



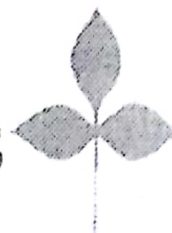
BULLETIN

OF THE

CENTRE FOR POLICY STUDIES

(SANKAR FOUNDATION)

Vol. I No. 3
Feb. 2, 1997



THE LIGHT THAT ILLUMINES OUR PATH ...

Forty nine years ago 'the light' had 'gone out of our lives' — the light that had led us from bondage to freedom, the light the entire world looked to for 'a way out of the darkness.' The dazed Jawaharlal quickly recovered from the shock to remind us that 'it was not ordinary light' and that the light that represented the eternal truths 'will illumine this country for many more years and a thousand years.'

As messages from all over the world poured into grief-stricken India, a moving tribute from a leading English daily of that time brought tears even to the stout-hearted. The *Hindustan Standard* of January 31, 1948 left the editorial page blank except for these few lines: "Gandhiji has been killed by his own people for whose redemption he lived. The second crucifixion in the history of the world has been enacted on a Friday — the same day Jesus was done to death one thousand, nine hundred and fifteen years ago. Father, forgive us."

Memorials in stone and metal have been raised and January 30 and October 2 witness rituals of homage to Gandhiji. Fifteen days after the assassination of the Mahatma, in a broadcast to the Nation, Nehru cautioned against memorials which 'mock him and belie his message' and exhorted the people to understand Gandhiji's 'way to live and the way to die' and 'follow reverently in the path he showed us and to do our duty in life and in death.' As Rajaji observed "October 2 and January 30 cannot be better observed than by a rededication to Truth and non-violence to the extent we are, each one of us, capable of and by a prayer for increased strength of heart in order to be more and more devoted to that ideal."

Gandhiji does not need to be propagated nor to be rescued from the many who claim to be his followers. Every one of us, including the millions who did not either see or read him, is his legatee. As Edgar Snow beautifully put it "This small man, so full of a large love of men, extended beyond India and beyond time. There was a mirror in the Mahatma in which everyone could see the best in himself and when the mirror broke, it seemed that the thing in oneself might be fled forever."

Rajmohan Gandhi summed it up all in just one line: "Our link with Gandhiji is not of blood but of spirit." It is that human spirit that transcends the barriers of time and space. That light and spirit are not the preserve of a country or of a people. They are eternal. They illumine our path...

— The Editor

FROM GANDHIJI'S PEN

Women's Status and Role in Society :

Of all the evils for which man has made himself responsible, none is so degrading, so shocking or so brutal as his abuse of the better half of humanity to me, the female sex, not the weaker sex. It is the nobler of the two, for it is even today the embodiment of sacrifice, silent suffering, humility, faith and knowledge.

Not Weaker Sex :

To call woman the weaker sex is a libel; it is man's injustice to woman. If by strength is meant brute strength then, indeed, is woman less brute than man. If by strength is meant moral power, then woman is immeasurably man's superior. Has she not greater intuition? Is she not more self-sacrificing? Has she not greater courage? Without her man could not be. If non-violence is the law of our being, the future is with woman. Who can make a more effective appeal to the heart than woman?

Had not man in his blind selfishness crushed woman's soul as he was done or had she not succumbed to the 'enjoyments', she would have given the world an exhibition of the infinite strength that is latent in her. The world shall see it in all its wonder and glory when woman has secured an equal opportunity for herself with man and fully developed her powers of mutual aid and combination.

"I do not believe that in the other world there are either Hindus, Christians or Moslems"

—Gandhiji

Women, I think, is the paramount effect of self-worth. But unfortunately, today she does not realize what a tremendous advantage she has over man. As history used to say, they are labouring under the tyrannical influence of man. If they would realize the strength of man violence they would not expect to be called the weaker sex.

Woman is the counterpart of man, gifted with equal mental capacities. She has the right to participate in every national effort in the activities of man and she has an equal right of freedom and liberty with him.

ENVIRONMENTAL GENDER BIAS

—Prof. M.V. Venkata Rao

Incitement of gender bias is the order of the day. The gifted fair sex and the unfair sex with enthusiastic lip sympathy have enough statistics to prove their point. For example, males outnumber females by 7 percent. 9 percent more girls die in the age group 0-4, in spite of their genetic advantage of the duplicated X-chromosome that can mask a recessive X-linked genetic morbidity, while the male has to suffer all X and Y-linked genetic problems. In 3.5 percent of the deliveries the mothers die. This is enough to show the female gender victimisation in Indian physical environment.

To start with, nature has been unfair to the fair sex. Female sex femininity is made more complex and hence more susceptible to environmental stress. A tougher role is assigned to the lady in procreation, while it is left as a matter of recreation for the man. Even the female morphology is more vulnerable for abuse or exploitation by the opposite sex. Male domination in society with gender bias in social organisation and evolution of gender based technology that constrains the female participation even unintentionally, has precipitated an unprecedented drive for self-assertion of the elite female. She has succeeded in gaining a soul (only men had souls) ending some earlier beliefs, in claiming privacy rights and voting rights and in struggling for 30 percent reservation for her with the backward classes. Yet, the fact remains that the beneficiaries of the trivial success of women are the privileged few who hardly represent the dumb millions. A typical Indian female fits the following picture.

She has to carry headloads of water (10 kilometers in some villages) for the family. Head loads of kitchen fuel, head loads of construction material over scaffolds, if employed, and the shoulder load of her own kid, make her an accepted haulage animal, supplementing the bullock that is credited with 50 percent haulage of the national needs. Some ergonomic studies show that woman, with her hip sway during walking (which incidentally adds to the sexual aesthetics in male perspective) saves 30 percent energy in carrying loads as compared to man. This is a by-product advantage of the larger pelvis which is basically meant to accommodate the unborn baby. Thus male gets a point to feel less guilty

in condemning women folk to load-carrying chores. Urbanisation and technological progress in our country could denude the land without being able to provide toilets. The modestly expected of a women demands postponement of defecation till darkness sets in. The slum lady in urban environment has to stand up a number of times while easing herself on public roads. With the projected forest fires, dwindling vegetation and water resources, fetching water and kitchen fuel are getting tougher with the 'progress' of the country.

Today pollution is on everybody's mind. A few studies show that pollution haunts a woman more. To cite one evidence in Visakhapatnam female samples show 30 percent lung function impairment caused by air pollution, while the corresponding figure for males is 23. The respiratory damage is found to be associated with kutcha fuel and kerosene stove in kitchens prevalent in 65 percent of Visakhapatnam households. Kitchen air has been found to contain particulates and toxic gases as air pollutants at 10 to 50 times the out door concentrations. Industrial and autoexhaust pollutions on the citizen are dwarfed by the kitchen (indoor) pollution on the lady.

Conclusion: The typical Indian woman, the head loader, the cook in the kitchen using kutcha fuel and the victim of embarrassment from the lack of a toilet facility needs protection from pollution and environmental degradation resulting from national 'progress'.

WOMEN AND DEVELOPMENT— RHETORIC AND REALITY

—Dr. M. Vijayalakshmi

The process of paradigm shift in favour of sustainable human development is in the making. The accent of development progress is that it must be people-centred, equitably distributed and environmentally and socially sustainable. Human Development Report 1995 showed human development if not engineered, is endangered. Gender equality represented by fairer opportunities for women and better access to education, child care, credit and employment contribute to their human development. It is recognized that investing in women's capabilities and empowering them to achieve their choices is the surest way to contribute to economic growth and overall development.

The central message brought forward by the Human Development Report 1996 is that there is no automatic link between economic growth and human development. But if these links are forged with policy and determination they can be mutually reinforcing and economic growth will effectively and rapidly improve human development. It is high time the government policy makers accept the premise that economies exist for people and not people for economies. In the past 15 years the world has become more economically polarized not only between countries but also within countries. It is observed that if present trends continue, economic disparities be-

When the industrial and developing nations will move from inequitable to inhuman, in fact obviously more inhuman towards women. Hence, the need for determined efforts to avoid growth that is "jobless, ruthless, voiceless, rootless and futureless" as called upon by Human Development Report 1996.

The goals and commitments of the recent series of global summits provide a powerful new framework and many concrete specifics for concerted action. The Cairo conference was a challenge to the world to accept that if we are to deal with population issues in a truly serious and meaningful way, it requires the emancipation and improvement of women. The ICPD was remarkable for the breadth of its focus on the human dimension of population - a recognition that tackling population issues in this context requires simultaneous progress on related issues such as empowerment of women, gender equality and girls education. The Cairo catch phrase 'from Rio to Beijing' referred to the UN's Journey from the UNCED in 1991 via the Vienna conference on Human Rights of 1993 on through Cairo and the Copenhagen Summit of Social Development in 1995 to the UN conference on Women and Development. James Gustave Speth presents an optimistic note that we have both an opportunity and a moral imperative to reverse the negative trends of recent times and to reinforce the positive patterns of sustainable human development the vision guiding us into the next century.

GDI and GEM :

The gender related development index (GDI) and the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) introduced in Human Development Report 1995 provide several conclusions the most common thing being that no society treats its women as well as its men. Second, comparing the GDI ranks of countries with their income levels confirms that removing gender inequalities is not dependent on having a high income. Third, gender equality is not necessarily associated with high economic growth. In no country is the GDI value greater than the HDI value and this confirms that in every country there is gender inequality in capabilities. (to be well nourished and healthy, healthy reproduction, to be educated and knowledgeable represented by female literacy). Women in India suffer on two counts - first, because the society as a whole is impoverished, and second, because they are women.

The gender empowerment measure (GEM) concentrates on participation, measuring gender inequality in key areas of economic and political participation and decision making. It differs from the GDI which is an indicator of gender inequality in basic capabilities.

In the GEM ranking Norway and Sweden are at the top, followed at a distance by Denmark and Finland. The Nordic countries are not only good at strengthening the basic capabilities of women, but have also provided many opportunities for women to participate in economic and political fields.

INDIAN MINDSET TOWARDS CHINA MUST CHANGE

—Dr. (Mrs.) Karki Hussain

The Indian mindset towards Chinese has to change for better relations between India and that country, Dr. Mrs. Karki Hussain, Sinologist, has said.

Speaking on Sino-Indian relations at the Centre for Policy Studies of the Sankar Foundation here, she said the Indians still viewed China from the bitter experience of 1962 while Chinese forgot it as an unpleasant chapter.

Drawing on her experience during her recent visit to China, Mrs. Karki Hussain said China had come a long way in its approach to economic development with its thrust on township village enterprises (TVE).

The TVE enjoyed fullest autonomy to negotiate with foreign companies within a broad framework.

The concept was different from the trickle down effect of the liberalisation as it was aimed at horizontal development. The goal was to reach the most backward areas which was in consonance with the mythology of ideologically egalitarianist society advocated by Marxism.

She said the visit of the late Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi was considered a landmark event by the Chinese. She is of the view that the recent visit of Chinese President Jiang Zemin signalled a positive turn in the ties between the two countries.

Drawing a comparison between India and China on their international relations, she felt that China was taken more seriously and even the U.S. had to balance its relations with China. She also said that she found that the Chinese, compared to 1970s, were a more relaxed lot and did not hesitate to mingle with visitors to their country though they were under regimented thought process earlier. Referring to township village enterprises, agro-industrial complexes which had autonomy within the framework, she said the Chinese were reaching out to the most backward areas to sustain development and by going in for innovative methods to ensure a horizontal economic development of the country and even academics would seriously discuss business and commerce. 'Now their mission is to develop Shanghai into their own capitalist centre to outbeat Hong Kong,' she observed.

Replying to a question, she said that the Chinese who were used to the socialist umbrella were equally worried about the cultural influences the multinational companies would bring into the country. She also noted that the common Chinese man would no longer speak about ideology in the era of consumerism.

The entry of MNCs inevitably brought in its wake an imitative culture to which both China and India were

subjected. This had turned the Chinese more consumerist and materialistic in their attitudes.

Dr. Mrs. Karki Hussain, wife of former Indian Ambassador to the United States Dr. Abid Hussain, was an honorary member of the Political Science faculty of the Andhra University three decades ago when her husband was the Collector of Visakhapatnam.

(Courtesy : THE HINDU & THE INDIAN EXPRESS)

HOMEcoming FOR DR. ABID HUSSAIN

It is more than a formal lecture trip to Visakhapatnam for Dr. Abid Hussain, now in the city with his wife and daughter.

Personally for Dr. Hussain, Collector of Visakhapatnam in the 60s, former Ambassador to the United States and Vice-Chairman of Rajiv Gandhi Foundation, as he disclosed while addressing a meeting of the Centre for Policy Studies here on Wednesday evening, it was a trip down the memory lane. His wife, Dr. Karki Hussain, found the occasion close to homecoming given the affection bestowed on them by friends and well-wishers on landing here. Asked to reveal the secret behind Dr. Abid Hussain's success, she was to later tell the gathering that "he was very lucky in building up excellent human relations, which helped him grow up in a wonderful manner and face life's challenges."

For the old-timers of the city the occasion meant catching with up an 'admirable friend,' and more important, benefiting from his refreshing humour once again. And Dr. Abid Hussain left none disappointed as he narrated anecdotes laced with his irrepressible wit from his distinguished career in India and abroad and recollected the incidents during his time including the turbulent period of the agitation for a steel plant here and his old acquaintances, in particular the 'Daffadar,' Polipolli, who had faithfully served him during his Collectorship here.

Dr. Abid Hussain's love for Visakhapatnam could not be better reflected than the fact that he had named his daughter, who was born here 'Visakha,' after the city.

There was more than one quality of Visakhapatnam that had inextricably drawn Dr. Hussain to it. "There is something about the city and its soil that conquers the mind and the spirit making its people successful," he said, adding that in the U.S. he found innumerable people from Vizag making out remarkable careers for themselves. He was delighted by the transition Vizag had from an ordinary town to an important city of the country but he would not want it to rest on its laurels.

"You have to become a city of the 21st century. You have achieved many things but have to do much more," said Dr. Hussain. Its people should build on their "feeling of togetherness and companionship." Those who neglect children suffer," he added.

(Courtesy : THE HINDU)

A NOTE ON THE HEALTH PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS OF THE FOUNDATION

—Dr. G. Prabhakar
Coordinator, Health & Projects

The World Health Organisation declared Tuberculosis as a global emergency. Most of the burden of the disease fall on third world countries. There appears to be no early end for the threat posed by Tuberculosis. The recent press reports say that South East Asia, particularly, has a high burden of the disease with the region accounting for about 40% of the world's total cases, both in terms of incidence and death due to it. It is estimated that last year, 3.5 million new cases would have occurred and 1.2 million would have died in the region. Of the new cases, 2.3 million occurred in India, 0.5 million in Indonesia and 0.4 million in Bangladesh.

Sankar Foundation is running the TB Detection camps and providing services for the Tuberculosis patients both in urban and rural areas satisfactorily. The Foundation is identifying the new cases, carrying out part of the tests and supplying Anti-tuberculous medications. The suspected cases are brought to Foundation's clinics for medical examination and for pathological testing. If found positive, the patients are sent for radiological tests and then put on a treatment regimen. The social workers of the NGDOs supervise and ensure that the patients go through the entire treatment without dropouts.

Recently two coordination meetings were held at Anakapalle and Mamidipalem to review the joint programmes of the NGDOs and the Foundation. Sankar Foundation's programmes were discussed in detail and 5000 survey forms were distributed to the Organisations to carry out the surveys. The social workers are taking up house to house survey in villages to identify the potential patients with tuberculosis, cataract and eligible couples for Family Planning.

Despite all efforts by the Government agencies, the Family Planning programmes are showing slow results. Sustained commitment to create awareness and education about Family Planning Programmes are the need of the hour and Sankar Foundation is actively associating with the Family Planning Programmes. The Foundation is providing Special Incentives to the people undergoing sterilizations at Govt. Victoria Hospital (500 cases) Govt. King George Hospital (500 cases) Health Centres of Visakhapatnam Municipal Corporation (500 cases) and in rural areas (1000 cases at Anakapalle, Yelamanchili, Narsipatnam and Bhimili).

Sankar Foundation organised a function at Govt. Victoria Hospital to launch the Special Incentive Programme for Family Planning. Dr. S.A. Rehman, MLA was the Chief Guest. Sri K. Parvathi Kumar, Chairman of the Foundation presided over the function and released the Pamphlets printed by the Foundation for publicity campaign for Family Planning. Dr. Shirin Rehman Social

Ward and wife of MLA distributed the Incentives. Prof. Prasanna Kumar, Sri A. Sankar Rao, Trustees, Dr. YV Krishna Rao, DM & HO and Dr. Sakunthala, Superintendent of the Hospital spoke on the occasion.

Similar function was held at Govt. King George Hospital on 23rd January 1997 to launch the programme. Sri M.G. Gopal, IAS, District Collector who has been the guiding force for the Family Planning Programmes of the Foundation was the Chief Guest. Dr. C. Srinivas, Superintendent of KGH, Dr. Indira Devi, Prof. and Head of Department, Obst & Gynaecology, Dr. R. Sasi Prabha, Prof. of Obst & Gynaecology and Dr. Y.V. Krishna Rao, DM & HO spoke at the function. The Incentives were distributed by all the dignitaries who attended the function.

AIDS is the most dreaded disease all over the world now. Recent reports say that more than 3 million new cases have been reported in 1996 and India is now believed to have the largest HIV infected population in the World. Concerted efforts by Voluntary Organisations and authorities are necessary for creating an awareness about AIDS and precautionary steps should be explained to people.

The Foundation is conducting Awareness and prevention programmes on AIDS jointly with SPAAD. MAHAMMARI, a street play on AIDS was sponsored by the Foundation on World AIDS Day at Ramakrishna beach, at Gayathri College and in rural areas. The Foundation is conducting a Seminar on AIDS for Voluntary Organisations at Anakapalle on 17th February 1997.

SOME FINDINGS ON STATUS OF WOMEN

Political Participation : Political space has always been monopolized by men. Although women constitute half the electorate they hold only 10% of parliament seats in developing countries and 12% in industrial countries.

Women are relatively better represented at local levels. In 46 countries women's representation in local governments surpasses their representation in national parliaments. In 1994 India reserved a third of panchayat seats to women. As a result, at least 800,000 women entered the local political pipeline. But some preliminary conditions have to be fulfilled for the purpose to be served. The lesson of the freedom struggles all over the world is that the greater the participation of women in public affairs at all levels - local, district, state, national or global, the greater is their share in power. However, the general tendency all over the globe is to send them back to the barracks after the struggle is won and when entering the domains of power is to be decided. Hence, as Prof. Drude Dahelrup propounds unless women's presence in all decision making bodies becomes a 'critical mass' (at least one third) it cannot make any real impact. However, numbers alone do not make a 'critical mass' but enough numbers with heightened consciousness and commitment can play a meaningful role in the developmental process.

Health : Women continue to be a vulnerable group and for them the most critical period is pregnancy and childbirth. It is estimated that in 1990 more than half the pregnant women in developing countries were anemic, and about half a million women die every year from causes related to childbirth. The average maternal mortality rate for developing countries is 384 per 100,000 live births, with the rates varying considerably - from 95 in East Asia to nearly 1,000 in Sub-Saharan Africa. In India the sex ratio in the 1991 census is 927 females to 1000 males. Deaths of young girls exceed those of boys by 1/3 of a million every year. One hundred and twenty thousand women die in child birth every year. Morbidity including diseases relating to reproductive functions and organs are at alarming levels. Women are now being infected with the HIV virus at a faster rate than men.

Security : Human security represents safety from such chronic threats as hunger, disease and repression and protection from sudden and hurtful disruption in the pattern of daily life in homes, workplaces and the community. Among the worst personal threats women are the targetted lot. It is estimated that a third of married women in developing countries are battered by their husbands. In Germany up to four million women suffer from domestic violence every year. And nearly 130,000 rapes are reported annually in industrial countries in the age group 15-59. The first world Congress on the Commercial sexual exploitation of children revealed the staggering scale of child sex abuse which are horrifying and bemoaning. There are 70,000 child prostitutes in Zambia, 200,000 in Thailand, 40,000 in Venezuela, 25,000 in the Dominican Republic and 500,000 in India. In America, between 100,000 and 300,000 children are sexually exploited through prostitution and pornography every year. Of the 100,000 odd Nepalese women who work as prostitutes in India, 20 percent are estimated by local non-governmental organisations to be under 16. While child prostitution results from a combination of historical, economic, political and cultural factors in Nepal its main cause remains to be the deep contempt in which girls are held in a highly patriarchal society. In Eastern Europe the situation is acute, even thinly populated Estonia employs 1.500 millions, some as young as 10, in its sex industry. The worst sexual atrocities occurred in Bosnia where muslim women and girls were herded into rape camps and systematically gangraped. In Egypt the government's new strategy is to target women by way of arrest, torture and sexual abuse in the all-out war against Islamic terrorists.

Recent reportages have brought to light that the brutal practice of female circumcision or genital mutilation isn't confined to primitive cultures in Africa and Asia. Thousands of girls in the United States are being mutilated in immigrant communities. The Centre for disease control and prevention estimates that about 270,000 females in the US were circumcised in their home countries or are at risk in the US.

The vulnerability of women is also represented in the recent case of Bishop Wright of how irresponsibly priests behave and are backed up by the church which puts the blame on the 'scarlet women' and these 'scarlet women' are no other than those who go to the priest for help when they are very vulnerable and encounter men's dishonourable behaviour.

Maggie O' Kane has recently reported about the relentless, obsessive harassment and crude jokes that hundreds of policewomen suffer in Britain. It is no wonder that patriarchy is often used as the central concept to understand the nature of women's oppression. Asking a simple question "why do men do these things to women?" Barry answers "because in part there is nothing to stop them" female victimization continues to be a universal phenomenon.

In India women-friendly development remains a myth yet to become a reality. The indicators for women development show a pathetic picture despite all the rhetoric. It is quite frustrating to see the clock turn back in our country. The glorious traditions of more than a century and a half of the renaissance movement of the nineteenth century and the Indian National Movement of the twentieth century, the Gandhian ideology of women's emancipation, the guarantees provided by the constitution of India for gender equality, everything goes in vain widening the gap between rhetoric and reality. The slide towards revivalism is evident in the Muslim Women's (Protection of Rights in Divorce) Act and popularly known as the Muslim Mahila Bill passed in 1986 taking Muslim women out of the purview of the Indian penal code in matters concerning man-woman relationships. Then followed in September 1987, the heinous crime perpetrated by the Hindu fundamentalists of burning young Roop Kanwar on the pyre of her dead husband in spite of an existing ban on 'Sati' by the Government of India Act since 1829. These instances are pointers to show that there is a strong relationship between religion and society and women's subordinates position. Sheila Collins rightly observes that religion has been and may continue to be the most powerful and pervasive force with which women will have to contend in their efforts to

achieve equality and self-actualization. The recent shocking acquittal of the accused in the Roop Kanwar 'Sati' case is an attempt to justify a custom of a particular historical juncture symbolising an attitude towards women - 'a restoration of traditional family values.' Judicial activism exists, ironically no activism so far as women are concerned.

The forward looking strategies adopted at the end of the Decade conference at Nairobi noted that advancement of women and gender based discrimination are 'inter-twined issues' and that such discrimination is rooted in both the structural and cultural dimensions of society.

Many studies on the impact of structural adjustment have revealed that women lose out in many ways. They have to make up for rising prices by taking up more work at a time when work is not easily available (unemployment for women in India by current weekly status is 44 percent rural and 53 percent urban) and hence has to undertake multiple activities in order to sustain family income. Education of girls suffer further (At present India has the largest number of illiterate women, 39.29 female literates compared to 64.6 percent of male literates) and food scarcity pushes them further down in malnutrition. The rise of female supported families is evident over many parts of the third world.

A new consciousness about the failure of international human rights in protecting the rights of half of mankind should be appreciated. It has also been established that women's issues span a vast and borderless world from macro economic policies and the environment to health and human rights.

(Source: Human Development Report 1996, Guardian Weekly, The Times of India, Mainstream)

Democracy tends to make a society more parochial, not more cosmopolitan.

—Samuel Huntington

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