

GROOTS

GRASSROOTS ORGANISATIONS OPERATING TOGETHER IN SISTERHOOD (SOUTH ASIA)

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Editorial

MAN'S INHUMANITY TO MAN (IN SEARCH OF DIGNITY)

Is it not that manual scavenging has left an indelible blot on the population both urban/rural and our apathy towards such a despicable practice has crossed the threshold from worrisome to dangerous? It's hard to imagine as to why this inhuman practice continues unhindered despite being dangerous and regardless of technological advancement and increased awareness of human rights.

Aren't the citizens of the country aware that manual scavenging is one of the most dehumanizing/dangerous occupations? Obviously the Rules, Regulations and Acts such as *The Employment of Manual Scavengers and Construction of Dry Latrines (Prohibition) Act, 1993*, followed by another act in 2013 i.e., *The Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act* besides the *National Commission for Safai Karamcharis* in 1994 and the Government initiated *Self Employment Scheme for Rehabilitation of Manual Scavenging* in 2007 - Nothing works. The ruling class and the citizens of the urban/rural areas are least concerned.

Why are the responsible citizens despite being



intellectuals not able to think of alternative despite the safeguard promulgated by the government? The governments too are not able to meet the deadlines to eradicate manual scavenging. Witnessing this disastrous practice what else could one think this is nothing but man's inhumanity to man and its prolonged continuance?

Is it not an enigma that the development of science and technology couldn't think of an alternate method to end this inhuman practice when modernization is possible in many other fields? How to compensate the valuable life of the manual scavengers who die while doing their work and their families left in shambles? Are the lives of such people so cheap? It's a shame that this inhuman despicable practice draw the attention of foreign visitors/dignitaries, human rights groups who leave an enigmatic question as why are we yet to abolish it despite the judiciary, executive. The media ofcourse continues to do its best in bringing out deaths of manual scavengers and other anomalies happening, but the ground reality is, there is hardly any substantial alternative change or



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transformation due to lack of concern of public and inadequate implementation of the laws on the ground by the respective local governments.

Yet another catastrophic fact is when the manual scavenger are not available the municipal corporation hires private contractors to bring them from other places instead of using alternative technological assistance, as manual scavengers are cheaper. To describe the operations of manual scavenging, they clean with their bare hands, broom and enter the drainages with minimum clothes and get fully drenched with filth. It's questionable whether they are provided with any protective measures and safety guidelines? Manual scavenging is the practice of completely using two hands for carrying, handling or disposing filth i.e., human excreta from dry latrines, septic tanks, gutters and sewages. Often it is reported and seen that in many places workers die due to asphyxiation, succumb to devastating skin diseases, health problems and many more. The work being tougher/difficult most are addicted to alcoholism and die at young age because of this devastating practice.

Whose fault is this that this mess has persisted for over years? The unfortunate reality is that the social inequality of labour hierarchy makes the labourers to engage in such exploitative jobs for meager wages in least safety.

Having been discarded as untouchable and being part of the dalit community they remain marginalized and discriminated as human beings. As per the 2011 socio-economic caste census report, 1,80,657 households are engaged in manual scavenging for livelihood and most are women. It's more surprising and the parody remains that despite various Act's being passed the Indian Railways is the largest employer of manual scavengers in the country. It is not a tough task for the ruling class to rehabilitate the manual scavengers as could be seen by the way of resources a spent by the past/present authorities/officials for the projects such as flyovers, roads than in the welfare of the marginalized workers i.e manual scavengers

who still struggle in the filthiest job that goes against humanity.

Is it not the duty of the educated citizens to educate about the use of scientific technology and the harmfulness of using septic tanks and spread awareness on building composting toilets, bio-toilets and leach pits? Isn't it for us now to stop playing with the lives and dignity of the marginalized community and exploit their desperation? There is an immediate need for making them use/provide sophisticated equipments for cleaning. Technological assistance is far more important in cleaning of sewages and equipments to protect themselves. Besides yet another important aspect is the simultaneous approach to make the programmes/schemes more as rehabilitation for manual scavengers to change their lives towards a dignified livelihood. The government should support them with decent housing, children education and health care facilities to secure the future of the next generation of liberated manual scavengers.

Sanitation services should be put on par with other public services like fire service, ambulance service, rescue service, police services etc. In this issue we have highlighted the grave issue of manual scavenging before the general public and the responsible citizens to thing over a solution of for the rehabilitation/ liberation of this disadvantaged group. ■

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PARTICIPATION IN NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL SEMINARS/CONFERENCES

National Workshop on Strengthening Women Cooperatives



Dr. Jaya Arunachalam, President WWF at the National Workshop on Strengthening Women's Cooperatives

President, Working Women's Forum (India) participated in the National Workshop on Strengthening Women Cooperatives organized by National Cooperative Union of India (NCUI) and National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC) held on 7&8 March 2017 at New Delhi. More than 190 women cooperators attended. Welcoming the guests Dr. Vasudha Mishra, MD, NCDC narrated the idea behind the workshop and said NCDC is ready to facilitate with all kinds of help- financial as well as skill development to reach out to the needy.

The Chief Guest on the occasion NCUI President Chandra Pal inaugurated and conceded that workshop like this takes place rarely and assured woman cooperators present on the occasion that they have the support of the cooperative movement of India. Chandra Pal also said that besides increasing the number of woman cooperatives we should also simultaneously try to have more women in the boards.

In this workshop, Dr. Jaya Arunachalam President, WWF was honored as a senior cooperator and a pioneer. The President WWF, spoke in detail about the various activities of Working Women Forum/Indian Cooperative Network for women in the three southern states.

Further she said that this workshop is only a beginning and many more should follow to realize the goal of cooperative doyen Shri.Vaikunthbhai Mehta.

Speaking at the Valedictory Function on March 8, 2017, Shri. Radha Mohan Singh, Union Agriculture Minister said that "Cooperatives are the only medium to remove poverty and for strengthening family life in the villages in which the role of women is pivotal. Further shri. Radha Mohan Singh said cooperative training programmes for women should be organized in large numbers, and should be skill-based. Minister also announced that 15th October every year would be celebrated as Women's Farmer Day and deployment of one female scientist in every Krishi Vigyan Kendra will be made compulsory. ■

Vaikunth Mehta Institute of Cooperative Management

The President, Indian Cooperative Network for Women (ICNW), Dr. Nandini Azad addressed the pioneer Vaikunth Mehta Institute of Cooperative Management, Pune on International Women's Day, March 8, 2017 and spoke about the global recognition of gender equity as a key to the cooperative movement. She highlighted the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that states that gender equality is a fundamental right for a peaceful world towards growth and global poverty reduction. Further she highlighted the International Labor Organization (ILO) Recommendation no. 193 (7.3) - "Special consideration should be given to increasing women's participation in the cooperative movement at all levels, particularly at management and leadership levels." The Indian Parliament passed the crucial Constitution (111 Amendment) bill granting every Indian citizen the right to form a cooperative voluntarily as a human right insisting on autonomy and democracy. ■

ICA-AP Women's Committee Meeting at Kobe, Japan



Dr. Nandini Azad, President ICNW along with other dignitaries at Kobe, Japan

On March 2017, An office bearers meeting of the ICA-AP Women's Committee and a Seminar on Gender Sensitization was held at Kobe, Japan. The board representatives, Vice-chairperson, the Head of the International Division, senior officers and Managers of the Japanese Consumers' cooperative Union participated. In this event ,Dr. Nandini Azad, President ICNW and as Vice chairperson of the ICA AP Women's Committee presented a paper on 'Gender Integration in Co-operatives' with best practices from Philippines, Japan, Korea, China and the Indian Cooperative Network for Women, India. ■

10th Asia Pacific Co-operative Ministers' Conference



Honouring Her Excellency, Vice President of Vietnam, Dang Thi Ngoc Thinh, at 10th Asia Pacific Minister's Conference, Vietnam

Dr. Nandini Azad, President ICNW and Vice Chairperson of ICA-AP women's Committee

participated in the 10th Asia Pacific Co-operative Ministers' Conference held from April 18 to 21, 2017 at Hanoi, Vietnam. Ministers, high ranking diplomats, national government officials and co-operators from 25 countries came together to participate in this function. Dr.Nandini Azad presented the findings of the study on gender in cooperatives in the Asia-Pacific region. As the Vice-Chairperson of the women's committee Dr.Azad, read the declarations on the drafting committee and co-presented the final resolution. ■

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Smarak Trust

As a trustee of the Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Smarak Trust, Dr. Jaya Arunachalam, President WWF attended the Board of Trustees meeting on April 7,2017 at New Delhi. The discussion focused on the minutes/matters of previous meeting, to consider/approve the audited statement of the 2016- 2017 and budget for the year 2017-2018. ■

Training/awareness Programme In Working Women's Forum (india)/indian Cooperative Network For Women

Orientation Programme for Women Cooperators



President WWF addressing the trainees

A two day orientation programme for 30 women co-operators of Indian Cooperative Network for Women promoted by Working Women's Forum (India) was organized on March 17&18, 2017 at Chennai. The women co-operators from all the 14 branches of ICNW/WWF of three southern states i.e., Tamilnadu, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh

participated in the programme to update their existing knowledge/skills and be well versed to carry on their day-to-day work.

The training programme was inaugurated by Dr. Jaya Arunachalam, President, WWF also Member of NCCT welcomed the resource persons and briefed on the nuances of the training programme. Highlighting the achievements of the cooperative that has been running successfully for over three decades transcending language, class and caste barriers she advised the participants to utilize the training programme and enrich their knowledge. On March 17, 2017 Mr. I.Venkatesh, faculty, Natesan Institute of Co-operative Management delivered a lecture on the role, objectives and principles of co-operatives. Smt.Lalitha, Deputy Registrar (retd) explained the formation and process of cooperatives, registration process, time period for to initiate cooperative. Mr.Rajamohan, Chief Manager (retd) TNSC bank spoke about the importance of KYC norms and its

usefulness to prevent money laundering. He also informed the participants the monitoring process and steps for recovery.

On the second day i.e., on March 18, 2017 Mr. Maniappan, AGM (retd) Kanchipuram Central Cooperative Bank briefed on the types of assts/accounts, branches of accounts and mentioned how the bank can curb the defaults to a maximum level through proper accounting system. Mr. Nagarajan's Faculty NICM session was practical with focus on the basics of using a computer - from Microsoft Windows desktop properties, to writing and editing documents in Word, using Excel sheets and other frequently used Microsoft Windows functions. Mr. Venkatesh and Mr. Nagaraj enlightened the participants about the importance/usefulness of digital banking. In an interactive training programme, Mr. Raja Balachandran. Faculty,NICM focused on self-confidence, motivation and positive attitude through discussions and games.



Women Cooperators at the Orientation Program



Mr. Satya Narayan, Chief Executive NCUI addressing the Women entrepreneurs

Dr. Nandini Azad, President ICNW reviewed the participants about the training programme. The participant said the programme was very informative, knowledgeable and had a good mixture of learning activities through practical training/games.

On March 25, 2017, Shri. Satya Narayana, Chief Executive, National Cooperative Union of India was invited as a chief guest to the valedictory function of the orientation to cooperative staff. The President WWF and the staff from all the 14 branches briefed him about the branches, programmes/activities and the member's occupation. Shri. Satya Narayana suggested to the staff to promote machinery among the members so that make the work can be performed easier and quicker. Later a meeting was organized in the auditorium that was attended by over 2000 members of WWF/ICNW. Dr. Jaya Arunachalam



Mr. Satya Narayan, Chief Executive NCUI interacting with women entrepreneur

welcomed the chief guest, faculties and the members and said Shri. Satya Narayana is an accomplished CA know for his honesty, he was always working behind and has a clean image and it's a good sign that he has come to front now and visit WWF/ICNW.

Shri. Satya Narayana presented certificates to the participants and while speaking at the event, he said that one feels very happy when something is given/ done for others and that's exactly Dr. Jaya Arunachalam, President WWF is doing. Looking at her one does not feel amma is no more in Tamil Nadu but is here at WWF/ICNW. Shri. Satya Narayana complimented that WWF/ICNW is one of the best women's cooperative he has ever seen and this is due to the efforts of Dr. Jaya Arunachalam's will power to organize/run the society. He suggested that products of the entrepreneurs be sold under a brand name as it would attract more



Mr. Satya Narayan, Chief Executive NCUI glancing at the products

customers and helps to establish quality and increase sales of the products. Further he said he is happy to find a member paying income tax and he wants every member should progress like that. Further he said he would look into the loan requirements of WWF/ICNW for machineries like looms and subsidy for the same. He also suggested Dr. Jaya Arunachalam to undertake a study of cooperatives in South India for which NICM will facilitate WWF/ICNW.

On February 26, 2017 he visited the Kanchipuram branch, the staff explained about the purpose of initiation of the branch, the membership of the branch and the number of weavers. He visited the Tattitoppu area and witnessed the weaving techniques and suggested that the loan can be given for buying machineries and usage of machines in the weaving. He also said a visit can be undertaken to small scale industries in Ghaziabad as learning/sharing process. ■

Awareness on Kidney



Participants being enlightened about Kidney

March being National Kidney Month, WWF/ICNW thought it's the best time to spread awareness about the risks of kidney disease and to maintain a kidney healthy. In association with the TANKER Foundation, an awareness camp was held on March 21, 2017 to educate the members /staff about the kidneys, risk factors for kidney disease, and steps to take to keep kidneys healthy and reduce risk. Over 100 members attended the

awareness camp. Two volunteers of Tanker foundation said that most patients suffering visit hospitals when their kidneys functioning have already reduced to half of its capacity and further said that if the disease can be diagnosed early, the progression can be halted with medicine. For most people, kidney damage occurs slowly over many years, often due to diabetes or high blood pressure and those with a family history of kidney failure, recurring urinary infections, diabetes and hypertension must get tested periodically. They also enlightened about the preventive health check-ups that include urine test, blood test, BMI and abdominal ultrasound to detect any damage to the kidneys. Tanker foundation affords this at free of cost to the needy. WWF/ ICNW propose to have health camp/test in near future with the Tanker foundation. ■

Visitors to Working Women's Forum (India)/Indian Cooperative Network for Women

Associate Professor from University of Michigan

Ms. Shobita Parthasarathy, Associate Professor of Public Policy and Women's Studies, University of Michigan Visited Working Women's Forum (India) on January 9, 2017. The visit pertained in connection with her research and interest in India on grassroots innovation and entrepreneurship. Meeting the President WWF she wanted to know how the organization was initiated and challenges faced. She wanted the view of the president WWF on the role of microfinance. Ms. Shobita also inquired that why the insurance hasn't grown as much as microfinance? Besides, she was curious to know how the men take the success and growth of women. She also visited the training department and credit society. Impressed with the programmes of WWF/ICNW she wanted to visit the field and have direct interaction with the micro-entrepreneurs. She visited the areas in Pattanipakam and Velachery on February 8 & 15,

2017 and asked them the purpose of availing loan, benefits of joining the organization, loan repayment and profit earned from the business etc, She termed her visit “as an extraordinary and truly life-changing experience”. ■

Student from University of Madras

Ms. Srilekha, student from University of Madras visited Working Women's Forum (India) on April 2017 as part of her internship work in Prajyna Trust where she was given the task to update the work of the organizations in Chennai. ■

Exposure visit in the Working Women's Forum (India)/Indian Cooperative Network for Women Students from University of Leipzig, Germany



President WWF, in conversation with student's

26 students from University of Leipzig, Germany headed under the guidance of Dr. Brunhild Landwehr visited Working Women's Forum (India)/Indian Cooperative Network for Women's head quarters at Chennai on February 16, 2017. The main purpose of the visit is to study the Indian culture, country and its diverse background and compare it with the German culture. Dr. Jaya Arunachalam, President WWF welcomed the students and happily shared the news with the students that she was honored with a doctorate by the University of Lunenburg with the facilitation of Dr. Bruni and also the first book on WWF/ICNW was written by her. The students queried the President WWF as how the organization and the



Student Listening to President ICNW

Gandhiji are related, the training aspects, motivation of members towards carrying on business and the challenges faced from men. Later, Dr. Nandini Azad, President ICNW enlightened the students about the feminization of women apart from poverty, class, the history/activities of the organization. The students showed keen interest and asked the president ICNW about her opinion of European women, how she reached to the present level. etc.,

Next day i.e February 17, 2017 the team visited the Kanchipuram branch and was given a warm welcome. President WWF informed the student that Varanasi and Kanchipuram are famous for silk sarees. Further she said that most of the members are silk weavers and the staffs also belong to the weaving communities. The branch incharge , staff, trainers and organizers shared with the students the initiation of the branch, the hardship faced by the poor women, child bondedness and how the organization has reached out to them in their hour of crisis. They said that organization has brought in a dramatic impact in their lives by providing them various facilities facilitating them in their economic and social aspects. The team later visited the Thatithopu area to witness the silk weaving and to known the facilitation of the organization in their occupational pursuits as well as life. ■

Internship Programme in the Working Women's Forum (India)/Indian Cooperative Network for Women

Students from Madras Christian College, Chennai



Women's Day Function at WWF

As part of their field work in the community Ms. Amy and Merlin Thangam students of MSW, Madras Christian College, Chennai were placed in the Working Women's Forum (India)/Indian Cooperative Network for Women from January 4 to March 21, 2017. WWF/ICNW provided them an opportunity to learn about the functioning of the organization and its activities in all branches in three southern states. The interns observed various activities of the organization, cooperative bank, training, etc. As part of the field exposure visit, they visited Kannigapuram and SA colony to know about impact of WWF/ICNW programmes. When the trainees visited various members who were benefitting from the organization, they found that the loans that were being provided by the organization had to a very great extent, impacted the lives of these women in a very positive manner. The trainees were amazed at the way these women had utilized the loan money that they had received and had built businesses for themselves and had also managed to educate their children.

The trainees conducted a group work session with the trainers in order to help them to work with each other in a much better manner. The trainees also organized an Awareness Program for women about their reproductive health by inviting four resource



Interns conducting awareness/activities

people who were graduates of Medicine to sensitize and educate the women about reproductive health, hygiene process during menstruation, pregnancy, contraceptive methods and cancer. Lastly, the trainees decided to celebrate women's day as a special program to celebrate womanhood and the various success stories that each woman in the organization had to tell by conducting a cultural programme. Terming their placement in the organization the trainees said they learnt that self-determination and self-belief can make a person progress in life and the importance of proper guidance. ■

Students from Mar Gregorios College of Law



Interns interacting with members

Ms. Ateba and Ms. Aleena students of integrated BA LLB course, Mar Gregorios College of Law, Thiruvananthapuram, interned in WWF/ICNW as part of their curriculum from April 20 to 30, 2017. The President WWF said the women have to be

enlightened and empowered on issues that affect like gender based violence, Properties Act, crimes against women etc., and all these issues are taken and addressed by WWF/ICNW. The interns were briefed about the activities of the organization, banking procedures, training aspects and various cases handled by WWF/ICNW. The interns interacted directly with the members to know their progress. ■

Activities in Working Women's Forum (India)/Indian Cooperative Network for Women Review of Andhra Pradesh branches



Review meeting at Andhra Pradesh

Ms.Egammal, Secretary and Ms. S. Nandini, Coordinator reviewed the Andhra Pradesh branches i.e Bhimavaram, Palakol and Narasapur from February 1 to 5, 2017. This is with regard to the work of staff, organizers, collection and membership process. Besides, they visited the areas to meet the members directly to cross check the work of the branches.

On 4th February, 2017 around 40 members carrying on various occupations like lace, sarees, general stores, cotton weaving tailoring etc participated in the meeting in the Narsapur branch. Similarly on 5th February 2017, around 50 members involved in tailoring, pickle making, clothes, and embroidery work participated in the meeting held at Bhimavaram branch. On enquiring the members about the services of the WWF/ICNW, the members said the loans are very



Member engrossed with stone work

useful for business, education of children etc., and the rapport between the staff and the members are good. Further the members said that the staff treats them with respect. Ms.Egammal enlightened the members about the usefulness of insurance and asked them to enroll in insurance schemes.

On 4 February 2017, the visiting members as well the staff of the Narasapur branch visited the Machalipattinam area to see the members and their occupation. Most of the members are involved in sticking stones to the fancy jewelleries. After reviewing the 3 branches Ms.Egammal advised them to select good members and to give more loans to old members. ■

Volunteers visit Kasimedu



Oil leakage at Ennore, Chennai

In the aftermath of oil spill that occurred on January 28, 2017 in Ennore, Chennai, the volunteers of WWF/ICNW visited the fish selling members in Kasimedu to know about their plight



WWF/ICNW Volunteers interacting with fisher women

and how it has affected their livelihood. The members said the collision between the two ships lead to an oil leakage. The spill has affected their livelihood. Fishermen in Ennore are unable to go fishing. The fishing net does not get into the water as the oil floats on the surface. Due to the spill, consumers are worried about the quality of fish. Also, after the reports in the media stating that the fish is contaminated following the oil spill their sales have decreased. ■

Branch performance review by President ICNW



President ICNW reviewing the branch performance

Dr. Nandini Azad, President ICNW reviewed the performances of ICNW branches on May 15, 2017 at Chennai. The staffs from Chennai, Vellore, Kanchipuram, Bellary, Bidar, Narasapur, Bheemavarm, Palakol, Hyderabad participated in the meeting. President ICNW reviewed the staffs from branches individually and asked them to increase membership and reduce defaults.

Similarly President ICNW visited the Chennapatna branch, Dharmapuri and Dindigul branch from June 3 to 5, 2017. The President ICNW asked the Vellore branch staffs to take the responsibility and to monitor the Dharmapuri Branch. Further she asked the staffs to increase membership and revive all the old loanees. ■

Project Monitoring and Review Committee Meeting



PMRC Meeting at Adiramapattinam

The sixth Project Monitoring and Review Committee (PMRC) meeting of NABARD was held on June 5, 2017 at the premises of Working Women's Forum (India)/Indian Cooperative Network for Women, Adiramapattinam, Tanjore district. The meeting was attended by

Dr. K. Subramanian, DDM, NABARD, Thanjavur, Ms. Sheelarani, Senior Manager, Syndicate Bank, Pattukottai and other staffs of ICNW/WWF. The discussion focused on details of the sanctioned loan amount and outstanding of Adiramapattinam branch, the periods of installments to members, the minimum and maximum loan amount to members and the number of members in a group. Further NABARD felt that as WWF/ICNW is working for the overall upliftment of women by providing credit and related services, it can support in many other ways apart from credit support. ■

GROOTS

ERADICATE MANUAL SCAVENGING



WE NEED YOUR INPUTS!!!

Contribute Letters, Ideas, Comments for our Newsletter

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What Readers Say about GROOTS

Congratulations! The articles featured are interesting, informative and creative. This is one of the newsletters with a strong connection to working women's welfare.

*Mr.Narayanaswamy, B.Sc,FCA
S.Venkatram & Co, Chartered Accountants,Chennai*

Groots provides ideological base of women development and movement.

*Mr.Surendra Kumar
Acharya Kriplani Memorial Trust, New Delhi*

Thank you for the newsletter and for continuing your inspiring work.

Prof.Bish Sanyal

All articles are good and many people read your valuable magazine.....Your activities are good and you are our master.

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