

ANNUAL REPORT  
1 APRIL 2018 to  
31 MARCH 2019



SPARROW

Sound & Picture Archives for Research on Women

## Kavita Mahajan

It is a story  
when she tasted sunlights...

The house stood, fastened firmly to the ground.  
The doors and windows gaped in disbelief  
with fingers in their mouths;  
then the walls gawked  
only to close their eyes in a hurry...it was then...

when she put a radiant piece  
of sunlight  
on her tongue!

the Master, taken aback, said  
your lustrous skin, your rosy lips ,  
your cool eyes.....  
what will happen to all these?  
emerald desires in His eyes,  
His branches of hands  
wishing to swing her,  
His shade wishing to close in upon her.

But she kept holding on  
to the golden crystal of the sunlight  
and kept on smiling!

*Translated from the original Marathi poem.*



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Publication No. 95  
December: 2019

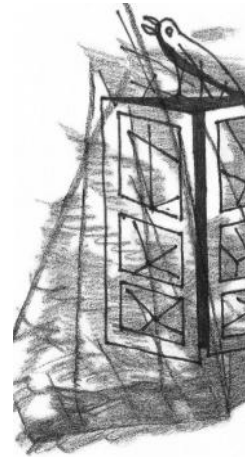
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**SPARROW**

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1 April 2018 TO 31 March 2019

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*PREFACE*

SPARROW always begins a new financial year with joy for it means one more year of perseverance and one more year of archival work that we enjoy so much despite several drawbacks we face both in terms of funds and in terms of the workforce we have. Last year we had been determined to complete the fifth volume of the five-volume series of 87 writers in 23 languages, *Building a Boat on Hilltops to Sail the Oceans*, with poems and stories of women in Naga, Nepali, Oriya, Gujarati and Marathi. Unfortunately at the end of this financial year the project was still hanging fire due to circumstances not under our control. The basic work for the project had been done but the Project Coordinator who was in charge of the project decided to go on long leave for personal reasons. The part-time Project Co-ordinator who joined us around November took a while to pick up the threads of the project. Hopefully the volume will be out soon and will delight everyone.

In the national context, there were many incidents and events with women in the news but I think what took the country by storm was the nun's rape case in Kerala. In Kerala the church is a very strong and influential institution and all voices of dissent are suppressed and the state hardly ever interferes with the affairs of the church. So on September 15<sup>th</sup>, a Saturday morning, when the people of Kochi in Kerala woke up to see nuns protesting on the street with placards against Bishop of Jalandhar, Franco Mulakkal accusing him of raping a holy sister, to say all hell broke loose will be an understatement. The protest had been organised by the nuns of the convent at Kuravilangad where the nun who had been raped was lodged. The Kerala Church Reformation Movement had organised the protest in Kochi. One would have expected righteous outrage but what followed was a series of efforts to silence the protest. The nun who was the complainant was questioned by the police five times while the police that went to interrogate Bishop Mulakkal returned without arresting him. Meanwhile there was a flood crisis in Kerala and the nun was almost fighting a lonely battle. She was being kept under watch and her widowed sister was threatened but Bishop Mullakkal was still using his power in the church as a Bishop. Nuns who supported her like Sister Lissy Vadakkal in whom she had confided and who had stood by her, were ostracised. Sister Lissy Vadakkal was almost kept under house arrest within the convent not allowed to perform her duties as a nun. In August Sister Lucy Kallappura, who was one of the main faces of the agitations against father Bishop Mulakkal was warned by her convent, The Franciscan Clarist Congregation for indulging in such activities against the church. Bishop Franco Mulakkal was arrested on September 21, 2018, but was out on bail 25 days later, on October 15, without any charge sheet being filed. However, no charge sheet was filed against the Bishop. Shortly after a Vatican City women's magazine published



an article on sexual abuse of nuns and forceful abortions by bishops and priests which led to an outrage, in February 2019, Pope Francis admitted that Catholic priests and bishops have sexually abused nuns and that there is a need for the church to do more to prevent such crimes. But in India the nuns who protested were being punished. Sister Lucy Kallappura was one of the main faces of the agitations against Bishop Franco Mullakal. In March 2019 The Superior General of Franciscan Clarist Congregation issued a final letter of warning to Sister Lucy Kalapura instructing her to leave the congregation.

Yet another women's issue that took up agitational forms was the Sabarimala Temple entry issue. The Ayyappa temple in Sabarimala, atop a hill that is not easy to climb, has followed the practice of not allowing women of menstrual age from entering the temple as Ayyappa is considered a celibate. On 28 September 2018, The Supreme Court struck down a rule that disallowed girls and women in the 10-50 age group from entering the Sabarimala temple in Kerala. The constitution bench headed by Chief Justice Dipak Misra, passed a verdict that said that temple rule violated women's right to equality and right to worship. Justice DY Chandrachud termed the custom as a form of "untouchability" which cannot be allowed under the Constitution. According to him, "Prejudice against women based on notions of impurity and pollution associated with menstruation is a symbol of exclusion. The social exclusion of women based on menstrual status is a form of untouchability which is an anathema to constitutional values." He also said that, in any event, the practice of excluding women from the temple at Sabarimala was not an essential religious practice and so "the court must decline to grant constitutional legitimacy to practices which derogate from the dignity of women and to their entitlement to an equal citizenship. Notions of 'purity and pollution', which stigmatize individuals, have no place in a constitutional order." Justice Indu Malhotra was the only woman among the judges who opposed the verdict. She argued that "in a secular polity, issues which are matters of deep religious faith and sentiment must not ordinarily be interfered with by courts." She, of course, drew the line at pernicious practices such as sati but her point was that a secular polity must allow heterogeneity in religion, allow diverse forms of worship, even if irrational, insisting that courts must not enter into areas of faith. She emphasised that "constitutional morality in a secular polity would imply harmonisation of fundamental rights, which include the right of every individual, religious denomination, or sect, to practise their faith and belief in accordance with the tenets of their religion, irrespective of whether the practice is rational or logical."

While the verdict was a welcome one it was not welcomed by those, including women, who believed in such a tradition. Many argued that there were several other Ayyappa temples where women could go and this was the only temple that followed this practice and that there were several temples where men could not enter. Also, visiting the temple entailed a 41-day rigorous practice of fast and abstinence from sex after which the hill had to be



## 1 April 2018 TO 31 March 2019

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climbed with a basket of ritual offerings. The verdict and the protest against it ended in several hartals and protests and the temple also became a free ground for many feminists who called themselves atheists, in making efforts to get into the temple forcefully and secretly and the entire episode became an ugly one. How this will eventually lead to the Supreme Court of India taking up petitions relating to entry of Muslim women into mosques, female genital mutilation in the Dawoodi Bohra Muslim community and barring of Parsi women, married to non-Parsi men, from the holy fire place at Agiary while also considering Kerala's Sabarimala Temple issue will be taken up in the next annual report.

In September 2018, actress Tanushree Dutta came out with her accusation of well-known actor Nana Patekar of misbehaving with her on a film set in 2008. Patekar denied it and she had filed a police complaint. But it triggered off a series of #Me Too allegations. The case sparked an outpouring of other #Me Too allegations on social media. In October 2018 Mahima Kukreja tweeted that a Mumbai based comedian, Utsav Chakraborty had once sent her an unsolicited photo of his penis. And then all hell broke loose so to say. Many other women took to twitter to detail their experiences of sexual harassment. Kukreja's tweet had started a fresh wave and prompted the compilation of a list—consolidated from stories across social media platforms and shared as a Google spreadsheet—with more than 80 men on it, many of them prominent. The Me-too battle reached the classical music world and the film world in South India also. The stories that came out against popular actors and lyricists in the Tamil film world, and gurus, mentors and patrons were ugly and even uglier were the terms used for women who dared to make the accusations.

The UN Theme for International Women's Day March 2019 was "Think equal, build smart, innovate for change". The Padma awards declared this year did justice to this theme. The Padma awards were announced in January 2019. Women who work quietly and with commitment in many fields were honoured with the Padma Shri awards. SPARROW was happy to see women who are part of its oral history project recognised for their work. Many social workers and those who have diligently promoted organic farming and environmental awareness, and have worked hard to excel in sports, have been chosen for the Padma Shri award this year. SPARROW has documented them on its Face Book page. SPARROW is also proud that Madurai Chinna Pillai, Dr Rohini Godbole and Narthaki Nataraj who have been awarded the Padma Shri, are part of the oral history project of SPARROW. Dr Rohini Godbole is also part of the SPARROW publication *The Balancing Act* & Narthaki Nataraj is also part of the film *Degham* produced by SPARROW. SPARROW is particularly happy that Teejan Bai a leading performing artiste and a contemporary exponent of Pandavani, who sings the narrative of the epic *Mahabharata* had been chosen for a Padma Vibhushan and that Bachendri Pal, considered the Iron Lady in mountaineering, who conquered Mount Everest in 1984 and became the first Indian woman to achieve this feat, being honoured with the Padma Bhushan thirty-five years after getting the Padma Shri.



## SPARROW Congratulates all Padma Awardees 2019 winners



Teejan Bai (Art-Vocals-Folk)



Bachendri Pal (Sports)



Bhagirathi Devi  
(Public Affairs)



Draupadi Ghimiray  
(Social work)



Bombayla Devi Laishram  
(Sports-Archery)



Harika Dronavalli  
(Sports-Chess)



Kamala Pujhari  
(Others-Agriculture)



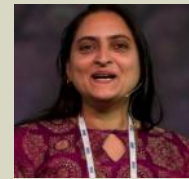
Muktaben Pankajkumar  
Dagli (Social work)



Rajkumari Devi  
(Agriculture)



Tao Porchon Lynch  
(Foreigner)(Others-Yoga)



Dr Sharada Srinivasan  
(Archaeology)



Godawari Dutta  
(Art-Painting)



Friederike Irina (Foreigner)  
(Social Work-Animal Welfare)



Jamuna Tudu (Social  
Work-Environment)



Gita Mehta (Foreigner)  
(Literature& Education)



Prashanti Singh  
(Sports-Basketball)



Milena Salvin (Foreigner)  
(Art - Dance Kathakali)



Saalumarada Thimmakka  
(Social Work-Environment)



1 April 2018 TO 31 March 2019

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**SPARROW CONGRATULATES THE PADMA AWARDEES  
who are part of SPARROW**



Dr Rohini Godbole



Narthaki Nataraj



Madurai Chinna Pillai

WE ARE SO HAPPY THAT MADURAI CHINNA PILLAI, DR ROHINI GODBOLE AND NARTHAKI NATARAJ ARE PART OF THE ORAL HISTORY PROJECT OF SPARROW. DR ROHINI GODBOLE IS ALSO PART OF THE SPARROW PUBLICATION *THE BALANCING ACT* & NARTHAKI NATARAJ IS ALSO PART OF THE FILM *DEGHAM* PRODUCED BY SPARROW.

SPARROW was happy about some women receiving recognition for their lifetime work but also feels distressed when friends associated with SPARROW pass away at a young age and when women have to face death for doing their duty. SPARROW congratulates Tamil writer Krishangini for getting the Thanjai Prakash Achiever Award on 15th December 2018 from *Pesum Puthiya Sakthi* magazine, Shanta Gokhale for getting the Maharashtra Foundation Award (Sahitya Jeevan Puraskar) & Reshma Nilofer Naha, the only woman river pilot, for the Nari Shakti Puraskar.

SPARROW was saddened by the murder of Neha Shoree. Neha Shoree had a Pharmacist degree from Punjab University. She also had a Master's degree from NIPER (National Institute of Pharmaceutical Education and Research). Those who have degree in pharmacy normally go for well-paid jobs in pharmaceutical companies. But Neha chose to appear for the Punjab Public Service Examination for Drug Inspector and cracked it ranking 8<sup>th</sup>. She joined the Punjab Health Department as Drug Inspector. She took her job seriously and soon began to fight the drug mafia and gangsters revealing the nexus of some influential people in Punjab with the drug mafia. She came to be known as one of the best drug inspectors of Punjab during 2007-2010. In fact, she was transferred by the government



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SPARROW

to protect the drug peddlers. At the time of her murder, she was posted at FDA's Zonal Licensing Authority. Neha had cancelled the license in 2009 of Balwinder Singh who shot her. In September 2009, Neha was posted as a Drug Inspector in Ropar District and she had raided Balwinder's shop. During the raid, 35 types of tablets used by drug addicts were recovered but Balwinder Singh could not produce any supporting documentation. That was when she cancelled his licence, according to SSP Bhullar. According to the police, Balwinder Singh went to the FDA office, shot Neha twice on the temple and chest and shouted "Happy Holi!" Then he shot himself when he was cornered at the gate. On 29th March Balwinder Singh had his revenge. But it was a revenge not just against Neha Shoree but against all women who dare to fight for justice. Neha has a two-year-old daughter and would have been Assistant Commissioner in a few months. She was a woman who dared to fight the dreaded drug mafia in Punjab. It is easy to get rid of women like her but not easy to obliterate the exemplary and important work she has done. There will be more Nehas in future.

SPARROW has interviewed many writers for its Oral History Recording Project but Kavita Mahajan was someone we took for granted and thought we could interview her anytime for she was someone close to us and we could always talk to her later. Kavita Mahajan passed away on 21 September 2018. SPARROW has very good memories of Kavita. She had come to the Women Writers' Meet at Kashid in 2006 organised by SPARROW and had kept us entertained with her mimicry and also shared with us her life and experiences as a writer. Considering the ups and downs in her life, she was always full of laughter. When she spoke of the kind of readers in Marathi and how they viewed women writers, she said that when she wrote the novel *Brr* (A Cry) in 2005 which was about women sarpanches and their experiences in the Panchayati Raj, it was written in English as 'Bra' in the print page and a man had the temerity to send her a bra by parcel. *Brr* was her first novel and but she wrote two more—*Bhinna* (Different, 2007) and *Kuhu* (Sweet Note of a Bird, 2011) which won a lot of critical acclaim. *Brr* won 12 awards and *Bhinna* won four awards. *Kuhu* was the first multi-media novel of its kind which had audio, visual clips, animation, lyrics, music over a classical base and original paintings woven into the text. Kavita also did non-fictional work (*Graffiti Wall*, 2009) and translations. She put together translations of selected stories of non-Marathi writers like Ambai and Vaidehi. Her book *Rajai* (Quilt) a translation into Marathi of 17 short stories of Urdu writer Ismat Chughtai was given the Sahitya Akademi Award in 2011. She also wrote poetry which came out as a collection, *Dhulicha Awaz* (Sound of Dust) in 2008. *Joyanache Ranga* (Joyana's Moods) is book of children's stories that she wrote, published in 2011. For her work in children's literature she got the Shashikalatai Agashe Award for Children's Literature in 2013. She could have contributed a lot to Marathi literature, had she lived. It is pity pneumonia snatched her away.

G Shanta who had set up the Ngo DAWN in Virudhunagar is a part of our Oral History



1 April 2018 TO 31 March 2019

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Project. We had regular communication with her. SPARROW had come to know Shantha in the early nineties. She had already set up DAWN (Development Action for Women in Need) in Virudhunagar by that time. She had had a tough life and was in a long distance marriage after a failed first marriage. Yet she had the courage to adopt two children knowing she would have to bring them up as a single mother. SPARROW had planned to do some collaborative projects with DAWN. It is a pity the plans never took off.

C S Lakshmi, Mumbai



### ***POLICY DECISIONS, STAFF STRUCTURE AND TEAM SPIRIT***

While the regular archival activities continued, the organization has survived this year on money saved and individual donations and a grant received for digitisation and a very small donation received for carrying on the archival projects and to meet some infrastructural expenses. Major policy decisions had to do with making coordination possible even from another country and making positive contribution in terms of work a possibility by allowing some work to be done from home and making the working hours a little flexible. New appointments were made this year in view of the grant received for digitisation. Appointment of one IT library professional and one Junior Librarian was done under this project. Training programme to handle Koha library software from the IT professional was conducted in SPARROW. A part-time coordinator was also appointed for the project section. Despite drawbacks in terms of the entire archival project team not being active on a full-time basis, the never-say-die spirit of the SPARROW team was heartening.

The new trustees appointed towards the end of 2017 have been very encouraging and supportive and have contributed in different ways by donating books, identifying possible donors and so on.

### ***PROJECT AND ARCHIVAL ACTIVITIES***

The regular archival projects like cataloguing of books, articles, print visuals, and posters, audios and films, marking and cutting newspaper articles and print visuals, acquiring books and journals, transcribing and translation of oral history interviews done, identifying and acquiring private papers and photographs, planning publications that can be taken up after the fifth volume of translated stories gets done, writing and commissioning book-reviews and articles for the SPARROW Newsletter, uploading the website and maintaining the Face Book page and networking with colleges continued although with some constraints regarding purchase of books and similar expenditure. We also continued our outreach activities of holding workshops and interacting with researchers.

In 2018, The Human Capability Foundation came forward to support the digitisation part of the work of SPARROW. We received a grant from Human Capability Foundation for a Project entitled *A Pilot Digitisation Project to Digitise The SPARROW Library Catalogue To Make Online Access Possible And As a First Step Towards Digitising the SPARROW Holdings And Creating A Digital Library for Reference and Research*. The pilot digitisation project is for making catalogue entries in digitised format to be uploaded on the net as an extension of our own website or in a blog when grants are available to upload and maintain it online. The entire archival material in all formats are also being scanned and digitised



## 1 April 2018 TO 31 March 2019

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under this project. The immediate action on completion of the project would be to share the meta data details in Koha format with NDLI (National Digital Library of India). With two appointments of library personnel and training in library software Koha, the ground work for the project began in full earnest and the project began to take off slowly but steadily by the end of the year.

Under Oral History Research Project (OHRP) this year we interviewed Roshan Vajifdar Ghose and also made a short documentary on her. Roshan Vajifdar Ghose was born on 15th May 1929 and when she was 7 she and her younger sister Khurshid began to learn dance from their elder sister Shirin who was a pioneer among the Parsi community to take up classical dancing. The three of them performed together as Vajifdar Sisters. The three sisters trained in many styles of dance like Kathak, Bharatanatyam, Manipuri, Kathakali and Mohiniattam.

In the early fifties Roshan Vajifdar earned a national scholarship in Bharatanatyam and studied in the Indian Institute of Fine Arts, Madras, for two years. Her guru was Chokkalingam Pillai, the son-in-law of the legendary Natyaguru Meenakshisundaram Pillai of Pandanallur School of Dance. Her arangetram took place in 1955 in the presence of the then Governor Shri Sri Prakasa.

In 1954, she and her sister Khurshid danced for the song *Yeh barkha bahar soutaniya ke dwar* (This rainy season bothers me like the other woman my husband has fallen for) written by Shailendra and set to music by Shankar-Jaikishan and sung by Lata Mangeshkar and Asha Bhosle in the film *Mayur Pankh* directed by Kishore Sahu which was sent to Cannes Film Festival and got nominated for the Grand Prize. Roshan also did a stage dance with Gopi Krishna for the song *Ae Bandi Tum Begum Bani* (Hey partner bound to me, you have become a begum) written by Bharat Vyas and composed by Arun Kumar Mukherjee and sung by Kishore Kumar and Asha Bhosle in the film *Parineeta* (1953) directed by Bimal Roy.

Roshan Vajifdar lived in Bangalore for seven years to train under Kittappa Pillai, nephew of Pandanainallur Meenakshisundaram Pillai. During her stay in Bangalore, she spent a lot of time with her actress friend Devika Rani and her husband Russian painter Svetoslav Roerich. Roerich painted several life-size portraits of Roshan. Some of these have appeared as covers of *Illustrated Weekly*, *Femina*, *Dharmayug* and several other magazines. Many of these paintings are housed in the Karnataka Chitrakala Parishad, Bangalore, and the State Museum of Oriental Arts, Moscow.

Although she danced in several styles Bharatanatyam was close to her heart and she sought out gurus to teach her the intricacies of Bharatanatyam. Her third main guru was Mangudi



## SPARROW ANNUAL REPORT

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Durairaja Iyer, who was an excellent mridangam artiste and dance guru from whom she learnt how to give life to *sollukattu*, rhythmic beats in a time sequence.

Shirin Vajifdar married the well-known writer Mulk Raj Anand and Khurshid married the painter Shiavax Chavda. Roshan married Dr. Hiranmoy Ghose, a renowned chiropractor and a connoisseur of art from Mumbai who was 30 years elder to her. Her last performance was in the year 1992 in Bangalore and that was the year she and her husband shifted to Kodaikanal also. The same year she joined the Kodai International School and taught dance there till 2007. She has since settled down there in Vilpatty village and her son Prasanna Ghose runs the most successful pastry shop Pastry Corner also known as Daily Bread in Kodaikanal. Her daughter Meenakshi Ghose lives in Dindigul with her husband Chandrasekhar.

Her dance compositions she is proud of are "The Pilgrimage of the Soul" set to Meera Bhajans sung by Gujarati singers and "Gita Govindam" which combined Odissi and Bharatanatyam movements.

In a life dedicated to dance Roshan Vajifdar Ghose earned praise for her exquisite costumes and chiseled movements. She was not only muse to Roerich but inspired others too. When Mulk Raj Anand brought out his short story collection *Lajwanti and Other Stories* in 1999, he dedicated the first story "Anjali Hasta" to Roshan Vajifdar.

The documentary film on Roshan vajifdar tries to bring out all these aspects of her life.

### ***SPARROW EVENTS, WORKSHOPS, SCREENINGS AND OTHER OUTREACH ACTIVITIES***

As we always emphasise, SPARROW is an archives that does not believe that people must come to its venue for consultation but believes that we live in times where an archives cannot lie in waiting. It should be taken out to meet people. SPARROW is taken out regularly in various networking activities involving screenings and interactive sessions, meetings with individuals and groups.

**The Sixth edition of the South India Writers' Ensemble (SIWE) organised by Pampa (People For Performing Arts and More at Chengannur, Kerala** was an extremely interesting meeting of writers from 24-26 July 2018. Dr C S Lakshmi participated in it as a writer and as Director of SPARROW and spoke about both her work as a writer and as an archivist.

In January 2019, Dr C S Lakshmi participated in **Kolkata Literary Meet** held from January 24-27 2019. She took part in a panel with Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni on Reading Sita and Draupadi and also a session with Padmapriya Janakiraman, an actor, Nasreen Khan, Urvashi



**1 April 2018 TO 31 March 2019**

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Butalia and Ghazala Wahab on the MeToo movement with the discussion centering on the safety of women at workplace. At the Kolkata Literary Meet it was possible to network with Malavika Banerjee the main organiser and others who showed a keen interest on the work of SPARROW.

In March 2019, Dr C S Lakshmi was invited by The French Institute of Pondicherry for a two-day workshop followed by a seminar on *Archives in India, theories and practice*. She made a presentation on SPARROW under the title **Women's Lives as Digital Texts: Some Thoughts on Archiving Women's History**. The workshop and seminar on archives was organised by CEFRES (French Research Center in Social Sciences) and IFP ( French Institute of Pondicherry) on March 7 and 8th, 2019 at the IFP, Pondicherry. Their project statement mentioned that the seminar aimed to provide a survey on the live practices of archive and filing, along with the history of a few institutions where these cultural forms take shape. The purpose was also to describe what such *function* yields in various cultural contexts and the common desire of memory transmission which are revealed. According to the project statement, in practical terms the main aims of the seminar were not only to study and understand the notions of archiving but also to create a network of researchers and research institutions involved in archiving and study the intercultural stakes across continents.

SPARROW has always had reservations about open archiving considering the sensitive nature of its material and has always held that what it archives is not information but knowledge and knowledge has to be transmitted and is not downloadable. The methods of transmission of this knowledge have to be done in ways where the women's lives do not become consumable products. Workshops and seminars that speak in terms international stakeholders in a large global archiving project often perceive the women of the Third World as those who can be "studied" and there is the possibility of such studies leading to generalisations regarding the culture of a given country and its women based on limited understanding of women's lives in a culture. So SPARROW agreed to be part of the workshop and seminar provided it can discuss, debate and disagree.

The French institute has a an excellent archival system and the first day of the workshop where the participants had the opportunity to see ways of archiving palm leaf manuscripts to photographs and slides, was a very useful one. The seminar with a variety of participants from the 25-year old Roja Muthiah Research Library to the newly founded NCBS (National Centre for Biological Sciences) Archives and several other individuals who had private personal archives was a treat in terms of the variety of practices that it revealed. Some scholars from abroad also spoke about their research in India and that generated an interesting discussion on looking at cultures from the perspective of an outsider, especially a western one. The seminar reconfirmed SPARROW's determination to understand the global



but not at the cost of what was unique to the culture of a given nation referred to as the local. In other words, to reassert that a given culture has several truths and that they cannot be archived in a way that they can be turned into easily accessible capsules. The work of SPARROW, as an archives, is to document diversity in the lives and work of women and not to go by any one kind of reading of the culture. As C S Lakshmi has always argued in several seminars, a culture cannot be offered on a silver platter for consumption; some mysteries must remain. And they have to be discovered in a physical archives through consultation or through innovative ways an archives adopts to transmit this variety in experiences and work of women. They cannot be laid bare for online browsing.

### SPARROW EVENT: SPARROW LITERARY AWARD 2018

The SPARROW panel of judges (N Sukumaran, Kannan Sundaram and Ambai) decided to take up contribution to literature in general this year for consideration for the SPARROW-R THYAGARAJAN Literary Award 2018. Two awards are normally given for Tamil writers and one for a non-Tamil writer. This year for the first time we decided unanimously to award three Tamil writers and two non-Tamil writers. In Tamil, two awards for acknowledging and honouring writers who have been in the field for many years and one award for a younger writer for literary work done in the recent past. The SPARROW-R Thyagarajan Literary Award 2018 for Tamil was given to S Thenmozhi for her excellent contribution to fiction and poetry and non-fictional work, Ba Venkatesan for the wonderful literary work he has done for the past many years both in terms of fiction and poetry and S Senthilkumar for the promising work he has done in fiction and poetry. This year the non-Tamil writer award was shared by two writers: Varsha Adalja, a feminist novelist and playwright, who won the 1995 Sahitya Akademi Award for Gujarati language for her novel Anasar, who is also a dramatist who has acted and written several stage plays, screenplays and radio plays and Aruna Dhere, a Marathi writer, who has written over forty books in different genres including personal essays, short stories, novels, poems, travelogues, children's stories, bhakti literature, folk literature and social history.

Former Trustee of SPARROW, Dr Roshan Shahani, gave away the award and spoke eloquently about her association with SPARROW and SPARROW's work and also about how Indian language literature needs to be taught and studied as diligently as English literature is, for India is a land of diverse languages and diverse cultures all of which contribute to what makes India.

The award function is normally an informal event which we organise in collaboration with RCWS (Research Centre for Women's Studies). Our association with RCWS is a long one and it is always a pleasure to work with Dr Putul Sathe who is generous with her time for this event. This is an annual event when everyone who is a friend of SPARROW comes to support and cheer us up. This year too our regular friends Dr Divya Pandey (former trustee



1 April 2018 TO 31 March 2019

### SPARROW LITERARY AWARD 2018



L to R: Aruna Dhere, S Thenmozhi, Dr Divya Pandey, Dr Roshan Shahani, Ba Venkatesan, S Senthilkumar, Dr C S Lakshmi and Varsha Adalja



Dr C S Lakshmi with Varsha Adalja and Ila Arab Mehta



Dr C S Lakshmi with Ba Venkatesan, S Senthilkumar, Puthiyamaadhavi and S Thenmozhi



Awardees with audience



Mandar Katti and Shreeraj Tamankar performing



SPARROW Team



## SPARROW ANNUAL REPORT

and friend in whose love and support we thrive), Dr Chhaya Datar, Vijaya Dass, Dr Kunjalata Shah and writers Puthiyamadhavi and Urmila Pawar had come. It was a pleasure to have Ila Arab Mehta, the legendary Gujarati writer, with us and she came quietly as her sister Varsha Adalja's guest.

The acceptance speeches were inspiring and dealt with many different aspects of literature. S Thenmozhi spoke about how and why she writes and about women writers, especially Dalit women writers, evolving a language of their own and why it was important to make this a universal language. Ba Venkaetasan was of the opinion that awards alone would not do and that organisations like SPARROW must also translate the writers they award. It is a tall order considering he writes novels of thousand pages but well taken. S Senthilkumar's acceptance speech was a story by itself. He spoke about Bodinayakkanur passenger train that brought cardamom bags to Mumbai at one time and gave a picturesque description of his town and its gods and how humans become gods and become part of his stories. Aruna Dhere spoke about her writing and what it means to her and why it is important to write if one wants to change the society and also keep what is precious in our culture. Varsha Adalja spoke just two lines accepting the award as she was keen to give more time for the evening's music performance.

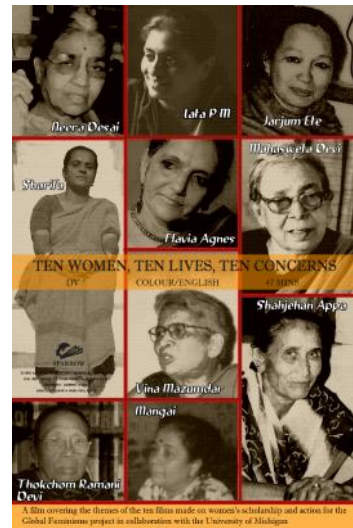
The evening's programme ended with Mandar Katti entralling us with Puriya Kalyan played on his sitar. He was ably accompanied on the tabla by young Shreeraj Tamhankar.

### SPARROW SCREENINGS

In September 2019, Dr Putul Sathe, Head of Department, R C W S (Research Centre for Women's Studies), SNDT University, visited SPARROW along with her 13 students for a Workshop on Oral History. The students were shown SPARROW film *Ten Women, Ten Lives, Ten Concerns*, which is a short synoptic film of half an hour on ten films made on ten women under the Global Feminisms project in collaboration with the University of Michigan.

### INTERNS

This year four M A Part II students Ms. Zainab Shaikh, Ms. Rasika Suhas Mandvikar, Ms. Alpha Mathew and Ms. Laxmi Bapurao Ghodke from Department of History, SNDT University successfully completed their internship with SPARROW with Dr Charanjeet Kaur as their mentor.



**1 April 2018 TO 31 March 2019**

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Ms. Oorna Raut, student of Sociology in the second year at Lady Shri Ram College for Women completed a one month internship with SPARROW.



Ms. Zainab Shaikh, Ms. Rasika Suhas Mandvikar, Ms. Alpha Mathew and Ms. Laxmi Bapurao Ghodke.

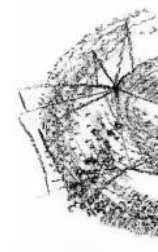


Interns- Ms. Zainab Shaikh, Ms. Rasika Suhas Mandvikar, Ms. Alpha Mathew and Ms. Laxmi Bapurao Ghodke with Professor Jaswandi Wamburkar, Sharmila Sontakke, Dr. Meherjyoti Sangle & Asmita Deshpande during VIVA of the interns.

## **VISITORS**

Many scholars and researchers, professors and students visited SPARROW for consultation and to take a SPARROW Walk.

Anand Tharaney, a filmmaker and researcher visited SPARROW Archives. Virien Chopra, Doctoral Research Scholar, Department of Sociology, Delhi School of Economics, Delhi University visited SPARROW for consulting the SPARROW Archives for the works of Maya Kamath. Arundhathi a PhD scholar enrolled at the Advanced Centre for Women's Studies, Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), Mumbai visited SPARROW archives for her PhD research.



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**SPARROW**




1 April 2018 TO 31 March 2019

**SPARROW COLLECTIONS**


The work done on existing collections which are still being catalogued and on collections acquired during the period is shown in the table below:

<b>Photographs</b>	
Photographs Received Original	126
Photographs Received Copies	142
SPARROW Literary Award 2018	38
Processed (current)	
<b>Total</b>	<b>306</b>
Processed and Digitised	62
<b>Cartoons</b>	
English	56
Total	56
Processed and digitised	56
<b>Books</b>	
English	99
Hindi	6
Marathi	12
Tamil	22
Gujarati	9
Kannada	1
Punjabi	11
Total	160
Processed and digitised	160
<b>Video Films</b>	
English	8
Tamil	1
Total	9
Processed and digitised	9

**SPARROW Collections**

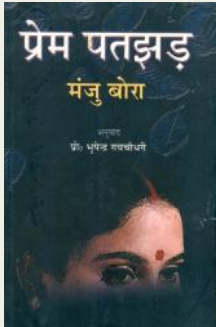


Mumbai Mirror, 16 October 2018

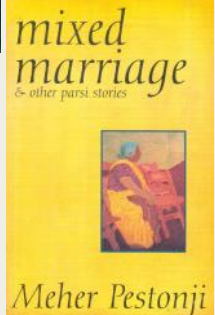


The Hindu, 5 February 2019

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## SPARROW ANNUAL REPORT

<b>Print Visuals</b>	
English	186
Marathi	9
Hiindi	2
Total	197
Processed and digitised	197
<b>Posters</b>	
English	2
Total	2
Processed and digitised	2
<b>Calendars</b>	
English	2
Tamil	1
Total	3
Processed and digitised	3
<b>Brochures</b>	
English	3
Processed and digitised	3
<b>Newsletters</b>	
English	9
Marathi	12
Processed and digitised	21
<b>Advertisements</b>	
English	46
Marathi	4
Hindi	1
Total	51
Processed and digitised	51

### SPARROW Collections



Indian Express, 14 April 2018



Growing support: A priest visits the protesting nuns in Kochi on Saturday. \*SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Hindu, 16 September 2018



Mumbai Mirror, 26 January 2019



Times of India, 5 January 2019

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**1 April 2018 TO 31 March 2019**

<b>Newspaper Articles</b>	
English	2300
Marathi	231
Hindi	62
Total	2593
Processed and digitised	2593
<b>Journal Articles</b>	
English	15
Tamil	10
Marathi	1
Total	26
Processed and digitised	26
<b>Journal Articles (Backlog) (2000-2003)</b>	
English	751
Hindi	29
Marathi	78
Tamil	369
Malayalam	147
Kannada	84
Gujarati	198
Bengali	35
Total	1691
Processed and Digitised	1691
<b>Oral History Collection</b>	
OHRP cassettes were digitised (transferred into .wav files)	88
New Recording Roshan Vajifdar	1hr 20 mins

**SPARROW Collections**



The Indian Express, 8 September 2018



Brunch November 2018



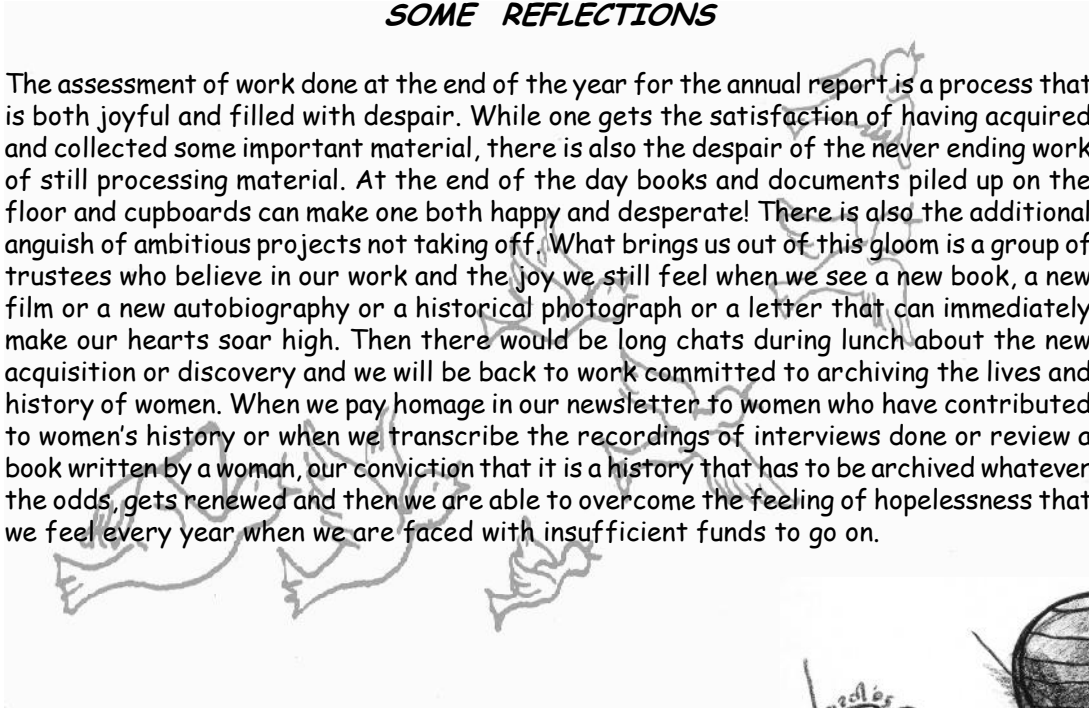
Roshan Vajifdar

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*SOME REFLECTIONS*

The assessment of work done at the end of the year for the annual report is a process that is both joyful and filled with despair. While one gets the satisfaction of having acquired and collected some important material, there is also the despair of the never ending work of still processing material. At the end of the day books and documents piled up on the floor and cupboards can make one both happy and desperate! There is also the additional anguish of ambitious projects not taking off. What brings us out of this gloom is a group of trustees who believe in our work and the joy we still feel when we see a new book, a new film or a new autobiography or a historical photograph or a letter that can immediately make our hearts soar high. Then there would be long chats during lunch about the new acquisition or discovery and we will be back to work committed to archiving the lives and history of women. When we pay homage in our newsletter to women who have contributed to women's history or when we transcribe the recordings of interviews done or review a book written by a woman, our conviction that it is a history that has to be archived whatever the odds, gets renewed and then we are able to overcome the feeling of hopelessness that we feel every year when we are faced with insufficient funds to go on.

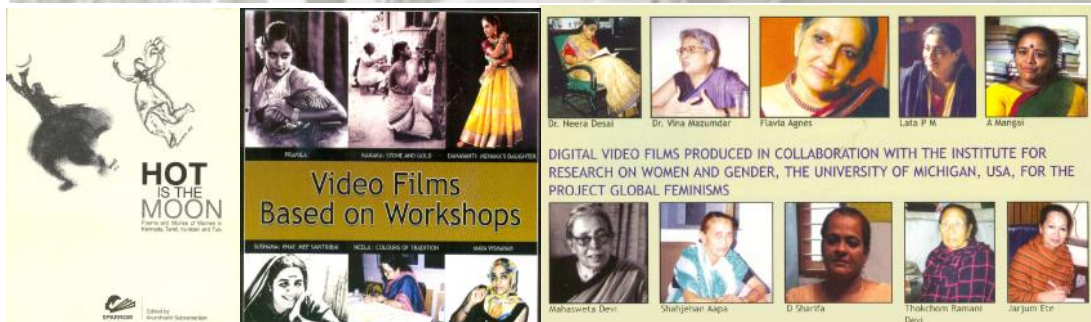


1 April 2018 TO 31 March 2019

**CURRENT SPARROW HOLDINGS**



Photographs.....	19644
Ads.....	7562
Books in 12 languages.....	6090
Newspaper Articles in 8 languages.	36033
Journal Articles in 8 languages.....	5121
Brochures in 9 languages.....	2069
Print Visuals.....	4807
Posters.....	1776
Calendars.....	133
Cartoons.....	3752
Maya Kamath's cartoons.....	8000
Oral History.....	660
Video Films.....	1271
Audio CDs and Cassettes.....	929
Private Papers.....	280





Do visit our website and also join us on our Facebook page.

Website <http://www.sparrowonline.org/>  
FB: <https://www.facebook.com/sparrowngo/>

Contributions to SPARROW qualify for 80 G. Donations can be sent by cheque or draft marked to SPARROW OR can be sent by wire transfer.

**BANK TRANSFER DETAILS**

**FROM INDIA**

**In India Women Spoke, Women Worked, Women Wrote, Women Acted**

**Women Chose, Women Demanded, Women Created, Women Rebelled**

**We Put Them All Under One Roof And Called it SPARROW**

**30 years of Archiving Women's Lives, Women's History**  
**SPARROW**  
For Change For Knowledge

**To Change the World for Women**  
Come Join Us in Our Mission, in Our Dream

**SPARROW**  
Tel : 28280895, 28965019  
E-mail : sparrow1988@gmail.com  
Website : www.sparrowonline.org

Name Account Holder: **SPARROW**  
Name of the Bank: **AXIS BANK**  
Address: B Wing, Madhuban, L T Road, Dahisar (West) Mumbai-400068.  
Tel No. 022-28940257/9/61  
Saving Account No. **917010041910597**  
IFSC Code - **UTIB0000701**  
Branch: Dahisar West Branch

**FROM ABROAD**

Organisation Name: **SPARROW**  
Bank Name: **STATE BANK OF INDIA.**  
Address: 7, Sarvoday Building, Juhu Road, Santacruz (W), Mumbai, Maharashtra, India, Mumbai: 400 054.  
SANTACRUZ (West) Branch  
Corresponding FCRA Account number:  
Current A/C NO: **10154460173**  
SWIFT-code / BIC code bank:  
**SBININBB536**  
IFSC Code: **SBIN0001183**  
Bank code: 01183

Join us in our mission





## SPARROW ANNUAL REPORT

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*We thank all our trustees and advisors who reposed immense faith in our efforts which has made it possible for us to spread our wings. They continue to stand by us. We also thank our funders, donors, supporters, well-wishers, friends and many more who have supported us in many ways.*

*Rama Viswanathan  
Varsha Tiwary  
Aroon Raman  
Geraldine Forbes  
Mandakini Mathur  
Veena Poonacha  
R Thyagarajan  
Vijaya Dass  
Savita Damle  
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Janaki Swamy  
S Hemalatha  
Charanjit Kaur Singh  
Rajshree Trivedi  
V G Narendra  
Meenakshi Shedde  
V Suryanarayanan*



**1 April 2018 TO 31 March 2019**

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