

Roshni

October-December 2023



Shilpkala utsav



COP 28, Dubai



ALL INDIA WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

AIWC team at COP 28, Dubai



From left: Bhuvaneshwari R, Secy Gen. Dr Manju Kak, Asha Deshpande & Usha Nair



From Left: Dr Vijayalekshmy, President Mrs Kalyani Raj, Dr Upasana



In a session



With fellow participants



President Kalyani Raj chairing a session

Mrs. Kalyani Raj spoke about the challenges as well as the way forward and about the collective work NGOs can do to include women's voice



In a morning session



At the release of the document - 'Gender just climate solutions'

ROSHNI

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- Permanent Representative at UN New York: Smt Sudha Acharya

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 Sisters,

Greetings for the festival season!

We, at AIWC, flag off the season of festivities with our signature festival, the 'Shilpkala Utsav'.

India's culture is quite patriarchal, and the degree of discrimination and oppression intensifies as we move from urban areas into rural spaces. So, women hardly have the opportunity to showcase their talent or reap the benefits and advancements of development happening in the world at large.

Keeping up with its almost 100-year-old tradition of being a beacon for the womenfolk, AIWC strives to be a pioneer in all possible ways, paving the way for empowering women.

'Shilpkala Utsav' is a three-day annual event organized by AIWC to provide a platform for women artists and entrepreneurs to facilitate the sale of their products and also showcase their artistic talents to a wider community. This year, there was a gathering of around 109 artists from diverse backgrounds and different parts of India. The artisans from remote tribal areas were a special feature of the 'Utsav'.

Environment and climate change issues are areas where AIWC has been historically very active and continues to be committed. Climate change disproportionately affects the most vulnerable social groups—women and girls, in particular—because of the roles and tasks that they are assigned (taking care of the land, carrying water, caring for children and the family) and the discrimination (restricted access to resources and education) they face in many regions of the world. Women are affected more than men by the impacts of climate change. For example, in the event of a natural disaster, the risk of death is 14 times higher among women and children than among men. The risk of violence and sexual assaults also increases for women and girls during displacement caused by extreme climate events. The impacts of climate change have disastrous consequences for their health (food insecurity, exhaustion, heat, and waterborne diseases), their safety, their rights, and their economic situation (lost harvest, higher food costs, being forced to buy water, and having less time for a job).

This subject has assumed immense importance globally, and AIWC has played a great role in combating and reducing climate change impacts by taking up programmes and projects in this regard. The very dynamic team from AIWC attended the COP 28 meeting in Dubai, which was held from November 30 to December 12, 2023, and was back with learning experiences to be translated into programs and projects to be conducted through AIWC branches for the benefit of society.

With a focus on the two major highlights, you will get a dive into new realms of knowledge in this issue.

I look forward to your contributions and constructive feedback!

Meenakshi Kumar
Editor, Roshni

October- December 2023



Participation of AIWC in COP-28

- Bhuvaneswari Ravindran, Member-in-charge, Climate Change

I feel privileged, thanks to AIWC, to have attended the 28th Summit of the Conference of Parties (COP 28) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), held in Dubai. While Secretary General Dr Manju Kak, Smt Usha Nair, Smt Asha Deshpande, and myself participated from November 30 to December 6, 2023, President Smt Kalyani Raj, Treasurer, Dr Upasana Singh, and Dr KG Vijayalekshmi participated in the conference from December 7 to 12, 2023.

Environment and climate change issues are areas where AIWC has been historically very active and continues to be committed. This subject has assumed immense importance globally, and the role of grassroots organisations like AIWC to help combat and reduce climate change impacts by taking up programmes and projects has also increased manifold. In this context, a preparatory WEBINAR was organized on November 22, 2023, for members of AIWC. At this session, president Smt Kalyani Raj took us through the journey of AIWC's close involvement with COP meetings and with Environment Conferences even before the formation of UNFCCC. Smt Raj brought out many milestone events, like attaining observer status in 2013, the election of members as co-focal points (global south) of the Women and Gender Constituency (WGC), as well as activities by different branches of AIWC, in the fields of climate change mitigation and adaptation.

India's key negotiator for climate change at COP, Shri RR Rashmi (IAS(1983), Manipur Cadre), was our esteemed guest and resource person at this webinar. The presentation by Shri Rashmi gave us a good idea about the overarching structure of the UNFCCC, its different layers of committees and bodies, and their roles. The fundamentals of the Green Climate Fund, the Loss and Damage Fund, and the Adaptation Fund were suitably amplified and explained for the benefit of all. It was interesting to note that prior to

the Paris Agreement, commitments were binding only on developed countries, which were historically responsible for the climate change phenomenon. This position changed, and the Paris Agreement, in the interest of global climate stability, made it mandatory for all countries to take binding commitments as per individual national circumstances, termed "nationally determined contributions".

Shri Atul Kaushik, Retd Additional Secretary, Government of India, spoke at the meeting, taking us back to the year 1991 when very small countries like Vanuatu had made demands for an insurance scheme to protect countries impacted by sea level rise due to climate change—a voice that was not heard. This was due to stalling by developed countries for fear of having to face compensation demands and litigation. It took decades for this issue to get due importance, which eventually led to the Loss and Damage Fund being set up at COP 27 in 2022.

The WEBINAR was quite helpful for more meaningful and informed participation in the COP.

During the Echo webinar, after COP, on December 21, 2023, the participants shared their experiences and main takeaways from the event. A presentation was made with the help of pictures capturing the magnitude of the event, which had over 1 lakh delegates, and visuals of the AIWC stall, important personalities, etc. President Smt. Kalyani Raj gave an overview of COP processes and then narrated her personal experiences of participation in various side events, including organizing one in the WGC Pavilion, participation in the daily Caucus meetings, and chairing one of its sessions; other side events and meetings with Solar Cooker International; an event on disaster resilience; an event on LIFE at the India Pavilion, etc. Smt. Raj explained that the COP meeting provided a good ground for networking, showcased AIWC work, and offered scope for further cooperation with various agencies.

4 All India Women's Conference



President Mrs Kalyani Raj, Treasurer Dr Upasana Singh & Dr KG Vijayalekshmi, MIC, Adult literacy at equity education, at COP-28



AIWC stall in COP-28



Mrs Bhuvaneshwari Ravindran, MIC Climate Change, Dr Manju Kak, Secy General, Mrs Asha Deshpande, MIC Socio-economic programs, Mrs Usha Nair, MIC, Liason with International agencies at COP-28



Dr Manju Kak, General Secretary AIWC, made special reference to the thought-provoking addresses by Al Gore, King Charles, and the UN Secretary-General and spoke about visits to several pavilions, including the high-tech pavilion of Google's Exhibition on Water; the presence of moneyed people like financiers, bankers, and fund managers at this COP and their efforts to float climate funds and monetize climate finance; the importance of the Loss and Damage Fund, etc. Treasurer Dr Upasana Singh described her participation as a learning experience and expressed her happiness witnessing

the role played by AIWC leadership and listening to Mary Robinson, an amazing personality.

Smt Usha Nair summarized the conclusions and decisions at the COP, which included some new terms like 'transitioning away from fossil fuels' instead of the earlier phrases 'phasing out' and 'phasing down'; false solutions, etc. The meanings and implications of all these phrases, as well as what is expected from a 'just and equitable' transition, were also clarified. Some positive aspects of the decisions that AIWC can leverage and areas where our activities can be scaled up were pointed out, such as

the popularization and creation of awareness in the fields of renewable energy sources, energy efficiency, sustainable lifestyles, etc. Smt. Nair mentioned the record participation of 7 members, with only a few badges provided, which were put to maximum use by participants taking turns at meetings; the steady flow of visitors to the stall; participation in various side events; controversy surrounding the selection of the host country; challenges faced due to poor logistics and directions; the award function; morning caucus meetings; interviews where AIWC work could be highlighted, etc.

Sharing her experience Smt. Asha Deshpande felt that participation in this event had enriched her understanding of climate change issues through interactions and by participating in side events. In particular, she explained her experience of meeting with a South African delegate who shared the problems that they constantly face due to devastating floods and the fact that a large portion of direct jobs were in coal mining, energy, etc, all closely impacting climate change. A specific mention was made about the side event on nuclear power, where the young presenter came up with several positive sides of nuclear energy generation as an alternative that, according to him, was safe and sustainable. Smt. Deshpande mentioned her plan to organize awareness sessions on such topics with

the cooperation of delegates from Pune whom she met in Dubai. One of the participants in COP 28, Dr KG Vijayalakshmi, was unable to participate in the meeting since she was travelling.

As a participant at COP 28, I had great satisfaction manning the AIWC stall and interacting with the stream of visitors to the stall. Before the journey to Dubai, I also had the satisfaction of preparing the three posters that were to be displayed in the AIWC stall at COP 28, under the able guidance of Smt. Usha Nair. The Gender Justice Solutions Award co-hosted by AIWC; GJCS journal release; and the side event organized by the Global Carbon Council where issues relating to Nuclear energy were discussed were quite enlightening. Discussions with Smt Rajasree Ray, Economic Adviser; at the Indian Pavilion and visits to Singapore and Korean Pavilions, visit to an organic farming space set up in the open in the Green Zone etc were also very interesting. Several inscriptions recommending organic materials, qualities of millets, carbon reduction through agriculture, reversing climate change impacts, etc. attracted my attention. It definitely, was a good and enriching experience.

On the whole, participation in this conference was quite a learning experience, which in due course will be translated into programmes and projects for implementation.



Some meaningful glimpses

Rajkumari Amrit Kaur receiving Penicillin cases

Ninety-three cases of penicillin, a gift from the Canadian Red Cross to India arrived at New Delhi in a special plane from Canada on 17 October 1947. Presenting the gift to Amrit Kaur, the then Health Minister in the Government of India at the Palam aerodrome. Jivraj Narayan Mehta, Director General of Health Services appears on the left and standing on the right is Sardar Balwant Singh Puri of the Indian Red Cross.



Climate Empowerment: A Nurturing & Transformative Experience at COP 28, Dubai

- Dr K.G.Vijayalekkshmy, MIC, Adult literacy at equity education

Embarking on my journey as a first-time attendee at COP 28 in Dubai proved to be a pivotal moment, immersing me in the dynamic realm of global climate action. The resonating theme of **nature-based solutions and eco-centric approaches** encapsulated the essence of the conference, reflecting a collective commitment to educate, equip, and empower individuals globally. My focus gravitated towards the youth-led transition to climate-resilient development, encapsulating the spirit of collaboration and innovation.

The caption, **Ambition to Action**, truly struck a chord with my thinking. Every morning at 9 am, I attended the orientation session on the gender constituency. The session on the 9th, chaired by Mrs. Kalyani Raj, the honourable president of AIWC, showcased the deep-rooted working relations that AIWC maintains with NGOs working for climate change. Witnessing the familiarity and affection extended towards Mrs Kalyani Raj by numerous participants made me immensely proud of AIWC's impactful presence in the global climate dialogue.

Youth Climate Dialogue: Participation in the Youth Climate Dialogue, recommended by the Glasgow Climate Pact, provided me with an enriching platform to directly share policy priorities with decision-makers. The culmination event, the Youth Stocktake Outcomes Launch, underscored the commitment to inclusivity by synthesizing priorities, outcomes, and next steps. The youth stocktake process initiated at SB58 unveiled progress and gaps in youth inclusion, presenting a blueprint for enhancing youth participation in the UNFCCC process.

ACE and its significance: The session focused on Action for Climate Empowerment (ACE), as outlined in Article 6 of the Convention and Article

12 of the Paris Agreement, and emerged as a beacon for fostering global climate engagement. The overarching goal of preventing dangerous human interference with the climate system is pursued through six vital ACE elements. These encompass climate change education, training, public awareness, participation, access to information, and international cooperation. Recognizing the importance of engaging all sectors of society, ACE emphasizes the empowerment of individuals, particularly the youth, in steering the world towards a low-emission, climate-resilient future.

Youth Environmental Alliance in Higher Education: The session organized by YEAH, a Research Coordination Network in Undergraduate Biology Education, provided insight into empowering students across higher education institutions to address climate change and the Sustainable Development Goals.

ART X CLIMATE: Connecting Head to Heart: This session showcased climate change through storytelling, film, fine art, music, soundscape, theatre, dance, fashion, virtual reality, and social media. Three captivating performances through short films and videos left a lasting impression on me, highlighting the diverse ways art can convey the urgency of climate action.

Climate Solutions through Research and Student Engagement: Pameela Templer, professor and chair of the Department of Biology at Boston University, emphasized the importance of study and research in meaningful interventions. It prompted the suggestion that AIWC considers prioritizing small research centres at both the head office and branch levels.

Indigenous Youth Empowerment & Other Sessions: I partially attended sessions on Indigenous Youth

Empowerment, Entertainment and Culture Pavilion, Supporting Innovation to Build Food System Resilience across Landscapes and Waterscapes, Youth-driven Climate Change Solutions for the Future, and Community Screenings in Rural and Climate Frontlines.

Future of Sustainable Agriculture: Discussions on the differing international contexts for emissions reduction and food security, organized by Monas University, emphasized innovation and practice through people, campuses, and catalyzing the transition to net zero.

Consolidation of Sessions:

Climate-Resilient Crop Varieties: Facilitate the development and adoption of climate-resilient crop varieties through advanced breeding techniques, emphasizing drought and disease resistance.

Promotion of Agro-Tourism and Rural Entrepreneurship: Integrate agro-tourism initiatives with rural entrepreneurship to create sustainable livelihoods and enhance the economic viability of agricultural communities.

Water Resource Management and Conservation: Implement precision irrigation systems and

promote water-use efficiency through the adoption of innovative water-saving technologies.

UAE's Leadership and Regional Climate Action: The United Arab Emirates' exemplary leadership in climate action, particularly in a region grappling with extreme heat and water scarcity, showcased a strategic approach that positions the country as a global hub for sustainability, technology, business, commerce, and tourism.

Conclusion:

A Distinctive COP 28 Experience: My experience at COP 28 in Dubai was truly transformative. The commitment to climate empowerment, youth inclusion, and the pursuit of sustainable development echoed throughout the conference. The UAE's role as a regional climate leader exemplifies the urgent need for collaborative efforts at all levels of government and society. Reflecting on the discussions, initiatives, and vibrant atmosphere, I am inspired by the collective determination to address climate change and accelerate the transition to a sustainable future. This experience has not only broadened my understanding but has also fuelled my commitment to actively contribute to the global effort for a resilient and low-emission world.



An Introduction to COP

- Mrs Shanthi Socrates, MIC, Promotion of Renewable Energy, Energy Efficiency and Conservation

COP is the formal meeting of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) parties. COP stands for the 'Conference of the Parties'—the governing body of an international convention. These conferences are held yearly in the framework of the UNFCCC, or COP, to assess progress in dealing with climate change.

The first COP meeting was held in Berlin, Germany, in March 1995.

In COP 3, on December 11, 1997, the Kyoto Protocol was adopted in Kyoto, Japan. In COP 11, a Montreal action plan was created. In COP 15, Copenhagen, and COP 17, Durban, the Green Climate Fund was created.

COP 21 in Paris, 2015, secured the crucial Paris Agreement, which was an unprecedented unification of the world's nations, agreeing to limit carbon emissions and combat climate change. In November 2016, the Paris Agreement entered into force, with signatory countries committed to low-carbon strategies. This marked the beginning of the process of reducing global emissions.

The Paris Agreement was signed by a majority of countries in attendance, and it marked a turning point in the battle against climate change. These countries aimed to hold the increase in global average temperature below 2 degrees Celsius, above pre-industrial levels, ideally limiting the increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius. These countries stood united for the first time in history to legally ratify action against pollution through the United Nations Framework Convention.

Kyoto Protocol

The Kyoto Protocol mandated that industrialized nations cut their greenhouse gas emissions at a time when the threat of global warming was growing rapidly. Kyoto Protocol, which was adopted on December 11, 1997, became international law on February 16, 2005. Countries that ratified the Kyoto Protocol were assigned maximum carbon emission

levels for specific periods and participated in carbon credit trading. The Kyoto Protocol was intended to last until 2020.

The Kyoto Protocol established three different mechanisms, such as

1. International emissions trading
2. The Clean Development
3. The Joint Implementation

to enable countries in additional ways to meet their emission limitation target. It recognized that developed countries are principally responsible for the high levels of GHG emissions in the atmosphere as a result of more than 150 years of industrial activity. It separated countries into three groups. Annex 1: industrialized countries that were members of the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) plus countries with economies in transition (the EIT Parties); Annex 2: OECD members of Annex 1, but not the EIT Parties; Non-Annex 1: mostly developing countries, and all three groups had differing commitments.

In December 2012, after the first commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol ended, the original Kyoto Protocol was amended in Doha, Qatar. But the Doha Amendment had a short life. The Paris Climate Agreement was signed in 2015 in Paris, effectively replacing the Kyoto Protocol.

The Paris Climate Agreement

The Paris Climate Agreement is a landmark pact that was adopted by nearly every nation to address climate change and its negative effects. It also provided a way for developed nations to assist developing nations in their efforts to adopt climate control, and it created a framework for monitoring and reporting countries' climate goals transparently.

As MIC of Promotion of Renewable Energy, Energy Efficiency, and Conservation, I would like to point out India's stand at COP 26 in Glasgow,

UK. India presented the five nectar elements (Panchamrit) of India's climate action. Lifestyle for the environment (LIFE) to combat climate change was also shared in COP 26.

- 1) To reach 500 GW of non-fossil energy capacity by 2030
- 2) 50% of its energy requirements will come from renewable energy by 2030.
- 3) Reduction of total projected carbon emissions by one billion metric tons from now to 2030
- 4) Reduction of the carbon intensity of the economy by 45% by 2030 over 2005 levels.
- 5) Achieving the target of net zero emissions by 2070

Variable renewable energy (VRE) resources are renewable energy resources that are non-dispatchable due to their fluctuating nature, such as wind power and solar power, as opposed to controllable renewable energy resources such as dammed hydroelectricity or biomass or relatively constant sources such as geothermal power.

To cut down emissions, India needs to increase renewable energy integration and absorption. Running existing coal or gas power plants at low load factors and flexibly to stabilize the grid will help increase the share of variable renewable energy in the electricity supply mix.

The utilization of VRE-generated electricity requires cost-effective and efficient energy storage systems that deliver better use of existing power systems, high power quality, and support grid stability. The increasing reliance on variable renewable energy as a source of low-carbon electricity is precipitating fundamental shifts in how power systems are controlled, configured, and regulated.

Only 11.5% of the electricity generated in India is produced by variable renewable energy (VRE)

sources, and coal-fired thermal power plants generated 74.3% of India's electricity during FY 2022–2023. Further, India's cumulative emissions from fossil fuels and industrial purposes between 1750 and 2021 are only 3.3% of the global total.

Sustainable development would be an empty catchphrase if we did not fill the development needs of 17% of the world's population.

COP 28

The 28th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 28) is to be conducted in Dubai between November 30th and December 12th. It is expected that this conference will discuss the four pillars of transition.

1. Speed up the transition to a low-CO2 world.
2. Fix climate finance.
3. Focus on people, lives, and livelihoods.
4. Full inclusivity

At COP 28, nations will focus on cutting down on fossil fuel use and accelerating the energy transition. The key feature of this summit will be the conclusion of the Global Stocktake, a first-ever reckoning of the actions taken by each country towards achieving targets set at the COP in Paris in 2015. Global stocktake is the critical turning point when it comes to efforts to address climate change. It will help the world's nations take a long, hard look at the state of our planet and chart a better course for the future. The nations are at a point where it is important to act fast to mitigate climate change, or the measures that will be taken in the future won't be enough to protect the people who are already affected by it. At present, there is an urge and a need to scale up climate adaptation efforts, which refer to adjustments in ecological, social, or economic systems in response to the current and projected impacts of climate change.



Report of international faculty visit to AIWC

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

A team of sixteen American Professors from the Faculty Development Group of the American Institute of Indian Studies, Delhi, visited the Head Office AIWC, for an Orientation Program on 28th December, 2023 and interacted and exchanged ideas with AIWC management, members, and staff.

Dr. Manju Kak, the Secretary General, welcomed them, emphasizing the history of AIWC and the pivotal role played by founder members in establishing the organization prior to Independence. She highlighted that All India Women's Conference founded by Margaret Cousins, an Irish woman, to promote women's emancipation. This also marked the inception of women's participation in the revolutionary movement, against colonial rule. Gandhiji played a foundational role in instilling this philosophy in the minds of all, and pride was expressed in this regard. Dr. Manju Kak further informed that during the partition of India, AIWC members played a active role in helping refugee camps. AIWC itself is a secular organization with a non-profit ideology from that time onward.

The Treasurer Dr. Upasana Singh briefed the team about the current AIWC status. She elaborated on women's organizations, emphasizing that each organization trains members for effective work. Thereafter, the MICs and members introduced themselves to the team.

Ms Ritu, assistant program manager, highlighted various community development projects focussing on health, nutrition and skill development, including the EESL program and awareness programmes on important social issues.

She highlighted the climate change programs under AIWC president Smt Kalyani Raj. She discussed the project in the light of real-time data of beneficiaries collected during the programmes.

Amar Sawhney holds the position of Professor of

Architecture, Building Construction, and Interior Design at Miami Dade College. His engagement extends to collaborating with cities to aid underserved communities. Additionally, he serves as a co-leader for a faculty development seminar. While discussing the climate change program, he inquired about the protection of the Sunderbans to safeguard the mangrove forest and garner support for the livelihoods of nearby villagers.

In response, Ms Ritu shared that AIWC has branches in Kolkatta and South Parganas. These branches have been actively planning various projects, including plantation initiatives in the vicinity of the Sunderbans, offering supportive programs for livelihood improvement. Furthermore, these branches have undertaken projects to provide education to children in local villages, and numerous microorganisms are contributing to the overall development of the area.

Jessica R. Barnes, an Associate Teaching Professor in the Department of Geography, Planning, and Recreation at Northern Arizona University, inquired about the use of the English language in Indian schools. In response, Prof. Sherina Joshi stated that English is indeed taught in schools, but the initiation varies. Government schools typically introduce English after the 5th class, while private schools commence English instruction as early as the nursery level. In India, three languages—Hindi, English, and the local language—are universally used. Private schools may also include German and French in their curriculum after the primary classes. Amarjit Sawhney added that post-independence, English is the primary language taught in private schools.

During the discussion on elected positions and the role of women in Parliament and Assemblies, Leila Chacko, the Director of Public Affairs for Indian Affairs at the University of Central Florida, posed a question about the voting rights of women in India to which Smt. Shubra Mehndiratta, MIC Constitution,

explained that in India everyone has the right to vote after turning 18. She also elaborated on other issues connected with political empowerment of women.

In response to a question from Helene Ducros, a JD and PhD in Geography from the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, about the challenges an ordinary woman may face in standing as a contestant, she highlighted that there is no discrimination in elections, and anyone can contest. The ability to convince the public is a necessary criterion. The university provides a platform for students' roles in the political context. She also emphasized the role of Panchayat Raj in villages, where there is 33% reservation for contesting elections, contributing to the empowerment of local areas.

Regarding questions on any legislature and labour law, Treasurer Upasana Singh clarified that the organization is collectively supportive, but as a non-political organisation no political issues are taken up. However, in matters concerning the welfare of women and children, recommendations are made to the government.

Ajay Budhiraj explained that members nominated in the Rajya Sabha often come from fields such as art, music, and dance. Dr. Manju Kak then provided a brief overview of how AIWC has fought for women's

rights over the years since independence, citing numerous examples.

In response to a question about women's roles in peace and AIWC's involvement in human rights, Manju Kak mentioned a book by late Prof. Aparna Basu shedding light on human rights in the context of the constitution and parliament. Dr. Upasana Singh asserted that women have equal rights in Parliament and across all spheres.

Prof. Sandria B. Freitag, Associate Professor in History at North Carolina State University, raised questions about gender sensitivity. The assistant programme manager explained that AIWC operates through various branches dedicated to community-based work. AIWC's main objective is to provide support to grassroots communities, fostering financial independence for a better quality of life. This includes awareness programs that foster gender sensitivity amongst youth and others.

Treasurer Dr. Upasana Singh expressed gratitude to all for their participation. Afterwards, the attendees were invited for lunch, followed by visits to Bapnu Ghar and the Textile Centre of AIWC, and a visit to a field project at Majnu Ki Tilla organized by the SWEDWA branch of AIWC.



Shilpkala Utsav-2023

- by Sapna Acharya, *Shilpkala utsav, Sub-committee member*

The Shilpkala Utsav at the All India Women's Conference, held from October 25th to 27th, 2023, signifies a longstanding tradition of providing a platform to women artists and entrepreneurs that facilitates the sale of their products and also showcase their artistic talents to the world at large.

The fair commenced with the adornment of colourful flags and hangings, creating an artistic ambience. This year's focus was on the theme of the Santhal Tribal from the Eastern Region of India, Orissa. The Shilpkala Utsav featured the traditional Santhal dance known as "Lagan Naccha," performed by ten women artisans from Rengalbeda, Mayurbhanja, and Odisha adorned in their localsarees. Accompanied by the rhythmic beats of tamak, tumdah, chadchadi, and ghanti, the ladies gracefully danced with Kasa Lota decorated with beautiful flowers on their heads. Their movements synchronized with the music's rhythm, creating an irresistible allure for the audience to join and dance with them in their respective styles, making it a truly representative celebration of India's rich cultural heritage.

Ms Archana Pandey from AWWA was the chief guest. Over the three days, numerous esteemed guests including; Ms Nidhi Harit, Deputy Director of Handloom and Handicrafts, Ms Sanjay Bhoi, a former Member of Parliament from Odisha, and Ms Sharon Lowen, an American Odissi dancer visited the event. The guests were presented with a silk stole and tilak with kumkum and rice was applied as a mark of honour to guests. A puja was performed and the lamp was lighted before the idol of Ganesh.

The Gandhian practice of crafting thread with the charkha served as a major attraction, like every year, and the guests came forward to spend a few moments engaging in this traditional art. The demonstration led by specific artisans like sabai grass basket weaving, pattachitra painting, Odisha, and Kalamkari added an element of excitement to the event.

This year there was a demonstration by 70 members from Sanjeevani Mahila Sanstha, Meerut, led

by Ms. Nishi Jain. Each participant prominently showcased a quotation at their forefront, centered around the theme of saving the environment and nature and adorned with captivating slogans. The symbolic gesture of holding a long arrow during the guest reception adds an enchanting touch, creating captivating moments for everyone involved.

There was a gathering of around 109 artists from diverse backgrounds and different parts of India. This year holds a distinctiveness of its own, featuring genuine artisans from remote tribal areas as well as participants from organizations like the Army Women's Welfare Association and the Air Force Women's Welfare Association. The array extends further with the inclusion of a variety of household utilities and designer sarees, crafted by traditional weavers in India.

The abundance of stalls, each crafted with spacious, charming white canopy-style designs, imparted a distinctive aesthetic. These stalls offer a plethora of materials for guests and customers.

The items ranged from Kerala's Ayurveda Panchakarma to Rizwana Khatun's designer carpets. The assortment included hand-painted sarees from West Bengal, Kalamkari designs from Andhra Pradesh, Bandhini work by Riyaz Khatri from Gujarat, and Phulkari work from Patiala. This diversity of designs from artisans added a unique touch to the overall show.

The artisans specialising in Pattachitra, Ikat, and Sambalpuri Khandua silk sarees from Odisha found the experience to be an enlightening exploration of a new platform. This opportunity allowed them to gain confidence in interacting with customers, resulting in brisk business transactions. The significance of this interaction cannot be understated, as it enables these artisans to showcase their skills and adapt to the preferences of their clientele. This successful engagement aligns with the core idea behind organising Shilpkala providing motivation and support for artists to enhance their craft in a more meaningful manner.

Young entrepreneurs such as Morpanks, who

specialized in designer sarees and hand embroidery from Kutch, captured the attention of customers. The Kalamkari designer handbags crafted by these young participants served as an additional attraction. The hand-made embroidery designs from Jammu and Kashmir, as well as Parampara's focus on tribal handwoven sarees from Odisha, added to the diverse range of products. In addition to individual artists, branches of AIWC also actively participated in the Shilpkala Utsav, presenting their artistic skills and talents. AIWC Textile Printing stood out with its block printing materials drawing the attention of customers. Women entrepreneurs from AFFWA and AWWA participated with great enthusiasm, aiming to

enhance their talents and expand their businesses.

The three-day continuous celebration created an enthralling experience for customers, offering an array of sumptuous food. Attendees not only enjoyed satisfying their culinary cravings but also had the opportunity to take a break from shopping, and partake in the spirited Santhal dance, and capture memorable moments through photographs.

The success of this remarkable event can be attributed to the meticulous planning and guidance provided by our president Kalyani Raj, secretary Manju Kak, and treasurer Upasana Singh. The credit for its successful and strategic execution goes to the all-time cool and composed Smt Jayashree Kumar who was the main coordinator.



Inaugural Ceremony and other shots captured of Shilpkala Utsav



Going an extra mile...

Branch activities

1. A visit of the President to Durbadal Rural Br, Canning

- by Smt Deepa Acharya, SCM, Constituent branch of AIWC South Calcutta Branch

AIWC President, Smt. Kalyani Raj, visited the AIWC Durbadal Canning Constituent Branch on October 2, 2023, accompanied by the Zonal Organiser of AIWC, Eastern Zone A, Smt Chandrani Niyogi, and Smt Sikha Mitra, MIC. This rural branch under the AIWC Calcutta South Branch is situated in Canning South 24 Parganas, one of the border districts of West Bengal.

The president reached Canning at 10 a.m., and the happy faces of the Creche children of 'Minur Pathshala' greeted her. She said she was reminded of her early days at AIWC. The children showed her their drawings and performed for her. She distributed toys among them. She then met the Youth Wing members. One of the members presented her with a beautiful drawing of Mahatma Gandhi. Being Gandhi Jayanti, a short program on Gandhiji was

presented. Then Smt. Kalyani Raj visited the computer project and spoke to the beneficiaries. She bought some articles made by students in tailoring and embroidery classes. Then she visited the vermiculture project, which was started on World Earth Day, in the presence of the zonal organizer, AIWC Eastern Zone A, Smt. Chandrani Niyogi. She saw the products made by the Spice and Pickles project. After that, she saw how different parts are coloured in a batik design with the help of wax coverings in the batik project. Thereafter, the President was entertained by ethnic Bengali songs by the beneficiaries of Sanjh Bela (the senior citizens group).

The president then addressed the members of the branch. She congratulated the branch for their sincere work and promised to come again. The visit ended with lunch prepared by the AIWC Durbadal Canning Constituent Branch Canteen.



2. Renewable Energy & Energy Efficient Technologies

- An awareness session

- by Yuthika Mishra, President, Ujjawal Women's Association

An awareness session on renewable energy and energy-efficient technologies was organised on October 20, 2023, by the Ujjawal Women's Association in collaboration with the All India Women's Conference (AIWC) and the Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL). Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL), an entity under the Ministry of Power, is a super energy service company (ESCO), which enables consumers, industries, and governments to effectively manage their energy needs through energy-efficient technologies. The seminar aimed to create awareness about energy conservation and the reduction of carbon footprints, to foster a sense of responsibility and environmental consciousness among the participants, particularly emphasizing the participation of young individuals.

Three resource persons from EESL, Ms Charu Jain, Dr Ritu Singh, and Ms Shefali Sharma, explained the purpose and objective of the session and also elaborated on the processes involved. Dr Ritu Singh outlined the session objective under five different headings: types of energy—renewable and non-renewable; renewable sources of energy generation; energy conservation and efficiency; electric vehicles; and what we can do to make more efficient use of energy.

The event commenced with a warm welcome from the organizing committee, emphasizing the importance of energy conservation and its profound impact on the environment. Esteemed speaker Dr Ritu Singh, along with her colleague, are the representatives holding expertise in this field. They shared their insights on various aspects of energy efficiency, ranging from sustainable practices to the utilization of renewable resources. Interactive sessions, including panel discussions and practical demonstrations, enabled the participants to grasp the significance of their contributions to the larger goal of sustainable energy consumption. The best part is that they covered the entire Indian condition and facts in just a few hours.

The seminar witnessed a remarkable turnout of participants, including students, faculty members, industry professionals, environmental enthusiasts, and professors. Notably, young individuals who were enthusiastic participants underscored

their growing interest and commitment to environmental sustainability, reflecting a promising shift in their perspective towards energy awareness.

Key Takeaways:

1. Enhanced understanding of the importance of energy conservation and sustainable practices.
2. Increased awareness of the impact of carbon footprint reduction on the environment.
3. Empowerment of participants, particularly the youth, in advocating for energy-efficient solutions in their respective spheres of influence.

Important Facts That Were Discussed:

- India's energy consumption has been steadily increasing. In 2019, it was the third-largest energy consumer in the world after China and the United States. The country's energy demand is expected to double by 2040.
- The energy sector is a significant contributor to India's carbon emissions, with coal being the dominant energy source.
- In 2019, India was the third-largest carbon emitter, with CO₂ emissions exceeding 2.6 billion metric tons.
- Power generation contributes to almost 46% of the overall CO₂ emissions.
- Coal weighing 500 grams is required to produce 1 unit of electricity.
- According to the World Resources Institute report released in 2020, there are two main strategies for removing carbon from the environment, 1) first through planting and forest restoration, 2) second through direct air capture technology.
- List of greenhouse gases: Carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, hydrochloro-fluorocarbons (HCFCs), hydrofluoro carbons (HFCs), and ozone.
- The impact of CO₂ emissions is mainly due to the following: CO₂ emissions remain in the atmosphere for more than 300 years, forest fire, floods, increasing temperature, weather changing and natural calamities.
- According to the World Air Quality Report 2022, India ranks 8 in the global list of countries with the most hazardous air quality and hosts 12 of the 15 most polluted cities in Central and South Asia.

16 All India Women's Conference

- India's first solar-powered village is Modhera in Gujarat, which was implemented under the Gujarat Suryagram project. The total cost was RS. 80.66 crore.

- Energy conservation is the practice of using less energy by adjusting behaviour and habits.

Energy efficiency, on the other hand, involves using technology that requires less energy to perform the same function.

- India's air pollution index (Air Quality Index on October 18, 2023): 129

- India's energy landscape is primarily dominated by coal, followed by oil and natural gas. These conventional sources of energy have been the backbone of the country's industrial and economic growth. However, they come with a high carbon cost, contributing significantly to the country's carbon footprint. Furthermore, the ever-growing demand for energy due to urbanization, industrialization, and a rising middle class poses a significant challenge to sustainable development.

- Energy efficiency is crucial to curbing energy consumption and reducing the strain on existing energy resources. By maximizing energy efficiency, India can achieve its development goals while simultaneously minimizing its environmental impact. Energy efficiency not only leads to a reduction in energy consumption but also contributes to cost savings for industries, businesses, and households, thereby bolstering economic growth and improving living standards.

- Strategies for Energy Efficiency and Carbon Footprint Reduction:

1. Promotion of Renewable Energy Sources: India has a vast potential for renewable energy sources, including solar, wind, hydro, and bioenergy. Encouraging the use of these sources can significantly reduce the country's reliance on fossil fuels and subsequently decrease the carbon footprint.

2. Implementation of Energy-Efficient Technologies: Embracing energy-efficient technologies across industries, transportation, and households can lead to substantial energy savings. This includes the adoption of energy-efficient appliances, LED lighting, and the use of efficient industrial processes.

3. Building Energy-Efficient Infrastructure: Incorporating energy-efficient design principles in infrastructure development, including green buildings and smart cities, can lead to reduced energy consumption and lower carbon emissions in the long run.

4. Policy Initiatives and Regulations: Enforcing stringent energy efficiency standards, providing incentives for the adoption of energy-efficient technologies, and implementing regulations to curb carbon emissions are crucial steps in reducing the carbon footprint.

Conclusion

The success of the seminar can be attributed to the collaborative efforts of UWA, AIWC, and EESL, who demonstrated their commitment to promoting environmental consciousness and sustainable practices. The seminar successfully instilled a deeper understanding of the importance of energy efficiency and its implications for a sustainable future.



3. Adolescent Awareness

- A report

-by Kriti Naren, Secretary, Human Touch Foundation

Human Touch Foundation, the Greater Noida branch of AIWC, organised a programme on adolescent awareness on December 24, 2023, focusing on child abuse and child rights (POCSO) in the village Sakipur, Greater Noida.

Kriti Naren, the branch secretary, explained in her welcome address the need for awareness on the subject and the lifelong traumatic impact of child abuse on the victim. She said that this program is to sensitize women and children to differentiate between good touch and bad touch and to give children a safe upbringing and protect them from any child abuse. A skit was presented on this subject by the team members, which was enjoyed and well taken by the audience.

Advocate Rajeshwari Mitra explained the POCSO Act and the punishment for such a heinous crime. She explained the reporting procedure for such incidents to the police and mentioned the helpline number for children in India, ie, 1098. This is a free, 24/7 emergency service for children in need of assistance. She also appealed to women to keep

a vigilant eye on their children and take action on sudden behavioural changes.

In the interactive session, the audience actively participated. Few women shared their bad touch experiences during their adolescent days with their relatives, neighbours and even family members, which disturbs them to date. Even some teenagers came forward to share their minds and experiences. Children were encouraged to share their feelings with their parents without fear.

The symptoms of such abuse were not limited to just physical injuries but also included situations of depression, difficulty trusting others, making friends, sudden changes in eating or sleeping patterns, inappropriate sexual behaviour, poor hygiene, secrecy, hostility, etc. If any evidence of abuse is seen, a report should be made to the state's child protective services department or local police. In the end, another small skit in an entertaining and informative manner was enacted. At the end of the program, refreshment was distributed among the participants, and Christmas greetings were exchanged.



4. Zonal Report of AIWC East Zone A

- by Smt Chandrani Neogie, Zonal Organizer, East Zone A

AIWC East Zone A consists of West Bengal & Odisha and has 15 Main Branches and 65 Constituent Branches with 12 Blocks of Balasore, Odisha.

On 13th July 2023, AIWC East Zone A was fortunate to be able to felicitate our dynamic, energetic & enthusiastic National President Smt. Kalyani Raj at Kolkata, Kaushik Hall, Nari Seva Sangha. All the Main Branches & Constituent Branches of Kolkata & Howrah joined the event with great delight. More than 110 members spontaneously participated to interact with our beloved President directly. The Programme was supported by AIWC GMJ Constituent Branch.



Visit of President Kalyani Raj to Kolkata main & constituent branches

On October 4, 2023, the Zonal Conference of AIWC East Zone A was held at Kolkata, Kaushik Hall, Jadavpur. Respected President Smt. Kalyani Raj, Honourable Secretary General Dr Manju Kak, and Honourable Treasurer Dr Upasana Singh graced the conference. Vice President Smt. Gopamudra Mohapatra, Asst. Secretaries Smt. Indrani Sengupta and Ms Catherine Pradhan Lobo, MICs Smt Gunkeshari Pradhan and Smt Shikha Mitra, and 130 delegates from various parts of West Bengal and Orissa were present. It was a huge success. The Zonal Conference was hosted by the AIWC GMJ branch.



Zonal meet of East Zone A

On 5th October 2023, AIWC Secretary General Dr Manju Kak and Treasurer Dr Upasana Singh visited and saw the activities of the two branches.

AIWC Behala Constituent Branch under AIWC Calcutta Southwest Suburban Branch is running a free pre-primary school named 'Sarojini Naidu Sishu Vidyalaya' for children aged 3 to 5 years and a free primary school in the name of 'Lady Abala Basu Primary School' since 1983, for underprivileged children. They also run an embroidery, knitting, and tailoring center for women in distress.

They also visited the AIWC ECC Branch at Lake Town, Kolkata. They inspected the part-time medical dispensary creche inside a slum area. They also went to the ECC office for the pre-made section branch.



Vistt of Secretary General Dr Manju Kak & Treasurer Dr Upasana Singh to branches

5. Felicitation of Kalpana Roy, Secretary of Raiganj Mahila Sammilani on Matri Shakti Sammelan by MSS

Mahila Samanway Samiti (MSS) organised their Matri Shakti Sammelan on December 17, 2023 in Sarada Vidya Mandir School, Uttardinaipjur which meant for the acknowledgement of the immense value and power of women in society. In this programme, they felicitated Mrs Kalpana Roy for her contribution to women's empowerment since 1975. She is humbled and felt obliged for such great respect and honour from MSS.



6. Activities in Oct-Dec 2023 period of Calcutta North East Suburban branch of AIWC

- by Shampa Das, Secretary and SCM of the branch

In November 2023, our branch donated Rs.8000/- for the disaster in North Sikkim.

- All our constituent branches celebrated Bijoya Sarmilan at our Calcutta NES main branch, where all our members participated in cultural programmes and we parted with the exchange of sweets.
- On 21st December, our branch organized an awareness programme on 'Renewable Energy and Energy Efficient Technologies' in collaboration with EESI, funded by the head office, New Delhi. The programme was held at East Calcutta Girls' College

at Lake Town and was attended by the students, teachers of the college and our members including MIC Mrs Shikha Mitra. A PPT presentation was made and an interactive session was held towards the end of the programme.

- On 23rd December, we celebrated Christmas with around 25 senior citizens of Geetanjali Old Age Home at Kestapur by giving them woollen clothings, body oil, cream, lotions etc. A lady gave us lace borders for blouses as a return gift which was a sweet touchy gesture on their part. We had a wonderful time with the ladies.



7. Activities in Oct-Dec 2023

WOMEN'S INDIAN ASSOCIATION, CHENNAI

- by Smt Padma Venkataraman, President, WIA

A solar programme was conducted on October 21, 2023, at the WIA premises for members, where experts demonstrated how to use the solar cooker.

- A one-day awareness programme on National Integration was organized on November 30, 2023, at the Dr MGR Janaki College of Science and Arts for Women. WIA president Smt Padma Venkataraman talked about the challenges faced in building

national integration and about the great leaders who motivated people to keep unity, peace, love, and brotherhood among them. Many other dignitaries attended the programme. Nearly 113 youth and teachers benefited.

- Relief items were distributed to 50 families affected by the Michaung cyclone and also to the Leprosy Rehabilitation Centre at Villivakkam.



8. Activities in Oct-Dec 2023 at AIWC Kakinada Branch

- by Ms Vijayalakshmi, Standing Committee Member

The AIWC Kakinada branch participated in the programme EK TAREEKH-EK GHANTA-EKSAATH by the Govt. of India on October 1, 2023, with organizations like ONGC, NCC, local panchayat staff, and NSS volunteers from different colleges. I cleaned the Kakinada Beach area for one hour. We received a very good response from our sister organizations. On World Mental Health Day, we conducted an event in the Hotel Grand by GRT for the staff of the hotel. Dr. Vijayalakshmi, a psychologist, addressed the staff and emphasized the importance of mental health.

In November 2023, our Constituent Branch participated in a two-kilometer run for the elimination of violence against women conducted by the Maitreyi Women Organization. Sweets and crackers were distributed to the children of the beach cleaning staff. After the cyclone, we helped some poor families with groceries.

We participated in the medical camp for HIV-positive children organized by our branch, Maitreyi Women Organisation. AIWC, Kakinada, sponsored millet and healthy drinks for children.

During the celebration of national integration and communal harmony, we conducted a meeting in the Panchayat Office, Suryaraopet village. Dr.Y. Vasantha, High Court Advocate, participated and gave an elaborate lecture about “communal harmony.” She interacted with participants. The event was supported by the Head Office, New Delhi.

As our Udaan Project is coming to a close, O.N.G.C. was requested to sponsor sewing machines for the beneficiaries. Certificates, machines, and tool kits will be given to trainees in the new year.

AIWC, Kakinada, celebrated Christmas with elder people in the Red Cross Old Age Home. 20 women and 18 men participated in this event. They sang Christmas songs and enjoyed it very much. AIWC sponsored cake and snacks.



9. Activities in Oct-Dec 2023 at Ashok Nagar Main Branch, Ranchi

- by Dr Jyotsna Kumar, Secretary, AIWC, Ranchi

On 9th October 2023, AIWC, Ashok Nagar Main Branch Ranchi, Jharkhand organized “Swakshata Abhiyan” in a Government Middle School where students were given lectures on maintaining sanitation, good health, cleanliness etc. The students were given soaps for body and clothes as well. A competition was held for classes and the best class was gifted with a dustbin and a big dustbin was presented to the school for maintaining sanitation. Some food items were distributed among the students.

On 5th November 2023, deepotsav was celebrated in Mahila Club Bhawan. Diwali was celebrated with all the members. The dance and songs were performed by younger members and finally it ended with the party dinner.

On 12th December 2023, blankets, woolen garments, and edibles were distributed in a Blind School, in Bahu Bazar, Ranchi. The blind students thanked us by singing a beautiful song.



10. Activities in Oct-Dec 2023 at Jagriti Women's Conference, Haridwar

- by Dr. Karuna Sharma, Secretary, JWC, Haridwar

Gandhi Jayanti was celebrated at the Computer Training Centre, Kangri, Haridwar. After performing Hawan, tribute was paid to Rashtrapita Mahatma Gandhi ji and Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri ji. In the awareness programs on health, hygiene, and malnutrition conducted in 32 different schools on October 3 and November 28, 2023, the students were made aware that 2023 was a millet year, which means 'MOTA ANAJ VARSH' and highlighted the importance of millets to health and the benefits of the grain millets. Almost 250 students from grades 9th to 12th attended and benefited from this awareness program. Lifestyle disorders and diseases were also discussed.

JWC organized an awareness program on 'Sanskar and Jeevan Mulya' at Jila Bal Sanrakshan Grah, Roshnabad, Haridwar. Secretary Karuna Sharma narrated a beautiful peacock story to the children and explained the value of learning from it. Mrs. Manjula Bhagat, our patron, told the children about 'sanskar and jeevan mulya' in very simple language. At the end, stationary and snacks were distributed among the children.

We organized an awareness program on the use and misuse of mobile phones in an intercollegiate setting. The use and misuse of mobile phones were

discussed, and how to use them to one's advantage was explained by experts. Students were made aware of issues like cyberbullying and cybercrime and the protective measures against them.

We organized two eye check-up camps in two different villages. The patients were given free medicines, spectacles, etc., and two cataract patients were given free treatment, including the cataract operation.

JWC, Haridwar, donated seven potlaks of mixed materials —clothes, bags, bed sheets, etc.— and two electronic items to the Goonj organization for a social cause.

An awareness program on environmental conservation was organized, where the importance of the environment and nature was discussed. The harmful effect of plastic on the environment was also discussed. Our day-care center, sponsored by AIWC Old Age Trust, New Delhi, is running successfully. Sweets, snacks, and other food items were distributed among the old ladies on the occasion of Diwali.

Our organization inaugurated a free computer training center at Kangri Bhawan on Gandhi Jayanti in 2022 to empower girls and women in Kangri.

Our organization has been providing medical facilities to the villagers of Kangri Gram and other nearby villages every Sunday regularly for almost the last 6 years.



Awareness program on environmental conservation



Computer Literacy training



Day care centre of JWC



Free eye camp



11. AIWC's programmes on National Integration

A review

- by Supriya Bhalerao

Coordinator, National Integration & Communal Harmony

The national week of National Integration & Communal harmony was coming closer hence the Coordinator sent a Circular appealing to the branches of AIWC to come forward and conduct the programmes in their branch offices or in the educational institutes they generally work with, on this subject in the week of November 19-25, 2023 and further till the month end. She suggested that they apply for a one-day awareness programme of the AIWC Head office and avail the funding for that. After a fortnight, the result was amazing! As many as 13 branches took the opportunity and conducted programmes successfully in this week, availing the funds from the Head office.

AIWC has always been closely working with the National Foundation of Communal Harmony (NFCH) that comes under the Ministry of Home Affairs. When they were informed about it, they were pleased and asked the AIWC to send a report on these programmes to incorporate in their manual.

The list of programmes held in the National Integration week (19-25 Nov, 2023) is as under:

- 1) Durgabai D. Adopted Village Komaragiri Branch, in Andhra Pradesh conducted it on 19.11.2023
- 2) Kalpadharu Women's Association, Palakkad Branch, Tamil Nadu, on 17.10.2023
- 3) Dhuri Hoon Mai, Budh Vihar, N Delhi, on 22.11.2023
- 4) Cannal West Constituent Branch, Kolkata, West Bengal, on 19.11.2023
- 5) Canning Durbadal branch, Constituent Branch, W. Bengal on 26.11.2023
- 6) Vikas Mahila Sangam, East Delhi branch, New Delhi, on 26.11.2023
- 7) Amritsar Branch, Amritsar, Punjab, on 24.11.2023
- 8) Human Touch Foundation, Greater Noida Branch, New Delhi, on 24.11.2023
- 9) Gandhi Nari Kalyan Samiti, Dhampur, UP on 29.11.2023
- 10) Nirbhaya Kranti Mahila Mandali, Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh, on 30.11.23

11) Kakinada Branch, Kakinada, AP on 2.12.2023

12) Women's India Association, Chennai, TN on 30.11.2023

13) Raiganj Mahila Sammilani, Raiganj, West Bengal on 25.11.2023

Most of these branches have organised the programmes mostly in the educational institutes. They held some activities and competitions along with the speeches by the experts.

In all, there were 14 programmes conducted in the year 2023, funded by AIWC Head Office, since initially, the Hyderabad Branch of AIWC in Telangana state, also had conducted a pilot programme on National Integration of one-day awareness nature with theme of 'Know your India', on October 18, 2023, at one of the renowned colleges of Hyderabad - St Ann's Women's College in Hyderabad. Dr Rekha Pande, a sought-after speaker on Women related issues, was the chief speaker, who spoke extremely well with an elaborate PPT presentation. Competitions like Essay writing, Poster making, and slogan writing etc, were held and prizes given. Student girls danced on the theme of National Integration and presented dance forms of Andhra, Bengali, Rajasthani and Punjabi states. Students enjoyed it thoroughly. It was funded by AIWC HO.

OUTCOME :

These 14 programmes that were conducted in a short period of less than a month, have created a remarkable impact of the topic on the target audience ie, the students, at different places in India wherever they were conducted. This is how the **National Days** positively affect our lives. At AIWC, we have no dearth of the topics, and no dearth of funding for the right cause. As a responsible coordinator and as branch members our enthusiasm doubles up when such impact these programmes create.

One thing to notice here. When we have such topics to conduct the programmes which are not so important from the curriculum point of view

for the institutions and students, but are very important for their existence in the society, then a one-day awareness programme no-doubt would do wonderful work of injecting the thoughts in the young minds and allowing its penetration into brains in due course.

This way, the subjects like Consumer awareness

and protection, Human rights, Menstrual hygiene, Abuse of the old and many more can be taken up with High schools and Colleges so that their thought process is channelised in an appropriate way! For this, the National Days will give us the information and opportunity and AIWC will give us the channel and the financial assistance!



National Integration programme in Hyderabad



In Vikas Mahila Sangham, N Delhi



In Kakinada



In Komaragiri



In Nirbhay Kranthi, Vijayawada



In Raiganj, W. Bengal



In Canning Durbadal Br



In Human Touch Foundation, N Delhi



In Women's Indian Association, Chennai



Members speak...

Articles by members

1. The journey of a daughter with her mother

A tribute to Mrs Kunti Paul, Patron, AIWC

- by Mrs Rakesh Dhavan, Patron, AIWC, New Delhi

Mother is one such word that cannot be defined in a single phrase—that one word embodies all the love a human being could offer. Smt Kunti Paul ji was not my biological mother, but still, she was the personification of feelings, behaviours, and sacrifices that occur in the journey of life of a person filled with compassion and love.

Shakuntala Kalia, daughter of Sh Harman Das Kalia and Smt Ratan Devi, was born in Lahore in 1925. She was a vibrant, outstanding person, whether at her school or during her intermediate course at Hansraj College at 12 Narson Road, Lahore. Shakuntalaji married Sh Premchand Paul and was named, as we know her today, Kunti Paul.

She was blessed with three sons:

Vijay, a leading businessperson in Kanpur; Ajay Paul, a gold medallist engineer, and Nirbhay Paul, a politician and MLA from Saharanpur. Unfortunately, all her sons have left for their heavenly abodes. Her daughters-in-law Poornima, Nina, and PK. Poornima is doing great work with spastic children. Nina is a successful fashion designer, and PK is one of the leading businesswomen in the manufacturing of 3-wheelers under the banner of Sooraj Motors.

Vijay was blessed with two children; a son and a daughter. Ajay was blessed with three sons; Aditya, Arjun, and Nikhil. Nirbhay was blessed with Raghav,



a leading politician and MLA from Saharanpur, Rahul, and his daughter Softy.

Her only daughter, Alka, is married to cabinet minister Sh Kamal Nath Chinwada MP and is blessed with two sons, Nakul and Bakul.

Kuntiji's journey with AIWC started in 1943. She became closely associated with Maharani Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, the sister of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, and was extremely inspired by her.

Today, as I sit back and go down memory lane, I remember various tours with her including our Pondicherry train journeys and stay in Aurobindo Ashram or any other tours, she was so insightful and encouraging, mentoring and demonstrating the power of an abundance mindset on how you live?

She attended conferences and was a spokesperson around the globe. She and her family would specify that wherever she travels, I should be with her. Travelling with her was a matter of energy and excitement; it was a training ground wherein we each aspired to go a lot further. Mussoorie was one of her favourite holiday destinations; however, she was never on vacation. She would hold Mussoorie and Dehradun branch meetings for expansion work and guide us towards more innovative ideas and concepts. Every moment with her was a learning experience. She was always framing us with responsibilities and duties, as she would quote, "We are here to serve the public, not the institution".

She demanded independent thinking, creativity, and above all, she always wanted to see or hear something progressive and innovative; it was her motivation and aspiration that led me to be the President of AIWC. She would say, "Rakesh, I want to see you as president; it's my dream".

Our branch at Amritsar was initiated by her, and we see today the fruits of what she has sown. Our AIWC Saharanpur branch is like her umbilical connection. The branch has been doing pioneering activities such as providing education, training, employment opportunities, and arranging marriages for eligible women to collectively empower them to lead a quality life with self-esteem and dignity. For every function and her daughter's wedding, I would receive a call 1 week in advance from her saying, "Rakesh, it is our daughter's wedding; come soon, and ask my son Vijay to send their sagun." It has been a home away from home.

She loved dates from Dubai. Those were some of her precious memories with my husband, Vijay Kumar Dhawan. After every few months, she would call Vijay and ask him when he would travel to Dubai, as her dates were over, and he could procure some more for her.

I recall a very recent memory, despite her feeble health, she sent a video saying, "Rakesh, when are you coming here? Drop by so we together can visit my branch". She took her message of hope and resilience to thousands through her humorous motivational speeches. So many feelings, thoughts, and memories come to the surface; however, it's not always easy to find the right words, and summarizing isn't easy.

This life is not about birth and death only; this is what our heroes have taught us. Work for the cause, live for the people and live in their hearts. She is a real-life guardian, and her stories have inspired all of us who follow her steps today. I take this moment to thank my mother, Kuntiji. You will be missed by all, but your memory will live on in us all forever.



2. Unprecedented Challenges

- by Smt Sheela Kakde, Patron, AIWC

With immense gratitude to the Almighty, I took charge as the 42nd President of the All India Women's Conference on February 3, 2020, along with Secretary General Mrs Kuljeet Kaur and Treasurer Mrs Rehana Begum. With the attitude 'work is worship', I had started drawing plans of activities to be carried out in the next three years of my allotted tenure, mostly focusing on 'Swachata Abhiyan, Women's Safety, and Save Planet—Save Earth', along with better living for matajis of Tarash Mandir, Vrindavan. We were planning to go for physical participation in CSW 64 in New York in March 2020, and suddenly, with the Coronavirus spreading like wildfire, a nationwide lockdown was declared in March 2020. It hit me like a bolt from the blue. I finally realised that this was never heard of as a challenge I had to face without grumbling.

The pandemic created significant, unprecedented challenges for all leaders across the globe. We soon geared up and adjusted to the new pattern of work at the head office and in the community, as required by different states and localities. I decided to take on this new challenge with determination and plunged headlong into the situation, bearing in mind the safety of all the residents on the campus, like hostel girls, a few essential staff with families, Bapnu-ghar inmates, etc, and also all members across the country by boosting their courage and faith in the Almighty through WhatsApp messages and emails.

The shelter home for distressed women, with twenty residents and the warden, continued to work with no new entries. They were cheered up by my frequent visits; daily yoga postures, gardening, drawing, painting, stitching masks, etc. kept them busy. At times, they arranged for music, dance, etc. to keep their lives interesting, and cleaning the campus kept them occupied. With the fall season in full swing



during that time, AIWC premises were kept neat and clean daily by the staff staying in the quarters with me all the while. The office, library, exhibition halls, hostel, shelter home, and community college were sanitized regularly. All residents and staff on the campus were checked regularly with an OXY meter for their oxygen saturation and temperature. Homeopathic medicines were provided for immunisation.

All through the first and second phases, the office was running regularly as per government instructions, except for the lockdown imposed by the authorities. Despite the unavailability of regular public transport, the staff managed to come to the office. The mess manager took extra effort and risks to keep the mess running for the hostel residents. This was at our home ground at 6, Bhagwan Dass Road, New Delhi, where I was stationed all through out the pandemic and could supervise all activities.

The bigger challenge was to boost the morale of members of our approximately 500 branches across the country. Many of the senior members were going into depression because they were all alone. So I decided to conduct regular webinars. But soon I understood that many members did not have a smartphone or a laptop or did not know how to log in. Hence the mammoth task of calling each one and explaining step-by-step how to log in for the webinar began. Several workshops through webinars were conducted in all the regions/zones in different languages to teach them the functioning of the smart phones, laptops and the virtual meetings apps of Zoom and the Webex.

It was a great achievement, and I am proud to say that our members picked up very fast and have become tech-savvy in no time.

AIWC members in districts acted as warriors, during this highly challenging period, stitched thousands of masks and distributed them. Prepared chemical-free sanitizers and tons and tons of a variety of food items were prepared and distributed to the poor and needy migrants. Free medicines were given, RTPCR tests were done, and medical help was provided. The services of many AIWC members were recognized and appreciated. A big salute to all the COVID Warriors of AIWC!!

Women suffered a hard blow at home and at work as well. Our members helped them overcome the atrocities. Their work was also appreciated. Our community college students found it really tough with a lack of smartphones or laptops of their own. Our teachers took great care of these students for long hours. The amount of work done by our branches was tremendous, and all of that was included in a special issue of *Roshni* that was brought out, our quarterly magazine. Our Vice President, Dr Bhavna Joshipura, and her team in Rajkot did excellent work during this testing time by providing food, RTPCR tests, vaccination, free accommodation for the medical team, and treatment at the PHC run by the branch.

Any challenging situation brings in new ideas. A society survives best when interacting, sharing, and learning happen at the same time. We installed and introduced the WEBEX virtual platform conducting meetings and programmes regularly, since September 2020 and conducted all half-yearly, annual, and zonal meetings and awareness programmes, which were very necessary at that time. Later, our members also started conducting webinars on various topics of interest for members across the country.

The rich legacy, of the All India Women's Conference created by the dedicated and selfless services of our past 38 presidents from 1927 till 2010, out of 42 in all till date, was presented by involving branch members of the past presidents, their relatives, and their close associates. Life sketches of the past presidents and enormous work done by them for the nation and the organisation, were very well received by the members across the country. They attended these webinars in large numbers and got inspired to work through AIWC. We could pay our respects to each one of our stalwarts in a very dignified manner. Now all the recordings are present in the archival section of our MCM Library. Soon, they will be edited and uploaded on YouTube. This webinar series of past presidents proved very useful, as our members were enlightened with the tremendous work done by these esteemed women in pre- and post-independent period. Most of us were hardly aware of even their names, leave alone their work and the rich legacy left by them. The MCM Library team of Ranjana and Sujata provided a lot of archived material on them, and Member-in-charge of MCM Library, Dr Yutika Misra proved a very apt anchor. Joint Secretary Supriya Bhalerao prepared very attractive and elaborate invites, and technical support was provided by programme officers Ritu and Pratibha.

Commendable efforts were made to create awareness through various webinars on different other topics by the vice presidents, zonal organisers, members-in-charge, and branch members. I truly appreciate the efforts of every member!

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Due to the lockdown during the pandemic, national and international travels were curtailed, and staying continuously for longer periods on the 6 Bhagwan Dass Road campus drew my attention to the much-needed and over-due extensive repair and maintenance work of our Sarojini House campus. It was taken up rigorously and completed in stipulated time, leaving a fresh and elegant look of the buildings on the campus. A mammoth task indeed!!

Besides many other challenges that we faced during this tenure was getting tenants for the most of the portions suddenly fallen vacant in the Covid pandemic period, and streamlining the rental income for AIWC was a big achievement for us. These are just a few glimpses of our achievements in this unprecedented period of the three years.

I can say that this three-year journey as the 42nd President of AIWC was differently placed on my platter, and with the blessings of the almighty, it has culminated with a very satisfactory feeling of accomplishment in the most adverse circumstances. In the tough situations, I did not sit back or complain but faced the challenges as and when they came and converted them into opportunities for the betterment of the organisation. Mine was certainly not a normal tenure like all the presidents before me, and probably even for those who will follow me. It was a tenure I had never dreamed of before, and though regular work suffered a setback due to the lockdown and financial crisis, God did not let me down. He saw to it that every minute of mine spent on AIWC premises was worth my staying away from home, as he opened new and better avenues for me once the crisis was over.

We were 'the team' with warm and cordial relations and ready to take on the storm head-on. I am very happy that we have all done the same. I appreciate all our AIWC branch sisters who have lived true to their nature of extending a helping hand to the needy without discrimination of caste, creed, or sex. They have made the most of the opportunity to learn the new technique of attending virtual meetings on various topics like 'Ode to the Glorious Past' knowing our past presidents, the atrocities and sexual harassment women of India faced, various health issues of women and how to tackle them, meeting the newly elected Janapratidinidhis, communal harmony and peace, environment and climate change, to name a few—which have helped in getting awareness, knowledge, and information on various topics, meeting new people, and getting different ideas. Remember, we are not 'a team' just because we work together; we are a team because we respect, trust, and care for each other. Thank you, Secretary General Kuljit ji and Treasurer Rehana ji for being 'my team'!!

Last but not least, Mr. Ranjit Kakde, my husband, is at a loss for words, as none of this would have been possible without his wholehearted support. In the worst phase of the pandemic when I was down mentally, it was he who pulled me up and never once insisted that I should come home, as he was all alone surviving on my daily cooking lessons on video calls.

I am ever so grateful to Him for that complete surrender to the Almighty! He has helped me sail through the rough sea successfully.

SARVE SUKHINAH SANTU II
SARVE SANTU NIRAMAYAH II
SARVE BHADRANI PASHAYANTU II
MA KASHCHIT DUKH BHAGBHAVET II



3. A tribute to Sham Mohini Pathak

- by Smt Chandra Prabha Pandey, Life Member, Delhi Women's League

Smt Sham Mohini Pathak was a member of the Delhi Women's League. Her contribution to AIWC was exemplary. She was born in Lahore, in undivided India, where she spent her early life. She studied at Kinnaird College of Women, Lahore, but could not complete her education as the partition of India took place in 1947. When she came to Delhi, she enrolled in Lady Irwin College, where she studied home science. Her education was eclectic, and she also took several vocational courses. Sham Mohini got married to Sh R.S. Pathak in the year 1949, who was the son of the Vice President of India, the late G.S. Pathak. She left for London soon after her marriage.

Sham Mohini's father, Nanak Chand Pandit, was a well-known barrister, and her mother was a highly educated and sophisticated lady of her time. Sham Mohini joined AIWC in the early 1960s, worked with great dedication from 1971 to 2006, and held several portfolios during her tenure. She represented AIWC in different world conferences and conferences of international alliances. She was the MIC for international relations and participated in UN affairs. She attended meetings of the UN as an observer on behalf of the AIWC. Her greatest contribution lay in her work as MIC for International Affairs. Her role in AIWC included attending these conferences abroad and writing about meetings of the United Nations. She reflected on the position of women at world conferences and how they empowered women and brought them together globally.

There is a wealth of knowledge in her writings about the challenges and problems faced by women. These issues were shared in meetings about the International Alliance of Women. Sham Mohini also wrote in AIWC magazine Roshni, graphically retelling her experience at these meetings. Her articles focused on how women's lives have been impacted globally and how their problems have been addressed at the conferences held by the UN.

She also worked with many other stalwarts of AIWC at that time, such as Smt Raghuramiah, Smt Lalita Balkrishna, and Dr Aparna Basu. She

held the following portfolios as member-in-charge at AIWC: MIC Library, 1970-1979; MIC Family Planning, 1983-1984; Vice-President of AIWC, 1985-1992; MIC of UN Affairs, 1987-1990; Vice President, Population and Family Planning, 1990-1992; International Relations and Vice President UN Affairs, 1992-1994; MIC-Health and Population Management, 1996-1999; Head of Dept., Population and Family Welfare, 2002-2004; MIC-UN Affairs and International Affairs, 2006.

At the International Conference of Family Planning held under the auspices of the Indian Medical Association in Delhi, five AIWC members represented the organisation and a paper was presented by Mrs Nilima Acharji, Mrs V. Shenoi, and Mrs Sham Mohini Pathak. In 1979-80, Mrs Lakshmi Raghuramiah, Mrs Usha Bhowmik, and Mrs Sham Mohini Pathak also attended the conference. The full details are given in Mrs. Raghuramiah's report in the July 1980 issue of Roshni. An invitation was given to Sham Mohini to participate as an observer in the United Nations International Conference on Population in Mexico City, Mexico, from August 6-13, 1984, and she attended.

She became Vice President of AIWC and took responsibility for welfare projects. Two Family Welfare Orientation Training Camps for Crèche and Balwadi workers were held in Delhi and Calcutta. The Northern and Eastern zones met with great success and were acclaimed not only by the branches that participated but also by the Ministry of Health. The participants in the Delhi Training Camp came from Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Punjab, Chandigarh, and Delhi. In the second camp, participants came from Assam, Manipur, Orissa, Bihar, Mizoram, and West Bengal. The main focus of training courses was population, education, and family welfare, with special emphasis on family planning.

Sham Mohini Pathak will be always remembered for her work in various areas of women's empowerment, life, and education.



4. Lakshmi N. Menon (1899-1994)

Remembering Smt Menon, Past President & Patron, AIWC

- by Mrs M. Bargavi Devendra, Hon. Secretary, WIA



Mrs M. Bargavi Devendra, Secretary, WIA, represented President Smt Padma Venkataraman and enlightened the audience about the great personality of Smt Lakshmi N. Menon as a Parliamentarian in the virtual meeting.

The late Smt Lakshmi N. Menon was a shining example of simplicity, integrity, and sincerity and one of the most remarkable senior members of Parliament. She was inspired by the late Mrs. Annie Besant and the late Smt. Sarojini Naidu.

She was a member of the Rajya Sabha—Department Minister of External Affairs. She was a highly educated lady who travelled all over the world. She was married to Professor N. Menon. She and her husband joined the teaching profession and taught at universities in Patna and Lucknow. She took a keen interest in women's problems.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India, persuaded her to join politics, brought her to the Rajya Sabha, and made her Parliamentary Secretary. She rose to become a Deputy Minister and thereafter a Minister of State in the Ministry of External Affairs in 1962 and a member of the Nehru Cabinet as Union Minister of Health, Local Self Government, Country and Town Planning and Chairman of the Planning Committee in 1964.

She had pleasant manners, and her dream was to make women in India literate by 2000 A.D. She was a well-known and respected scholar who tirelessly worked for the political, social, and economic emancipation of women. Her work at the U.N. won the unstinted respect of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru.

She had been at the U.N. for many years, representing India at the Women's Commission. She was not a politician but a state woman with an outstanding personality, and in all her speeches she gave importance to women and child welfare and stressed "Panchasheela in her talks." 1) Ahimsa; 2) non-stealing; 3) not lying in words and thought; 4) non-adultery; and 5) not coveting others property.

She was an ultimate delegate at the 3rd, 5th, 8th, and 9th sessions of the United Nations General Assembly and also on the U.N. Commission on the Status of Women held in Beirut, worked in the U.N. Secretariat at Lake Success as Chief of Section on the Status of Women, and represented the State Commissioner of Guides. Related to Rajya Sabha Parliament Secretary to Prime Minister, Deputy Minister External Officers. He retired from politics in 1966.

We are proud that she was the president of AIWC.

I pay my homage to the great personality of the late Lakshmi N. Menon and thank my president, Smt. Padma Venkataraman, for the opportunity given to participate in this wonderful session. I also want to thank Smt. Kalyani Raj, President, AIWC, Smt Manju Kak, Secretary General, AIWC, and Smt Upasna Singh treasurer AIWC.



5. Programme on National Integration

In the week of National Integration

- by Mrs Sapna Acharya, President, Vikas Mahila Sangam, East Delhi Constituent Branch

The Vikas Mahila Sangam, the constituent branch of AIWC in East Delhi, celebrated National Integration Week, sponsored by the AIWC head office in collaboration with the National Foundation for Community Harmony. The programme was organized on the 26th and 27th of November at Jaibharti Camp, near Mayur Vihar Phase 2.

The first day of the event featured a poster-making competition for students, revolving around the theme “Know Your India,” delving into the lesser-known aspects of our diverse regions, captivating places of interest, and the rich tapestry of traditional arts and crafts.

On the second day, a series of lectures and activities were conducted, with Dr R. Venugopalan as the esteemed chief guest. He delved deeply into the meaning of national integration, providing intricate details that left a profound impact on young minds. Dr Venugopalan expounded on the inner essence of Bharat and its significance, concluding with a practical demonstration of yoga postures aimed at enhancing students’ health and well-being.

“Bharat,” a name deeply etched in the cultural and historical fabric of India, holds profound significance. Derived from the legendary king Bharata, the term encapsulates the essence of the nation and its rich heritage. In ancient Hindu mythology and scriptures like the Mahabharata and Puranas, Bharata was an illustrious king and a key figure in the lineage of Indian rulers. The name “Bharat” is intricately connected to the Sanskrit words “Bha,” meaning light or knowledge, “Ra,” symbolizing fire or energy, and “Ta,” representing purity. This amalgamation gives rise to the symbolic interpretation of Bharat as “a land illuminated with the light of knowledge” or “a land where the fire of purity prevails.”

The concept of Bharat goes beyond mere nomenclature; it resonates with the idea of cultural continuity and the unity of diverse traditions. “Bharatavarsha,” often used interchangeably, specifically refers to the Indian subcontinent, emphasizing its unique cultural tapestry.

As a symbol of national identity, Bharat embodies the collective spirit of the Indian people. It stands as a testament to the historical and cultural continuity that has shaped the subcontinent for millennia. The use of “Bharat” as an official term is not just a matter of convention but a conscious choice to embrace and celebrate the nation’s deep-rooted heritage.

Bharat is not merely a name; it is a reminder of the shared history, values, and aspirations that unite the diverse people of India. It is a beacon that illuminates the path forward, reflecting the timeless wisdom and enduring spirit of a nation that proudly carries the legacy of the Bharata.

One of the main cultural festivals, Deepawali, was just over, and the day was the day of Karthik Purnima, and all other festivals were related to light. Diyas are commonly lit during religious and cultural celebrations. Lighting a diya symbolizes the victory of light over darkness and the triumph of good over evil. Diyas are also used in various religious ceremonies and rituals, signifying the presence of the divine and the dispelling of ignorance.

The lighting of a diya is symbolic not only in its immediate religious or cultural context but also aligns with the broader symbolism of enlightenment and illumination. In a metaphorical sense, the diya can be seen as a representation of knowledge, wisdom, and the cultural brilliance that characterizes Bharat.

Just as a diya dispels darkness, Bharat, as a name and concept, signifies the dispelling of ignorance through the pursuit of knowledge and the celebration of a rich cultural heritage.

In essence, both the diya and the name “Bharat” carry deep cultural meanings for the people of India. The diya brings light and spiritual significance to various occasions, while the name “Bharat” reflects the historical and cultural continuity of a diverse and vibrant nation. Together, they represent aspects of India’s cultural identity, celebrating traditions, unity, and the pursuit of knowledge and enlightenment.

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Traditionally, the Diya represented light within our body as energy, symbolising chakra. The point wherein one connects to light is through the eyes, which work on our physical body thermostat called the Xiphoid or Surya Chakra. "Surya Chakra" typically refers to the symbol associated with Surya, the Hindu solar deity. The term "chakra" here represents a circular or wheel-like emblem. Surya Chakra is often depicted as a circle with rays emanating from it, symbolizing the radiant energy and light of the sun.

The Surya Chakra can be considered a form of yantra, a geometric design used in Hindu and tantric traditions for meditation and spiritual practices. The sacred geometry of the chakra is believed to have specific vibrational qualities. The moment one can connect to the diya through the eyes, the energy moves down to the chest and connects with the Surya Chakra. This joining is termed yoga. This was the origin, or Yog, meaning the merging of light and consciousness.

Until the energy from the eyes merges with the Surya Chakra, one cannot be strong, have great focus, or have great concentration. This is the need for children and adults alike. Focus and concentration work on the body, mind, and consciousness. It allows one to become healthy at the body level, calm at the mind level, and happy at the conscious level. It was a very special moment to know deeply the essence of such a deep-seated meaning of India's culture.

The program culminated with the distribution of prizes to the winning participants, followed by the generous distribution of refreshments to all attendees. This event proved to be an excellent opportunity to engage with students, fostering a sense of motivation for their nation and an appreciation for its splendid cultural heritage. It was all possible for the funding of the program from the All India Women Conference, HO.



6. Book Club Webinar at the Head office

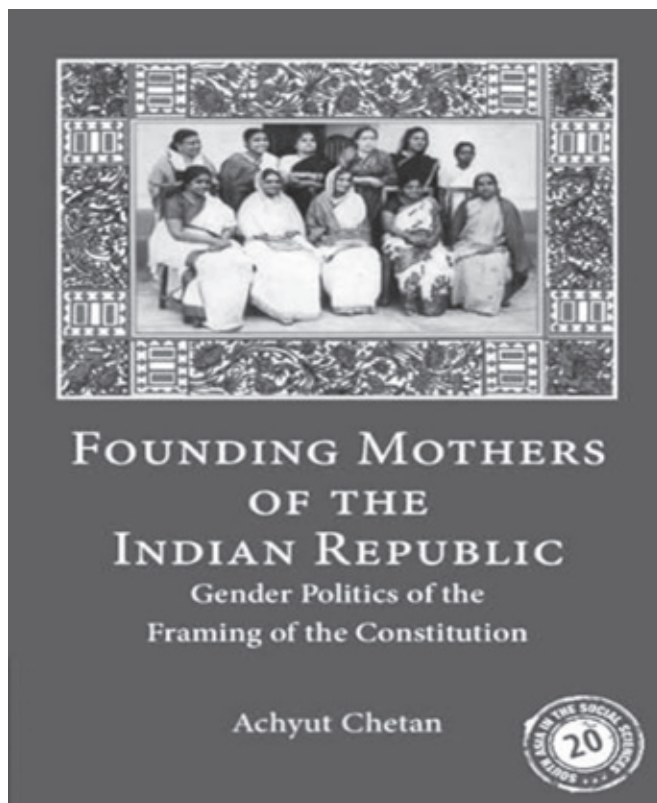
- by Mrs Meenakshi Kumar, MIC Roshni

MCM Library at AIWC organized its 11th Book Club webinar on November 24, 2023. The book discussed was “Founding Mothers of the Indian Republic: Gender Politics of the Framing of the Constitution” by Achyut Chetan.

These women, most of whom were connected to the AIWC and had personal histories of political and social activism, brought feminist ideas and a vision of equality to their work shaping the fundamental principles of the Constitution.

Achyut Chetan’s ‘Founding Mothers’ are the eleven women members of the Constituent Assembly omitted from histories of the Indian Constitution. In this impressively researched, thoroughly analyzed, and persuasively written account of the arguments of the ‘missing mothers,’ Chetan illuminates the distinct moral vision of the women framers of the Constitution. Going beyond the usual documents, the author examines the work of committees and sub-committees, memoranda, amendments, notes of dissent, correspondence, and legislative debates. ‘

As per Geraldine Forbes, Professor Emerita, State University of New York, Oswego ‘This remarkable work is bound to alter our understanding of the making of the Indian constitution—that it was a male preserve of ratiocination about public life and the foundational document of the people. By presenting with a powerful combination of evidence and eloquence the work of the remarkable women members in the Constituent Assembly and their life-trajectories outside it, Achyut Chetan has recuperated a critical part of our political heritage, rescuing it from ‘the enormous condescension of posterity’, and presented us with a precious gift:



the history of Indian feminist thought and practice before the concept was born.

Sudipta Kaviraj, Columbia University, New York, said, ‘Achyut Chetan’s work on the ‘founding mothers’ of the Constitution admirably fills a critical gap in our understanding of the Constitution. A collective biography that refrains from treating its subjects as a monolithic category, this book is a deep and insightful history of the sustained vision and politics that lay behind the interventions that women members made!

Founding Mothers is an indispensable addition to the history of the Indian Constitution and of the women’s movement and feminism in India.



हिंदी जगत

सदस्यों द्वारा हिंदी में लेखन

1. जागृति वोमेन कॉन्फ्रेंस शाखा - रुड़की

— डॉ. भारती शर्मा, सचिव, पर्यावरण, जागृति वोमेन कॉन्फ्रेंस, हरिद्वार

दिनांक 29 सितंबर 2023 को शिवालिक पब्लिक स्कूल रुड़की में जागृति वोमेन कॉन्फ्रेंस रुड़की उपशाखा के सौजन्य से अध्यक्षा श्रीमती उर्मिला पुंडीर जी के संयोजन में अत्यंत रोचक और सामयिक गतिविधियां सम्पन्न हुईं।

अध्यक्षा

प्रथम चरण में जागृति की यूथ ब्रिगेड ने समाज के कुछ ज्वलंत प्रश्नों के लिये मोटिवेशनल सेशन के माध्यम से विद्यार्थियों की काउंसलिंग की जो निम्नवत रहे :

नशा छोड़ो हाथ के हुनर जोड़ो शीर्षक से कार्यक्रम का आगाज करते हुए जागृति सचिव डॉ भारती शर्मा ने एंटी ड्रग्स काउंसलिंग के दौरान विद्यार्थियों को संबोधित करते हुए कहा कि राष्ट्र निर्माण के लिए नशा मुक्ति जरूरी है

कुछ पलों के मनोरंजन के लिए हम मजबूरी की गफलत में आ जाते हैं और नशा मानसिक, सामाजिक व आर्थिक बदहाली का सबब बन जाता है। हाथ के हुनर वक्तव्य के केंद्र बिंदु रहे जिसके लिए वक्ता ने मधुमक्खियों का उदाहरण देकर विद्यार्थियों को समझाया की मधुमक्खी से इंसान उसका शहद छीन सकता है किंतु शहद बनाने का उसके हाथ का हुनर नहीं ठीक इसी तरह बदहालियों के दौर में हमें हाथ के हुनर जीना सिखाते हैं।

जीवन संकल्पों की कथा है (मिस जोया मलिक) अब चाहे संकल्प जीवन में हो अथवा कैरियर में। जीवन स्वयं को ढूंढने का नाम नहीं वरन जीवन, सृजन की कथा है। इस अवसर पर अपनी नाट्य प्रस्तुति में यूथ ब्रिगेड ने आचार्य चाणक्य व चंद्रगुप्त मौर्य को सम्राट बनाने के संकल्प को याद किया व कहा कि चंद्रगुप्त को तक्षशिला ले जाते समय जब माता ने पूछा कि मैं नहीं समझ पा रही हूं कि आप चंद्रगुप्त को क्यों ले जाना चाहते हैं? तो चाणक्य का उत्तर था, क्योंकि तुम मेरे राष्ट्र की समस्या को नहीं समझ पा रही और आचार्य चाणक्य ने सम्राट—संकल्प को सिद्ध कर दिखाया आज जरूरत है ऐसे ही संकल्पशील आचार्यों और शिष्यों की जो राष्ट्र की समस्या के गर्भ में जाकर नवसृजन कर पाएं।



युवाओं में बढ़ता मोबाइल फोन का नशा

(मिस लविशाना) — जिंदगी में कोई भी चीज अच्छी या बुरी नहीं होती वह केवल हमारे इस्तेमाल करने के तरीके पर निर्भर करती है। आप मोबाइल फोन इस्तेमाल करने का तरीका बदल दीजिए वदलाव आपको खुद महसूस करेंगे।

कभी हार नहीं मानूंगा (मिस प्रीति) —

रख हौसला वो मंजर भी आएगा प्यासे के पास चलकर खुद समंदर भी आएगा, यू जमीन पर बैठकर क्यों आसमान देखता है, पंखों को खोल जमाना उड़ान देखाता है। विना संघर्ष के कोई महान नहीं होता, पत्थर पर जव तक चोट ना पड़े पत्थर भी भगवान नहीं होता।

खुद पर विश्वास रखो (मिस शिवानी संभालिया) —

राह मेरी मुश्किल थी और आसमान मेरी मंजिल लेकिन आंधी से जो डरे वह परिंदा नहीं हूं मैं। अपनी उड़ान हौसलों से भर रही हूं जो किसी और ने किया है वह क्यों दौराहया जाए जिसे किसी ने सोचा तक नहीं वह क्यों ना करके देखा जाए मिसाल देने से लाख बेहतर है मिसाल बनो। यह बात में दावे से कह सकती हूं कि आपसा ना कोई है ना कोई होगा।



मिस उर्वशी

क्या हार में, क्या जीत में

किंचित नहीं भयभीत मैं कर्तव्य मार्ग पर जो भी मिला यह भी सही वह भी सही वरदान नहीं मांगूंगी, कुछ भी हो और नहीं मानूंगी।।

दूसरे चरण में अखंड राष्ट्र के सूत्रधार शीर्षक के अंतर्गत चंद्र गुप्त मौर्य व आचार्य चाणक्य के जीवन वृत्तांत को यूथ ब्रिगेड ने रोचक तरीके से नाट्य प्रस्तुति के रूप में पेश किया।

जागृति अध्यक्षा श्रीमती उर्मिला पुंडीर जी द्वारा थनयबाद ज्ञापन:



2. नारी शक्ति सम्मान

— श्रीमती वीणा कॉल, मेंबर—इन—चार्ज, पर्यावरण,
जागृति वीमेन कॉन्फ्रेंस, हरिद्वार

यह नारी शक्ति अधिनियम तभी होगा सबल
जब तुम्हारी सोच में नारी का सम्मान होगा प्रबल
जिस दिन नारी सुरक्षित बाहर से आयेगी
जिस दिन नारी की दिन की थकान तुम्हें समझ में आयेगी
जिस दिन शादी करके वह एक और एक ग्यारह हो जायेगी (एक से ग्यारह)
जिस दिन बच्चे और गृहस्थी उसकी परीक्षा न रह जायेंगी
उस दिन समझना असल में यह विधेयक पास हुआ
आज का दिन भी बहुत महत्वपूर्ण और शानदार है
परन्तु सोच का परिवर्तन ही असल में खास है।
जिस की हर नारी को आस है।



Work of AIWC Zones October-December 2023



UDAAN project at Neb Sarai in November 2023. A total of 30 Girls were selected for the beautician course. It is a 6-month course in basic parlour and personality development



On 26th Dec. 2023, blankets were distributed to the senior citizen women



In AIWC Calcutta South-West Suburban Branch, on 28th November 2023 "Know Your Bharat" on National Integration was organised with 30 beneficiaries, 10 members & resource persons. It was funded by AIWC HO.

Missing Late Patron Mrs Kunti Paul



Prayer meeting for Patron Kunti ji at Mata ka mandir Delhi

Shipkala Utsav 2023



As each year, Shipkala Utsav 2023 was organised from October 25-27, 2023 at Agakhan Hall of Sarojini House



Odisha's Santhal tribe women dancing in their traditional attire with the Chief guest, the AIWC President and Secretary General



The Chief guest Mrs Archana Pandey president, AWWA went around to see the traditional arts of different regions of India. AIWC Treasurer and Shipkala Utsav Coordinator are seen with her



AIWC office bearers, senior members and 'Save the earth' volunteers from Meerut with the Chief guest