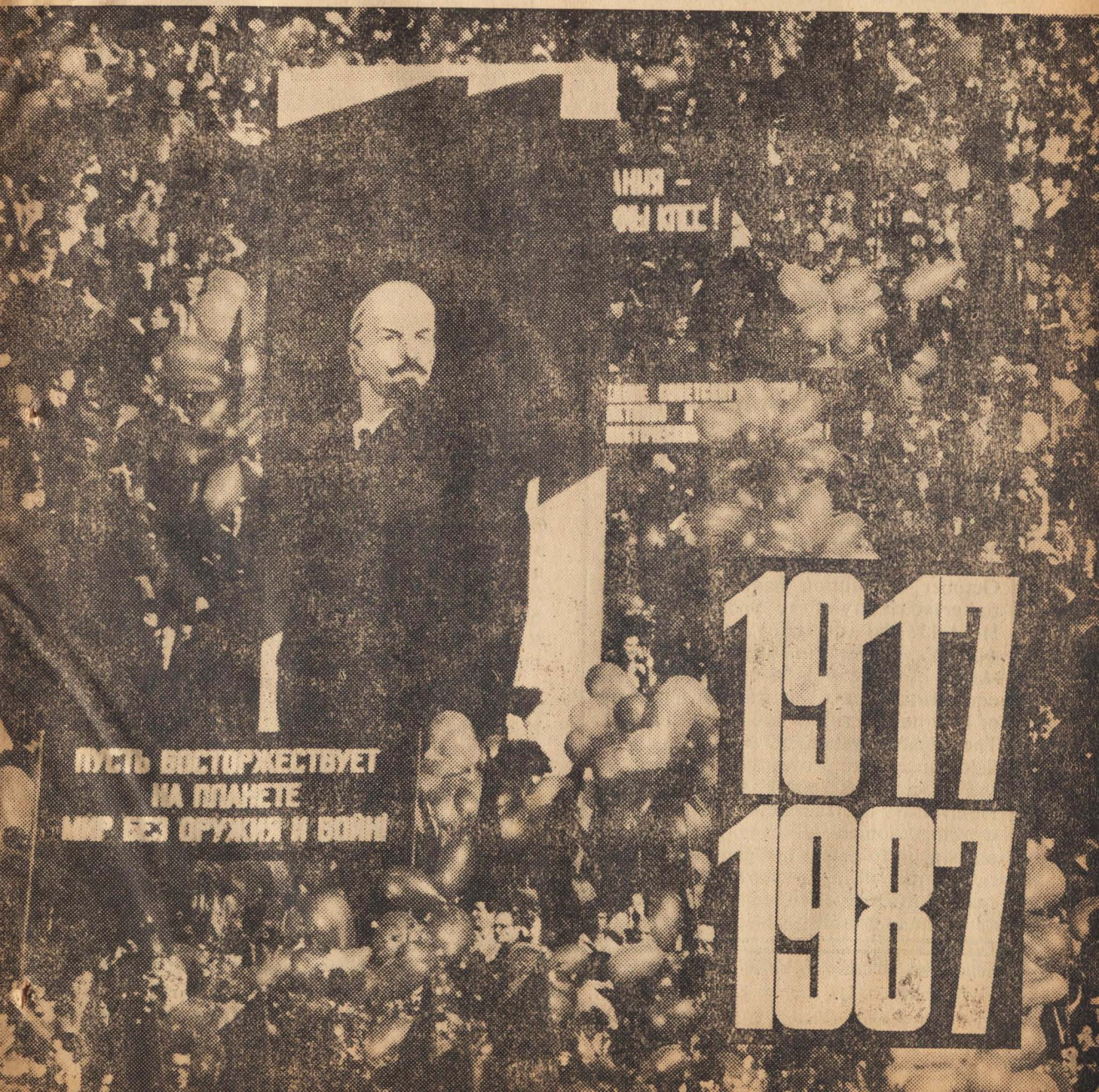
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THE VOICE OF THE WORKING WOMAN



Chokha, General Secy. of Democratic Women Association, Punjab, Smt. Bimala Devi and others. The resolution demanding acceptance of demands submitted in demand charter and condemning the activities of terrorists were passed. The convention took pledge to work for communal harmony in Punjab and make any type of sacrifice for the integrity and unity of the country, and supporting demands of the striking nursing staff.

The conventions in Gurdaspur, and Ropar Dist. were held on 20.9.87. At Gurdaspur 250 women employees participated in the convention inspite of this district being worst hit district due to activities of terrorists. The convention elected Smt. Talwinder Kaur, Dist. Convener. The convention was addressed by Smt. Surinderjit Kaur Gill, State General Secretary of Istri Mulazam Committee, Smt. Talwinder Kaur, Smt. Jagjeet Kaur and others. The convention passed resolutions in support of women employees demands, condemning anti-national activities of terrorists and condemning innocent killings. The conventions took pledge to work for communal harmony and make all type of sacrifices for integrity of country, and supporting the demands of nursing staff on strike.

The Convention held in Ropar district was attended by more than 150 women employees and Smt. Manjit Kour was elected district convenor. The convention addressed by Smt. Surinder Kaur, President State Istri Mulazam Tal-Mel Committee Punjab, Smt. Manjit Kaur and others. The convention here also passed resolution in support of women employees, condemning activities of terrorists and took pledge to make any type of sacrifice for the unity and the integrity of the country, and supporting the demands of striking nursing staff.

The convention in Dist. Ludhiana was held on 11.10.87 in E.S.I. Hospital Ludhiana and Bibi Chander Konta was elected Dist. Convener. The convention was attended by more than 150 women employees and was addressed by Smt. Surinder Kaur, President, Bibi Chander Kanta, Smt. Rabinder Kaur, Smt. Harjeet Kaur, Smt. Amitpal Kaur, Smt. Surjit Kaur Chauhan and others. The convention passed resolution in support of women employees demands condemning activities of terrorists and pledging to win faith integrity and unity of the country and condemning the incident of Sati in Rajasthan and demanding severe punishment to guilty for Sati incident, and supporting demands of the striking nursing staff.

The convention held in district Jallandar on 18.10.87 elected, Smt. Suranjit Kaur Convener of Dist. Unit. More than 250 women employees took part in the convension, and convension was addressed by Smt. Surinder Kaur-State-President, Smt. Talwinder Kaur Dist. Convenor Gurdaspur, and State Vice-President, Bibi Balbir Kaur, Smt. Mohinder Kaur General Secretary, R.D.A. Craft Teacher Association and Sarlijit Kaur Cheima and others.

The convention passed resolution demanding acceptance of women employees demands condemning terrorists activities, and work for unity, and integrity of the country, condemning the incident of Sati in Rajasthan, and demanding severe punishment to the guilty for Sati and supporting the demands of nursing staff.

The Order for Verginity Test withdrawn Victory For Nurses

Nurses of Raipur hospital observed strike to protest against the decision of the hospital authorities introducing "Virginity Test" of Unmarried nurses. The Nurses Association withdrew the strike when their demands were accepted after negotiations with the authorities. Consequent on the agitational movement undertaken by the Nurses Association, the Hospital Supdt. Dr. Harshabhardhan and Chief Matron Smt. Sheela Bose, who forced the 14 newly appoined Unmarried nurses to undergo the 'Virginity Test' have been removed from the hospital and forced to proceed on leave. The orders regarding the Virginity Test have also been withdrawn.

Charter of Demands Placed before Concerned Authorities

Surinder Kour, Panjab

THE State Committee Meeting of Women Employees Co-ordination Committee (Istri Mulazam Tal Mel Committee) Punjab decided to hold district level conventions of Co-ordination Committee to organise district level units of Co-ordination Committee. It also decided to present Memorandum to Punjab Pay Commission regarding special demands of women employees. The demand charter sub-mitted is as under:—

It is quite true that women employees who are working in different Govt. and Semi-Govt. services have to perform many duties and responsibilities regarding their household affairs besides their office duties. In this way the time they invest in social production is more than other employees. Their contribution in the National Income is of great importance. Due to the over burden of their duties women employees have to face many problems. These double responsibilities have great effect upon their physique and mind. In these conditions it becomes necessary that in the interest of national gain they should be given social justice so that they could maintain their capability. In the fulfilment of this aim the working women should be given the following facilities comprising in their demands.

1. Women employees should be given 6 month's Maternity leave without any condition. The certificate requires by the C.M.O. should be avoided.

2. The Maternity benefit should be given according to Punjab C.S.R. up to three living children.

3. The Women Employees should be given double casual leaves than their male colleagues.

4. Women Employees should be cxempted ½ hour in the evening duty-hours.

5. Women Hostels for Women Employees should be constructed at all sub-divisional.

6. Creches should be opened in all the towns or cities where more than 30 women employees work.

7. Disparity at the time of promotion with the women employees should be finished, they should be given priority at the time of promotion to choose their stations of posting.

8. In the departments where women employees have got reservation, that reservation should be completed.

9. Arrangements should be made for 100 per cent residential facilities near their place of posting and they should be given protection.

10. Separate Toilets and Rest-rooms should be provided in all the institutions and offices.

11. In the Hospitals there should be arrangement for separate duty room in every ward.

12. Efforts should be made to accommodate all couples at one place.

13. Women employees of Dist. cadre should be given the benefit of one chance of changing their district without losing their seniority, after their marriage.

14. Anganawadi Workers should be given a grade of pay according to their qualifications and all other facilities equal to other Govt employees. In this way Anganawadi Assistant should be given the grade of Sewadar.

District Conventions

The conventions in Hoshiarpur Dist. was held on 30.8.87 in Civil Hospital, Hoshiarpur. The conventions was attended by more than two hundred women employees working in different departments of punjab Govt. Smt. Bimala Devi was elected Dist. Convener. The convention was addressed by Smt. Surinder Kaur, State President of Istri Mulazam Talmel Committee Punjab, Smt. Rajinder Kaur

of school teachers, the charges against the accused principal Mr. Chandrapal Singh were so serious that she had to expediate the earlier enquiries and order another enquiry. This was for the first time that the department showed some sense and appointed a lady as enquiry officer. Mrs. J. Jagannathan, Education officer, Calcutta Region Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan was appointed to go into the matter. This final enquiry was done between 28th and 30th of July '87. Mrs. Jagannathan also visited M.P. Janawadi Mahila Samiti office on 29th of July and made it clear that it was AIDWA which wrote to the minister, on the basis of which the minister had ordered the enquiry. Mr. Jagannath took written acknowledgement of her meeting with Secretary M.P. Janawadi Mahila Samiti.

JMS was imformed by the parents of the two girls that Mrs. Jagannathan had recorded the statements of their daughters. At least six teachers gave their statements in writing and many other orally told the enquiry officer about the unbecoming behaviour of the principal with opposite sex. This time, since the enquiry was made properly and was seemingly impartial, all the persons who were striving for justice since October 86 as well as J.M.S. who had raised the issue at such height were expecting a just result. But the orders that came from the corrupt bureaucrats were terribly shocking. The accused principal was given a token punishment in the form of simple transfer from K.V. Gwalior to K.N. Jawahargarh in Bihar. Since a case of 'attempt to rape a harijan woman Bhooribari is subjudiced in Gwalior Court the Commissioner Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan Mr. R.C. Sharma who had always been helping the culprit C.P. Singh out of the way was kind enough to change Mr. Singh's station from Jawahargarh (Bihar) to Babina (M.P.) very near from Gwalior so that the culprit can appear before the Court with least inconvenience and lesser financial loss.

On the other hand three of the teachers of Kendriya Vidyalaya Gwalior No. 1 are transferred to remotest places so that they as well as other teachers should learn a lesson for their crime of raising their voice against the immoral deeds of their superiors. Out of these three, one is a lady teacher who is being disturbed, has completed fifty three years of her age and is nearing retirement. Her "crime" is that she being the seniormost lady teacher in the school was first approached by the girl student who came out running from the principal's chamber and with uncontrollable tears, narrated his immoral deed to her. Naturally this particular teacher was also one of those who sharply reacted against the misdeed of their senior. Her second 'crime' is that the parents of the two girls approached Janawadi Mahila Samiti and one of the office bearers of Janawadi Mahila Samiti is also related to her. For these two 'serious offences' this particular teacher has been given punishment for transfer with a great surprise that this victimising act of K.V. Sangathan is approved by Mrs. Krishna Sahi the people's representative.

Insult of Shahdol Nurses — Enquiry Demanded

A statement signed by more than 20 nurses and staff nurses, Budhar, condemning the vile propaganda made against the nurses in Kendriya Hospital, Shadol in M.P. in the newspapers namely '*Samay Dainik*' and '*Navbharat*' Jabalpur in the month of Sept. 1987 has been issued to the press and the copies have been sent to those dailies asking for explanation. The signed statement was sent to District Magistrate, Budhar demanding action against these dailies. The following demands are made in the statement:

1. Inquiry into the charges made against nurses in these dailies,

2. In case, such charges are not proved to be genuine, the administration should act and punish those papers found guilty.

3. If the dailies have got the proof of such incidents or happenings, they can submit them in the office without any delay.

The statement further said that to be enlightened or educated does not give them the liberty to print anything they like. The nurses have to continue to serve the patients despite the mental strain they are going through because of such vile propaganda against them in the press. It is also a fact that they have to face a number of such scandals against which immediate actions are to be taken by the administration without any delay. Those found guilty should be punished severely so that they will not behave with their sisters or mothers in such unmannerly way.

(*Contd. on page 9*)

Teachers Employed 20 Years, Overnight Become Clerk in AVADI — Tamilnadu

THERE are many schools with no teachers to attend, in our country. But the case of Vijayanta Nursery School, a unit started and inaugurated in 1966, in Avadi, Madras is quite different. The children are there, teachers are employed since 20 years, but they are not allowed to teach, made to sit idle without any work. Over and above that "Teachers of 20 years service overnight became clerk" in the Heavy vehicle factory. Mrs. Chakrapani, the headmistress was made a peon and was denied even a table and a chair.

These five teachers of the Schools made a representation to Tamilnadu AIDWA appealing to intervene in the matter and get justice. What are the facts and why are they tortured, insulted, kept in suspence, not allowed to teach despite their teaching profession, and given a clerical job?

In 1967 the Primary Section of the School was handed over to the Kendriya Vidyalaya, and H.V.F. used to appoint a senior Gazetted officer to be the Chairman of this school. This transfer was not authorised by the Ordinance factory Board or the Ministry of Defence. Now, the General manager of H.V.F. transferred the administration of the school to Women's welfare Association headed by his wife Chinthini Pandian.

But what happened after her taking over was something different. New teachers were appointed on ad-hoc basis, not governed by any regulations. The number of teachers dwindled or raised as per the attendance of the students. In 1970 there were 11 while in 1977, there were 27, to come down to 11 again at present. Most serious thing was the account, which was Rs. 1,70,000/- in its credit which was totally controlled by the chair woman, and still is in her personal name. The property of the school is also now under W.W.A.

Under such serious circumstances, these teachers approached the Central Administrative tribunal Madras. The tribunal passed many strictures against the management of H.V.F. Due to nonavailability of an important document the teachers could not prove that the school was run by the Central Govt. Subsequently they obtained the said document and now they approached the supreme court and the Supreme Court ordered on 5.5.87 that the H.V.F. management and others should not interfere in the duties of the Govt. teachers and Headmistress. Surprisingly, even after the order received in the 3rd week of May 1987, the teachers are not asked to join the duties. Ths General Manager of the Factory and his wife are sitting tight over the Supreme court order. Is it not a contempt of the court? And just to show that they are doing something, the General Manager is found writing official letters to the teachers complaining that they are not taking over the jobs. The teachers also represented the case to Defence Minister.

After such an adamant attitude of the husband and wife of the Factory, the teachers now approached Com. Samar Mukharjee M.P. and Vimal Ranadive Secretary, AICCWW for getting justice. Com Samar Mukharjee after hearing the whole case, wrote to Shri K.C. Pant, the Union Defence Minister on the issue on 7th of October 1987, stating all the facts enclosing the memorandum of the teachers. The teachers must get justice after serving in the school for 20 years. The school should not run on the whims of one person which happens to be the wife of the General Manager of the H.V. Factory, Avadi.

Women Teachers in K.V.S. Transferred As Punishment

EARLIER, in our July issue, we published the story of the immoral and corrupt principal of Kendriya Vidyalaya Gwalior No. 1 who is in habit of talking over most vulgar sexual topics even with the girl students studying in class IX and X in the same institution and report of AIDWA delegations meeting with Mrs. Krishna Sahi, Minister of Education for state.

Though Mrs. Krishna Sahi tried to discuss the whole matter by calling it a 'union matter'

Various Organisations Condmn Sati incident in West Bengal

THE gruesome act of burning 18-year-old Roop Kanwar in the name of Sati in Deorala village of Rajasthan, was condemned by all in the State. Such medieval brutality in the name of religion should be nipped in the bud by strong measures. This was the feeling expressed by the Marwari community on October 10, by women in marches organised in the heart of the city on October 15 and by citizens in a rally on October 16.

Women rose to protest, as hnndreds of them assembled at Sidhu-Kanu Dahar at the call of four Leftist Women's organisations on October 15, the Gantantrik Mahila Samity, the Mahila Samithi, the Agragami Mahila Samiti, and the Nikhil Banga Mahila Sangha.

Rise against atrocities on women in the name of religion; Condemn and protest against medieval brutality — these were the slogans of the day. Veteran women's leader, Renu Chakravarty, expressed her shock that such a protest rally needed to be staged in the 20th century. Women take a vow to resist and raise against all evils in the name of religion, she said, Two women's delegations went and met the Governor of West Bengal and Chief Minister of West Bengal, with a memorandum to be forwarded to the President of India.

Women leaders from all the women's organisations addressed the rally and condemned the naked alignment of the Rajiv regime with such communal forces. This was the same foul play noticed regarding the Muslim Women's Bill and the Ramjanambhumi and Babri Mosque controversy.

Kanak Mukherjee M.P., stated that it was pathetic even to think of such an incident and condemned all the religious fundamentalist forces who are supporting the custom of Sati today. The rally was also addressed by Smt. Gita Mukherjee, M.P., Shyamali Gupta and others.

The Marwari Yuva Samaj too expressed bitter anguish and hatred against the incident on October 10. They too submitted a memorandum to the Governor in this regard.

Democratic citizens gathered at Subddh Mullick Square and marched to Sidhu-Kanu Dahar for the same cause on October 16. The march culminated in submitting a memorandum to the Governor in this regard. The call was given by the Calcutta Nagarik Sammelan.

West Bengal Assembly Passed Resolution on Sati

Members of the Legislative Assembly condemning the brutal act of Sati in Rajasthan, on October 16, took up an unanimous resolution during the Session of the West Bengal Assembly. The members force fully demanded punishment of the criminals involved in the incident. The people and the Government should see to it that such acts are not repeated.

The Assembly also appealed to the people to organise unified protests on the issue. Speaking on the resolution, Buddhadev Bhattacharya, Minister of Information and Cultural Affairs, said that acts of Sati and super computer do not go hand in hand.

Such is the nature of the crisis of our country. An all-party resolution condemning the act needs to be there. Kamal Sengupta of the CPI (M) introduced the resolution while Shantasree Chatterjee and Mumtaz Begum of the CPI (M), Aparjita Goppi of the Forward Bloc, Mohan Singh Rai of the CPI spoke on it. Congress (I) members Superiyo Basu, Aparbolal Majumdar, too condemned the act.

Report from Andhra

Punnyavathi

IN Andhra, with the inspiration of Bombay Conference special Session on working women, CITU leaders as well as state committees have taken more intest in organising workers under the banner of CITU. Especially in Hyderabad city, where the CITU State Centre is situated, the state leaders as well as Hyderabad CITU Council members have showed more interest, they encouraged our women activists and put them into work. Our women activists campaigned for one month, got contacts from many of the middle class employees, Railway HEL ECIL employees ect. They got contacts with Beedi workers also where about 20000 beedi workers are working in Twin cities.

District Conventiona were held in 4 districts; in Hyderabad on September 27; in Nalgonda on September 26th; in Kurnool on September 29 and in Rajamundry on October 11 and Ad-hoc Committees were formed.

We have to hold Conventions in four more districts. After that in the month of December we are planning to hold a state Convention and bring out a rally to the State Assembly. 380 students including 10 women activists have participated in state CITU classes held from 2nd October to 7th.

Working Women Convention in Rajhmundry

East Godavari District Working Women Convention was held in Rajhmundry on October 11th. CITU state Vice-President Com. G.S. Balaji Das inaugurated the Convention. He Stated that after 40 years of independence, The women workers are loosing their jobs, instead of getting jobs, more retrenchment due to the mechanization. Mrs. Punyavathi, Convenor, State Co-ordination Committee stated how the women workers in Tobacco industry lost their jobs. She stated that without participation in their respective unions the women workers cannot solve their problems.

Mrs. Krishna Kumari placed secretary's report before the Convention. Eight women participated in the discussion. A new Ad-Hoc Committee was formed and Com. G. Krishna Kumari was elected as convenor. About 150-women workers participated in the Convention. After 8 years, this 2nd Convention was held. The Convention also, passed a resolution in protest against Sati and emphasied the necessity of fighting against fundamentalism.

District Working Women Convention (Nalgonda)

On September 26th working Women Convention was held in Nalgonda. About 400 women workers who are working in Rice mills, Beedi, Teachers, private hospital Nurses, press workers and industrial workers participated, They came from far off places like Surgapet, Miryalagudam, Devarakonda, Elluru, Ramannapet and Bhongiri. Mrs. Punyavathi attended the meeting and narrated the problems that are facing women workers and emphasised the necessity of organising women workers.

Smt. M. Swarajyam, President A.P. Mahila Samgham greeted the Conference and spoke on 'Siti' incident, emphasised the necessity of fighting against feudal elements. Sri N. Reghavreddy MLA also greeted the Convention. Eight members participated in the discussion. A Committee was formed with 11 members, Mrs C. Anandamma as Convenor.

Kurnool District Working Women Convention

Kurnool district Werking Women convention was held on 29th September in Kurnool. 200 women workers from paper mill, seeds farm, glass factory, sericulture industry, Bandage factory, Ginnings mills & Rice Oil Mills attended the Convention, They came with so such enthusiasm. 8 women workers participated in the discussion. They narrated that the managements whether it is private or Government are exploiting women without paying minimum wages and overtime allowances; and how the CITU is leading them in fighting against the ex-

Contd. on page 11)

Women in Rajasthan Campaign Against Sati

Madhu Sethia

ON 14th Sept. the Janwadi Mahila Samiti of Rajasthan along with Rajasthan University women's Association and many other prominent women from all walks of life organised a demonstration to protest against the incidence of Sati Dearala village. We had to make a lot of efforts in trying to convince these women that Sati is not only a Social evil but this practice is continuing only because the government remains a silent spectator and takes no action against those who are responsible for this heinous crimes against the women. As a result on 14th Sept. some two hundred women gathered to demonstrate against the Rajasthan government and to submit a memorandum to the Chief Minister. We were really shocked to know that neither the Chief Minister nor any other minister were available to talk to us and to discuss as to what the government's stand was on issue and what the government was going to do about the "Chunari Mahotsav" to be hcld on 16th Sept. for which a lot of propaganda was being done and lakhs of people were to participate. Only the Secretary of the Chief Minister met us and failed to give any categorical reply. The government was clearly trying to evade the whole issue.

Therefore, we tried to persuade the women who had gone in that deputation to file an application in the High Court, requesting to stop the celebration of the Chunari Mahotsav. Out of the 10 women who had gone in deputation only three came to the Court with us. Altogether six women Madhu Sethia, Kalpana khera from Janwadi Mahila Samiti, Renuka Pameoha from Rajasthan University Women's Association, and Kumari Jain form Mahila Punarwas Samiti, Mamita Jaitely from IDARA, and Sunita Satyarthi a women advocate filed an application addressed to the Chief Justice of Rajasthan. It was treated as a writ petition and the hearing was done on 15th Sept. '87. Many of the leading advocates refused to plead our case saying that there is no legal merit in this case. Sumita Satyarthi who is a very young and inexperienced advocate formally presented the case just saying a few sentences and we actively helped her by speaking ourselves in the Court. On the otherside advocate General of Rajasthan Nathualal Jain argued on behalf of the government of Rajasthan. In reply to the continuous questioning by the bench of Justic Agrawal and P,C. Jain he shamelessly tried to defend the government by saying that Chunari ceremoney is a part of the customary religious rites, performed after the death of a Sahajin Rajput women. The judges were not satisfied and continued to ask further question so that Advocate general asked for some time to consult the government. The Court permitted him to do so and to reappear at three three 0' clock. Meanwhile lot of Rajput Thakurs and goondas had gathered in the Court room threatening and abusing us. At three the advocate general reappeared with a statement of the Chief Minister, condemning the incident of Sati and assuring that the guilty will not be spared. This was the first official condemnation of Sati. Yet the judges gave direction to the State Government and its officials to stop any public function or ceremoney on the cremation ground which may have the effect of glorification of Sati.

However, the Rajasthan government did not move into action and as a result while on 15th evening there were some forty thousand people in Deorala but by 16th morning the crowd swelled to three lakhs. Police did not even go any where near the Sati sthal on that day.

As a result of the wide publicity of the High Court's decision there was an upsurge of the public opinion against Rajasthan government and against Congress(I). It compelled the State Minister for Home affairs to come to Jaipur and to meet the women's organisation and to explain the stand of the Central Government. During the discussion he observed that women's organisations had failed on their duty by not going to Deorala. We counter questioned him by saying why the Chief Minister and Director General of Police didnot go to that village and why many Congress(I) office bearers and one Ex. MLA participated in the Chunari Mahotsav. We also pointed out to him the failure of Rajasthan government in preventing chunari ceremoney. To this he said

Janwadi Mahila Samiti, Gwalior Burn the Effigi of Hardev Joshi

Anagha Shinde Gwalior

PROTESTING against the recent incident of 'Sati' in Deorala, Rajasthan, Janawadi Mahila Samiti, Gwalior gave Dharna on 3. 10. 87 in front of Gwalior District Collectorate. The major demand of this Dharna was removal of Harideo Joshi's regime.

A hand bill was brought out and distributed all over the city mainly among the women condemning the 'Sati' incident, government's calculated long silence over the shocking incident as well as the Hindu fundamentalists who are glorifying the brutal case in the name of religion. Even the illiterate tribal women from nearby villages came on Dharna protesting against the horrid incident and demanding Harideo Joshi's removal. After the Dharna at 6.30 P. M. the Public Meeting beagan. It was presided by Mrs. Gayatri Saroj, President, M. P. Janawadi Mahila Samiti. She said that recurrance of such inhuman feudal traditions to-day is seen not in the families of feudal lords but among common masses. The reasons behind are economic in the root. Secretary Janawadi Mahila Samiti Gwalior Mrs. Afroz Sheikh said that be it the question of the rights of Muslim women or murder of a young Hindu girl like Roopkuwar, government has always knelt before the obscurantist forces.

Sandhya Shaily, a member of the All India Working Women's Co-ordination Committee said that it is the fault and weakness of our education which does not bring us out of the narrow sphere of religion and blind faith. It does not make one capable to face the Challenges of life. It makes us escapist and dependent. That is why a young and educated girl like Roop Kunwar could successfully be forced to perform 'Sati'.

Secretary, M. P. Janawadi Mahila Samiti State Committee Anagha Shinde said that Government and communal forces are responsi ble for the murder of an young Indian citizen. The so-called spokesman of Hindu religion Shankaracharya and intellectuals like the editor of Hindi daily Janasatta are playing the most shameful role in the history of India today by supporting the brutal custom of Sati in the name of religion and Indian tradition. Also it is ridiculous to equate the recent incident of Sati with the 'Jauhar' in Rajpoot tradition. Citing the example of our fighting sisters of Africa, Iran and other countries she said today women have a more important role to play in the struggle for a better future of their motherland and the whole humanity. Instead of dying to save the chastity of their body it is more important to join the ranks of those fighting for the burning problems, freedom and cause of humanity.

She said that the most valuable thing for Cong. (I) people is their votes. That is why the government does not want to take action against the culprits of Deorala Sati incident under the latest ordinance. They do not want to displease their voters.

Janwadi Mahila Samiti had also invited the district Secretaries of CPI and CPI (M) to address the meeting. Com. Rajesh Sharma from CPI and Com. Badal Saroj from CPI (M) addressed the meeting. The meeting was conducted by Jaishree Sharma. About one thousand people attended the meeting.

Dharna and Public meeting in place like Gwalior which is a strong centre of Hindu communalist forces and that too immediately after Deshahara when these forces were over enthused, had its own significance.

In the end women took over their shoulders the effigy of Harideo Joshi and burnt it.

(Contd. from page 6)

The statement further adds "if immediate steps have not been taken within 15 days, we will be compelled to have demonstration strike and other actions for which you will be held responsible."

National Commission on Self-employed Women and Trade Unions

THE Department of Women and child Development, Govt. of India appointed a National Commission on Self Employed Women a few months back with Smt. Ela Bhatt, member of Parliament and the General Secretary of SEWA as a chairperson with five other members, all women. The first meeting of this committee with the Central Labour Unions was held on 6th October 1987. Vimal Ranadive represented on behalf of CITU. Along with the term of reference as to what was to be discussed in the meeting, the trade unions were requested to say on the questions of how far unions have been able to voice the demands and grievances of women workers and steps taken for effective representation of women in Labour Unions, causes for low unionisation of women workers in the unorganisatised sectors and suggestions for improving the unionisation. Unions were also asked to give their openions on the implementation of the legislations changes and modification requird.

Perhaps this was the first kind of a meeting called by the Commission to discuss the problems of women workers in the unorganised sector including self-employed women and their problems. The meeting attended by the women representatives of the unions including CITU, AITUC, BMS, INTUC, TUCC, HMS, NLO and SEWA. Smt. R. Thamarajakshi, adviser Planning Commission, member of the National Commission on self-employed women and Mr. T.S. Shankaran convenar of Task Force attended the meeting.

Smt. Ela Bhatt, while welcoming the participation of trade unions in the meeting, reported, the commission visited about 15 states, held meetings with women workers in different industries and also with the managements. What the commission found was women were not aware of the labour legislations, and are not taking interest in the union activities as they should. Wages are low, sometimes found unequal despite the Act. While speaking about women in the unorganised sector, she felt the total absence of union consciousness, there is harassment on women contract labourers by contracters and it was found Equal Remuneration Act is not being unplemented and even the Government is the biggest defaulter. Smt. Ela Bhatt also touched the question of mechanisation when many women are discharged. She said the commission has appointed a task force to identify areas and impact of the legislations and suggest ways and means to improve the conditions of women in the unorganised and self employed sections.

Mrs. Desoza, INTUC asked the question as to why the Government, one of the largest employer did not implement all the laws passed by Government itself, she said ESI covers very few people, it does not cover the unorganised rural poor and hence, the coverage should be extended.

Mrs Kamala Sinha HMS, spoke about non-implementation of Minimum wage for women. Maternity Benefit is not given because they are not regular workers. In rural sector women earn only half the money of what men earn for the same period. She said Central Government is not keen to implement and the State Government is callous. It is sad if a woman goes to the court, she is out of job. While turning to the unionisation of women, she said women have to look after home also and all the union activities are handled by men. Now women are asserting themselces, trade unions should motivate them and have classes for them.

The representation from BMS gave account of Seminar held on the problems of women workers with ILO. She also emphasised the importance of rural women who constitute 80 per cent, and Govt. gives little help to improve their conditions. The Govt. must implement their own legislations.

Parvathi Krishnan AITUC spoke about the rights of women workers and how they were obtained by struggles. Turning to implementation of legislations she mentioned the plantation labour Act when delays take place while implementing. The unions must take responsibility of unionisation of women, it was a joint responsibility, meeting should be held according to the convenience of women, so that they can attend. No revision of minimum wages is done every four years. There should be national minimum wage. Women do not get

that the Central Government exercised great restraint and not to resort to firing on that day. All this clearly showed that the Central government also wanted to be on the safe side and lacked the political will to deal with this act of religious revivalism. However, to save the government from criticism and political isolation Rajasthan government issued an ordinance. Margret Alva announced in Delhi that in Jaipur women's organisations will hold a rally against Sati on 6th October in which Congress (I) ministers from Delhi will also go. Except Janwadi Mahila Samiti all other women's organisations were persuaded by the local Congress (I) women to joint it. We clearly said that we will have our own campaign from 11th to 17th in as many districts as possible and will not join this rally of Congress(I) who has failed to do anything against those who are trying to defend and glorify Sati. As a result the feeling against Congress again became dominant and on that rally of 6th Congress(I) women ministers reached but were not allowed to speak.

During the week we observed against Sati, we were able to have demonstrations jointly with SFI and DYFI, JLS, in Udaipur Ganganagar, Alwa, Ajmer, Sikar and Bikaner.

Meanwhile the religious fundamentalists have been trying to organise people on caste lines and in the name of religious sanction to the practice of Sati. On 8th October there was a massive rally of the Rajputs in Jaipur with more than one lakh people openly raising slogans supporting Sati and Sati worshipping. Again on 28th October they are going to held another rally asking to take the anti Sati ordinance back and for release of the so called innocent persons.

To counter this attempt of the fundamentalists we are carrying on a signature campaign against Sati and are trying to hold a padyatra as soon as possible. With the tremendous support we are getting from AIDWA units all over the country, we are confident that we will be able to mobilize for this programme and make it a success.

Janwadi Mahila Samiti, and SFI, DYFI of Jaipur organised a Convention against Sati and Religious Fundamentalism on October 18th. This convention was to mark the culmination of the propaganda campaign from 12 to 17th October, launched against the barbaric practice of Sati and its defense being made by the religious fundamentalists.

The Convention was attended by some four hundred men and women. Justice Potti delivered the inaugural speech and Com. Vimal Ranadive, presided the Convention. Com. Hariram Chauhan, State Secretary, CPI (M), Com, Brinda Karat and two M.L. As from Janata Party, Digvijay Singh and Manak Chand Surana also expressed their views. The Convention passed a resolution demanding resignation of Chief Minister and Home Minister of Rajasthan.

(*Contd. from page 7*)

ploitations and how now they are getting atleast minimum statutory rights after they formed the Unions under the banner of CITU.

CITU State Secretary Com. M.A. Gafoor greeted the women workers who fought herorically and stated that as per decisions of the *Bombay CITU Conference*: the CITU State Centre took initiative to organise women workers. continuing his espeech, he stated that we have to fight against economic exploitattion together with social oppression like *Sati*. Democratic Mahila Samiti conventor Com. Virsala and CITU Dist president Com. Shadrak also spoke in the meeting.

Com. Punnyavathi, State Convenor attended the conference and narrated the importance of women to join and participate in trade unions and managenal Committee.

In Karnool hundreds of women are being organised by CITU and their participation in movements and committee is also satisfactory. A new committee was elected with Mrs. Animulla as Convenor.

AIDWA Appeals to Join the 9th December Rally in Thousands

THE CEC of AIDWA met on 27-28th of October 1987 in Delhi with most of the members present, took some important decisions. Ahilya Rangnekar presided over the meeting. The condolence resolutions on the murder of Balkumari by Gorkhaland anti-socials in Darjeeling distt. was passed. The murders of common people in Tripura by TNV and in Punjab by Khalistani Extremists were also condemned by the CEC. Susheela Gopalan, the General Secretary then placed the report on the present political situation in the country condemning the latest horrible incident of Sati in Rajasthan. She said this shows the emergence of revivalism, under the garb of religion. The leaders of BJP and Janata along with Congress(I) attended even the Chunari Mahotsav while glorifying the 'Sati' incident. Turning to the serious political situation, when all the communal and divisive forces are dividing our country with the help of extremists in Pakistan, and when the threats of imperialism has become a reality, she said the women's organisations have to work jointly together for restoring peace and for communal harmony. Comrades from every states spoke on the report and with a few amendments it was adopted. Com Swarajam from Andhra, Madhu Sethia from Rajasthan, Shymali Gupta and Sarala from West Bengal, Prabha Savant from Maharashtra Rajender Kaur from Punjab, Sudha Bindu from Bihar, Anagha Shinde, MP and Ranjana and Asha from Delhi and others spoke on the reports in the states on different issues such as Peace and, communal harmony, price rise, on the campaign on Sati, on the issue of the role of 'Media' like T.V. etc and its use for religious purposes as well as for lowering the image of a woman Ahilya Rangnekar on the next day placed the future programme of action. One of the important progromme taken up by the committee was an all India convention of rural women on their demands. It was reported from almost all the states a high participation of rural women in the Kisan Morchas in Andhra, Tamilnadu, Kerala, Maharashtra etc. They do not get work and the minimum wage is not implemented. The month and the place of the convention will be decided by the secretariat. Another question came up for discussion was the ICDS scheme where AIDWA or CITU unions are working to improve their conditions. The campaign for communal harmony and peace, as well as against price rise, will have to be strengthened up by the committees since the prices of essential commodities have gone up sky hish.

Brinda Karat spoke on the report on organisation, while pinpointing the advance of AIDWA in different states and weaknesses. She informed the committee about the first issue of 'Equality' brought out by AIDWA. She also stressed the need of joining in thousands by women in different states, under the banner of AIDWA, demanding resignation of Rajiv Gandhi Govt on 9th December along with other secular and democratic parties and mass organisations.

The resolutions on Sati, Sri Lanka, on the Chittaranjan Park killings of men, women and children and on price rise were adopted. Ahilya Rangnekar while winding up the discussion explained the danger of Hindu communalism, and fundamentalists for common people, and warned. We have to take up the fight seriously. Vimal Ranadive moved the resolution on the resignation of Rajiv Gandhi and immediate midterm poll in the country. With the vote of thanks to JMS for the help they gove for holding the meeting, the CEC ended their deliberations.

(*Contd. from page 22*)

Darjeeling district leader of AIDWA and resolving to fight the separatist forces was sent to West Bengal unit of AIDWA.

Telegram was sent to Rajasthan Chief Minister demanding his resignation on 26/9/87 on the question of Sati on the initiative of Joint Action Committee of eight women organisations, sent a joint letter to the Prime Minister asking him to prevent festivals to commomerate the Sati.

training and they are out.

The representative from NLO gave some suggestions for organising women in the unorganised and self employed sections. For these women legislation is required and Govt. must act. The question of raw material and obtaining market and finance are the important questions. Loans snould be given by the banks, with interest, training for women and minimum wage must be decided. A separate comprehensive social legislation is necessary to be applicable throughtout the country he said.

Vimal Ranadive CITU while submitting her paper on the agenda and welcoming the discussin informed the members, that to work among women workers and for their unionisation, the CITU has started a women's wing, AICCWW in 1979. After 7-8 years, CITU has noted some positive results in the promotion of working women on the higher bodies, and women taking up their specific issues in the unions. While turning to the various schemes offered by 6th and 7th five year plan she said the unemployment among women is increasing, women in the unorganised sector are getting appaling low wages, and are thrown out due to mechanisation. The Self-employed women are not getting loans, and market. She further said though self-employment can not be the solution on the unemployment of women, their work should be recognised, some legislation is necessary so that they all can be covered under minimum wage, can get maternity benefit and other amenities. She suggested since there is no employee — Employer relation, some type of identity card can be given as given in Beed, co-operatives of women in industry should be formed with the loan given by the Govt. She ended her speech by stating women are entering labour market on a large scale, and it is the duty of the Govt to provide the jobs. It should be accepted as a fundamental right in the constitution for every person.

Smt. Renana Jhabwala, member of task Force on legislative protection spoke by giving her experience in SEWA. She said there are Loopholes in the legislations, and there is no will to enforce them. There is no law to define the relation of employer-employee. There is no protection of legislation for home-based. When new technology is introduced women are out. There should be special act for rural women. A note should be prepared on self-employed women to be submitted to the Ministry.

Mr. Shankaran Convenor of Task Force criticised the trade unions for not taking up the cause of women workers as they should. He demanded the present piece rate as fixed wages. Also the Maternity Benefit should be an obligation for entire employers.

Smt. Ela Bhatt, the Chairperson, summed up the discussion and called upon the trade unions to consider the suggestions made in the meeting before the next meeting to be held before December 1987. She hoped that these delebrations would help in formulating, not a monumental but a report with practicle recommendations by the commission, implementation of which could then be persued by building up pressure from outside.

Mahadevi Verma—Tribute by AIDWA

THE well-known Hindi poetess and prose-writer, Mahadevi Varma, passed on September 11, 1987. She was one of the pillars of *Chhayavadi* movement in the history of Hindi literature. Her career as a poetess started during the days of the freedom struggle when Gandhiji has strarted mobilising the Indian masses against the British raj. Though the freedom struggle as such did not find reflection in her poetry, she did express the sorrows and griefs of the Indian women which had been their fate for the centuries. That is why Mahadevi Varma was called "Modern Meera" and "a poetess of grief".

However, apart from her poetry, the prose she created is totally devoted to the grief and problems of the exploited, oppressed and downtrodden sections of society.

Born in Farukkhabad, Uttar Pradesh in 1907, Mahadevi married at an early age of 11, into a family of old ideas. Her in-laws did not like that she read and write. At 17 she passed her matric with a first class, after which she was pressurised by her in-laws to abandon her studies. She left her in-laws' house and never went back. She actively participated in the national liberation struggle.

She registered her strong protest to the hated emergency regime; despite her close relations with the Nehru family. She always to displayed a critical attitude to the policies of the ruling classes.

struggle against the culprits responsible for this discrimination and profiting from it; it also means to under rate the degree of consciousness women have attained. Despite these differences, the common views that bring the feminists closer to other democratic currents in the women's movement explain its growing unity and make it possible to expect new advances in the consolidation and development of the joint struggle for the emancipation of women.

On the international scene there is a new alignment of strength in favour of socialism and peace. The movements for national liberation, independence, and the self-determination of nations have grown powerful. The potential of the peace movement is gaining strength. We are witnessing mounting actions by the working class and other sections of the people for the satisfaction of their vital needs for social progress, against war, imperialist exploitation, nuclear blackmail, aggression, and oppression. All this is bringing women into the struggle both for their own rights and for the destiny of humankind.

"The experience of all liberation movements has shown, "Lenin said, "that the success of the revolution depends on how much the women take part in it", These words have been and continue to be borne out by practice.

Set up in 1947, the Union of Argentinian Women has done much to draw working women not only into the discussion of the nation's major social problems but also into the efforts to resolve these problems. Despite the repressions and interdictions during the sinister years of the dictatorship (1979-1983), the Union's grassroots, much was done to protect human rights and find out what happened to patriots sent to prison or listed as 'missing'. The Political Women organisation was formed to bring more women into the actions against the tyranny. Together with the UAW it enlisted thousands of 'Argentinian women into the movement to safeguard national sovereignty and peace in the region and throughout the world during the conflict between Britain and Argentina.

The Union of Argentinian Women constantly stirs public opinion with its initiatives aimed at safeguarding the rights of mothers and children and winning equality for women in the family and the state. For its part, reaction preaches moderation in order to divert Argentinian women from public activity.

"The struggle for the emancipation of women", states the CC report to the CPA's Congress (November 1986), "is part of the struggle of the working class of the whole people. In order to achieve its objectives the women's movement should unite its destiny with that of the proletariat. There can be no emancipation for women without a revolution guaranteeing peace, happiness, progress, food, jobs and equality."

At this congress it was noted that "passiveness or indifference in regard to the problem of organising the women's movement, underrating this sector of our work or any attempt to rate this movement as the business of women themselves are incompatiable with membership of the party."

Having set the highly important target of forming a Front for National and Social Liberation, the Congress noted that Argentinian women should play a major role in it and that women Communists should do everything in their power to marshal the enormous energy potential of the mass of women workers.

This mass participation of women in the class struggle, the anti-imperialist movement, and the battle for peace is thus becoming a highlight of our epoch of social renewal. The women's movement is now a major socio-political force. It has never been so extensive as today, and has never before displayed such a powerful aspiration, for unity.

Formed in 1945 immediately after the Second World War, the Women's International Democratic Federation has united millions of women throughout the world. As one of the initiators of the International Year of Women (1975) and the Decade of Women (1975-1985) with the motto 'Equality', Progress and Peace' both of which were proclaimed by the United Nations Organisation. Our Federation gave a further demonstration of its unitary spirit, wide representation, influence, and dynamism.

The Women's Movement Today

Fanny Elderman, Argentina

THE following article was written by Com. Fanny Elderman, Vice-President of WIDF and the Communist Party Central Committee Political Commission member of Communist Party of Argentina, in the world Marxist Review March 1987 issue. The major part is being reproduced here for our readers. —(Editor)

March 8 was proclaimed International Women's Day on the initiative of Clara Zetkin (1857-1933) at a conference of women Socialists held in Copenhagen in 1910. The decades that have passed since then enable us to appreciate the epochal significance of this event for million of working women on all the continents. In capitalist states they are fighting for their rights. In countries that have won liberation from colonial bondage they are fighting for a new life. And where socialism has triumphed women are involved in all the affairs of state and society. March 8 is a festival of solidarity and friendship with the focus on democracy, national liberation, social emancipation, and peace.

Today, with the threat of a nuclear war overhanging our planet, with our civilization and species facing the menace of extinction, we can see the full significance of Clara Zetkin's great contribution to the world democratic women's movement, which is in the vanguard of the planet's peace force. At the turn of the century, she wrote: "peace can be ensured for the peoples of the world only when the slogan of 'War Against War' is supported also by a considerable majority of women motivated by a profound inner persuasion." These words acquire a special meaning in the present situation when imperialism is savagely attacking the aspiration of nations for peaceful coexistence, cooperation, solidarity, and friendship.

Clara Zetkin gave more than 40 years of her life to the fight to emancipate women, spreading the tenet of Marx and Engels that full emancipation can only be won for women when the working class fulfils its historic mission. The fact that the women's question became an inalienable part of the theory and practice of the proletariat's class battles is due largely to the efforts of this outstanding revolutionary. In our day Clara Zetkin's behests are a lodestar for the huge army of her followers, who have been able, even when capitalism was still supreme in the world to secure a substantial expansion of their civil rights and liberties.

The global magnitude of the liberation process that commenced under the impact of the Great October Revolution reaffirms that women have an active role to play in the epoch-making battle for far-reaching social changes, democracy, and peace.

In this context it is imperative to re-emphasise the need for fundamentally re-appraising all of capitalist society's norms and practices that in effect deny equality to women. In speaking of conformity between the letter of the law and reality it must be noted that here we are dealing with a complex process whose starting point is that all citizens men and women, should enjoy rights, August Bebel wrote that the unequal status and oppression of women "are rooted in the essence of bourgeois society", which "is unable to extirpate this evil and emancipate women".

Diverse aspects of the issue of the emancipation of women have been substantively elaborated by the classics of Marxism-Leninism, who pointed out that this issue is not one of drawing distinctions between the sexes but a social problem, whose solution is a pre-requisite for the renewal of society as a whole.

Our approach to women's problems differs from the attitude adopted by some sections of the feminist movement. We emphasise the close interconnection which links the exploitation and oppression of women with the nature of capitalist society. To blame men for the inequality from which women suffer means to confuse the causes of this inequality. To ignore the real problems that affect working women means to isolate the female masses from the

Wife Beating in US on Large Scale

UNITED States is most advanced capitalist country. It is reported the status of women is very high, they are equal and very much forward. The report appeared lately in the bourgeois press speak something quite different, and surprising. The National Crime Survery statistics are compiled twice in a year in USA interviewing about 60,000 households at randum in all the 50 states. The report defined domestic violence, as rape, robbery, assault committed against a married, divorced or separated women by a relative.

The data collected by the National Crime Survey notes that 2.1 million women were victims of domestic violence at least once a year from 1978 to 1982. And out of these, 32 per cent were abused again in the following six months! Forty-eight per cent women said they were abused but did not report to the police due to shame, or they considered it was a "private matter." And many felt if they reported they would be again assaulted by their husbands. Wife beating is a common thing now in America.

Another report appeared in Telegraph in the month of October 87 with the heading "15 per cent U.S. women beaten at home" tells much more about the unequal, degrading status of women in America. The report states "the single major cause of injury to American women is not due to car crashes, muggings or accidents at home or work, it is the beatings from their boyfriends or husbands." Our women in India would not have believed this story if it did not come from the horses mouth, from 'New York'. The domestic violence seriously affacted as per the report to 3.5 million women and their children last year according to different women's groups. It is common knowledge that in 15 per cent of America's 47 million couples, women are beaten and domestic violence occures at least once in one out of two couples.

"Most people don't think about battering as a health care issue but, the U.S. surgeon General has said it is the single most common cause of injury to women."

Ms Marcia Niemann, director of the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence. said "Women suffer bruises, broken bones and bites, but most women say the psychological damage — the fear, intimidation, the sexual abuse is worse than the battering that goes on with it...." An educated woman, economically independent, if beaten by her husband, will feel insulted, mentally disturbed no doubt. From the report, there were many research studies as to why men beat women and why women put up with it. The researchers have noted that in America the domestic violence "tends to escalate over time".

"It starts with him putting his fist through the door or deliberately hurting the family pet" says Ms. Niemann. Then the turn comes of the wife. "Violent shoving and then beating, kicking, punching, weapons and threats of death. Sometimes it is death". How serious and tragic fate the women in America are faced, one cannot even imagine.

Not only that, the most heneius thing as per the investigation, "it appears, pregnancy may trigger the first episode of violence and that pregnant women are more likely to be beaten..." The statement of the researchers is very clear as to why the women in America are beaten by their husbands. Ms. Niemann says "the belief that hurting pregnant women in our society is taboo is a myth". The surveys indicate "one out of every 12 pregnant women is beaten, shoved or harmed by her partner." Is it not a little surprising for our women in India that the women who demand abortion as their right and fight for it in USA also have to go through the insulting treatment given by their husbands? But this is the fate of the women everywhere under capitalism. In America, more women enter in the emergency rooms because of domestic beatings than for any other reason.

This is one side of the picture of women exploited in an advanced capitalist country. But the very same women are fighting today against this social system courageously, against the reactionery moves of President Reagon with regard to women's status, they are fighting for equal remuneration, for maternity benefit for working women, and for equal opportunities in employment. The women are in the

(Contd. on page 21)

By virtue of inumerable objective reasons, the aims advanced by the WIDF have still not been attained and remain on the agenda to this day. But we have reinforced the unity of the women's movement globally and drawn new sections of women into it. They are beginning to realise that the success of the struggle for social and economic equality cannot be ensured solely by legislation, that it depends to a large degree on the extent to which this struggle fuses with the actions for a radical restructuring of society on the basis of social justice.

The Federation's basic aims until the end of the present century are to help eliminate the nuclear war threat, prevent the militarisation of outer space, ensure a turn towards detents and peaceful co-operation among the nations, do away with racism and the atrocious apartheid regime, establish a new international economic order, and guarantee human rights. These aims are indicative of the maturity and all-embracing character of our programme.

Vietnamese Women Workers in Trade Unions and National Assembly

WOMEN workers and employees account for 46 per cent among nearly 3,700,000 workers and employees. In some branches this rate is higher. Public health: 81.1 per cent; Education: 72 per cent. Home trade: 67.5 per cent; Light industry: 65.49 per cent and Agriculture: 60 per cent. In the intellectual contingent women account for 10.6 per cent of the total doctors and candidates; they account for 36 per cent of the total number of workers having the university and college education standard and 26.6 per cent of the total number of university and college teachers.

Many women's collectives and units recorded great achievements and successes and outstanding achievements and they were awarded the noble titles: 17 socialist labour units, 6 armed forces' hero units, nearly 3,000 socialist labour units and teams. From 1981 to 1985 3,000 women workers and employees were given creative labour certificates and medals by the Vietnam Federation of Trade Unions.

Women unionists account for 85 per cent of the total number of women workers and employees. The rate of women trade union leadership at various levels is as follows: 25.27 per cent of the VNFTU secretariate members; 23 per cent of the local federations of trade union executive committee members, 27.5 per cent of the Presidents of the provinces' or cities trade union federations and 40 per cent of the executive committee members at grassroot levels.

Women deputies to National Assembly (VIIIth legislature): 88, the nmmber of women occupying leading position is considerably high. Ministers or vice-ministers: 14; general managing directors or deputy general managing doctors: 21; managing directors or deputy managing directors of various enterprises: 385, Presidents or vice-presidents of people's committees at all levels: 523.

Equal Employment Opportunity Law in Japan

Despite strong protests, the Equal Employment Opportunity Law came into effect of the lives of 15 million working women in Japan on April 1. On paper this law promotes equal opportunities between men and women for employment benefits. But much opposition has come from labour and women groups in that there are no penalties for those who flout the law. In short no company is forced to practise it if it chooses not to. Ironically the law in fact worsens the situation of working women in Japan as it has lifted all the restrictions on overtime work, work on holidays and night work for women.

In a country where male hierarchy dominates, were full time women workers are paid on the average 40 per cent less than their male counterparts, where 80 per cent of companies have only all male work categories, where only 21.6 per cent of local government employees are females and only 27 of the nation's 757 members of parliament are women, equality is unfortunately still a very far reaching goal.

working women.

Experience shows us that the defence of working women's rights and the advance of the struggle for the emancipation of the oppressed majority are tied-up with the struggle for the advance to PEOPLE POWER.

Workers' Unity

Women and Men in Thousands in Delhi Condemn 'Sati' in Rajasthan

IT was an unprecedented procession for Delhi. The huge procession of over 5000, among whom, school children, college girls and boys, women from middle class and working class, all walking under a huge Banner "Sati Virodhi Sangharsh Manch". SFI and DYFI, CITU and AITUC with their flags added glory to the procession. Boys and girls from various schools were in the front with a huge banner — "Let our mothers live" shouted slogans "Stop the Sati Pratha" "Save our mothers!" The procession was a disciplined one. It started from Mandi House, Ferozeshah Road turned to Barakhamba, Janpath and to Boat Club. The pendal could not accommodate all women and men. A Co-ordination Committee of various organisations viz, AIDWA, NFIW, Saheli, Ankur, Co-ordination Committee of 'Working Women' SFI and so many others was formed to prepare for the 9th November anti-Sati demonstration. Over 100 street corner meetings, in Old Delhi and New Delhi Colleges and Schools were held, propaganda was jointly done in a tempo arranged by the Committee. Money was collected from the masses.

All these things made the magnificient procession on 9th of November a grand success, which ultimately ended in a rally at Boat Club at 4 P.M. The meeting began with the suitable songs by Parceam. Anjali Deshpandhe, one of the Jt. Convenors of the Committee opened the meeting with a few words saying the huge mobilisation of men and women should at least bring the pressure on the Government to meet the demands of the manch. She welcomed the support from all the schools, colleges, trade unions and other organisations. Madhu Sethi (AIDWA Jt. Secretary) who specially came to attend the meeting from Jaipur was requested to preside representing the Joint Action Committee against Sati of Jaipur. She narrated as to how the incident of Rup Kanwar took place and Jaipur organisations tried to bring pressure on the Rajasthan Government not to allow at least the Chunari Mahostav. Under the plea of religion everything was allowed, no arrest was made of the culprits who murdered Rup Kanwar in the name of 'Sati'. She said though in Jaipur, Sikar and other places we could not do much we are happy to get the big support we are getting today.

Brinda Karat, the General Secretary of Delhi J.M.S. and Jt. Secretary of AIDWA then spoke in detail about the social evil and how did it arise. She said it was not only a women's issue but an issue for all. Even after 150 years, when Raja Ram Mohan Roy and others took up the case against Sati. These things continue to happen and Government could not stop burning women. She demanded the dismissal of the Rajasthan Govt, all India legislation for this, and the money collected by the Dharma Raksha Samithi should be confiscated and given for rehabilitation of widows. Vimala Faruqui (NFIW) expressed the incident as shame on the whole society and condemned the Rajiv Gandhi Government for not issuing any statement for 20 days. A representative from Saheli Kalpana Tandon explained the worse conditions under which women are continuing their lives. Sudesh, a Lecturer of IP college who had done research on Sati exposed the fraud of these operating in the name of religion. Shree Gope from AITUC and Puran Chand from CITU greeted the women for bringing out such a massive demonstration against Sati, while expressing their firm solidarity with the cause of women.

A deputation, consisting of Susheela Gopalan (AIDWA), Vimal Ranadive (CITU) Vimala Faruqui (NFIW), Anjali Deshpandhe (Jt. Convenor SVSM), Bulu Roy Chowdhuri (AITUC), with Com. Kanak Mukherjee, M.P. and Geetha Mukherjee, M.P. met the speaker with a memorandum. He promised to do whatever possible to bring the All India legislation against Sati. He also said, if I had power, I would have dismissed the Rajasthan Government!

Peoples Power for Women Emancipation

"THE working woman and peasant woman are oppressed by capital; but in addition to that, even the most democratic of bourgeois republics, they are firstly, in an inferior position because the law denies them equality with men, and secondly, and this is the most important, they are "in domestic slavery", they are domestic slaves", crashed by the most arduous, and most petty, most menial, and most stultifying work of the kitchen, and by isolated domestic, family economy in general."

(LENIN: International Women's day 1918)

The working women numbering 600 million or 35 per cent of the world labour force, are amongst those who are hardest hit by the consequencies of the capitalist crisis, and their living and working continue to deteriorate. The working women are the first to suffer evils of capitalism. Discrimination against women in social and political life, and in access to education, vocational training and culture is ever more apparent.

In South Africa for example, work for women is regarded as a privilege and not a human right.

SACTU, consistent with its policy of equal opportunities for all regardless of sex, have reflected on this question and drew attention to problems of working women and the need to involve them actively in trade union and political struggles. Experience has shown us that such participation contributes to the success of the struggles against the apartheid regime.

For us revolutionary trade unionists, the emancipation of women is a process that cannot be separated from the class struggle for peace. Women's struggle for emancipation is closely boud up with the struggle of all working people for National and Social emancipation from the Pretoria regime.

We base our argument on the fact that women do not constitute a united social stratum. Like men, they belong to different, including antagonistically opposite classes and social groups. Their emancipation signifies the emancipation of working women from capitalist oppression and exploitation, and on the other hand, an end to discrimination, inequality and injustice.

Women's struggle should not be confined to their specific problems, otherwise the broad women's movement would find itself on the sidelines of the struggle against every form of social oppression and exploitation. The more closely the struggle for satisfaction of their specific demands is tied in with the general struggle waged by the Congress Alliance to transform the apartheid regime to PEOPLES POWER, the greater are its chances for success.

The complete emancipation of women, a long and intricate process, can only take place with disappearance of a society based on private ownership of the means of production i.e. land, factories, banks, mass media etc. an end to a society where man is to man a wolf, with the establishment of a society where man is to man a brother, sister and a comrade, and with the release of human mind from the age old prejudice, that "the place of a woman is in the kitchen."

We regard the disappearance of the private means of production, that is, their nationalisation and socialisation as central to our argument, because women's oppression is rooted in the nature of capitalist society which is based on the private ownership of the means of production, and not to the so-called male dominated world as some women would like to make us believe.

To regard man as being guilty of the enslavement of women, to regard man as women's social enemy, to regard women as victims of the so-called power of man is nothing but approaching the question from non-class position, and at the end of the day passing a verdict of NOT GUILTY Messrs capitalists, and that is luxury we cannot afford as workers.

A question may be asked, why SACTU does not have a Women's Section? The answer is clear and straight forward SACTU always believes that, working women have to be present on the same level with men in Local and National Committees, and have to tackle the problems which are the same for all members of the union, but this does not mean that the working women should isolate themselves from other mass organisations. On the contrary, working women must be members of women's organisation along non-trade union

State Peace Convention Trichy on August 6th

Report from Tamilnadu

THE Peace Convention was atteded by 779 delegates from 18 districts. 4000 women from various districts participated in the rally despite of heavy rains. Three days preceding convention propaganda compaigns were held in all the districts. 90500 handbills were printed and distributed in 764 street cornor meetings. 149 women's meeting were held all over the state.

Com. Janaki Ammal President DWA and AIDWA Treasurer, Bibha Goswamy M.P. hoisted the flag of the Association and world peace respectively. Com. Papa Umanath, stressed the need of peace movement and role of women in it.

Com. Bibha and the USSR consulate Com. Molchanov, emphasised on the Moscow Peace Conference on women and peace. While placing the resolution before the delegates Com. Mythily Shivaraman stressed on the issues of war and peace, and its effects on the lives of women.

A slide show on anti-nuclear war got a good response from the audience. Songs and dances were staged on world peace, poster exhibition on war and peace was organised two days before the convention. A booklet 'should This Beautiful planet-Be Destroyed' brought out at time of convention, when 1000 copies were sold.

The convention was very well covered by papers and radio. The AIDWA Peace Convention was the first to organise in Tamilnadu State which has raised the status of the association.

Seminar: At Madras an effective seminar on prosecution on dowry death cases was organised on 10.10.87 which was attended by the I.G.P. (Crime), a woman S.I. of the dowry cell, city commissionery's office woman doctor in charge of Burns Unit of the Kilpaik Medical College and two lawyers. Com. Mythily emphasised on the experience in the last five years dealing with the cases and the suggestions to avoid delay and the ensure more effective prosecution of the guilty. The S.I. pointed the weaknesses of the anti-dowry law. The Doctor complained that neither the victim nor her relatives, speak the truth. The seminar got good converage in papers.

Drought Relief Anti Price Agitation: Demonstrations, dharnas were organised against the irregularities in the working of fair price shops, restoration of original supply of rice and supply of more commodities for Divali and for proper drought relief throughout the state on 5th of October.

Separate memorandum emphasising most backward potrayal of women on the T.V. Demanding Advisory Committee consisting representatives from women's organisations be formed to examine the potrayal of women in T.V. programmes, and also demanded the censorship guidelines regarding potrayal of women in movies issued in 1985 be applied to T.P. plays and movies as well.

45,000 Women courted Arrest

A solidarity demonstration in support of the Government College Teachers Association to protest the arbitrary and vindictive transfers of nearly 10,000 teachers for their heroic role in the teacher's struggle half year ago. The AIDWA supported the week long picketing in the teacher's struggle half year ago. The AIDWA supported the week long picketing in September by Kisan Sabha, 45,000 women courted arrest. Only agitators from south Arcot district were detained in jail for 15 days while other were released. Com. Shajadi (Vice President) and Lakshmi State Committee member were released after a week. AIDWA demanded the following in the poster:

1. A sum of Rs. 200 to be given as maternity benefit to women from workers.
2. Mobile creaches for their children. The state committee criticised the Kisan Sabha for not including these demands in their charter of demands.

Messages of demanding the release of Tereza Ramashomola by South Africa regime was sent to the U.N.O. A resolution on the brutal murder of Bal Kumari Sharma the

(*Contd. on page 14*)

Without Comments

Union Labour Minister Assures — Computerisation will not Affect jobs:

WHILE inaugurating an Electronic Data Processing (EDP) Cell in the office of the Regional Provident Fund Commissioner, Delhi on the 12th May, 1987, the Union Labour Minister assured that computerisation will not affect employment prospects for job involving manual work. The Minister further said that since the office of the Central Provident Fund Commissioner was the biggest social security organisation in the world, it was imperative that work should be computerised here to improve the efficiency and skill of employees.

Minimum Wages—not to be fixed below Rs. 11/-per Day — Union Labour Minister

While concluding the 36th Session of the Labour Minister's Conference in New Delhi on the 21st May, 1987, the Union Labour Minister announced that the State Governments have agreed that the minimum wages fixed under the Minimum Wages Act should bear a relation to the concept of the "Poverty Line" and should not be fixed below Rs. 11 per day. It was also agreed that the minimum wages. particularly, in respect of agricultural employment under the Minimum Wages Act, will be immediately reviewed and new rates of minimum wages notified within six months wherever required.

Government's Policies On child Labour

Among the most important welfare oriented initiatives launched during the current year is the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Bill, 1986 which seeks to regulate the working conditions of children in non-hazardous employments. The Bill also empowers the appropriate Government to make rules for health and safety of childern and also lays down the enhanced penalties for violation of the prohibitory and regulatory provisions of the law. The Act was passed by the Parliament and received the assent of the President on the 23rd December, 1986.

Women's Cells to Assist Voluntary Organisation

To Strengthen women workers in the field, improve their working conditions and increase their employment potential, the Women Cell in the Ministry of Labour also gives financial assistance to voluntary organisations to take up action oriented projects. Four such projects have been founded during the year 1986-87. These are (a) Income generating activities for women in the districts of Banqura/Purulia/ Midnapur, West Bengal, (b) 'Privartan Programmes for the welfare of poor women in Mehrauli', New Delhi; (c) Setting up of Mahila Haat for poor women and (d) Setting up training camps for Bidi workers, study of bidi workers of Gujarat and study of contract labour in textile mills of Ahmedabad.

Total Work Seekers

The total number of work-seekers on the Live Register of the Employment Exchange showed a rise of 14.7 per cent from 262.70 lakhs at the end of the 1985 to 301.31 lakhs at the end of 1986. The total number of placements effected during 1986 was 3.51 laks.

Education Applicants: The number of the educated work-seekers (i.e. Matriculates and above) on the Live Register of Employment Exchanges continued to show a rising trend. It was 150.88 lakhs at the end of June, 1986 as against 139.76 lakhs at the end of 1985.

The Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes: The number of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Triber job-seekers on the Live Register at the end of June, 1986 was 41.31 lakhs as against 38 32 lakhs at the end of 1985. The number of placements effected in case of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Castes and the Tribes applicants was 43 thousand during the first half of 1986.

Women Job-Seekers: The number of the women job-seekers increased from 44.48 lakhs at the end of 1985 to 50.98 lakhs at the end of 1986 showing a rise of 14.6 per cent. During the year about 51 thousand women job-seekers were placed in employment.

(*Contd. from page 18*)

forefront of the peace movement, despite the threats of Reagan to have Nuclear war. It is true it requires proletarian Revolution to change the status of women under capitalism. And even after the revolution, women have to continue to fight along with their brothers to bring the actual equality with men into practice. This once again shows the correctness of what great Lenin has said in the October Revolution about the status of women and how it can be equal only under socialism!

visions like Maternity benefit etc. which are only on paper, she said employers terminate their services before they fulfil the condition of 160 days. Now the Central Govt. has decided to stop paying the benefit after two children.

A plantation worker from Iddukki Dist. told the delegates' session that when wages were increased the task also increased in plantation. Maternity is denied for many women.

Kamalamma from Palghat appealed the leadership to examine the work among women and whether it was satisfactory. We must try to instal the trade union consciousness among them. She said CITU as a revolutionary trade union, should recognise women as an important part of it.

Jainaba from Malappuram said though the call was given to discuss the problems of working women there was still hesitation. This shows we are still influenced by the feudal ideologies. If CITU can not organise women, who else can do?

K.V. Raza from Trichur talked about women working for 14 hours altogether. Many women are working in garment industry or as vegetable vendors. We must take up their problems.

Radha, a farm labourer spoke and criticise about the documents circulated in English. Th CITU should organise the women from the class. Many Tamil women are employed i industries and CITU has to organise then Middle class women discuss about the ma domination, but they forget that they are th product of the present feudal set up.

Suguna from Kottayam spoke about th private press where women are employed o large number and there is no legislation, an no minimum wage is paid. A representativ from hospital employees spoke about the co ordination of work among them.

Leela from Calicut pointed out the wors conditions faced by women workers in Coi industry which is facing crisis now. The stoc is piling up, and only 25 per cent of th workers get partial employment. The Govt has promissed to introduce a bill in the las Assembly for providing welfare fund an pension.

K.M. Mathai from Calicut and many othe comrades from different districts spoke enligh tening the discussion. The session on workin women was lively and helped the leadership t understand better the problems and responsibi lity to guide the working women, and streng then the Kerala CITU.

(*from page 2*)

and BJP on this issue came out sharply in the press, especially the wing of Janata in Rajasthan demanding resignation of the President J.Kalvi. Mrs. Sindiya one of the leaders of BJP expressed her opinion that if Sati is done voluntarily it should be respected! The women leaders in Janata and socialist party like Pramila Dandavate and Mirnal Gore demanded resignations of Kalvi from Janata Party and others who glorified Sati.

In contrast the Left Parties and its mass orgamanisation including CPM and CPI, SFI and DYFI, CITU Janawadi Lokhak Sangh and others have come out sharply against such revivalism in the name of religion. The West Bengal, Assembly passed an unanimous resolution condemning 'Sati' while Rajasthan Congress Govt. dissolved the Assembly to save its face after passing of the ordinance banning the Sati. The Minister of Information and Cultural Affairs of West Bengal while speaking in the Assembly rightly said "acts of Sati and Super computer do not go hand in hand"! Instead of proceeding to 21st century, we are movin back to 17th century that was the publi opinion expressed by democratic minde people. The discussions in the Hindi Press o this question shows an ideological struggle i going on the Hindi belt on this question.

Women's organisations, including AIW and many others have condemned Stai an have launehed Compaign against it. AIDW units in states sent telegrammes to the Prim Minister, held demonstrations, burnt the effig of Haridev Joshi, Chief Minister of Rajasthan Gheraoed Jansatta office which supported Sat More than 2000 women, mostly belonging t Congress, demonstrated in Jaipur on 5th o Oct. describing Sati as 'murder' and "Slur o humanity". The rights of women under th present bourgeois feudal regime are scuttle under the name of religion.

Men and women must come forward to tak up the challenge to save our country from suc obscurantists, degenerated, ideas propped u by religious leaders. 'Roop Kanwar' should b the last victim of such moral degeneration!

If CITU cannot Organise Working Women, who else can do? CITU Holds Special Session

THE Kerala State CITU conference was held from 16th to 18th October, 1987. About 600 delegates including 72 women attended the conference. One of the special feature of the conference was a 3 hours discussion on working women and their problems. A resolution on their demands and their participation in trade unions was moved by Com. A. Nazimunnissa and more than 13 women from different states and industries and unions spoke on the resolution and what the CITU should do to help the movement of the working women so that they can join in the mainstream of working class struggle.

While moving the resolution Nazimunnissa said "The working women have many problems which need to be explained to them also, so they can be organised under their unions. It is heartening that the CITU has taken up the issues which is reflected in the General Secretry's report. Our State Co-ordination Committee of working women was formed in 1979 with the help of CITU. While discussing the problem of unemployment in toto, a major section of women becoming unemployed due to mechanisation, computesation and so on has to be considered. A good section of it are from traditional industries. Even where minimum wages have been fixed women workers are deprived of the same. Those women workers, who should be a part of organised work force are deprived of all benefit because now the industry has been closed. Maternity benefit and provision of creche exist only on paper.

"The CITU has taken up the problem of unemployment and women are to be involved in this struggle along with their demands of equal wage and implementation of legislations. So far we are not able to organise large sections of women on these issues.

"The NGO's, teachers, P&T, etc. have their women's wings and it is quite natural the middle class women are taking more interest in organising women in their unions."

While speaking about the co-ordination committee of working women, Nazimunissa said "this wae discussed many times, but we failed to implement the plans chalked out. The CITU should consider that working women are a part of our organisation and take interest to see that they join into the mainstream of trade union movement. Here, we have not yet succeedcd to bring them in the common struggle of the working class."

She welcomed the change in the attitude of the CITU when 75 women comrades out of 600 or so are attending. The study conducted by the CITU it was found that even where major section of women are emploped in the industry number of unionised women are much less. We have to organise them, on their demands, so that their trade union consciousness would be elevated and they would activey participate in the movement."

While mentioning about the trade union membership, she said in 1985 out of nearly 3 lakhs membership of CITU, women workers numbered 79,000 Therefore, there is a tremendous scope to increase the membership of women workers if we work seriously. District Committees have to be formed all over the state to work with the help of working women in different middle class unions".

Com. Ratnamma from Coir workers pointed out that in construction women get Rs. 25 while men Rs. 36/- The same thing can be said about the agricultural workers. Conscious efforts are to be made to organise women in CITU. The wrong impression of so called "weaker sex" about women should be corrected, and they should be brought out in the democratic and revolutionary movement, to bring the basic changes in the society".

The representative from Kasargode pointed out that there should be proper understanding among the couple, then only it becomes easy for women to work. Our own comrades hesitate to allow their sisters or wives to come forward.

Girija Potty from Trivandrum spoke about the 70th Anniversary of Russian revolution and the role of women played in it, as working women. After mentioning about various pro-