Gender Issues

BANDYOPADHYAY, KRISHNA, 'Naxalbari Politics: A Feminist Narrative', *Economic and Political Weekly,* **XLIII (1), April 5, 2008, pp. 52-59.**

Using the method of a historical non linear narrative, in this article a woman participant in the Naxalite movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s recounts a number of incidents from those tumultuous days from a feminist perspective. For the then member of the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist), those events suggest that the history of the movement would have been different had the feminist question of equality been dealt with more objectively.

BASU, ASMITA, 'Legislating on Domestic Violence', *Seminar,* **583, March 2008, pp. 25-28.**

The article attempts to reflect on the rationale and objectives of the legislation on Domestic Violence (PWDVA 2005) and also examine the trends that foretell its future. The author raises issues like the need for a separate law on domestic violence and the inadequacies of the existing laws in this domain before reflecting upon the PWDVA which uses a judicious mix of civil and criminal law to protect women from domestic violence. Apart from expanding the scope of 'domestic violence', the Act provides adequate infrastructure and means to access relief. While the trends observed in its functioning have been mixed, the success of this law is dependent on whether the society and the policymakers are able to identify domestic violence as a violation of human rights and not as a mere domestic dispute.

DAS, RANJAN Kumar and SHARMA, GOPAL, 'Women in Grassroots Democracy in India: Non Governmental Organizations and its Possibilities', *Indian Journal of Political Science,* **LXIX (4), Oct-Dec, 2008, pp. 512-525.**

The article is an analytical attempt at reconciling the interplay of decentralized governance in India and the role of NGOs in the process of empowering women vis-à-vis such decentralized rural

governance through Panchayati Raj Institutions. The article attempts to vigorously analyze the prevailing condition of women in India despite the presence of reservation dynamism adopted for creating gender equality. The article has been designed into different parts each dealing with the women in international, national and local level of governance and the role of NGOs. The article concludes by arguing that NGO activities are relatively better than governmental ones and enumerates the various challenges before the NGOs in achieving cent percent results in their initiatives.

JAISWAL, SUVIRA, 'Caste, Gender and Ideology in the Making of India', *Social Scientist*, 36 (1&2), 2008, pp. 3-39.

The article looks at caste oppression and gender in historical perspective, with a wealth of information, based on a wide range of primary sources, relating to the ancient and early modern periods of Indian history. The article critiques the post modernist understanding of caste that regards it as being essentially the result of colonial practices of governance, ignoring the pre-colonial roots of caste oppression. The author demonstrates the close link between caste and the subjugation of women, which has been crucial to sustaining it as a system. Further, the caste system has survived by constantly adapting itself to changing social formations. The article concludes that in the absence of a thorough understanding of these dimensions of caste, the contemporary struggle against caste oppression is not likely to be successful.

JAN, MUZAMIL, 'Impact of Education on Decision-Making Power Among Women', *Journal of Educational Planning and Administration*, XXII (3), July 2008.

The decision making power among women can be improved with increase in their educational status. The article presents a study undertaken to find the impact of education on women's decision making power. A sample of 100 married women from Kashmir region have been selected through multistage sampling methods, using questionnaire, interview schedule and scale constructed by the author regarding 'Decision-Making Power among Women'. The study shows that with the increase in the educational status of women, their egalitarian and feminine decision-making power

increases; while masculine and familial decision making power in their families decreases. Significant differences are observed among qualified, literate and illiterate women, as to their decision making power for family planning, control on unnatural abortions, health and education of children, participation in local government and choice for income generating activities.

KAIWAR, APOORVA, 'Meandering Forward', *Seminar*, 583, March 2008, pp. 62-65.

The article argues for a fresh understanding of the women's movement in India in the new neo liberal and communalized context. Drawing from the autonomous women's movements in Delhi and Bombay, the article examines the important issues taken up by the women's movements in the recent past which include, the plight of the sex workers, lives of single women, domestic and other forms of violence, rise of parallel jati panchayats to 'rein in' the women and the need for gender just personal laws. The article raises some important questions like: Does the law still hold all the answers to women's issues? Is the autonomous movement keeping pace in understanding the changing identities of women in the context of sexuality and identity politics? Is the autonomous movement still relevant in an almost 'post-feminist' world? Is the autonomous movement able to respond to working class women or are the criticisms leveled against it of being upper class and elite still valid? The article concludes that the major challenge facing the autonomous movements is to retain its autonomy and freedom of ideas as also to better relate to the changing realities of women's lives.

KAUR, HARSUKHJIT, 'Role Performance of Women Leaders at Grassroots Level: A Case Study of Kharar Block of Ropar District in Punjab', *Indian Journal of Public Administration*, LIV (1), 2008, pp. 119-131.

Several factors like education, caste, age, traditional patriarchal culture have emerged as impediments in the way of meaningful participation of women members in PRIs. In this context, the article provides an explanation of the leadership pattern of women by making a close study of their socio-economic background, caste and age profile, educational level and general political environment of

the families they come from. Through the case study of Ropar district in Punjab, the article discusses the role perception and performance by the women panchayat leaders and articulates the picture that emerges out of the ground reality.

KAUR, RAVINDER, 'Dispensable Daughters and Bachelor Sons: Sex Discrimination in North India', *Economic and Political Weekly***, XLIII (30), July 26, 2008, pp. 109-114.**

Daughters may not be wanted, but daughters-in-law are necessary for family well being and perpetuation. Similarly, not all sons in the family receive equal treatment and those who are left bachelors suffer a lesser fate. The article attempts to move beyond the currently available explanation of low sex ratios and daughter elimination. While supporting the hypothesis that large peasant castes in the north and north west practiced infanticide, non- marriage of men and polyandry as strategies to control family numbers in relation to available resources, the author makes three arguments: one, that these strategies occurred together; two, that one needs to go beyond this explanation to understand why daughters were the dispensable ones and three, that the number of sons wanted was by no means unlimited.

KUMAR, KRISHNA and GUPTA, LATIKA, 'What is Missing in Girl's Empowerment?', *Economic and Political Weekly***, XLIII (26&27), June 28, 2008, pp. 19-24.**

Addressing gender disparity in education goes beyond increasing the presence of girls in school. It involves the removal of deep mental blocks that bind them to limited traditional roles. This article, while discussing the functioning of Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya Scheme highlights the problems impeding girls' overall development. If the KGBV is to be given a second chance for mainstreaming rural girls belonging to deprived social backgrounds, it needs to set right certain shortcomings.

KUMAR, M. SURESH, 'Status of Women in India: Era of Globalization', *South Asia Politics***, 7 (2), June 2008, pp. 31-34.**

The article examines the change in status of Indian women from the

Vedic period to the post independence period and finally in the era of globalization, modernization and urbanization. The article argues that the feminist revolution is far from being won and the exploitation of women continues in many ways. The article concludes by highlighting the importance of education as a means of empowering women and for bringing about an attitudinal change that will correct the society's patriarchal bias and make men and women equal partners.

LATEEF, SHAHIDA, 'From Shahbano to Sachar', *Seminar*, 583, March 2008, pp. 46-50.

As with Partition and Independence, the events between Shahbano case and Sachar Committee Report polarized the Indian polity while creating fissures within the Muslim community. Events like Babri Masjid demolition and Godhra have had profound political and economic consequences for the Muslim community, particularly Muslim women. The article explores the struggles faced by Muslim women for their political and economic rights and caught between the Hindu and the Muslim right wings with neither of them concerned about alleviating the position of indigent Muslim women. It is in this context that the Sachar Committee report which dispels some oft repeated myths about Muslims needs to be viewed. The author highlights the need for better governance and political and criminal accountability to help reverse the seemingly myriad afflictions of the Muslim community and of the Muslim women.

MATHUR, KANCHAN, 'Body as Space, Body as Site: Bodily Integrity and Women's Empowerment in India', *Economic and Political Weekly*, XLIII (1), April 26, 2008, pp. 54-63.

The identification of women with their physical bodies is the root cause of their oppression in a patriarchal culture and society like India. Most often women are denied the rights to emotional, mental, psychological and physical spaces. The fact that the female body is constantly under pressure to conform and mould into prescribed social and cultural roles brings into question the spaces that need to be protected as well as rights that need to be claimed so that woman's bodily integrity is respected. In this context the article highlights the struggles and spaces that Indian women have negotiated in their quest for empowerment.

MATHUR, KANCHAN, 'Gender Hierarchies and Inequalities: Taking Stock of Women's Sexual and Reproductive Health', *Economic and Political Weekly***, XLIII (49), December 6, 2008, pp. 54-61.**

Following the UN Conferences on women in Cairo and Beijing, which established the importance of gender as a critical dimension of reproductive and women's health; India initiated several changes in its family welfare programmes in a phased manner. However, despite these changes the sexual and reproductive health of women continues to be an area of concern. The article examines the socio-cultural determinants of a women's health through the experience of Rajasthan in the light of National Family Health Survey - 3 data as well as the current policies and programmes affecting women's health. It asserts that in the present context, women's bodies, health and sexuality are being grossly neglected and abused and there is a dire need for reform in the state's attitude towards women's health needs.

MEHTA, KALPANA, 'Women's Movement in India', *Seminar***, 583, March 2008, pp. 66-71.**

The article is partially an account of the author's thirty year long personal experience as a part of the autonomous women's movement, the cutting edge of which was provided by a socialist feminist stream which redefined and extended the very definition of politics with its slogan of 'personal is political' and situated itself in a struggle against capitalist patriarchy. It reflects on the impact of communalism, fundamentalism, liberalization of economy and foreign funded NGOs on this movement. The second part of the article describes the Draft Declaration of National Conference on Women which brings together women and organizations who care 'autonomous' i.e. non-government, non-electoral, non-political party and non-violent. The declaration seeks to challenge violence against women, communalism, fundamentalism, globalization, coercive population policies, state aggression and divisiveness. The author concludes that though in its short history the movement has played a big role in improving legislation for women, yet it is important to broaden its base and intensify the participation in mass struggles and fights the forces of communalism.

MUTHALAGU, K., Indian Women in Development Perspective, *Kurukshetra*, **56 (11), September 2008, pp. 18-22.**

The article traces the evolution of the status of women in India which has been subject to great many changes over the past few millenniums from a largely unknown status in ancient times to the promotion of equal rights since Independence. With the help of latest data, the article analyses the present position of women in areas of education, health, workforce participation, land and property rights and women in politics. Government initiatives and schemes for women empowerment are also discussed along with some negative observations regarding women's status including poor health, sexual harassment, dowry, domestic violence and child marriage. The article concludes that transforming the prevailing social discrimination against women must become the top priority in our policy and it must happen concurrently with increased direct action to improve the socio economic status of women in India.

RAO, D. PULLA, 'Disparities in Juvenile Sex Ratios in India: An Analysis', *Think India Quarterly*, **11(4), Oct.-Dec. 2008, pp. 55-69.**

The article highlights how male domination, perpetuated either by economic necessity or social compulsions, has taken a heavy toll on half of the global population of Homo Sapiens. The article attempts to examine the major issue associated with gender disparities i.e. sex ratio including the juvenile sex ratio, highlighting the available factual information at international, national and at state levels. It is shown that juvenile sex ratio declined sharply under 0-6 age population in the last 40 years in India and the decline in urban juvenile sex ratio is more than rural juvenile sex ratio. Increasing use of prenatal sex determination tests and female foeticide have been major contributors to this sad trend in the last two decades.

SARMAH, ELATI and BORDOLOI, BADANGA, 'Violence Against Women: When Will it End?', *Kurukshetra*, **56 (11), September 2008, pp. 3-6.**

The article throws light on the forms of violence against women across the globe and the serious consequences that it produces for the physical and mental health of women. In this broader context,

the article examines some of the important initiatives of the Indian government to curb this malady including the setting up of National commission for Women in 1992 and Domestic Violence Act of 2005. it is argued that though a lot has been done and said regarding laws and steps to combat violence against women but the real impetus should be give for the implementation of these laws. The article concludes by suggesting some steps for the government to enable it to play a decisive role in strengthening the capacity of women to undertake broader decision making and representative roles.

SINGH, DEEPALI and ANSARI, NAFEES A., 'The Empowerment of Indian Women with reference to Five Year Plans', *Kurukshetra*, **56(11), September 2008, pp. 7-12.**

The article tries to look into the shift in government's attitude to the issue of women empowerment as manifested in the approach in its five year plans since 1951. The focus of each Five Year Plan with respect to women's development has been discussed with a detailed analysis of the terms of reference of the XI five year plan on the issue of women empowerment. The five key elements of XI Plan approach to gender equality are also discussed. The article argues that liberalization of the economy has led to a paradigm shift in the country's economy towards technology driven sectors, rendering women dominated sectors like agriculture unviable and without security cover. The Plan will have to address such issues relating to the feminization of poverty and exploitation of women.

SUTAR, ANIL S., 'The Emerging Women Leadership: Panchayats in Karnataka', *Social Action*, **58 (1), 2008, pp. 82-93.**

The democratic and efficient functioning of women leaders in Panchayats is a crucial issue that needs careful academic attention. The article, based on field work carried out in Bagalkot district of northern Karnataka, which was pioneer in launching Panchayati Raj Institutions in India, observes that the prevailing rigid caste system, cultural values and social norms surrounding the system of patriarchy have stronger implications in the good governance at the grassroots level. Also, the emerging women leadership from the lower castes is found relatively more democratic and people-centric precisely because of the lesser degree of patriarchy practiced among them.

SWAMINATHAN, PADMINI and J. JAYARANJAN, 'Mainstreaming Gender, Engendering Development: Reflections on a Case Study', *Economic and Political Weekly*, XLIII (1), April 26, 2008, pp. 77-86.

Mainstreaming gender and engendering development has now become a part of the feminist discourse. The article presents a case study of the MV Foundation, which has implemented its programme of "Empowering Women through Collective Action" in the Ranga Reddy district of Andhra Pradesh. It shows how this foundation had consciously and concretely incorporated aspects that have the potential to mainstream gender as well as engender development. It also describes how the foundation identified the most marginalized among the rural population, apprised them of the existing rural and land based programmes of the government and acted as a catalyst to source these programmes.

TIWARI, NUPUR, 'Women in Panchayati Raj', *Indian Journal of Public Administration*, LIV (1), 2008, pp. 34-47.

Analysing the impact of Panchayati Raj Institutions on women, the article argues that the traditional institutions of local governance have not created adequate space for women. Many of the factors that hindered women in the earlier system, like caste, class, religion etc. continue to exist and operate in the rural areas. The article argues that despite the implementation of reservations in Panchayats, women in PRIs still lack the capacity and capability to raise voice against various issues. The article makes a detailed analysis of the types of interferences faced by women functionaries in panchayats and other challenges faced by other women members of PRIs. It concludes with some solutions to these problems and also reflects on some of the activities on how to operationalize the solutions suggested which may help the women representatives tide over the social and economic disadvantage and face male domination and bureaucratic apathy.

YADAV, SUPRIYA, 'Emancipation of Women: From Awareness to Empowerment', *Social Action*, 58(4), 2008, pp. 412-419.

A major concern in India is achieving gender equality through empowerment of women. The article examines how the planning

process for development of women has evolved through welfare to development to empowerment to participation. Legal reforms and legislations have been a focal point to revolutionize the movement for gender justice. In this context, the article takes a purview of women empowerment in India by focusing on legislations in social, economic and political realms and concludes with a quite a few suggestions for generating awareness and for improving the status of women with the help of state, law and civil society.