

STRENGTHENING FEMINIST STRATEGIES FOR BUILDING WOMEN'S RESILIENCE

FIRST ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE
15 – 17 NOVEMBER 2021, KOLKATA



Prepared by :
Rev. Dr. Joseph Xavier, S.J.
Indian Social Institute, Bangalore

INTRODUCTION

Calcuta Ondoan, a Basque based NGO has been partnering with NGOs in India for over a decade, focusing on women empowerment. Considering the rich experiences of the NGOs in building resilience of women in diverse contexts as well as the challenges faced by them, it was felt appropriate to bring together members of NGO partners and feminist movements on a platform to discuss different strategies and methodologies, to create opportunities for learning from one another and also explore opportunities for possible synergies and alliances in the future.



Hosted by Kolkata based Udayani Social Action Forum, the 1st Round Table Conference was organized on **Strengthening Feminist Strategies for Building Women's Resilience** in which about 53 participants from 12 organisations participated from 15 -17 November 2021. While Calcuta Ondoan gave a lead, NGOs accompanied by Eusko Jaurlaritza Gobierno Vasco, ALBOAN and Medicos Mundi joined the conference. Ms. Maria Zarauza was the anchoring person of the conference.

OBJECTIVES

1. To share and learn strategies and methodologies from one another on building resilience of women.
2. To critically reflect on key issues faced by the organisations on gender mainstreaming
3. To explore opportunities for networking and collaboration among the partners and other feminist organisations

OUTCOMES

1. Participants learnt strategies and methodologies through cross learning.
2. Developed critical understanding on some key issues faced by women and women organisations and articulated the way forward.
3. Measures identified to build synergies and alliances across partner organisations for future.

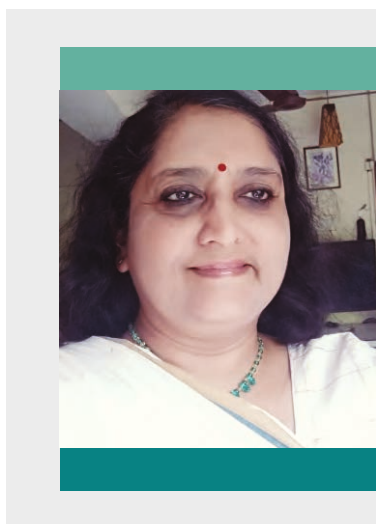
INFORMAL SPACES



DAY 1 15 NOVEMBER 2021

Fr. John Kerketta, Director, Udayani formally welcomed the Conference delegates. This was followed by a short presentation of the purpose, dynamics and outcomes of the 1st Round Table Conference on Strengthening Feminist Strategies for Building Women's Resilience by Dr. Joseph Xavier, Director, Indian Social Institute Bangalore. He invited everyone to bring knowledge, experiences, challenges, values, beliefs, inquisitiveness, and imagination to the conference hall and also be open and generous to listen to ideas, new perspectives and possibilities.

10.30 AM: KEYNOTE ADDRESS: PROF. VIBHUTI PATEL: LESSONS OF WOMEN'S MOVEMENTS IN INDIA



Prof. Patel highlighted the historical roots and evolution of Women's movements in India beginning from the Bhakti Movement 12th Century to 16th Century, Social Reform Movement of 19th Century, Freedom Movement of 20th Century and Women's Rights movements from 1970. Emphasizing that the gender just world is possible she said, "personal is political and political is personal".

The first wave of feminism began with English educated women's struggles against child marriage, widow burning and female infanticide which later took the form of freedom movement to guarantee constitutional rights for women. The second wave could be identified with educated middle class women getting involved in various struggles of the marginalized communities, youth, students, peasants, Dalits, tribals and civil liberties.

Major milestones of women's movement:

- Single issues platform – dowry, rape, declining sex ratio, domestic violence
- Discourse around 'consent'
- Legislative routes – POCSO Act, Violence against Women, Maternity benefits, sexual harassment in workplace
- Judiciary route – Triple talaq, Sec 377
- Reservation of seats for women in electoral bodies
- Special needs of single women and development and livelihood issues

Third wave of feminism challenges the male-female binaries. Economic globalization, environmental policies and climate action mark the current challenges faced by women. Movers and shakers of women's movements have been constantly breaking the glass ceiling. Alliance among feminist groups is demonstrating new ways of garnering collective strength. Connections

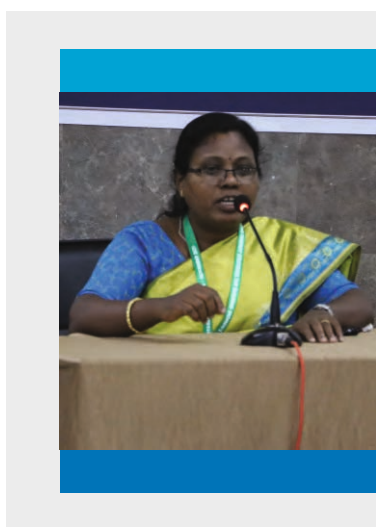
with international networks have opened up new vistas, especially intersectionality dimensions of new feminist discourses. She concluded stating: Last 50 years of feminist activism in India has managed to challenge the 5000 years of patriarchal order by striking at root of exploitation and oppression and subjugation.

12.00 : WOMEN'S PANEL –HOW I BECAME A LOCAL WOMEN LEADER?

Panelists: Ms. Basanti Soren from Udayani Social Action forum, Ms. Desbashree Mukherjee from Swayam and Ms. Jermaven Vasaba from Adivasi Samaj Seva Trust.

Moderator: Ms. Alphonsa Kumari, Udayani Social Action forum

MS. BASANTI SOREN

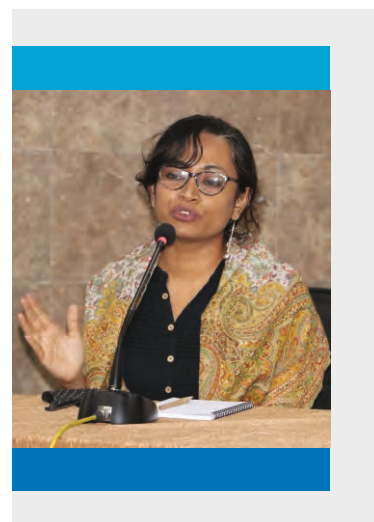


I am a Santali Adivasi woman. I was a shy person. Udayani trained me to be what I am today. When I was opening up to speak and raise my concerns the officials would put me down saying, I do not know anything. When I look back, I am proud of myself. The same officers who never respected me are inviting me for a dialogue and ready to work with me and our women groups. I am a self-made women leader.

My strength is our women group members. All of us are together in working for our development. We have grown to the extent of contesting in local body elections and forming our own NGO.

MS. DESBASHREE MUKHERJEE

My life is a story of pathos. From childhood I have been subjected to abuses and violence. Who will understand me and who will listen to me? Those who were all around advised me to swim with the current and not to speak of such abuses. I refused to do it. For me my body is sacred. I love my body. I cannot allow my body to be abused. To speak up against such abuses was a great struggle. I have learnt to communicate my feelings, emotions, pains and anguish through various art forms, which help me to go through a healing process. I am using my learning to impart the same to those who are abused today. Swayam helped me in rebuilding my broken humanity, despite all odds from family, friends and relatives.



MS. JERMAVEN VASABA



I am an Adivasi woman and come from Gujarat. We began our work by organizing and mobilizing women as Self-Help Groups. Eventually, women led SHGs paved the way for women leadership. Soon we realized that we need to occupy panchayat space. Some of us were elected as ward members. Later I moved from the position of ward member to Block level and finally contested in the district level elections. With the support of women group members, I won the district level election. Just then district level elected representative office was built. As per the rules, it was the right of the district elected leader to inaugurate the building. As I was an Adivasi woman, the newly built office was locked by the higher caste people with the tacit

support of government officers. On the day of the inauguration, I took courage and went to the new building, broke the lock and started occupying the chair. When the officers came, I told them that the lock was open and so I asked people to clean the place and occupied the chair. What is wrong with it? The collective power of the women has given me enormous strength. I am able to dream of great changes in the lives of Adivasi women. I am a bold and courageous leader now and ready to face any adversities.



03.00 PM EXPLORING THE COMMUNITY-BASED APPROACH METHODOLOGY OF MARMARA

Marmara means noise created by leaves. Women gather under a tree - a democratic and non-hierarchical space. They start speaking on issues that concern them. While initially, women will



bring out all sorts of issues such as, female infanticide, abuse, domestic violence, wages, education, health etc, slowly through a dialogue process the women identify the issue that they want to understand, analyse and act upon. Everyone's voice is heard, and everyone is encouraged to share her views. A sense of equality, solidarity and fraternity help the women to get into the depth of their personality, their issues and challenges and find ways to deal with them. So far about 50 marmaras have been organized in various locations. Marmara is a financially viable and less expensive methodology. More than that, the values attached to the methodology generated passion and commitment among women. This methodology breaks the myth of organizing programmes in closed doors. All major issues could be discussed. The non-hierarchical space and a sense of equality and solidarity among the participants is a game changer of Marmara methodology. The entire community participates in the dialogical discourse.



6.00 PM REIMAGINING THE JUSTICE SYSTEM TO ADDRESS VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN BY MS. CORINE KUMAR, VIMOCHANA.



Violence against women is privatized, individualized and invisibilised denying political significance of abuses and violence. History of women's movements shows the power of speaking the truth. Stories must be told, and we must speak truth to the power. All texts must be seen in a context. The current legal jurisprudence is rule based and evidence based. Most of the violence against women take place within four walls and evidence should not be asked for. Asking for evidence or proof demean the integrity and dignity of women.

From a retributive justice there is a need to move towards transformative justice. We need a new language of justice. No justice system can be merely based on a witness proof system. Learning from the South African Truth and Reconciliation commission, we need a justice system based on reconciliation and transformation. Restorative justice, the call for a new form of relationship must be based on justice and reconciliation.



09.00 AM CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN OUR DAY-TO-DAY LIFE AND IN OUR WORKS AS FEMINIST ORGANIZATIONS.

Group work themes:

Themes:

1. **Form of violence and addressing violence at the family, community and institutional level.**
2. **Economic challenges of women and self-reliance strategies.**
3. **How to mobilize women in the grassroots to be involved in Community mobilisation and how to develop change makers to claim their due rights and participation at all levels.**
4. **Reviewing my organisation from a Gender lens. Do we have a Gender policy? Do we have a Policy on prevention of sexual harassment? If yes, challenges in the implementation of these policies.**
5. **Engaging Men in Promoting Gender Equality. How to involve the man in the process of equality? How to approach men to work with them about these topics?**

THEME 1:

FORM OF VIOLENCE AND ADDRESSING VIOLENCE AT THE FAMILY, COMMUNITY AND INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL.

▶ ANALYSIS OF THE PROBLEM

- Violence is of many types, Physical, Sexual, Emotional, Financial
- It begins from womb and continues till tomb
- There is discrimination in bringing up boy & girl. Heavy restriction on freedom of girls.
- While girls' schooling ends at puberty there is forced marriage.
- Subjected to sex & Pregnancy without consent
- Physical movement of women is curtailed
- Gender based body language.
- Community and Family is built on patriarchy. Questioning is not tolerated.
- Educated women not permitted to work. Even those who work have no power over their income

▶ CHALLENGES

- How to sensitize people
- Feminism is often misinterpreted
- There is social tendency to normalize violence
- Asking for legal reforms is very challenging
- Implementation of prevailing Acts (DV Act/ Dowry Prohibition Act)

▶ FUTURE STRATEGIES

SHORT-TERM

- Environment modification of Survivors
- Emergency health care for women & children
- Legal Assistance
- Safety planning
- Identifying support systems
- Helpline numbers for the people in the community

LONG-TERM

- Awareness creation
- Advocacy with Local Self Governance, State & National Bodies
- Committee formation for effective implementation of Law

WITHSTANDING PRESSURE IS A DIFFICULT JOB

A 6-year-old girl was sexually abused by a 17-year-old boy for a year. She didn't reveal the matter to the family members. The mother noticed her fear and inquired. She was shattered to know that her daughter was abused for a year. The case was referred to Vimochana. With the help of the community members Vimochana filed a complaint to the police. Legal steps were taken in spite of the opposition and pressure from political leaders. Later, the boy was arrested and was sent to juvenile rehabilitation home.

WOMEN SAKHI

A lady, aged about 20 and completed her Teacher Training, got married to a fisherman. The woman was facing domestic violence every day. The girl's parents asked the girl to accept the violence as normal. She moved to Andhra Pradesh and sent divorce notice. Sakhi intervened, counselled her and mobilised women to arrest the man. Women were threatened. Women stood strong till the man was arrested. This incident had deep impact on many other women who were suffering from such domestic violence. Following this incident, many such violations came to the lime light.

▶ WAY FORWARD – CONCRETE SUGGESTIONS

1. Monitoring implementation of Laws
2. Empowering women to become change agents
3. Working with men & boys
4. Gender training for Health Care experts, Protection Officers and Police

THEME 2:

ECONOMIC CHALLENGES OF WOMEN AND SELF-RELIANCE STRATEGIES

▶ ANALYSIS

- Women have no access to money though she is earning money
- Wages discrimination
- No economic independent even after the marriage
- Women are not assertive
- They are told to work in the house, not to go to work far.
- Nutrition, food and other intersectionality with economic challenges
- Land and Assets: access and control denied
- Accessibility of public space, education and wellbeing.
- Forced migration
- Credit & Debt of women

▶ CHALLENGES

- Attitudinal change is very difficult.
- Lack of motivation and awareness of dignity of work
- Lack of savings
- Lack of decision making in the house and outside
- Education of girl children
- Lack of budget allocation for economic empowerment of women at state and national level
- Lack of support structures
- Social stigma attached and Patriarchy

▶ STRATEGIES

SHORT-TERM

- Awareness and importance of saving money monthly
- Safeguarding from microfinance lenders
- Income generating activities to boost income, like mushroom cultivation.
- Revenue Cycle Management
- Motivation and attitudinal change

LONG-TERM

- Cooperative banks
- Change the mindset of people

- Improving collective bargaining.
- Strengthening group unity
- Non-conventional work for women for better income generation.
- Women accessing common property resources to generate income
- Promotion of women entrepreneurs
- Focus on women holding assets; movable and non-movable
- Financial literacy

WE GOT A NEW OFFICE BUILDING

The women group members were meeting in the convent premises regularly. As they were growing in big number, they felt the need to have their own office outside the convent. They approached many people including NGOs. Initially some persons agreed to support them but later all withdrew. This was discussed in the women meetings. All women unanimously proposed that they could share the expenses, offer free labour, mobilise some materials and thus construct the office. With the sheer determination of the women, a new office came up in Narmada district. The women members of proud of their achievement that they have an office of their own, solely built by local resources of the SHG members.

▶ WAY FORWARD - CONCRETE SUGGESTIONS



- Monitoring of SHGs and Cooperatives
- Avoiding nepotism

- Work on attitudinal changes
- To create more awareness priority of needs
- Demonstrate, proclaim the success stories of one woman, SHG, NGO to another women/SHG/NGO
- To motivate and increase grassroots level leadership
- Power sharing and entrusting local leaders with responsibility
- Trust and confidence building
- Collective bargaining - Local and higher levels

THEME 3:

HOW TO MOBILIZE WOMEN IN THE GRASSROOTS TO BE INVOLVED IN COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION AND HOW TO DEVELOP CHANGE MAKERS TO CLAIM THEIR DUE RIGHTS AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION.

ANALYSIS

- Our approach must be rights-based and not need/welfare based
- Recognize that the women have the potentialities to break the chains of unjust systems

CHALLENGES

- Political parties pressurize the community that such issues should not go out of the community.
- People themselves also do not want to reveal such issues like violence against women to the outsiders.
- Infiltration of political parties in all spheres of women's life
- Prejudice created in the minds of the people about the NGOs
- Women are trapped by Micro-Finance institutions

STRATEGIES

SHORT-TERM

- Involving the stakeholders and their family members/counter partners/communities in different groups for transformation programmes and processes.
- Addressing the current issues and solving the problems
- Supporting women victims
- Providing them short stay homes if needed



INCLUSIVE MOBILISATION OF THE MARGINALISED FOR A SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Sri Lankan repatriates, who were bonded labourers in Kodaikanal hills were freed from the clutches of multinational company contractors in 1986 with the collaboration of National Bonded Labour Liberation Andolan headed by Swami Agnivesh. The supreme court ordered the Tamil Nadu Government to give two acres of land, milch animals and money to till the land. They were settled in the midst of very old villages, and they named their village as Liberation Nagar.

After their settlement they motivated the neighbouring villages to fight for higher wages, electricity, drinking water, motorable road, transport facilities, phone, schools etc. They could achieve the basic infrastructural facilities because of their constant struggles and protests and by mobilizing the neighbouring villages to boycott the Parliament election in 1998.

LONG-TERM

- Local leaders are formed in such a way that they can lead their movements independently.
- Formation of women parliament and resource teams in village level
- Women reservation in political parties, institution including religious organisations
- Children parliament
- Sex education and life skill education among children made compulsory

MOTHER-IN-LAW IS PROUD OF HER DAUGHTER-IN-LAW

A 30-year-old village lady studied up to Class 5 contested the panchayat election in 2019 and was elected as the vice-president of the panchayat. This woman's mother-in-law who was illiterate used to attend the SHG meetings in Udayani and came to know about the panchayat raj systems and how women could enter political leadership. So, she encouraged her daughter-in-law and supported her to contest the election. All community people supported her financially and morally at the time of election campaign. She acquired many soft skills after the election by attending the different training. She is a good listener and changemaker now in the village.

WAY FORWARD – CONCRETE RECOMMENDATIONS

- Develop community-based organization
- Through existing SHGs, monthly meetings and through federations
- Public awareness on various issues and celebration of important days.

- Capacity building of resource teams in the villages and ToTs
- Spread of optimistic way of constructive socialization
- Networking and advocacy with local leaders
- Formation of vigilance committee in area-wise
- Movement should spread through at least at the state level with the networking of other like-minded NGOs.
- Creating local funds and ensuring sustainability for the Movement.



THEME 4: **REVIEWING MY ORGANIZATION FROM THE GENDER LENS**

ANALYSIS

- Regular system of reporting, reviewing the work progress.
- Using gender inclusive language
- Space for self-growth and recreation
- Space for people coming with multiple gender identities.

CHALLENGES

- Less participation in decision making processes.
- Sometimes principles are not reflected in practice.
- Lack of tangible policy though values are incorporated in practice.

▶ CHALLENGES

- Policy missing
- Employees not aware of the policy
- No regular meetings of the POSH committee.
- Irregular review process of the POSH committee.
- Lack of ongoing training and awareness on the issue.

▶ STRATEGIES

- Mechanisms to be put in place to include voices from grass roots.
- Need gender sensitization training for the organizations.
- Strengthen POSH Committee and use communication materials



USE EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN WOMEN'S MOVEMENT

In West Bengal, before the Assembly elections, the Chief Minister introduced an opening to directly speak with the Chief Minister if the citizens have some grievances. Ms. Sujata Chiti, the NGO leader of Bishnupur, made use of this opportunities and registered her grievances. Immediately some officials came to her asking her to withdraw the complaints. She stood strong on her grounds. Realising that Sujata was strong, and she was backed up by large number of women members, the officials addressed her grievances. The community members appreciated her commitment and passion for the wellbeing of the community.

THEME 5:

ENGAGING MEN IN PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY. HOW TO INVOLVE MEN IN THE PROCESS OF EQUALITY? HOW TO APPROACH MEN TO WORK WITH WOMEN?

▶ ANALYSIS

- Patriarchal mindset is the root cause which determines the behaviour of women from womb to tomb.
- Men are considered as gods
- Women suffer in the family from birth, puberty, adolescence, marriage and at the workplace.
- Violations of women's rights are considered as acceptable practices.

▶ CHALLENGES

- Change of patriarchal mindset and practices. Be sensitive in the use of words and terminologies which have male chauvinist connotations.
- Stereotype mentalities need to be changed.
- Need to create a safe space

▶ STRATEGIES

SHORT-TERM

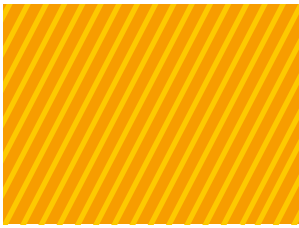
- Women's liberation should begin from home.
- Importance of girl children must be promoted and considering girls as a burden should be challenged.
- Men should be educated about women's reproductive system and not to treat women as unclean.

LONG-TERM

- Developing non-judgmental attitude towards Women and men
- There is no rule book of Dos and Don'ts. Challenges socially accepted rules which demean women.
- Promote White Ribbon campaigns – Say No to Violence or Run for Equality or Men of Quality Stand for Equality.
- Develop rap song on women issues

▶ WAY FORWARD – CONCRETE RECOMMENDATIONS

- Sensitize men to take stand for women and not against men.
- Bring the change in policy level to promote gender equality
- Work towards Equal Property rights.
- Create men groups to create change makers.



5.00 PM WOMEN FARMERS LEAD THE TRANSITION TO A BIODIVERSE, REGENERATIVE AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SYSTEM THAT IS A SOLUTION TO HUNGER, MALNUTRITION AND CLIMATE CHANGE
 - DR. VANDANA SHIVA

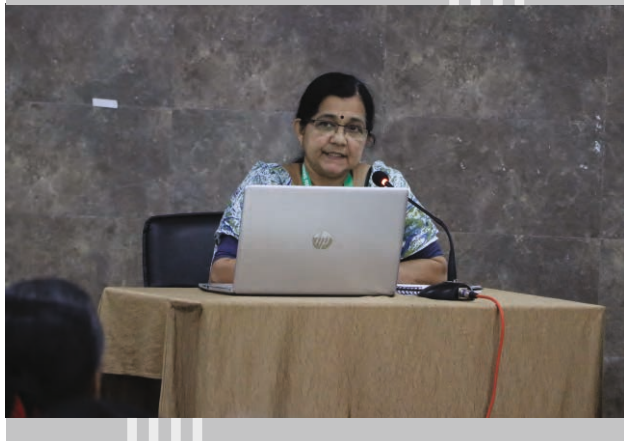


Women's power is 'sakti'. Such create power of women is considered as passivity. Women have innate potentials and eco-feminism is built on acceptance of nature's process, to create, provide and take care. Masculine culture is corporate culture which does not care about nature, uses chemicals, fossil fuels and destroys the earth.

- Women contribute to the food grain system. But their contribution is not counted.
- Women are sensitive to climate vulnerability.
- Women have contributed to various movements
- We need Mahila swaraj
- We do not need GMO seeds
- Land was used as a common resource. We have imbibed colonial legacy of privatization of lands
- We need a cooperative approach and not corporatization of land.
- Intellectual Property Rights have helped MNCS to have a seed and fertilizer monopoly.
- We have contested many such claims and won the battle – Basmati, neem etc
- Economy is not a commodity for trade. Art of living is not meant to be money making.
- COP 26 has miserably failed to address basic issues and the countries are non-committal on fundamental issues affecting climate.
- The commitment to SDG goals is not followed up. We need nonviolent technology.













9.00 AM WOMEN LEADERS SHARING THEIR KNOWLEDGE, EXPERIENCES, CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES.

Ms. Celine Suguna (Vimochana) Ms. Amrita Dasgupta (Swayam) Ms. Beulah Devakumari (IWID) and Ms. Sandhya J (Sakhi)

The panel members who head the organisations focused on three important dimensions:

1. **Highlights of various interventions to strengthen women's resilience**
2. **Post Covid-19 scenario challenges**
3. **Understanding Feminism – Challenges**

HIGHLIGHTS OF VARIOUS INTERVENTIONS TO STRENGTHEN WOMEN'S RESILIENCE

1. Working on Land and livelihood rights
2. Making governance structures and processes participatory
3. Developing women parliament and working on state budgeting
4. Gender just work culture – culture of peace and non-violence
5. Promoting Campaigns
6. Occupying spaces
7. Generating non-threatening processes
8. Creating safe spaces
9. Adopting multiple strategies to address women issues
10. Working on simple strategies
11. Bringing people together on issues
12. Take knowledge to public
13. Feminist approach in training
14. Gender budgeting and monitoring
15. Working with government and influencing government bodies and initiating joint actions
16. Strengthening local self-governance with women's participation
17. Action research
18. Gender audit
19. Training government officials, police, teachers and students and preparing training manuals
20. Creating gender resource centres in panchayats
21. Night walks to ensure women safety
22. Networking
23. Art forms, wall writings, creating talking points and dialogue
24. Evolving context-based strategies and redesigning workshops with gender lens



POST COVID-19 SCENARIO CHALLENGES

1. Working on rights and entitlements
2. Addressing issues of children and adolescents
3. Reached out to women with food, along with government and provided complementary needs
4. Online learning; worked on misuse of mobile
5. Counselling
6. Medical care and generated volunteers
7. Covid impact study
8. While farming was done, marketing was a problem
9. Intrusion of Micro Finance institutions
10. Increase in migration
11. Domestic violence increased
12. Mercy Mission Angels was a model intervention who buried the dead bodies, when no one cared for.
13. Child marriages at night
14. Worked through phone system, mainly provided counselling
15. Pro bono services increased through digital platforms

UNDERSTANDING FEMINISM – CHALLENGES

When patriarchy was born, feminism was born – Kamala Bashin

1. Sensitivity to women and their issues in the organization and in programmes
2. Personal commitment as women
3. Changing preconceived notion of patriarchy
4. Making women's voices heard
5. Strengthening the agency of women
6. Integrated dialogue and value driven approach
7. Need to promote gender neutral languages
8. Funding concerns, mobilizing local resources
9. Creating learning spaces

12.45 PM GENERAL CONCLUSIONS – REV. DR. JOSEPH XAVIER, S.J.

A FEW GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

1. A conference has huge strength. Not a solution for all issues. It is a step forward in our journey.
2. First conference – A lot to share. Outcome was high, considering time.
3. Deeper understanding of Feminism within development discourse – social, economic, cultural, political and environmental

4. An attempt towards – Collective processes – bringing us on the same page, sharing and learning, analyzing and exploring, generating new strategies, while we will continue to work on diverse themes and strategies.
5. Each organization has unique strengths (resource orgs) – grassroots, thematic issues, national and international linkages.
6. Covid halt – need to reimagine our strategies in a post covid new normal.
7. There was language difficulty. We need to decide on whether we look for more ideas or participation of all, taking note of time needed for translation so that all could meaningfully participate.



LEARNINGS AND FEMINIST STATEMENTS

1. We are Together in the women empowerment process. We developed a sense of empathetic solidarity.
2. Coming together is power generation. Sharing with and learning from one another - mission, values, strategies, methodologies, successes, dreams and imaginations.
3. Women power (Shakti) is creative, caring, and nurturing and in consonance with nature.' It is not passive.
4. Amidst us, in the field, there are unsung women heroines. Struggle and search for dignity was the pathway. Women groups (Collective power) stood by us.
5. Women's contribution is enormous in all spheres. But remains hidden and invisible. We must give articulation and bring them out in the public domain.

ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE – CRITICAL UNDERSTANDING

1. Patriarchy is a violent ideology – shatters the mental and emotional wellbeing of women.

Patriarchy is corporatized. All of us are victims of a patriarchal mindset. Need to question power structures and systems and discriminatory hierarchy.

2. Women lack access to power, resources and decision making. Vulnerable women lack education, health and employment opportunities.
3. Abuse and violence cannot be considered as private, personal, individual, invisible, hidden or accepted behaviour. Personal is political and political is personal.
4. We are called to question our own approaches and strategies, as women in search of dignity and rights.

NEED FOR MULTI-DIMENSIONAL APPROACH

1. Women are not a homogeneous entity – dalit, Adivasi, minority, single mother, widows, PWD, abused, trafficked, LGBTQ...
2. We might work with a specific community but our approach, thinking and strategies must be multidimensional.
3. Issues are interconnected. Intersectionality in our strategies – social, economic, cultural, environmental and political.
4. Womb to tomb means understanding the connection from house to land to corporate agenda and women to agriculture and climate change.
5. Land, livelihood, legal support to deal with violence
6. Developing volunteerism / integrating online/digital approach – Covid times

LEARNING FROM HISTORY

1. Collective voice, wisdom and public events have brought in change in policies and laws. (Mathura, Nirbhaya). Still incidents like Hathras continue
2. Need to give new articulation to different forms of violence.
3. Celebrating victories / successes
4. Writing history from gender perspective/lens
5. Writing history of our own bringing out the stories of unsung heroines in our organisations and people we serve.

MORE QUESTIONS ... SEARCHING FOR ANSWERS

1. Despite developments, there is stagnation in the women empowerment process. How do we reimagine and intervene and pass on the rich legacy?
2. Need to break the glass ceiling; need movers and shakers.
3. Need strategies for mass campaign, awareness and attitudinal changes.
4. Need for ongoing sharing of experiences, questions, strategies, challenges and solutions.
5. Gaps to be identified and addressed – Text Vs Context; Private Vs Public; Knowledge Vs emotions
6. We are called to empower women to become leaders and change makers in concrete life situations and in women movements.
7. We need to link women empowerment with political, human rights and democracy (Current regime) and environmental processes (COP26).



RESILIENCE = CREATING/STRENGTHENING SPACES

1. Participatory spaces – Processes, organization, governance and decision making
2. Engaging spaces – Engaging in concrete life struggles – land, livelihood, education, health, climate, gender rights
3. Emulating spaces – Be a change
4. Generative spaces – New ideas (research/publications), new strategies, art forms, social media
5. Interrogating spaces – Developing questioning mindset, single story, myths
6. Redefining spaces – New articulations/imaginings/solutions
7. Alternative spaces – Creating replicable, non-threatening, sustainable, people's
8. Movement spaces – Mass based, public visibility and collectivity
9. Networking spaces – Joining other women initiatives, alliances
10. (Re)Claiming spaces – public, governance, decision-making - rights, entitlements, policies, laws – dignity, gender equality, peace, reconciliation, restorative justice.

1.15 PM - WRITTEN EVALUATION

1.30 PM - TAKEAWAYS

Four participants shared their experiences of participating in the conference, appreciating the

planning, implementation, space provided to listen to one another, share their experiences and to learn from one another. It was a moment of joy. Overall the participants expressed high levels of satisfaction and full marks in realizing the objectives and outcomes of the conference.

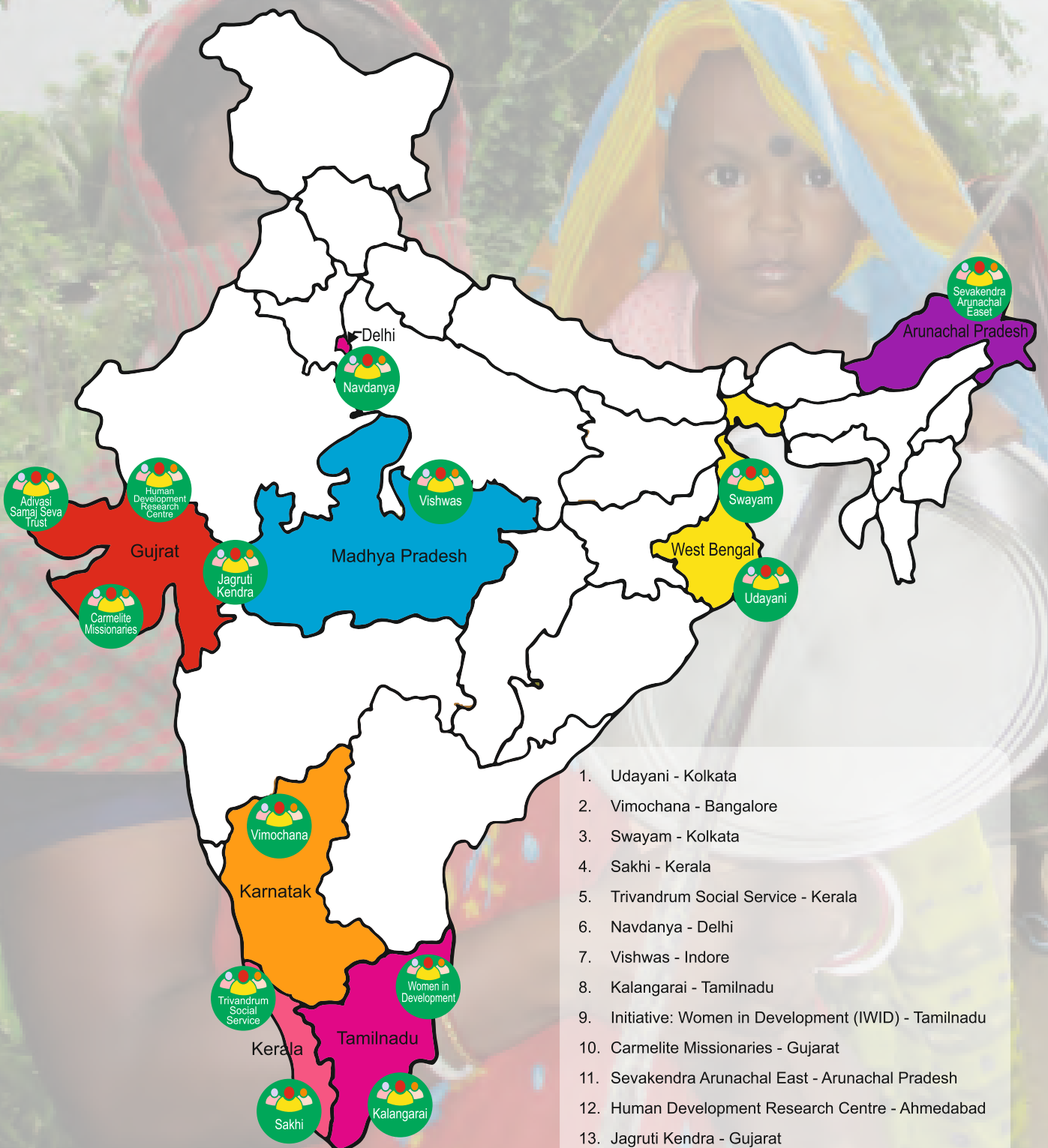


2.00 PM THE CONFERENCE WAS OFFICIALLY CLOSED.



ANNEXURE - I

1. LIST OF ORGANIZATIONS PARTICIPATED



1. Udayani - Kolkata
2. Vimochana - Bangalore
3. Swayam - Kolkata
4. Sakhi - Kerala
5. Trivandrum Social Service - Kerala
6. Navdanya - Delhi
7. Vishwas - Indore
8. Kalangarai - Tamilnadu
9. Initiative: Women in Development (IWID) - Tamilnadu
10. Carmelite Missionaries - Gujarat
11. Sevakendra Arunachal East - Arunachal Pradesh
12. Human Development Research Centre - Ahmedabad
13. Jagruti Kendra - Gujarat
14. Adivasi Samaj Seva Trust - Gujarat

ANNEXURE - II

2. CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

DAY 1: 15 NOVEMBER 2021

- 09.30 am - Welcome, Fr. John Kerketta, S.J. Director, Udayani
09.45 am - Purpose, dynamics and outcomes – Rev. Dr. Joseph Xavier, S.J.
10.30 am - Keynote address – **Lessons of Women's Movements in India by Prof. Vibhuti Patel, Gender Economist & Women's Rights Activist (Online)**
11.30 am - Break
12.00 noon - How I became a local women leader? - Panel
Moderated by Ms. Alphonsa Kumari.
Panelists: Ms. Basanti Soren (Udayani, Kolkata), Ms. Jermaben Vasava (Gujarat) and Ms. Desbashree Mukherjee (Swayam, Kolkata)
03.00 pm - Exploring the community-based approach methodology of Marmara
04.30 pm - Break
06.00 pm - Reimagining the justice system to address violence against Women by Ms. Corinne Kumar, Vimochana (Online)

DAY 2: 16 NOVEMBER 2021

- 09.00 am - Challenges and opportunities in our day-to-day life and as women organisations - Group work

Themes:

1. Form of violence and addressing violence at the family, community and institutional level.
2. Economic challenges of women and self-reliance strategies.
3. How to mobilize women in the grassroots to be involved in Community mobilisation and how to develop change makers to claim their due rights and participation at all levels.
4. Reviewing my organisation from a Gender lens. Do we have a Gender policy? Do we have a Policy on prevention of sexual harassment? If yes, challenges in the implementation of these policies.
5. Engaging Men in Promoting Gender Equality. How to involve the man in the process of equality? How to approach men to work with them about these topics?

- 02.30 pm - Plenary - Sharing the reflections of the group work
06.00 pm - **Women Farmers lead the transition to a Biodiverse, Regenerative agriculture and Food system - a solution to hunger, malnutrition and climate change** by Dr. Vandana Shiva (online).

DAY 3: 17 NOVEMBER 2021

- 09.00 am - **Women leaders share their knowledge, experiences, challenges and strategies.**
Ms. Celine Suguna (Vimochana) Ms. Amrita Dasgupta (Swayam)
Ms. Beulah Devakumari (IWID) Ms. Mercy Alexander (Sakhi)
11.30 am - Open conversation
12.45 pm - General Conclusions
01.15 pm - Takeaways
02.00 pm - Conference ends

ANNEXURE - III

3. EVALUATION OF THE ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE

SECTION 1: PARTICIPATION IN THE DESIGN OF THE CONFERENCE

Participation in the design of the Conference	N	%
YES	22	61.1
NO	14	38.9
TOTAL	36	100.0

Mean value of satisfaction in the planning of the conference – 6.77

IMPRESSIONS:

- Lot of effort put into designing
- Lack of concept note
- Opinions considered
- Grassroots women participation was good
- Advance preparation required.

SECTION 2: ABOUT THE EVENT IN KOLKATA

Satisfaction level in a scale of '1' to '10' where '1' is minimum and '10' is maximum.

Venue	8.35
Food	8.57
Accommodation	8.23
Covid protocol and precautions	6.43
Space for informal sharing	8.03

SECTION 3: PRESENTATIONS AND ROUND TABLES

Prof Vibhuti Patel - <i>Lessons of Women's Movements in India</i>	7.95
Women Panel – Experiences sharing – <i>How I became a woman leader?</i>	8
Marmara methodology by VIMOCHANA	6.51
Ms. Corrine Kumar - <i>Reimagining the justice system to address violence against Women</i>	4.88
Dr. Vandana Shiva - Women Farmers lead the transition to a Biodiverse, Regenerative agriculture and Food system – a solution to hunger, malnutrition and climate change	7.78
Work in groups on thematic areas	7.97
Women Panel – Our organizational works and challenges	8.19

SECTION 4: PARTICIPATION IN THEMATIC GROUP WORKS

Participation in thematic areas	N	%
Form of violence and addressing	5	14.3
Economic challenges	11	31.4
How to mobilize women	9	25.7
Reviewing from Gender lens	7	20.0
Engaging men in promoting gender equality	3	8.6
Total	35	100.0

LEARNING FROM THE GROUP WORK:

- Learnt new strategies
- Happy to express my views
- Sharing of case narratives
- Open and honest sharing
- Learnt about different spaces available for women
- Developed conviction that barriers can be broken
- Organisations are hard working
- Importance of giving voice to women
- Diversity and multidimensional approaches while goal is same

SECTION 5: GENERAL INDICATORS

Use of language and translation	6.46
Space to share information about organisations	7.11
Degree of participation	6.97
Methodologies applied in the conference	7.78

Note: Language and translation has been one of the concerns.

SECTION 6: REALIZATION OF OBJECTIVES AND LEARNING FOR FUTURE

Fulfillment of expectations	7.16
Learning new strategies	7.65
Made new contacts	7.54
Creation of possibilities for future alliances	7.69
Sharing with others what each organization does	7.41

SECTION 7: FUTURE EVENT

Interest to participate in the next event in Kerala in 2022	N	%
Yes	27	73.0
No	1	2.7
Need time to think	9	24.3
Total	37	100.0

REASONS:

- Importance of collective learning
- Opportunities for alliance building
- Possibilities for new learning
- To promote cross learning and to change old strategies

SECTION 8: TAKEAWAYS

- Women power can succeed
- Affirmation and solidarity among women
- Shared learning and learnt new experienced based knowledge
- Got a lot of clarity
- Spaces presented by Fr. Joe Xavier SJ was a good way forward. We need to work on expanding at least some spaces.

SECTION 9: SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Spend time for translation so that all are taken on board
- Avoid technical glitches
- Include exposure and site seeing
- In the evening organize cultural and presentation of creative arts (songs, slogans)
- Include men in the conference
- Avoid use of plastic
- Provide good drinking water and avoid plastic water bottles
- Avoid online presentations. Good to have physical presence of resource persons
- Use visual presentations (PPT). Helpful to follow especially when there are language difficulties.
- Not satisfied with the explanation of Marmara methodology. We should have had one practical demonstration.

REASONS:

Many participants enjoyed the conference as it was an opportunity for learning. Diverse ways of working for women empowerment opened up new possibilities. The conference strengthened the confidence of women.

ANNEXURE - IV

4. LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

S.No.	Organisation Name	Name
1	Vishwas	Rosily Panjikanan
2	Vishwas	Sushma Dung dung
3	Vishwas	Prakash Sastya
4	Vishwas	Rosily Chacko
5	Trivandrum Social Service Society	Babita Miriam Jacob
6	Trivandrum Social Service Society	Preeja FM
7	Trivandrum Social Service Society	Meenu Rose Ebi
8	Sakhi	Sreekala
9	Sakhi	Mercy Alexander
10	Kalangarai	Jessy Sandhanasamy
11	Kalangarai	Kulandaisamy Antony
12	Women In Development	Esther Beulah Devakumari
13	Women In Development	Aspy Joyson V
14	Carmelite Missionaries	Marykutty Mathew
15	Carmelite Missionaries	Shiny Thomas
16	Sevakendra Arunachal East	Sunitaben Parmar
17	Adivasi Samaj Seva Trust	Jermaben Vasava
18	Vimochana	Sahel Anees
19	Vimochana	Celine Suguna
20	Vimochana	Anita Devi
21	Jagruti Kendra	Parmar Pratixxa
22	Udayani	Alphonsa Kumari
23	Udayani	Basanti Saren
24	Udayani	Chiranjib Murmu
25	Udayani	Champa Mondal
26	Udayani	Arati Saren
27	Udayani	Rupa Saren
28	Udayani	Sujatha Chiti
29	Udayani	Rinku Patra
30	Udayani	Paromitta Dutta
31	Udayani	Lekha Naskar
32	Udayani	Koyel Saha
33	Udayani	Ananta Saren
34	Udayani	Padma Murmu
35	Chitrabani	Arun Lucas
36	Udayani	John Kerketta
37	Udayani	Anburaj Manuel
38	Swayam	Debashree Mukherjee
39	Swayam	Seema Sreeniwas
40	Swayam	Triparna Nandy
41	Swayam	Sriya Satuluri
42	Swayam	Rahool Goswamy
43	Swayam	Dulari Khatoon
44	Swayam	Namrata Bose
45	Swayam	Amrita Dasgupta
46	Udayani	Francis Edwin Juan
47	Udayani	Munmun Haque
48	Udayani	Subhra Mishra
49	Calcuta ondoan	Maria Zarauza
50	Calcuta ondoan	Melisa Juana Alonsa
51	Calcuta Ondoan	Ainhoa Albeniz
52	Indian Social Institute	Joseph Xavier



Udayani Social Action Forum

75/1, Ballygunge Place, Kolkata - 700019, West Bengal, India

Ph : 033 2972 3344 Email : info@udayani.org

Web site : www.udayani.org