

**SUBVERTING
PATRIARCHY:
WORKSHOPS FOR RURAL WOMEN**

T.K.SUNDARI RAVINDRAN

Rural Women's Social Education Centre,
Nehru Nagar, Vallam Post,
Kanchipuram - 603 002, Tamil Nadu, India.
Phone : 04114-30682
Fax : 04114-26179.

PREFACE

Rural women's workshops bringing together women from different villages are a regular feature among the activities of Rural Women's Social Education Centre – an organization by and for rural women operating in 92 villages around Chengalpattu town in Tamil Nadu, India. These workshops enable rural women to reflect and discuss on common issues- (specifically women's issues or those relating to their community as a whole), to learn new skills / gain information and to display their talents.

A unique feature of these workshops is that the facilitators and organisers of the workshops are also rural women who come from a similar background and belong to the same villages as the participants. They are facilitated by RUWSEC's staff who work in their own villages to organise women around women and health issues and stand up for their rights as women and as persons.

Several such workshops have taken place since the inception of RUWSEC's work in 1981. This document brings together reports of four workshops from our early years.

The first of these is a five day workshop in 1981 which marked the founding of RUWSEC. The workshop illustrates our politics and our vision.

The remaining three are workshops for rural women from the twelve villages where RUWSEC then worked. These are examples of the many workshops carried out during 1981, 1982 and 1983 respectively. The workshop were usually not more than a day long; at times when the women were busy in the fields during the day, they started after sunset and went on till day break. Despite coming with babes in arms and accompanied by their younger children, women usually participated actively and with enthusiasm. This report bears testimony to their wisdom and immense potential.

Each of these workshops signify different stages of progress in our work towards consciousness raising and organising rural women during these early years. Originally brought out as a mimeographed report in 1984, this report is being republished in 1999 to preserve and learn from our history, and for the benefit of the many new workers who have joined us in over a decade since then.

T.K Sundari Ravindran
For the RUWSEC team

THE BEGINNING: REPORT OF RUWSEC'S FOUNDING WORKSHOP 30 JULY – 3 AUGUST; 1981

Background: -

Rural Women's Social Education Centre (RUWSEC) is a grassroots women's organisation in Tamil Nadu founded in 1981. The organisation evolved from an adult education programme. Women who came together to form the organisation were 'dalit' women who were working as adult educators in a pilot project of the National Adult Education Programme (NAEP) initiated in 1978. The adult education project had been influenced by Paulo Freire's philosophy of conscientization. Both as a result of the training and exposure received from working as adult educators, and as a consequence of their experiences as women who were playing an important role in the community for the first time, the women began to question their oppression as poor, dalit women. Conflicts in the domestic front and opposition from the male leadership in their communities; and other concerns such as the need to know more about the many reproductive health concerns they had, led to their meeting regularly as a women's group along with one of the women functionaries associated with the NAEP.

After several months, the group felt that the experience of meeting together as women to address gender issues and issues around reproductive health and rights should be extended to women's groups in their respective villages. Reproductive health and women's wellbeing was their main focus. This owed itself to the conviction that had evolved from their personal experiences, that women cannot become successful 'change agents' addressing social issues without dealing with the lack of control over their bodies and their lives that they experienced. They felt powerless in their personal lives and needed to start with it, and continue to address it alongside other issues of social concern.

Subsequently, the women's group held meetings and workshops with women in different villages on various dimensions of gender discrimination within the context of a society stratified along caste and class lines. This phase continued through 1978 to 1981, and included eighteen months of work under the aegis of a newly formed NGO, Rural Development Society.

During these years we came to realise that to build village women's organisations we needed to carry our sustained activities, not just ad hoc meetings once in so many months. Women needed to meet regularly with a definite purpose, and not only because there was a local problem that needed to be dealt with. The meetings had to be creative experiences for women, involving them personally and touching the core of their being and consciousness. The group also felt the need to constitute itself into a women's organisation through which to carry out these activities.

We were thirteen of us: twelve of us were dalit women from the local villages: Arasammal, Govindammal, Muniammal, Caries, Kumari, Murugammal, Kamala,

Devagi, Yasodha, Kadambadi Ammal, Anjalai and Dhanalakshmi; The thirteenth was Sundari Ravindran who had come to Chengalpattu as part of the NAEP. Some of us were new to the group, and had joined only in 1981. Rural Women's Social Education Centre was thus formed in 1981, with the aim of addressing issues related to women's well-being through women's empowerment.

In July 1981, a 'founding' workshop was planned and carried out by Sundari in order to prepare ourselves for the new phase. The workshop was intensive, and lasted five days (and evenings). The following report shares in detail the content, process and outcome of this workshop.

DAY – 1

Thus God Judged the Women

We began just before lunch time on the 30th of July 1981 since the participants had all arrived only then. The camp began with a game on communicating what we hear.

A story from Kenya on women was read out by one of us to another; while all the others stayed away. One by one, the participants came in. The second woman communicated it to the third and so on, till the twelfth person heard it from the eleventh. The last person's version of the story was compared with the first, and we discussed whether the message was communicated effectively or not, what aspects of it got distorted or left out and why. We found that though details had been lost and descriptions altered, the essential message had got conveyed: that every culture attempts justification of its oppression of women. We then went on to discuss the actual content of the story, and the group came out with similar stories about women in vogue in our villages.

**OUR COMRADESHIP IS GROWING THROUGH STRUGGLING TOGETHER.
AND OUR HOPE IS SUSTAINED THROUGH OUR COLLECTIVE VISION.**

கடவுள் பெண்களை இராமராமா பாடத்தா?!



“THUS GOD JUDGED THE WOMEN”

(Garri Folk Tale, North Kenya)

Once upon a time very long ago, God needed someone to help him with something he wanted to have done. He turned to the women, who already had their hands full even in those days. Just then they were sitting making milk jugs and water basins and mats to cover the huts. God summoned them, “Come here! I shall send you to an important mission.” The women replied, “Yes, we are coming, but wait a moment, we shall just finish our work here,” After a while, God summoned them again. “Wait a moment, we are nearly done. Let us just finish our mats and jugs,” said the women.

The men did not have to milk, build houses, fetch wood and water as the women did. Their only duty was to put up a fence and protect the livestock. So, since at the moment they had nothing else to do, they came running at God’s call and they said “send us instead, father”. Then God turned to the women and said. “Hereafter, women, your chores will never be done. When one is completed then next will be waiting for you. Hence, the men may rest since they came at once when I called but you women will have to work and toil with neither pause not rest till the day you die”.

As so it has been ever since

IN THE BEGINNING OF A GROUP EXPERIENCE, OPENING UP IS A REACHING OUT TO FIND HUMAN CONTACT WITH OTHER WOMEN. LATER IT BECOMES A WAY TO COMMUNICATE TO OTHERS ABOUT ONE’S SUBJECTIVE FEELINGS ABOUT THE GROUP, ABOUT THE WOMEN’S MOVEMENT, ABOUT ONE’S LIFE.

Towards Collective Decision Making

After lunch, the session was on decision – making as a group. This was through an exercise, which was in two stages. To start with, all of us broke up in pairs. A set of six pictures, some abstract and some depicting the rural scenario were displayed. Each one of us had to choose two pictures we liked best, and explain our choice to our partner. The two of us together would then decide on two pictures, and discuss our choice with another pair. This went on till the entire group had long time, at each step there were lengthy discussions on why a certain picture was chosen, for the idea it conveyed or its physical get-up. All the same, decision making in this case was much simpler than in the

next, when extracts from the Tamil poet Bharathi's poems (on women in the present era) were displayed, and we had to choose three poems as a group.

This second exercise was very valuable, since it gave us an opportunity to reflect on the "ideal woman" visualised by the poet. We compared notes with each other on our ideas about feminine qualities, on the concept of chastity of women and women's oppression, since the poems dealt with these. It exposed the differences among us on ideas about women's oppression and what we mean by gender equality.

To Speak to Lead

In the late evening session, we had an exercise on public speaking. Each one of us had to speak extempore on one of four topics concerning women. The topics were the following: -

- a. Should women choose their own life partners?
- b. What qualities make an ideal woman?
- c. Is marriage a must for women?
- d. What are the qualities of an ideal wife?

For some this was the very first time they were addressing a group. They were nervous at first but gathered themselves up to say a few sentences. Traditionally women in the villages are never allowed to express themselves, and never at all in a public gathering. This exercise gave us an opportunity and made us more confident to address an audience.

All women were of the view that women should choose their own life partners. This choice should be carefully done. One should not go by looks or other superficial qualities. The man one marries must share your view of life and be committed to the same cause as you are. He must treat you as his equal, and respect you for what you are instead of trying to mould you his way.

Opinions regarding marriage were divided. Of the three who spoke, two felt marriage was not a must for women. Women could support themselves and live independently, if they wanted to. There may be social pressures on her, but if she believed in her choice, she could put up with it. The third person said that women were economically dependent on men, since even if they worked they never earned enough to sustain themselves. Marriage became essential because of economic considerations.

The view of an 'ideal woman' varied. She was to be intelligent, bold, creative, open, and make her own decisions and stand by them. According to one participant, the ideal woman was someone who worked along with other women in the community for women's liberation – helped them organise themselves, fight for equal wages and just treatment, and live for the cause of the poor, the dalits and women.

IN OUR GROUP WE ARE A GATHERING OF EQUALS WHO HAVE LEFT BEHIND OUR DAILY CARES FOR A SHORT WHILE AND PARTICIPATE IN THE COLLECTIVE BUILDING OF IDEAS TOGETHER.

Views on the ‘ideal’ wife were very conventional. She was someone who managed the family well, did not get into disagreements with her husband and in – laws, and brought up her children care.

After all had finished speaking, we broke up for the day, but heated discussions continued almost up to midnight. Participants also had two papers to read before we met the next morning. One of these was a story that had appeared in a popular Tamil magazine “Seethaikku Mattum Thana” – (Is it (chastity) only required for Seetha?) and the other, a debate on the pros and cons of legalized abortion.

DAY – 2

Shackled in the name of Chastity

We began after ten in the morning, since we had to read the papers. The story “Seethaikku Mattum Thana” was read aloud by one of us – it depicts an office going wife who suffers mental torture because of her husband’s everlasting suspicion of her chastity. The story ends with her voicing protest that men have double standards on the question of chastity, and walking out on him. The group members agreed whole heartedly with the women’s course of action. In their own experience, chastity was a chain by which men bound women, and even brainwashed them into believing it was a virtue. Women were supposed to be subdued and withdrawn, shy not only of strangers but even of their in – laws and husbands, and obedient to everyone. They had thus no role in decision making even within the family, leave alone in the community. Any attempt by a woman to speak out boldly earned her the name of a “morally loose” woman and led to a subtle kind of social boycott.

Abortion Yes, Abortion No?

After a short break, we met to discuss the issue of legalized abortion in the light of our present understanding on chastity. The usual argument against legalized abortion is that this will encourage loose morals, and endanger the chastity of women.

The discussion began with the spontaneous sharing by one of us of an incident in her village where an unmarried girl who got pregnant died of haemorrhage after being aborted on by a back street abortionist. We soon realised that almost every one of us had a similar story to share of a neighbor who had died trying to terminate her seventh pregnancy, of a relative who committed suicide because she was pregnant before

marriage, of a friend who sought medical help to terminate an unwanted pregnancy and was ill-treated by the doctors.

But legalised abortion for all was not palatable to some members of the group.

“It is alright for married women, but for others, this would be like licensing immorality”.

“What do we mean by loose morals?”

“Well, a woman losing her virginity, getting pregnant”.

“Is it the woman alone who is responsible for getting pregnant?”

“No, but it is the woman who suffers and so it is she who ought to be careful”.

“And that’s why we were brought up to be shy of men and remain in the house after puberty, till we are married off”.

“Now, do you mean to say it is always wrong to relate to men?”

“What do we mean by relating to men”? Does it mean flirting and things like that or being friendly?”

“Come on, it possible in our context – meaning, in our villages, to even talk to a man without everyone, including the man himself, giving sexual connotations to it?”

“Well, it is possible sometimes to be friends with men, like those who work as animators in RDS – but in the villages it is unthinkable?”

“Men view us only as objects of sex. That is why they ogle at us, tease us and harass us. They have no respect for us.”

“That is why, even if a girl gets friendly with a guy she ends up getting pregnant – the guy refuses to admit his part, and she is the one who is punished by the community”.

“Yes – that makes it clearer – it is the woman who suffers for what the man is also responsible – there is no future for an unwed mother, her whole life is a misery; her entire future is doomed”.

The group thus eventually came to support legalised abortion but this was motivated by sympathy for women who didn’t want another child since they had too many already, and girls who were cheated into pregnancy, not because it is a woman’s right.

Self Awareness

The rest of the day was packed with a number of activities. In the afternoon we explained to the new members why we considered understanding our bodies to be important. We have been brought up to view our bodies with suspicion and contempt, and this gave us a very poor self-image. We were taught to consider our existence as women as a misfortune, we never understood the way our bodies functioned, and always feared and were ashamed of natural processes such as menstruation, pregnancy, child birth. A healthy attitude to our bodies would help us develop self-respect, and such self awareness is the first step towards playing an active role in our communities, to change the unjust structures of which we are a part.

BUT BEFORE WOMEN CAN TAKE THEIR DESTINIES INTO THEIR OWN HANDS, THEY MUST UNDERSTAND THE OBJECTIVE CONDITION OF WOMEN AND THE MANY FORMS THAT OPPRESSION TAKES IN LIVES OF WOMEN.

The new members were then exposed to charts and explanations on menstruation, pregnancy and child birth, and contraception. Though some of them were married and had children, this information was new to them. One of them who had three children within a space of five years was not aware that spacing children was possible. Her reaction was, "I only knew of the "operation" that put a stop to children once and for all." There were many questions raised on the validity of taboos associated with menstruation: that we were polluted, that if we handled food it would get spoilt, if we touched babies they would get sick, tender plants would dry up on our breath. Those of us who did not adhere by rules of isolation on the fays we had our periods told the others how we had found all of these to be untrue, but the rest still seemed a little hesitant to challenge the rules. Beliefs and practices connected with pregnancy and childbirth were also discussed.

Voices of Women from other Countries

Later in the day, we read stories of women like us – a story from china and another from Bolivia. We began to feel women are similarly placed all over the world. The cultural contexts may differ but the exploitation of poor women seemed to be similar everywhere.

Multi-Dimensionality of Women's Oppression

We then went on to discuss the issue of organising women. Women are kept in their exploited situation through cultural brain-wash. Organising them is therefore much more complex than organising workers stand in an antagonistic relationship with their masters, with no identification with them in terms of interests, and fighting becomes relatively simpler. But for women, the men who exploit them are very closely and

emotionally related to them, as fathers, brothers, husbands, and sons. It is difficult for women to press for their rights and still maintain harmony in the family, but it is also impossible to bow down to oppression. Collective forms of protest like striking work are also not feasible when it is against one's own families. We have to evolve new forms of protest, learn to have our way in the face of opposition from the family, participating in village affairs, and press for decisions in favour of women. We will be able to derive strength for all these only if all women stood united, convinced of their worth and angry at their oppression.

This led to a discussion on how sometimes women were their own worst enemies, because they believed in their subordinate and secondary status, and condemned other women who fought for their rights. We were able to understand this phenomenon, since as dalits we have seen how our own men believe that we are born to slave while others are born to rule. As oppressed people, women internalised that values of their oppressors, as did dalits.

The Media Image

The participants then worked in groups to make charts on how the media depicted women, with advertisements and extracts from stories in popular magazines. It was revealing to go through a lesson in Tamil textbook used in schools for the third class – the message on the subordinate role of women could not be more explicit. (See box) We also read translations in Tamil of some feminist poems.

എന്ന കൂടെയ്ക്ക്?



IDEAL FAMILY

In the picture above, a boy is studying. His name is Kannan. His elder sister's name is Kamalam. She is sweeping the floor.

The man leaning on the easy-chair is Kannan's father. His mother is busy cooking in the kitchen.

Kannan's family is an ideal family. His father is dutiful. He is very punctual in everything he does. He rises early in morning, reads that newspaper, and has his bath. He then goes to the market and buys vegetables. After finishing his morning chores, he eats and leaves for his office in time.

The family depends on Kannan's monthly salary for its subsistence. He never spends beyond his income. Nor does he have the habit of borrowing from others.

Kannan's mother is a very nice person. She spends within her husband's means. She takes loving care of her children. She gets up early in the morning and does her domestic duties briskly. She is a very good cook. She keeps the home clean and tidy. Kamalam is a good girl. She studies in the morning and then sings for sometime. After returning from school in the evening she goes out to play. She always helps her mother with her domestic chores, and helps Kannan with his lessons.

Kannan is a studious boy. He loves to play. At night he studies his lessons. He scores high marks in his exams. He reads storybooks when he has leisure.

Kannan respects his elders. He is very affectionate towards everyone. He is commended by all as an "ideal boy".

The Real Game of Life

Our day was not over as yet – we went on till late at night, playing a simulation game called the game of life (See Annexure II), which laid bare how unjust the society was, as were the rules that helped sustain it. This was a board game like the monopoly, with one main difference- the playing field was not level. Some players already owned property when the play began.

It was past one 'o' clock when we went to bed, and we actually slept much later.

DAY –3

Reflecting on our Double Oppression

We began the next day with reflections on the game of life we had played the previous night. The oppression of women had to be understood as part of a larger oppressive and exploitative social system. Poor women face double exploitation as poor and as women, but poor dalit women are triply exploited, being in the lowest rung of society in terms of caste, class and sex.

We then read two stories “Kodikku Uzhattan” – (He worked for his funeral expenses) and “Thagam” (thirst). The first of these is about the plight of a poor dalit labourer, and what society has in store for a socially and economically marginalized

REMEMBER ALL OUR WOMEN IN THE JAILS. REMEMBER ALL OUR WOMEN IN CAMPAIGNS. REMEMBER ALL OUR WOMEN OVER MANY FIGHTING YEARS. REMEMBER ALL OUR WOMEN FOR THEIR THUIMPHS, AND FOR THEIR TEARS.

individual. The second is a powerful story of a young dalit woman who challenges the “respectable” village elders of the upper castes. She announces to the world how for these “respectable” men, dalit men were untouchable, and yet dalit women were not: they were needed to satisfy these men’s lust. (Annexure III).

Both these stories were very true to life, and we were able to recollect instances in our villages, which were similar. As women who understood how unjustly society treated its women, its poor and its dalits, we needed to be committed to challenging it, and to get all other women of our community to rally round this cause.

One of us then summed up our experience during the past two days and we broke up for lunch. After lunch we were to start on a different theme – our health care system – how it reflects the contradictions of the larger social system, For the next day, we had also planned for a couple of introductory lessons on diagnosis and treatment of some common ailments by our doctor friend Sekar. This was part of a series to be continued after the workshop, to help us function as health workers working mainly with women and children.

The (ILL) Health Care System:

The afternoon session began with presentation by our doctor friend of two papers – one describing a typical village,

A WOMEN’S MOVEMENT IS NECESSARY IF THIS SOCIETY IS TO BE CHANGED. AS WE RECONDITION OURSELVES WE MUST

SIMULTANEOUSLY RESOLVE THE CONTRADICTIONS IN SOCIETY. THIS IS A POLITICAL, SOCIAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL STRUGGLE AND I DO NOT BELIEVE THAT THIS IS POSSIBLE WITHOUT A RE-ORGANISATION OF SOCIETY.

the poverty of most of its inhabitants, the impossibility of getting food enough to eat, leave along nutritious food, and the absence of even the most basic amenities like safe drinking water. The second was a report of a survey of three low-income settlements in Madras, which relates the crowded setting of their houses amidst filth and squalor; and their poverty, to their disease patterns. They were affected mainly by gastro-intestinal diseases, T.B. and other communicable diseases. (Annexure IV)

It was very obvious that the poor are denied their right to health. Their ill-health was the reflection of an unjust society that catered to some at the cost of the many.

A Postmortem of Our Health Care System:

A paper, “Our health care system: a post-mortem” was read and discussed by us. It dealt with the lopsided priorities of our health care system, and how women – and especially poor women suffered most under it. Women need medical attention not only when they are ill, but also during pregnancy and child birth. The consumer oriented health care delivery system deprives them of care when they need it most. The system serves only those who approach it themselves and the poor women in the villages, who have neither the time nor the money to reach the often distant primary Health Centres, are affected by this. We are dependent on doctors for birth control advice and they administer pills or advise insertion of an IUD without even a medical check up or sparing a thought for side effects. Though abortion has been legalised, unwed girls who go in for abortion are brutally treated by our doctors and nurses who seem to have taken on the additional responsibility for protecting society’s moral standards.

We could go on and on with the list, adding to the contents of the paper from our personal experiences. One of us had brought a case study of the way abortions were being performed in some hospitals in Bombay which we read, just to re-emphasise that the situation was similar in many places, and that we all had a common cause.

Learning about Prevention and Treatment of Common Health Problems:

The afternoon session was led by Dr.Sekar who discussed causes, symptoms and treatment for various types of fever and diarrhea. The interesting part came later. We put up role-plays portraying patients who come with different complaints. We played the role of health workers and had to discuss the problem with the patients, tell them what was wrong with them and why, suggest the necessary and possible course of action and render any help needed. For example, if they could not afford going to the hospital, the health worker had to call on other women to help and even accompany the person to the hospital. This was an effective way of learning both the skills of diagnosis, and the code of behaviour, which would be in keeping with our philosophy.

Before retiring, we spent a few hours at night learning and teaching each other some meaningful songs we knew. It made us feel so much together – so well-knit, to sing along in one voice; we want to do this much more often.

PERHAPS THE MOST IMPORTANT QUALITY IN A HEALTH WORKER IS A STRONG SENSE OF FAIRNESS AND SOCIAL JUSTICE.

A WORKER'S SPEECH TO A DOCTOR

We know what makes us ill
When we are ill we are told
That it's you who will heal us.

For ten years, we are told
You learned healing in fine schools
Built at the people's expenses
And to get your knowledge
Spend a fortune.
So you must be able to heal
Are you able to heal?

When we come to you
Our rags are torn off us
And you listen all over our naked body
As to the cause of our illness
One glance at our rags would
Tell you more. It is the same cause that wears
Our bodies and our clothes.

The pain in our shoulder comes
You say, from the damp; and this is also the reason
So tell us:
Where does the damp come from?

Too much work and too little food
Makes us feeble and thin
Your prescription says:
Put on more weight.
Your might as well tell a bullrush
Not to get wet.

How much time can you give us?
We see: one carpet in your flat costs

The fees you earn from
Five thousand consultations.

You'll no doubt say
You are innocent. The damp patch
One the wall of our flats
Tells the same story.

-BERTHOLD BRECHT

DAY – 4

Communicating our Ideas:

Friends from 'SKILLS', an NGO working on media and communication, came by to help us learn to communicate our ideas visually. Chandralekha from SKILLS asked us to work in groups, each group depicting pictorially one message on women's status. The three groups made the following posters:

- i. A pregnant man with the caption, "If this was your plight would you oppose birth control?" This actually refers to our men in the villages who do not permit their wives to use contraceptives or undergo sterilisation ostensibly because they fear for their wives' health.
- ii. A woman with a naked child on her hips and a disproportionately large basket on her head, and multiple arms full of pots and pans and brooms and dusters. The caption said, "She bears burdens from birth unto death".
- iii. A large gathering under a tree in the village – the scene of a caste panchayat with only men both among spectators and among those who arbitrated disputes. The caste panchayat is a traditional council of elders who belong to the same caste. This council is responsible for arbitration and settlement of disputes within the caste. There is one woman standing, head bowed, and nervous. The picture depicts an enquiry before the caste panchayat of a case of adultery. It is the custom in our villages that no woman except the accused could attend the enquiry. The caption said, "The guilty are the judges!"



அவளுக்கு பிறப்பு முதல் இறப்பு வரை
வாழ்க்கையே சுமைதான்



குற்றவாளிகளே நீதிபதி



DAY -5

Reflection and Conclusion:

We decided to end out workshop with lunch. Two of us: Caries and Sundari were in the ninth of pregnancy. Caries' baby was due the next week, and Sundari had a fortnight to. We were anxious that they get back home soon, since we'd had a very busy four days.

We spent the first four hours in quiet reflection and then wrote down what we had experienced and felt during the past four days. We then discussed our plan of work for the next few weeks. We had asked for financial help from various sources to get our work going, but had not received a positive response till then. So we were going to keep up contacts in the villages, and among ourselves, meet as and when we could, since we belonged to different villages spread over a radius of 20 kms, and could not all afford the bus charges. It was very unwillingly that we went home that afternoon, amidst talk and laughter, what with each one predicting whether the two pregnant women would beget a boy or a girl, taking sides and betting. It had been really beautiful and memorable five days – one we would not forget for many years to come.

...AND OUR BEGINNING TO RELATE TO OUR SOCIETY THROUGH THE WOMEN'S THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT HAS GIVEN A CENTRAL UNITY TO OUR LIVES. WE ARE NO LONGER DRIFTING PASSIVELY THROUGH LIFE. RATHER WE ARE ATTEMPTING THROUGH AN INTENSE RELATIONSHIP TO SOCIETY TO AFFECT HISTORY, TO ACT INSTEAD.

RURAL WOMEN'S WORKSHOPS 1981 - 1983

RURAL WOMEN'S WORKSHOP 1981

The workshop described below was among the first rural women's workshops held by RUWSEC. It was meant to bring women together to reflect on their status as female, poor and untouchable. Nearly all the women who participated in it had no schooling, and had never travelled outside their villages except with their families. It had been very difficult for them to get away from their homes and the work for a whole day, but their determination to come had won out in the end.

Ice breaker

The workshop began around eleven in the morning with an ice breaker. Each participant was given a piece of paper with a particular sign and she had to find another woman who had a similar sign on her paper. The entire group was paired up in twos. The women were given about 10 minutes to talk to their partner. At the end of it, each person had to introduce her partner to the whole group.

The women spoke easily to each other and were engrossed in conversation by the end of the 10 minutes. The introductions were therefore very lively and detailed than if each of them were asked to introduce oneself. "This Rani she is from-----village. She almost dropped out of this workshop because of a row at home with her mother-in-law about leaving the work undone. She has three children and is here with her third child Kala..." and so on.

Beasts of Burden:

The first event after the introduction was reading aloud and reflecting on a poem entitled "Beasts of Burden". A poster showing a village girl of about 8 or 9 years carrying a baby on her hips and balancing gruel pot on her head was displayed. The poem was read out aloud the participants.

கமலதாங்கி



BEASTS OF BURDEN

Our master's farm is the biggest of all farms.
It's our men who work like beasts of burden on our master's farm.
I'm carrying gruel for my hungry father toiling since morn.

I'm learning to bear the burden
of a child on my hips and
a pot of gruel on my head
For, one day, not far off
I have to walk on these field bunds
With a child in my belly and a child on my hips
Carrying gruel for my husband, working in these farms.

But there's something
I'd like to know...
Who made the rule that
Our heads be bowed and backs
always be bent, under burden?

Thick silence engulfed the room after the poem was heard, the participants were visibly moved. We then asked the women what they felt about the poem. One of the women set the ball rolling with the narration of an incident on her village. A pregnant woman carrying gruel on her head and walking on the bunds of the paddy field towards her husband's work place had slipped and fallen and died of hemorrhage.

One of the others joined in to talk about their lives as women and how the burdens of womanhood were thrust upon them very early in life, when they were still children. By the time they were five or six they took care of their younger brothers and sisters, at seven they were fetching water for the household and before they were nine they cooked and managed early not to make demands of their poor parents but to try and help them, and more importantly to never be assertive and to suffer in silence because they were born female.

They appreciated the question with which the poem had ended. Why was being a woman so difficult? Was this a divine law or was this man made? Was there a way out? Many questions were raised. We did not dare to pretend we knew the right answers or interrupt the process of reflection that was beginning.

The story of our lives:

This was an open ended story-telling session. There were a number of pictures depicting rural women in a variety of settings, pasted on to emery paper so that they would stick to any rough surface. A wooden door at one end of the room on the hut where we were was covered with a rough cloth and served like a flannel board. The participants were requested to put the pictures on the flannel board in any order they choose, so as to make up a story.

They saw in the picture what they were used to seeing. It was the story of their own lives that they seemed to be telling through these pictures. For example, there was a picture of a child putting his hand into a gruel pot and a woman looking on. The woman who described it said that the child was hungry, but the gruel pot was empty and that his mother was looking on helplessly.

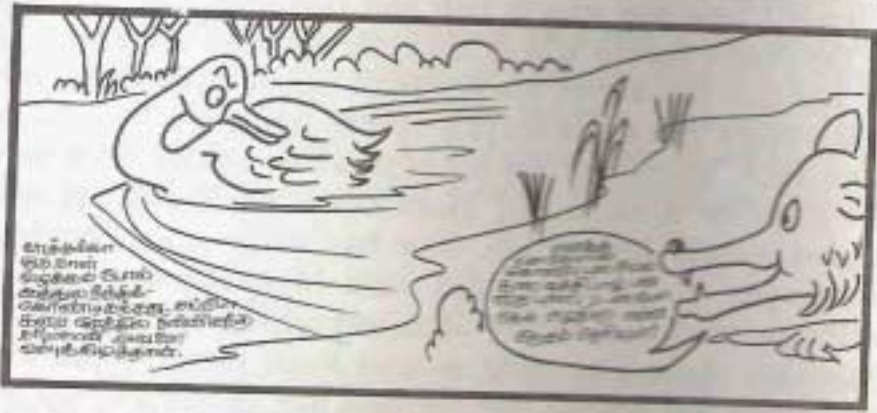
At the end of the session we had come very close to each other. We had shared through the stories the problems and worries that dominated our thoughts day after day. Realising how similar our lives were had built a kind of bond between us.

Sister Goose and Uncle Fox:

The afternoon session began with a fable depicting the injustice that the poor often experience in society and how a lone fighter often fails to win. The fable had animal characters-Sister Goose and Uncle Fox. Sister Goose unintentionally offends Uncle Fox who is rich and powerful. She is dragged to the police station where Inspector Fox files several charges on her that she hardly understands. She is summoned to the Magistrate's court and despite all her arguments to prove her innocence, Magistrate Fox pronounces her guilty. Angered by the injustice done to her, sister Goose decides to appeal to higher courts for justice. She has little money and she mortgages all her valuables with Moneylender Fox who willingly lends her money at an exorbitant rate of interest. Judge Fox of the high court accuses sister Goose of anti-social tendencies and actions, and declares that people like her were a threat to the very fabric of society. She is punished with rigorous imprisonment of two years.

This fable was read out to them in play-reading style with different people lending voices to different characters. A poster depicting the different scenes was prominently displayed before them.

Though it may appear simplistic, the story struck a familiar cord in them. We soon had a very lively discussion going. Episodes very similar to the story of Sister Goose were narrated by many and it finally led on to an analysis of the story that displayed remarkable insight. The poor do not





realise what they are up against till they chance to confront the system. When a lone victim naively seeks justice like Sister Goose did, he/she finds himself / herself overpowered and beaten. While it was wise not to underestimate the might of the powers that-be, this did not mean that the poor had to take their lot lying down. The mistake Sister Goose made was that she fought her battle alone. If she had had the support of others like her, the consequence would probably have been different.

Star Power Game

The finishing point of the above discussion proved to be. An apt introduction to the game that was to follow. The Star Power Game is a simulation game depicting interaction across social classes in society.

The participants were divided into three groups. Each participant in the group was given five tokens in a combination of four different colours. The tokens varied in value: gold was 50, silver was 25, red was 10 and green was five. All members of the first group had gold and silver tokens each, members of the second group had a silver token each and members of the third group did not have either gold or silver tokens but only red and green. One member of the second group was given a gold token, and two members of the third group had gold and silver, and silver alone, respectively. In other words, the first group was the 'rich' group, the second group was 'middle class', and the third group was 'poor'. But there were one or two members in the middle class and poor groups who were better-off.

Participants were not told of the difference between the groups. After the tokens were distributed, participants were asked to exchange tokens with each other by mutual consent. They were not to talk to each other, nor show the tokens to be exchanged. After three minutes of such an exchange, participants reassembled in their respective groups. The value of the tokens each of them had were now added up and announced to all. They were regrouped according to the values of the tokens they had, into 'rich' 'middle-class' and 'poor' groups. The whole process was repeated twice.

After this the facilitator of the game announced that henceforth all rules of exchange would be made by the 'rich'. The 'rich' group was requested to play its role. The consequences were unbelievable. The women playing 'rich' consulted each other and announced the new rules for the exchange of tokens:

- 1 Members of the other groups had to go on their knees while they exchanged tokens with the 'rich'.
- 1 For each token that a 'rich' person gave, others had to give two in return.

The others could not believe their ears. They called the whole thing outrageous, and there was some confusion for a while. The middle and the poor groups then decided to get together and strategise on the course of action. They chose representatives to negotiate with the rich on their behalf. The negotiation did not yield any results. The 'rich' were adamant in their stand.

The whole atmosphere turned electric. The middle and the poor groups were enraged and decided that since together they outnumbered the rich, if they went on strike the rich would have to give in.

At this point the game was brought to a close (the atmosphere was becoming too tense....) and some time was spent on quiet reflection on the game.

The participants spontaneously began voicing their feelings. They observed how those who originally belonged to the middle and poor groups and risen to the rich had behaved even worse than the other 'rich'. But the overwhelming feeling was one of strength and power. They repeatedly mentioned how the poor and middle groups together were more than a match for the rich who were making unfair and unjust laws.

There was a short break after this very demanding game. When we resumed again the facilitators summed up the substance of the activities thus far. As women and as poor, we bear a double burden. While it is difficult for the poor to challenge their downtrodden situation, it is even more difficult for those who are poor and women. Their strength would be in their unity. Together, supporting each other's battles against their oppression, they could begin to improve their lot.

The Co-operation Game

We then came to the last event of the day. Participants divided themselves into groups of four. Each member was given an envelope containing parts of a square. The objective of the game was for each group to have four squares assembled. Members of the same group could exchange pieces of squares but could not take one without the consent of the others. There was to be on verbal communication between the participants.

In each group there were one or two who were able to assemble their squares quickly. Once they had their squares put together, they usually closed these with their palms and watched on – rather smugly as others in the groups struggled with their pieces. They rarely offered any help and never once considered pulling down their own squares, exchanging their pieces with others, trying to reassemble four squares for the group.

After gentle reminders that the objective was that the group as a whole assembled four squares, one of the groups worked together and finished its task. The others groups were still at a dead end.

The women liked this game a lot:

“That’s the way we behave; if all is well with our own household, we often couldn’t care less about what’s happening to others....”

“If a person who is slightly better-off or knows more among the poor is willing to help the others, then all the poor will gain”.

“What we need is a genuine give and take-you know a little and I know a little. You may know something I need to know and vice versa-If we get together, we win...This is what we women need to do..”

There could be no better statement closing speech than this last statement.

RURAL WOMEN’S WORKSHOP 1982

By the time the workshop described below took place, RUWSEC’s animators had established a Women’s Centre in their respective villages. A women’s ‘Sangham’ or association was beginning to emerge in the villages as a result of regular meetings and discussions and joint actions by women to tackle village problems.

This workshop was qualitatively different from the earlier ones. This time it was the women’s groups in the villages who had suggested what maybe done in the workshop. It was to be mainly for adolescent girls (both married and unmarried) and was to undertake two different tasks – learning to function in groups and learning about heir bodies.

There were thirty young girls all below twenty years in age, from three different villages. A couple of older women had also come along with the girls as escorts, in response to the request of the girls’ parents.

Getting to know each other:

The workshop began with an introductory talk by the animators present. They spoke of their transformation from shy and diffident women to confident person who were now organising workshops for others. They went on to say that since they had been no different to begin with from the young women participating in the present workshop, it was clear that such development was possible for all of them given the opportunity. They concluded with the hope that workshops such as these would help to discover the girls’ latent potential and to channelise it constructively towards building a just society.

Following the introductory talk, participants introduced themselves through a memory game. The first person would say, “Hello I’m A...”, the second person, “Hello A, I’m B.” and the third, “Hello A and B, I’m C” and so on till the last person. There was much fun and laughter as the girls struggled to remember names. But by the end of the exercise everyone knew one another by name.

Learning to listen to each other

The first of the three exercises for learning to work as a group was Chinese whisper. The participants were, as is usual in our workshops, seated in one large circle. One of the participants whispered a message into the next person’s ear and she to the next and so on, and the last person had to say it aloud. Her statement was compared to the original one. The two bore little similarity.



The participants then discussed the importance of listening carefully to each other, not only in the literal sense but also in the sense of having the willingness to give other's opinion a hearing and be open to a different point of view.

Often what we hear or how we interpret what we hear is influenced by our preconception about the persons speaking. This point was made by the girls of one of the villages while they narrated how the women's group in their village was divided into the young unmarried and the married. The latter often criticised the former being frivolous since they laughed and giggled often. Also they mistook the former's laughter being directed at them and this created a lot of problems.

Another story came up from a village. A young girl's reputation was ruined and she was termed immoral because of what she said had been interpreted very differently. Many such incidents of misunderstanding between people arising from communication gap were recounted and analysed to see how the problem could have been handled. This made the discussion very concrete and at the end of the exercise we had come to a better understanding about how good interpersonal communication was basic to keep any group together.

Floods!!! Floods!!!

This discussion was followed by a group exercise on consensus decision-making when under time pressure to make quick decisions. An emergency situation where a

village was threatened by floods was simulated. Participants worked in groups of five. Each group played the role of a family which had to take a quick decision on the five most important articles they would take along while evacuating their homes.

A list of ten articles commonly found in a poor peasant household was pictorially represented on a chart. The groups were given three minutes within which the consensus decision was to be made. At the end of the three minutes each group read out the list of the articles their 'family' had chosen. Some participants who had played the role of observers were then asked to comment on the decision-making process. It was of one or two members deciding, and asking the others if they with, the others just nodded their heads. At times they feebly suggested an alteration, which was quickly overruled. Only in one group had a member argued for her suggestion to be considered, and a compromise had been reached.

The participants described how difficult it was to function really democratically. Since they were used to obeying authority they conformed to the same styles of functioning even among themselves, said one of the animators. She stressed the need for everyone to be assertive and express her opinion confidently to enable democratic functioning.

Discussing issues in a group

The participants were now to put into practice all they had said so far about functioning in a group through an experience in conducting a small group discussion.

There were three different topics each of which was discussed by one group;

- Does the day break with a hen's crowing?
(This is a popular saying, which implies that it is the men who perform tasks of any consequence or importance, in the same way as it is the cock and not the hen that announces the dawn and gets the day's work going).
- Do women need schooling?
- Are women "sanghams" necessary? Are they possible?

Discussion of the first group

"Whether or not the cock crows, the dawn sets in and people begin their daily tasks. But this saying has been used to tell us women that we are inferior to men".

"It's the hen that is responsible for the very existence of the cock, is this any less important?"

“Why should boys be superior to girls? Both are borne in their mothers womb for the same period of time”

“We do not work any less then our men. We work alongside them in the farms but when they get home, we have to greet them with warm water to wash themselves. We then have to cook and in the meantime attend to our children as well. To top it all, our men spend half their wages in the liquor shop, but we who bear the burden of the household responsibilities bring home our meagre wages and struggle to make both ends meet. Yet fun and freedom is said to be only for men. I wonder why this should be...”

“The problem is that women ourselves believe that we have no capabilities or talent. See, how capable women can be (referring to the animators) given a chance”.

“Once when some of us were going to town a young man beside us started teasing us. He deliberately rode slowly and kept blocking our way and then he fell against one of us. We were very angry, we pulled away the cycle from him and shouted for help. A lot of people came. We refused to return the cycle till the young man apologised to us. Who said we were inferior to men? If women get together, they can move the world”.

Discussions in the second group

“Women definitely need schooling. Even if they don’t go to high school and college, they should at least be literate. When we go to receive our wages, some men sign their name and it feels humiliating to put my thumb impression”.

“That’s right. We are so dependent on our men because we cannot read. We do not know which bus to take to go somewhere, and cannot find our way to new places. I cannot even go to my mother’s place, if I have a row with my husband”.

“Many misunderstandings can arise when women cannot read. Take my sister for instance. Her husband has to read out to her all letters from us. He often misinterprets the contents of our letters”.

“I dare not go alone to the hospital because I cannot read the sign boards and ward numbers and get so confused”.

“Ability to read and write is essential, if not for anything else, for the confidence it gives us. I have a daughter and I shall surely send her to the school and encourage her to study as far as she could”.

Discussion in the third group

Forming a woman 'Sangham' was no easy task since public opinion in the village was so much against it.

"It is said that when four 'turbans' (men) get together the work gets done, but when four 'plaits' (women) get together, then trouble originates".

"The men say. What can ten women meeting together achieve? Only gossip. It is because the women have started doing such unheard of things that the rains fail".

"My parents say, 'What is the point in going to meetings and forming Sanghams, are these going to provide our daily gruel? It's only if you go harvesting in our masters' farms that you will bring home wages to live on'".

"My husband did not like my coming to this workshop. I bet he will ridicule me on my return and ask, what treasure have brought from your important workshop".

In spite of all these, a Sangham had been formed in one of the three villages through the initiative of about eight to ten girls. These women said shyly, "Have we not shown that it is possible for us to do what we consider important, no matter how others underplay its significance"?

There was no difference of opinion on the necessity for Sanghams. They said that they learnt many new things and derived great joy from this. It made possible discussing and acting on problems that were troubling them.

Learning about our bodies:

It was almost half past two in the afternoon when the small group discussion reports were presented. We began after lunch for the second theme of the workshop that was learning about our bodies.

Each of the four **RUWSEC** workers present were to explain one aspect of our reproductive functions with the help of simple graphic charts. The four topics discussed were menstruation, conception, pregnancy and child birth. The participants listened in a kind of embarrassed silence interrupted by occasional suppressed giggles for most of the part. This was understandable as open discussion among adolescent girls on such topics is unheard of even in our cities, leave alone in village.

After the presentations, there were several questions. They had many questions about menstruation. The women had been told that it was bad blood leaving their bodies once a month. Women were unclean and untouchable during the days of their periods. Were we saying that there was no basis to this? One of the facilitators explained how she had dared to break the rules of isolation when she had her periods, and well, here she was safe and sound. She had not invoked the wrath of Gods nor had hell broken loose. The

facilitators admitted that they were facing lot of problems with their families for doing so. The most important discovery for them was that the taboos around menstruation were indeed baseless.

The girls then talked about the difficulties they had in maintaining adequate hygiene during these 'difficult' days. There was no proper water supply, nor the privacy of bathing rood or toilet to wash themselves and had only rags to use as sanitary napkins.

The difficulties and problems faced by women during child birth was also talked about. Most women worked in farms till late pregnancy. They delivered the child at home with the help of the village midwife. It was difficult to provide her with enough clothes for sanitary protection, and so the woman was made to lie on a mat under which a thick layer of ash was spread. The ash soaked up all the blood discharged. The whole thing was messy and uncomfortable. The women could rarely eat nourishing food in the days following her delivery and had to resume household work. All these negative experiences served to reinforce the notion that it is a curse to be born a woman.

It was well after sunset when the workshop came to a close and the participants bade good bye.

About the Workshop

Above all I liked the opportunity to get to know so many women from other villages.

When I meet other women and get to hear of all the things they have done in their villages, it makes me feel very hopeful.

I found the 'passing the message' (Chinese whisper) game particularly good. It had some important lessons.

I didn't know anything about my body. I wouldn't dare to ask anyone about it, either. It was good that it was taken up in detail. I am sure most others will agree with me.

We hope that there are many more such workshops to come. We had such good time. It was fun, really.

RURAL WOMEN'S WORKSHOP 1983

This workshop was held to mark the completion of one year since the establishment of Women's Centres. There were four such workshops and in each, women from three villages assembled in one of the Women's Centres and organised and evening of cultural events to celebrate the occasion.

The workshop began after sunset and went on almost until early hours of the next morning. There were dances, songs and skits, all put up by the village women themselves. The highlight of the evening were the skits. They dwelt on the village problems, were very pro-active and unbelievably real. The women's groups had themselves planned the stories for the skits and the dialogues were improvised on the spot.

In this report we describe three of the skits enacted in the workshop. It is with pride that we do so, for these skits are indicators of the degree of awareness that has developed in the women's groups and also of the women's potential role as agents of social change.

SKIT -1

Whither justice for women?

This is a skit about a woman who seeks justice from the caste council of the village, an informal body consisting of elders of a particular castes. There are separate caste councils for different castes. It is this body that arbitrates quarrels within the members of the same caste group and administers justice. The caste council portrayed in the skit is that of dalit or ex-untouchable castes, because the women enacting it were all dalit and were trying to portray their own life situation.

Scene - I

It is very late at night and Neela is dozing in her hut, waiting for her husband's return.

Munian, Neela's husband, enters. He is drunk and roars for Neela to serve his meal.

Neela looks disgusted and in a mood to start a row.

Neela: (noisily serving food) Are you not rather early!

Munian: (spitting out a mouthful of rice) Bitch! Look at the way you cook! And better hold your tongue.

Neela: So now, you don't like the food. Did you not eat your feast in that women's house or did you get kicked out before that

Munian loses his temper and beats Neela black and blue. Neela does not give up on her taunting but keeps on mocking him.

Munian: (snatching Neela's tali) Get out of the house!

(The tali is a yellow thread worn by a married women indicating her married status. It is considered sacred and is never removed till widowhood. It is given tremendous importance in Tamil culture. Snatching a woman's tali is the highest insult that can be accorded to her.)

Neela packs up a few things and leaves for her father's home early next morning.

Scene II

Neela reaches her father house in the neighbouring village. Neela's father is about to leave for the farm to work. He is surprised at Neela's unexpected visit. Her swollen eyes and tear stained face tell him that something is amiss. Neela breaks down and tells her father about Munian's affair with another woman. She narrates how she had been beaten and thrashed day after day to prevent her from challenging his errant ways. She accuses her father of having given her away in marriage to such a heartless man, and asks him to set the matter right.

Neela's father is very upset. Ever since her marriage to Munian, Neela had come back every other month after some fight or another and now Munian had snatched away Neela's tali. He decides not to keep quiet this time and that he would take the matter to the caste council in Munian's village. It is time the elders taught the young man how to run the family.

Of course, it wasn't unusual for a wife to be beaten by her husband, nor was it uncommon for young men to have extra marital affairs. Even the (Neela's father) had had his flings in his younger days, hadn't he? But Munian dare not treat his daughter like any other slut, dare he?

Neela's father decides to go along with Neela to Munian's village the next day and give the caste council a piece of his mind.

Scene III

Neela and her father meet the caste council elders of Munian's village. This scene is revealing for the subtle manner in which the all male caste council manipulates the issue, ultimately turning the tables against Neela.

Neela's father angrily accuses the elders of not enquiring into Munian's ill-treatment of his wife (it is customary for the elders to intervene and settle family quarrels before matters came to head).

Elder 1: Patience, brother – it is well known how your daughter's tongue wags. A silent wife provokes no beating.

Elder 2: OK, Let's hear both sides of the story. Don't lose your temper like this.



Neela's father: If the man spends all his earnings on his concubine, will the woman of the house keep quiet? Shouldn't people like you advise the young man?

Elder 3: Now, now brother... That's not true, what you say; Munian is a nice boy. Don't we know about him? Maybe he beat his wife, maybe he didn't give her money for the house. But you shouldn't waste your words on such exaggeration.

(All the elders raise similar objections)

Neela's father: And to add insult to injury he snatched her 'tali' and threw her out of the house.

(With this the tide begins to turn. The elders grab this statement, twist it around till there seem to be no doubt left that it was Neela who was to blame...)

Elder 3: so that was it! I heard some whispers in the village that Munian's wife threw back her 'tali' at her husband and ran away; but I dismissed it as idle women's gossip. It was true, I now see.

(Neela and her father's protest. But these are drowned amidst the loud voices of the caste council elders.)

Elder 2: If the women had a complaint against her husband, what ought she have done? What are we elders here for?

Elder 1: And instead what does she do? Flings her 'tali' and runs away! I remember now – didn't Munian complain to us how his wife stopped to speak to all the young men in the village? And that when he reprimanded her she threatened to leave?

Elder 3 and Elder 2 whisper to each other: A man does not beat his wife for nothing. There is no smoke without fire!

Elder 1: And coming to think of it, don't we beat our wives and don't they take it quietly? If a woman dares to throw her 'tali' and walk out on her husband, what kind of a woman is she – wouldn't you all know? Is it not evident?

The caste council is visibly on the offensive. This is the first time in the village that a woman has dared to walk out on her husband. Besides setting a bad precedent, it also raised doubt about her character. How could a man continue marital life with such a woman? The man would go a thousand places – (meaning he could have any number of affairs) but as long as he comes home what has anyone to complain about? And, if he doesn't come home, there is the caste council that a woman could appeal to. What does a woman mean, taking matters into her own hands?

Neela's father is cowed down and is desperately trying to make peace. But the Council rules that Neela go back to her father's house and that her father pay a fine of five hundred rupees as compensation for the scandal raised by her.

SKIT –2

Water! Water!

While the previous skit dealt with the problems faced by a dalit woman within her family and community, this skit portrays how she is treated by the land-owning castes. It shows the lack of support for her cause from within her community for several complex reasons.

Scene-I

Valli, a poor dalit woman goes to fetch water from the pumpset irrigating the fields of an upper caste landowner. There is no water in the well in the dalit settlement. While others prefer to walk a long way to another water source, Valli dares to venture into the fields nearby.

While Valli is filling her brass pots with water, the landowner chances to come by. He is very angry and abuses Valli. Valli is rather cheeky and defies him saying he wouldn't lose a fortune by lending her two pots of water. The landowner slaps her hard and snatches away her pots.

Scene II

Valli comes back home seething with impotent rage. She complains amidst sobs to her husband about the landlord's behaviour. Her husband is in a state of shock. He is not used to the idea of a confrontation with the landlords. When he realises what the loss of two brass pots means to the family's scant resources, his anger gets directed at Valli. He accuses her of being quarrelsome and unwomanly. He is afraid she has ruined him by evoking the wrath of the landlord. 'You lazy slut!' – he says. "Are your feet so delicate that they cannot take the two mile walk to the pond?" and slaps her:

Valli's husband is concerned about the brass pots lost to the landlord. He meets some influential dalit elders and requests them to negotiate with the landlord on his behalf. The elders agree to take up his cause for a small fee (!) and Valli's husband has to reluctantly part with five rupees – a whole day's wage for him.

Scene III

Dalit elders outside the landlord's house. The landlord comes to the door.

Elders: (bowing down) Sami (meaning master), we bow before you.

Landlord: (loudly and rather arrogantly) – What brings all of you here at this hour? Hurry up and don't waste my time.

Elder 1: (hesitantly) Sami, it's nothing important; we came to see you about a problem in our Cheri (in every village, the dalit live in a separate settlement traditionally known as Cheri, but now called 'colony').

Elder 2: It's about Kasi's wife Valli.

Landlord: You came about Kasi's wife – I see... I meant to call you about this matter. You elders – Do you have no say in the community? Haven't you taught your women to behave? Shame on you? If I were you I wouldn't dare to expose my face for shame.

Elders: (together) Yes Sami, this woman will be the ruin of Kasi. She's got a wagging tongue, she does. Never learnt to obey, nay, not even her husband! We came to apologise for her behaviour. We will not let such an incident occur again, Master.



Landlord: You apologise! Your apology isn't worth two pence, you thankless bastards. We give you work and take care of your livelihood and look how we are repaid! No, we have to teach that woman how to behave – so that others learn too. She'll have to pay a fine. Fifty rupees, shall we say? Go tell Kasi to come and beg forgiveness and pay up.

Elders: Sami, have mercy. You are our protector. Scold us, take us to task, punish us... But we are poor – where will Kasi go for fifty rupees?

Landlord: Good for nothing paupers! You should have thought all this before letting your women talk back to the landlord. Learn to keep your women in their proper place.

(After a while) – OK, since you plead so much... Kasi must pay a fine of twenty five rupees as soon as possible. I hope you'll take the responsibility for it.

Elders: Of course, Sami, Thank you for being so merciful.

Landlord: Here, take this and go have a drink (Throws a few coins at them which they take and make their exit).

Thus, not only does Valli not get back her brass pots, her husband has to pay a fine. As to Valli's having been slapped by the landlord, whoever remembers it?!

SKIT – 3

The Village Fair Price Shop

This skit is about the malpractice in a village fair-price shop. The fair price shop of a village receives supplies of essential food stuff like rice, sugar, cooking oil and coarse cereals from the Government and is meant to sell these at controlled prices. Each household in the village is eligible for a fixed quota of the supplies according to the number of members it has,

The skit portrays how most often the real culprits act behind the scenes, leaving those who act on their behalf, move out of compulsion than by choice, to face all consequences. Attacking the mere figureheads doesn't solve the problem because someone else would soon take their place. One has to direct one's confrontation at the powerful men acting behind scenes.

Scene I

The house of an influential upper caste landlord in a village. Subban and his educated son Sundaram are waiting in the courtyard. Subban is a dalit farmer who has been cultivating this landlord's farm on lease for more than 30 years and is a trusted

servant. His son Sundaram is a modern young man, dressed in trousers and shirt, while his father still wears the traditional dhoti and has only a towel, on, no shirt. Sundaram is one of the few dalits to complete high school. The two meet the landlord to ask for a favour. There is a vacancy for employment in the village fair price shop and Subban requests that his son Sundaram be given a chance. The landlord promises to consider the matter and the two men return hopefully.



Scene II

Sundaram is now employed in the fair price shop. The job means a lot to him since it is his first break after five years of unemployment.

Stocks of rice and sugar arrive and Sundaram makes an entry in the stock register. Shortly after this, the landlord's manager-of-affairs pays Sundaram a visit. There is to be a wedding in the landlord's family the following fortnight; Sundaram should deliver the bulk of the supplies of rice and sugar to the landlord's house.

Sundaram tells the manager he is afraid. He is told not to worry, the need of his obligation to the landlord's family and the possibility that he would lose his job.

Eventually, Sundaram delivers the rice and sugar stock to the landlord's house.

Scene III

The Fair Price shop has a board outside saying "Stocks exhausted". Many women who have come to buy provisions seem agitated. They are talking loudly to each other. Hadn't they seen stocks arrive just a few days ago? When few households had bought their rations, how could they be exhausted?

Sundaram is nervous but tries to overcome his nervousness by being offensive. He asks the women to get lost and not crowd the shop. There were no supplies left and he could not help it.

A young woman in the crowd-the only woman to have gone to school in the village – demands to see the stock register. All the other women cheer her and repeat the demand. Sundaram loses his temper. He is a Government employee and is answerable only to his superiors, he claims. He is not willing to offer explanations to a bunch of loud-mouthed women.

The women get together to discuss the matter. Many suggest writing a petition to complain to the higher authorities. Sundaram's mother is among the crowd. Hesitantly, she asks the others what they expected to achieve by this, except Sundaram losing his job. Did they believe that replacing Sundaram would solve the problem?

There is a lot of confusion among the women now. If they complained about Sundaram, a poor family would lose its income. If they didn't their own families would continue to suffer because food stuff was not available at controlled prices... What was the way out? How could they ensure that food supplies did not get delivered to the rice households?

The questions were left open for consideration by the audience and the skit ended on this note.

ANNEXURE – I

THEMES FOR DISCUSSIONS WITH WOMEN'S GROUPS IN VILLAGES DURING THE FIRST YEAR OF OUR WORK (1981-82)

The meetings were generally conducted late in the evening, after the women returned from the fields, under street lights or with the help of petromax lights. About twenty to twenty-five women came usually. There was initially much difficulty in getting the women to talk and for a couple of years some women did not open their mouth. All this was eventually overcome, and the meetings laid the foundation for strong women's Sanghams (associations/groups) in all the villages.

Content

- I. Sharing our experiences as Women and our feelings about ourselves.
- II. Understanding our bodies to Understand ourselves
 - a) Our reproductive systems
 - b) Menstruation
 - b) Conception, pregnancy and childbirth
 - c) Abortion
 - d) Menopause
 - e) Birth control

Facts regarding these:
Discussion of practices and myths associated with each of these, sharing our Personal experience.

- III. Women's status and the Present social system.
 - a) Our status at home and work: understanding our double burden.
 - b) Understanding women's oppression in society in the context of social inequalities by class, caste, and ethnicity.

Methods and Materials.

Posters, poems and stories read out, and role plays as stimulants of discussion.

Posters, poems and stories read out, and role plays

Undertaking an enquiry into their work load, contribution to the family income, decision making powers in the family and role in the community. Discussing findings.

- i) Simulation games bringing out inequalities in society and

how power and wealth go together

- ii) Fables with the same theme depicted in pictures or acted out
- iii) Photo cards which can be arranged by participants to tell a story they themselves frame, enabling expression of their perceptions
- iv) Posters depicting unequal distribution of resources
- v) Charts with pictograms of status of women in India.
- vi) Stories, folk plays and songs which depict women as inferior beings
- vii) Exposure of sexist lessons in school textbooks
- viii) Reading a paper on laws affecting women.
- i) Modern parable – a parable showing we have to recognise to roots of iii-health before we go about curing it.
- ii) Conducting an enquiry into what are the basic amenities necessary to prevent diseases and how many of them have been denied to them.

IV. Health care in the present social system.

- a. Ill health is system generated denial of basic needs and through unequal distribution of resources.
- b. Knowledge of prevention and cure of endemic and communicable diseases.
 - i) care centres and other ventures by women
how power and wealth go together

- iii) Working out a family food budget that will meet minima nutritional requirements and appraising how many families can afford it.
- iv) Charts giving statistics about distribution of basic amenities and health care services between villages and towns.
- v) Role-plays depicting the attitudes of hospital and bureaucratic authorities in the local hospital and health centres, and development offices.

V. Our role as women in bringing about fundamental changes in society.

- i) Discussion based on “story of an underdeveloped peasant”
- ii) Co-operation-game
- iii) Reading case studies of women’s health centres, day care centres and other ventures by women. Discussing what is feasible in their own villages

ANNEXURE-II

The Game of Life*

(This game was developed by TK Sundari Ravindran
for the founders' workshop in 1981)

This is a board game similar to "Monopoly" or "Trade" with the difference that it has true-to-life rules and regulations and depicts a rural setting.

Materials To Be Prepared

1. The Playing Board

There are in all 44 columns on the board. These are as follows:

Different kinds of rural properties (7 places in all): Toddy shop, Provisions stores, Bus company, Rice mill, Lorry company, Sugar factory, Touring movie talkies.

Different categories of agricultural land (15 places in all): "wet" land with ground water irrigation sources: (2); "wet" land with canal irrigation: (2); 'dry' land with less access to irrigation: (4); rain fed poor quality land: (3); waste land (unprepared, uncultivated land which belongs to the government, and is sometimes encroached upon the cultivated): (2).

Landlord's lands (2 different landlords, sharing 10 places between them but not equally).

Land to be taken on lease: 3 places

Other places (9): Start; Chance (2); weekly market; Temple; School; Bank, Police and Jail.

Land values, terms of lease and price of other properties are to be stated according to what prevails in one's area.

2. Money:

Rupees in the denominations 50, 000, 10,000, 5,000, 1,000, 500, 100 and 50.

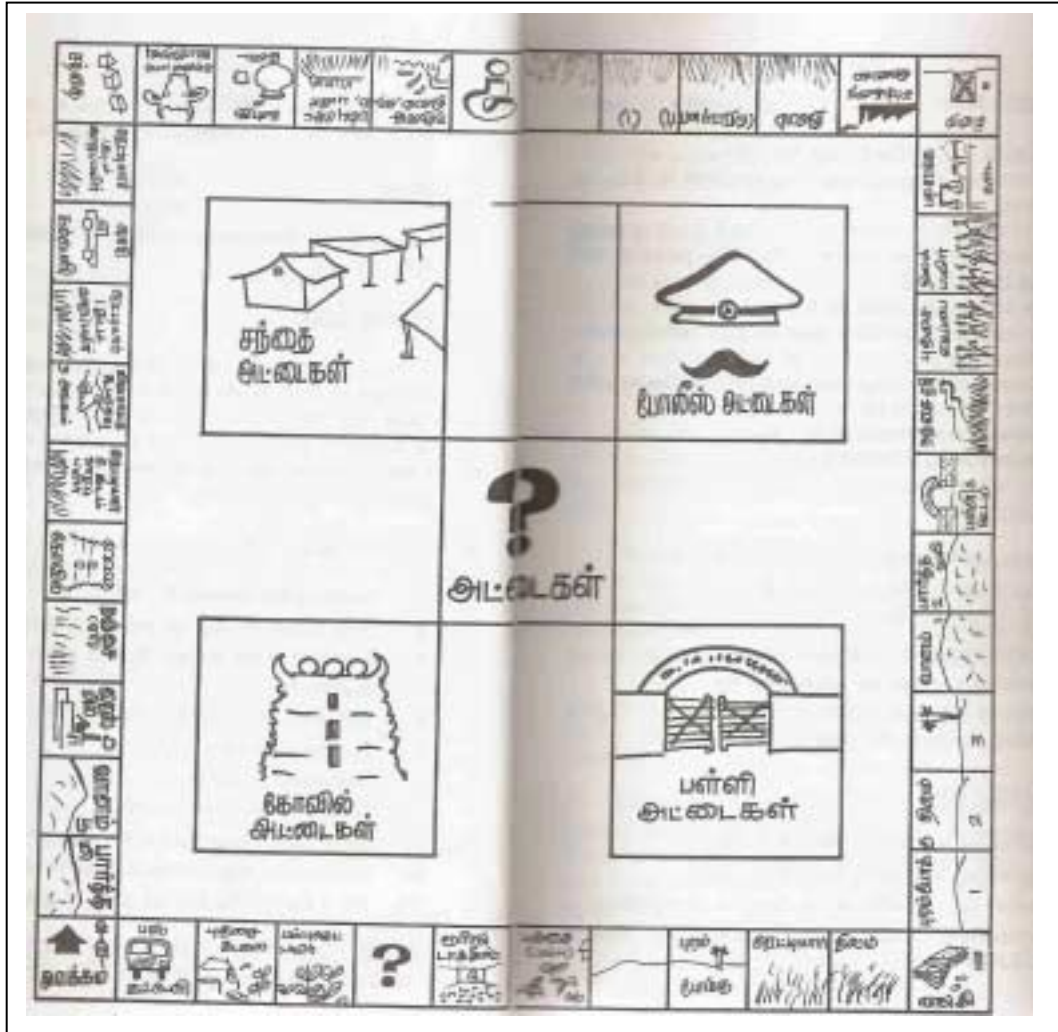
3. Property cards:

These have to state cost of property, rent payable and in the case of land, produce per harvest. There are also three cards of lands leased out by the landlord, stating cost, rent and amount payable by lessee annually (i.e. every time he completes one round on the board), as well as number of bags of gain per harvest.

4. Chance Cards: Ten

1. Lottery prize income Rs. 100/-
2. New tax of Rs. 50/- on your property.
3. Sickness in the family: Pay Rs.299/- for medical expenses.
4. Expenses for children's education Rs. 100/-
5. Pay the doctor Rs. 100/-
6. Son sends Rs. 250/-
7. Go to jail on a false charge.
8. Local parish priest gives you Rs.50/-
9. Continuous rains 0 unable to go to market this turn.
10. Pay a fine of Rs. 50/- for a social offence.

5. Market Cards: Nine in all, 3 each stating, 'High Prices', 'Medium prices', and Low Price'.



6. Police Cards: Eight

1. Tiff with the landlord. Fine Rs.100/-
2. Antagonised the local cop. Stay one turn in the lock-up.
3. Involved in a wage strike, and keep getting accused on false charges. Rs.500/- penalty and three turns in jail.
4. Fine for straying cattle Rs.50/-
5. Involved in a local caste fight Rs.299/- penalty and two turns in jail.
6. Accused of stealing the landlord's bullocks - pay Rs.500/- or stay in jail for three turns.
7. Unable to repay loans Rs.50/- fine
8. Drunken brawl – Pay Rs.50/-

7. Temple Cards: Six

1. Pilgrimage Rs.700/-
2. Make gruel for the local deity Rs.300/-
3. Festival give Rs.50/-
4. Rs.400/- expenses to fulfill a vow.
5. 'Chithirai' car festival – spend Rs.50/-
6. Going to the family deity's temple for your Child's naming ceremony Rs.800/-

8. School Cards: Four

1. Studied up to class 5. Receive Rest. 500/-
2. Studied up to class 8. Receive Rs. 1000/-
3. Studied up to matriculation. Receive Rs. 1500/-
4. Successfully completed technical training. Receive Rs.5, 000/-

Number of Players

The game can be played by six or more players. It also needs a facilitator cum banker besides this.

Rules of the Game

To start the game, the players take turns to throw a pair of dice. The two players with highest scores become landlords, and the others are labourers. The banker then distributes Rs. 50,000 each and their property cards to the landlords, Rs.1000 each to each one of the labourers.

The players place their respective tokens at the 'start' column. The landlords are the first to play, and are followed by the labourers according to their scores in the initial throw of dice.

To play, the pair of dice are thrown, and the token is moved to the corresponding column. The player has the option to be purchased. She would receive a rent from any subsequent player who lands on her property. To buy a property, the player has to pay the banker the amount stated and receive a property title from her in turn. The rent to be collected would be stated on her card. The two landlords do not have to pay any rent to others.

Land to be leased in from the landlords can be had on landing on the corresponding column, by paying a fixed sum stated in the landlord's property card. The lessees do not receive rent from other players who land on his land. The rent accrues to the landlord.

On landing on the landlord's land, a sum of Rs.150/- has to be paid as rent to the person concerned.

Temple, Chance, Police and School are special columns. When a player arrives on any one of these, he draws a corresponding card from the pile shuffled and placed at the centre of the board and does as indicated in the card. The police cards do not apply to the landlords.

Weekly market is another special column. On crossing this or arriving on it, owners of land draw a market card and sell their bags of grain at low, medium or high price as stated in the market card. The number of bags of grain they have for sale is given in their property cards. The current high, medium or low prices for the grains will be stated by the banker.

On arriving at the Jail a player pays Rs.500/- as fine to the banker, or loses three turns. This does not apply to the landlords.

A player unable to pay her rent, or requiring money for investment can mortgage her property and borrow money from the bank at the prevailing rate of interest. Every time a player completes one round on the board, she has to pay interest on the moneys he borrowed. Also, if a player arrives at the Bank column, she pays an additional 10% interest on money borrowed.

It is up to the banker to decide when money borrowed should be reclaimed, and to auction the property if the player is unable to pay.

Personal loans from other players can also be taken at terms and conditions specified by them.

When a player has no property and is repeatedly unable to pay dues, she can declare herself insolvent and quit the game.

ANNEXURE –III

THIRST

Five or six women were plucking bunches of ripe groundnut plants. “Groundnuts grow well on this soil – this year the crop has been good”, said Ramasami Gounder, standing on the field bunds, to himself.

One of the women turned back, and seeing no one beside him, chuckled softly.

“Is that Valli the madari? (1) Why that laughter’? roared Gounder.

“The master was talking to himself...” “um. Come on now, proceed with your work. The fields yonder have to be harvested by evening. Don’t while away your time gossiping”.

He walked up to the shade of a neem tree on the bund and watched the grace with which women were plucking groundnuts. His eyes lingered a while on one of them whose saree ‘pallau’ was flying away from her.

“Ye Valli, bring the spade home after the work is over”.

“So will I, master”

As soon as Mooppan the supervisor arrived, Gounder started towards the well. Power supply to the tube-well stopped at noon. He tried the switch on – “Lineman Christian is too conceited. Says the office at Gangeyam has permitted only four hours power supply for the tube-wells-che! too bad.”

1. ‘Madaris’ – are an ex-untouchable caste, who besides being agricultural labourers, are cobblers

A pair of sturdy bullocks were resting under the projecting tiled roof of the room enclosing the motor. Gounder brought them their feed of maize. Adjoining the motor room was another where ploughs, sickles, pick-axes and other implements were kept. In a corner of the room was usually kept a pot brimming with fresh toddy. Nachimutu Mooppan, the toddy tapper who climbed the palm trees belonging to the Gounder, always filled up the pot for the ‘Yajaman’s’ (1) use, before supplying toddy to the shop owners. Once in a while, the Gounder would dip-in a steel tumbler into the pot, and drink up a whole glass in one breathe.

The Gounder took a glassful now, and leant on his rope cot. He had just been lulled to sleep by the cool breeze when a voice startled him awake.

“Where do I keep this spade, O Master?”

“Whom do you want?” he began to shout, but his voice softened as soon as he caught a glimpse of the red saree at the door.

“The madari? Bring the spade and keep it against the northern wall”.

Valli came in hesitantly, and turned back to flee once her work was done. The Gounder reached for her, and trapped her in a crushing embrace. “What’s the hurry, Valli. You can go later, wait...” he smiled obscenely at her.

“Yajman – what is this...O, please leave me. Please...” she tried to break out of his embrace and run.

1. Yajman – Master; landlord

“Don’t act tough now, woman – look, is this the way to cover a beautiful body – with tattered blouses? I’ll arrange to give you double the wages from tomorrow; I’ll buy you a nice blouse”.

“Please leave me. I don’t want anything. Oh! leave me..” her struggling body was enclosed in his arms, her cries smothered by his hungry kisses. The torn blouses revealing her youthful breasts set his passion aflame. “Valli, I’ll give you anything you want. Aren’t you my darling – just today, dear, only once. Please don’t say no...”

She was soon lost beneath the Gounder’s huge frame.

After a while when she came staggering out of the room-setting her saree in position and pushing back her dishevelled hair, the cool breeze slapped bitingly against her sweat- bathed body. “Thoo”. She turned back towards the room, and spat with disgust, and headed to the groundnut fields.

“Where were you all this while, Valliama” asked Kosalai, her neighbour.

“The Gounder’s wife kept me back in idle gossip when I went to return the spade”. She said carelessly and turned to pluck groundnuts. She felt her head reel- “Kosalai, I’m feeling faint” she walked slowly towards the neem tree and sat leaning against it.

Just then a little boy come running towards the fields. “Akkov – Akkov” (1)... he was draped in a loin cloth, and just and dirt and covered his hair and body.

1. “Akkov” – for akka or elder sister.

Hearing her younger brother’s voice, Valli turned back, “Tieurpathi? Why did you come in this hot sun. Did you not see the gruel I had kept for you in the pot?”

The boy nodded his head vigorously to say he had not come for the food. “It’s not that, Akkov. It’s Machan (1) – they are beating him up in the ‘ur’ (2). Come fast. Come soon”.

His words took sometime to sink in. Valli sat spell bound for a while. She then rose abruptly, and ran behind her brother-“Why did her go inside the ur? I didn’t give him money for toddy. today. Why should they beat him – did he drink and not pay?”

“Will they no thrash him? Machan had the audacity to go into the ur and draw water from their well.”

“What? What!”

The enormity of her husband’s offence shook her up and she walked on with a quivering heart.

Her husband, Sadaiyan the cobbler, was tied to a tree in front of the Kali temple. All the respectable men of the ur- the “Yajamans” had assembled there, and were discussing aloud. In a distant corner stood the Madaris of the village Cheri (2), their heads bowed and mouths shut.

Chellamuthu Gounder; the richest landlord of the village turned to the Madaris and said “You madari dogs – what do you mean, standing there in silence/ Sadaiyan had insulted all the Yajmans of the ur – what do you have to say to that.”

-
1. Machan – brother-in-law
 2. ‘Ur’- The village is divided into two sections, ‘ur’ where the upper and middle castes reside and cheri where the ex-untouchable castes such as Madari, live.

“Who are we to say anything, master – give him any punishment the Yajmans deem appropriate?”

“I knew it right then. This bugger Sadaiyam came parading in front of me with slippers on, last week at the town shandy. No respect at all. And today, he has the guts to dip his bucket in the ‘ur’ well. In all these generations such a thing has never happened. If a madari bugger has the cheek to insult all the Yajmans here, he deserves to be beaten to death”.

Ramasami Gounder joined the group just then. He had just learnt what had passed, and hurried through the fields. “We cannot tolerate such happenings. What are we waiting for? Thrash up all these madari dogs with the whip. Only the will they learn some discipline” – he shouted at the top of his voice.

“Sami (Lord), the well in the cheri has gone completely dry. I didn’t do this intentionally, Oh mighty Yajmas!. I couldn’t bear the thirst,” pleaded Sadaiyan faintly.

“Elei, Sadaiya – don’t open your mouth and (tempt us to) tear your throat apart” shouted someone.

“What if you couldn’t beat the thirst, you bastard – would you die? And even if you did die, what is lost? How can any of us drink water from this well, you son of a

“Stop it, Sami.” Valli came roaring in front of Gounder. Her whole body trembled like someone possessed, her eyes burning like fire.

She stripped her top bare, and stood before them – Ramasami Gounder closed his eyes, and all the others, while hurling curses at her could not bear to look away either.

Valli looked at everyone. She glared at Ramasami Gounder and said – “It’s pollution if we madaris dip a bucket in your well. But you don’t get polluted raping a madari women – is it?”

Ramasami Gounder sprang forward and slapped her hard. “Madari bitch – the audacity – talking rotten language in front of so many Yajmans”. He caught hold of a horsewhip and whipped her till his hands tired. The council of Yajmans med to decide on the case, and half an hour later spelled out the judgment.

“The water has been polluted. We shall have to get the pujari and perform a puja to rid ourselves of it. Sadaiyan is fined two and a half rupees for polluting the ur well. His wife Valli madari has to pay a fine of one and a quarter rupees for talking disrespectfully to Yajmans. The amounts will have to be paid within a week. Only then will they be permitted to work in the Yajmans’ fields.”

Sadaiyan was untied from the tree; he fell on the Yajmans’ feet and rose. Valli staggered along with her madari Kinsmen and her husband.

Ramasami Gounder looked at his hand which had struck the madari women.

“I’ve been polluted.. hitting a madari bitch with this hand; have to hurry home for a bath”... h that others may hear him.

(Story from 'Thenmazhai', a student's magazine; originally published in the late seventies. Author's name not known.)

Annexure – IV

RIGHT TO HEALTH DENIED

TABLE 1: HOUSING

Location	No. of Huts	Type of Roofing	Type of Flooring	Area	Av. No. Of Person per Hut	Rent/paid Paid month
1. Ambedkar Bridge	1000	Thatched	Mud	8' x 8'	6	Rs. 14
2. Sarangapani St.T.Nagar	300	Thatched	Mud	8' x 8'	5	Rs. 16
3. Below railway bridge T. Nagar	200	Thatched	Mud	8' x 6'	6	Rs. 14

TABLE 2: WATER SUPPLY

Slum	Public Water tap			
	Number	Duration of water supply	Uses	Around the water tap
1.	2 taps & one hand pump	4.00 am to 9.00 am	Drinking, cooking bathing washing vessels, for the live stock,	Crowds; long queues, stagnant water; no drainage. Brawls are a daily feature due to the long, frustrating wait.
2.	1 tap	4.00 am to 9.00 am	-do-	
3.	1 tap	11.00 am to 5.00 am	-do-	-do-

TABLE 3: TOILET FACILITIES

Slum	Public latrine	Place used instead of latrine			
	No.	Hygienic condition	Men	Women	Children
1.	2	Cleaned twice daily but very dirty in the morning hrs.	Canal bank	Can go out only at night and very early in the morning.	Street corners
2.	1	No water supply, never cleaned	Street corners	When they use street corners, residents of bunga-lows in the area drive them away.	Street corners
3.	none	not applicable	Railway line		Street corners

Lighting and drainage facilities:

Not present in any one of the three settlements.

**TABLE 4:
CONSEQUENCES OF INADEQUATE AMENITIES**

Slum	Scenario
1	Stagnation of drain water, abundance of mosquitoes Foul smell from overflowing garbage dumps.
2	Accumulation of faecal matter in latrines, foul smell. Rain water entering houses.
3	Women can bathe only at night. Never able to sleep because of the train traffic, and mosquitoes.

TABLE 5: EMPLOYMENT AND WAGES

Slu m	Permanent Employment	Tempor ary Emplo yment	Unemployed	Wages			
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men & Wome n	Permane nt (Month & wages)	Temporar y (daily wages)
1.	Corporation workers, transport workers (4%)	-	Construction workers Rickshaw Pullers, Vegetable vendors Scavengers	Construction worker Domestic Servant Vegetable vendor	60-70%	Rs.150	Rs.1.00-
2.	Corporation workers, drivers (5%)	-	Construction worker, Head load carrier Rickshaw pullers, Domestic servants	Construction worker Vegetable vendor Domestic servants	90%	Rs. 150	Rs. 1.50- Rs.4.00
3.	Labourers (5%)	-	Any type of wage labour like construction head load carrying or rickshaw pulling	Domestic servants	60%	Rs.150	Rs.0.50- Rs.3.00

TABLE 6 : FOOD

Slum	No. of Meals per day			Food Eaten	Ration Card use	Pregnant Women's Food	Children's Food		Consequences
	Twice a day	Once a day	Once in two days				1-4 Years	5-14 Years	
1.	53%	45%	53%	<p>Morning: Gruel Sometime s daily</p> <p>Noon: Evening: a cup of tea, dry bun</p> <p>Night: Cooked rice brinjal or dried fish sauce (sometime s spinach or potatoes) No Milk.</p>	<p>Since most are daily wage labourers, they are unable to buy foodstuffs in bulk once in 15 days. Often pawn their cards and buy daily provisions in small quantities.</p>	<p>Very undernourished. Go hungry on many days. Suffer from severe anaemia.</p>	<p>Usually breast milk. When mother is unable to feed, children also eat the same food as elders.</p>	<p>At noon eat the free meal full of stones and worms given at school. At night eat the same food as their parents.</p>	<p>*Malnutrition *Iron, calcium, protein and Vitamin totally absent from their food. *Permanent problems with the digestive system *Most have worms and therefore the minimal food intake goes to feed the worms.</p>
2.	49%	50%	46%						
3.	4%	50%	46%						

TABLE 7: DISEASES AND AVAILABILITY OF HEALTH CARE

Slum	Diseases			Nearest Clinic	Description
	Men	Women	Children		
1.	Anaemia T.B. Malaria, Filarial, Typhoid Occupational injuries	Anaemia jaundice T.B. Malaria Occupational injuries White discharge Urinary	Rotary Club's Clinic		"The attend only to well-dressed persons. Never examine us, just ask us orally and give medicines. If we are hurt, they not only tincture. For bandages, we have to pay".
2.			Corporation clinic		"They don't have medicines for worms. For malaria, we have to buy medicines from the drug store. After "operation: (sterilization)" if we have pus around the stitches and go to the clinic, they don't attend to us"
3.			Corporation clinic		"There are hardly any drugs. When we go for delivery, we have to walk back on the third day with the baby. Poor care. All they talk about is family planning"

