

MATERIAL FOR WEBSITE -ANNUAL REPORT 2006

1. Bayan-a regional socio legal journal

The topic for the fifth issue of *Bayan* was the 'Right to a Safe Environment '.This edition of Bayan highlighted the pressing environmental issues faced by Pakistan at the time of writing which included selling of Dingi & Bandar (two islands)of the coast of Sindh to a Dubai-based company and the very famous "Lahore Darakht Bacho Tehreek".Both moves,driven by commercial investors,clearly ignored the interests of those directly affected by it.

Prominent Pakistani writers like Justice (R) Saleem Akhtar,Dr.Parvez Hassan,Azim Azfar and Najma Sadeque contributed to this journal.Other than this environmentalists from other countries such as Dr.Bharat Desai(India),Proffessor Dinah Sheleton(USA) ad Proffesor Koh Kheng Lian(Singapore)gave their respective inputs too.

Work for this edition of Bayan was done from 1st February 2004 to 31st January 2006.

1(a) Spreading the word-Lecture Series by Najma Sadeque:Globalisation and WTO-Livelihoods Under Threat

A series of three lectures were held in January 2006 as part of Simorgh's overall aim to raise awareness and generate public debates on the 'rights' issues and related laws.Conducted by Najma Sadeque these lectures highlighted the threat to life and livelihood by globalization and WTO.

Over three hundred students and woman from walled city attended these lectures.Students of St.Anthony's College,Government College University and team members of NGO Shirkat Gah participated in these lectures too.

The great level of participation confirmed these lectures success.It highlighted a need and drawbacks of official policy especially with regard to education which sabotaged its' dissemination.It showed that public was not indifferent to various issues raised in these lectures-all they needed was acknowledgement and space where they could discuss, understand and address the various issues that concerned them.

2. The World Court(AWHRC-Simorgh)

Simorgh has been a member organization of the AWHRC since 1988,when it was formed in Bangkok to (i)examine and address the lacunae in the UN Charter of Human Rights from a third world perspective and (ii)to work regionally and locally for the rights of women and other disempowered groups.

The World Social Forum in Karachi, in March 2006, provided the opportunity to hold this event in Lahore as the 'Asian Human Rights Council,' which was holding the 'World Court' in Karachi would be there in Lahore. The World Court was thus held in Lahore for the first time immediately after the World Court was held in Karachi.

The World Court Lahore was held at Lahore from 29th to 30th March at the HRCP Auditorium. It was planned on the same lines as the first Lahore Court. It had witnesses and speakers who testified to the violence of war, wars of globalisation and wars against women all over the world. A panel of judges and jurists analyzed and commented on such situations. The proceedings were interactive and communication was facilitated by in-tandem translation—a task that was with great ability and good humor undertaken by Tahira Abdullah. Tahira Abdullah had previously been one of the translators at Lahore Court as well.

Speakers at this event included members of AWHRC and AWHRC members from Pakistan. To name a few; these included Corrine Kumar who was the International Co-ordinator of AWHRC; Shakun Mohini and Madhu Bhushan from India; Ita F. Nadia from Indonesia; Rana Mustafa from Iraq; Wahu Kara from Kenya; along with Najma Sadeque, Maruim Palejo, Tabassum Bhatti and Nighat Said Khan all of whom were from Pakistan.

Overall the World Court Lahore was a successful event.

3. The Lahore Walled City Project: Planting the Seeds of Change II

This project was conducted from July 2005 to December 2007 with the financial aid of 'Action Aid Pakistan'. It was an awareness raising research project.

A series of workshops, lectures, discussion sessions, activities were held in the pursuance of this project. Prior to and during the duration of this project Simorgh visited various areas, so to make its' contacts with people and to involve them in the aforesaid project. This helped attaining acceptability for this Project.

Workshops: as a part of this Project there were 3 workshops conducted at F.J. Chuna Mandi. The first workshop was from 13th to 14th March 2006, the second was from 19th to 20th April 2006 and the third one was from 1st to 2nd December 2006. Issues taken up at the first two workshops were those based on student's concerns as articulated during the base-line survey. Topics covered were Aims and Objectives of the Walled City Project, History of the Women's Movement (in England and Pakistan), Poverty and its' effects on Women, Muslim Family Laws (an overview), Tolerance and Society, Human Rights and CEDAW. As far as the third workshop was concerned, this particular workshop had the aim of developing life-skills such as theatre techniques and script writing amongst its' participants.

Other than these 2 workshops with students of F.J.Chuna Mandi,there were two more workshops conducted.One was conducted with VTI students and one with the Community.Both workshops had the title of 'Aaye Naiy Rasstay Nai Manzilain Talaash Karain'.

The one conducted with the Community was a two day workshop from 27th June to 29th June 2006.It had a total of 36 women participants.The main aim of the workshop was to build trust,select women for initial mobilization and to motivate them for formal learning by providing them with a space where they could comfortably discuss various matters and problems.

The one conducted with VTI Students was a two day workshop from 11th July to 13th July. Following were discussed in this workshop namely,(i)goals, aspirations and ground realities,(ii)women and development and (iii)strategies and routes for positive change.

Sessions: regular sessions which taught students how to read,write,attempt comprehensions, informed them about their legal rights ,NGO's role in community development etc were held with students of VTI,Delhi Gate at various intervals in 2006.Simorgh also made efforts to contact the non-muslim community so as to conduct similar sessions with them too.

Activities: activities in this project included the Najma Sadeque Lectures,World Court on War,of Globalization and Wars and Celebrating 25 years of Women Action Forum.

4. Women's Empowerment in Muslim Contexts (WEMC)

In partnership with Shirkat Gah and the Agha Khan University Community Health Department. Simorgh became part of the WEMC programme.This project is part of a four-country action research project.Although Simorgh did not get an opportunity to carry on with this project for long,and it participated in this project only during it's inception period, Simorgh contributed to it tremendously in this brief time period.

Simorgh's efforts as regards this programme were basically concentrated on the research aspect of this project.They involved conducting focus groups,social mapping,creating networking diagrams,interviewing and last but not the least indulging in policy dialogue.

5. Asia-Pacific Advisory Forum for Judicial Education on Equality Issues

Simorgh has been a member of the Advisory Forum since 1996 and a member of the Management Team since 1999.Formed with the view to sensitizing senior members of the judiciary regarding women's issues and ground realities ,the Advisory Forum is a regional body that has undertaken different activities especially workshops and Protocol meetings nationally and regionally for this purpose.There has been tight monitoring and planning as regards this

project via the management team meetings. Management Team meetings have been taking place regularly so as to assess ongoing activities and to plan for the future.

The two meetings held this year were in Nepal and Delhi with Justice Nasir Aslam Zahid and Neelam Hussain attending these meetings in these places respectively. The focus of these meetings was based on the findings of the ten-year evaluation project undertaken by CIDA. In these meetings the coming five years, from 2006 onwards, were planned for this project.

6. Planting the Seeds of Change I: Kaleidoscope and Phuljari

Simorgh's first long-term partly self-sustaining project, the human rights school texts, more specifically the *Kaleidoscope* Primers are in use in over twenty four schools in the major cities of Pakistan. *Kaleidoscope* reprints including revisions were undertaken regularly by the editorial staff and Publication Unit throughout 2006.

The *Phuljari* Primer 1-5 which are for Urdu medium schools were complete and ready to be printed by the end of 2006.

Following publications were planned for 2006:

(i) *Colonial Roots and Post Colonial Realities*: editor Samina Choonara. Cover title: Maryam Rahman

(ii) *Endangering the Nation-State*: editors Rubina Saigol, Neelam Hussain and Samiya Mumtaz. Work proceeded on a revised one-volume edition. An Urdu edition of the same book was planned and is due to be translated by Samira Khalid.

7. Conference and Publication Project: Global Fund for Women

A regional conference on cultural and historical contexts was planned for 2006, however following the October 2005 earthquake this conference never took place. Funds allocated for this conference were diverted towards earthquake relief on the initiative of Global Fund for Women.

In the preparation phase of this project, participants had been identified both nationally and regionally and a preparatory brainstorming exercise was organized by Project Co-ordinator and editor, Samina Choonara. Participants included academics and researchers from Government College University and from various women's organizations.

8. The Simorgh Diary 2007

Simorgh's diary is an annual feature based on a selected theme. This year the diary celebrated the first twenty-five years of WAF's history and struggle for women's rights.

9. Earth Quake Relief: The Shang School Project

As part of its' earthquake relief activity Simorgh decided to put up a school in the village Shang, Battagram. It did this in partnership with Lahore Grammar School 55 Main Gulberg and Lahore Grammar School, Jauhar Town Branch. This decision was based on the desire to make a more permanent and long term contribution to earthquake relief on the basis of funds collected by Simorgh and the concerned branches of Lahore Grammar School for this purpose.

Shang is a small village on the silk route to China. It has a population of 4,000 people. The community accepted Simorgh's proposal of enrolling equal number of girls and boys in the school. Also the headmaster offered to donate land for the school if Simorgh could provide the building. Simorgh agreed to this offer and by September 2006 documents donating the land and the design for the new building were both prepared. Work on this building has been delayed and postponed to March 2007 because of weather conditions.