. There are four areas, which occurred to me, and I just thought to put it before you. First is this whole thing of commodification. We are seeing it at every level. Everything is being commodified and a value is being attached to it, which is of course very disturbing. But it seems to me that this process itself opens up a new space because for the first time what was regarded as the externalities in economics are coming to the fore and in a sense challenging the old structure of capitalist economy. This may be a good way of challenging the basis of profit saying everything is now being valued whether its nature, human beings, water or labour; and if you start adding up those figures, where is the profit eventually for capitalist enterprise? This is an area we need to focus a little more on. Second is the issue of violence which is coming up so powerfully and I think it's not merely violence, it's brutalisation, dehumanisation at every level and it is to my mind not gender specific. This dehumanisation is at every level and perhaps CWDS might at some stage consider setting a CMDS also! Primarily because brutalisation and dehumanisation of a male is an extremely important factor in how the political economy is proceeding. Violence against women is somewhere or the other rooted in the manner in which men are brought up, in how they are educated and taught to see society. Perhaps this is an area which needs to be taken up because of the conflict ridden societies that we are seeing, whether it takes the form of Naxalite or some other separatist movement. I was just with a group of Afghans who have come up from 30 years of sustained conflict in Afghanistan and I think conflict makes you more sensitive with respect to certain issues that you have not thought of and perhaps those need to be looked into. Third issue is of ideology and how media is playing a role in

this. I would just venture to suggest that what the media is probably doing is trying to make a spectacle out of everything, including movements, including WSF and we need to somewhere withdraw from that. We are not looking at these critically because the spectacle itself is so powerful and it also makes you feel good. But while feeling good, you don't feel particularly intelligent and perhaps there is a need to recapture some of that criticality in alliance, in solidarity. The last point is this whole issue of rights. In a sense we are trying to reclaim rights- right to education, right to information, right to food, right to work, right to the stupid constitution itself in some ways. Can't we think a little beyond this? What is happening is we ask the state to legislate something and then we spend the next 20 years trying to get them implemented because there's constant delusion that's taking place at the lower levels. I'm not saying don't fight for it, I'm trying to find out spaces within those struggles where we need to move further. Perhaps we need to look beyond the rights issue itself and in a sense talk of re-structural reform because the society and state is being structured through structural reform. We need to think how it can be restructured. Perhaps some more serious work needs to be given to that. CWDS and specially, the women's movement, given its particular position in the history of our time is ideally suited to take up these issues. I think it'll be extremely powerful work on not only what women are doing but also what they have been doing and will be doing.

◆ *Uditi Sen (one of the rapporteurs)*

I'm a student of JNU. While we have been keeping quiet during the sessions because we have been mostly rapporteuring, we have been jabbering during the breaks. It's been very exciting for me personally and a fantastic exposure to the whole range of issues being taken up in women's movement. Therefore one thing which kept coming to my mind, which is of course said from my specific position in a certain background of being middle class and a part of the educational elite (having come up to do my MPhil), is the invisibility of women's movement amongst so many young women and girls. Society has learnt very well how to give lip service to women's rights, therefore you'll not really be shocked into taking up women's causes out of your own experiences. So many women still grow up trying to be individuals, trying to be "men", as the value system hasn't really changed. I have seen so many of my friends doing that and they just do not have that outlet or the information to break out of this. Frankly speaking I do not know what is happening at the mass level. May be, there the issues are so stark that things are different. But in the particular set up of middle classes there is a kind of lull or numbness and women's movement is invisible to most women. It's not integrated in graduate education or even high school education. It's just invisible. There are very few of us who are lucky enough to get this exposure, who are lucky enough to form linkages through friends etc. I don't know how it is to be done- maybe through the Internet, may be the high school syllabus or maybe the undergraduate syllabus, the women's movement needs to be made more visible and accessible. This needs to be done because too many women still don't have this space.

◆ *Unidentified Speaker*

I would really like to thank CWDS. I just want to make some very short points. One was that there are whole lot of organisational strategies that have been attempted by women and by workers and which have come to impasse, whether it's trade unions or other various types of organisations, especially in smaller workplaces. That, I think, would have been a

very important thing to discuss. There have been very small attempts like call centres trying to have welfare centres rather than unions. I think there is a lot of sense in taking what Nalini was saying a bit further in terms of what organisational strategies we visualise in the coming period. The other thing I felt was that the interconnections of some of the issues that we discussed would be very important. One of the connections was what Kiran spoke about in terms of fundamentalism, right wing politics and globalization. There have been a lot of things pointed out in terms of what these interconnections could be but more detailed discussions of strategy vis-à-vis both these giants are required. So how does one look at those, especially from the context that I worked in - a Muslim women's organisation and the sort of backlash that it's faced since its birth. The third issue that was mentioned a lot was that of new marginalised sections and the interconnections there. For example, in case of the denotified tribes and the Dalits, how the fact of economic exclusion becomes a greater factor than social discrimination. But what are the implications of economic exclusion for Dalit women workers in terms of their exclusion from economic processes as well as in terms of organisational strategies and especially wages? Similar questions can be raised regarding women of denotified tribes, sexuality minority women and the other category that came up - a very large army of NGO workers and the sort of problems they are facing including sexual harassment. There is a complete lack of any mechanism or procedure in place. These are the sort of things which have come up only in the last few years; it's not something that has been discussed earlier. These were quite absent from our discussions ten years ago. These are completely new experiences and women in small towns are very confused regarding how to deal with this. What does one do when somebody who talks of gender equality etc. harasses you? There are so many issues that come up like that and may be at some point we can make the interconnections.

◆ *Malini Bhattacharya*

There have been so many good points with which I'm entirely in agreement. I just want to make one point continuing something that Madhura had said. If there has been a single principle thrusting this multi-layered seminar, I think it has been towards the re-politicisation of women's studies and enlivening its connections with activities. In this connection, one of the areas for intervention that has come up again and again in the course of this seminar is that of the funding agencies coming up with programmes which then generate their own data. There is total lack of transparency and we do not know what the parameters for expenditure are, what the objectives are and if there is any study assessment, it comes from the agencies themselves. Now I think one important area of intervention would be for us (those who are in women studies) to take up these specific areas- particularly education and health- where I think a lot of money is coming in and where we don't really know what are these programmes which national and state governments .are implementing. We need to question what they are leading to as we do not really know. Apart from cooked up data there is also such a lot of false rhetoric, which we need to cut through and I think that should be one of the follow-up agenda that we should take up from the seminar.

◆ *Mita Parekh (SEWA)*

We are very grateful to CWDS for giving us this opportunity.

◆ *Satyamala*

When Indrani called me just two days before the seminar I jumped at this because I felt here was an opportunity to say something that I have wanted to say for a long time. I agree with Rami completely but in my presentation I had cut out the entire thing about what the NGO sector was doing in health and HIV AIDS is very much a part of it. Infact this whole debate on women in prostitution and sex workers has really filled me with great worry. For example, there is a group in Sangli, which has come up with the report that is organised along the lines of Communist Manifesto. It starts in that kind of language where the women in prostitution or sex workers say that women who are married are not living in a state of freedom and women who are prostitutes are actually living in a state of freedom because they can decide whom they want to have sex with. If anybody wants a copy of that I can give it to you. In fact there is going to be an international women's Health seminar in December and kind of energy and funding that has gone into it is remarkable. Of course, I have not been invited to be a part of it and I'm happy to be where I am. But the women in health movement has actually at some level been hijacked by NGOs and groups and forums like SAHELI and other autonomous groups doing something independently and trying to look at issues in a different way, have become very small and not so significant. I don't know where their voice is! So that is one of the challenges- how do we take back the women and health movement and how do we make a joint front with health groups. Even within health movement there is a big NGOisation. The right based approach comes to occupy centre stage in the health debate and this is one of the points I made in my presentation, i.e. the huge amount of funding given to certain groups becomes central to policies debate and research designs and that is a very important thing. Last point I want to make is about data. The problem is not just distortion of data but it also involves commissioning studies and selective presentation of data and the data that shows different kinds of things does not get published. So how do we to get out of this?

◆ *Vibhuti Patel*

I just want to add to the Sangli study because it uses much of the feminist language or formulations of women's movement but then it sees only pimps as agents of change. There was a one day workshop in Bombay and they way they were discussing it made it seem like they were attacking all settler women's movement and promoting these. Not just this, even the way 8th March programme has been hijacked by the corporate world (total commercialisation of March 8) and now there is a lobby within women's study. I think in IWSF there is a special number where three authors wrote that we should declare Manusmriti Dahan Divas as women's liberation day instead of March 8th. The Dalit lobby is also talking about it. Social marketing, new jargons that are coming up in women's movement and the way different state group one the one hand like Hindutva lobby is also very much in women's study now. The tenth Five Year Plan said there would be 26 new women's studies centres but which departments and universities will be getting them and what kind of shape will they be given in the name of women's study is also quite questionable. Our task is immense and that's why we need such gatherings not only in Delhi but also all over. Again I reiterate that we need to restart the culture of study circles, camps and summer schools at community level and among the youth, especially students because at present the most active organisation among the youth is the Hindutva lobby.

◆ *Vina Mazumdar*

Everybody has been thanking the CWDS but on behalf of CWDS let me say very straight out that if the seminar has been successful it's because of all those who responded to our invitation, all those who came and participated in spite of all other pressures on their time and thank you very much. If new energy has been generated, we are mutual beneficiaries.