

TOWARDS
SOUTH ASIAN
SOLIDARITY

A REPORT
OF
A SOUTH ASIAN WORKSHOP
OF
GENDER TRAINERS

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Foreword

We are happy to share with you this report of the South Asian Workshop of Gender Trainers jointly organized by us and sponsored by the Department for International Development, UK.

Many participants contributed to the writing of this report by taking notes of different sessions and small group discussions. Based on these notes and their own notes Abha Bhaiya and Kamla Bhasin wrote this report. We acknowledge with thanks the contributions made by Juhi Jain and Vibha Arora in the completion of this report.

As you will read in the report, this gathering of gender trainers was found to be very educative, energising and joyous. It helped the participants to learn about the ongoing gender trainings in Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Europe, to promote gender equality and women's empowerment. It helped clarify many issues and create common understanding on them. The workshop also helped to create a common commitment, solidarity and a South Asian Network of Gender Trainers.

The fact that as a follow-up of this workshop many activities have already been initiated proves that the workshop was successful in generating a lot of enthusiasm for collaborative action for achieving gender equity and sustainable development.

Both IDPAA and the FAO-NGO South Asia Programme are committed to carry forward this initiative at the South Asian level. We have already started planning a month long South Asian Workshop on Gender and Sustainable Development for women activists, planners, policy makers, trainers, academics, media women etc. This workshop will be held at the Training Centre of Proshika in Koitta, Bangladesh towards the end of 1998.

We consider it a privilege to be part of these initiatives and celebrate the common understanding and solidarity being built at the South Asian level through these South Asian gatherings. We rededicate ourselves to the creation of a peaceful, harmonious, poverty-disease-illiteracy-and inequality free, democratic, gender-just South Asia.

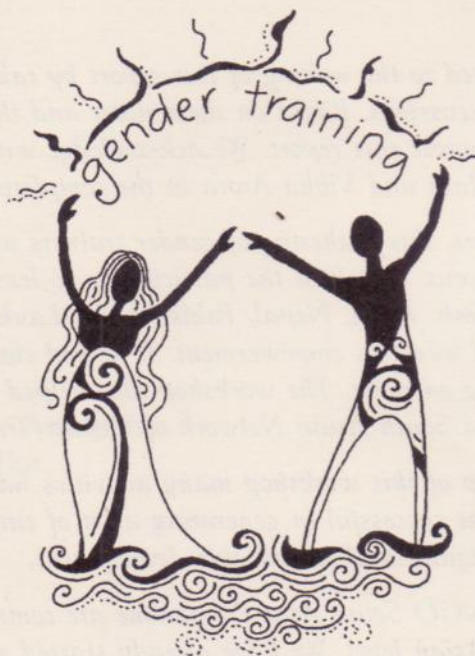
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July, 1998



An Ongoing Journey....

Background of the Workshop

A six day long South Asian Workshop of Gender Trainers was jointly organized by the FAO-NGO South Asia Programme and the Institute for Development Policy, Analysis and Advocacy (IDPAA), at Proshika, Bangladesh. It was held in Bangladesh from April 16 to 21, 1998. IDPAA mobilized the funds for this workshop from Department for International Development, UK, made all local arrangements as well as provided it's excellent training centre at Koitta, Manikganj, (65 kms. outside Dhaka) as the venue. Kamla Bhasin, the co-ordinator of the FAO-NGO South Asia Programme planned and co-ordinated the workshop in close collaboration with Mr.Mahbubul Karim, Mr.Shahnawaz and Ms.Fawzia Khondkar of IDPAA and Proshika and Ms. Abha Bhैया of Jagori, Women's Resource and Training Centre, New Delhi. A large number of NGOs and gender trainers were also consulted while planning the workshop and specially while identifying the participants.

The workshop was a continuation of the activities carried out for many years by the FAO-NGO South Asia Programme to strengthen gender training capabilities of NGOs, to make NGOs and their programmes more gender sensitive and to empower women in South Asia. It was also in continuation of the work being done by IDPAA to enhance the analytical and lobbying skills of NGOs on issues related to sustainable development and gender justice.

More specifically this workshop was a follow-up of the recommendations made by a group of South Asian Gender Trainers in 1995 when the FAO-NGO South Asia Programme and Asian and South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education (ASPBAE) initiated a 'State of the Art' study on gender trainings in South Asia. Vasantha Kannabiran of ASMITA, India, a feminist writer, activist and gender trainer, was requested to undertake this study which had the following objectives:

- To understand the concept of gender training as it is being used by women's groups, NGOs and government organisations in South Asia.
- To document how gender trainings are being conducted and institutionalised within organisations.
- To understand the content and methodology of these trainings.
- To understand the gaps and explore how they can be addressed.

Vasantha Kannabiran visited some countries in South Asia, personally met many trainers and had detailed discussions with them, corresponded with those she was not able to meet, and produced a good and useful document entitled "Sharing the Fish Head: Theory and Practice of Gender training in South Asia". In order to share the findings of this study with a group of trainers and practitioners, and to further discuss issues emerging from the field, a South Asian workshop was organised from July 1-3, 1996. Nineteen women from Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Sri Lanka and India met at Surajkund, Haryana in India, to share experiences and insights on gender trainings, and to try to reach a consensus on an agenda for the future. Kamla Bhasin of the FAO-NGO



South Asia Programme and Suneeta Dhar, ASPBAE's South Asian facilitator on women's education for empowerment, co-ordinated and facilitated this process.

After analysing the kind of gender trainings being done in Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, the group came to the conclusion that there were broadly two kinds of gender trainings being done in South Asia.

- a. Those which can be termed transformative and
- b. Those which are project efficiency oriented.

These are of course not neat categories. In fact there is a CONTINUUM between these two types of trainings and different trainers, training organizations and trainings may be located at different points of this continuum. These two kinds of gender trainings seem to have the following characteristics/emphasis.

Transformative Gender Training

1. The main objective is to challenge Patriarchal Gender Relations and other related hierarchies of Class, Caste, Race, North-South, Man-nature.
2. It questions the present paradigm of development in terms of its social,



- economic, ecological sustainability.
3. It looks at gender in connection with other systems, institutions, structures like the state, markets, global economic systems. It also examines religion and culture which are often at the root of gender hierarchies. It looks at interconnections.
 4. It is holistic and multi-dimensional; it is cerebral as well as emotional; it talks of cognitive as well as behavioral/attitudinal changes. It talks of values.
 5. It does not separate the personal and political, personal and professional, domestic and public and does not make a distinction between "Us" and "Them", the Subjects and Objects of development or change.
 6. It is political, struggle and transformation oriented. It wishes to empower women. It is linked to the women's movement.
 7. It works with women and men who are vehicles of change, who are interested to transform themselves and others, as well as to transform structures.
 8. It values commitment, involvement of "trainers" and "trainees".
 9. It is process oriented. It empowers participants Specially Women.

10. It emphasizes the need to link gender related development activities with the women's movement and other people's movements.

11. It tries to overcome dualities, which are both gendered and hierarchical e.g.

personal	public
trainee	trainer
practice	theory
subjective	objective
emotional	rational
body	mind
nature	culture

12. It tries to demystify knowledge, begins with the concrete realities and moves on to concepts. It affirms people's knowledge and practice. It is participant focused.

Project Efficiency Oriented Gender Training

1. The main objective is to make projects more efficient, involve women in them and ensure that women are not left out or further subordinated.
2. Does not question the present development paradigm. It attempts to make it more efficient and more inclusive.
3. It looks mainly at gender and development

and development also in its narrow definition (economic development), sees things in fragments. It shies away from looking at religion, culture, traditions and other systems.



4. It is mainly cerebral, dispassionate, aiming to provide knowledge and skills and claims to be objective.
5. It focuses on the official/public side of participants. Differences between Us and Them, the “planners” and the “planned”, the subjects and the “objects” are not addressed.
6. It is political in so far as it wishes to maintain the status quo in terms of the present paradigm of development, political and economic structures.
7. It works with, trainers, managers, planners, who will deliver, plan and manage change for others. The approach tends to be Top-Down. It may also work with project beneficiaries to make them gender sensitive in so far as it is related to the project.
8. It values professionalism.
9. It is product/target oriented.
10. It does not emphasize linkages with the women’s movement or other people’s movements.

11. It does not question these dualities.

12. It ends up mystifying knowledge by creating pre-packaged modules and “gender experts”.

Need to Strengthen Transformative Gender Trainings

The group which met in Surajkund felt that project efficiency trainings are increasing by leaps and bounds because there is big money behind them and they do not threaten anyone. They also expressed the fear that the term gender, which has made it into the mainstream is creating a lot of confusion. People and groups are using it in whatever way they like. The way its used by many is obscuring power relationships rather than illuminating and challenging them.

Gender is becoming a sanitised, neutral category, it is becoming a ‘discipline’ (a disciplined discipline) an expertise, undiluted, unspoilt by emotions and passions linked to the women’s movement. This makes it possible for people to become instant gender experts and to fly in and out of cultures which they hardly know, to do gender sensitization, gender analysis, gender sensitive planning, evaluation etc. As if changing gender relations is a

technical exercise which has nothing to do with complex and deep rooted things like religion and culture. These experts have studied 'gender' but have not necessarily been part of the painful and long struggles against patriarchy. They are often different from women's rights activists or activists of the women's movement.

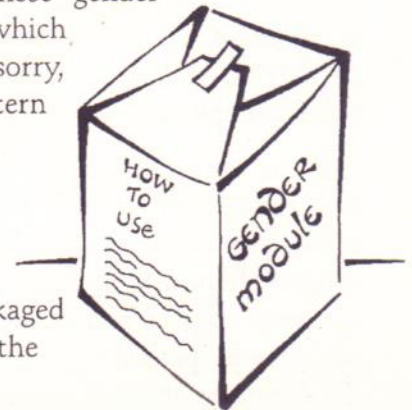
Those who met in Surajkund felt that in a true patriarchal sense gender has become a separate category, a specialised subject. It has been taken out of the living, kicking, interconnected world. Now you can talk of gender in the context of a project without mentioning patriarchy, without looking at, understanding or challenging the root causes of gender subordination. You can now assume that gender concerns can be treated in isolation in the projects, amongst the beneficiaries without looking at the gendering of the gents and ladies who come as experts, without questioning the patriarchal nature of the organizations they represent.

Gender is fast becoming a thing you do to others, specifically to the "target groups" or so called beneficiaries. If not in theory but definitely in practice, the concern is with gender at the "grass root" level only and the concern is also mainly with the efficiency of the projects being implemented.

If gender is purely a rational category, and only purely a project related thing, it does not threaten anyone. It is acceptable, it can become popular it can be mainstreamed unlike the struggles against patriarchy which to many people smell of blood, which conjure up pictures of falling male skulls, of families breaking, religions being toppled etc.

Neat, well packaged modules on gender have been prepared by high-powered experts, in western universities and research centres for multi-lateral and bi-lateral "development" organizations/donors. Development aid moneys are being paid to these experts to conduct TOTs (Training of Trainers) and to prepare a cadre of gender trainers, who can deliver these packages with efficiency. Efficiency is the key word. No one in their right senses can have any objection to these gender packages, many of which have built in trips (sorry, study visits) to western destinations for the influential few.

According to some South Asian gender trainers the pre-packaged gender-modules are the



product of the modern, market economy where everything - even love, emotions, knowledge, entertainment is turned into products. One person or a group thinks, prepares packages, patents and sells. These packages have little to do with transforming gender relations or South-North relations or rich-poor relations. Because they are part of the dominant paradigm, they follow the same logic, the same methodologies and use the same power-structures.

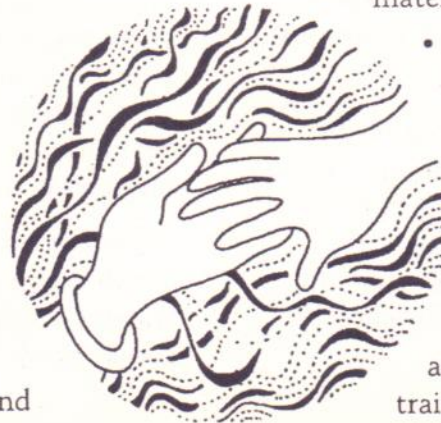
It was felt, that this neutralisation of women's issues by a large number of "gender experts" is worrying. Discussion on women's issues is thus being robbed of its struggle aspects, robbed of its political activism and this is a problem for many South Asian gender trainers who believe that the challenge to patriarchy needs to be strengthened and not watered down, because there is a resurgence of patriarchies. Patriarchy and patriarchal violence are definitely NOT on the decline.

Another major problem with the way mainstream gender business is being practised is that while socialist feminists and eco-feminists expose and challenge the present paradigm of development itself as patriarchal and

ecologically destructive, the attempt of the mainstream gender exercises is to increase women's opportunities for "empowerment" within the present system. The relationships between patriarchy, caste, class, race, the state, colonialism/imperialism and the environment are seldom explored by the gender experts because they are "political" issues !!

After doing this analysis the group felt that efforts need to be made to increase, improve and strengthen transformatory gender trainings and trainers through

- Systematic efforts to identify and create a pool of facilitators at the regional and national levels.
- Creation of opportunities for trainers to share experiences and educational/training materials.
- Documentation and dissemination of principles of transformatory gender trainings.
- Building links with other people's movements which are challenging the dominant development paradigm
- Involving women academics and researchers in transformatory trainings for development activists.



- Deepening feminist analysis to make them more holistic.

To follow-up these recommendations this South Asian workshop of women and men gender trainers who are already conducting or who have the potential of conducting transformatory gender trainings from a feminist perspective was organized. Originally it was planned that the duration of the workshop will be two weeks, but when consulted, majority of the participants said they will not be able to spare two weeks. Hence it was decided to reduce the duration to six days.

Objectives

The objectives of this workshop were:

- To bring together gender trainers from Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and from Europe to share their experiences and ideas and training materials used in gender trainings specially in the context of the fast changing economic, socio-political and cultural scenario in South Asia.
- To discuss strategies for gender advocacy in different countries of South Asia
- To evolve a broad outline of contents and methodologies of gender trainings for development workers, planners, decision-



makers at the national and local levels.

- To develop ways to address issues related to sustainable agriculture and rural development, bio-diversity, macro economic policies in gender workshops.
- To identify written and audio-visual materials and exercises which can be used in gender trainings.
- To upgrade the information levels and analytical skills of participants
- To get commitments from gender trainers to act as resource persons at South Asian or national trainings in the neighbouring countries.
- To plan joint activities at the South Asian level to facilitate ongoing sharing and mutual strengthening.

Inspiring Location, Sensitive Arrangements, Keen Participants and Participatory Processes

The location of the six day workshop was the very picturesque and secluded training centre of Proshika in Koitta, Manikganj, 60 kms from Dhaka. This centre, situated in the middle of lush green paddy fields, has two very large ponds (so characteristic of Bangladesh) full of fish and lotus flowers, vegetable gardens, fruit

orchards, poultry farm, cattlesheds etc. A large portion of the food we consumed was produced in the training centre itself.

Everyone was inspired by the beauty, silence and simplicity of the place. There were no distractions other than the beauty of the place. Totally unexpected rains and storms not only brought the high temperatures down, they also made the place more enchanting and magical. Our proximity to nature provided a sense of rootedness and harmony and it inspired us to work harder and make full use of our time together.

The importance of suitable locations for trainings was emphasized during the workshop. Locations, it was said influence the learning atmosphere and inter personal relationships. They have an impact on the amount of work done during the day and seriousness with which it is done. Locations, it was stated, should not be in contradiction with the objectives and contents of the workshop. Having workshops on poverty in five star hotels or having workshops on sustainable development and environment in air conditioned halls is indeed incongruous and should be avoided.

In addition to the natural beauty of the training centre we had the simple but comfortable accommodation and perfect arrangements. All our basic needs were taken care of by the very hospitable and friendly staff of the training centre and IDPAA staff specially deputed for our workshop. One could not have asked for better arrangements was the unanimous pronouncement by the participants. These excellent arrangements facilitated our work and increased our efficiency and productivity. Often one loses so much time on simple logistics. Although organizing everything

and meeting the various needs and desires of 27 of us looked so smooth and effortless, all of us know how much work and effort had gone into it. We were full of admiration for the IDPAA and Proshika staff, specially for Fawzia Khondkar, the co-ordinator of the Gender Relations Co-ordination Cell of Proshika. Because Fawzia was a participant in the workshop she was the one everyone went to for whatever they required.



Participants

There were a total of 27 participants in the workshop, 24 from



Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka (amongst whom two were men) and three from Germany, Netherlands and the UK. Like-minded gender trainers from Europe who conduct trainings in South Asia and /or invite South Asian trainers to their trainings were specially invited to develop common understanding, plan joint activities and generally to expand the network. Everyone was happy that we had extended invitations to these friends because in the present globalized world our networks also have to be global.

The participants were very carefully selected and they represented many important NGOs imparting gender trainings, working for women's empowerment and improving gender relations. Some participants were from bilateral organizations like CIDA, European NGOs like Action Aid and some were free lance trainers. The list of participants is enclosed.

The participants brought with them a great wealth of experience of conducting gender trainings, of planning and implementing development programmes and also of participation in the women's movement and in some other people's movements (e.g. environment movement, movement for democracy and secularism). Almost all of them are very committed persons who are doing this

work with full involvement and passion. In spite of the differences in the group in terms of the length of experience, the kind of trainings they were doing, the focus of their trainings, there was a tremendous commonality in their understanding of issues.

In spite of the fact that there were many strong people, with strong convictions there were hardly any tensions in the group. This reflected the maturity of the participants, their willingness and ability to listen and to hear out the other point of view. The spiritual/inner journeys some of the participants are undertaking and the work some of them are doing on self growth seemed to contribute to the learning atmosphere and the process.

Everyone was serious about the workshop and keen to learn and share as much as possible, hence there was no resistance at all to working long hours. It was evident, that everyone had come to learn and to offer whatever they knew to others. Because of this, personal interactions continued deep into the night and for the early birds they started at dawn. Many participants felt and said that the sense of togetherness and harmony was quite special in this workshop.

The Atmosphere and the Process

The atmosphere in the workshop was very informal, cordial, friendly and joyous. This was partly because conscious efforts were made to make it so and partly because many participants knew each other from before, hence there were existing bonds of friendship.

The large workshop room given to us had chairs and tables and a rather formal look about it. This arrangement was changed to make our working/meeting space more comfortable for long hours of work and more suitable for role plays, sculpting and other exercises used in trainings. All the furniture went out (the amount of wood we use in our daily lives is amazing. No wonder forests are disappearing so fast) and in came mattresses for the floor. The room was decorated with posters brought by the participants and given a festive look. The posters kept transmitting inspiring messages like—

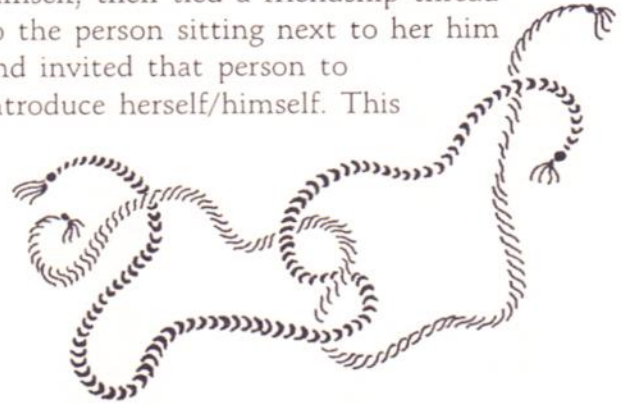
“ I am learning how to read so that I can read my own life”

“I am learning how to write so that I can write my own destiny”

“I am learning how to count so that I can keep an account of my rights”

The Friendship Knots

To create and strengthen the feeling of togetherness and friendship, the workshop was started by tying friendship threads to each other. Each participant first introduced herself/himself, then tied a friendship thread to the person sitting next to her him and invited that person to introduce herself/himself. This



little ceremony helped create a warm and friendly atmosphere. The participants were encouraged to introduce not just their official/professional selves but also their personal selves. This process of self introductions and getting to know each other was carried forward through some more exercises on identity.

Yoga for the Body and the Mind

The days began quite early for most of the participants because of the early morning yoga

session. Yoga was done from 0645 to 0745 and it was included in our programme to make the workshop more holistic. Although the yoga session was totally voluntary, 15 to 20 participants came everyday. Some of them already practised yoga, while others tried it for the first time. Yoga was done together with proper breathing, hence it helped both our body and mind.



On two days the yoga session extended into a session on message/acupressure conducted by two participants who have been learning and practising these for some time. The morning yoga time was also the time of silence. Participants were encouraged not to talk, to be inward looking, to be home in the true sense of it, to observe our bodies, our thoughts, our breathing and to bring them all together.

For those of us who had not done any work with our bodies, it was initially difficult to do the exercises, but each day our bodies were a little less stiff, a little more supple. It was interesting and exciting to see the bodies change slowly. Many of the asanas which seemed impossible to do on the first day were eminently doable after a few days. While doing yoga we explained which exercises were good for strengthening stomach muscles, back muscles etc. This was very helpful for many participants.

We included these aspects in a workshop with gender trainers because for us the aim of gender trainings is not only to achieve intellectual clarity, gather more information, develop strategies, it is also to challenge each one of us to review our thinking, behaviour, beliefs; to reflect on those areas of our life which might have been shoved under the carpet and to make our lives more healthy and holistic. We attempted to break the barriers between mind and body.

Knowing well that patriarchal control also cripples women's bodies by not allowing us to stand erect, walk freely, use our limbs freely; by making us women cover our bodies, feel ashamed of our bodies, we integrated yoga in the workshop. Along with unravelling theories

and concepts, we tried to untangle our bodies, to get to know our bodies and to like them, to make them more agile and healthy and to see the connections between our body and mind.

Knowing that in normal life working women spend all their time looking after the needs of others, neglecting their own needs, we tried to make women pay attention to themselves, to their own bodies. If we are not well, strong and happy how can we make others well, strong and happy. The morning yoga was, in a way the practice of what we talk about during the day about women's empowerment.

If Music Flows Can Dance be Far Behind...

The very long hours of structured work (from nine in the morning till nine, ten, eleven at night every day) were interspersed with music and dance. The two tea breaks were also song and dance breaks. While tea and snacks provided physical energy, music and dance gave us mental and spiritual energy. This combination truly recreated us.

The morning and afternoon sessions normally started with songs sung in different languages by different participants. These songs were those which are used by the participating trainers in their workshops/trainings. The singing sessions, thus, were also full of learning

and teaching. Our repertoire of songs was replenished by this collective singing.

It was stated during the workshop that songs, music and dance, are an integral part of most gender trainings in South Asia. In some workshops singing is not assigned a separate slot, outside the sessions, it is woven into the working sessions. Collective singing energises and enthuses us; helps break the monotony of long sessions, wakes up people if they are gradually falling asleep, and generally keeps us active. Sometimes we sing songs as

part of the discussions themselves, for example, when we are talking of

women and their unpaid work, we express the same idea through a song. Similarly there are songs on dowry, wife-beating, family planning, women's education etc. There are also a number of songs on women's consciousness,



women's resolve to break the shackles, and on other issues like environment, human rights, communal harmony, peace.

Singing, it was said, is an important part of the culture of South Asia. In countries with a strong oral tradition, songs are a very potent means of communication. Many groups have been using the medium of songs for initiating discussions, for raising awareness and for energising.

No Dearth of Resource Persons in a Workshop of Trainers

The overall responsibility of planning and co-ordinating the workshop had been handled by Kamla Bhasin and Abha Bhaiya till the beginning of the workshop. But, once the workshop began the responsibility was handed over to the entire group to make the workshop participatory and to make everyone responsible for the success of the workshop.

The group took up the challenge and set a team of seven to review the workshop every evening and to steer it into the direction desired by most. The 'seven sisters', (as they came to be known) set the agenda of the workshop for each day and identified participants who could act as resource persons



for sessions where some inputs were required. This system worked extremely well.

Resource persons for different sessions were from amongst the group and this too worked very well because different participants had different expertise and experience. Doreen led the discussion on identity and power; Ambreen, Yasmin, Rashida and Kausar conducted the session on self growth; Kamla handled the discussions on globalization, food security etc.; Ranjini initiated the discussion on organizational development. Everyone shared experiences during the sessions on training. Sadeque led the discussion on evaluation of gender trainings. Almost everyone chaired small group and plenary discussions and everyone acted as a rapporteur of one session or another. Everyone owned the workshop and did his/her best to contribute to it and learn from it.

Readings

A set of articles/papers was put together by Abha and Kamla and given to every participant. This set included articles and booklets written from a gender perspective on gender trainings, food security and bio-diversity, organizational analysis and organizational development,

women's land rights etc. A list of these readings is enclosed as an Annexe.

Some of the important articles were read and discussed in small groups. These exercises were found to be very useful because many of these articles were on issues with which many participants were not familiar. The importance of identifying good articles, of translating selected articles into local languages and the importance of cultivating a habit of reading by activists and trainers was highlighted during the collective reading sessions.

Display and Sharing of Training Materials

In response to a request made by the organizers, many participants had brought training materials used by them. All these were on permanent display due to the workshop. In addition Jagori, New Delhi had identified and procured a large number of documents specially for this workshop and they were also on display. Some participants had brought multiple copies of some articles/reports which were given to participants.

During the breaks, participants could be seen looking at these materials and having those



documents photocopied which they thought would be useful for them.

Getting to see so many interesting and useful documents at one place and getting access to some of them was quite a bonus for trainers. Jagori had also brought along some booklets, books, posters, audio cassettes for sale.

During the discussion on these materials it was emphasized that we need to systematize sharing of training materials across countries and increase our efforts to produce and translate materials into local languages. The South Asian Network of Gender Trainers, which was set up on the last day of the workshop, decided to undertake these activities with the active support and co-operation of all the members.

Making Bridges All Around

On one of the evenings we invited feminist scholars, women and men NGO workers and leaders, and activists of the women's movement in Bangladesh to interact with the participants. We were delighted and grateful to find that about twenty people took the trouble of travelling for one and a half hours each way to be with us. Amongst those who came were ten

women and men who had participated in one or the other South Asian or national activity organized by the FAO-NGO South Asia Programme. One of them had been part of a South Asian workshop on women's empowerment held way back in 1983. It was evident from what people said in this social gathering that the small but consistent work FAO-NGO South Asia Programme has been doing at South Asian level has added up to something substantial. Old members of the South Asian network were happy to meet and welcome new ones. Everyone expressed the necessity, benefits and joy of understanding and co-operation at the South Asian level. It was also stated that NGOs and specially women's organizations have played a very crucial role in making bridges across national borders in South Asia and in emphasizing that peace and solidarity in South Asia is essential for this region to prosper.

The non-Bangladeshi participants were particularly happy to get an opportunity to meet so many people actively involved in work related to sustainable development and women's empowerment.

As usual, in addition to discussions, there was singing in different languages. Bengalis from



India and Bangladesh, Punjabis from India and Pakistan sang old folk songs together reminding everyone of the cultural heritage shared by people living on different sides of political borders.

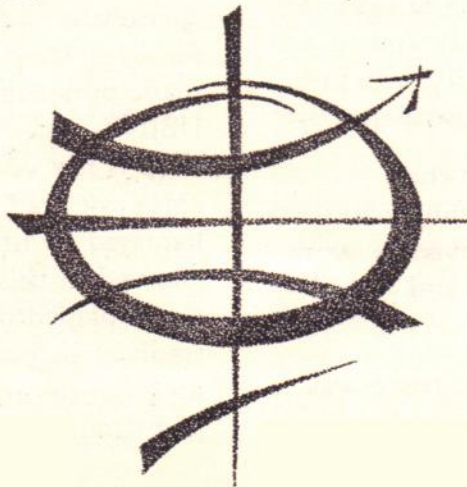
Almost all the participants spent an extra day in Bangladesh after the workshop to meet some more groups in Dhaka and to understand their work. Everyone went to Nari Grontho Probartana, a feminist bookshop run by UBINIG, a voluntary organization working on different aspects of sustainable livelihoods. The bookshop has books, posters, postcards, magazines, audio cassettes from Bangladesh and from other parts of the world on gender, ecology, women's reproductive rights, sustainable agriculture and human rights etc. On another floor the shop has handloom cloth, saris, clothes made by village communities with whom UBINIG works. The most exciting part of the shop is the women's cafe where women can come, sit read, talk without being disturbed, harassed by male gaze and intrusions. Men are allowed in this cafe but only if they are accompanied by a woman. The cafe serves traditional food and drinks. No Pepsi, coke and junk food is served. Once a week, at a fixed day and time women meet here to listen to poetry,

songs , short stories presented by local women poets, writers. On other days other groups can use the space for meetings, discussions. Several participants wished they had such a space and facility for women in their country. A participant from Pakistan was so inspired and excited that she resolved to do her best to replicate this in Islamabad. The others who shared her dream said INSHA ALLAH.

Some participants visited Khushi Kabir and her colleagues at Nijera Kori. Khushi is one of the senior NGO leaders who is involved with a number of environmental struggles and is part of the women's movement. Some others visited BRAC and Aarong, the shop which sells hand made products made by village groups supported by BRAC and other NGOs.

Congratulations ! A New Network is Born

After experiencing and rejoicing so much togetherness, collective thinking and learning and solidarity it would have been very surprising if the participants disbursed without any plans to keep connected. From the third day onwards, some participants started talking about formalising and strengthening the network which exists at the South Asian level. Because everyone was enthusiastic about this idea, on the last day the group created the South Asian Network of Gender Trainers, or SANGT. The objectives, activities, structures were worked out and the friends from Bedari, Pakistan offered to host the Secretariat of SANGT for the first year. (*See Annexe 3 for details*).



Highlights of Workshop Content

It is not possible to reproduce all the presentations, discussions, debates which took place in the workshop in short report. Even more difficult is to do justice to the processes and the interpersonal dynamics that enriched the workshop. The attempt here is to give an idea of the main issues discussed during the workshop.

Getting to Know Each Other

As a part of getting to know each other, a session was conducted to explore our identities.

In the first exercise we were divided into groups of three, were asked to describe ourselves to someone who has never seen us before and who is coming to pick us up at the airport.

In the second exercise, each of us were asked to choose five identities for ourselves and share them in our group. The collage was fascinating... activist, mother, fighter, teacher,

nature-lover, feminist, trainer, sincere, committed... from choosing roles to identifying with beliefs and values, we covered a range. In some cases, we found that there were some identities which competed with each other in terms of priorities.

We reflected which of our identities gave us strengths and which made us vulnerable. Most identities were seen as strengths, but some participants felt that being a woman, or a mother also can make us vulnerable.

After these short exercises we discussed how we could use these exercises in our work.

1. We could fold a paper into four parts and map our identities...

Personal	Social
Professional	Activist

We could further explore those identities which are close to us and those that are further away.

It was explained that in different settings identities come up differently depending on class, caste, race, colour, ethnicity etc.

It was reiterated that the process should enable participants to explore and be sincere in their sharing, and participants should not be forced into sharing. We need to focus on “who we are” and not confuse it with “what we do”.

Through these exercises we began the journey of getting to know each other. We found out how each one of us looked at ourselves, what we identified with, which part of our work/ personality we valued most.

As is usual in feminist gender workshops, the exercises encouraged us to talk also about our personal lives. The personal and the professional were merged as they have to be if we wish to reflect on our gendered identities and if required, change them. This session was extremely lively and everyone learnt as well as enjoyed a lot. As it turned out many participants use very similar exercises in their trainings/workshops.



A Small Exercise on Self Growth

While for most trainers ‘self’ is the starting point of training, some feminist trainers have evolved a well thought out module to go deeper into the areas of self analysis and self growth.

One of the participants who has done considerable work on self growth was requested to conduct a session on self growth and self analysis.

The session started with an exercise on childhood messages. While the first step dealt with messages of what we as girl/boy were told regarding what we should/ could do and what not do; what were our dreams and what are our feelings today regarding these messages. Step two mainly focused on messages regarding our relationships with others, our skills and abilities, physical appearance, intelligence and setting future goals for us. The last part of the exercise tried to access how these messages impacted our feelings and behaviour and also explored how some of these messages could be changed.

The facilitator explained that this exercise is used as part of self growth training and is conducted as 3rd or 4th session of the training because there has to be sufficient bonding

within the group and an environment of trust and confidence before an exercise like this can be done. She further stressed that a careful, sensitive facilitation and group support are critical for these processes.

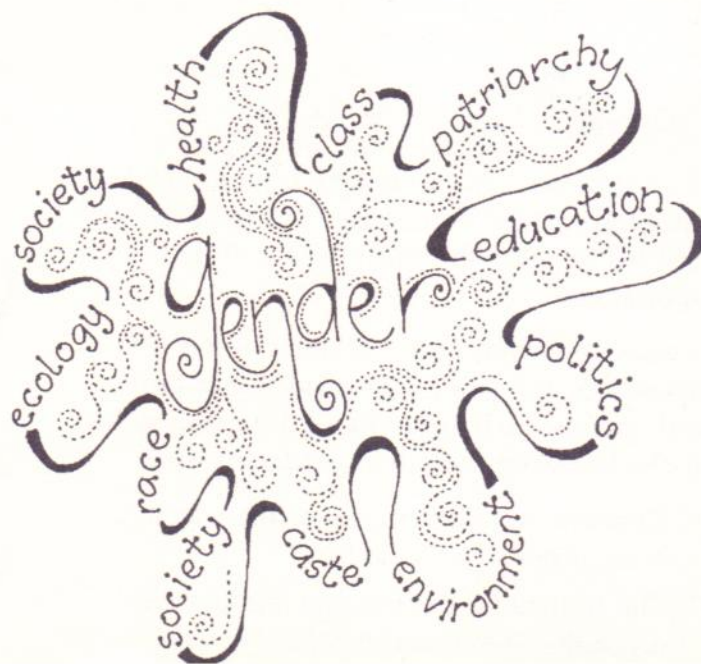
Most participants were moved and some participants were overwhelmed by the emotions this session unleashed. Many participants said that more work needs to be done on self growth in patriarchal societies like ours. On the last day, during the session on follow up, it was decided to organize a South Asian Workshop of Gender Trainers on Self Growth.

Sharing of Experiences of Gender Trainings

The main discussions during the workshop were on issues and concerns that were articulated in the form of expectations from the workshop on the first day. These concerns were directly linked to the work that the participants were doing in their field areas or in the process of gender trainings. These concerns reflected the participants search for clarity, and desire to learn from each other's experiences and the need to take these learnings back to their own constituencies. Everyone had noted their concerns on pieces of paper and placed them on the board for

everybody to see. These concerns were then grouped under the following categories:

- Issues related to perspective.
- Aspects of methods and methodology used in trainings.
- The role of trainers and their strengths and weaknesses.
- The content of workshops/ trainings.
- Selection of training material for specific groups of participants.



- Mainstreaming gender trainings and its impact on women's empowerment.
- Building advocacy and lobbying skills.
- Evolving indicators for impact assessment of trainings.
- How to support and strengthen gender training inputs and processes.
- Need for networks of gender trainers and for support mechanisms.



In order to fulfil our expectations from the workshop, it was seen as important to begin by sharing our training experiences and reflecting on the salient issues emerging from our experiences.

As all the participants brought rich and diverse experiences to the workshop, sharing of these itself led to the fulfilment of some of our expectations.

In order to do full justice to the trainers' experiences, the group was divided into four small groups. Each group focused its discussions on the following aspects of gender training:

- Duration and participants of the trainings being conducted. (Who?)
- The content of the training and the non-negotiable core content (what?)

- The methodology and the methods used (how?).
- The objectives of the trainings (why?).
- Challenges and constraints faced by the trainers.

Additionally each group chose and demonstrated a method/exercise used by them in their trainings.

Objectives of Gender Trainings

From the group work it emerged that following were the broad objectives of the gender trainings being done by the participants:

- To enhance awareness regarding the self with regard to the construction of gender; the situation of women and men with respect to social, political, economic, health and educational factors.
- To develop conceptual understanding on gender and patriarchy in relation with class, caste, race, region, religion, minority status, ethnicity and so on.
- To understand the interconnectedness of various issues such as health, environment, education, employment etc., and various institutions such as family, religion, media etc.

- To enhance analytical abilities for self-reflection and for understanding women's discrimination, exploitation, subordination and oppression.
- To energise the women's movement and evolve a feminist perspective.
- To develop one's creativity and sensitivity.
- To learn from and understand each other with love, care and a sense of freedom.
- To make development organizations and their programmes more gender sensitive, efficient and effective.
- To enhance the communication and training skills of trainers.
- To integrate gender perspective at the self/ family, organisation and the community level.
- To build networks among NGOs, women's movements and other people's movements.
- To promote collective understanding, commitment and solidarity among South Asian countries.



The participants unanimously stated that all gender trainings should believe in and promote the following:

- The inherent creativity and potential for self growth of every participant (woman and man)
- Exploration of the full potential of every participant
- Centrality of human beings in all development efforts and focusing on human development
- Equality between sexes, castes, classes, races, religious and ethnic identities
- Cultural and biological plurality and diversity.
- Practice of democracy within all relationships and organizations, from the family to the global.
- Peace and non-violence at all levels.
- Conservation of environment and ecology and people's knowledge.

Gender trainings are committed to:

- create mutual help.
- create opportunities for collective reflection
- enhance new strategies of learning.

- deepen sensitivity.
- build commitment to self and women's causes.
- develop commitment.
- understand and steer social change.
- making organizations gender sensitive
- evolve alternative processes of knowledge production.
- create/deepen commitment to social justice and equity
- democracy and ecological sustainability

The group agreed that gender training is a limited exercise and it cannot be a solution to all the problems faced by women in society. Hence it is necessary to go beyond trainings and to evolve strategies such as:

- Making organizations and their policies gender sensitive.
- Taking broad steps/measures to improve and develop linkages with the women's movements, other people's movements.
- Building support systems through networking.
- Drawing strength from collective processes.
- Extending solidarity towards like minded groups working for women's empowerment.



Content

The content of the training depends on the training objectives and the requirements of the participants and the organisations they are representing. On the basis of collective reflection the following core content areas/ covered by most trainers were identified by the participants:

- A. Conceptual clarity with regard to
 - The social construction of gender, gender inequalities/discrimination.
 - Patriarchy and other systems of domination.
 - The institutions of family and marriage.
 - The State and its institutions.
 - The market and the impact of globalization.
 - The history of the women's movement.
 - The sites of struggle and change.
 - Empowerment of women.
 - Development and sustainable Development.
- B. Analysis of development paradigms, policies, plans and devising alternative strategies for individual and collective action for gender sensitive planning and implementation.

Linking the micro level with the macro-level (national-global policies and programmes).

- C. Organisational change and making innovative use of diversity (caste / class/ ethnicity/ language/ race) within an organisation.

Some of the participants were of the opinion that the core content areas must include a discussion on the institution of marriage and the family as they play a key role in the construction of gender identities. Hence it is important to understand how are women placed within these institutions and what are the forms of oppression that these institutions perpetuate for women. In this context it was emphasised that in order for gender trainings to create a significant impact, the participants of the trainings must get familiar with the history of the women's movement that exemplify collective struggles by women and some men against women's oppression. The accent put on these core contents, however, varies from trainer to trainer.

In addition to these core contents several other themes are covered by some gender trainers, for example, identity, processes of socialisation, conceptual clarity on development and approaches to women and development, gender



analysis of projects, gender and media, health and law, resistance to and resolution of conflict on gender issues. However the coverage of these themes in gender trainings depends on the participants attending trainings.

Many participants emphasized that conceptual clarity is not sufficient in itself. According to them in any gender training reflection on one's values, attitudes and behaviour is extremely important. The need to deal with issues such as resistance to change, prejudices, blocks to self awareness and the silence around issues of sexuality were seen as crucial in the context of gender training. Gender training should also enable the participants to reflect on one's self and develop strategies for change. Thus clarity on spaces available for individual and collective action for change is crucial for making gender training effective.

It was found that most gender trainers start their trainings from personal experiences of participants and then proceed towards a situational analysis of men and women in the family, society, and at the workplace. The next step is to search for the causes of powerlessness and the secondary status of women in all spheres of life. After this the trainers explain concepts like patriarchy, gender, feminism,

empowerment and initiate discussions on development paradigms development policies and programmes, women's movement etc.

Some groups talked about the political and social environment that determines the course content so that the training does not seem to be too threatening to people's beliefs or to the state, for example issues related to religion or culture are not taken up directly by some participants in some settings

Methodology and Methods

According to the group, methodology is the set of principles that underlie the whole process of training. The ideological underpinnings of the trainers determine the principles of training which constitute methodology. The following points were mentioned as the principles of a feminist methodology:

- The personal as the starting point.
- Process oriented and experiential.
- Creating a balance between women as victims and as active agents of change.
- A belief in the people's fundamental capacity to change.
- Circular process of reflection.



- It was agreed that in these trainings all the participants share their experiences of life and work, and do collective analysis of the content areas. The methodology used is participatory and experiential, analytical in its approach, oriented to discovering/establishing interconnections, related to strategies for change. The selection of training methods is based on the levels and kinds of participants.

The following approaches are brought used by different trainers:

- The conceptual approach dealing with concepts (feminism, patriarchy, organisational change, etc.) for senior women and other members of the organisation.
- Policy analysis approach through the presentation of hard core statistics and policies for policy-makers - the government, NGOs, and others.
- Empirical 'hard facts' approach dealing with analysis of statistics for examining discrimination etc. with bureaucrats, police officials, government functionaries etc.
- Action-reflection approach dealing with a continual process of reflection, analysis of

theory and practice, and the use of innovative methods with groups related to the women's movement.

- Self-development and self-reflection approach - the analysis of 'sources' of power which is oriented towards the achievement of equality, and the vision of a just society. The question raised by such an approach is how to address these in the women's groups as well as in mixed groups.

Some of the methods and exercises that are used by the participating trainers were elaborated in detail and they were:

- Group discussions
- Question-answer sessions
- Role-play
- Mime
- Discussion with statement cards
- Examples/case studies
- Structured exercises
- Energisers/ice-breakers
- Songs/jokes
- Self-study and presentation
- Sculpture
- Socio-gramming

- Illustrations/symbols
- Life-mapping
- Fish bowl
- Training evaluations

In order to make these methods effective audio-visual tools/aids such as films, video-cassettes, slides, transparencies/overhead projectors, flash cards, jig-saw puzzles etc. are used by some trainers

Exercises to Make Learning More Lively

A special feature of the workshop was the creation of space for trainers to share some of the methods, exercises and energisers that they use in their trainings. Difficult issues are made easier to raise and discuss by using non verbal communication methods. They also break the monotony of the usual methods of reflection and dialogue. Theatre exercises such as sculpting, (through a process of making sculpture or a freeze of a theme or an issue, an attempt is made to present the issue) role play are excellent ways in which trainers can encourage creativity among participants. The following are some of the exercises that trainers demonstrated during the workshop.

A **sculpting exercise** was used to deal with the issue of power and powerlessness in

different settings such as family, public place, in an institution or in the community. The objective was to explore concepts of oppression, protection and other deeper feelings around these. The exercise was then taken forward by changing the sculpture to introduce desired changes in the existing situation.

Organizational change exercise was done by drawing the structure of the organization by using a symbol. This is used to help participants explore their position and placement within the organization, to understand their feelings about the hierarchy and power and to identify sources of power within the organization. The exercise can be taken forward by strategising for the empowerment of those who find themselves in a situation of powerlessness.

Life history mapping is used in order to understand the difference between sex and gender, this method helps in identifying social and biological milestones of participants lives.

Socio gramming is used to get a lot of information about the participants in an interesting manner by asking them to group around various questions related to their lives such as age, experience, marital and maternal



status, etc. This can also be used to elicit participants beliefs, perspectives and understanding of concepts.

Self growth exercise is an exercise to explore very personal and often untalked about experiences of participants that reveal areas of denials and affirmation.

Duration: The duration of the trainings being done vary according to the needs of the participants and the nature of their work. For instance while some trainings are 2 to 7 days long, others are for longer periods such as 1-3 months and still others, such as the Women's Studies Course in Nepal, is one-year long.

Participants: Gender trainings are organised for people from a wide range of organisations, such as government departments (including police departments), non-government development organisations, women's organizations, donor agencies. A large number of trainings are conducted for village level functionaries, members of community organizations, elected members of local government bodies. Some trainings include teachers, students, media persons, lawyers, medical practitioners etc. because it is believed that reorientation of these people is necessary to strengthen the women's movement and to bring about widespread change in the thinking on gender issues.

Discussion on gender training brought the following questions and concerns to the forefront.

- Is 'gender' a relevant construct for understanding complex system of patriarchy?
- The notion of differences. How inspite of multiple identities do we build solidarity?
- The notion of social citizenship for women.
- How do we address the issues of sexuality in gender training?
- How to mainstream gender concerns without diluting our politics.
- Resistance/backlash (Understanding it and dealing with it).
- How to generate enthusiasm and commitment.
- Discourse analysis (Language, terminology, politics).
- Gender trainings and their relationship with the women's movement.

As stated earlier most of us agreed that gender training is only one of the many strategies for bringing about changes in women's situation and in gender relations. Training cannot be a one-time activity. It has to be an ongoing process of reflection followed by action.



Whatever changes are seen as critical during the training at the level of the self, the group, and the organisation need to be supported by all the actors involved in this process. Training by definition needs to be seen in the context of action for change. It is a capacity building activity of analysis and practice. It is also a mutually strengthening process - both for the participants and the trainers.

A Critical Look at Gender Analysis Frameworks

One session was spent on critically reviewing the following frameworks which are being taught and used for gender analysis and planning.

- The Harvard Framework
- The Gender Analysis Matrix
- The Gender Roles and Needs Framework developed by Caroline Moser
- The Women's Empowerment Matrix

These frameworks, it was stated by the resource person, do further a gender perspective within grassroot organisations, but they are more concerned with integrating women into mainstream development processes rather than in transforming gender and other social

relations. Normally the term gender is used in a descriptive way to refer to social differences in roles and responsibilities of men and women, rather than to indicate the power relations between men and women. Issues like violence against women, male control over women's sexuality and reproduction, male control over mainstream political processes etc. cannot be analysed through most of these frameworks. The fact that gender relations are closely intertwined with relationships of race, class, caste, religion, ethnicity, age and other social categories is also not recognized adequately by these frameworks.

Some participants felt that the process of transforming power relationships between men and women is depoliticized by these frameworks and specifically by the way they are being used by people in the field. A complex process of struggle is converted into a set of seemingly simple and sequential tasks. There is also the assumption that if plans are gender aware, they will automatically be implemented by development organisations. Implicitly, development organizations are viewed as neutral arenas. Some participants were however of the view that some of these frameworks can be selectively used as



tools for gender analysis and planning.

The resource person then introduced Social Relations Framework (SRF) developed by Naila Kabeer which views development as increasing human well-being at the levels of survival, security and autonomy. Poverty, vulnerability and powerlessness of women are seen as arising out of institutional rules, activities, people, resources and power. It examines institutional features of kinship, community, market and the state: and the different organisational forms these take. As institutions take a variety of organisational forms, transforming institutions is also about transforming organisations. A first step to transforming organisations, the SRF says is to bring about shifts in policies, from gender blind to gender aware; and from gender neutral to gender redistributive. There may also be need for policy shifts within gender aware policies.

The SRF also talks of the need for a field analysis of the enabling and disabling factors in the internal aspects of the development organisation as part of the planning process. The enabling and disabling factors can be divided into four categories; people (allies and

adversaries), resources (material, human and social), rules/norms and power/ decision making. The disabling factors need to be reduced or eliminated, using some of the enabling factors strategically.

The SRF is concerned with the achievement of both welfare and autonomy/ empowerment goals. It does not value one over the other, but sees their achievement as inter-related. It also recognises that gender relations are created because of the distribution of power and resources; and are not merely voluntarily learned norms of social behaviour. This framework can be used to address issues of poverty, as well as issues of violence, sexuality and reproduction.

However, the framework does not state what kind of development paradigm it upholds, the key issues to be addressed in the contemporary context and the role which governmental and non-governmental organisations should be playing.

It was emphasized by several participants that patriarchy and its manifestations had to be clearly understood and struggles have to be organised to overthrow patriarchy. Tools cannot transform power relations; such relations can only be changed through struggle.

The Politics of Mainstreaming Gender

The issue of mainstreaming gender came up for heated discussion during the workshop. The following questions were discussed in some depth.

- How do we go about mainstreaming gender?
- Some participants felt that in the name of mainstreaming gender women's concerns were being diluted and depoliticised. Often just lip service is paid to gender issues and no basic changes are brought about. Several examples were given to substantiate these points. Gender cells, women's commissions have been created by some organizations/ governments, but more often than not these bodies have no teeth. They are there only for decorative purposes. A lot of concern was expressed on these issues.
- Should we work with organizations whose policies are leading to further marginalization of the poor and of women, destruction of ecology, increasing disparities within and between nations etc.? According to some participants the policies and programme of World Bank, IMF, many corporate bodies and MNCs are leading to unsustainable development and hence they

questioned the wisdom of collaborating with them. What should be the strategy to deal with such organizations whose power has increased over the years ?

The discussion on these issues showed that there were differences in opinion and strategies. Those of us who are placed in mainstream organizations like donor agencies, government projects, bilateral funding programmes or mainstream gender training institutes expressed concerns about the limited availability of spaces to introduce changes within these organizations. Some of us felt that instead of refusing to interact with such structures we should use them to our advantage by entering these spaces. In this context, some participants shared how they have tried to increase gender sensitivity within such organizations. This however was a contentious issue because some participants were cynical and felt that its nearly impossible to raise our voices against such powerful actors leave aside impacting them from inside. There was a sense of despair when some of the participants observed how it is becoming increasingly difficult to get away from the presence of WB in our daily lives.

One participant sharpened the debate by expressing her dilemmas and difficulties in the



World Bank financed projects such as District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) in India that focuses on the education of girls. While 'unpacking' the programme approach and the underlying assumptions it is easy to understand the hidden agenda of the World Bank in promoting girls education. At one level, primary level education is advocated at the cost of higher education, which is getting privatised. At another level, the underlying rationale for supporting education of girls is to "catch them young" for addressing the problems of higher fertility. In recent years the focus on girls has increasingly shifted towards adolescent girls merely for controlling the population. There is hardly any element of women's empowerment in these programmes.

While describing the positive experiences of a colleague in a World Bank financed project on education in Baluchistan, one of the participants argued that the availability of space to effect change depends to a large extent on the context. In this case, the trainer was able to form village-level committees for girls' education which questioned the existing power relations. The key issue then is to get the space, enter it, expand it, create a base for supporting your efforts and create more space.

Another participant was of the opinion that no matter what the donor agencies are doing in terms of their projects, they do try to link the project work with strategic issues (i.e. empowerment).

One of the participants mentioned that the money which is available to most organisations is from the corporate sector, the World Bank or the donor agencies. We can't get away from the pressures of the donors. The need is to recognise the in agenda and devise the strategies to deal with it. Another participant mentioned her concerns about the inability to participate in the formulation of the policies in their organisations. She described her experience of working for an organisation that organises women for saving and credit without any awareness about gender issues. She expressed concern that most of us are engaged only in training and not in policy formulation which determines everything.

Another participant stated that the time has come for us to decide whether we want to work for with the World Bank or for peoples' movements that oppose the agenda of structural adjustments and globalization. World Bank projects such as aquaculture development are not meant to empower people. They are working towards disempowering them. Our



governments do not seem to have the desire or power to influence World Bank policies and programmes. Our elite is going along with policies of globalization, liberalization because they stand to benefit from them. Some large NGOs working with them are doing so in order to survive as they need money for staff and infrastructure.

In spite of differences of opinion, the participants heard each other out, they tried to understand each other's perspective and finally, it was agreed that in order to influence policies it is important for women from the South Asian region to come together to create autonomous spaces. What was seen as important was to maintain alliances with divergent groups of actors/stockholders. Actions take place within a context. What is needed is an ongoing dialogue with people, decision-makers, donors, etc. The need is to trigger activism through our gender trainings. Working for gender equality is often a sort of guerrilla warfare. We must recognise where power is located and how it influences our lives. We need multiple strategies to introduce social change.

Some of the participants felt that we need to take a binary position, while others insisted

that we do need to state our position very clearly at this point of time. It is important to introspect and take a clear stand. Each of us needs a group that warns each one of us if we are moving towards the other camp. It was stated that it is necessary to make a distinction between the World Bank, IMF, G8 whose policies are harming the lives of millions of people and the peoples' movements and organisations which work for the empowerment of people. The latter also need professionals. For example, the Narmada Bachao Andolan in India needs engineers, mathematicians, scientists etc. to make an argument against big dams. Survival struggles of marginalized people need support. Professionals need to decide on whose side they are. Personal sacrifices are required from middle class professionals to change the present paradigm of development.

Organizational Development

The discussion on organisational development was introduced through an exercise. Participants were asked to visualise a metaphor for their organisation and draw it on a sheet of paper. After the drawings were completed, participants sat in small buzz groups to discuss their drawings.



The participants were asked to explain the pictures that they had drawn of their organizations. It was pointed out that having a woman head or a large woman staff did not necessarily mean that the NGO was responsive to women and their lives. Whether organizations were challenging patriarchy or not reflected in style of leadership, structure and organisational culture. Gender issues in NGOs cannot be viewed in isolation. They are linked to other organisational issues like democracy, autonomy and transparency. Organizations are influenced by outside factors like the state, community and donors (multilateral, bilateral and NGO donors). They are also influenced by the people within.

This was followed by a sculpturing exercise. The participants presented human sculptures of their organizations. The facilitator then asked whether the sculptors were happy with the state of the organization and if not they were asked to change the sculptures to show the changes they desired in their organizations.

The facilitator pointed out that the sculpture reflects people's personal feelings and perceptions about their organisation. It is an effective way of bringing issues about organisational culture and hierarchy into the

open. There should always be a discussion after the sculptures are done.

The discussion then moved to gender and organizations. It was pointed out that since the 80s feminist organizations had begun to critique the perception which saw organizations as neutral public sites where they efficiently do the work that they are supposed to do. Feminists critiqued that these organisations reflect and perpetuate social hierarchies.

In order to look at the issues of organizational structure and power, participants divided themselves into four groups according to the type and nature of organizations they represented. The four types were

1. Feminist organisations
2. Gender training and research institutions
3. Donor organisations
4. Organisations working at the grass roots

Groups discussed the problems and issues of their organisations related to Power. In order to unpack the issue of power further, the groups were asked to read certain papers dealing with organisational analysis. As part of the assignment the groups were also asked to apply SWOT for doing organizational analysis.



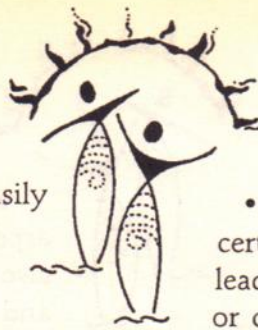
Lot of points were raised in the plenary regarding the use of SWOT. It was felt that not all organisational aspects can be unpacked using SWOT. It also does not allow analysis of functions and how different aspects are played out on the ground. While the effectiveness of SWOT as a tool is dependent on the user, it is not comprehensive and is unable to deal with complexities. However it is a useful tool for enabling reflection on interrelationships between strengths and change opportunities as well as on the external factors which have a direct impact on the internal dynamics of organisation. There was concern about the outcome of such an exercise because its effectiveness depends on how much the person doing it is able to influence decisions within the organisation. It is therefore, helpful if a large group of people do the exercise together.

This discussion also raised the issue of resistance to change. As trainers are outside change agents, it is necessary for us to generate enthusiasm and identify supporting individuals before beginning the change process itself, and also explore with the organisation what 'change' means for them. The process of change in gender relations within an organisation

entails questioning and changing all hierarchies of power within the organisation. Dominant groups will not easily agree to share/give up their power. In the end it was agreed that frameworks have limitations and are useful only when adapted to specific contexts. It was also stressed that gender hierarchy cannot be addressed without addressing the issues of democracy, accountability and transparency.

The group which consisted of representatives of women's organisations made the following points:

- There are different sources of power within organisations which need to be addressed during the process of organisational change. These include age, education, class, language professional competence, marital status etc.
- The notion of perfect "equality" among different members is mythical.
- Some women accept subordination and obedience to authority as an acceptable cultural norm, and are reluctant to exercise power even when they are encouraged to do so.
- The open and flexible structures of many women's organisations can themselves be a problem, since women have to define their



own roles and often have difficulty in doing so.

- Power continues to be centred in certain key individuals, whose vision, leadership or charisma are identified with the organisation. This can become a block for others to participate in decision making.
- Some women's organizations have evolved strategies to enable their members to share their feelings and give feedback in non-threatening ways.

One of the groups, which had done a fairly detailed reading of a case study of a large NGO, shared the following points which came up during their discussions.

- There is often a contradiction between the goals of organisations (credit), and the more holistic goals of an OD intervention.
- An exclusive focus on credit can lead to sidelining of many issues, such as violence against women, women's participation etc.
- The output/efficiency- oriented thrust of the credit programme has more in common with a top-down and rigid management structure, than with an open and flexible one.

- The scale and size of the organisation and its operations make it difficult to envisage it as being “owned” by the community. People are likely to remain “objects” of the credit programme. People’s ownership of other such mega programmes has come about only through restructuring the parent organisation into many smaller groups.



Every group took the challenge to look at the complex, abstract and subtle issue of power within these spaces and presented it through sculptures. This activity generated a very interesting and rich discussion in the plenary.

Impact Assessment of Training Processes

While discussing the issues raised by small groups in the plenary, we agreed that gender issues could not become an add on to standard “OD modules”. Since the issue is one of changing attitudes, each organisation will have to start from its own experience of gender inequality, and evolve its own vision of equality. The changes in structures, systems and activities will follow after a consensus has been reached on the basic values of the organisation. Our effort should therefore be to explore the implications of gender equality in the context of organisational vision and mission.

One exercise that generated a lot of interest and discussion was around the issue of power. With the use of sculpture exercises, the participants in small groups looked at existing institutions such as family public spaces and community that perpetuate patriarchal system increasing gender discrimination at all levels.

The discussion on the impact assessment of gender trainings was initiated through a presentation on the experience of BRAC’s gender training programme called Gender Quality Action Learning (GQAL) that uses a cyclic process of training, monitoring and evaluation involving eight steps.

The gender training is done at the level of Block Units. The main training inputs cover 42 days spread over 12 months. Evaluation and Monitoring are a part of follow up, and a set of formats have been designed to assess the impact of training. The GQAL process aims both at improving the quality of gender relations within BRAC, as well as improvement in programme processes for both men and women. BRAC’s attempt is to bring gender equity at every level.

The evaluation format used by BRAC addresses issues of change at the level of the individual,

changes related to work, changes in office practice and staff relations and achievement of programme objectives.

A number of questions were raised by the group, regarding the responses of the BRAC management to issues of attitudinal and behavioural changes which the evaluation had opened up. Although we used BRAC as an example, the discussion was broadened to address a whole range of issues related to gender training impact analysis. We agreed that the task of assessing the impact is extremely difficult as a lot of changes in the area of gender equity are intangible and therefore beyond measurement.

It is by no means easy to quantify or even define what people learn in a participatory programme which does not necessarily seek to promote any technical skills or knowledge but instead attempts more to improve human and social skills and capacity to analyse through a dialogical approach to training. The objectives of such a programme are to effect changes in attitudes, behaviour, thinking and approach to developmental issues by bringing together a group of development-practitioners and then letting them learn from each other. There are no modules of knowledge here which are passed on by a set of "trainers" to the "trainees" and



which can be neatly defined and quantified at the end of the exercise.

Moreover, the projects/organizations from which participants come and to which they return are not empty slates on which they can start writing afresh and one can say "Look this is what happened as a result of our training". Many of the organizations represented in our workshops are already involved with innovative programmes; many of them have been experimenting with new approaches and ideas hence it is not possible, not even desirable, to claim ownership of changes.

It is not easy to ensure and/or monitor follow up of these workshops if the participants are not heads of institutions. The ripples which are created in the minds by an effective training course might not find responsive waters in their own organizations. How many ripples a stone thrown into a pond leads to, after all depends not only on the size of the stone and the way it is thrown but also on the nature and volume of the water it is thrown into, the prevailing winds and so many other factors.

It would also be well to remember that participants of these workshops have to return to a group of people who have not had the

same experiences and exposure as they have had. Most of them return to an organisational structure where authority for decision making and policy formulation does not usually lie with people close to the field. Because of the top down nature of the channels of communication it is not easy for field level workers to introduce their participatory experiences and insights into the consciousness of their superiors always and to effect changes in their organizations. They are, however, able to initiate changes in their own personal lives and at their own level at their place of work. So it is not at all easy for them to break through the resistance to change within their organizations working structures.

Some participants said that in many instances, they were asked to conduct trainings just for one or two days which were more like orientation sessions rather than trainings. There is no possibility whatsoever of assessing the impact of such short sessions. Some of us who do long term trainings (7 to 30 days) felt that there were greater possibilities for the internalisation process to take place. Long term trainings also have more possibilities for the trainings to be process oriented. There were also experiences of working with the same organization over a period of time, making it



possible to see the process of integrating changes.

Some participants emphasized that to ensure the impact of trainings it is important to build support mechanisms as part of the training process itself. For example, in the context of rural poor, non literate women regular night meetings, skill building workshops, involvement in larger campaigns and movements, visit to other NGOs, issue based village fairs and regular follow up meetings create a rich ground for practising the principles of empowerment and transformatory politics learnt during the workshop. Normally it is easier to assess the changed understanding, analysis, perspective when participants start using the tools of analysis, but these can also not be measured easily.

Some participants were of the view that this obsession with quantification of impact is quite misplaced and at times counter productive. This often leads to the creation and use of simplistic modules and measurement tools for things which are so complex. We are not even conscious of so many of our own attitudes, thoughts. Gender identities are creations of centuries old traditions, religious and cultural practices. How can one talk about measuring

changes after a few days of discussions, specially if the material conditions of women remain the same, their powerlessness does not change, caste and class structures remain the same.

The participants were of the view that, although you cannot measure the impact, both the participants and resource persons can feel the effectiveness of a good workshop, they can feel if perceptions change, if enthusiasm is created, if energy flows. Everyone can distinguish a good training from a bad one, even though they cannot provide data to prove that.

One of the significant indicators to judge the impact of training is when the organization/group requests for more trainings or a follow up of the same training. Such demand also indicates organization's commitment to issues related to gender within the organizational structure and programme.

While discussing the impact of trainings on organizations, it was said that this also depends on the size of the organizations. Bigger/larger organizations, by their very nature, are hierarchical and often undemocratic. In large organizations it is difficult for the staff to feel a sense of ownership of the organization. They



become objects rather than subjects of the institution. Therefore it is more difficult to evolve a collective vision and commitment and in the absence of these it is likely that gender trainings become just a token activity.

In order to broaden the discussion on monitoring the impact of gender training, the issues were further debated and discussed in smaller groups. It was agreed that since training is just one of the many strategies, it is often difficult to make direct link between training processes and changes taking place within an organization. The vision, culture, structure, men women ratio, resource allocation-all these reflect whether an organization is gender sensitive or not. The groups tried to evolve some indicators to measure change, which were:

- Increase in confidence, self esteem, assertiveness, bargaining power of women and men participants
- Increase in active participation of women and men at lower levels of hierarchy affecting decision making at higher levels.
- Increase in individual's courage to challenge power relations between women and men within the family and at place of work.
- Increase in analytical abilities and

understanding of themselves and their relationships with others within the context of patriarchy.



- How often complaints of sexual harassment from within the organization and from community about staff are registered.
- Action taken on sexual harassment.

Changes in Structures

- Spaces for women to meet and to influence decision making.
- Facilities for women-toilets, place to rest and breastfeed, crèches etc.
- Allocation of resources, financial and human to women.
- Empowered and resourceful gender focal point/unit/team
- Balance of female/male staff at all levels, including management is critical.
- Ownership of the process of mainstreaming gender-how much is the responsibility shared by the members of the organization.

Changes in Systems

- Existence of a gender policy
- Personnel policies including maternity leave, child care etc.
- Commitment and work on gender in job descriptions, appraisals and remuneration.
- Drop out monitoring by sex and why women leave as compared to men.

Changes in Culture

- Changes in the use of sexist language, anti-women jokes, demeaning posters/calendars.
- Changes in the use of women for stereotyped roles-women serving, offering flowers to chief guests etc.
- Does working culture require staff to work late at night (This was an important issue in the group. Many participants felt that there was a great deal of pressure to confirm to this working style despite negative impact on family/personal life of women).
- Is the organization democratic in its style ? Do ideas or concerns emerge from all levels?
- Social functions—are partners encouraged to attend ?
- Encouragement to the staff to participate in the women's movement, mass protests etc.
- How much of activist image the organization has.

However the group felt that it is very difficult to assess the real internalization of change in power relationships. At times trainings equip people with right jargon and the use of politically correct language, but without any kind of impact in their personal lives or work situations.

In the end, we agreed that the personal change can only be assessed by each individual. In fact, as she/he has to map her own change, impact assessment and evaluation should be a part of a learning process and not become mechanistic or just quantitative. Change is an ongoing process which is not linear.

Globalization, Food Security and Sustainability

One long session was organized around the issue of globalization and SAP and their impact on the rural poor, on gender relations, on ecology and on human values. The participants were divided into four small groups and each group read two of the following papers to initiate discussion—

- Marie Mies-Globalization of the Economy and Women's Work in a Sustainable Society
- Maria Mies-Women Food and the Global Trade



- Gita Sen-Globalization in the 21st Century, Challenges for Civil Society

- Martin Khor-WTO and the Proposed Multilateral Investment Agreement: Implications for Developing Countries and Proposed Positions.

- Kamla Bhasin-Winners And Losers of Globalization

The main objectives of the session were-

- to develop a deeper understanding of globalization process and concerns and issues arising out of that
- to do a critical review of the present development model
- to assess its impact on women and other marginalized groups
- to debate issues related to consumption, patterns and resource distribution between the North and South.
- to review possibilities of alternative development models
- to develop strategies to challenge and change the negative aspects of globalization.

Each group had very rich discussions on the impact of changing economic policies on people's lives, on food security and bio diversity.

This was a very useful session as it built on both aspects of work - the theoretical as well as the practical. In a fast changing political and economic scenario, it is crucial that gender trainers keep pace with new knowledge and information as the perspective of trainers informs the contents of training processes. It was accepted by many participants that they were not paying adequate attention to this very crucial issue in their trainings/workshops. The group was unanimous in saying that issues related to macro policies should be included in gender workshops, because they have an impact on women's position in society, on gender relations as well as on caste, class, race relations. It is a known fact now that capital intensive, purely profit oriented and market dictated policies have further marginalized the poor in general and women in particular, they have increased economic disparities between and within countries and have plundered nature and caused ecological disasters. Examples were given from all South Asian countries to prove the links between increasing economic disparities, loss of people's control over their resources and between increasing fundamentalism, ethnic conflicts, and communal violence. The present paradigm of development it was said, is tearing apart the socio-cultural fabric of South Asia.



Violence was erupting all over as a result of economic vulnerability, loss of people's livelihoods and cultural identities. Women are doubly affected by all these unfortunate developments.

Each group formulated a training session on globalization and presented it in the plenary. As an example of the work done, the presentation by one of the groups is being reproduced here.

Training Session on Globalization:

- **Audience:** Development practitioners and activists of the women's movements
- **Issue:** Impact of macro economic policies on women
- **Design:**

STEP ONE: Facilitate discussion on people's perspective on their own lives and the changes in them. Probe into the causes of these changes (Use e.g. the life of the grandfather/grandmother in relation to father/mother in relation to the participants own lifestyle).

STEP TWO: Discuss development paradigms for the participant's to determine their own notion of development.

STEP THREE: Generate discussion around the identified changes over a period of time and

present power structures represented by the IMF, World Bank, etc. by posing the question "Who is making decisions and what is the source of their power?"

STEP FOUR: Based on the above, facilitate understanding of the linkages between the macro economic systems and their impact on people's livelihoods and the development goals of participants

STEP FIVE: Encourage participants to locate the discussion within the purview of their personal lives by examining individual lifestyles in terms of its contribution in creating, supporting and sustaining the present economic systems.

Note: The group felt that like Gandhi used the charkha as a symbol for asserting the right of Indians over their own cotton, the present scenario also needed similar movements and symbols. As proposed by Vandana Shiva, the symbol of the seed was today appropriate to assert our rights on our resources and bio diversities and revive our struggle for independence.

STEP SIX: The group concluded the design by singing a song on SAP which could be used as part of the training design to raise the issue of global policies and their impact on local people.

The group was grateful to the organizers for providing good reading materials on this issue



and requested that more materials be sent to them from time to time. The need to develop/and disseminate simply written materials in local languages was stressed. In this context, two participants from India informed the participants about a very innovative project on economic literacy of people being co-ordinated by PEACE, a Delhi based NGO with the support of EZE. This project is generating information from people's groups on the impact of new economic policies after informing the people about macro policies and programmes.

Looking at the World through Women's Eyes

On the last day a large group discussed the issue of advocacy on globalization and its impact on food security, bio diversity, people's livelihoods and gender. It was stated that these are crucial issues for people's survival. Gender trainings must provide more space for these issues. Gender is not an isolated separate issue. It is actually a perspective on all issues. Gender trainings should help the participants to look at all issues and to look at the world through women's eyes. Gender workshops should also give more attention to the creation of alternative practices of sustainable agriculture, bio diversity conservation, preservation and, recognition and renewal of women's knowledge.

These workshops should integrate gender issues with issues of sustainable livelihoods. In South Asia, which continues to be predominantly agricultural, gender concerns are strongly related to sustainable agriculture and rural development.

This group then went on to discuss how the above could be achieved. They discussed advocacy, skill building, evolving common strategies and South Asian networking. After evolving strategies for advocacy work, the group assessed the ongoing efforts in each country and planned some future strategies. In the end they all agreed that they have to give up feeling TINA (There Is No Alternative) and talk of

TIAA (There Is An Alternative).

Another group discussed the issue of feminist perspective building through trainings and workshops. The concern was how to bring feminist perspective to different kinds of learning processes. The group was unanimous that feminist learning processes are empowering and liberating for both men and women. It was seen as necessary to ensure that the perspective and the methodology enforce each other. However it was stressed that this process is not without obstacles and difficulties and it combines the personal with the political and therefore meets with lot of resistance and prejudice.



Some Reflections on the Workshop

As is usual in every workshop, on the last day the participants were asked to do a written evaluation of the workshop. They were asked to put down their feelings/thoughts on five aspects of the workshop i.e. selection of participants, methodology and process, reading materials, resource persons, and their overall impression of the workshop. The written evaluation was followed by a group session where each of us added to what we had written. All that was written and said is not possible to reproduce in a report but here are some of the comments:

"The workshop was magical. Relationships were built, friendships renewed. New friends created and old ones met. There was so much that happened that touched us in this one week. Each had brought a wealth of experience and took back memories of people, moments, ideas, resources, dreams and thoughts. What has been shared in this evaluation is only a small part of all what was felt and of what the workshop

meant to us. A lot is unsaid but in no way is less important."

Although a conscious effort was made to keep in mind equity of representation depending on the region, countries, sex and religion, some participants felt that there should have been more male members in the group. Participants also missed the presence of members from Bhutan and Maldives. However, It was fascinating how in a feminist perspective all diversities blended harmoniously.

The mix of experience and skills of participants brought diversity and created a treat of learning environment. Deferent experiences helped understanding issues not only from a different perspective but allowed questioning from different angles which is very crucial for learning critically. And as one of the participants reflected "the diversity of the group created a new reality by giving the space to realize that diversity and to consciously use it as a source of strength."

Responding to the issues that were discussed in the workshop, all participants felt that they were relevant and interesting. For each one there were issues that were directly connected with their respective work situation. The lectures and discussions were thought provoking. The discussions on gender frameworks and organisational analysis were very informative. As one remarked "the stress on your own creativity in the use of framework was quite in line with my thinking and thanks for the affirmation."

Participants felt that they found space for debates on issues which concerned them deeply both inside and outside the sessions. There were others who felt more time was needed to discuss issues in more detail, particularly issues related to perspective and ideology building.

"The workshop selected salient content areas of gender training. However, it couldn't treat each area in detail and with some level of depth. It is important to arrive at a common understanding of the issues discussed. Some structure is necessary to discuss complex theoretical frameworks. Unless the group has clarity about them the group discussions don't yield much."

About the **resource persons** this is what was said-

*"Kamla's spirit and Abha's smile
Though different in energy filled me with strength
Activism in neighbours rekindled the fire.
Kausar's energiser supplied the wind
Bangladesh firewood, helped to set ablaze
And the smoke will go beyond snow mountains"*

The process and the methodology of the workshop was found to be participatory. The feeling was it was everyone's workshop. The agenda was set in consultation with the participants. Sessions were planned together and everyday two of the participants acted as rapporteurs.

But there were times when the participation was limited. This was because of a variety of reasons, varied levels of participants, barriers of language etc. Sometimes the discussions did flow back and forth among the more articulate participants while the others felt left out.

This is what some of the participants felt about the process :

"The identity session at the beginning served the dual purpose of getting us to reflect on ourselves and giving us a useful method to use."

Summing up one of the participants said "I loved the pace with which the day unfolded,

the time created for reading, reflection, sharing watching films, singing and even doing yoga. However the planning of the workshop could have been done with more rigour."

"**The reading material** given to participants was carefully selected. For many it was more than they have had to read or they have access to. The workshop did give time to read this material individually and in small groups. It was good because we often lack time to read and reflect and discuss".

"The sessions during the day were supplemented with **powerful audio visuals**. It was useful and good to have discussions after them. But perhaps it would make more sense if the films are at times shown within the sessions so that it becomes easier to relate to and integrate them in your discussions. At night often people are too exhausted to sit through and watch them."

In the end some of the comments summarize the harmony of the experience.

"Reminders of the shared values and heritage of this region was wonderful which made our borders seem somewhat meaningless."

"The spiritual/inner journeys some of the participants are doing silently contributed to



the atmosphere and the process. The feeling of togetherness was very empowering."

"I am convinced that it will help if we trainers explore more deeply what it is that makes people start creating something new, something beyond what is keeping us tied to convention, taboos, bureaucratic structures and procedures and to the system that reinforces and legalizes the status quo."

"I valued the space which was created for me to look at and talk about my fractured identity. I feel renewed, reborn and energised".

"Reaffirmation of shared values and culture was important. It became clear how much more we have to do to work on the borders and boundaries between us. The activist part of me got renewed".

"I felt an emotional and professional bonding".

"I have attended many workshops on gender but this was very special. I have got a vision for the future. I feel we are not ending here we will meet again, continue to walk together. As a man, I was worried but now I do not feel I am different."

"Everyday, there was a storm here that reflected my inner being. I found we are exploring

similar politics on our own without knowing that others are doing this. The South Asian solidarity is very precious to me, we women have denied these boundaries. South Asian meetings are strong political statements by us."

"At times I missed rigour in the workshop. We could have worked more deeply. We are all trainers and could have taken more initiative, pushed ourselves a little more."

"It was wonderful to be a learner again. It broke my isolation. It was reaffirming to see the commonality."

Let Us Find Ways to Keep in Touch and to Keep Moving

The workshop concluded with a session on planning joint activities and informing the group about events planned in different countries in which people from the neighbouring countries could participate. The moving force behind these discussions was the strong desire in all the participants to remain in touch, to participate in collaborative activities and to keep enlarging the spaces available for transformatory gender trainings and gender politics.

- The most exciting outcome of this discussion was the unanimous decision to



create a South Asian Network of Gender Trainers (SANGT). SANGT will also invite like minded gender trainers from other parts of the world who work in South Asia or work with South Asians. Details are given in the Annex. We are happy to report that in the two months between the conclusion of the workshop and writing of this report information about SANGT has been sent out and the Network is slowly getting established.

- The second major decision taken was to organize a South Asian Workshop for Gender Trainers on Self Growth in the second half of 1998. This will be organized jointly by SANGT and Bedari, Islamabad which has done considerable work on self growth. Efforts are being made to mobilise funds for this workshop.
- It was suggested that SANGT could create a website to keep in touch with its members and others.
- It was decided to do a systematic sharing of training materials across countries and to do translations of selected materials into local languages.
- As a celebration of our solidarity planning a South Asian gathering in the year 2000.

This workshop once again reaffirmed our commitment to South Asian solidarity. For the last 25 years the women's movement within each country and across borders of the region have played a significant role in systematically building alliances on common concerns. We have raised strong voices against militarization and communalization of the region and we have pleaded for democratization, peace and for sustainable policies and programmes which would reduce poverty, disease, provide choices to all citizens, lead to people centred development etc.

A series of activities organized during the last two decades have led to developing a common South Asian feminist perspective. The South Asian Feminist Declaration drafted in 1989 in a women's workshop clearly stated that the declaration is an expression of our personal and political commitment to and a call for support to build a broad based South Asian feminist platform.

Through different fora we have been meeting to share, learn and struggle to build a common future. Even in this workshop the feeling of oneness at the personal and the political level was overwhelming. We refused to accept man made boundaries and the notions of national interest and "neighbours as enemies".



It is in this historical background, the euphoria of togetherness and the desire for future bonding that we talked about meeting across "fenced borders". We decided to organize a meeting of hearts and minds, a coming together of creative expression, to claim our common heritage for us and for our children.

We did a creative exercise - each one of us tried to give a name /theme for this event and put it up on the board. Many of us talked about this dream of holding a large mela-a women's fair at the South Asian level. We all agreed that it will require a lot of preparation if we wanted to make it celebratory. We decided to go back and consult others in our respective organizations/networks and start thinking about the event in a serious way. This will need a co-ordinating team at the South Asian level to carry forward the task.

- Kamla Bhasin informed the participants about the month long South Asian workshop on "Gender and Sustainable Development" being organized by IDPAA and the FAO-NGO South Asia Programme. This workshop will be held in Bangladesh in November/December 1998. All the participants were invited to nominate candidates for this workshop, to help in the

planning of the course and some of them were invited to act as resource persons. The response from the participants was very positive and many of them have sent bio data of their nominees soon after the workshop.

Kamla Bhasin also informed the group about the VIII National Conference on Women's Studies being organized by the Indian Association of Women's Studies on the theme "Survival and Sovereignty: Challenges to Women's Studies". This Conference was to be held in Pune at the end of May. The participants were requested to spread information about this Conference and encourage researchers, activists, academics to attend this Conference which, though a national conference, is always open to participants from neighbouring countries. We are happy to report that 15 women from Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka



participated in this Conference. But with deep regret we report that the four Pakistani participants who had got visas to travel to Pune were unable to travel to India due to the political tensions created by the nuclear tests carried out by the governments of India and Pakistan. Most members of SANGT have expressed their opposition to these nuclear tests and to the consequent political tensions and jingoism.

It was decided that everyone will inform SANGT about similar activities in their countries and SANGT in turn will keep the information flowing to all members.

The workshop concluded on a very positive note. Everyone felt energised and enthusiastic. One could already feel the ripples created by this gathering. Everyone left with the hope and promise of keeping in touch.

List of Documents

- Her Words on His Lips: Gender and Popular Education in South Africa- By Dr. Shirley Walters
- Power, Institutions and Gender Relations: Can Gender Training Alter the Equations?- By Ranjani Krishnamurthy
- Gender Trainings Endangered by Fragmented Thinking- A view from the South- By Kamla Bhasin
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- " Successes and Limitations of Promoting a Gender Approach" - By Brigittte M. Holzner
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- Globalization of the Economy and Women's Work in a Sustainable Society: Paper presented at the 6th International Interdisciplinary Congress on Women, Adelaide, Australia, 22-26 April 1996- By Maria Mies
- The WTO and the Proposed Multilateral Investment Agreement : Implications for Developing Countries and Proposed Positions - By Martin Khor
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- Feminism/ Postmodernism/ Development- By Marianne H. Marchand and Jane L. Parpart
- Intellectual Property Rights and Community Rights- By Dr. Suman Sahai
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- Some thoughts on Development and Sustainable Development- By Kamla Bhasin.
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- Gender and Organisational Change : Bridging the Gap Between Theory and Practice- By Mandy Macdonald, Ellen Sprenger, Ireen Dubel
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- Making Men an Issue: Gender Planning for "the Other Half"- By Sarah White.



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South Asian Network of Gender Trainers (SANGT)

This South Asian Network of Gender Trainers was created in April 1998 in a South Asian Workshop of Gender Trainers, held at Koitta (Bangladesh) and jointly organised by FAO-NGO South Asia Programme and the Institute of Development Policy Analysis and Advocacy, Bangladesh. The founders of the Network were 27 women and men from five countries of South Asia and three countries of Europe. (Like minded Gender Trainers from Europe, who work in South Asia and/or include participants from South Asia in their Gender Trainings, were invited to this workshop, to expand our bonds of solidarity)

One of the participants at the workshop summed up what many of us have been feeling "The space for transformatory gender work is being squeezed and the fear is that it may further decrease unless we use every opportunity available to us to push for

transformatory gender trainings and advocacy work".

A series of earlier workshops and the warm atmosphere of this workshop, the rich sharing and learning which took place, the friendships which were strengthened and created and the feeling and belief that understanding, peace and co-operation is essential in South Asia if the region is to progress in a meaningful way, gave birth to this Network. We felt such a Network is required to

- keep us in touch with each other to expand and strengthen bonds of solidarity
- help us evolve a South Asian perspective on issues related to gender and development
- help us not only to keep "alive" women's concerns and issues, but also bring them centre stage in all "development" debates.

In some South Asian languages the word "Sangat" means gathering, community of like-minded people.

- help us lobby for a gender perspective on all issues at the South Asian and national levels and to mobilize the implementation of Beijing Platform of Action.
- help us develop strategies to institutionalize gender concerns within all development organizations and trainings.

It was felt that a South Asian Network would be the logical extension of national networks of gender trainers which already exist in Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal.

It was decided that SANGT will try to undertake following activities:

- Prepare an inventory of gender trainers, training materials etc.
- Prepare a calendar of main gender trainings and other gender related events in the region.
- Facilitate sharing of documented research, training materials (books, pamphlets, Avs etc.) and information
- Encourage the participation of experienced resource persons in workshops/ trainings in the neighbouring countries.
- Set up a website to facilitate exchange of information and experiences

- Work towards a large South Asian Women's conference/ gathering in the year 2000
- Organise annual meetings of the network focusing on a theme. The first annual meeting is scheduled for the last quarter of 1998 in Pakistan, and the theme is "Self growth and Self awareness".
- Update gender trainers on recent debates/ writings/development in the region.
- Encourage inclusion of regional perspectives and participation at country level events like workshops, trainings, conferences.

MEMBERSHIP - The Network will be informal and it will be open to those organisations, women and men who are involved in gender trainings in South Asia. These will be 'key' members, while those working on women's issues, but who are not necessarily gender trainers, will be welcomed as 'interested persons' or associate members. Gender trainers based in other parts of the world who are working on South Asia, working with South Asians and/or interested in interacting with gender trainers will also be invited to become members.

The network **SECRETARIAT** will rotate between the members on an annual or

bi-annual basis. **Bedari** (Pakistan) has agreed to take the responsibility of the secretariat for the year 1998. A small amount of funds would be raised to run the secretariat. For most activities funds will be raised according to the need of each activity. Attempts will be made to keep activities low-cost and self-funded.

The following national organisations present at the Bangladesh workshop were identified to act as co-ordinating agencies within each country. All messages/information/material will be sent to them and they in turn will be responsible to share it with SANGT members and others in their countries. These organisations will also work towards strengthening national networks, and share lists of members with the Regional Secretariat.

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