



A REPORT
OF
THE XITH CAPACITY BUILDING COURSE
ON
GENDER, PEACE & SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT

*Learning
&
Growing
Together*



SANGAT

*Learning
&
Growing Together*

*A Report of
The XIth Feminist Capacity Building Course
On Gender, Peace and Sustainable Development*

*Written & Compiled by:
Kamla Bhasin & Juhí Jain*

**Kathmandu, Nepal
September 18 to October 15, 2006**

Foreword

A leader of an indigenous community was once asked what the three most important things in life were. She thought for a moment and said-the first most important thing in life is PEOPLE. The second most important thing is...PEOPLE and the third most important thing in life is ALSO PEOPLE.

We believe that changing the world requires us to have faith in the commitment, and capacities of people. In order to make this change a reality we have to work towards strengthening people-their creativity, their potential and their knowledge base.

We also recognise that an important factor responsible for making organizations, their policies and programmes gender sensitive, is the presence within the organizations of strong women with a feminist consciousness. This is why we have been working consistently to help build the capacities of women working with NGOs, grassroots and women's organizations; professional women, women in media, UN agencies, other civil society organizations etc. by helping them develop a clear and collective understanding of gender and development, enhancing their feminist consciousness and creating a strong base of human values.

We bring you the report of another such effort which was a four week international course held in Nepal, jointly organized by SANGAT and Shtriu Shakti, Kathmandu. The course was sponsored by EED and MISEREOR Germany. OXFAM Nepal, CIDA and

OXFAM, Sri Lanka Action Aid and Sungi Development Foundation, Pakistan, Danchurch Aid ,India also helped by providing funds to some participants for travel and stay.

There were many others who contributed to this course- by identifying participants, acting as resource persons, coming to the course as participants and observers, joining us in our social gatherings, and by appreciating what we were doing. We celebrate this solidarity which reaffirms our mutual desire to create sustainable livelihoods and lives in South Asia. We are full of admiration for the young team of Shtrii Shakti, namely Ramita Ranjit and Prativa Shrestha and the team of Godavari Resort who supported the course with amazing efficiency and affection.

As you flip through the pages of this report, you will feel the joy and energy of this process of collective learning. These feelings helped the participants to learn and clarify a large number of concepts and issues, to develop a common understanding, to create and strengthen bonds of friendship, solidarity and to deepen their commitment to equality, democracy, ecological balance, peace and human values.

All of us in SANGAT are committed to carry forward these educational and networking activities in South Asia and elsewhere and to create a large cadre of women and men feminist activists. We consider it an honour to be part of these efforts for the creation of a peaceful, harmonious, democratic, gender just and green South Asia.

Kamla Bhasin & Juhi Jain

December 2006



*Women like us
Chosen to be fighters by fate
Against the injustice around.
Hair assembled together
To build our capacities and experiences
To finely chisel ourselves
With concepts and thoughts
Building and making ourselves strong
To get back and fight
Lead together the war against injustice and wrong
That is in us and in society
So that this world becomes an Eden Garden
For our generations to come!*

Priya Raju, a participant from India

Introduction & Background

We are happy to share with you another story of a four week long South Asian Course and an intensive collective learning process held outside Kathmandu from September 18 to October 15, 2006.

The participants were from some of the finest, committed, innovative feminist groups, national and international NGOs, women's studies centers, media organizations, etc. Thirty women came primarily as learners, ten women as resource persons and five participated as observers in some of the sessions.

Even as we recall the story, we are aware that our words cannot capture the various dimensions of the course. The intensity of personal sharing, the pain of personal narration, the depths of discussions, the spontaneity of bursting into singing and dancing, the joy of collective living and learning and making friends are some of the most treasured moments of this collective learning process.

In addition, the participants interacted with a large number of Nepali development workers, lawyers, journalists, peace activists and women studies teachers at the social gatherings organized during the course and a series of events organized by Nepali women's organizations on the International Day of Peace on September 21, 2006.

This was the eleventh such course organized by Kamla Bhasin, earlier through the FAO-NGO South Asia Programme and now by SANGAT in collaboration with NGO partners. The partners in this exciting venture were Shtrii Shakti and WOREC Nepal, ROZAN and Sungi Development Foundation Pakistan, Women and Media Collective, CIDA and OXFAM Sri Lanka.

What We Try & What We Achieve

These courses are organized to build the capacities of activists working with women's organizations, NGOs, government organizations, UN agencies, women's studies centres, media, women policy makers, planners, trainers, teachers, etc. The attempt is to improve the understanding, analytical skills, conceptual clarity; to make these women feel and become stronger, more capable and to strengthen their resolve to work for equality, peace and development.

The attempt at these courses is also to create/develop a feminist consciousness which would challenge patriarchal notions, knowledge systems, values, institutions; which would look at the world through women's eyes; which would refuse to accept man as the subject and woman as the "other".

We try to show the connections between thinking and social action for desirable change, between theory and practice. We try to make it clear that feminist scholarship is not for the sake of scholarship, it is essentially for change, for transformation. In fact, the work of almost all the resource women who come to these courses is an example of this connection between thinking and committed action, between academic work and women's movement. Many feminist scholars have worked on issues thrown up by the women's movement, be it women's reproduction or the origin of patriarchy in South Asia or the impact of SAP on working class women. The outcome of this work is in turn fed back into the movement, to help us clarify issues, to make strategies etc.

Most of the participants who come to these courses are not exposed to women's studies or feminist scholarship. Many of them have not begun to see that most knowledge has sexist biases, it is patriarchal, women have had little role in creating formal knowledge and consequently women's experiences and perspectives are missing. They begin to understand that most history is HIS-STORY or history of men (albeit upper class).

They start examining areas of their lives critically which they had not questioned so openly earlier; most significantly their families, religious/ cultural customs and practices and even their own attitudes. As development workers they had been looking only at women's health, credit, income generating activities etc. in isolation. They had seen women's "backwardness" but hadn't really asked why; hadn't

looked at patriarchy as a system and caste men), women who constitute half of humanity, are missing in HISTORY.

Slowly, as the days pass and as they understand patriarchy and gender, participants start naming patriarchal biases. One can see a difference in the way they begin to describe social phenomenon and their own experiences.

Seeing Connections, Recognizing Patterns

The course encourages the participants also to see the connections between different institutions-family, religion, law, markets, state and between different hierarchical systems like class, caste, race, imperialism, and patriarchy.

We try systematically to move away from narrow categorization and specializations, which are unable to see things in their totality, which end-up compartmentalizing the lives of women and men. Even as development workers, many of us look at women and their lives in parts, some only look at women and credit, others look at women's health, yet others look at women and politics. We challenge these fragmented ways of looking and working with people. Almost all resource persons challenge androcentric (male centered) systems of knowledge, and androcentric institutions. Development is also analyzed critically from the perspective of the (income) poor (especially women) and from the perspective of Nature and the South.

The methodology used in the course is to begin with the personal experiences and then move on to understand social systems, to begin with the concrete and move on to concepts. The fragments of individual presentations slowly form into patterns. For many participants it is very liberating to find out that what they thought were their individual problems, are actually social phenomena.

In a way, for most of the participants these courses are like consciousness raising groups of the women's movement, where women talk about their lives, pains, dilemmas, frustrations in an atmosphere of support, understanding, and affirmation. In these courses we develop a larger understanding of being a woman in our society, look at all the institutions which continue to create and

recreate the definitions of women and men, which define our status, position, roles, behavior. Through the conceptual tools made available, we start looking at social phenomena dispassionately.

Lifting the rug off our unspoken lives and emotions leads to a lot of cleansing. The fresh air and sun of our gaze and our analysis, reduces the power of patriarchy; it makes the insects hiding under the rug crawl, wriggle and run away. Initially when the insects of unquestioned patterns start crawling there is a lot of unease, disease, and discomfort. We try to dodge direct questioning, painful challenging. But slowly we get the courage to pose difficult questions, to look at our own subordination, our own patriarchal values that we have unconsciously or consciously internalized. Some of us get the courage to openly talk about our lives, others take the questions along and we might answer them at some later date. But none of us go back the same.



Objectives, Location, Participants & Resource Persons

Making Friends, Creating Solidarity

Four weeks of living together, of sharing our feelings and experiences, of exploring ideas, of singing and dancing together, yoga and massaging turns a disparate group of individuals into a community, an extended family. Much love and affection is released. There may also of course be some tensions, misunderstandings, hurt feelings but the dominant feeling is that of mutual understanding, caring – a feeling of tremendous well being. There is a feeling of healing, a sense of inner greening. Participants often said how much better, wholesome, peaceful and encouraged they were feeling during the course. “I am glad I have my own space and time here,” “I am glad I am being made to look after my body” were some of the responses.

After a few days of being together, when the resource persons leave, many eyes are moist. Goodbyes and hugs are endless. At the end of the workshop no one feels ashamed to cry, to express her sorrow or to burst out laughing. The magic of affection, giving and spontaneity works wonders and everyone feels at home.

Because of the bonds of understanding and affection created, these courses become the best way to create solidarity and networks at the South Asian level. The non-competitive, supportive atmosphere makes us see through false notions of nationalities. Instead of emphasizing our nationalities we start calling ourselves “Regionals” of South Asia. What begin as personal friendships often turn into political solidarity and commitment for a dream of peaceful and just South Asia.

In themselves these are small beginnings, small and insignificant steps, but doesn't the longest journey begin with small steps? For us these courses are steps towards strengthening and building the capacity of women development workers, researchers, teachers and their organizations working for equality, development and peace.

Although a lot of work has been done to sensitize programme implementers and development workers

on gender issues, much remains to be done. Women's participation in decision-making (at all levels) in both government agencies and NGOs, is still marginal, opportunities for training and jobs are still limited and dominant values and behavior patterns are still very patriarchal. There is a dearth of opportunities for decision-makers, workers and activists to build their knowledge and sharpen their analytical skills on gender issues. These eleven courses have by now helped over 450 women to develop a socialist-feminist understanding and perspective and also create strong friendships across borders.

Bridging the Gap between Theory & Practice

Although terms like action research, participatory research and praxis are frequently used in connection with social movements in South Asia, in reality there is still a tremendous distance between theory and practice, action and research, activists and researchers and between being, doing and thinking. There are hundreds of activists and committed development workers who seldom have the support, time or space to read and reflect on where they are going. On the other hand, there are an equal number of academics, researchers and theoreticians who have the map of where to go, but seldom undertake the journey.

Activists often lack the time to read, study or analyze. Most of them have little or no background or training in analytical and critical reading and thinking, and even less encouragement to move in this direction. They are often intimidated by the evolving theories and analyses, which are couched in unfamiliar language. Their alienation from theory might at times play itself out as disdain or contempt for theoretical work. Activists working towards changing the situation of women are seldom armed with a rigorous analysis of the causes of women's subordination and their suppression by society. And yet, without such an analysis, we cannot hope to find solutions to the problems.

On the other hand, there are the 'thinkers' - academics, researchers, and theoreticians, who write and investigate women's issues and social change without necessarily directly experiencing the reality. Their theories and concepts are refined and elaborated through debate and discussions within their own circles, but are seldom shared with activists and development practitioners. Thus, on many occasions, research and theory move in parallel trajectories, without really meeting, interacting or

enriching each other.

That the need for convergence exists on both sides has been brought home in a series of South Asian and national courses/workshops on theoretical and conceptual issues related to women and development organized by Kamla Bhasin when she was with the FAO-NGO South Asia Programme between 1983 and 2002. These workshops have brought together women development workers, trainers in development organizations, academics, media women etc. and have demonstrated that people working in the field *can* be interested in study and reflection, if they are given the opportunity and support for it. They have also proved that there are some academics who see their work flowing from and connected to action and who can articulate concepts and ideas in such a way and in a language that is comprehensible and non-intimidating to activists.

It was also obvious that in order to ensure development programmes facilitate change in the situation of women, the main input has to be education, training and capacity building of those who are working in the field. An overall understanding of the systems and processes which strengthen and perpetuate the subordination of women, is essential for all those who are involved in programmes and activities for women's development. These SANGAT South Asian courses have emerged from the above background and perspective.

Objectives of the Course

To respond to the need to train capable women trainers, managers, activists, lawyers, media women and researchers and to create solidarity and networking between them, earlier FAO-NGO South Asia Programme and now SANGAT have been organizing these regional courses. It is now accepted that the single most important factor leading to gender-transformative organizations and programmes, is the presence of committed, clear and strong women in these organizations. It is also well accepted that development planners and implementers require a broad and deep understanding of the reasons for gender and other inequalities before they can launch programmes to address these inequalities.

The main objectives of the course were to:

- enhance the effectiveness of development programmes in South Asia, specially those in the rural

areas working towards greater gender sensitivity, sustainability, human rights and peace.

- facilitate an intensive dialogue and sharing of experiences among women development workers, trainers, activists, educationists, lawyers and media women from different countries who are working primarily for the development and empowerment of marginalized rural people, particularly women.
- enhance the capacities, capabilities, self-esteem, self-confidence, sense of commitment and belonging of the participants.
- help the participants improve their health and control over their bodies and mind with the help of yoga, meditation, massage etc.
- provide participants with an opportunity to increase their conceptual understanding, analytical skills, awareness and sensitivity to a range of gender and development issues and to the dynamics of socio-economic and political change as it affects women and the poor, specially in the rural areas of South Asia.
- develop ways to address issues related to sustainable agriculture and rural development, biodiversity and macro-economic policies.
- provide insights into training skills and methodologies, organizational development etc.
- provide advocacy skills on issues related to gender and sustainable development.
- identify written and audio-visual materials and exercises which can be used in gender trainings/workshops.
- evolve a common perspective and shared commitment amongst people's organizations/NGOs/women's organizations in South Asia.
- strengthen networking and co-operation for advocacy and action for sustainable development, gender equality and peace in South Asia.
- plan joint activities at the national and South Asian level to facilitate ongoing sharing and mutual strengthening.

Most Important Are Human Beings & Human Values

Few development organizations seem to be doing the kind of thinking, soul searching and re-designing which a paradigm shift leading to sustainability requires.

We, the organizers of these courses, believe that without focusing on, promoting and cultivating human beings and human values, like caring, sharing, nurturing, diversity, sustainability, meaningful living is not possible. These values need to be practiced not only within families, but also in ALL Institutions. Today, peace, love, caring, promotion of diversity are not luxuries or options, they are necessities.

Based on this belief, the leitmotif of this course was development of human capabilities and nurturing human values. Through the sessions, resource persons emphasized the need for human development, and the need for peace, harmony, diversity and human values in all social relations (gender, class, caste, race), in all institutions and in all production relations. These messages were combined with rigorous and critical analysis of present day realities of families, economics and politics and of other issues related to gender, sustainability, conflict, peace, human rights etc.

The constant refrain from Kamla was – along with women’s empowerment we need empowerment of human values. “Changing the sex of the cancer cells won’t help”, she said, “We have to fight cancer”. Women not only have to enter the mainstream, they have to transform it, make it fair, just, democratic, peaceful. It is not enough that women become leaders, she said, women have to transform the whole notion of leadership, the notion of power. We need collective leadership. To inspire her participants, Kamla, often started her sessions by narrating stories emphasizing sharing, cooperation, honesty, harmony with nature.

This focus on values of sharing, cooperation, sensitivity and similar values made a difference to the collective life at the workshop. There was almost complete absence of competition and one-up-woman ship. Most participants were extremely sensitive to each other’s needs and background.

Inspiring Location & Sensitive Arrangements

The location of the course was the very picturesque and secluded Godavari resort outside Kathmandu. The word for it, which often came to many minds, was “heavenly”. The greenery, views and silence of the place played an important role in our collective learning and energizing processes.

We were all inspired by the natural beauty and silence of the place. There were no distractions other than the beauty of the surroundings. Our proximity to nature provided us a sense of rooted-ness and harmony, inspired us to work hard and make full use of our time together.

Although organizing everything and meeting the various needs and desires of about 40 persons looked smooth and effortless, all of us knew how much work and effort had gone into it. We are full of admiration for Juhi Jain, the Coordinator of Sangat and the Shtrii Shakti team, especially Ramita and Prativa.



Participants

These courses are still exclusively for women, so that they can think, speak, act freely, without any inhibitions. We believe this space for women is still necessary in South Asia.

Careful selection of the participants is a pre-requisite for the success of these courses. The selection is always done with the help of NGOs and individuals whom we know well and who know the nature and significance of these intensive courses. We wrote to all our partners and to those individuals who had participated in earlier courses/workshops to identify and nominate suitable candidates. The criteria for selection were:

- Affiliation with and commitment to an organization/movement working for women's empowerment and sustainable development.
- Minimum five years of work experience
- Good working knowledge of English

The original idea was to take a maximum of twenty five participants, but we were inundated with requests and ended up accepting as many as thirty-four full time participants and five participants as observers for some sessions.

Once again we had a very good group for our course. This was thanks to our partners who has identified, suggested and/or nominated participants. They were from seven countries, Austria/India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. They represented some of the finest, committed and innovative local, national and international NGOs working in South Asia. We had selected them in such a way that they came from different regions, religions, ethnic groups, castes of our countries.

Anjum, Zubayda and Nahid Sultana from Bangladesh were from Gaibanda and Dhaka. Two participants were to come from Chittagong Hill Tracts, but they dropped out last minute, without any information, in spite of repeated emails from us. We have been concerned about them.

Thinley, from Phuntsoling, Bhutan is a young school teacher, who is also part of the local women's organization which is affiliated to the National Women's Association of Bhutan.

Barbara Nath Wiser, the oldest amongst the participants is a medical doctor, originally from Austria and working for the past 24 years in Himanchal Pradesh, India.

The other participants from India were Mamta Baxi from Olakh, Baroda; Nitta Jhansi Rani and Priya Raju from Centre for World Solidarity, Andhra Pradesh; Anjuman Ara from the North East Network, Assam; Sheila Joseph from DanChurch Aid, Delhi; Purnima Gupta from Nirantar, Delhi and UP; and Aparna from Asmita, Hyderabad.

Uzma and Arifa came from Sungi Development Foundation Abbotabad and Islamabad. Shakila was from Aurat Foundation, Peshawar; Zakia from Khwendo Kor, Peshawar; Sadia from Uks Islamabad and Ambreen from Action Aid Lahore.

From Nepal, we had Karuna from Oxfam; Samita from Didi Bahini; Bishnu from IEDI; Shiv Maya from Sri Nepal; Ranju from All Nepal Women's Association; Shanti from Stri Shakti; Laxmi from; Bhawani from Sahbhagi, Savitree, a political science lecturer from Tribhuwan University.

The Sri Lankans were Prabha from Women's Education and Research Centre; Saama from Canadian International Development Agency; Bharathi from Suriya Development Centre, Batticaloa and Padmini from Oxfam, Vavunia.

The background of the participants was as varied as their experience. There were activists, trainers, researchers, planners, development workers and programme managers. We had field and community workers, university lecturers and also a school teacher. There were professional women-lawyers, a journalist and a radio producer. They represented large and small NGOs, training and resource centers, legal aid groups, Departments from Universities, donor partners like OXFAM, Action Aid, Danchurch Aid and CIDA. The diversity in educational background, work experience, nature of work made for beneficial sharing and mutual learning.

This time the participants were from Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Austria. Dr. Barbara Nath is an Austrian national but who has been living and working in India for over 20 years. We are also glad that after a gap of some years we managed to have one participant from Bhutan in this course.

Special efforts were made to get the representation of minorities from different countries. We are happy to report that we had one Christian, a Muslim and Dalit women from India, a Hindu and a Christian woman from Sri Lanka, Hindus and ethnic minority women from Nepal. We had both Tamil and Sinhala women from Sri Lanka, one woman from the North East of India, two women from NWFP Pakistan, women from the valley and the Terai region in Nepal.

This diversity enriched the course and also provided a glimpse of the rich diversity in our countries as well as provided an opportunity to discuss issues related to identity politics, communalism etc.

The participants came from a variety of NGOs, most of who are working in the rural areas with an integrated approach to development and women's empowerment. They are working for the empowerment of women and the rural poor through legal aid, economic support, education, improved health, mobilization, networking, research, lobbying advocacy and journalism. For example, we had two participants from Centre for World Solidarity in Secunderabad which has been working for almost three decades with rural poor and landless women and men. Similarly ALRD in Bangladesh supports struggles for land reforms and works with landless labourers for helping them procure land rights. Similarly Sungi Development Foundation and Khwendo Kor in Pakistan work with women training them to become self reliant and economically independent.

Several participating NGOs organize campaigns and support movements against violence against women, unjust globalization, poverty, destruction of biodiversity etc. They support rights of women and girls survivors rescued from being trafficked across borders, women and men working for sustainable livelihoods and for indigenous people. Didi Bahini, Sahavagi, Shtrii Shakti, in Nepal work

with youth and women's rights issues focusing on trafficking, violence against women and peace.

All these NGOs have realized the need for conceptual clarity on gender issues and for making their programmes gender-transformative. The keenness and commitment of these NGOs in sending their senior staff to the course is amply demonstrated by the fact that several of them raised funds for their travel and stay. OXFAM Nepal and Sri Lanka, CIDA Sri Lanka, Action Aid Pakistan sent their programme and community staff members to gain a clearer understanding of concepts, rights based approach which will help in mainstreaming gender concerns in their projects and programmes.

Sincere efforts were made to create an informal, friendly, serious and joyous atmosphere during the course. During our first session in the morning on "reflection on yesterday", the participants said they felt accepted, reaffirmed, empowered. They said, because strong women like them often do not get reaffirmation and appreciation, they felt overwhelmed when they were showered with affection and attention. Many participants said that they did not want the course to end.

The Resource Team

The team of resource persons was large, committed to such South Asian learning and networking processes and truly resourceful. We can actually boast and say that our resource team is amongst the best anywhere. The full time resource persons who handled most of the responsibilities of conducting the course were Kamla Bhasin and Abha Bhaiya.

- Kamla Bhasin, the Advisor of SANGAT was present for the first eighteen days during which she handled most sessions providing conceptual clarity on feminism, patriarchy, masculinity, gender, VAW, sustainable development and the morning yoga. Kamla has been organizing such courses since the late seventies through the FAO-NGO South Asia Programme. Kamla has written extensively on issues related to gender, participatory development, peace etc.
- Abha Bhaiya, a feminist gender trainer and activist, one of the founders of Jagori Women's Training and Documentation Centre and Kartini was present for the last thirteen days during which she conducted sessions on body politics, sexuality, health and reproductive rights, media and feminist

training methodologies.

The other very experienced and committed people who contributed to the learning process for one to three days each by conducting sessions and interacting with the participants were:

- Sunila Abeysekara, from INFORM and Women and Media Collective, Colombo, a performing artist, human rights activist, educator and an organizer.
- Durga Ghimire, an activist, mobilizer, organizer from the local to the global levels working on issues of trafficking of girls and women, VAW and other issues in Nepal.
- Nivedita Narain a trainer-activist who works with PRADAN, India at the grassroots and community mobilization level.
- Sapna Pradhan Malla, a human rights lawyer working on issues of human rights and violence against women through the Forum for Women, Law and Development in Nepal.
- Hisila Yami, polit bureau member of the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist).
- Urmila Aryal, presently a Minister in the Nepal government and a member of All Nepal Women's Association, a mass based people's organization with over four lakh members from all over Nepal.
- Zehra Kamal, a development activist working with ROZAN Islamabad on the issue of emotional health of women.
- Rukmini Rao, a feminist activist and scholar who works both at the grassroots and policy levels in India. She has worked with Saheli, DDS, CWS and is now actively involved with Gramya, an organisation working with the Dalit community in India..
- Azra Talat Sayeed, a feminist activist from ROOTS, Pakistan who works with marginalized communities on issues of sustainable livelihoods.



All the resource persons had a strong rights based, pro-people, ecological and feminist perspective. They looked at issues in an integrative, holistic, and interconnected manner. All of them have been involved with both action and reflection. This combination of action and theory was used to emphasize the need for development workers to study and also to write about their experiences.

Most of them have been involved with organizations and movements for social change and committed to creating a peaceful, just, sustainable South Asia. By bringing such resource persons to the younger participants, we provided an opportunity for an interface and a dialogue between two generations of development activists and feminists. Many resource persons shared their life stories, which were like oral histories of the women's and NGO movements in India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Nepal. Participants found these life stories extremely educative and inspirational.

As all the outstation resource persons were requested to come at least a day prior to their sessions and to stay on for a day after their sessions, there was enough time for the participants to interact with them in different ways, during and outside the sessions. Some resource persons joined the outings on free days, participated in the morning yoga, in the song, dance and laughing sessions interspersed throughout the day.

All the resource persons made commitments to give time to such learning processes in the future also, because the atmosphere of the course and the amazing appetite of the participants for new learning inspired them!

The Atmosphere

From the very beginning of the process of organizing this course i.e., sending out letters about the course, we tried to create an informal, cordial, friendly and joyous atmosphere. At Godavari Resort, they were welcomed by Kamla Bhasin and Retika Rajbhandari from SANGAT and the Shtrii Shakti team.

The seating arrangement for the course was on mattresses on the floor, which is found to be more comfortable for long hours of work and more suitable for role-plays, sculpting and other exercises used in the course. The room was decorated and given a festive look with the help of banners and posters brought by the organizers and participants.

The banners transmitted inspiring messages

- Men Of Quality And Not Afraid Of Equality
- To Avoid Global Sinking Say No To Bushful Thinking
- Zero Tolerance To All Kinds Of Violence
- Looking At The World Through Women's Eyes
- Real Men Do Not Rape
- Families Need Partners, Not Lords And Masters
- We Want Open Skies Of Friendship Not Walls Of Hatred
- War Has No Future, Peace Is The Future
- Human Rights For All
- We Need The Movement Of Men Towards Family Kitchens
- Women's Body and Mind Are Sacred, No One Has the Right to Violate Them.
- South Asians For Human Rights
- Those Who Love Life Stand For Peace
- People Do Not Want Development, They Want To Live
- Mother Earth Has Enough For Everyone's Need But Not For Everyone's Greed
- All Kinds Of Militarizations Are A Crime Against Civilizations
- We Respect Men Who Respect Women

Sharing Rooms, Cultural Practices and Concerns

For most participants this was their first South Asian encounter. Many had never been together for a substantial period, with CSO activists from the neighbouring countries. In order to maximize personal and professional sharing, participants shared rooms with women from different countries. Rooms and room partners were changed every week so that close sharing took place between many.

We kept hearing from many participants how much they learnt about the religious and cultural practices of the others. As both Ramzan and Dashain or Dashera were during this month, there was a lot of talking and sharing about them. Six or seven women were fasting and the others were sensitive to their needs and different hours of eating. (Sahri at 4.30 and Iftar at 18.15)

During our personal sharing in the sessions and outside we learnt about each other's physical and emotional problems and also tried to help. There were many ready to massage some one with a back, head or neck aches; many happy to get hot water for those suffering from throat problems. Many cried listening to stories of personal losses or oppression within families; painful tensions/ conflicts in personal relationships. A great deal of caring and compassion was around, almost from the beginning.

On our first free day, Ramita, the young woman from Shtri Shakti, who was our manager/administrator/helper, lost her mobile. In a spirit of sharing, all the participants contributed money for buying a new mobile for Ramita. Spontaneous gestures like these led to a lot of bonding and love.

Participants brought different talents also which enriched and helped the group. Nahid was an amazing singer. She sang with her entire being. Listening to her and seeing her whole body singing and swaying was an experience. Her loud, uninhibited singing encouraged many others to open up.

Sadia and Saama danced particularly well, but within a few days everyone was a dancer. It did not matter how we danced or sang. What mattered was that we SANG and we DANCED and we ENJOYED.

Welcome With Colourful Setting, Flowers, Sweets And Hugs

In the inaugural session Kamla and Retika from SANGAT and Ramita and Prativa from Shtrii Shakti welcomed each participant individually with a marigold garland, Kaju barfi (a sweet) and a big hug. The bright orange and yellow bags with all the readings, writing pads, and pens also added colour.

The sitting arrangement was on the floor of a big hall on the third floor. From this height we could see the snow clad Himalayas on clear days or the clouds on the mountains, the green paddy fields, the small, meandering river. The setting was PERFECT.



Lighting Candles of Knowledge, Friendship & Peace

Kamla welcomed everyone to our month long adventure of sharing and learning. She said the most important reason for doing these courses was developing understanding, friendship and cooperation across borders in South Asia.

“Through this month long togetherness we try to develop a South Asian consciousness and a South Asian community of concerned and committed activists and citizens” she said.

“In addition to developing a feminist and pro people perspective amongst mid-level women activists/development workers, these courses strengthen, create cooperation and networking” Kamla added.

Kamla invited everyone to contribute as much as she could and take as much as she needed. She handed over the responsibility of the success of the course to all the participants, saying “the tiny SANGAT team, mainly Juhi, has worked for about six months to plan and put this course together. Now you will take it forward. Now the success depends on your seriousness and commitment to learn, to contribute, to make friends and to love.”

Kamla made it clear that the group will be working for long hours. “The day will begin with yoga at 0630 and go on till 2200 on most days. Evenings will be devoted to country presentations, films and more song and dance. I say “more” because singing and dancing will take place also during all tea breaks. ”

After welcoming the participants she lit a candle as a symbol of knowledge which dispels darkness, love which dispels hatred, peace which dispels violence and conflict. Then with her candle she lit the candle of the participant sitting on her left and invited her to introduce herself and give a nice message to the group. One by one all the candles were lit and every one was introduced.

The atmosphere was full of love, joy, anticipation. The participants were asked to write their messages on cards and put them all on a board, to inspire us.

These were some of the messages:

- For creating peace, we need to find peace within ourselves
- An empowered woman brings big change in the family and society.
- Respect others to get respect
- Let us be in the PRESENT MOMENT and ENJOY our time together
- Every one pays the prize of violence against women.
- PEACE is the only way forward
- Women's rights are human rights and we will fight for them. Long live women's movement.
- We believe in solidarity and peace
- *Sirf hungama khada karna mera maksad nahi, meri koshish hai ki yeh surat badalni chaahiye*
- Happy homes are violence free
- I want to see smiles on every woman's face.
- Give love and get love

Every effort was made to create an informal, free, intimate and JOYOUS atmosphere which would encourage honest sharing

Observers Welcome

Like in earlier courses, we encouraged women to come and be at the course as observers to see what we were doing and to meet women from different countries. Several women working with NGOs came for some sessions. Eva and Lasse Anderson from Switzerland, two volunteers with the PeaceWomen Across the Globe initiative spent two days with us. Eva was in the sessions and Lasse (a man) joined us during our breaks.

The Process & Methodology of the Course

Our Process of Learning

It is an impossible task to describe the process and to summarize the proceedings of the course. How can one capture the coming together of such a large group of women, with their varied strengths and histories? Words can really not convey the energy and the excitement, the warmth of our togetherness, yet we have attempted to give some idea through this report.

We used innumerable ways to transcend the distances between us. We sang in different languages and danced together, we meditated and did yoga together. We shared rooms with different women, rested together in the afternoons. We achieved all this with minimum tension. There was a lot of laughter and warmth, as much as there was intensity and the shared pain of being women in cultures that refuse us the essence of self-dignity.

We gave each other the strength to learn, the space to talk, to share even the most painful experiences. We laughed like we had not done for a long time. The spontaneous joke sessions were hilarious and sometimes extended till midnight and beyond.

At the end of the course we looked back at the process and tried to identify the basic feminist principles around which our collective learning was built. We realized that the way in which we introduced ourselves and got to know each other helped create an environment of affirmation and trust. We tried breaking down artificial barriers between body and mind, rational and emotional, joy and work, subjective and objective. The yoga sessions helped us concentrate our attention on ourselves and experience some aspects of this unity between body and mind. The evening walks and games in the

open air provided another way to be with each other.

Similarly living and learning together minimized the distinction between resource persons and learners. Our sitting on the floor in a circle where each one could make eye contact with the others was an attempt to minimize hierarchies and to encourage open, informal and fearless discussion.

The process of self analysis and awareness which ran through the course and which was systemized on three days, helped us to identify patriarchal structures of domination and subordination in our own lives and to identify ways in which we have challenged and transcended them.

The theme of feminism was not limited to a single session but ran through the workshop like a thread. The process of constructing a feminist lens and using it to examine various issues ran side by side. By sharing each other's lives and analyzing how our various identities were constructed, we were able to locate ourselves in a complex fabric made up of structures and systems of domination, interwoven with sites of struggle and resistance. Whatever the issue, the training process helped us to make connections between our own experiences and the larger context, and to sharpen our feminist, ecological and pro people perspectives.

The creativity of each individual was encouraged and each of us got the opportunity to learn new skills and share our strengths. As a group we pooled our resources to take the learning process forward. We looked at issues like violence in the context of our own lives and experiences. We refused to help maintain the status quo by hiding personal issues. We were able to open up in the safe and non-judgmental atmosphere of the group.

The learning was joyous, and was not limited to our minds. It touched our bodies, minds, emotions, beliefs and attitudes. In such a large and diverse group there are bound to be some tensions and frustrations. Some of them relate to language, others to personality and likes and dislikes.

Minor illnesses, created some problems but overall the atmosphere was positive, friendly, full of trust and cooperation. Even when misunderstandings did arise, everyone tried to diffuse them. This gave us hope and strengthened our belief in cooperation.

Free Flowing Songs & Dance Were Integrated Into Learning

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

The morning and afternoon sessions normally started with songs sung in different languages by different participants. The songs were normally those which were relevant to the issues and which are used by the participants in their workshops/trainings. The singing sessions, thus, were also full of learning and teaching. Our repertoire of songs was replenished by this collective singing.



It was stated during the course that songs, music and dance, are an integral part of many gender trainings in South Asia. Singing is often woven into the working sessions to energize and enthuse, to help break the monotony of long sessions, to wake up people if they are gradually falling asleep and generally to keep us active. Sometimes we sang songs as part of the discussions themselves, for example, when we were talking of women and their unpaid work, we expressed the same idea through songs. Similarly there were songs on dowry, wife beating, family planning, women's education etc. There were also a number of songs on women's consciousness, women's resolve to break the shackles as well as on other issues like environment, human rights, communal harmony, and peace.

During discussions on training methodology, it was explained that singing, is an important part of the culture of South Asia. In countries with a strong oral tradition, songs are a very potent means of communication. Many groups have been using the medium of songs for initiating discussions, for raising awareness, for energizing and most of all for creating solidarity. In some areas women and men farmers can still be heard singing while planting rice or harvesting crops. It is through songs that many NGOs are spreading the message of organic agriculture, harmony with nature etc.

Some songs were already in several languages. There were attempts to translate some more songs. Some new songs were learnt by all in the group. Some participants had never sung before, but this process brought them all in. Some had never before danced but here they joined. There were many night sessions filled with vigorous dancing, as if to find new bonds, a new language, a new medium. The day's mental exhaustion was worked out through this medley of action.

Posters and films used through out the workshop complimented lectures, and discussions. Learning was made fun with the use of multimedia forms of communication. On the first day itself participants put up posters, charts and wall hangings which they had brought along with them from their organizations.

My First Few Days at the Course – Saama Rajakaruna, Sri Lanka

When I learnt that I was selected to participate in the XIth Feminist Capacity Building Course organized by SANGAT, I was overjoyed. After various email exchanges I learnt that we had to do a few presentations. I quickly put together some presentations on PowerPoint. Just before leaving Sri Lanka, I emailed Juhi at SANGAT and asked whether they would have a multimedia projector for the presentations. She said that they would most probably not have access to a multimedia projector in Godavari, Nepal. Undaunted, I asked about the availability of an overhead projector. When that question was also replied to on the negative, I remember mentioning it to one of my colleagues and expressing my concern at the lack of facilities at this training programme. Little did I know that I would learn so much more than what I would have learnt at a high-tech training programme that has more connections with and to laptops than with the people attending the training programme.

The spontaneity of laughter, crying, singing and dancing; the intimacy of sharing very personal experiences and listening to others opening their hearts out to thirty other women; the strength and comfort of holding hands and hugging each other for any reason or no reason at all or just sharing a moment of silence during the yoga sessions are way more precious than any powerpoint presentation.

Being at the training programme has given me many answers, raised more questions but above all, has created an appetite to learn much more. We have not only had the privilege of listening to and discussing with various resource persons from South Asia, we have also had the luxury to learn more about our neighbours of South Asia. But, if I'm honest, I must say that the highlight for me is the yoga class that is conducted at 6.30 every morning by Kamla and Abha.

Yes, it has been two weeks since I left home, the office and all my friends and family. Although I am looking forward to going back home after the next two weeks, I can predict now that it won't be very easy to say 'Au revoir' to these beautiful women who have very easily become my surrogate family. I will now have to strengthen my ability to live in the present moment!

Many Other Ways to Learn

Other methods used were small group discussions, role plays, debates, skits, sculpting, mirroring exercises. These exercises enhanced the creativity of the participants, and enriched the quality of the discussions. Every morning critical reflection and reviews were held of the proceedings of the previous day. This helped the resource persons and the group to review, remember and move forward.

The personal lives of each participant, the collective life of the group and those of the visiting resource persons got intricately woven into a beautiful tapestry as the processes unfolded. Personal introductions, group presentations, reflections, vignettes of the personal lives all helped the process.

The personal testimony of the resource persons was very inspiring as many of them had been in the women's movement and involved with research and women's studies for over two decades. It challenged us all to see our lives as connected, as creating spaces with the many movements whether in academia or in the field, to challenge and to evolve newer dimensions of understanding.

Banners and Posters

One of the most creative expressions of SANGAT's work in South Asia and its contribution to alternative forms of communication has been the production of well designed, bright colourful banners on issues of gender, human rights, peace, friendship, globalization, diversity, pluralism and sustainable livelihoods. These banners are created specially to add colour and provide a richness to the surroundings during our courses. At this course we had decorated the entire resort and the passage leading up to the training hall with cheerful banners emanating strong feminist messages. The aim is not just to use the mediums of lectures, readings and discussion but also use other creative mediums to foster understanding and clarity on concepts. These banners helped in creating an atmosphere of solidarity and commitment to issues like peace, women's empowerment. In fact many participants took photographs of these banners and wanted to translate these into their local languages for use in their activities. The banners spoke to hundreds of others visiting the Godavari Resort.

Films

To make discussions more lively and meaningful, films were shown throughout the course. Of course, we did not have enough time to do justice to the many films we brought with us. The films were thought provoking and moving. They moved us to explore issues and moved us emotionally. What could never be captured with a lecture was captured into our minds and hearts through the films.

Sometimes the films were followed by discussions, but most of the time we were too tired to discuss immediately after the film, but often resource persons wove the contents of the films into the text of the sessions. But we know the films did make a long term impact on the minds of participants. So even if there were no large group discussions, they did spend time talking about films in small groups.

Films shown during the course were:

- Khamosh Paani-a film on the partition of India and Pakistan
- Na Ho Maata Na Ho Konna- a film on sexual abuse of girls and women in Bangladesh
- America America-an anti war song
- Man ke Manjeere-a song series on women's empowerment
- When women Unite-a film on women's empowerment and struggle for rights
- Something Like a War-a film on women's health and contraceptives
- Leila-story of a woman's struggle within marriage in Iran
- Mr. and Mrs. Iyer-a film on communalism, violence and humanity
- Unlimited Girls-women and feminism
- Antonia's Line-a film on gender and sexuality
- Tale of the Night Fairies-a film on sex workers and their struggle for dignity
- Who will Speak of Men-a film on men and masculinities
- Chopal Bhaduri – a film on sexuality and women

Linking Learning to Real Life: Peace Day Celebrations

All opportunities were used to link learning to real life events to help the participants to internalize or embody the learning and to make it more meaningful, relevant and action oriented. Every resource person linked all conceptual theoretical discussions to real life examples. The participants were asked to give examples from their own lives, working situations and on the basis of their knowledge of their countries.

As the International Day of Peace on September 21, was during our course, we celebrated it in a big way in Kathmandu. WOREC, a SANGAT partner and its chairperson Dr. Renu Rajbhandari, a Core Group Member of SANGAT took on the responsibility of planning and organizing the celebrations.

The exhibition of 1000 Peace Women Across the Globe was inaugurated by eleven women from seven countries at the Birendra International Convention Centre. Kamla Bhasin who is the Co-Chair of the global initiative, Peace Women Across the Globe, spoke on the occasion about women's role in peace building. Renu Rajbhandari spoke about the grassroot level peacewomen in Nepal and their tireless work for justice and peace.

Then a film on peacewomen from India entitled: "Redefining Peace: Women Lead the Way" directed by K.P.Sasi and produced by SANGAT was shown. The audience liked this film very much.

This was followed by "Rhythms of Peace", a musical performance by KUTUMBA, an activist music group.

The celebration culminated in a peace march through Kathmandu city. It was a long and very disciplined, silent peace march by over 400 people from different CSOs and individual peace lovers. The peace marchers ended the march at 7.30 by lighting candles.

The participants of the SANGAT course had prepared peace placards in their mother tongues, which

they carried during this march.

Mainstream media covered the event well. Two national newspapers carried photos of the event on the front page and several other newspapers carried reports.

The National Television did a fifteen minute interview on peace with Kamla Bhasin. FM Nepal and FM Eastern Nepal also did long interviews with Kamla Bhasin.

Many participants from the course said that it was the first time they marched for a cause.

They felt inspired and many of them said they would celebrate the International Day of Peace in their country.

The peace exhibition was shifted to another location on September 22 and 23.

Documentary films were screened and plays performed on both these days.

Many participants expressed their desire to get involved with the initiative Peace Women Across the Globe and to identify and document many more peace women from their countries.

Here is what some participants felt after the peace day celebrations were over.

- *“I was touched and moved by our experiences. I learnt a lot about other cultures and religions. It was the first time I held a banner in my hand and marched on the road.”*
- *“It was for the first time that I marched. I felt strong and powerful,”*
- *“I was touched by the documentary and the strength of the movement and of the women leading them. I felt I was not doing enough. We need to be more united at the South Asian level. I also realized the power of documentaries, music and street theater.”*



The Contents of the Course

There were three main content areas in this course. The following pages provide some glimpses into what was shared and discussed.

A. Getting to Know Ourselves & Each Other

Getting to know ourselves and each other was an important aspect and objective of the course. Through various exercises Kamla stated that we have multiple identities and we should get to know the different sides of each other. The sociogramming exercise done on the first day brought our different identities and also very different groupings based on our different identities. We saw that in addition to having different nationalities, the participants belonged to different religions, ethnic and language groups. The groupings were quite different according to these three identities. Muslim participants from Bangladesh, Pakistan, found themselves in the same group when we grouped according to religious identities. Similarly Hindus from Nepal, India, Sri Lanka and Pakistan were in the same group. Bangla speaking Indians and Bangladeshis, Urdu speaking Indians and Pakistanis were in the same group when we divided ourselves according to language and cultural identities. This exercise brought out the cross-country connections and historical links and strengthened our desire and resolve to build stronger bridges of peace and development cooperation across countries. It also showed how our identities are fluid and shifting. We also discussed that it is up to us whether we wish to have a large (human) identity or narrow identity of religion, caste, nationality etc.

The Personal Is the Political

As is always the case in these courses, we made attempts to have a glimpse of each other's personal lives and journeys. We did this in the feminist belief that the personal and the professional can

hardly be separated specially in the lives of women. It was stated that to understand gender inequalities in South Asia we can start by critically looking at our own lives and then seeing the connections between our lives and the lives of women we work with and seek to empower. Starting with the realities of our lives also makes our theoretical learning about gender issues more rooted, meaningful and clear. It takes it beyond cognitive learning and makes it part of our life experiences.

One of the exercises we did in five small groups was to answer three simple questions:

- When did I realize I was a girl/woman?
- What was my most painful experience as a girl/woman?
- Have I ever revolted against or opposed any patriarchal norms?

These questions were discussed with incredible honesty. Some women poured their hearts out as if they were just waiting for the lid to be lifted. While narrating their stories many couldn't help crying.

Many participants said this was the first time they had shared their experiences with others and they were happy and grateful about it. While the process of sharing was painful, they had a sense of release and relief after it. They felt lighter at the end of it. This kind of sharing acted as a glue for the group. Suddenly all of us felt much closer, as if our collective tears washed away our differences and our political distances.

The Realization of Being A Girl

In some cases, the first memory itself was that of being unwanted, because one was a girl. For many, being a girl was a disability and disqualification. In most cases the realization that one was a girl was due to some restrictions imposed during puberty. This is what some of the statements were:

- At birth itself I realized I was a girl because my parents had wanted a boy.
- My mother made me feel I was inferior because I was a girl and on top of that dark.
- I realized I was a girl when my mother gave more importance to our brother than to us sisters.
- When I started menstruating and my mobility and freedom was snatched away from me. I felt I was

- not a human being because I was a girl.
- At seven when my mother forced me to do household work while my brother played.

Unfortunately, for many in the group the realization of being a girl was painful and negative and the scars of this rejection, humiliation were still there.

My Most Painful Experience As A Woman

Again our sharing showed that almost all of us had experienced rejection, humiliation, constraints because we were girls/women. Some experiences were more painful and shocking than others, but painful they all were. Sexual abuse by family members, school teachers, male friends of the family was experienced by many. Most of us could not talk about this to anyone, which made coping with it more difficult. The few who confided in their mothers were told not to talk or think about it.

But, the Victims Resisted & Became Survivors

The answers to the third question showed that everyone in the course was a fighter and a survivor. It was clear that, had they not fought, resisted, revolted, opposed, they wouldn't be doing what they were doing and wouldn't be at this course. Everyone had to break strong patriarchal traditions and norms to move forward. Some had to fight even to get educated, others to get the right to meet a friend, or to marry someone of their choice, or to take up a job.

These women had to struggle, revolt, and face disapproval for doing things that their brothers could take for granted. To live with dignity they had to revolt. They had to revolt to have choices, to have a voice, to realize their human potential.

From this sharing it was evident that most participants had made a difficult journey. The workings of patriarchy were evident in most stories and patriarchy was by no means a thing of the past for any of us. Each one was still negotiating, fighting or living with one or the other manifestation of patriarchy. It was clear to all of us now why it was necessary to talk about our personal lives and to see the

connections. NGOs have to understand the past and the present of women's lives and their experiences and only then can they make fair gender policies. Trainers have to deal with and build their training and other strategies on that understanding. The need to have a holistic perspective and approach in gender workshops and gender work was clear to all. It was also clear that women's activism, sensitivity and commitment to gender issues is connected to their personal experiences. For them **personal IS the political**. While women activists empower other women they empower themselves and as they empower themselves they make more spaces for others. Women's empowerment in this sense is not one way traffic, from the development workers to the community women. During this and many other sessions it was stated that working class/caste women are often freer than middle class women who were at the course. Working class women are more mobile, seldom practice *pardah*, they are freer with their bodies, because they are economically productive and independent. They often have the freedom to choose their marriage partner, to divorce, to remarry. Widowhood is not the end of their lives, because like men they can also remarry. Tribal women and other working class women do not have to be given dowry and many may get a bride price. This means there is lot middle class development workers can and should learn from the poor working class women. In this and many other senses, women's empowerment has to be a collective process, it has to be a partnership between development activists and women peasants, farmers and workers.

B. Country Presentations

Learning about each other's country and organization was another important part of the course.

The country presentations were a beautiful mix of stories, an overview of the country, its socio-political profile, the situation of women, the key development issues being addressed in the country and of organizational profiles and activities of each NGO from the six countries. Through these presentations the regional profile of South Asia emerged. Many participants wore their national/regional costumes, combining diversity with a commonality of vision during their country presentations.

The overwhelming powers of the fundamentalists and power brokers, the violations of women's rights, the increasing violence against women, the degrading ecological zones, the politics of identity, the

issues of governance, the increasing gap between the rich and poor, the relationships between various development actors were a running theme. The statistics presented by each country indicated the inferior position of women.

The story of each organization was one of struggle, determination, courage, of daring to challenge. Whether it was a health programme, or an income generation programme or policy research, or a feminist resource centre, the seeds of alternative development were being tested and implemented in significant ways. The country presentations helped the group to see close links between the historical, geographical, ecological, economic and political lives of the countries. They also presented data and details about the major features of each country, major development and gender issues, major policy interventions for women's empowerment etc.

The participants got to know many organizations and saw their images in each other's work. They enhanced their perspective through each other's experiences. They experienced the pain of each country, through the stories of denial, of exclusion, of subjugation of women and girls. They raised questions about how they can turn the processes around, and strengthen each other.

C. The Main Issues Discussed

The main objective of the course was to provide conceptual clarity on the most important gender and development issues in South Asia and other countries and to help the participants see the interconnections between them. Attempts were made to provide a broad integrative, gender perspective to the participants.

We started the course with personal experiences and on that we built the discussions on the concept of gender and patriarchy. While explaining these two concepts, Kamla also introduced and explained a whole lot of terms used in the gender discourse like-gender inequality, gender hierarchy, gender asymmetry, gender division of labour, biological reproduction, social reproduction, construction of gender, gender indoctrination, gendering, women's subordination, gender analysis, gender sensitivity, gender sensitization etc. The concept of power was also introduced and discussed here. As most

participants did not have a clear understanding of most of these terms it was useful to clarify them and to develop a common vocabulary.

From gender we moved on to the concept of patriarchy. It was stated that women are subordinated because of the system of patriarchy, which is both a structure and an ideology. Like gender, patriarchy also may vary from community to community and also from time to time. The two concepts, it was stated, can be used as tools to analyze and understand our families and all social, economic and political institutions. In small groups, these tools were applied, and patriarchy was seen all around us. From patriarchy we moved to the construction of masculinity and saw how men get dehumanized within patriarchy and the different ways in which men also suffer. The need to do more work with boys and men was emphasized. Feminism was explained and discussed quite a lot.

The next section dealt with the concept of development and sustainable development in which we dealt with post independence development planning and policies in South Asia and their impact on the income of poor sections and women. Globalization, privatization and liberalization were explained next.

Presentations and discussions on neo liberal policies, control over resources and gender were next. Women's participation in natural resource management, women's indigenous knowledge, appropriate technology, case studies of projects which marginalized women further and of others which represented successful practices were discussed in these sessions. Indicators for measuring the success of rural development and natural resource management projects and women's empowerment initiatives were also developed.

One session dealt with very live and difficult issues like identity politics, religious fundamentalism, ethnic conflict and violence, conflict and conflict transformation, militarization and nuclearization. All these issues it was stated, have a direct impact on women, the income poor and on development in general.

There were sessions that dealt with human rights, poverty and gender, people's movements, alternative development paradigms, sustainable livelihoods and food security and gender and law. There were sessions on health, sexuality and gender and right to health and reproductive rights.

Women's role in governance, women and media, advocacy and lobbying on gender issues, strategies for women's empowerment, organizational development and strategies to gender sensitize NGOs were other issues on which presentations were made by resource persons and discussions held.

Initially one month had seemed very long to some participants, but as days passed everyone realized a month was hardly enough to learn everything there was to learn. There was not enough time for the participants to read all the papers, which had been given, to see all the films and to go deeper into discussion.

The following themes were covered during the course :

- Gender - Kamla Bhasin
- Feminism and Women' Movement-Kamla Bhasin
- Patriarchy- Kamla Bhasin
- Masculinities -Kamla Bhasin
- Gender and Development- Kamla Bhasin
- Leadership and Confidence Building -Kamla Bhasin
- Violence Against women- Durga Ghimire/Kamla Bhasin/Renu Rajbhandari
- Self Awareness and Self Growth-Zehra Kamal
- Gender and Human Rights-Sunila Abeyesekera
- Identity Politics, Conflict and Conflict Transformation- Sunila Abeyesekera
- Globalisation, Poverty and Gender-V.Rukmini Rao
- People's Movements and their response to LPG (women's movement, WSFSustainable Livelihoods/Food Security-V.Rukmini Rao and Azra Talat Sayeed
- Local Self Governments, Women and Sustainable Development - V.Rukmini Rao/ Azra Sayeed
- Poverty eradication, community mobilization-Nivedita Narain
- Gender and LawSapna Pradhan-Malla/Abha Bhaiya
- Media and Gender-Abha Bhaiya
- Women's Health and Reproductive Rights Abha Bhaiya
- Body, Sexuality and Gender-Abha Bhaiya

Evaluation, Reflections and Follow-up

Review and evaluation of the month long learning process was built into the course and it was an ongoing process. The evaluation is done in three different ways. The first is a daily reflection where every morning a few participants were asked to reflect on the previous day's sessions. This daily evaluation done by some participants helped the group to remember what had been done on the previous day.

After the first fifteen days of the course a mid term evaluation was done where the participants were asked to write down their feelings and reflections about the course. This mid term evaluation, enabled the resource persons get some feed back on the content and methodology of their sessions and if necessary they were able to clarify issues and questions. It also helped in understanding any specific needs of the group, which could be built into the course in the next 15days.

In addition, the participants were asked to do a detailed written evaluation on the last day. Sets of questions were given to them on content areas, methodology, design and duration, resource persons, administrative support and logistics, personal growth, resource materials etc. The participants were also asked to write about how they plan to use the learning in their ongoing work and in their personal lives.

While it would be impossible to do justice to the entire evaluation process, some highlights of the various processes of evaluation are presented in this section.

Ongoing Daily Reflections

Every morning began with a song, which rooted and inspired us. This was followed by reflections on the course, specially on the previous day by the participants. Every participant was encouraged to speak in this session. It was said that in this reflection session participants should “think with their heart” and express their feelings. This is what some of them had to say:

- *“I am feeling a big change. I am working on my own development, my personality”.*
- *“Taking time for myself. I feel very relaxed. I am reflecting also on my own behaviour”.*
- *“I am thinking how I can influence my family members”.*
- *“Last 4-5 months I was very tense. Facing lots of problems. I came here to be away. I don’t know how to relax. Here I am giving time to myself. Also the group is very nice, smiley, songful. Already in 3 days I am feeling a change in my personality. I am learning new things even about gender. We need to open more and talk also about our personal life. We need to share more that will help us all”.*
- *“I am feeling free of home tensions and responsibility. This is my first training like this. I want to learn a lot”.*
- *“Resistance to injustice is deepening inside me.”*
- *“I have taken trainings earlier but here my understanding is deepening. The workshop is making me stronger and clearer.”*
- *“the seating pattern here is very good. Normally things are very fixed. Here we are free.*
- *“Everything is WOW! Amazing, wonderful. I am enjoying very much. I am making friends”.*
- *“Very happy to be here. I am the youngest one here and I am lucky to get this opportunity. It is very useful for me and my office. I am learning punctuality here and time management. I am feeling light and healthy”.*
- *“I liked the masculinity session very much. I also feel that it is women’s qualities which are keeping us going. We need more spirituality to fight negative qualities.”*

Mid Term Written Reflections

After two weeks of the course the participants were asked to write down their reflections on and experiences of the course. The reflections were a happy mix of varied emotions. Each and every participant expressed her gratitude to the people responsible for them being part of the course. Some described their disinterest and the assumption that it would be “just another workshop” before coming in and how everything changed for them in the last week. Many were moved by Kamla Bhasin who exuded her infectious radiance and warmth winning many hearts! Yoga was a big hit with everyone who got up for it in the morning! Similarly, the venue of the course was a total hit too – it was described by words such as “paradise” and “heaven”.

Although a lot of participants are involved in working on gender issues, for most this was the first time that they understood it from a feminist perspective. It was thus an exploration for them both personally as well as professionally. At the personal front, while some reported that they are no longer confused about calling themselves feminist, there were others who were very excited to discover themselves as one, there were yet others who said that they have been rid of their guilt and are no longer “ashamed” to be known as a feminist. At the professional front, they gathered new energy and direction to put into their work. For many it was looking at their roles at the work place with a new kind of passion – the passion of being an agent in the “change” process. Many reported that they got strength.

The participants were especially inspired by all the resource persons who had conducted sessions so far. The bonding and the feeling of sisterhood was like a cement to hold this diverse group of women together – they discovered the myriad ways in which they were similar despite their differences! In some of the participant’s own words:

An Unique Experience

"Well! To express my feelings on attending this course, I have been saying that this course on "Gender" is the first of its kind and I am really enjoying. The concepts that we were learning in the last twelve days were all new to me. Some concepts were somehow not clear to me and it was during the self reading to me I made things more clear. I am thinking that these things are not only new to me but also to so many Bhutanese women in Bhutan. So I was thinking to have this workshop on gender for few days in Bhutan. This will be focused only on the issues which are relevant in Bhutanese context. I am also worried that people in Bhutan will say that although gender issue is a serious problem, it is not in Bhutan. So I was thinking to create a situation where women and men enjoy equal rights and privileges keeping in mind the slogan "changes for women means change for men and vice versa.

With this in my mind I am going to attend the rest 15 days course with full enthusiasm and commitment that I do something when I go back to my country.

Thinley Wangmo, Bhutan

A Multidimensional Learning

The program began with introducing our self to others. I found myself as honored after being introduced to 36 participants.

Kamla Bhasin is an extraordinary personality who plays the role of a bridge that binds us and brings us together. It is evident that tremendous hard work and untiring zeal of the SANGAT team has been the main force that could make these programs possible.

Godavari Village Resort is an exquisite place surrounded by the bounties and beauties of nature that is full of greeneries. Hospitality here has been splendid, behaviour of those who are the service provider and the treatment we received from them was fabulous. Quality of food was superb. Each room has all the conveniences that made our stay comfortable. It was not at all difficult to approach and access them or communicate with each other. They also took good care of each of the participants. The first session was a beginning of our dreams also. It brought us together with lots of hope. A process of new exploration began; we got to know about so many new things.

The most effective aspect in this course that touched my heart is the various and multiple dimensions of this training and the varieties of activities that never let me feel bored during the course of this training. Acquiring knowledge can be so interesting and joyful was beyond my experience earlier. I am not aware of a better training course than this where along with good food and comforts we sing, dance, have fun and share tears. I feel happy, proud with a sense of accomplishment for being able to participate in this wonderful training program. I will always seek for this kind of trainings. When some the participants came up to me and told that they would have not enjoyed this workshop if I had not sung the way I have , that filled me with happiness and self-worth. Since I can not speak in English I was in doubts but the love that everyone gave here took away all my worries.

Nahid Sultana , Banglades

A Space to Breathe

Its an opportunity to break monotony of work and life. I got so much... fresh air, rest, yoga, discipline, good friends, recognition, no hurry, no pressure, no anxiety, absolutely no negativity- it has all healed myself.

Kamla's charisma, energy, sense of humour and clarity of concepts are just excellent. This training in real sense is conceptual clarity where each and every concepts are defined with simplicity which would be a lifetime asset for me.

All the resource persons were very good. Moment of tea table, dining table with questions, dialogues and laughter.

This was the opportunity where I came to know about culture and conflict of South Asia. I would still like to know more about political economy, more about leadership and governance.

This training has definitely built more clarity, sharpened my concepts and it has given few tools of analysis for one's own life and work. There has to be more and more such workshops and each person should get this opportunity. It has created space for me to breathe, break routine, think, reflect, relate and be at peace. Its lovely...

Mamta Baxi, India

A Privileged Learning

I consider myself very privileged to be a part of this course. I got the opportunity to learn from the resource persons who have enormous experience on gender issues, self awareness and conflict management.

The sharing of experiences by the participants has enriched my understanding and knowledge on the issues of Gender Feminism and patriarchy.

My perception towards the Maoists has changed drastically. Self awareness sessions have helped me to understand myself and others in a very constructive way. I have already made good friends with more than fifty percent of the participants. I am determined to use the knowledge and the skill gained during the past two weeks in my future assignment.

Sheela Joseph, India

An Extraordinary Experience

The way Kamla welcomed us in the evening by describing the scene and the weather with Nahid's song was beautiful. The moment more precious when Kamla said "these mountains, sunset and the clouds are made for you." The beautiful surrounding, yoga in the morning, fresh air that's pollution free has given me power to learn more.

The resource persons and facilitators are extra ordinary, very experienced, interesting, friendly, funny, loving and caring.

Very appropriate subject matter is chosen for the course. The course is designed so well, every bit of it is essential. Lots of banners outside and inside with nice messages and classroom decoration is very encouraging and inspiring. The month long program that began on 18 September 2006 in Nepal has been an extra-ordinary incident in my life. I consider myself fortunate to be able to participate in this.

Laxmi Raj, Nepal

So Many Things to Learn

In this time period, firstly I learnt time management and about value of punctuality. Secondly, I learnt about myself and I am now searching for good and bad things in me. Thirdly I made friendships with women from six countries. I am very much enjoying Yoga with Kamla and others. I want to gain more clarity on gender concept, analysis and also learn from South Asian experiences. I am very happy to be in this course and I am trying to do best and learn as much as I can.

Samita Karmacharya, Nepal

A Process of Linkages

This course has been a bridge to link women from South Asia and unite on women's issues. It also compelled me to raise questions about my identity and my own recognition.

The course has raised questions such as how I can change my perception and attitude about certain things. This course has been a mirror for me where all my strengths and weaknesses are reflected. This course has not just allowed for mental growth but for emotional strengthening and bonding. I want each one of us here to go back as a stronger person—stronger WOMAN.

At last, I would like to thank Juhi Jain and Kamla Bhasin who made it possible for me to come here.

Shanti Manandhar, Nepal

Looking at the World Through Women's Eyes

Thanks to this course, I am able to look at the world through women's eyes. The group sessions which were done with us forced us to analyze our family through gender lens has created a space to share our feeling with other friends. It was very interesting to analyze myself during the good qualities of men and women session. I was very impressed by the stories during each session. Self awareness session has made me aware of the defenses which I used often in my life. Yoga has given me the strength of being in the present moment during the day. I was relieved from my worries during the self awareness sessions. Songs which we all sang during the days gave us energy to start the day with happiness.

Padmini Balachandran, Sri Lanka

A Healing Course

The feminist workshop for me has been a wonderful opportunity to learn new concepts, refresh and reaffirm my strong opinions about women's rights.

I have had inner battles and struggles within my whole being on the impact of the issues discussed during the days and my personal life. The wounds on my battered soul have been reopened and healed. I have been able to create peace within after a long struggle during the workshop.

The sheer beauty of the people, my workshop participants and resource persons and the beautiful resort will always remain alive in my mind.

These are my cherished and unforgettable memories of love, acceptance and friendship.

I am very happy to have shared these lovely moments of pure joy and peace with the other beautiful women and am taking back HOPE, COURAGE, LOVE and BELIEF in BELIEVING IN MY DREAMS with me!!

Saadia Haq, Pakistan

The Course has Given Me My Soul Back.

From the last five years, I have remained really busy with domestic problems as well as office work. But after joining this course I came to know that I was actually not busy but running away from myself. I have been dead internally. I didn't want to laugh or talk to anyone. I wanted to do something big in life and all my dreams were just being shattered. The first week of the training was difficult for me since for so long I had been in isolation.

I have always thought that my family is conservative. But after attending the session on patriarchy, I came to know that it's me who's even more conservative. I have always listened to my family's commands. I now realize that cruel is not the person who does cruelty, but the one that tolerates cruelty.

I have had this self realization that so far I'd been allowing people to control me, and that they were making me a puppet and playing with it. I want to go back and start working with women that have faced miseries due to our patriarchal system which I hadn't realized till I came for the course.

Zakia Yousaf, Pakistan

An Opportunity for Clarity, Enjoyment and Relaxation

I am newly flourishing in the field of feminism. I had no idea about the feminist capacity building course on gender, peace and sustainable development. But after following the course, I have learnt many new things so that I can now share some of it with you.

All these days when I talked about gender, I thought that gender means women and women participation. But after the sessions of Kamla Bhasin, I really understood the socially defined concept of gender, and the same with patriarchy and feminism.

Kamla Bhasin is much older than me. She digests any difficult thing and assists us in a way that we all can digest it easily. I have met facilitators who will lecture the participants and after an hour of lecture they will leave them and live in a different world not even caring what is happening to the participants. But here she became the head of the family and treated everyone accordingly.

Zehra bridged the emotional contacts with the participants. Whenever there were any emotional imbalances I kept it tightly within me. But when she showed the way to pump it out, there were spaces in the names of friends for me to ease myself.

More than anything these days are more than a course to me. These days gave me the clarity, enjoyment, relaxation.

Florence Bharathy Kennedy, Sri Lanka

I Feel a Sense of Courage Now

I really liked and appreciated how everyone welcomed us. It was a beautiful arrangement. The hall was decorated with flowers all around. Listening to Nahid sing the first evening after introduction was amazing.

Having the course in Godavari is wonderful because the environment is beautiful, full of fresh air, birds singing everywhere and the place really teaches us how to relax. We can inhale beauty of nature being here. It's Kamla who taught me to appreciate nature this way. Thank you so much.

Learning Yoga is a new experience for me. It has given me a chance to think about myself and to care for myself which I have never done before. I will continue this all my life now.

I have learnt a lot of songs in different languages which has made me really happy. All my family members are good singers, now because of the course; I have acquired the skills to sing and now I can also sing aloud back home.

The resource persons were very experienced, friendly, loving, caring and efficient. Only now I have gotten a clear idea about patriarchy, gender, masculinities etc. Nobody can take sessions so simply as Kamla didi. I have not only learnt about the issues from you, but also about how to live in this world and how to manage myself. Zahra's self awareness and self growth sessions were interesting, but I didn't think two days was enough for this.

I am happy I could make so many friends, learn so many things from all women from South Asia. The sharing with all has given me a lot of courage to think through the facts we have discussed here.

Prabha Gunasinghe, Sri Lanka

Personal and Professional Growth

I have really enjoyed the last eighteen days. I have visited many places but nothing like Godavari! It is a perfect place for peace and nature lovers. The arrangements are almost perfect which is why participants are not bothering Prativa a lot. I will always remember this beautiful time of one month forever. I am enjoying chattering of sweet birds, sunlight and clouds, lush greenery, blowing winds and architecture of the resort which at time reminds me of my grandma's house made up of bricks with huge courtyards.

I am enjoying yoga a lot which is bringing a lot of positive changes in my body and mind. I was a patient of swear vertigo which has gone as a magic. I have planned to teach this to my family as well.

The group is very good. I have made lot of friends and developed a bonding with South Asian diversity especially with Indian friends who, in our country's dictionary are our enemies. I have also got an opportunity to clarify bad and typical image of Pakistan. Every country has positive and negative aspects but media is depicting just the bad images. I have invited my friends to visit Pakistan. We also have shared our sorrows, grieves and happy moments of our lives. And I would say that I have met with so many brave and nice women who are contributing a lot to bring change in the society.

Kamla has really touched my heart. I am really impressed by her. She has multi dimensional qualities: she is traditional as well as a modern woman. Her closeness to nature, people and their problems and happiness has really impressed me. She is a very articulated woman who very simply without putting a pressure of her intellectualism teaches very complicated issues in a simpler form. Alas! Other trainers around us could also develop this art. She is a charismatic person who never gets tired.

The contents of the course are selected perfectly according to our professional as well as personal needs. The concepts are now very clear in my mind and I can apply those very confidently in my work. The best thing is that we got an

opportunity to meet with women comrades from government and other areas of Nepal. I have had an opportunity to ask so many questions to different facilitator which are frequently asked by others to challenge our work. Till now I have learnt from the conceptual clarity on Gender, feminism, self awareness, human rights and identity that nothing is above than humans and their dignity and how we can play our due role towards equality in the society. The most touching parts of the workshops are documentary on peace and the movies we watch in the evenings. By seeing these injustices you feel emotional but, energetic to counter these in your personal and professional lives.

Arifa Mazhar, Pakistan

The Final Evaluation

Based on the evaluation form filled up by each participant, a summary of their responses is as follows:

1) Contents

A majority of participants responded by saying that they have gathered a clear understanding of concepts of gender and patriarchy and what feminism and being a feminist means. The issue of globalization, sustainable development and livelihoods, food security etc. were a new learning for many. Sex and sexuality, reproductive rights, women's health etc. was the other topic found useful and explained very well. However, the topic of legal rights, media and representation of women which interested many was felt to have been given less time.

Many participants felt the need to know more about alternative development paradigms and many requested that a session on feminist training methodologies be included as an essential component.

Many suggestions came in with regards to sequence of sessions, new topics. Among them were that an overview of the women's movements could be done country wise, more time could be spent on feminist theories, the session on sexuality could have been immediately after patriarchy, the topic on "human rights" and "gender and law" should follow each other in that order.

Overall, for a vast majority their expectations were fulfilled, for some it exceeded what they had expected and they reflected the opinion that, *“All the topics were wonderfully dealt with (coherent and comprehensive), overall content very useful and relevant and were linked to each other.”*

2) Methodology

The methodologies were universally felt to be “inclusive”, “unique” and “participatory”. Facilitation was overall “great”. The warm-up exercises, group discussions, group work, the presentations, film screenings, yoga and the stress on generating love , friendships was found to be a wonderful way to make learning worthwhile, enjoyable and lasting.

In the words of some participants:

- *“Very appropriate combination of presentations, group work, readings, films etc.”*
- *“Methodologies used were very effective. There were opportunities for joint learning with presentations and discussions”.*
- *“In the beginning we missed modern technology but slowly it was clear that we can work without this and also very effectively”.*

3) Duration

More than half the participants felt that the course should have been longer. Some more days would have allowed them to go deeper into issues for some topics like gender and law, sex and sexuality and alternative development, there was not enough time according to some.

4) Resource Persons

The opinion that was expressed for the resource persons in unison was, *"they all have rich experience, vast knowledge, they are committed, sensitive, friendly and each is unique and brought out their own flavor"*.

Some resource persons of course became favorites for whatever reasons. Kamla Bhasin and Abha Bhaiya were said to have touched the body, mind and spirit in a "different" way. The reason for this perhaps was that these two spent a long time at the course.

Most participants said they felt privileged to have been able to interact with the finest trainers from South Asia at one place.

5) Resource Materials

The resources materials were widely appreciated. Kamla Bhasin's primers were especially liked because of their simple style and language. However, it was felt that it would have been a good idea to share the resource materials a month in advance. Participants also felt that more time should have been kept for self reading and group discussion.

6) Group Dynamics

The group dynamics was found to be very healthy, good and inspiring b most. An atmosphere of sisterhood, bonding, sharing, caring, understanding and love was created that greatly enhanced each collective learning. Many felt enriched and energized by this experience.

However, some participants felt disturbed and uncomfortable with the dominating attitude of one or two participants. Some felt that all the participants should be treated as participants. No one should be asked to facilitate some sessions, as it leads to hierarchy in the group.

A few participants felt that sharing was difficult for them because of the language. Although knowledge of English was essential, some participants were not able to speak well and they had problems in expressing themselves.

Most participants said that they made a genuine attempt to share in the larger group in whatever way/s they were capable of. While some said that they shared their friendship and love, others said that they shared information in the group in constructive ways, yet others said that they contributed by respecting other's thoughts and expressions and listening to them.

- *"I made a conscious effort to spend time with those team members who were feeling isolated and marginalized"*

7) Some Comments on Personal Growth and Performance

On the issue of personal growth and performance, many responses were given. From the responses it was evident that all participants were immensely gratified by the experience of being part of the course. Some participants said that they would like to change their attitudes, thinking, behavior, and ways of dressing up. Some reported that they had become stronger to change their personal lives. In their own words: –

- *"I have acquired more courage to live my life my way".*
- *"Yoga and pranayam will now be a part of my daily routine."*
- *"I will review my relationships and will stop lingering in painful relationships".*
- *"I will use the learnings in my daily life."*
- *"I will change myself into a strong person"*
- *"I will say no if I do not want to do something".*

- *"I will take care of my body".*
- *"I will build my self esteem".*

8) Reflections on Using Learning in Professional Work

Most participants said they would go back and share the learning with their colleagues, with the community they work in, with women's groups they interact with, with partner organizations, extend solidarity to the movement, critically analyze patriarchy in their work and strengthen feminist principles in work.

Some said that they would like to learn more. In the participant's own words –

- *"Most of the leanings will be used as a reference while implementing programmes"*
- *"I will share the learnings with my colleagues and co-workers".*
- *"First step will be to start gender sensitization for seniors within the organization and for partners."*
- *"I will include the concepts I have learnt here in journalism training modules"*
- *"I felt I had returned back to my college life, full of energy to face new challenges at home and in the office".*
- *"I will critically review my organizations programmes".*
- *"I am on the right track. I will increase my inclusive behavior".*
- *"I have a new perspective. I will definitely internalize concepts like secularism and love for all".*

- *“I will use the learnings in my university lectures”.*
- *“Create a gender friendly working atmosphere”.*
- *“Work on staff development and planning”.*
- *“Conduct sessions with community partners”.*

9) Suggestions for Follow-up

Every participant was unanimous that networking must be established to carry on the interaction the seeds of which were sown during the course. An immediate action that was taken was to form an e-group to share all kinds of information ,experiences and keep in touch.

Besides this, some suggestions for specific follow up activities were discussed by the participants:

- *Translation of materials into local languages so that more people can read and understand them.*
- *Several participants wanted a two week gender sensitization workshop to be conducted in local languages in their own countries.*
- *An effort should be made to get more participants from Bhutan, Afghanistan and Maldives.*
- *Need to include specific issues of Dalit women in the course.*
- *Some participants requested for a refresher course to be conducted as a follow up after six months.*

Sharing & Collaboration After the Course

A month of living, sharing, learning and, working together. A group of thirty five women from different cultures, countries and professions. It is indeed difficult to explain the transformation in body, mind, relationships which one can see at the end of the course.

We are often asked the question, what is the tangible outcome and impact of such courses? What have you achieved? And we always find it difficult to quantify the love, solidarity and trust which binds the group together, the personal and professional relationships which grow. In this section of the report we bring you glimpses of some of the ways in which these courses help in building long-lasting friendships and networking across national borders. For us the emergence of a South Asian identity is the most logical outcome of this course.

It is a great blessing for us to have friends across the globe. I was just visiting the trade fair in Delhi. When I visited the different countries shops I was thinking of Sangat friends. Some kind of happiness I felt which I am unable to express. I made an attempt to talk to the persons in the shops from Pakistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal etc. I felt some attachment to those countries for I know some one from those countries. I am proud of being a member of such a big loving and vibrant group. It was a rare opportunity that one gets in life time. Sheela, India

The participants of the month long courses create an email group through which they keep in touch with each other almost on a daily basis. Reading through some of the email exchanges after this course, one can get a feel of the various matters which are discussed. Information which is both personal and work related is shared. Advice on professional matters is sought.

It is so nice to hear from everyone ... so exciting to read all the mails which I receive daily. Karuna, I am also happy to hear about your field experience.. In Sri Lanka also OXFAM organized different activities for 16 days activism. I participated on the 25th November. Thanks for your song, Tumhara Saath..I am always singing ~Tumhara Saath, Pulko Aakha ma.. and Ya Ali... These songs are so nice. Whenever I sing them I think of Kamla ,Nahid... and all of you.Prabha, Sri Lanka

*Namaste, Namaskar, Jojolappa, salamewalekum, kujijampo.....
.It is so exciting to see so many mails from all of you and recalling the memory of one month. I have just returned from the field after almost 18 days. I went to Jumla & Dailekh Districts in Mid Far western region of Nepal. During the Violence against women campaign for six days, I got chance to celebrate/stay/ talk/enjoying/ listening to those women who's life we are trying to understand. During these days Oxfam also organised different activities around the WE CAN campaign, focusing the themes Light the light for change and sing the song on issues of Violence Against Women. In villages most women share their sorrows, pains and happiness through songs. Sheela, you are right,,,,yoga is helping us a lot otherwise it will be difficult to walk for hours together in hills and mountains of Nepal. My dear sisters, Saadia and Samita I will try to send your photographs by next week. Bharathy, I love your bright eyes with lots of confidence. Mamta and Purnima and Anju thanks a lot for building the link between us...please keep in touch. "Karuna ,Nepal*

It is Christmas time - Wishing all the women and their families the blessings of Jesus and Al Mighty Allah. May this christmas bring us all joy, peace and contentment and time to spend with our loved ones...Shella dint get your email of sharing your job.... still congratulations from me.. Priya and Jhanssi i hope u both r fine as we havent heard from you both.....May Allah bless the pakistani feminists whom we havent heard for a long time....Poornima where are u traveling these days.... Saama I am patiently waiting for Kamla to visit Pakistan....Thinley you still in capital of Bhutan.....Abha Im sure is now in Europe busy with the book....Karuna, Shanti, Ramita, Ranjhu hope u r fine.. any news of Laxmi she seems to have vanished...Barbara what about you - celebrating Xmas in Austria or in India..... write to us...Nahid good 2 know you found some free lance work.....any news of Ms. Chaudry and Zubeda..... we

did not hear from them at all.....Anju is busy in finalising her visit to Pakistan on 21 of this month.. we are gona meet and have some fun...Prabha I hope the cake you were making was just YUMMY..... Love and warm wishes for a holiday season ahead.... Miss you all very much.....YA ALI - Bless women in the coming times...Saadia, Pakistan

One participant from Sri Lanka, Bharathi writes about her fathers' illness. She is very worried and almost immediately all her friends in the neighboring countries send her good wishes. So we have a Muslim woman praying to Allah for the recovery of her Hindu friend's father in Sri Lanka. We have a Hindu woman from Nepal sending her positive energy. Such is the level of solidarity , love and caring.

"Dear Bharathi, I know you are stressed due to your father's illness. Please remember that we all are praying for his speedy recovery. May Allah All Mighty bestow him with good health Inshallah!! Our strength and support is extended to you always!" Uzma, Pakistan

"So sad to hear about your father's health. May God Pashupatinath bless him of prompt recovery.Bharathi, we all are with you and our prayers also".Savitree Thapa, Nepal

Bharathy am very sad to read about your fathers illness. We all are praying for your father's speedy recovery. Have faith in god. And please remember that life is not measured by the number of breaths we take but by the moments that take our breath away. So be strong." Ramita, Nepal

Many participants also share their travel plans to South Asia. During these visits to other countries they make a conscious effort to get in touch with friends and visit their organizations. During these exchanges they also plan joint activities and other ways to regionally link up with each other.

Amrita Dutta, one of our participants from our last course plans a visit to Afghanistan. Her trip is facilitated by Frestha, another participant who was with her during the course.It helps Amrita feel comfortable in a country she has never been before.

Our participants in previous courses also keep in touch with us at SANGAT through letters, email giving

us news about themselves. They come to meet us if we are visiting their country. For example in Nepal, for every workshop Kamla conducts with other agencies participants of our previous workshops/courses make time to meet her.

"My Dearest Kamla, It is so exciting to read your mail... oh.. It is so nice to know about your coming to Sri Lanka. It makes me very happy. I feel like singing, dancing, screaming...Of course am coming to see you. How long are you going to stay in Sri Lanka? ...I just want to see you, meet you, hug you...I am looking forward to it. With lots of love" Prabha

"I am very jealous of you all as Kamla will be visiting your countries and you will meet again and have a blast of time. Am missing Kamla very much and wished she was visiting Pakistan soon. Anju is coming Pakistan on Dec 21 and both of us will be meeting to have some good time here!! Take care and love to all lovely women out there!!! "Saadia , Pakistan

Besides all these many of the follow up activities taking place in our neighboring countries can directly be linked up to these courses. It was only after we invited participants from Afghanistan for these courses that many of our resource persons were invited to conduct gender sensitization workshops in Afghanistan, help in long term strategic planning and mainstreaming gender in organizations. We now have an invitation from Thinley in Bhutan for a short gender course. Such efforts gratify us and inspire us to continue with energy and vigour.



Annexures

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

BANGLADESH

Most. Anjum Nahed Chowdhury

Gana Unnayan Kendra
Nadhratpur, Gaibandha
Phone:0541-89042
Mobile:01711-413632
guk@agni.com

Anjum Nahid Chowdhary works with Gana Unnayan Kendra (GUK) for the past 14 years as a programme manager for gender equality, justice and governance programme. She is also a member of the management team and team leader of women's forum of GUK. GUK has been working for the betterment and empowerment of disadvantaged and neglected people especially women and children.

Syeda Zubyda Fatema

ALRD
10/11 Iqbal Road, Block A

71

Mohammadpur, Dhaka 1207
Phone:00880-2-8142031/9114660
Mobile:01711102873
alrd@agni.com

Syeda Zubyda Fatema completed her Master's in Accountancy. Since 2002, she has been working with Association for Land Reform and Development (ALRD), an organization working on land rights and agrarian reforms.

Nahid Sultana

32 East Razabazar
Dhaka 1215
Phone: 0088-2-8142065/67
Mobile: 0152389613
Sultana.nahid@gmail.com

Nahid Sultana did her LLM from Dhaka University. She is a journalist and contributes to different newspapers, magazines and journals on gender issues, women's rights and child rights. She is the coordinating editor of BD News 24 (News Agency) and Ekattor, a weekly magazine. She is closely involved with feminist activities. She loves singing.

BHUTAN

Thinley Wangmo

Phuentsholing Women's Association
Phone:00975-5-252132
Mobile:017605764
thinleewangmo@yahoo.co.in

Thinley Wangmo has a BEd in Primary Education and teaches. Besides this, she works as a program officer of Phuentsholing Women's Association (PWA) in a government school on voluntary basis.

INDIA**Barbara Nath-Wiser**

C/O Nishtha
Tikka Rakkar
Sidhbari, Kangra-176057
Himachal Pradesh
Phone:01892-246228/236597
bnathwiser@gmail.com, nishtha@sancharnet.in

Barbara Nath Wiser, is a medical doctor by training. An Austrian National she is living in Himachal Pradesh since 1984. She is the director of Nishtha rural health education and environment center, which aims to work with the poor in a holistic way.

Jhansi Rani Nitta

72

Centre for World Solidarity
12-13-438, Street No.1
Taranaka, Secunderabad-100 017
Andhra Pradesh
Phone:091-40-27017106
Mobile:09440797238
jani_ch@rediffmail.com

Jhansi Rani Nitta was born in a lower middleclass Dalit family in rural Andhra Pradesh. She has a bachelor's degree in the year 1993 and works with Centre for World Solidarity in Secunderabad, India. Her personal focus at work is to identify potential women leaders from Dalit, Adivasi and other backward communities and build their capacity to take up leadership.

Mukkavilli Aparna

Asmita Resource Centre For Women
10-3-96, Plot 283, 4th Floor
Teachers Colony, East Marredpally
Secunderabad- 500026
Phone:91-040-27733251/229
Mobile:09885502748
aparnaswathi@yahoo.com

Aparna Mukkavilli is working in Asmita resource centre for women as program associate. "At Asmita,
We dream of a future, where women speak out

their thoughts
Act out their dreams, walk paths they choose
Where girls grow up, brave sure gracious
Honing their talents, carving their identity
Moving towards a future, that is peaceful just
and free"

Priya Raju

Flat No. 203
Visha Ganga Apartment
Near Laxmi Nursing Home
Anandpuri, West Boring Canal Road
Patna- 800 001
Phone:0612-3257532
Mobile:09835641746
priya_sarah22@yahoo.com

Priya Raju comes from the dalit community and works with the Centre for World Solidarity in Bihar with rural women and children. She has a Post Graduate Diploma in Rural Development.

Purnima Gupta

Nirantar
B-64, Sarvodaya Enclave
New Delhi-110017
Phone:91-011-26966334, 26517726,
91-011-26013468(R)
purnima_203@yahoo.co.in/nirantar@vsnl.com

Purnima Gupta has been working with Nirantar, an NGO working women and education in New Delhi since 1998. Presently she is coordinating the empowerment and education project for women and girls in Lalitpur district of U.P.. Through her work and her personal experiences, she is able to relate to women of the community she's working with.

Mamta ben Jyotindrabhai Baxi

OLAKH
24 Jalaram Park
Opp. Lal Bahadur Shashtri School
Vadodara 390 009
Phone: 91-11-265-2486487
Mobile: 09825591226
Olakh@satyam.net.in

Mamta Baxi, works as a team member with Olakh since April 2001 and is also a part of the Olakh Board. She has worked on development issues for three years and worked with women's empowerment program for eight years. At present, she is involved in conducting trainings for grass root women and assists in the coordination of Olakh. She operates at all levels of Olakh.

Sheela Joseph

Flat No 31 DDA SFS, Surabhi Apartments
Sector 11, Pocket 1

Dwarka
Delhi 110 075
Mobile: 09810172041
sheeljoseph@rediffmail.com

Sheela Joseph is a graduate in social work and has specialized in rural community development. Presently based in Delhi she has worked with DanchurchAid for many years as a program manager and administrator.

Anjuman Ara Begum
North East Network
J.N Borooah Lane
Jorpukhuri, Guwahati
Assam-781001
Phone: 0091-361- 2603833
Mobile: 09954024624
assammen@yahoo.co.uk
anju.azad@gmail.com

Anjuman Ara Begum works as a legal associate with a women's organization- North East Network in North East India. Born in Meghalaya, she is a graduate in Chemistry and Post graduate in Law with special papers in constitutional law and Human Rights. She loves music, travelling and reading.

NEPAL

74

Bishnu Joshi-Sharma
Rural Entrepreneur Support Program
Panchthar, PHIDIM
Phone: 977-1-024-520401
Fax: 977-1-024-520106
reappanchthar@npc.net.np

Bishnu Joshi has a master's degree in Business Administration and has ten years of entrepreneurship and business development experience. Presently, she is working for Industrial Enterprise Development Institute (IEDI) as a district program coordinator in the eastern part of Nepal. The programme has been focusing on economic upliftment of men and women through capacity building of local NGOs, GOs and private sectors.

Karuna Amatya
OXFAM GB
Jawalakhel, P.O. BOX 2500
Kathmandu Phone: 977-1-5539171,
977-1-5520586 / Fax: 977-1-5523197
shrijal_lal@yahoo.com, kamtia@oxfam.org.uk

Laxmi Maya Rai
Nepal Abhilasha Development Centre (NADC)
Dharan
Phone: 977-1-25-527379
Mobile: 09852046728
luxmirai@yahoo.com,

npabhilasha@sailung.com

Laxmi Rai is an executive board member of Nepal Abhilasha Development Centre. She is currently working as an Inclusion Project Manager with Plan Nepal, Morang Sunsari Program Unit.

Samita Karamcharya

Didi Bahini

Anamnagar, P.O. BOX 13568

Kathmandu, Nepal

Phone:977-1-4226753

977-1-4225012

Fax:977-1-422653

samita@didibahini.org

Samita Karmacharya works as a youth coordinator and office secretary in Didi Bahini. Didi Bahini works on women's rights issues focusing on violence against women and trafficking.

Savitree Thapa Gurung

Ratna Rajya Laxmi Devi Campus

Ghatekulu 32, House No.185, P.O. BOX 11292

Kathmandu, Nepal

Phone:977-1-4770208 (R)

sngurung2@hotmail.com,

Savitree Thapa Gurung has a master's degree in political science and public policy and a post graduate diploma in population and sustainable development. Since 1990, she has been working in Tribhuvan University as a lecturer. She is a member of Tribhuvan University Teacher's Association, Society of Women's University Teachers, Human Rights Council of Nepal and Legal Aid and Advocacy Centre.

Shanti Manandhar

Shtrii Shakti (S2)

Lazimpat, P.O. BOX 23111

Kathmandu

Phone:977-1-4423054

Fax:977-1-4419429

shtriishakti@s2.wlink.com.np

Shanti Manadhar has a bachelor's degree in Social Science and has six years of working experience with Shtrii Shakti. She is the focal person for Shtrii Shakti's partner organizations of young farmers.

Ranju Thakur

House No. 01 / 107 Kupondole

Lalitpur Sub- Metropolitan Ward No. 1

Lalitpur, Kathmandu

Phone: 977-1-5552610

Mobile: 098030 49806

ranju_lr@hotmail.com

Ranju Thakur is a lawyer and a freelance social activist. She is the central committee member of All Nepal Women's Association (ANWA). and works as a volunteer lawyer in the organization.

Bhabani Sapkota Aryal

SAHAVAGI

Thulo Kharibot, Kumod Devekota Marga

Ghar No. 17, New Baneshwor,

Kathmandu

Phone No. 977-01-4464779/

Mobile :016212375

sahavagi@ntc.net.np

Bhabani Sapkota Aryal has a MA degree and a post graduate diploma in women's studies. She has been working as a program officer through Sahavagi on women and gender issues. She also works as a part time lecturer of Nepali in two colleges in Kathmandu.

Shiva Maya Tumbahangphe

Shiva Maya is an advocate by training. She is the member of the Communist Party Nepal (United Marxist Leninist) and board member of Self Reliance Initiative, Nepal. She is also a poet, a writer and has published many poems, articles and books.

PAKISTAN

76

Ambreen Fatima

Action Aid

258-A, Wazir Ali Road, Upper Mall

Lahore

Phone:0092-42-5764205, 5742620

Mobile:0092-3045157200

ambreen.fatima@actionaid.org

Saadia Haque

Apartment 13,

Aghaz Plaza, F-8 Markaz,

Islamabad

Mobile:0092-3215179986

saadiahq@yahoo.com

Saadia Haq has a masters in business administration but started her career in the development sector implementing programs related to women's reproductive health, gender disparities and sexual rights. She trained as a radio producer and journalist to join the radio program "Meri Awaz Suno" (listen to my voice) a special program focusing on women and children in 2004 through Uks research centre.

Shakeela Khan

Aurat Foundation

H/NO T229/230, Khyber Colony, Tehkal Payan

University Road, Peshawar

Phone: 091-2572113

Mobile:0321-9013732
friendlyshakeela78@yahoo.com

Zakia Yousuf
Khwendo Kor
Bungalow No. 3, Behind Siyal Flats, Arbab
Colony
Abdara, University Road, Peshawar
Phone:091-5271632
Mobile:03005937910
anmzjee@yahoo.com, zakia_je@hotmail.com

Zakia Yousuf did her Masters in Sociology and Economics, with a strong background in Information Technology. She started out as an Economics and English teacher, and then joined a computer institute as an administrator and principal. In 1992, she joined Khewendo Kor as a monitoring facilitator. Now she works as a regional manager

Uzma Gul
Sungi Development Foundation
House &A Street 10
F 8/3 Islamabad
Phone: 92-51-2282481/82
uzma.gul@sungi.org

Uzma Gul has done her Masters in Clinical Psychology. She belongs to a Pathan family from Kohat. She has been working as a

programme manager with Sungi Development since 1996.

Arifa Mazhar
Sungi Development Foundation
Hiuse &A Street 10
F 8/3 Islamabad
Phone: 91-51-2282481/82
arifa.mazhar@sungi.org

Arifa Mazhar did her graduation in Education and Philosophy. She started her career with Sungi Development Foundation in 1994. She is now the gender manager at the Foundation.

SRI LANKA

Bharathy Florence Kennedy
Department Of Management
Faculty of Commerce and Management, EUSL
Batticaloa
Phone:0094-065-2226961
Fax:0094-0652240591
kennedybharathy@yahoo.co.uk

Florence Bharathy Kennedy is a lecturer of Eastern University Sri Lanka. Her specialization is marketing management. She is reading Masters of Business Administration at Rajarata University, Sri Lanka and post graduate diploma in education at Open University Sri Lanka.

Padmini Balachandran

OXFAM

45/10, Jaffna Road, Vavuniya

Phone:0094-242220374

Mobile:0094-773064657

PBalachandran@oxfam.lk

Padmini Balachandran is from a middle class family and lives in the North part of Sri Lanka called Vavuniya. Since 2001 she has been working in the area of Gender and Development through OXFAM, in war affected areas with internally displaced people, survivor women groups, Indian returnees, women headed families

Liyanage Prabha Gunasinghe

Women's Education And Research Centre

58 Darmarama Road, Colombo 06

Phone:0094-11-4442111

Mobile:0777271164

womendre@sltnet.lk

Prabha Gunasinghe works as an accountant with Women's Education and Research Centre. She also works with Tsunami affected children.

Saama Rajakaruna

CIDA

12, Amarasekara Mawatha, Colombo 5

Phone:0094-11-2502640

saama_rajakaruna@cisa-psu.lk

Saama Rajakaruna did her first degree in law at the University of Warwick, and her Masters in Law at the London School of Economics and Political Science, United Kingdom. She is presently working at the Canadian International Development Agency- Programme Support Unit (CIDA-PSU) in Colombo, as a Development Officer.

READING MATERIALS

1. PATRIARCHY, MASCULINITY AND GENDER :CONCEPTS

- 1.1. What is Patriarchy? *Kamla Bhasin (Book)*
- 1.2. What is a Girl, What is a Boy? *Kamla Bhasin (Book)*
- 1.3. Understanding Gender *Kamla Bhasin (Book)*
- 1.4. Exploring Masculinities: *Kamla Bhasin (Book)*
- 1.5. Shadow and Sun: Femininity and Masculinity in South Asia: *Ruth Finney Hayward*
- 1.6. Explanations of Some Gender Related Concepts/Terms: *Kamla Bhasin*
- 1.7. Breaking the Silence: Why Boys and Men Should Speak Out Against Violence: *Rahul Roy*

2. FEMINISM/WOMEN'S MOVEMENT

- 2.1. What is Feminism ? *Kamla Bhasin (Book)*
- 2.2. Women in Muslim Paradise: *Fatima Mernissi*
- 2.3. South Asian Feminist Declaration

3. AGRICULTURE, FOOD SECURITY, SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS AND GENDER

- 3.1. South Asian Statement of Concern on Food, Ecology and Culture:SANFEC *(Book)*
- 3.2. Development and Sustainable Development: *Kamla Bhasin (Book)*
- 3.3. Gender and Command Over Poverty: an economic analysis of South Asia: *Bina Agarwal (Book)*

4. POVERTY, GLOBALIZATION, SAP AND WOMEN

- 4.1. Winners and Losers of Globalization: *Kamla Bhasin*
- 4.2. The Globe and Mail: *Blaise Salmon*
- 4.3. A Time to Dare: *Deep Joshi*

5. WOMEN'S HEALTH/BODY AND SEXUALITY

- 5.1. How Natural is Normal? Feminism and Compulsory Heterosexuality: *Nivedita Menon*
- 5.2. The Goddess Ungirdled: How I Learned to Love my Belly and Found the Sacred Feminine Within
- 5.3. Turning Dangers into Opportunities: HIV/AIDS and Youth: *Kamla Bhasin (Book)*
- 5.4. Sexuality in Modern India: Critical Concerns: *Mary John & Janaki Nair*

- 6. VIOLENCE AND WOMEN**
- 6.1 Women's Rights as Human Rights: *Charlotte Bunch*
- 6.2 The White Ribbon Campaign: Men Working to End Men's Violence Against Women
- 6.3 If Only Someone Had Broken the Silence: *Kamla Bhasin(Book)*
- 6.4 Violence Against Women and Girls in South Asia: *Dr. Vibhuti Patel*
- 6.5 The Tribalisation of the State and implications for Gender-*Nafisa Shah*
- 6.6 Violence Against Women-*Durga Ghimire*
- 7. WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT AND GENDER WORKSHOPS**
- 7.1 The Goal is Empowerment of Human Values: *Kamla Bhasin*
- 7.2 Gender Workshops with Men: *Kamla Bhasin (Book)*
- 7.3 Empowerment of Women in South Asia: Concepts and Practices: *Srilatha Batliwala (Book)*
- 8. ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND GENDER PLANNING**
- 8.1 Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture?
- 8.2 Gender Training Endangered by Fragmented Thinking: A View From the South: *Kamla Bhasin*
- 8.3 The Rights Based Approach to Poverty Eradication and Gender: *Kamla Bhasin*
- 9. MILITARISATION, CONFLICT AND PEACE**
- 9.1 Weapons of Mass Transformation
- 9.2 **Gendered Conflicts:** A Feminist perspective on Knowledge of Conflict :*Rubina Saigol*
- 9.3 Market, Fundamentalism and Conflict: *Jayati Ghosh*
- 9.4 Women Making Peace: South Asian Forum for Human Rights: *SAFHR (Book)*
- 9.5 The Fight Not to Fight: *Rachel Shabi*
- 9.6 The Hyderabad Pledge
- 9.7 Gender, Conflict and Peace: a report *KARTINI/SANGAT/JAGORI*
- 10. HUMAN RIGHTS/IDENTITY POLITICS**
- 10.1 Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- 10.2 Administration of the Convention
- 10.3 Basic Concepts of Human Rights
- 10.4 Debates and Conflicts in Human Rights
- 10.5 Mechanism for Ensuring Human Rights
- 10.6 Democracy and Human Rights from a Women Perspective: *Sunila Abeysekera*
- 10.7 Identity Politics: South Asia: *Amrita Chhachhi*

11 SECULARISM/RELIGION

- 11.1 What Clash of Civilisations: *Amartya Sen*
- 11.2 Is a dewdrop sacred or is it secular?
Lata mani
- 11.3 A Feminist Position on Secularism and
Religion: *Uma Chakravarti*

AGENDA

18 September 2006

- Arrivals
- 1900: Welcome and Introduction of Participants

19 September 2006

- Introductions of Participants contd.
- Conceptual Clarity on Gender

Kamla Bhasin

20 September 2006

- Conceptual Clarity on Patriarchy

Kamla Bhasin

21 September 2006

- Introduction to Nepal
- Peace Event

22 September 2006

- Exploring Masculinities and working with men and boys on gender issues

Kamla Bhasin

23 September 2006

- Feminism/Women's Movement
Kamla Bhasin

24 September 2006

- Gender and Development
Kamla Bhasin

25 September 2006

- Free Day

26 & 27 September 2006

- Self Awareness and Self Growth
Zehra Kamal

28 September 2006

- Leadership and Confidence Building
Kamla Bhasin

29 September 2006

- Violence Against Women and Girls
Durga Ghimire/Kamla Bhasin/Renu Rajbhandari

30 September 2006

- Gender and Human Rights
Sunila Abeysekera

1 October 2006

- Gender and Human Rights
Sunila Abeysekera

2 October 2006

- Identity Politics, Conflict and Conflict Transformation
Sunila Abeysekera

3 October 2006

- Free Day

4 October 2006

- Globalisation, Poverty and Gender
V.Rukmini Rao

5 October 2006

- People's Movements and their response to LPG (women's movement, WSF)-case study of SANFEC and Nobokrishi Andolan
V.Rukmini Rao

6 October 2006

- Sustainable Livelihoods/Food Security
VRukmini Rao/Azra Talat Sayeed

7 October 2006

- Sustainable Livelihoods/Food Security
VRukmini Rao/Azra Talat Sayeed

8 October 2006

- Local Self Governments, Women and Sustainable Development
V.Rukmini Rao/Azra Talat Sayeed

9 October & 10 October 2006

- Poverty eradication, community mobilisation
Nivedita Narain

11 October 2006

- Gender and Law
Sapna Pradhan-Malla/Abha Bhaiya

12 October 2006

- Media and Gender
Abha Bhaiya

13 October 2006

- Women's Health and Reproductive Rights
Abha Bhaiya

14 October 2006

- Body, Sexuality and Gender
Abha Bhaiya

15 October 2006

- Evaluation and follow up
- Closure of the course-by lunch
- Departures

* Evenings will be used for film screenings, country presentations and presentations on participating organisations.

* There will be yoga in the mornings from 0630-0730.

*Songs and spontaneous dancing will be integrated in the programme