

# ROSHNI

JAN-MAR 2024



ALL INDIA WOMEN'S CONFERENCE



## The 92nd Annual Conference at Trivandrum



*Inaugural ceremony and the Prayer dance of Kerala*



*Participants*



*Launching of the Report of the Trivandrum branch at the 92nd Annual Conference, Trivandrum*

## ROSHNI

Journal of the All India Women's Conference  
JANUARY-MARCH 2024

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### ROSHNI Editorial and Business Office:

All India Women's Conference  
6, Bhagwan Dass Road, New Delhi-110 001

Phone: 011-43389100, 011-43389101

E-mail: aiwc.roshni@gmail.com

Website: www.aiwc.org.in

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## *From the Editor's desk...*

*Dear friends,*

*January, as always, witnessed frenzied activity at AIWC, as it's the time for preparation, submission of reports and of course travel arrangements for the keenly awaited Annual Conference. This year, Trivandrum was the beautiful venue and Members from far and wide arrived to share their work and discuss and debate future activities. As always, there was a sense of camaraderie and happiness.*

*At HO, the first programme was the celebration of Sarojini Naidu's birthday. Every year we look at new ways of celebrating, either in the form of lectures, reading of her articles or enacting some scenes from her life. This year a skit was presented which made for an enjoyable celebration. Holi was a fun filled activity with AVI students, Bapnu Ghar and office staff and Members participating enthusiastically. This year's International Women's Day celebration was special as two events were organized. One, a thought-provoking discussion on the role of women as care givers and its impact on the family. The second one was pure enjoyment with the staff, MICs and representatives from all Delhi NCR Branches. Details on these events are included in this issue.*

*The new Team, having just taken over, apologize for the late release of the issue. We look forward to receiving your continued cooperation in sharing articles and reports of your activities with good photographs. Please continue to share your activities on Whatsapp, but for inclusion in Roshni may I request you to please send the details on mail along with two photographs.*

**Sheela Satyanarayan**  
**Editor, Roshni**

January- March 2024



## The 92nd Annual Conference in Thiruvananthapuram A triumph of Unity and Empowerment

*-Dr KG Vijayalekshmy, President, AIWC, Chirayinkeezhu branch*

The 92nd annual conference of the All India Women's Conference held in Trivandrum after thirty-four years stands as a testament to the enduring spirit of solidarity and service among women. With the unwavering support of all Kerala branches, this historic event exemplified the dedication and selflessness of its volunteers, echoing the legacy established since its inception in 1926. Conference was inaugurated by Princess Padmashree Aswathy Thirunal Gouri Lakshmy Bayi Thampuratti. The tourism seminar was inaugurated by Hon. Minister of Public Works and Tourism Mr Riyas Muhammed on 31st January, 2024. In the evening two eminent women shared their experiences with the women folk of the nation, Mrs Sarada Muraleedharan and Merin Joseph, Additional Chief Secretary and SP of Crime branch, Govt. of Kerala respectively. The inaugural function started through a Thiruvathira.

The event, held from January 30th to February 2nd, served as a joyous celebration of unity and collaboration, bringing together women from across India, including delegates from Manipur, Tripura, and the adopted village of AIWC Central office in Gurugram. The tireless endeavors of women across the nation, driven solely by their commitment to

serving others, were truly awe-inspiring under the able leadership of the present office bearers Mrs. Kalyani Raj, Dr. Manju Kak and Dr. Upasana Singh.

Amidst language barriers and geographical divides, the conference fostered a democratic space where diverse voices were heard, visions shared, and disagreements respectfully addressed. This democratic ethos extends to the organization itself, evident in its triennial elections and the remarkable display of camaraderie and solidarity among members.

The meticulous planning and execution of the conference, from welcoming delegates at the airport to ensuring their comfort throughout their stay, reflected the dedication and hospitality of the volunteers. Their selfless devotion, coupled with the support of members from various branches, ensured the success of the event.

Special recognition is due to individuals such as Padmini Nair, Santhanavally Chechi, Sasikala, Dr. Gibby Varghese, Lekshmy, Deena Das, Jayakumari, Sajeela, Bhuvaneswari, Usha Palakkad, Sasikala Thampan, Anitha, Omana Krishnakumari along with the day and night services of Beena Rani, Geethu Chandran, Swapna Panicker, Smitha, Divya Viswanath, Revathy Iyer, Roshini, Sindhu,



*The Chief guest Princess Padmashree Aswathy Thirunal Gouri Lakshmy Bayi Thampuratti lighting the lamp at the inauguration of the Conference*



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Sunitha, Anju, Suseela, etc. and many others, whose invaluable contributions enriched the experience for all. Additionally, the tireless efforts of volunteers like Aneesh, Ajith, Arjun, Parvathy, Arya. Their hard work really added the spirit of fragrance throughout the four days. Dr. Jameela Begum and Dr. Kamini were instrumental in creating a memorable and impactful event by their presence and blessings.

Acknowledgment is also extended to Mrs. Usha Nair for her able guidance and timely suggestions and my colleague Radhika Somasudaran, whose unwavering assistance ensured the smooth execution of the conference.

In conclusion, the success of the 92nd annual

conference of the All India Women's Conference serves as a testament to the enduring legacy of unity, empowerment, and service. It is a celebration of the tireless efforts of countless individuals who have dedicated themselves to the noble cause of uplifting women across the nation. At this juncture, I thank each and every participant of this conference from the length and breadth of India and they are the representatives of lakhs of voluntary social workers who dedicated their life for the betterment of womanhood in India.

Lastly, it was my privilege to take the lead to organise this conference in Trivandrum and host hundreds of dedicated sisters for the same.



*Honouring the Chief guest*



*Two other Guests of honour from Govt of Kerala*



*The address of the Chief guest, and the prayer dance by the Kerala team in the inaugural session*



*Patron Mrs Dhavan speaking*



*Another graceful Kerala dance by members of AIWC*



*Participating members*





## Presidential Address by Mrs. Kalyani Raj at the 92nd Annual Conference in Thiruvananthapuram

Namaskar and a very warm welcome to the 92nd Annual conference of AIWC, in the Thiruvananthapuram city of the 'God's own country'. We look forward to meaningful interactions and a successful meeting.

I sincerely thank every member of AIWC for being part of the AIWC family and continuing to work for the organization with dedication, selflessness and energy. The biggest strength of AIWC is her members and their voluntary work which I value immensely. I will always try to enhance their strength and support to the best of my capacity and ability.

We last met 6 months ago in Balasore, Odisha and let me give you an update on the activities since then. The second half of the year is normally hectic with festivals, Shilpkala Utsav in Delhi, Zonal conferences and other meetings and we try our best to juggle between all.

Capacity building sessions in English and Hindi that commenced in May last year was completed in October. The presentations and material were compiled in English and Hindi and circulated to the SCMs to be shared with their respective branches. I hope the Zonal Organisers have circulated it among their members. If any zone would like to repeat the session on any particular topic, please let us know, and we will try to do so in the regional language.

A crucial issue that has been resolved is the boarding and lodging license of AIWC Working Women's Hostel which was last renewed in 1999. With several attempts and personal meetings, we got the boarding

and lodging license issued by NDMC for AIWC Sarojini and KD Hostel, valid till March 2026. Together with this, the DPCC license and Police clearance, have also been renewed. Thanks to Ms Poonam, Mr Bharadwaj for uploading the documents several times, Mrs. Vijayalakshmi Krishnamurthy for follow up and most importantly Vijaya's husband Mr. Krishnamurthy for his regular guidance and help.

The Bapnu Ghar Shakti Sadan license has also been renewed and is valid till 31.9.2025. The grant till last year (March 2023) has also been received.

Shilpkala Utsav was a success. There were 105 stalls and most of them had good sales.

Four Zonal meetings were held. I enjoy these Zonal conferences as it is a great opportunity for deeper interaction with members who normally are not able to participate in half yearly and Annual conferences. COP participation in Dubai by AIWC members was a great success, 7 members attended - 4 members in the first week of COP and 3 in the second. We had exhibition there in the first week, very well managed by Secretary General Manju Kak, Usha Nair, Asha





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Deshpande and Bhuvaneswari. There was good footfall by delegates from different countries and good visibility to our work. In the second week, we had the opportunity of showcasing our work in the WGC pavilion and representation in a number of side events. The Pradarshini Exhibition Center that was closed due to COVID has been restarted. The Center will display products from Textile Center, solar products, herbal plants and the organic compost being made in the HO. Gradually we can also explore displaying products made by our branches.

Here are a few suggested initiatives for the future that I would like your opinion on:

- Strengthening of branches – particularly rural branches. Zonal Organisers (ZOs) to visit the branches, assess their requirements and send a proposal to Head Office in consultation with the Members-in-Charge (MIC) Rural Development. VPs to coordinate with the Zonal organisers and assist.
- The current format of Zonal meetings has limitations as only 2 members per branch can participate. Unfortunately, members who wish to take up active roles miss out the opportunity. Based on the suggestion from Padmini, Bhadra Mahila Samajam, Kerala, I propose an interactive webinar for each zone annually between members, Vice Presidents and 3 Office bearers.
- Programmes by Members-in-Charge - Before the Half yearly and Annual conferences, MICs request HO Programme officers about the number of programmes conducted for inclusion in their report. To promote transparency and collect appropriate data, I suggest we revive the earlier practice of marking copies to ZOs as well as subject MIC for all the programmes sanctioned by Head Office.
- Compilation of Traditional knowledge relating to health, lifestyle and specifically climate change mitigation and adaptation, - I believe by taking advantage of AIWC's presence in almost all the states in India, - we can bring out a publication compiling all relevant information on this subject. If this idea appeals, the interested members can volunteer to be part of the team.
- Centenary celebration - While some branches have initiated action based on the earlier circular, we need to set a target to work towards it and have a clear road map. I suggest the following targets:

1. Village adoption – at least 3 villages to be adopted in the next 4 years together with activities for concrete development. This will enable robust data to showcase during centenary.
2. Anemia programmes – target to reach out to 8000 girls

and women and make them Anemia free? This figure is based on actuals. Currently branches have been able to reach out to approx. 600 beneficiaries in a year. If efforts are accelerated and more branches get involved, we can double this figure. Health trust programme data could also be included under this. All suggestions are welcome.

3. Development of Rural branches - set up a target to develop at least 3 Rural branches in the next 4 years.
4. Commemorative stamp – This great suggestion has come from Ms Padmini of Bhadra Mahila Sangham. We need to start working on it at least 2 years before – so technically we need to commence work in 2025 if we wish to bring out the stamp in 2027. All views/suggestions are welcome.

Finally, I had invited views on the functioning, communication of branches & HO and new programmes. Some of the suggestions received are mentioned below:

- Small children to be allowed to attend awareness programmes with their mothers during programmes at the community level.
- While we are supporting many young girls through Education Trust, can we explore options to support middle aged women, especially single women/mothers who are in dire need of livelihood opportunities.
- Conduct home care course for young girls by Jyotsana. This is a good suggestion as most couples are working today and would be happy to hire trained help. A 2-week training programme could be explored. Ms. Shikha, MIC vocational training, can think about this and send a proposal. Ms. Ashita, MIC youth, could also give some ideas.

In conclusion, I want to reiterate a concern. Many of our branches are becoming inactive as members are getting old or not able to take up activities as earlier. Besides, new members have not been trained to carry the work of the branch forward. Only about 10-20% of 500 branches are regularly taking up programmes, sending reports and communicating with the HO. There is a need to strengthen the branches by helping them create second liners, assess the reasons for inactivity and work towards reviving them. Besides Vice Presidents and Zonal organisers, may I request the main branches and nearby branches to make a team and work on this.

Each one of you are playing a vital role in the functioning and progress of AIWC. I acknowledge and respect your contribution, support and cooperation and hope that the same will continue.

A big thanks to my team mates Secretary General, Manju Kak and Treasurer, Upasana Singh for all their support and encouragement. Once again, a big thank you to Cheriyanakara branch, Dr Vijayalekshmi and her team for all the arrangements in hosting this conference. Jai Hind!





## **BOLSTERING THE FRONT LINE: CSW parallel event GRASS ROOTS ORGANIZATIONS' ROLE IN WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT**

*- Shevata Rai Talwar, Joint Secretary, AIWC, New Delhi*

Women worldwide are the poorest of the poor. They are less likely to participate in the paid labour market, more likely to be unemployed and are paid significantly less than men. Child care and elder care are thought to be their prerogative. All these challenges have led to a feminization of poverty that can only be tackled by strengthening social protection systems and infrastructure at the grass roots level. Grass roots women's organizations have long been at the forefront of empowering women economically not just during normal times but also during war and other calamities like the recent global pandemic. Literacy and vocational training, computer training, higher studies, socioeconomic projects, legal literacy, and financial literacy all work in conjunction to eliminate poverty and nurture women's leadership.

A parallel event to the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW 68) was held through a webinar, in the form of a Panel discussion presented by All India Women's Conference (AIWC), along with the NGO Committee on Human Rights, New York, The International Federation of Settlements

and Neighbourhood Centers (IFS) and South Asian Council for Social Services (SACSS). The event brought together women leaders of global organizations that work towards the empowerment of marginalized and vulnerable women to rid feminization of poverty, due to increasing inequality in living standards between men and women due to the widening gender gap in poverty. The webinar explored best practices and programs at the grass roots level and recommended solutions for realizing the economic empowerment of women.

Kalyani Raj, President AIWC welcomed the participants and Dr Manju Kak Secretary General AIWC moderated the session. AIWC has played a major role in the education and economic growth of Women and in the formulating of laws like the Sarda Act, Hindu code bill, Universal Adult Franchise for women immediately after independence of India. Dr. Roberta Nassar, chair of NGO Committee on Human Rights NY and representative to the UN (IFS) and Sudha Acharya, SACSS executive director and principal AIWC representative to the United





Nations, introduced their organizations and the role played by them in empowering women and girls.

The panellists were Dr. Medha Puran Samant, chairperson and managing director of Annapurna Pariwar, Ela Gandhi, chairperson of Phoenix Settlement Trust and Gandhi Development Trust, Kuljit Kaur, member-in-charge AIWC, Junias Kanyinda, communications officer IFS, Mary Archana Fernandez, SACSS director of Family Support Services and Nidhi Ashok Goel, founder and executive director of Rising Flame. The speakers were introduced by Shevata Rai Talwar, Jt. Sec AIWC. Each speaker touched upon the various aspects that contribute to women's economic empowerment and explored best practices and programs at the grassroots level, which focused on access to healthcare and childcare, education, collaboration through social networking, financial literacy, and independence.

Dr. Medha emphasized the importance of providing healthcare for women and their families. According to Dr. Medha, 250,000 people are covered under Annapurna Pariwar's health insurance program. "We designed our need-based health insurance program 21 years ago as poor women were not dying of HIV/AIDS, a heart attack, or cancer, but of minor diseases like diarrhoea, jaundice, and malaria" she said. "Through our health insurance program, we have given financial assistance and health advice and connected them to hospitals." They also offered loan products, savings products and pension programmes. Assets ownership was also propagated by them.

In her presentation of AIWC's programmes, Kuljit Kaur MIC, listed education as the key to economic empowerment and gender equality. Among its programs AIWC's Village Adoption Project, empowers rural women. Entrepreneurship, long and short-term programmes on health, financial literacy, socio economic programmes, propagating self-help groups and facilitating income generation are some of the other activities of AIWC. "In a village where governance was traditionally with male members, the women have now empowered themselves and taken charge," Kaur said. "They started directly selling the product in the market. The project helped achieve economic empowerment, education, health, and gender equality." Bapnu Ghar, the short

stay home sheltered women subjected to violence and domestic abuse. They are provided training for employment. The senior citizens home shelters and supports senior, needy women. As good health is a major contributing factor in women's economic empowerment, anaemia detection camps and cervical cancer vaccination are held periodically.

Ela Gandhi the illustrious granddaughter of Mahatma Gandhi, referenced statistics that show a gap in the number of unemployed women and men in South Africa, which is probably due to the unequal salary scale for women in the country. "The reality is that women continue to occupy jobs at the lower level and earn much less, and men earn much more. The lower level of jobs would be domestic work, cleaners, caregivers, and administrative staff. That is where you find the bulk of women. Even in universities, very few women hold leadership positions," Gandhi said. As employed women continue to be responsible for household chores and childcare, known as the 'double shift', this results in women's reluctance to take on leadership roles and facing discrimination in the work-place. A society that is keen to change the status quo will start from early childhood changing the perceptions and mindsets about the differential roles and create the understanding that all work should be shared. Society has created them and can discard them," Gandhi said.

Nidhi Ashok Goyal, founder and executive director of Rising Flame, an Indian organization that advocates for women and youth with disabilities, discussed the stigma and shame of being disabled. "Surveys show that a girl/woman with disability is placed not just below a non-disabled woman or a non-disabled man, but also below a man with a disability, thus sitting at the bottom of the social structure," Goyal shared her organization's research project on the impact of COVID-19 on women and girls with disabilities. According to her, non-disabled kids were prioritized over disabled kids, and the disabled boy was prioritized over the disabled girl when it came to education.

Junias Kanyinda, a mother of three and an advocate for women's and girls' educational rights, shared her inspirational story of how community-based organizations supported her journey towards empowerment after immigrating to Finland from the Democratic Republic of Congo. "I accessed further



education and professional development through the Finnish Federation breaking through barriers that once seemed insurmountable," Kanyinda said. "Their inclusive policies and support for immigrant women like me allowed me to not only thrive but to also give back to the community that embraced me."

Mary Archana Fernandez highlighted how SACSS' sewing class gives immigrant South Asian women the skills, resources, and confidence to launch their own at-home business. "It's not just giving them a sewing machine and teaching them the skills but making them believe in themselves so that they feel empowered. It's giving them that self-belief and self-worth because a lot of them may have been told

that 'you can't do this,'" she said. She also discussed SACSS' Wednesdays for Women program, which focuses primarily on women's health and well-being.

Dr. Manju Kak shared data on the lack of social security for the Labour force in India. Shevata Talwar said that a value of self, emotional and mental strength were found as a succour of sisterhood offered by Women organizations.

Navina Sitaram summarised the talk bringing out the collaborative and ripple effect of grass root organizations in empowering women.

The vote of thanks was proposed by Dr Upasana Singh Treasurer AIWC who felt that the connection between and among woman was a transforming force.



**Dr Manju Kak, Secretary General of AIWC,** attended the CSW 68 Forum Parallel Event at New York. She was a Speaker at 2 events held in collaboration with the International Alliance for Women and IWPG, a South Korean Peace Group. The issues discussed included **Women's Right to Peace.** The UNSCR 1325 which brings to the forefront women's participation in decision making in matters of Peace and conflict resolution, that women are the first line of victims during war yet the higher echelons of power centres demonstrate total absence of women in the hierarchy.

**UNITED NATIONS INTERNATIONAL WOMEN WEEK  
NGOCSW 68 FORUM PARALLEL EVENT  
10-22 MARCH 2024 IN NEW YORK, USA**

**Date/Time:** March 19th, 2024 @ 12:30 PM  
**Venue:** 777 United Nations Plaza, 2nd Flr, New York, NY, 10017  
(Church Center of the United Nations)

**Multilateral Approach to Achieve SDGs by 2030: Empowering Women, Enabling Peace and Foster Sustainable Development by Accelerating Gender Equality**

**Finding Solutions To Global Gaps Challenges By Peace Dialogues**

Dr. Manju Kak, Author, *Common Peace Commission* (ed. for. Gov. of India)  
Women's Conference  
Ms. Cheryl Jackson, UN Ambassador for Peace  
Ms. Brenda Moore, President and CEO of International Women Trade Union  
Ms. Carmen Parker, Former Faculty at University of Texas  
Ms. Li Li Song, President New York Society for Ethnic Culture  
Dr. Mervyn Sigurdson, Founder AIWH

**How Gender Equity Strengthens Health System Resilience**

Ms. Lenny Aberia, Founder and CEO of Academy of Healthcare Services, Canada  
Mr. Andrew Nam, TV Host Of *Chronically Health Life*  
Mr. Jagrit Bajwa, UNESCO Ambassador for Peace, CEO of Jagrit

**Health, Equity And Gender: Can Digitization Narrow The Gaps In Access To Healthcare**

Dr. Manka Oshro, Medical Director of Fight Cancer Global  
Dr. Nita Patel, Healing the World through Art  
Dr. Michelle Mraz, Survivor of Brain Injury and breast cancer  
Dr. Uzma Gul, Women Right's Activist, Development Consultant

**Effectiveness of Targeted Financial Support and Role of Global Partnerships in Advancing Gender Equality**

Ms. Riqia Miles, Founder, Chair and CEO for *Sustainable Enterprise*

**RSVP - +1(347) 466 4425 or [law.health@womenalliance.org](mailto:law.health@womenalliance.org)**



## A symposium on International Women's Day 2024 Building a more caring world - Implications for the family

*- from Secretary General's Desk, AIWC, New Delhi*

To commemorate International Women's Day, the Office of Public Affairs of the Bahai's of India organized a symposium titled "Building a More Caring World: Implications for the Family" at the AIWC Library on March 4th at 10:30 am. Carmel Tripathy extended a warm welcome to all attendees, and Secretary General Dr. Manju Kak delivered the opening remarks. She highlighted the significance during the pandemic, emphasizing the need for care work in preserving health and well-being, and questioned the recognition and compensation for women's sacrifices in family care.

Ms. Nilakshi Rajkhowa, Director of the Office of Public Affairs of Bahai's of India, expressed gratitude to the organizers and stressed the importance of collaboration between men and women for sustainable development. Despite efforts to promote equality within the family, gender disparities persist, with women's roles often undervalued and their workload unrecognized. Dr. Arash Fazli, Head and Assistant Professor Bahai Chair for studies in Development, Devi Ahilya Vishwavidyalaya, raised the question

of why women's roles in the family should be prioritized, highlighting the essential yet undervalued contributions women make to society's sustainability.

Dr. Govind Kelkar, Executive Director and Professor, Gen Dev Centre for Research and Innovation, Gurgaon, India discussed the issue of human brutality in the name of religion and examined gender disparities within Indian and Asian families. She underscored the unequal distribution of property and decision-making power, emphasizing the need to address gender inequality within families. Kelkar also addressed the prevalence of domestic violence and the need for policies that promote financial independence and equality within marriages.

Dr. Ravi Verma, Regional Director Asia Regional Office, International Centre for Research on Women, [ICRW] examines masculinities and emphasising masculinity can involve focusing on traits traditionally associated with masculinity, such as strength, assertiveness, leadership and self-reliance. It is important to note that masculinity can be expressed in various ways and does not have to



conform to rigid stereotypes. Encouraging healthy expression of masculinity that promote respect, empathy and emotional intelligence is vital to fostering positive relationship and societal attitudes. Masculinity, he argues, deconstructs power dynamics and underscores the urgency for reestablishing diverse forms of recognition. Men are often seen as perpetrators and are subjected to societal norms that prioritize achievement, aggression, and expression. Dr. Verma highlighted the importance of engaging men and boys in discussions of equality and power-sharing, stressing that masculinity intersects with factors such as caste and creed.

He emphasized the need for societal restructuring to nurture a more inclusive masculinity, acknowledging the challenges of vulnerability and power negotiations. Dr. Verma also pointed out the patriarchal bias towards power and the disproportionate impact of masculinity-related issues like road rage and suicide, noting the importance of engaging men in caring roles to address violence and promote gender equality.

Dr. Manju Kak emphasised the significant contributions of women, particularly during the freedom movement, and highlighted the diversity of experiences across regions and cultures. Smt. Bina Jain, patron, AIWC discussed the protective role of men in certain communities, while Sunaina Kumar, Senior Fellow,

Observer Research Foundation, addressed the impact of the pandemic on various subjects, including care work and economic independence for women.

The discussion also touched upon issues like gender sensitivity in micro finance and the challenges faced by elderly women, particularly in rural areas where family care systems are declining. Migration to urban areas presents new opportunities and challenges, including disparities in household chores and care giving responsibilities. The importance of reframing care as a public issue and balancing paid and unpaid work is emphasized.

In conclusion, the symposium underscored the need to challenge stereotypes and promote understanding of gender roles, particularly in the context of evolving family structures and economic dynamics.

Smt Shevata Rai Talwar extended gratitude to participants and emphasised the significance of discussions on a caring world and their implications for families. The program was hailed as an excellent exploration of these crucial issues.

The symposium concluded with a call for research and action to address the complexities of women's roles in society and to bridge the gap between policy and implementation, thereby advancing women's civil rights and promoting gender equality.



## Do you know...

- Women have stronger immune system than men
- They have greater memory
- They have higher pain threshold
- They have larger colour vocabulary and see more colours
- They have different internal clock and they tend to be early morning people
- They cope up better with disruptions in their sleep



# *Going an extra mile...*

## **Branch activities**

### **1. Celebrating International Women's Day 2024 Central office of AIWC, New Delhi**

International Women's Day was celebrated at HO with the active participation of all the staff, MICs and representatives from Delhi NCR Branches.

Secretary Kriti Naren and her team from Greater Noida Branch added the flavor of colourful young energy through dance and singing. The performance enthralled everyone and the energy was automatically transferred to all present. The event was very well conducted by Delhi Women's League Member. A Beautiful play was presented by SWEDWA and Bapnu Ghar. Songs were presented by our Rural Branch representatives and other members.





## 2. Celebrating International Women's Day 2024

### Literary & Cultural Forum, AIWC Trivandrum

#### - a lecture series

- by Dr Jameela Begum, Director, Cultural and Literary Forum AIWC, Trivandrum

During the month of March 2024, the Literary and Cultural Forum of AIWC, Trivandrum took the initiative to create awareness on women's issues through a series of online lectures conducted on March 9, 16 and 23. The UN theme for the year, "Invest in Women and Accelerate Progress", was addressed in the lectures focusing on various perspectives touching the lives of women and stressed the need to enhance participation of women in social, economical, political and developmental activities.

#### Lecture 1 : 9th March, 2024

**Womanhood in the 21st Century: Law, Media, and the Embodied Self** by Dr. Lakshmi Sukumar, Assistant Professor, Institute of English, was a very informative and interesting talk on representation of women in the media which has moved from glorification to stereotyping women as jealous and villainous victimizers. Lack of awareness about legal protection and its implementations often deprive women of justice. Dr. Lakshmi drew attention to the way in which the concept of womanhood is being bestowed new dimensions. The new forms of patriarchy that are emerging are as detrimental to women's freedom as in the earlier social hierarchy. In the new liberal society, women and young girls are violated on the digital platform and their security is not safe-guarded. New forms of violence have been added to the already existing vulnerability faced by women. We need to fight against these emerging challenges in the neo liberal world.

#### Lecture 2 : 16th March, 2024

**Inclusive Collaboration in Education & Entrepreneurship: A Woman's Way** was the talk delivered by Dr. Kalyani Vallath, CEO Vallath Education, an educational service provider that has contributed to English Literature Education in the country for the past 25 years. She started her enterprise with an action research project on teaching and entrepreneurship. With focus on a knowledge

based economy, she looks at education as a business product in which ideas and training can be turned into human capital. A constructivist model of entrepreneurship and teaching for inclusivity has been the success story of her venture. This venture today caters to the learning of English language and literature, to groups of students from diverse regions and backgrounds. Experiential learning and practicality are the foundations on which she has built her teaching methods. She encourages students to think critically, ask questions, and become active partners in the creation of study materials. Intellectual capital, ideas and training can turn into human capital. She believes that women have a great advantage to turn this into products and services. The New Education Policy, with its emphasis on equitable and inclusive education, can act as a spiral in generating life skills based on choice and equipping students to become self learners. Teaching, training, marketing, and converting the initiative into a company, demanded new learning methodologies and an active, alternative, collaborative community of educational practices. Dr Kalyani has created a model that moves from labour intensive to capital intensive, from Edupreneurship to social Entrepreneurship. Students become active creators of quizzes, diaries, journal writings, compilation of material for Encyclopedia on British, American and Indian Literature etc, thus creating a new business eco system that is both productive and skill generative.

#### Lecture 3 : 23rd March, 2024

**Gender and Development: Philosophical Reflections** by Dr. R. Lekshmi, Professor and Head Department of Philosophy, University of Kerala, exposed a very different perspective to the issues that confront women in the modern world. She spoke from a philosophical perspective in which the role of the woman has for long been defined by society. In defining the importance of gender in development,



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she raised the question of power, privileges and possibilities. Progress can be achieved only through equity and freedom from discrimination. She raised the issue that even when we categorize women, we need to understand that differences are significant. Gender becomes a social and cultural construction imposed on identity. Becoming a woman is a project in itself. We have to be very conscious of our challenges and see ourselves from our own

perspective. We need to inculcate a radical change in our mindset because an assault on gender is an assault on democracy.

All the three lectures opened up new avenues for thinking and execution. There were very active discussions following each presentation. This series has been very valuable in creating awareness in society, specially among women, of the many areas of active participation that are essential to accelerate change.



### 3. Celebrating International Women's Day 2024 The young and the old hold hands

*- by Dr. Giby Geevarughese, Secretary, AIWC Trivandrum branch*



In connection with International Women's Day 2024, AIWC Trivandrum branch organised a Day Out for the beneficiaries of Asraya, the Old Age Welfare Centre run by the branch. The mothers were taken to LuLu mall to explore its wonder world! Each mother had a young student to escort and interact. Such a holding hands of two generations proved to be a great



experience for both. Lulu Mall sponsored snacks and soft drinks for all at the Food Court. The young student escorts and the old mothers happily relished the dishes. It is gratifying to see that sponsors are coming forward to support our Asraya mothers.



## 4. Celebrating International Women's Day 2024 by Women's Indian Association, Chennai

International Women's day with the campaign theme "Inspired Inclusion" was celebrated on 14th March-2024 at the premises of Women's Indian Association to celebrate the joyous day and extend deepest gratitude to all the remarkable women who continued to inspire us every day.

Smt. Padma Venkataraman, President WIA, while welcoming the guests and members warmly, emphasized the importance of reaching the unreached and inclusive society so that the benefits of Women's advancement programs will reach all sections of society.

The programme was introduced by Smt. Shanthi Socrates, Hon. Secretary of WIA. Ms. Bargavi Devendra, Patron of WIA honored the chief guest Dr BK Muthumani, Director, Bhrammakumari's, Adyar chapter. Dr BK Muthimani in her key note address emphasized five important points to ponder while having conversation with others, such as talk politely, talk sweetly, talk softly, talk affectionately and talk less.

In line with the theme "Inspired inclusion". WIA gave platform to women from tribal community, fisherman community, differently abled, Leprosy

colony women, Self Help Groups and Creche Balasevikas, to be vocal about their trials and triumphs in making progress in their lives. Women's day celebration is a constant reminder for making progress to reach their targeted goals.

Rtn. Barbara Bedi, Training and development consultant, Founder of Elevons, was the Chief guest of honor for the day. She encouraged everyone and called for strength resilience and courage of women.

Mrs. Krishna Radhakrishna, Founder, president of women entrepreneur welfare association enthralled the audience by her inspiring stories and need for presence of women in all sections of the society, where gender equality is just a dream.

Chief Guest Mrs. Thelma Isaac, Director, Aachi group of companies shared a success story. She captivated the audience by her simple interaction.

Mrs. Vanaja Krishnamurthy, Treasurer, WIA proposed vote of thanks and ended with a strong determination in the minds of every single woman present, to break down various challenges and biases to build a community where every woman feels valued and included.





## Short term projects of AIWC - Jan-Mar 2024

- by Ms Pratibha Arya, AIWC, Programme officer, New Delhi

### 1. Missing Children and Trafficking Awareness

- by Nav Srishti Branch, Neb Sarai, New Delhi



Missing Children and Trafficking Awareness programme Conducted by Nav Srishti Branch, Neb Sarai, New Delhi supported of All India Women Conference.

### 2. Consumer Protection Act and Rights

- by AIWC, Kanpur Branch



Awareness programme on Consumer Protection Act and Rights conducted by Kanpur Branch, on 14th March 24, with the Dainik Jagran Sangini Group NGO for social causes related to women and children. Nearly 50 AIWC members attended the programme at Sarsaiya Ghat Kanpur. It was addressed by Additional District Judge.

### 3. Menstrual Hygiene and Nutrition

- by AIWC Nirbhaya Kranti Mahila Mandali, Andhra Pradesh



Health and Hygiene Programme for women and girls to create awareness on Menstrual Hygiene and Nutrition conducted by AIWC Nirbhaya Kranti Mahila Mandali, Andhra Pradesh on 6 February 24.

#### 4. General Health & Eye check up camp

- by Garia Mahamayatala Jadavpur Constituent Branch, West Bengal



Garia Mahamayatala Jadavpur Constituent Branch, West Bengal conducted Eye Check Up and general Health check up camp at Jhorkhali Sundarban, South 24 Paraganas on 24th Jan 24. Approximately 122 patients benefited.



#### 5. Jagriti Women's Conference, Haridwar

*Jagriti Women's Conference, Haridwar, donated wheelchair to the needy person*





## 6. Dental check up camp

- by Unnayan Sanstha, AIWC, Uttar Pradesh



Unnayan Sanstha, Uttar Pradesh conducted Dental Check-up Camp on Feb 17, 2024 at Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar Shiksha Niketan Usmanpur Mirzapur. Approx 200 students were examined, Around 55 students were diagnosed with dental problems and were referred to the dental clinic for further treatment.

## 7. Menstrual Hygiene & Health Awareness

- by AIWC Batala Branch, Punjab



*Menstrual Hygiene and Health Awareness Programme by Batala Branch, Punjab*

## 8. Programs on Health & Socio-economic issues

- by Nanthancode Vanitha Samithi



A lot of women come with the chief complaint of pain in joints, back, in legs. Dysmenorrhea and fatigue cases were given lifestyle changes treatment. Most of the girls and women who were found to be anemic, were given the medicine and on follow-up examination, there was a reduction in the number of girls who are anemic.





## Long term projects of AIWC - Jan-Mar 2024

- by Ms Ritu, Assistant Program Manager, AIWC, HO

### 1. Kakinada Branch - Udaan Project



Around 30 girls, including some specially-abled orphan students, actively participated in tailoring cutting and sewing courses under the guidance of skilled instructor G. Padma. The UDAAN Project is making strides towards empowering these young women for future livelihoods.



The Branch completed 6-month UDAAN project sanctioned by AIWC, New Delhi. Project concluding meeting was held on 13th February at Maharshi Sambamurthi Differently Abled Girls school. 30 girls and ladies trained in basic and advanced tailoring course. ONGC, Kakinada sanctioned 17 sewing machines to the trainees (Orthopedically handicapped and Deaf and mute girls) Machines and certificates were distributed to trainees by our President Smt. P. Chiranjeevini Kumari and ONGC officials. ONGC Mahila sangham president Smt. Swetha Singh, graced the function.

International Women's Day was celebrated at local Red Cross Office campus in collaboration with Red Cross Kakinada.

### 2. Akhil Bhartiya Mahila Parishad, Sikar, Rajasthan



Part-Time dispensary serves the community comprising financially weak individuals who struggle to access timely medical treatment. Dedicated efforts by the Branch, have been made a significant impact, especially on women and children. So far it has benefited a total of 146 Patients.



### 3. Nav shristhi Branch, Neb Sarai, New Delhi



In all 30 girls took training under Udaan project in hair styling, hair care practices, other beauty courses like grooming and make up. The training helped them in their personal as well as professional growth.

### 4. Raiganj Mahila Samilani, Raiganj



Non-formal Education Programme for Economic Empowerment conducted by Raiganj Mahila Samilani, successfully engaged 25 children aged 6 to 11 years in meaningful learning activities in reading English and Bengali rhymes, basic arithmetic, writing skills, and moral value teachings. The program also incorporates yoga and awareness classes, fostering holistic development.

### 5. Part-time dispensary

- by East Calcutta Constituency, Kolkata

The ECC implemented a Community-Based Dispensary Programme for the people of our Nehru colony, Kolkata. The branch is running the dispensary well. The entire colony people benefit from it. The branch provides a few medicines free of cost. Branch members and supervisors visit the Dispensary regularly. They meet with the community people and hear their problems. Beneficiaries said this dispensary is really needed for their health problems.

Beneficiaries Details: January: 40 Patients, February: 50 Patients, March :31 Patient





## 6. Library for Tiny tots of Primary School, Hyderabad

- by AIWC, Hyderabad Branch



On 21st March, 2024, Hyderabad branch opened a library for their WAESA primary school. This library was sponsored by Mrs Farida Hussain, the president of the branch.

The books are in the range of picture books for tiny tots to the story books for the 5th standard students and General Knowledge books. All are hard bound books in multicolour. Children were delighted and excited to see the books, so were the teachers! Every Saturday, the library will be open for children to browse through the books and enjoy the world of stories and knowledge.

Hopefully now, the TV and mobile watching will reduce in their life.



## 7. Jammu & Kashmir Women's Society



Jammu and Kashmir Women Society(branch AIWC) Jammu has started cutting and stitching centre under Udaan Project at Village Malpur, on 1-1-2024. In all, 28 Women were enrolled to gain skill for income generation and sustainable livelihood opportunities.





## Arise! Awake! Do not stop!! National Youth Day celebration by HTF

- by Kriti Naren, Human touch Foundation, Greater Noida, New Delhi

AIWC Greater Noida Branch Human Touch Foundation for Women organised the Youth Day Celebration Program on 17th January 2024, in the village of Sakipur.

Kriti Naren welcomed everyone and explained the purpose of the program. She also gave a brief introduction to the life and achievements of Swami Vivekananda. In her address, she emphasized that the future of any country depends on its youth, as they are the ones who can represent the country well. Therefore, it's crucial to educate and make the youth aware of their potential.

As part of their efforts to promote the ideology and doctrines of youth empowerment for the development of a strong nation, the team members created a visually appealing poster. The aim was to create a better understanding among the viewers and inspire them to take action towards building a better future for the youth and the Country.

Questions were asked regarding the message of this poster. Many girls and boys gave answers according to their knowledge and understanding. Zeeshan, a resident of the village explained the meaning behind the message of the poster aptly emphasizing his oñ-repeated words "Arise! Awake! And stop not until the goal is reached."

Bhavna was the next speaker she said that India is celebrating the National Youth Day in honour of Swami Vivekananda, whose birth anniversary falls on January 12. Since 1984, the nation has marked the day by urging the youth to live up to the values, principles and beliefs that Vivekananda embraced. Yoga was one of them.

During the last segment of the program, an interactive discussion in the form of a quiz was organized on the topic of youth power, which was both entertaining and simple. All members of the audience actively participated. Kriti Naren delivered the vote of thanks.



# Members speak...

## Articles by members

### Education Trust at a glance

#### - Trust report of Education Trust, AIWC, Head office

• Smt Bina Jain, Patron & Managing Trustee, education trust, Smt Vijaya Bhasin, Coordinator

AIWC's Education trust has played a vital role in the promotion of professional courses among meritorious young girls coming from economically weaker section of society.

Financial constraint has been a major issue for the girls who inspite of their excellent academic performance at school level are compelled to discontinue further studies. Their dreams of becoming a professional like an engineer, doctor, nurse, teacher etc always remains a dream. They lack self-confidence and start presuming that they are a liability to the family, who are not able to contribute to improve the economic condition of their family.

At this juncture Education Trust has brought a smile on their faces by assisting them financially through scholarships and helping these girls realize their dreams of becoming a professional and become economically self-reliant.

Pursuing to achieve its objective of helping deserving meritorious girl students, this year also Education trust granted scholarships to 98 girl students who

are pursuing courses/degrees in Engineering, Optometry, BCA, MCA, BEd, Nursing, MBA, Physiotherapy, MBBS, BTech etc. to name a few. There were 45 renewal cases and 53 were new cases. Branches held functions to distribute cheques among the girls to motivate other girls also to perform well.

It is a privilege for our trust to help these girls to choose a career of their choice and pursue it with hard work. This will definitely help them to reach new heights and lead a life of self-respect and dignity

We are proud of our branches that have come forward in identifying the deserving girls for necessary help from the trust. We request other branches also to identify more needy and deserving girls with good academic record who want to pursue professional courses of their choice but are facing financial problems.

We feel proud to mention a few names of scholarship grantee students who in spite of the hardships and constraints faced by them at the family level have bravely countered them. They have become assets to their families and are no longer a liability.





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The following girls are our proud achievers -

- Deepthi A from Bhadra Mahila Samajam Branch, was awarded BDS degree
- Anjali G also from Bhadra Mahila Samajam was awarded BPT degree. She is working as physiotherapist at Daya physiotherapy centre.

- Swati P from Calicut branch completed M tech and got job in TCS.

- Punnya from Calicut branch completed B.Ed and is working as assistant professor in Mathematics in College of Arts and science, Kerala.



## **Jago! Grahak Jago!!** **Creating awareness on safe medicines for consumers**

- by Ms Rehana Begum, MIC, Consumer Protection

While we expect medicines to be safe, there is also the phenomenon of 'unsafe medicines'. This is due to unscrupulous elements manufacturing and marketing fake, spurious, mislabeled and sub-standard medicines. The need to address this public health problem led to the genesis of the Partnership for Safe Medicines-India.

AIWC conducted a webinar on safe medicines. Dr. Bejon Mishra, Founder Director at Patient Safety and Access Initiative of India Foundation Pvt. Ltd. Hyderabad was the guest speaker. He explained many of the issues and the possible resolution to our members.

India has a robust pharmaceutical sector that produces and supplies high-quality and affordable medicines across the globe. The critical aspect of the Indian Drug Regulatory framework is ensuring the quality and safety of the marketed medicinal products. In India, the Indian Pharmacopoeia (IP) is published at regular intervals to fulfill the requirements of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940 to ensure the quality of medicines being manufactured and/or marketed in India.

The high volume of drugs exported by India is proof that countries around the world accept Indian-origin generics. Dr. Mishra suggested

that the Indian government should focus on the pharmaceutical industry to foster an environment conducive to nurturing R&D and innovation which would translate into creation of jobs. India's total healthcare spending is 3.6% of GDP which is significantly lower than that of other countries. There is a need to increase the spend to at least 5% of the GDP, in the near future.

The Pandemic forced the pharmaceutical industry to recalibrate and leverage the use of digital technologies which led to a proliferation of online pharmacies. Dr. Mishra believes that the government

should extend the gambit of the stringent laws and regulations that govern the pharma industry to also cover the growing online pharma marketeers. Besides this, the industry needs to develop a robust tamper-proof distribution system with a non-cloneable tracking system to ensure that

quality standards are not compromised and keep out/weed out the unscrupulous elements.

He concluded by saying that the time has come for us to mobilize resources for manufacturing of pharmaceutical products and reduce taxes on medicines. The need of the hour is patient centricity and assured quality at the center of all policies.





## Long live in our Hearts !!

### Sarojini Naidu's Birth Anniversary at the AIWC, HO

- by Ms Mythily Jagannathan, AIWC, HO

Scholar, poet, and orator, Sarojini Naidu had been inspired by Mahatma Gandhi when she first met him in 1914. In 1917, she joined Gandhi ji in the Non-co-operation movement, going often to jail. In 1919, she went to London as a member of the Home Rule League for talks with the British government. In 1927, she was a founding member of the All India Women's Conference, where she took up the cause of women's socio-economic, legal and political rights, along with her active role in the freedom movement.

On 13th February, 2024, the 145 th Birth anniversary of Sarojini Naidu, a special program was held in her memory in AIWC. Along with talks and poetry recitations, a skit was presented on Sarojini Naidu and the All India Salt Satyagraha, launched by Gandhiji, on 12th March, 1930 in all coastal regions of the country.

The subject of the skit was a visit by Sarojini Naidu to Sabarmati Ashram, Ahmedabad in March 1930, when after much persuasion, Gandhi ji agreed to her joining the strenuous 23-day padayatra of satyagrahis to reach the sea-shore at Dandi, on 5th April and extract salt from the sea, defying the government ban. Groups of satyagrahis walked hundreds of kilometers towards the sea. All Along the way, they were joined by villagers, thousands reached the ocean, and defied the British law.

Gandhiji had reluctantly agreed to Sarojini's joining the rigorous march of 387 kilometers across 4 districts of Gujarat to reach the Arabian sea at Dandi. But Sarojini

with her inspiring oratory, songs and slogans, was a great attraction, especially for women, who joined in large numbers. The satyagraha went according to plan and salt was extracted from the sea on 5th April, 1930. On 5th May, Gandhiji was arrested, tried and sent to Yeravada prison. As he was led away to prison, he asked Sarojini to take over the freedom struggle with the words "The fate of the nation is in your hands".

On May 21st 1930, Sarojini led another salt satyagraha, taking 2500 volunteers on a march of 240 kilometers, north of Bombay to the Dharasena, Government Salt works. There, they picketed the salt factory and asked for the repeal of the 1882 Salt Act, which gave the government monopoly on salt extraction. Sarojini continued the Non-cooperation movement and satyagrahas, going frequently to prison.

As the freedom movement and satyagraha continued unabated, there was growing international criticism of the repressive British rule in India. As a result, the British Parliament passed wide-spread Constitutional reforms under the Montagu-Chelmsford Reform, 1935, ushering a federal structure of governance, with elected legislatures at the Centre and in the States. This federal structure has continued to this day, with some changes and additions.



A meeting and a skit at the Head office on the birth anniversary of Sarojini Naidu





## **Importance of timely renewal of Registration for NGOs under Societies Act 1860**

*- by Bhuvaneswari Ravindran, AIWC Suvarna, AIWC Kozhikode Branch*

During one of the discussions on the AIWC Constitution I learnt that Branches are required to renew the Registration under Societies Act 1860. It was in the year 2014 that SUVARNA was registered under the Act of 1860 and it had not been renewed since then. I share below our experiences in getting renewal of Registration done after nine years.

We decided to take necessary steps for getting the registration renewed. It appeared to be a long and tedious process about which there were very few who could advise us. We were warned of heavy fines and were even advised that it may be better to apply for fresh registration, which we did not want to. Having handled the Branch affairs for about 5 years, somehow, I felt confident about getting it done since all our books and records were in order. So sometime in October 2023, we made a trip to the Registrar's Office. The Registrar directed us to the dealing hand who explained the procedures. We were asked to come in early 2024 since they were then in the process of disposing several pending applications.

We went about collecting all relevant documents, which included an application requesting for renewal of registration, clearly mentioning the reasons for delay in renewal; regretting the delay; and requesting for condoning the delay. Along with that, we were to submit printed list of Executive Committee Members and signed audited accounts for the 9 years as well as a certificate from the ward Councilor that the Branch is functional. The original Minutes book and Membership register were to be produced to verify the facts.

We completed the time-consuming process and took all the documents to the Registrar's Office. But then, the dealing hand had changed and so had the format. We were told that the documents that we had prepared so painstakingly were not the right ones and we were given a new format. We were also told that the renewal is done online and we need to upload all the lists on their website.

We were having our annual General Body meetings in January and not in April, as given in the byelaws; this was pointed out as a big issue. Though it was impossible to rectify past dates, we could promise to follow it in future. As per the new format, the date of every AGM where the Executive Committee was approved needed to be reflected. The lists also had to be signed by the outgoing President and Secretary on one side and the present ones on the other side.

On the whole, the meeting left us very low and doubtful of our success. But we were not to be let down so easily. We immediately got down to redo the documentation in the new format, taking extra care that there was no room for discrepancy when it was cross checked with the Minutes book. This took some time. Meanwhile, some of our Committee members were doubtful if we can do it on our own and suggested going through a lawyer. Accordingly, we also met a lawyer specializing in this particular field but he was also not very hopeful of getting it done since we had not followed the byelaw in holding the meeting in April and felt we may have to go for fresh registration.

We were quite dejected and were contemplating on the next course of action when I suddenly thought of calling up the Registrar's Office to get an appointment with him. This became the real turning point for us. The lady at the other end happened to be the Superintendent. I explained my problems to her. She took our details and promised to call us the next day for a meeting. I was quite surprised when I got a call at around noon and rushed with all the documents we had already printed out and kept ready. She took us to the same dealing hand and asked him to resolve our problem. He minutely went through the records of all the nine years and cross-checked each and every detail with the Minutes book. After satisfying himself he said that the documents can now be signed and then uploaded on the website of the Registration Office. He gave us the link, user id



and password. After uploading we were to submit hard copies to the Registrar.

We were so relieved and happy. In a couple of days we got the signatures of the Office bearers of all nine years and uploaded the documents with the help of an Akshaya Kendra (an E-service Centre). Hard copies were submitted to the Registrar's Office on 14 March, 2024, for renewal up to the year 2023. Interestingly, when we asked how much fine we had to pay, we were told to buy Children's Day stamp worth Rs. 75/- !

We gave assurance that from this year (2024) onwards, Annual General Body will be held in April

as per the byelaws, and all procedures for uploading the list of Executive Committee members and submission of hard copy will be done in due course.

Thus, something, which seemed a Herculean task got completed with the intervention of a kind hearted understanding women officer whom we profusely thanked. Credit also goes to the methodical way in which the documents of all the nine years were kept, leaving no scope for the Registrar's office to find fault.

We all got a very good lesson on the importance of taking timely action every year for renewing the Registration of SUVARNA under the Societies Act 1860.



## **'Inspire Inclusion' - theme of International Women's Day 2024**

*"The story of women's struggle for equality belongs to no single feminist nor to any one organization but to the collective efforts of all who care about human rights."*

- Gloria Steinem, world-renowned feminist, journalist and activist,

The campaign theme for International Women's Day 2024 is **Inspire Inclusion**. When we inspire others to understand and value women's inclusion, we forge a better world and when women themselves are inspired to be included, there's a sense of belonging, relevance, and empowerment. Collectively, let's forge a more inclusive world for women. Organizations, groups, and individuals worldwide can all play a part - in the community, at work, at home, and beyond.

### **Committing to inspire inclusion**

'Include women' truly means to openly embrace their diversity of race, age, ability, faith, body image, and how they identify. Worldwide, women must be included in all fields of endeavour.

On an individual basis, it's important to understand, value and seek out the inclusion of women and girls. Additionally, sharing this knowledge, support and encouragement with others is key.

Organizations and groups can Inspire Inclusion through action in areas such as:

- forging women's economic empowerment
- recruiting, retaining and developing diverse talent
- supporting women and girls into leadership, decision-making, business and STEM
- designing and building infrastructure meeting the needs of women and girls
- helping women and girls make informed decisions about their health
- involving women and girls in sustainable agriculture and food security
- providing women and girls with access to quality education and training
- elevating women and girls' participation and achievement in sport
- promoting creative and artistic talent of women and girls
- addressing further areas supporting the advancement of women and girls

- from [internationalwomensday.com](http://internationalwomensday.com)



## Excerpts from her speeches: Remembering Rajkumari Amrit Kaur on International Women's Day

- by Supriya Bhalerao, Co-ordinator, National Integration, AIWC, HO

*Kaur was the first woman Cabinet Minister of Independent India, the first woman Health Minister and the founder of All India Women's Conference, Delhi wing. She served as the official delegate at the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, representing India. Kaur was the elected President of the World Health Assembly. The first woman who chaired the Indian Red Cross Society for fourteen years and served as the President of the Indian Leprosy Association and Tuberculosis Association.*

*Born in an Indian royal family of Kapurthala in 1889, to Raja Sir Harnam Singh & Rani Priscilla Kaur Sahiba. She did her undergraduate degree from Oxford University, London, and came back to India at the age of 20. Amrit Kaur's father was an ardent nationalist and had assisted in the freedom struggle. Many members of the Congress Party visited him, which may have nudged her towards politics and the independence struggle.*

Every International Women's Day, women members in the Constituent Assembly who were involved in the formation of the Constitution of India in 1950, are remembered. Each one of them was connected with All India women's Conference. We plan to take an account of them all, starting with one of the key players, Rajkumari Amrit Kaur. Her role in the Constituent Assembly reverberates through the Constitution. She was a part of the Sub-committee on Fundamental Rights and Minority Rights and also the Finance & Staff Committee and Provincial Constitution Committee. Some of her views and excerpts from her speeches are worth taking a note of.

### Becoming Gandhian

In the Foreword of 'Letters to Rajkumari Amrit Kaur', she has called these letters as the source of her 'infinite solace, hope and guidance'. She wrote to Gregg, the compiler of the book, how she came to know of Gandhi from Gopal Krishna Gokhale who had visited her father often along with other Congress members.

*"I tried to learn about Gandhiji from Mr Gokhale and when Bapu came to India for good in the winter of 1915-1916. I had the privilege of meeting him at the session in Bombay and Lucknow. Later I met him in Jullundur after the Jallianwala Bagh disaster."*



Later, in 1930, Amrit Kaur joined Gandhi. She moved to Gandhi's Ashram and for 16 years served as his secretary. She has written a detailed account of how she drew inspiration from Bapu. She wrote,

*"What drew me to Bapu was his desire to have women in his non-violent army & his faith in womankind. This was an irresistible appeal to a woman in a land where women were looked upon as only fit for producing children and serving their lords and masters!"*

### Championing Women's Cause

In 1928, Kaur along with Rameshwari Nehru founded the Delhi Women's League, the Delhi branch of All India Women's Conference (AIWC). The AIWC was first born out of an appeal by Margaret Cousins to form Constituent Conferences to address issues of education and child marriage. Kaur served as the president of AIWC for 3 years. Amrit Kaur worked ferociously for women's education and against social norms that bound women in the private and public sphere. For her, a women's religion couldn't be that of 'ritual and dogma', but one that appealed to justice. She urged for women's participation in the independence struggle and inspired them to take charge of their agency and being.

*"Women must be made aware of what a pitiful condition our country is in and what part they have to play in making her free. They must be made aware of their latent strength. It is my firm conviction that unless and until we develop within ourselves the belief that moral stamina is able to withstand all the onslaughts of physical might, we shall not be able to divest ourselves of the inferiority complex which millions of years of man's domination has bred in us nor we will be able to help in bringing in a world where might shall no longer be right."*

In a piece by Renuka Ray titled 'India's first Women Cabinet Minister', she wrote a detailed account of Amrit Kaur's political life. Ray's writing enunciates Kaur's role after independence in the Constituent Assembly. Highlighting the latter's active engagement, she writes,

*"During those days, the fourteen women who were members of the Constituent Assembly met very often together and it was under her (Amrit Kaur's) guidance that we were able to put up a united and concrete stand in regard to Women's rights."*

Rajkumari was vehemently against what she called were 'ugly customs'. At the time, she especially paraded against purdah and child marriage. Despite working for women and child rights all through her life, she was averse to the idea of reservation for women, like many other women members of the Constituent Assembly including Sarojini Naidu, opposing securing women reservation in the Lok Sabha. She said,

*"In the matter of representation, it was felt that if practical equality were secured for women in the domain of franchise, they would be able to find their way into the legislative and administrative institutions of the country through the open door of an ordinary election, and no special expedients such as reservation of seats, nomination, co-option or separate electorates would then be necessary."*

Although she and other women in the Constituent Assembly were confident that equality in the social and political domain would translate into more women in the assembly, in 1952, during the first election, only 43 women contested and merely 14 made it to the Lok Sabha.

### India's First Health Minister

Amrit Kaur became the first woman in Independent India to be a part of the Central Cabinet as the Health Minister, Government of India, for a decade until 1957. During her time as Health Minister, she rolled out several welfare schemes for Child Welfare and Nurses Training Centres.

### Combating Malaria

After independence, India was struck with malaria, affecting 75 million Indians and killing 8 lakh people. Kaur was instrumental in mitigating and monitoring the implementation of an aggressive anti-malaria public campaign.

Her efforts had prevented over 4 lakh deaths, helping India to enter the 'Eradication Era' from 1950s to 1960s. In the 10 years cases dropped sharply, plummeting as low as 64,000. Kaur had submitted her concerns regarding the rapidity with which malaria was spreading.

*"It is difficult for me to express in words the immensity of my heartache. It is perpetual and no medicine can cure it. I, who have to move and live and have my being amongst those who are sick and suffering, find that I cannot do all that I should like to do for them."*

Her concern in the Budget Session speech was centred around systemic, social and economic issues that were bound to the depleting state of health and she had put this forth clearly by asking for ample budget allocation to prioritize health and impending morbidity. In her speech, she had said,

*"We can remove malaria from this country. We ought to remove it. I am now pleading with the hon'ble Finance Minister, that if any money comes his way, it might be given to me for a countrywide plan for the eradication of malaria. I would like to say that I sympathise entirely with the States when they tell me: 'we have so many programmes on hand, we would like to avoid malaria and so one and we want money'. I believe, one member said that DDT (dichloro-diphenyl-trichloroethane) is not going to eliminate malaria. But I have the evidence of my hon'ble friend Mr Vartak who comes from Bombay State, wherewith a really good programme, malaria has been brought wonderfully under control."*



### 30 All India Women's Conference

#### Pursuit of Health: All-India Institute of Medical Science Bill, 1956

She played a major role in piloting the All-India Institute of Medical Science (AIIMS) Bill in Lok Sabha on February 18, 1956. But it had to be shelved due to the paucity of funds.

In the Parliament, when enunciating about her dream to have higher education in the medical field, she spoke for accessibility and availability of health services for all. She had said,

*"I want this to be something wonderful, of which India can be proud, and I want India to be proud of it."*

Her dream finally came true in all its glory. The Bill got its nod and the institute continues to outlive her exactly where she mapped it to be: 'in Delhi just beyond the Safdarjung aerodrome'. This provided many doctors to get their due and did not have to work for a minimal fee. She visualized that the institute would bring about a revolutionary change so it was essential that it enjoyed a 'large measure of autonomy', demanded 'full freedom' for the institute and its management.

*"The future of the Institute will lie ultimately in the hands of the Director, the Professors and other members of the teaching staff and students, and I believe it will be their devotion to duty, their desire to promote their work and the spirit of altruism that will actuate them to subordinate personal considerations, as I believe the noble profession of medicine should do, to the fulfilment of the objectives to be achieved that will eventually create and maintain the atmosphere which is necessary for an institute like this."*

The fact is that through her influence, she secured donations for equipment worth millions of dollars from across the globe.

After the jolt of mass deaths by malaria, she looked at the biggest gap concerning the Indian health infrastructure. She demanded the autonomy without compromising on any resources and also,

the inclusivity that would cater to 'all' and 'all of India' and meant every word of that.

*"I want it to play a guide to all our teaching institutions. It has got to be an all-India seat of learning giving the lead and ever so much in the truest sense of the term of 'all-India'."*

In 1961, the Massachusetts General Hospital on its 150th celebration placed AIIMS on the list of most distinguished hospitals of America, Canada and Europe. Kaur was awarded a medallion and a 'Book of Citation' for her efforts.

#### To Sum Up...

It will be hard to mention everything Rajkumari Amrit Kaur did in her great but muted life. Prof. Anima Bose when writing about Kaur, about her courage and conviction, saying,

*"Her serenity and gallantry in the face of critical situations and challenging problems, shouldering responsibilities she herself chose to take on, and more often than not, those that were thrust on her, made her a legendary figure in her time and day."*

In 1946, in London, she spoke at the UNESCO conference as the Deputy Leader of the Indian Delegation in words that hold more meaning today than ever. She said,

*"No structure of society can be stable one that has not the roots deep in moral and spiritual values of life; our children must be educated to appreciate which is of a permanent worth! Geographical barriers may have been conquered but oceans of hate and misunderstanding still divide us. If education is to play the part, it should play in the refashioning of the world it must itself be refashioned."*

*"There can be no true freedom and consequently no genuine culture in a world which is half bond and half free, half fed and half starved, where exploitation and social injustices flourish side by side with pious expressions of good intentions and high-sounding policies".*



## A Book Club event on the book 'I Kick and I Fly'

- by Sushila S.Kumar, Counsellor, Bapnu Ghar, Shakti Sadan, AIWC

On 16th February, 2024, a Book Club event was organised by Dr. Yuthika Mishra, MIC, at MCM library. Author- Activist Ruchira Gupta was present to talk about her book 'I KICK AND I FLY'. Dr. Manju Kak, Secretary General, AIWC, introducing the author-activist, said that she had the opportunity to hear Ruchira speak at the United Nations, where she was deeply impressed by Ruchira's efforts in assisting girls escape from the clutches of human traffickers in India and other Countries.

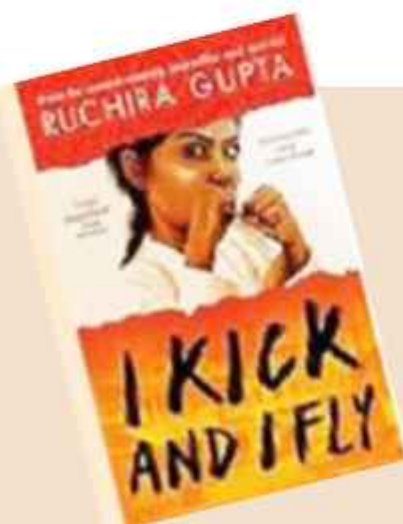
Ruchira Gupta, talking about her book 'I KICK AND I FLY', shared that the book was about the struggles of Heera, a 14-year-old girl from a nomadic tribe, and her mother's aspiration to educate and protect her from being sold into prostitution at the girl bazaar. Heera was expelled from school, as she got into a fight with a boy from an upper class who called her a thief for taking the eggs served in the midday meal. Heera was taking the eggs for her mother and her three year old sibling. When her little sister died due to a lack of medical treatment, Heera blamed herself and felt that this was the punishment for going to school and decided to drop out of school.

Heera had a cousin 'Meera di' who had been sex trafficked. The author read an inspiring extract from her book where Meera di explains to Heera the importance of education and encourages her to go back to school and make her own destiny. Heera went back to school and fought against poverty and broke the chains of sex trafficking across the world.

This was followed by a discussion, when members asked questions and Ruchira shared her experiences and offered helpful suggestions on dealing with different forms of exploitation against women.

Dr. Upasana Singh, Treasurer, commended Ruchira Gupta's work against crime and praised her book. She concluded by expressing her gratitude and dedicating the following lines to Ruchira Gupta.

*Sirf hungama kadha karna meri fitrat nahi  
Sirf hungama kadha karna meri fitrat nahi,  
Meri koshish h ki soorat badalni chahiye.  
Mere seene mei nahi toh tere seene mei sahi  
Mere seene mei nahi toh tere seene mei sahi  
Ho kahi bhi aag ho kahi bhi aaj lekin jalni chahiye.*



the book and the author





## Women Empowerment

### Unlocking the opportunities

- by Pratibha Arya, Programme Officer, AIWC, HO

In the quest for gender equality, India stands at a crucial junction where the empowerment of women links significantly on the two main pillars: digital literacy and financial literacy. As the nation advances in the digital age, bridging the gender gap in access to technology and financial resources becomes absolutely necessary for inclusive growth in the society. In the midst of global empowerment of women, empowering women in India through digital and financial literacy not only fosters economic independence but also paves the way for social progress and sustainable development in the country.

In recent years, India has witnessed a digital revolution, observing technological development even in the remotest corners of the country. However, the benefits of this transformation have not been equally distributed, especially among women. Gender disparities in digital literacy still persist from socio-economic barriers to lack of access to resources. These arising disparities need to be addressed to unlock the potential of millions of women across the nation. Digital literacy empowers women by providing them with essential skills to navigate the digital landscape. From basic knowledge of computers and proficiency in using the internet, smartphones and digital platforms women will surely gain access to a world of opportunities. Through online education, e-commerce, remote work, and digital banking, women can gain value to their skills, can pursue entrepreneurial ventures, and participate actively in the workforce, thereby challenging traditional gender roles and contributing to economic growth.

Furthermore, women equipped with digital skills can access information, engage with policymakers, and advocate for their rights more effectively, raising their voices in decision-making processes and shaping policies that promote gender equality and women's empowerment.

Parallel to digital literacy, financial literacy also plays a pivotal role in empowering women economically. Despite of having significant march towards financial

inclusion, a substantial gender gap still persists in control over financial resources in India. Women possess limited



knowledge of financial concepts, lack awareness about banking services, and socio-cultural barriers often discourage women from making firm financial decisions and also hold back them to secure their economic future. Financial literacy equips women with the knowledge and skills to manage their finances effectively, including budgeting, saving, investing, and access to credit. By understanding these concepts such as banking

interest rates, insurance, and investment options, women can make sound financial decisions and build wealth for themselves and their families. Moreover, financial literacy empowers women to navigate financial institutions confidently, access to banking services, and leverage towards digital platforms for transactions, internet banking thereby enhances their financial independence.

Empowering women through digital and financial literacy is not merely a matter of economic development but a set example for social transformation and inclusive growth. Governments, civil society organizations, and private sector stakeholders must collaborate to design and implement gender-responsive policies, programs, and initiatives that promote digital and financial inclusion for women. Moreover, fostering a culture of gender equality and challenging patriarchal norms are essential to address the barriers that hinder women's empowerment. By providing mentorship, awareness programmes, support networks, and opportunities to women to share knowledge and experiences, can empower them to overcome challenges, unlock opportunities, and realize their full potential.

In the end, gender equality and women's empowerment are not just aspirations but a essential tool for India's progress in 21st century. By investing in digital and financial literacy, we can unlock the potential of millions of women, accelerate their economic growth, and build a more inclusive society where every woman has the opportunity to contribute to nation-building.





# हिंदी जगत

## सदस्यों द्वारा हिंदी में लेखन

### रोकेया बेगम: नारीमुक्ति की एक गुमशुदा आवाज

किरण सिन्हा, सचिव, उज्ज्वल महिला एसोसिएशन, दिल्ली

भारत में उन्नीसवीं शताब्दी नव जागरण का काल था, जिसके उत्तरार्ध में नारी जागृति की लहर भी चली। राजा राममोहन राय और विद्यासागर जैसे समाज सुधारक नारी उथान के लिए काफी प्रयत्नशील थे, उन्होंने अपने निजी जीवन में क्रांतिकारी कदम भी उठाए। उन महिलाओं में आनंदीबाई गोपालराव जोशी, कादंबिनी बोस और रोकेश बेगम प्रमुख थीं। रोकेश बेगम शायद सबसे अधिक गतिशील और मुखर थीं, और महिलाओं की मुक्ति के बारे में उनका दीर्घकालिक दृष्टिकोण था। दुर्भाग्यवश, हम उन्हें लगभग भूल चुके हैं।

रोकेश सखावत हुसैन (1880-1932), जिन्हें बेगम रोकेश के नाम से जाना जाता है, अपने समय की एक प्रमुख बंगाली नारीवादी विचारक, लेखिका, शिक्षिका और राजनीतिक कार्यकर्ता थीं। व्यापक रूप से उन्हें दक्षिण एशिया में महिला मुक्ति की अग्रणी माना जाता है। वे पुरुषों और महिलाओं को समान रूप से विवेकशील प्राणी मानती थीं, और उनका मानना था कि महिलाओं के बीच शिक्षा की कमी उनकी खराब आर्थिक स्थिति के लिए जिम्मेदार थी। उनका जन्म रंगपुर (बांग्लादेश) के एक गांव में एक कुलीन मुस्लिम परिवार में हुआ था, जो पारंपरिक रूप से मुगल नौकरशाही से जुड़ा था। उनके पिता एक प्रबुद्ध जमींदार थे।

18 साल की उम्र में, रोकेश की शादी, 1898 में खान बहादुर सखावत हुसैन से कर दी गयी, जो भागलपुर में डिप्टी मजिस्ट्रेट थे। वे एक विधुर थे और रोकेश से 20 साल बड़े। उन्होंने इंग्लैंड से कृषि विज्ञानों में स्नातक किया था और इंग्लैंड की रॉयल एग्रीकल्चरल सोसाइटी के सदस्य थे। एक उदारवादी होने के नाते, उन्होंने रोकेश को बंगाली और अंग्रेजी सीखना जारी रखने और लेखन के लिए बंगाली को प्रमुख भाषा के रूप में उपयोग करने के लिए प्रोत्साहित किया। शादी के बाद रोकेश भागलपुर चली गईं जहां उनके पति पदाशीन थे।

रोकेश ने अपने साहित्यिक करियर की शुरुआत 1902 में एक बंगाली निबंध (पिपासा) से की। उनका अगला प्रकाशन मोतीचूर (1904) था, जो उनके नारीवादी विचारों पर उनके निबंधों का एक संग्रह था। (*Sultana's Dream*) (सुल्ताना का सपना, 1905) उनकी अगली बहुचर्चित कृति थी, जो महिलाओं द्वारा शासित लेडीलैंड (महिलाओं के प्रदेश) पर आधारित एक नारीवादी विज्ञान कथा है। पद्मपराग (1924) में बंगाली पत्नियों द्वारा सामना की जाने वाली कठिनाइयों को दर्शाया गया है; और अबरोधवासिनी (1931) में पर्दा प्रथा और महिलाओं पर लगे प्रतिबंध के खिलाफ आवाज उठाई गई है।

पति के अधिकारिक दौरों के दौरान समय बिताने के लिए रोकेश ने सुल्तान ड्रीम की रचना की पति कहानी से प्रभावित हुए और उन्हें इसे द इंडियन लेडीज मैगजीन को भेजने के लिए प्रोत्साहित किया, जिसने इसे 1905 में प्रकाशित किया यह बाद में 1908 में एक पुस्तक के रूप में सामने आई।

इस उपन्यास में रोकेश ने एक अलग वैकल्पिक वैज्ञानिक समाज का चित्रण किया जिसमें औरतों ने कई ऐसे वैज्ञानिक उपकरणों और वस्तुओं का इजाद कर रखा था, जो हमें अब उपलब्ध हो रहे हैं, जैसे सोलर ओवन उड़नेवाले कार और वर्षा कराने वाले उपकरण।

जिस समय सुल्तानास ड्रीम प्रकाशित हुई तब 1905 में संभवतः दुनिया में कोई ऐसी कितबा नहीं थी। रोकेश ने कई विधाओं में लिखा, जैसे लघु कथा, कविता, लेख, उपन्यास और व्यंग। रचनात्मकता, तर्क और हास्य उनके लेखन की मुख्य विशेषताएं थीं। उनकी रचनाओं में सभी पीड़ित महिलाओं को अह्वान किया गया था कि वे अन्याय के खिलाफ आवाज उठाएँ और उन सभी बेड़ियों को तोड़ें जो उन्हें आगे बढ़ाने से रोकती हैं। उनकी बाकि रचनाओं में सम्मिलित हैं- सौरजगत्, ज्ञान-फल, नारी-सृष्टि, मुक्ति-फल, नारी अधिकार आदि।



मोटे तौर पर उनका लेखन महिलाओं की दयनीय स्थिति और उन्हें इससे कैसे मुक्ति दिलाई जाए, इस पर केंद्रित था। वह शिक्षा को उनकी मुक्ति का प्रमुख साधन और उन्हें जागृत करने का माध्यम मानती थीं। वह एक निष्क्रिय दूरदर्शी नहीं थी; उन्होंने कई मोर्चों पर काम किया 1909 में उनके पति की मृत्यु हो गई, और पांच महीने बाद, उन्होंने उनकी याद में भागलपुर में लड़कियों के लिए एक हाई स्कूल की स्थापना की। उन्होंने इसे पांच छात्रों के साथ शुरू किया और घर-घर जाकर माता-पिता को अपनी बेटियों को इसमें भेजने के लिए राजी किया। संपत्ति को लेकर अपने ससुराल के परिवार के साथ विवाद के कारण उन्हें स्कूल को कलकत्ता स्थानांतरित करने के लिए मजबूर होना पड़ा (1911), जहां उन्होंने अपनी मृत्यु तक अगले 24 वर्षों तक शत्रुतापूर्ण आलोचना और बाधाओं का सामना करते हुए इसे चलाया।

1916 में, उन्होंने अंजुमन-ए-ख्वातानी-ए-इस्लाम की स्थापना की, जो इस्लाम की मूल शिक्षाओं के आधार पर सामाजिक सुधारों के लिए कार्यक्रम आयोजित करती थी और महिलाओं की स्थिति, उनकी शिक्षा और रोजगार पर बहस और सम्मेलन आयोजित करती थी। उनका मानना था कि भारत में मुसलमानों के धीमे विकास के लिए संकीर्णतावाद

और अत्यधिक रुढ़िवाद मुख्य रूप से जिम्मेदार थे। 1926 में, उन्होंने कलकत्ता में बंगाल महिला शिक्षा सम्मेलन की अध्यक्षता की, जो महिलाओं को उनके शैक्षिक अधिकारों के समर्थन में एक साथ लाने का पहला महत्वपूर्ण प्रयास था। यह द्रष्टव्य है कि **ऑल इंडिया वीमेनस कांफ्रेंस** की स्थापना एक साल बाद 1927 में हुई।

9 दिसंबर 1932 को उनके 52वें जन्मदिन पर रोकेया की मृत्यु हो गई। इस दिन को बांग्लादेश में प्रतिवर्ष रोकेया दिवस के रूप में मनाया जाता है, जब असाधारण उपलब्धियों के लिए व्यक्तित्व महिलाओं को बेगम रोकेया पदक से सम्मानित किया जाता है।

लेकिन वे भारत में इतनी कम क्यों जानी जाती हैं? आखिरकार उनका जन्म और पालन-पोषण अविभाजित भारत में हुआ और वे 13 वर्षों तक भागलपुर में रही, जहां वे बौद्धिक रूप से परिपक्व हुई, अपनी साहित्यिक रचनाएँ कीं और अपना सामाजिक मिशन शुरू किया। दरअसल, वे अपने समय से बहुत आगे थीं। और समकालीन रुढ़िवादी समाज, हिंदू या मुस्लिम, के लिए स्वीकार्य नहीं थीं। हालांकि, सच तो यह है कि वह सभी नारी समाज के लिए पैदा हुई थीं। वे हमारी साझी विरासत हैं— भारत, बांग्लादेश और दक्षिण एशिया के लिए।



## कुछ प्रशंसा भरे शब्द हमारी स्वयं सेविकाओं के लिए

ऋतुरानी, असिस्टेंट प्रोग्राम मैनेजर

मेरे लिखने के शोक ने मुझे प्रेरित किया कि कुछ ऐसा लिखा जाये कि हम उन महिलाओं को भी शत-शत नमन कर सकें जो अपने घर के जिम्मेदारियों को संभालने के साथ-साथ अपने आस पास के समुदाय में जाके लोगों की सहायता करती हैं बिना किसी निस्वार्थ के। शायद हमें दूर जाने की जरूरत नहीं, ये सब में अपनी ऑल इंडिया वीमेनस कांफ्रेंस की स्वयंसेविकाओं के लिए लिख रही हूँ जो निस्वार्थ भाव से इतने समय से इस संस्था के साथ जुड़ी हैं। सभी सामुदायिक कार्यक्रम में वे सभी की प्रशंशा तो करती हैं लेकिन उनके काम की प्रशंशा करना हम भूल जाते हैं। ये सब काम वो किसी अवार्ड या प्रशंशा के लोभ से नहीं करती हैं।

कौन भूल सकता है उन ऑल इंडिया वीमेन कांफ्रेंस की महानभुवो को जिन्होंने बड़ी-बड़ी कांफ्रेंस में जाके महिलाओं के हक के लिए लड़ी, कौन भूल सकता है उन्हें जिन्होंने महिलाओं को मुख्य धारा में लाने के लिए कोशिश

की, कौन भूल सकता है उन्हें जो रोज समय निकाल के समुदाय में जाके हर बार बच्चों महिलाओं की उन्नति के लिए काम करती हैं, ऐसी स्वयंसेविकाओं की प्रशंशा न की जाये तो हमारे बड़े-बड़े शब्दों का उच्चारण करना भी व्यर्थ है। कहा जाये तो हम ये भी कह सकते हैं कि, आल इंडिया वीमेनस कांफ्रेंस एक और घर है इन स्वयंसेविकाओं के लिए जिसे वो संजोगे रखती हैं और अपने समय देती हैं।

इस धारा में सभी का समन्वय इस तरह से है कि जिसमें हमारे देश के सभी रंग झलकते हैं। ये स्वयं सेविका छोटे-छोटे गावों से लेकर बड़े बड़े शहरों में जरूरतमंद बच्चों और महिलाओं की सेवा करती हैं।

ये सराहना भरे शब्द इन स्वयंसेविकाओं के काम के कुछ नहीं लेकिन अच्छा लगता है इन्हें भी कोई इनके काम के लिए कुछ शब्द बोल दे, इनकी भी कोई पीठ थपथपा दे। जिससे ये फिर से काम में जुट जाये पहले से भी ज्यादा उत्साहित होकर।





## कचरा व पॉलिथीन बैग मानव स्वास्थ्य के लिए हानिकारक

शोभा लाल, गुड़गाँव

पॉलिथीन और प्लास्टिक गाँव से लेकर शहर तक लोगों की सेहत बिगाड़ रहे हैं। शहर का ड्रेनेजसिस्टम अक्सर पॉलिथीन से भरा मिलता है। इसके चलते नालियाँ और नाले जाम हो जाते हैं। इसका प्रयोग तेजी से बढ़ा है। प्लास्टिक के गिलासों में चाय या फिर गर्म दूध का सेवन करने से उसका केमिकल लोगों के पेट में चला जाता है। इससे डायरिया के साथ ही अन्य गम्भीर बीमारियाँ होती हैं।

पॉलिथीन का बढ़ता हुआ उपयोग न केवल वर्तमान के लिये बल्कि भविष्य के लिये भी खतरनाक होता जा रहा है। पॉलिथीन पूरे देश की गम्भीर समस्या है। पहले जब खरीदारी करने जाते थे तो कपड़े का थैला साथ लेकर जाते थे, किन्तु आज खाली हाथ जाकर दुकानदार से पॉलिथीन माँग कर सामान लाते हैं। पहले अखबार के लिफाफे होते थे किन्तु उसके स्थान पर आज पॉलिथीन का उपयोग किया जा रहा है।

स्मरण रहे कि पृथ्वी तल पर जमा पॉलिथीन जमीन का जल सोखने की क्षमता खत्म कर रही है। इससे भूजल स्तर गिर रहा है। सुविधा के लिये बनाई गई पॉलिथीन आज सबसे बड़ी असुविधा का कारण बन गई है। प्राकृतिक तरीके से नष्ट न होने के कारण यह धरती की उर्वरक क्षमता को धीरे-धीरे समाप्त कर रही है।

विकास के नाम पर शहरों में पेड़ों की अन्धाधुन्ध कटाई हुई है। तरह-तरह के निर्माण के दौरान भी पेड़ काटे गए। रोड चौड़ीकरण के दौरान भी सैकड़ों पेड़ कुर्बान हो गए, पर उतने या उससे ज्यादा पेड़ वापस नहीं लगाए गए। प्लास्टिक का प्रयोग हमारे जीवन में सर्वाधिक होने लगा है। इसका प्रयोग नुकसानदायक है यह जानते हुए भी हम धड़ल्ले से इनका इस्तेमाल कर रहे हैं। यदि इसके प्रयोग पर रोक लगे तो बात बने। प्लास्टिक को जलाने से भी नुकसान होगा। इसका जहरीला धुआँ स्वास्थ्य के लिये खतरनाक है।

पॉलिथीन की पन्नियों में लोग कूड़ा भरकर फेंकते हैं। कूड़े के ढेर में खाद्य पदार्थ खोजते हुए पशु पन्नी निगल जाते

हैं। ऐसे में पन्नी उनके पेट में चली जाती है। बाद में ये पशु बीमार होकर दम तोड़ देते हैं। प्लास्टिक और पॉलिथीन गाँव से लेकर शहर तक लोगों की सेहत बिगाड़ रहे हैं। शहर का ड्रेनेजसिस्टम अक्सर पॉलिथीन से भरा मिलता है। इसके चलते नालियाँ और नाले जाम हो जाते हैं। इसका प्रयोग तेजी से बढ़ा है।

प्लास्टिक और पॉलिथीन का प्रयोग पर्यावरण और मानव की सेहत दोनों के लिये खतरनाक है। कभी न नष्ट होने वाली पॉलिथीन भूजल स्तर को प्रभावित कर रही है। देखा जा रहा है कि कुछ लोग अपनी दुकानों पर चाय प्लास्टिक की पन्नियों में मैगा रहे हैं। गर्म चाय पन्नी में डालने से पन्नी का केमिकल चाय में चला जाता है, जो बाद में लोगों के शरीर में प्रवेश कर जाता है। चिकित्सकों ने प्लास्टिक के गिलासों और पॉलिथीन में गरम पेय पदार्थों का सेवन न करने की सलाह दी है।

कई जगह पॉलिथीन पर प्रतिबन्ध है, इसके बावजूद दुकानदार चोरी-छिपे पॉलिथीन का प्रयोग करते पाये जाते हैं। ऐसे में सवाल उठता है कि क्यों नहीं सफल होता है पॉलिथीन पर प्रतिबन्ध? पर्यावरण एवं स्वास्थ्य दोनों के लिये नुकसानदायक 40 माइक्रॉन से कम पतली पॉलिथीन पर्यावरण की दृष्टि से बेहद नुकसानदायक होती है। चूँकि ये पॉलिथीन उपयोग में काफी सस्ती पड़ती है, इसलिये इनका उपयोग धड़ल्ले से किया जाता है। लेकिन इन्हें एक बार उपयोग करने के बाद कूड़े में फेंक दिया जाता है, जबकि इससे अच्छे किस्म की खाद बनाई जा सकती है तथा अन्य काम भी किये जा सकते हैं।

हिमाचल प्रदेश का भी उदाहरण हमारे सामने है, जहाँ केन्द्रीय प्रदूषण नियंत्रण बोर्ड की मदद से पन्नियों को चक्रित करके सड़क निर्माण में उपयोग में लाया जा रहा है। जर्मनी में प्लास्टिक के कचरे से बिजली का निर्माण भी किया जा रहा है। इसके अलावा पन्नियों को चक्रित करके खाद भी बनाई जा सकती है। इसलिये यदि सरकारें इस दिशा में



गम्भीर हों, तो नुकसानदायक प्लास्टिक के कचरे से लाभ भी कमाया जा सकता है। ऐसे प्रयोग को व्यापक बनाया जा सकता है।

कुल मिलाकर पॉलिथीन मनुष्य एवं सभी जीव-जन्तुओं के

लिये बहुत हानिकारक है। इसकी रोकधाम से ही इससे निजात पाई जा सकती है। आज समाज के हर व्यक्ति को पॉलिथीन के उपयोग से बचना चाहिए तभी हम इस समस्या

से छुटकारा पा सकेंगे।



## “अमृत महोत्सव” राष्ट्र को नमन

वीणा कौल

गद गद राष्ट्र है नमन कर रहा  
अमर वीर जवानों को,  
एक अनुगर्वित राष्ट्र सीना तान खड़ा है  
स्वर्ण कथा सुनाने को,

अमृत हर सू बरस रहा है  
भारत को अमर बनाने को  
जहाँ तहाँ खुशी के रंग बिखर रहे  
महा उत्सव मनाने को,

आजादी के गुलाल में रंगा है  
हर कण, अपना उत्सास दर्शाने को,  
जल धल गगन उदभासित जैसे बधाई गीत गाने को।  
पीढ़ियाँ बीत गई थी यह शहनाई की धुन सुनोने को।

अमृत बरस रहा सखी री  
खुब बसन्त मनाने दो।  
कलियों पर नया निखार है,  
बगिया में नयी बगार है,

प्रगति से हुआ नया श्रृंगार है राष्ट्र को सजाने को।  
पहुँ और नयी सज धज है  
सफलता दर्शाने को।

नया पुरातन सब अहस्तादित  
अपनी कथा सुनाने को।  
जैसे नये कान उगे हैं सब के  
और नयी जुबाँ आई  
नयी सोन धिरैया की सुंदर  
गाथा गाने को।

हर कदम में नया जोश है  
आगे कदम बढ़ाने को।  
सोये सपने जाग उठे हैं  
आकाश में उड़ जाने को।

नयी उड़ाने नयी उमंग है  
नया हौसला नयी घमक,  
नये नये पंछी तैयार खड़े हैं  
अपने पंख फड़फड़ाने को।

नयी उम्मीदों का नया जहाँ है  
गर्व सम्मान तारकपी का।  
नयी ऊर्जा उबल पड़ी है,  
नयी रहा पर चलने को।

नये बादल उमड़ पड़े हैं  
नयी बरखा बरसाने को।  
नयी फसल है, नयी नसल है  
नयी नयी तैयारी है।

हर भारतवासी के मन की  
एक नयी उड़ारी है।  
कह दो सब से, नहीं कम है हम  
किसी से नज़र मिलने को,

यह देश आज फिर से खड़ा है-2  
विश्व गुरु बन जाने को-2





**Creches run by AIWC branches**  
**January - March 2024**



*Creches by East Calcutta Constituency Branch*



*Kanchan Gauri Creche Dohad, Gujarat*



*Creches by Women's Indian Association, Chennai*



## At the Head office



*Garlanding the Sarojini's statue- Patrons, office bearers, members and staff*



*Meeting in the Library Hall and Skit by the members*



*Skits in the International Women's Day programme at Sarojini House*



*Holi on the premises*



*AVI Eco Club activity & prize distribution*