

ALU - WOMEN'S STUDIES BULLETIN



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Editorial Desk

By maintaining the respect and interest of its readers, this bulletin aspires ultimately set forth to give readers a clear idea of the status of women in India and also, the Convention of Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Discrimination against women is the major cause of gender inequality. The materialization of these problems still depends largely upon the attitudinal changes in society.

Women equality is not universal

The modern women are inclined towards the social issues, and trying hard to improve the social status of women at large. Many women actively supported and participated in the nationalist movement and secured eminent positions and offices in administration and public life in free India. Traditionally Indian women exist because of the family and for the family. Previously, men-folk used to discourage women from leaving their households for attending social functions. Now the spread of education, especially that of women, and with that the changing social attitudes of educated women have changed the order.

But Women's equality in terms of education, employment, and power is still an individual rather than an universal achievement. The majority of our women are still content to accept an inferior status. This is by and large due to the fact that, although legally women have equal rights with men, there are not enough jobs for women and working women are not

adequately protected from exploitation. Women are generally not aware of the provisions related to the improvement of their own position. Even if they know about some of the provisions related to their rights of succession, marriage, or family, they do not desire to invoke them. Traditional dominance of the authority of the male parents, husband, and other elder members of the family often restricts the enjoyment of their legal rights by the women.

Therefore, educated women are just on the threshold of transition from tradition to modernity. The women themselves desire that their status and position in society should rise higher. Though a proper climate for such a change is still wanting, yet there have been many structural and statutory innovations for the improvement of their position. The traditional status and role sets of women are breaking up and new role-sets based on achievement, independence and equality are gradually coming up.

Centre for Women's Development Studies

The Centre for Women's Development Studies (CWDS) was established on 19th April 1980, in the middle of the International Women's Decade, by a group of men and women, who were involved in the preparation of the first ever comprehensive government report on the 'Status of Women in India' entitled 'Towards Equality' (Report of the Committee on the Status of Women in India, (CSWI), Government of India) and who were later associated with the Women's Studies Programme of the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR). The Advisory Committee on Women's Studies of the ICSSR recommended the need for an autonomous institute to build on the knowledge already generated, but with a wider mandate and resources to expand its activities in research and action. The recommendation was accepted by the ICSSR, and communicated to the Women's Bureau of the Ministry of Social Welfare, Government of India. A few months later, under the leadership of late Prof. J.P. Naik, the CWDS was registered under the Societies' Registration Act, 1860 in New Delhi and started functioning since May 1980, with a small financial grant from the Vikram Sarabhai Foundation, under the Chairpersonship of Dr. Phulrenu Guha and Dr. Vina Mazumdar as the Director. In 1984-85, on the recommendation of a visiting committee appointed by the Indian Council of Social Science Research, CWDS began to receive an annual maintenance grant from the ICSSR and became recognised as one of the Research Institutes supported by ICSSR.

The Women Studies and Development Centre (WSDC) established in 1987, WSDC became an integral part of the University of Delhi in 1998 and is now covered by the maintenance grant of the University. WSDC receives direct support from the University Grants Commission which requires it to act as 'nodal' agency for the colleges and for the region. The responsibilities extend to evolve projects that provide leadership in identifying key areas in women's studies research and curriculum, and in actively collaborating with organizations serving development goals for women. It is believed that gender sensitization creates the necessary base for balanced perspectives on social construction, the WSDC initiates and implements appropriate research, curriculum development, teaching, advocacy and action. Using its location on campus to advantage, the WSDC programmes strive to engage the academic community in current issues relating to women from every strata of society. As part of a network, it seeks to strengthen individual and institutional efforts that enable women's empowerment.

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) is an international treaty adopted in 1979 by the United Nations General Assembly. Described as an international bill of rights for women, it was instituted on 3 September 1981 and has been ratified by 189 States. CEDAW consists of a preamble and 30 articles, it defines what constitutes discrimination against women and sets up an agenda for national action to end such discrimination. The Convention defines discrimination against women as "...any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedom in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field".

The Convention has a similar format to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, "both with regard to the scope of its substantive obligations and its international monitoring mechanisms." The Convention is structured in six parts with 30 articles total.

Part I (Articles 1-6) focuses on non-discrimination, sex stereotypes, and sex trafficking.

Part II (Articles 7-9) outlines women's rights in the public sphere with an emphasis on political life, representation, and rights to nationality.

Part III (Articles 10-14) describes the economic and social rights of women, particularly focusing on education, employment, and health. Part III also includes special protections for rural women and the problems they face.

Part IV (Article 15 and 16) outlines women's right to equality in marriage and family life along with the right to equality before the law.

Part V (Articles 17-22) establishes the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women as well as the states parties' reporting procedure.

Part VI (Articles 23-30) describes the effects of the Convention on other treaties, the commitment of the states parties and the administration of the Convention.

WOMEN'S RIGHTS ACTIVISTS

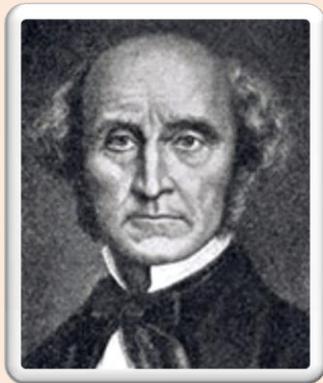
Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797)



Mary Wollstonecraft wrote the most significant book in the early feminist movement. Her tract “*A Vindication of the Rights of Women*” laid down a clear moral and practical basis for extending human and political rights to women. Mary Wollstonecraft was a true pioneer in the struggle for female.

Margaret Fuller (1810 – 1850)

Margaret Fuller was an American women's rights advocate, associated with the Transcendentalist movement. Her book *Women in the Nineteenth Century* was influential in changing perceptions about men and women, and was one of the most important early Feminist works. She argued for equality and women being more self-dependent and less dependent on men.



J.S.Mill (1806-1873) John Stuart Mill was a leading liberal philosopher of the Nineteenth Century. He argued for universal suffrage (extending the vote to women and all classes of people) His pamphlet *The Subjection of Women* (1861) was important for raising the issue of votes for women.

GLIMPSES OF OCTOBER

International Day of Non-Violence

"Non-violence is the greatest force at the disposal of mankind. It is mightier than the mightiest weapon of destruction devised by the ingenuity of man"

- Mahatma Gandhi



The International Day of Non-Violence is marked on 2 October, the birthday of Mahatma Gandhi, leader of the Indian independence movement and pioneer of the philosophy and strategy of non-violence. According to United Nations General Assembly resolution of 15 June 2007, which established the commemoration, the International Day is an occasion to "disseminate the message of non-violence, including through education and public awareness". The resolution reaffirms "the universal relevance of the principle of non-violence" and the desire "to secure a culture of peace, tolerance, understanding and non-violence".

International Day of Girl Child

International Day of the Girl Child is an international observance day declared by the United Nations. The International Day of Girl Child is globally observed every year on October 11. It was first celebrated in 2012.

The observation supports more opportunity for girls and increases awareness of gender inequality faced by girls worldwide based upon their gender. This inequality includes areas such as right to education/access to education, nutrition, legal rights, medical care, and protection from discrimination, violence against women and child marriage.

Every year, there is a theme associated with the day, and the events held in this regard.

- 2012 – Ending Child Marriage
- 2013 – Innovating for Girls' Education
- 2014 – Empowering Adolescent Girls: Ending the Cycle of Violence
- 2015 – The Power of Adolescent Girls: Vision for 2030
- 2016 – Girls' Progress = Goals' Progress: What Counter for Girls

World Food Day

World Food Day is celebrated every year around the world on 16 October in honour of the date of the founding of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in 1945. World Food Day is a day of action against hunger. The day is celebrated widely by many other organizations concerned with food security, including the World Food

Programme and the International Fund for Agricultural Development. *The right to food is a basic human right.* In a world of plenty, 805 million people, one in nine worldwide, live with chronic hunger.

Since 1981, World Food Day has adopted a different theme each year in order to highlight areas needed for action and provide a common focus. Most of the themes revolve around agriculture because only investment in agriculture together with support for education and health will turn the situation. Theme of the World Food Day from 2011:

- 2011: Food prices – from crisis to stability
- 2012: Agricultural cooperatives – key to feeding the world
- 2013: Sustainable Food System for Food Security and Nutrition
- 2014: Family Farming: “Feeding the world, caring for the earth”
- 2015: “Social Protection and Agriculture: Breaking the Cycle of Rural Poverty”
- 2016: Climate change: “Climate is changing. Food and agriculture must too”

UN Sustainable Development Summit

At the UN Sustainable Development Summit in September 2015, 193 countries pledged to end hunger in the next 15 years. We have 15 years to end hunger for every child, woman and man around the world. Reaching it will save countless lives and build brighter futures for us all.

8 Reasons Why Zero Hunger Changes the World

- 1) Zero hunger could save the lives of **3.1 million children a year**
- 2) Well – nourished mothers have **healthier babies** with stronger immune systems
- 3) Ending child under nutrition could increase a developing country’s **GDP by 16.5 percent**
- 4) A dollar invested in hunger prevention could return **between \$15 and \$139 in benefits**
- 5) Proper nutrition early in life could mean **46 percent more in lifetime earnings**
- 6) Elimination iron deficiency in a population could boost workplace productivity by 20 percent
- 7) Ending nutrition-related child mortality could **increase a workforce by 9.4 percent**
- 8) Zero hunger can help build a **safer, more prosperous world** for everyone

Facts of hunger

- ❖ 60% of the hungry in the world are women.
- ❖ Almost 5 million children under the age of 5 die of malnutrition-related causes every year.
- ❖ 4 in 10 children in poor countries are malnourished damaging their bodies and brains

ENVIRONMENTALISTS

Dr.Vandana Shiva

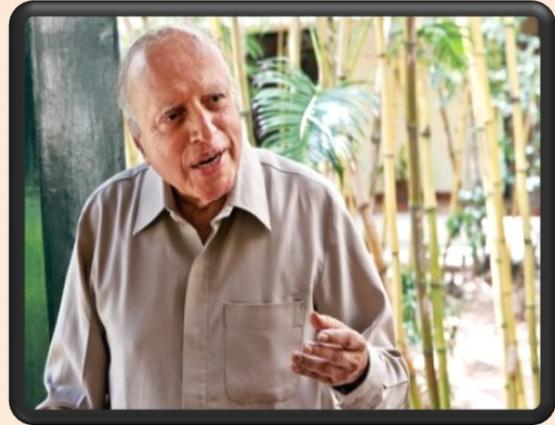
Dr.Vandana Shiva trained as Physicist at the University of Punjab, and completed her Ph.D. on the 'Hidden Variables and Non-locality in Quantum Theory' from the University of Western Ontario, Canada. She later shifted to inter-disciplinary research in science, technology and environmental policy, which she carried out at the Indian Institute of Science and



the Indian Institute of Management in Bangalore, India. Dr.Shiva's contributions to gender issues are nationally and internationally recognised. Her book *Staying Alive* dramatically shifts popular perceptions of Third World women. She founded the gender unit at the International Centre for Mountain Development (ICIMOD) in Katmandu, and was a founding Board Member of the Women Environment and Development Organization (WEDO). Dr.Shiva has also initiated Diverse Women for Diversity, an international movement of women working for food and agriculture. Dr. Shiva is on the National Board of Organic Standards of India. Dr Shiva was appointed to the advisory board of the National Controller General of Accounts from 2013 to 2015. She also works with the state governments of Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar and Uttaranchal for the promotion of organic farming. She has been invited by the Planning Commission to be a member of the expert group on environment, the expert group on nutrition, and the expert group on the voluntary sector. Internationally, Dr. Shiva serves on Prince Charles's expert group on Sustainable Agriculture and she is a member of President Zapatero's Scientific Committee in Spain. Dr. Shiva advises governments worldwide, and is currently working with the Government of Bhutan to make Bhutan 100% organic. She is also working with the Governments of Tuscany and Rome to create a hopeful and livable future for young people in these times of crises.

M.S.Swaminathan

Mankombu Sambasivan Swaminathan (born 7 August 1925) is an Indian geneticist and international administrator, renowned for his leading role in India's Green revolution a program under which high-yield varieties of wheat and rice seedlings were planted in the fields of poor farmers. Swaminathan is known as "Indian Father of Green Revolution" for his



fields of poor farmers. Swaminathan is known as "Indian Father of Green Revolution" for his leadership and success in introducing and further developing high-yielding varieties of wheat in India. He is the founder and chairman of the MS.Swaminathan Research Foundation. Swaminathan is an advocate of moving India to sustainable development, especially using environmentally sustainable agriculture, sustainable food security and the preservation of biodiversity, which he calls an "evergreen revolution". In 1999, Time magazine placed him in the 'Time 20' list of most influential Asian people of the 20th Century.

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