



**ANNUAL REPORT**  
**1 APRIL 2019 to 31 MARCH 2021**



**SPARROW**  
**Sound & Picture Archives for Research on Women**

SPARROW-R Thyagarajan Literary Award programme began in 2014. In SNL 39 supplement we have given all the acceptance speeches of the writers who got the awards from 2014 to 2019 for the acceptance speeches were not just formal speeches but stories the authors told us about themselves, their life and their writing which we felt, must be documented.

Giving below the link

<https://www.sparrowonline.org/downloads/SNL-38-supplement.pdf>

## SPARROW Literary Award completes 5 years!

SPARROW  
supplement



SOUND & PICTURE ARCHIVES FOR RESEARCH ON WOMEN

1 April 2019 TO 31 March 2021

---



SPARROW

Sound & Picture Archives for Research on Women

## SPARROW ANNUAL REPORT

---

### SPARROW TRUSTEES:

Founder Trustees:

Dr C S Lakshmi

Late Dr Neera Desai

Dr Maithreyi Krishna Raj

Former Trustees (1997-2016)

Dr C S Lakshmi

Dr Divya Pandey

Dr Roshan G Shahani

Dr Usha Thakkar

Dr Shoba Venkatesh Ghosh

Mr Mihir Desai

Present Trustees

Dr C S Lakshmi

Dr Shoba Venkatesh Ghosh

Dr Charanjeet Kaur

Dr Sunanda Pal

Dr Vidya Vencatesan

Dr Uma Maheshwari Shankar

Mr Jerry Pinto

Publication No. 98

July: 2022

Text : C S Lakshmi with inputs from SPARROW Team

Front & Back Cover: Illustration by Rekha Rodwittiya. SPARROW Collections.

All other images are from paintings of Bharati Kapadia done for SPARROW's various volumes.

Brought out by:



**SPARROW**

Sound & Picture Archives for Research on Women

©SPARROW

The Nest, B-101/201/301, Patel Apartment,

Maratha Colony Road, Dahisar (East), Mumbai-400068.

Phone: 022 28280895, 28965019

E-Mail: sparrow1988@gmail.com

Website: www.sparrowonline.org



**1 April 2019 TO 31 March 2021**

---

**ANNUAL REPORT  
1 April 2019-31 March 2021**

**PREFACE**

The pandemic that came and hit us in March 2020 literally transformed our personal and work lives. We really we were lagging back in many things including writing our annual report of work done and activities. Hence this annual report combines activities of two years beginning with 1 April 2019 and ending with 31 March 2021.

In the national context, women were in news for many reasons. The month of May 2019 in Mumbai was still hot and the news of Dr PayalTadvi's suicide due to ragging and torture on the basis of caste only added to the tension everyone felt while reading newspapers and news regarding women. Payal, belonged to the Tadvi Bhil community which was a part of the Bhil tribal community. Not many girls from her community venture to study medicine but Payal had studied medicine and had completed her undergraduate degree from a medical school in Jalgaon. After that she had secured admission to pursue post-graduation in Obstetrics & Gynaecology, as a resident doctor at BYL Nair Hospital, Mumbai. According to the suicide note she left behind she was subjected to mental harassment and ill-treatment and also abused by three senior postgraduate students namely Dr. Hema Ahuja, Dr. Bhakti Meher, and Dr. Ankita Khandelwal. Payal was allegedly subjected to sustained humiliation and torture by her three so called upper caste seniors which had pushed her to suicide on May 22, 2019. There were protests and demonstrations outside Nair hospital and eventually the accused doctors were booked under the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, Maharashtra Prohibition of Ragging Act, abetment of suicide, destruction of evidence and common intent under the Indian Penal Code. They were arrested and later released on bail.



The year 2019, however, brought some good news in the sports field. UNICEF appointed Asian Games gold-medallist sprinter Hima Das, as the first-ever youth ambassador of United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) India in July. As Youth Ambassador her work was towards drawing attention to the rights and needs of children and young people and make their voices heard as active participants in decision making.

Another news of July 2019 was that Muzaffarnagar's Vidisha Baliyan became the first Indian to win Miss Deaf World Title. She was a student of Asian Academy of Film & Television and also a former international tennis player and she had represented India in the Deaf



---

**SPARROW**

## SPARROW ANNUAL REPORT

---

Olympics and won a silver medal in it. August 2019 brought some knockout news! World Champion boxer Mary Kom was crowned as the best female athlete in Asia at a ceremony organised by Asian Sports writers Union (AIPS Asia) in Malaysia. In the same month Paralympic silver-medallist Deepa Malik became the first Indian woman para-athlete and



the oldest to be conferred the Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna award. At 49, she became the oldest athlete ever to have claimed the honour.

November 2019, brought in Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019 perceived as an Act to protect the right of the transgender people. Earlier in April 2014, the Supreme Court had legally recognised the rights and freedom of transgender people in National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) v. Union of India. On 6 September 2018, the Supreme Court had also decriminalised same-sex relationships and struck down Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code. The 2019 act had removed some of the severely criticised parts of an earlier 2018 bill such as the criminalisation of begging and the establishment of a district screening committee to process applications for issuance of transgender person certificates. However, the criticism was that it had failed to incorporate certain other provisions that the Supreme Court had mentioned in its judgment in NALSA v. Union



## 1 April 2019 TO 31 March 2021

---

of India. These provisions had to do with the rights of transgender people to declare their self-perceived gender identity without undergoing sex reassignment surgery and job reservations and reservations in educational institutions. It was also felt that the act had imposed less punishment for crimes against transgender people compared with punishment for crimes against cisgender people. The Supreme Court issued a notice to the central government in a petition challenging the constitutionality of the act. The transgender community named the date of passing the act (Lok Sabha: 5 August 2019; Rajya Sabha: 26 November 2019) as Black Day.

December 2019 drew attention to breast cancer. On 18 December 2019, The World Health Organisation (WHO) prequalified its first biosimilar medicine—trastuzumab—to increase worldwide access to life-saving breast cancer treatment. It was a move to make this expensive, life-saving treatment more affordable and available to women globally. December 2019 also became a month for celebrating Indian women scientists. The star HD-86081, located at a distance of 340 light-years from the earth in the constellation of Sextans, was named Bibha (a bright beam of light in Bengali) while its exoplanet HD-86081b was to be called Santamasa (meaning clouded in Sanskrit, signifying the atmosphere of the planet). Different countries around the world got to name more than 110 exoplanets and their host stars. The initiative for this naming was taken by The International Astronomical Union. It is interesting to know that two students were responsible for the names. Ananyo Bhattacharya, a 20-year-old student, from the Sardar Vallabhbhai National Institute of Technology, Surat, picked up Bibha and Santamasa was the choice of Vidyasagar Daud, 13, of Sinhgad Spring Dale Public School, Pune.

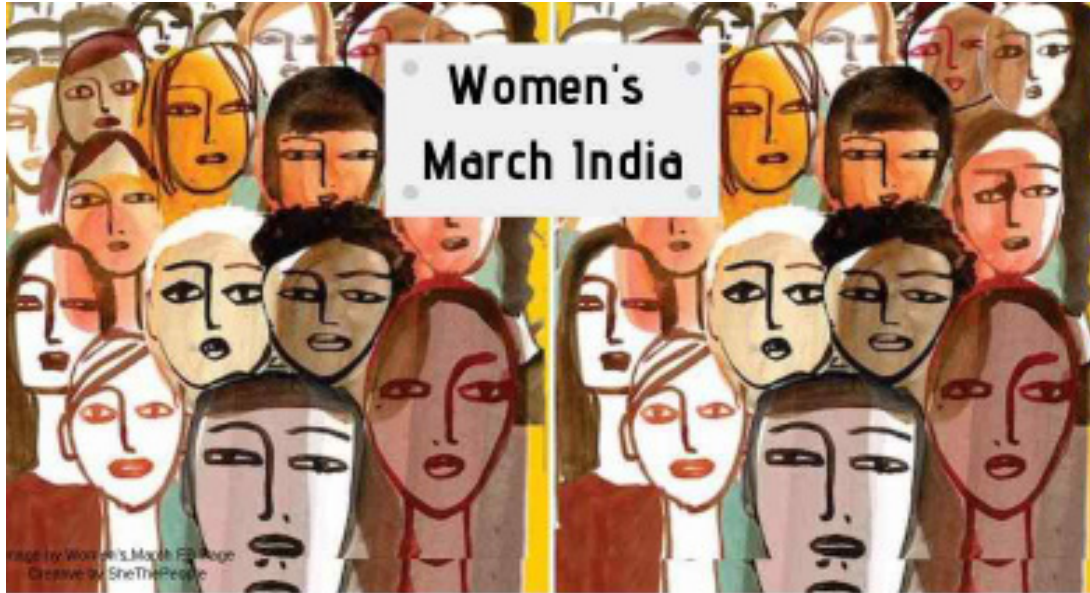


The star's name refers to the pioneering Indian woman scientist Bibha Chowdhuri (1913-1991). From experiments done in Darjeeling with her mentor D M Bose (nephew of the legendary scientist JC Bose) Bibha Chowdhuri had discovered a new subatomic particle, the p-meson. Her results had been published in *Nature*, but she did not get due recognition. Bibha Chowdhuri's biography *A Jewel Unearthed: Bibha Chowdhuri* by Rajinder Singh and Suprakash C Roy was published by Shaker Verlag, Germany, in October 2018. How one wishes a publisher in India or the government of India had taken the initiative!

The year 2019 had its share of protests also. Like the women's march in January 2017 organised by a collective of individuals with the hash tag I will Go Out, which was a statement about women's agency to protest against molestations, rapes and attack on women to start a dialogue on women's access to public spaces, April 2019 also began with a women's march demanding constitutional rights for women as citizens. The march was organised



under the banner *Aurat Uthi Nahi toh Jhulm Badhta Jaayega* Women March 4 Change. It took place in different places in different states of the country.



On 15 December began the 101 days' Shaheenbagh protest that lasted till 24 March 2020. On 12 December 2019, the Citizenship Amendment Act 2019 was passed. The CAA was meant to grant an easier and faster way to citizenship for specific religiously persecuted minorities of Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis and Christians from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan who have entered India on or before 31 December 2014. The protest was about the act not giving the same benefits to Muslim immigrants or immigrants belonging to other religions or from other countries like Sri Lanka, Myanmar and Tibet. The demand was to roll back CAA (2019) and not implement the National Register of Citizens (NRC) and National Population Register (NPR).



## 1 April 2019 TO 31 March 2021

---

The protest used satyagraha methods accompanied by graffiti, posters, public speeches, poetry reading, storytelling, street performance and puppetry. The protest, led by women, drew the attention of the world.



Although COVID became the destiny of India and the world and by 20 March 2020, there was lockdown everywhere in India, other significant things also happened. Captain Tania Shergill became the first woman Republic Day parade adjutant. Captain Tanya Shergill a fourth-generation Army officer, led an all-men marching contingent of the Corps of Signals at the Republic Day parade in New Delhi. She also became the

first woman Parade Adjutant in the history of the Army Day function. A parade adjutant is responsible for the parade.

In March 2020 President Ram Nath Kovind presented the 'Nari Shakti Puraskar' to IAF's first women fighter pilots, Mohana Jitarwal, Avani Chaturvedi and Bhawana Kanth, on Sunday at Rashtrapati Bhawan. The trio was inducted into the IAF's fighter squadron after the Government of India decided to open fighter stream in the force for women on an experimental basis. The three were first to be inducted into the squadron and conduct a solo flight in MIG-21 in 2018. The three expressed their desire to serve the nation and hoped to achieve more laurels in the forthcoming years.



2020 also brought two more important things in January and March 2020 quietly. In January 2020, Government of India took a momentous decision to introduce a bill to amend the Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) Act of 1971. It was introduced in the Lok Sabha on 2 March 2020 and passed by the Lok Sabha on 17 March 2020. This has made India one of the most progressive countries in the world, for women in the rest of the world, are still struggling to get such a bill enacted.

In March 2020, the year 2020 was declared the International year of Nursing and Midwifery. In India, where health services are concerned, nurses and midwives play a vital role. Government of India (GoI) committed itself to training 90,000 midwives to fill the work force gap hopefully by 2023. As WHO, it is our proud privilege to wholeheartedly support this initiative. And with WHO as its partner, India has been making serious attempts



to ensure universal health coverage through Ayushman Bharat. This was with the goal of bringing women's health and reproductive rights to the centre stage.



In August 2020, Kalli Purie the Vice-Chairperson of India Today Group, was conferred upon the prestigious 'Impact Most Influential Woman Award' for the year 2020. This was the 9<sup>th</sup> edition of the award and Kalli Purie had been a part of the list for 7 past editions and had made to the top 5, twice. These awards are given to recognise and acknowledge the immense contribution, inspiring leadership and remarkable body of work of some of the trail-blazing women achievers from the Indian Advertising, Media and Marketing industry.

In 2018, many sexual misconduct allegations had come up against film artistes, literateurs and Carnatic classical musicians with the hash tag MeToo. In September 2020 Dhrupad Sansthan in Bhopal, a residential music gurukul which was a UNESCO accredited institution, found itself in the eye of a storm. Two of its legendary gurus Ramakant Gundecha and Akilesh Gundecha were accused of sexual harassment by students abroad. The allegations were first put up in a Facebook post by a group called Dhrupad Family Europe and emailed to the students of the musicians.



The post highlighted alleged harassment by the two gurus for years. An Amsterdam-based yoga teacher who had put up the post said that she had done it on behalf of a friend who wanted to remain anonymous. At the time it happened, Ramakant Gundecha was no more. Akilesh Gundecha, a pakhawaj teacher there, stepped down as a teacher. Umakant Gundecha, the chairman of the Sansthan, said they had started an internal probe. An Internal Complaints Committee (ICC) had been later constituted which passed adverse recommendations against Akilesh and advised the board of the Sansthan be reconstituted with a majority of non-family members. It also advised disciplinary action and measures for reparation and also recommended penalties on the institute. The Gundechas approached the HC challenging the ICC recommendations.

In October 2020 the case of Dr Payal Tadvi's suicide mentioned above, was raised once again. In October 2020 The Supreme Court on Thursday permitted three postgraduate medical students accused in the death by suicide of their junior, Payal Tadvi, to complete nine months remaining in their course from their college in Mumbai. However, the court added a rider and asked the trio not to influence any witness, and to keep themselves away



## 1 April 2019 TO 31 March 2021

---



from the college and hospital as much as possible. The accused —Hema Ahuja, Bhakti Mehare and Ankita Khandelwal—had completed two out of three years of the course at Topiwala National Medical College, Mumbai, in April 2019. They were working as residents in BYL Nair Charity Hospital, attached to the college.

Flight Lieutenant Shivangi Singh became India's first woman fighter to fly the Rafale aircraft. It was formally inducted into the Indian Air Force on 10 September 2020.



In December 2020, Gitanjali Rao, a fifteen-year-old scientist and inventor, was selected as TIME magazine's first ever 'Kid of the Year'. Gitanjali Rao (just 15 years old) used technology to tackle issues ranging from contaminated drinking water to opioid addiction and cyber bullying. The cover Dec. 14, 2020 issue of *Time* magazine featured 15-year-old Colorado high school student Gitanjali Rao. She has created a device called Epione that diagnoses prescription opioid addiction at an early stage. She has also devised an app called Kindly that uses artificial intelligence to help prevent cyber bullying. It allows teens to type in a word or phrase to find out if the words they are using are bullying and lets them decide to edit what they are sending or to proceed. Gitanjali's parents are Indians who have settled down in the US.



In January 2021, Bhawana Kanth became the first woman fighter pilot to participate in Republic Day parade 2021. She was the part of the tableau of the Indian Air Force that showcased the mock-ups of LAC- Light Combat Aircraft, the Sukhoi-30 fighter plane, and light combat helicopter. She had

already received the Nari Shakti Puraskar in March 2020 along with two other colleagues.



In February 2021, activist Anjali Bharadwaj was honoured with the International Anti-corruption Champions Award by the United States. The award is in recognition of individuals who work against corruption





and demand accountability and transparency in all dealings with the public and work to raise awareness of corruption's corrosive effects on society and to help unite the global community in countering it.

In February 2021, in a first, 34 CRPF women commandos were inducted into the elite anti-Maoist Commando Battalion for Resolute Action (CoBRA) unit. They were chosen from all six of the Central Reserve

Police Force (CRPF) 'Mahila Battalions'. They were to undergo a strenuous training for three months before induction into the CoBRA unit. CRPF's 88<sup>th</sup> Mahila Battalion is the first all women battalion in the world.

February 2021 also brought another significant achievement. Kiran Deoli Uniyal, became the first Indian woman to have achieved 12 World Records in Martial Arts in speed elbow strikes and kicks, the maximum by any Indian woman. She was the first Indian woman to achieve most number of world records in martial arts. 47-year-old Kiran Deoli Uniyal w/o Col Sunil Uniyal, native of Uttrakhand, and a mother of two children, had said that her need to break world records in martial arts was to promote, inspire and encourage girls and women in India to take up martial arts for fitness and self defence. She also felt that stereotypes must be broken and wanted to prove that age was no bar for any physical achievement.



The Medical Termination of Pregnancy (Amendment) Bill introduced in the Lok Sabha in March 2020 was passed by Rajya Sabha on 16 March 2021. The home page of WHO called it a historic move as it aims to provide universal access to reproductive health services and it would further empower women by providing comprehensive abortion care to all. The WHO home page said that the new Medical Termination of Pregnancy (Amendment) Act 2021 "expands the access to safe and legal abortion services on therapeutic, eugenic, humanitarian and social grounds to ensure universal access to comprehensive care." And it provides such care without compromising confidentiality, autonomy and dignity of women and the quality of safe abortion services as women would be safeguarded by law.

While this was an important step forward as it gave India an enviable position globally in this matter, the Act and the Bill were not clear about transgender people being covered in the Act. The Transgender Persons (Protections and Rights) Act, 2019 recognises transgender as an additional gender in India. According to some medical studies conducted it is possible that persons who identify themselves as transgender and are in the process of becoming female to male, can become pregnant even after hormone therapy. They may also require



## 1 April 2019 TO 31 March 2021

---

termination of pregnancy services. The Bill and the Act mention only women and not transgender people. Hence there was a need for clarification.

The Padma awards for the years 2020 and 2021 were given to women who don't prominently figure in print or social media who work quietly with commitment in whatever they have chosen to do getting the awards. It is only in the past few years that we have come to know these women and their work. Krishnammal Jagannathan is a Gandhian revered in Tamil Nadu for the work she is doing in LAFTI (Land for the Tillers). Pavakalli Pankajakshi who is the only practitioner of a traditional puppetry art, the seed mother Rahibai Soma Popere who has spent her life working for agro-biodiversity, Tulasi Gowda for her knowledge of plants and herbs, Usha Chaumar, a manual scavenger who is now the President of Sulabh International and Vidushi K S Jayalakshmi, who along with her husband brings out the only Sanskrit newspaper, are some of the women who have been honoured with Padma awards they richly deserve. Krishnammal Jagannathan has been honoured with a Padma Bhushan and we are happy we have an interview with her in the SPARROW archives.

Sangkhumi Bualchhuak of Mizoram has been awarded the Padma Shri 2021 for social work and we are happy we have an interview with her in the SPARROW archives. For more details you can check SPARROW newsletter 40 <https://www.sparrowonline.org/downloads/SNL-40.pdf>

In these two years women from various walks of life were appreciated for their work and the efforts they put into their work. Odisha sprinter Dutee Chand won the Vogue award for Sportsperson of the Year 2019. Dutee Chand holds the national record in women's 100m. She has brought many laurels to the country and state. In October 2019, she clocked 11.22 seconds in the semi-final of women's 100m event at the 59th National Open Athletics Championships 2019 in Ranchi. With this score, she broke her own previous national record of 11.26 seconds. Annie Zaidi, journalist and playwright, won the Nine Dots Prize-2019 for her essay book *Bread, Cement, Cactus*. Professor Gita Sen, former Chairperson of the Centre for Public Policy at the Indian Institute of Management Bangalore, received the Dan David Prize for the year 2020 for her pioneering work to advance gender equality. SPARROW congratulated all of them in its Newsletter.

In these years there were many lives lost some of them very dear to SPARROW and some who have been unassumingly contributing to the lives of other women in their own way. They were writers, artistes and activists who had dedicated their lives to the work they chose to do. They were all paid tributes in our Newsletter. They are part of what these two years have been for us. Abburi Chayadevi, a Telugu writer who is part of our book *Sweeping the Front Yard*, Nabaneeta Dev Sen, the well-known writer who was a name to reckon with in Bengali literature and Kundanika Kapadia without whose name the history



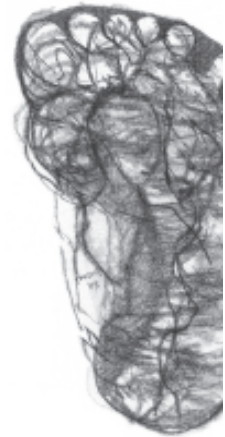
## SPARROW ANNUAL REPORT

---

of Gujarati literature would be incomplete, left us grieving. Activists like Vidya Bal and Puhpa Bhave who were a great support to SPARROW and whose work in Maharashtra is part of women's history, Sugatha Kumari, the grand old lady whose life as a writer, environmentalist and social worker caring for girl children has been an inspiration to many, passed away after a lifetime spent in living meaningful lives contributing to changing the world around them. Sculptor Jyotsna Bhatt left behind for her admirers, her exquisite sculptures and dancer Roshan Vajifdar Ghose mingled her breath with the mountains of Kodaikanal after having allowed us to make a film on her life and her dance, the previous year. Dr Vijaya Ramaswamy whose acclaimed books on women and religion and the arts and crafts of India have become encyclopedias for those interested in understanding Indian history and culture left all those who were waiting to read more of her works bereft. Nagam, from Nagercoil, a professor of Economics who had spent an entire life quietly giving herself to the betterment of lives around her, and had survived cancer, succumbed to other ailments.

SPARROW's projects were moving on an even keel and the digitisation project we had taken up made a lot of discussions and dialogues possible. There was a lot of travel which made it possible to meet new people and new methods of working and exchange of ideas. That was till mid-March 2020. That is when the pandemic hit us. How we dealt with it and how we worked is a long story which is narrated below. It was a difficult period for us at SPARROW but we managed to keep up our spirits, by constantly keeping in touch and even managing to follow up our FCRA renewal process and organising a couple of trustee meetings. How we went from regular work to a period of distress and anxiety and still managed to stay together and not lose hope is what this annual report is all about.

C S Lakshmi, Mumbai



**1 April 2019 TO 31 March 2021**

---

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

Although we had the digitisation project, where regular archival activities and infrastructural expenses were concerned the organisation had to depend on individual donations throughout this period. A junior librarian was appointed in November 2019 under the digitisation project. Major policy decisions had to be taken only in the period after March 2020. The decisions had to do with keeping the office closed and still continuing to pay the salaries to the team so that they could cope with the stress of the pandemic.

When the pandemic hit us and a total lockdown was announced, we were taken aback unprepared for total lockdown. But had to close office from the last week of March till August 2020, which was the first wave of COVID. The SPARROW office began to function from September 2020 onwards. We did not rush into work immediately but began to work slowly and steadily taking into account that the pandemic was not really over. From September to October 2020 we worked three days a week and from November 2020 began full time work with slightly longer hours and we worked on Saturdays to make up for lost work hours. Full speed work mode could not start as the public transport systems had not yet come back to normalcy. But the work was slowly picking up speed but with all the necessary precautions.

Our office assistant and library helper Pradeep had a sudden cardiac scare and had to be hospitalised and we heaved a sigh of relief when he returned to work. He has been with us from 1998, from the age of 16 when we persuaded him to attend evening classes to complete his 10<sup>th</sup> Standard and have seen him through all the various stages of his life in Mumbai first as a single person and now as a family man with a son who is in 5<sup>th</sup> Standard. He is a sturdy person and his cardiac problems surprised us and also made us anxious. In order to reduce his work stress a person who used to work with us earlier and is currently jobless due to COVID was appointed on a daily wage basis. The real tragedy happened with our computer maintenance person who lost his baby girl in May 2020 and lost his father to COVID in October 2020. COVID and the general stress caused a lot of deaths. This reflected in the way we designed our Newsletter SNL 40 that came out in March 2021. The Newsletter's Homage section had to be a separate supplement by itself for there were more than 60 women we had lost. Not all of them to COVID but these months had also taken away a lot of senior citizens including the mother of one of our Project Coordinators.

### **PROJECT AND ARCHIVAL ACTIVITIES**

Along with 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,



---

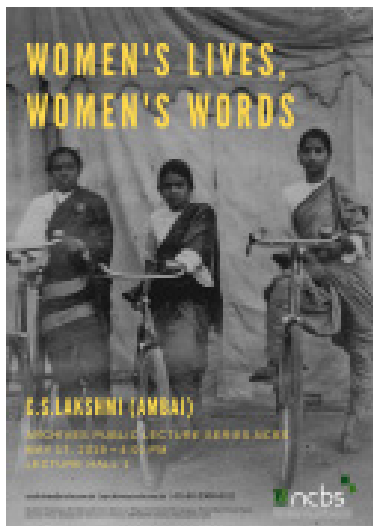
**SPARROW**

---

identifying and acquiring private papers and photographs, we continued with the work of the fifth and last volume of publishing 87 writers from 23 languages and began to identify some books for translation to be published in future. We also continued with the work of writing and commissioning book-reviews and articles for the SPARROW Newsletter, uploading the website and maintaining the Face Book page and also networking with colleges and holding workshops. Although we were cash strapped we did manage to buy some books and also got some interesting books donated. Some interesting travels and workshops happened as part of the archival activities which have been mentioned in details elsewhere in the report.

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

SPARROW has always maintained it is an active archives that does not believe that it should wait for people to come and use it. We live in times when an archives has to be consulted in many different ways and not necessarily by only people visiting it. Although we encourage people to visit the archives as a group from various colleges for what we call a SPARROW Walk, we strongly believe that the SPARROW archives should be taken out to meet people in many different ways. In all these years that we have functioned SPARROW has been taken out regularly in various networking activities involving screenings and interactive sessions, meetings with individuals and groups. And this happened during this period too when SPARROW's work was exhibited and discussed in many different venues in India and abroad.



On 17<sup>th</sup> of May an interesting event was organised by Mr. Venkat Srinivasan, an archivist at The National Center for Biological Sciences, Bengaluru. Dr C S lakshmi was invited to give a talk on SPARROW and its work under the title **Women's Lives, Women's Words**. The talk was basically about the ways in which women get written into history and how their lived lives, literary and other narratives have countered mainstream history writing all along. The talk elaborated how generally, history, which includes lived experiences and narratives of people, politics, literature, art, performance and pedagogy, has viewed women in specific ways. The talk was given using literature, history, oral history, performance and visual resources and Dr C S Lakshmi's own experience as a writer and archivist to illustrate the specificity of mainstream history narratives with regard to women, and counter



**1 April 2019 TO 31 March 2021**

---

narratives which she perceived as a feminist. The talk was interspersed with personal memories of growing up in the post-Independence decades and the values that filled women's lives as women and how despite all odds women managed to make space for themselves in the home sphere and the public sphere. The core of the talk was about memories and recall and how making heard unheard voices was the only way to understand, reinterpret and rewrite history. The talk was accompanied by a PPT of images and words.

An interesting travel to Germany happened on feminist memory work in India and Germany which helped us to present the work done by SPARROW in Germany. It was in the form of a workshop with the title *No More Sewing Machines!* The workshop at the University of Oldenburg was organised by *Medienbüro/cine k* and the *Centre for Interdisciplinary Research on Women and Gender (ZFG)* at Carl von Ossietzky University Oldenburg with Dr. C. S. Lakshmi, SPARROW, Mumbai, India & Dr. Sruti Bala, SPARROW Advisory Committee, University of Amsterdam, Netherlands, as well as representatives of Women's and Lesbians' Archives and Centres in Germany. Dr Katharina Hoffman, Retired lecturer, Carl von Ossietzky University of Oldenburg and Independent Researcher in History and Gender Studies, who organised the workshop wrote a note on it which is given below:

#### **Dr Katharina Hoffman**

The workshop, "No more Sewing Machines! Feminist Memory Work in India und Germany" took place in Oldenburg, a city with over 160,000 citizens in northwest Germany. It takes a half hour drive from Bremen Airport to the city, the Dutch border in the west is about 80 kilometres away. The history and present of the city refers mainly to its function as administrative centre in agricultural and horticultural surroundings. The university has a young history; it was founded in 1973 and named after Carl von Ossietzky (1889 - 1938), who was a journalist and pacifist. Ossietzky was detained in the concentration camp Esterwegen, which was built approximately 71 kilometres west south from Oldenburg, also not far away from the Dutch border (<https://www.gedenkstaette-esterwegen.de/english>). In 1935, Ossietzky received "The Nobel Peace Prize" (<https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/peace/1935/ossietzky/biographical>). He died in 1938 from the effects of tuberculosis and the mistreatments in the concentration camp Esterwegen. Naming the university after Ossietzky aimed at stressing the social responsibility of teaching and research. About 16,000 students attend the university, which provides a variety of study programmes among them women's and gender studies. Its *Centre for Interdisciplinary Research on Women and Gender* was founded in 2000 (<https://uol.de/en/zfg>). The centre was one of the organisers of the workshop, the other being the NGO *Medienbüro* (media office). The organisation runs the art film cinema *Cine Kin* Oldenburg. The organisation provides not only a venue for film screenings, it also organises film series, retrospectives, workshops and special film screenings for pupils and students. The main goal of its work is the initiation



of encounter, conversation and discussion between different people and groups living in Oldenburg.

The workshop that took place on 29 and 30 June 2019, aimed at introducing SPARROW to a German audience and discuss with representatives from German women's and lesbians' archives the differences and similarities of the past and present of feminist memory work in both countries. Feminist memory work gained relevance in both countries since the so-called second wave of women's movements. In both countries women's archives, libraries and other forms of organisations for feminist memory work were often founded by women activists who had collected documents and conducted interviews with women of diverse social and cultural walks of life for writing women's history and/or distributing knowledge of this largely silenced past in order to empower women. Materials of women's perspectives have been rarely stored in state or communal archives. The documents, which are stored there, usually represent governmental perceptions and interpretations of social lives and movements. Thus, archival work and active programmes to distribute knowledge and raise consciousness about the varieties of women's life in past and present is still an important task. Nevertheless, it seems to be important to discuss the challenges of archival work

against the background of changed political, social and economic contexts as well as different perspectives, ideas, concepts and programmes of feminist memory work within and beyond a particular society.



The workshop started with a short introduction of the workshop's content, aims and the representatives of organisations by me. The modus of communication during the workshop was English and German. Thanks to Dr Sruti Bala's language skills, main parts of the presentations could be translated from German to English and vice versa. She also

impressed the audience by explaining and giving an example of playing the tabla. Sruti, currently in the teaching faculty of the University of Amsterdam, was invited to the workshop as member of SPARROW's Advisory Committee.

Dr C S Lakshmi introduced SPARROW's work to the audience on 29<sup>th</sup> June 2019, Saturday afternoon and evening. She gave an overview of SPARROW's archival and educational work as well as its founding concept. In particular, attention was paid to SPARROW's



1 April 2019 TO 31 March 2021

---

audio-visual productions as films have been not in the focus of German organisations of feminist memory work and the workshop was conducted with support of the art film cinema. Lakshmi presented and commented on sequences of conversations produced for SPARROW's Silver Jubilee. This was followed by a public film screening of *Global Feminisms*, the 45-minute version from 2006 with excerpts from all ten interviews that were conducted during a project in collaboration with the Institute for Research on Women and Gender at the University of Michigan. This film was chosen as it shows a variety of women's life and kinds of activism. The comments of the spectators during the conversation after the screening showed that the film offers a good introduction into aspects of women's active lives and gender issues in India and that it inspired a meaningful conversation. Thus, such visual representations help to challenge images of Indian women as helpless victims, who have to be saved by white men and women.

On Sunday, the following organisations introduced their concept and work: the Lesbians' Archive in Frankfurt, FemRef, a students' organisation and the Centre for Interdisciplinary Research on Women and Gender at Carl von Ossietzky University, the Centre for Women's History in Oldenburg and the Archive of the Opposition to the GDR, founded by the Robert-Havemann Society, which is the largest and most significant amongst the so-called 'reappraisal archives'. Part of its collection is what is called the *Grau Zone Women's Archives* with documents and photographs and other material on the women's movement in East Germany, the former German Democratic Republic. Unfortunately, the person who was to represent the archive and library of Belladonna, a women's organisation in Bremen, fell ill and could not present the work. In other words, archival work as core element of feminist memory work could not be presented from different angles. The skills of the other organisations touched issues of distributing knowledge by exhibition projects, lectures or guided tours, providing particular aspects of knowledge about the history of women including gender and queer history and perspectives by collections of books or material mostly outside but also inside academia. The work of the Centre for Interdisciplinary Research on Women and Gender differs insofar as archival work (collecting, storing and making accessible) is not part of research or teaching although research on gender history and women's history requires good archival work. Moreover, from the histories presented it was clear that the centre in the university of Oldenburg was founded later than the local organisation outside the academia, which had made women's history visible through its various activities.

The workshop was announced nationwide in newsletters and platforms as well as locally by flyers and posters. Yet, only a few people attended the workshop. Therefore, the discussions and exchanges of ideas did not reach a broad audience. It is always difficult to find out the reasons why an event attracts people and why it does not. I enjoyed spending time with Lakshmi and Sruti and appreciated very much learning about different perspectives.



---

SPARROW

---

Dr C S Lakshmi also wrote a note on her experience of the workshop in Germany and about other activities and visits to other universities and archives and how it involved not only discussions but also eating simple but wholesome food and informal discussions and sharing thoughts on families and women in families. The note given below elaborates on the varied experiences of documenting and archiving:



Monika Brunnmüller in charge of the Belladonna Archives, Bremen.

The 2019 workshop planned for two days in the last week of June actually began much earlier when we went to the Belladonna archives in Bremen. It was an archives situated in a nice locality in a beautiful house which I later came to know belonged to one of the trustees. We met Monika Brunnmüller, who was supposed to represent Belladonna archives in the workshop planned. It was good we visited the archives for she could not come for the workshop and share the work of her archives. Belladonna is a centre for women's culture, education and economics and was founded in Bremen in 1986. It has one of the largest archives on women's issues in the German-speaking region. Speaking with Monika and going around the well-maintained archives with newspaper clippings, private papers, films, books other material was a good experience. Lydia Potts could not be

part of the workshop but she organised a talk of mine a day before the workshop in the Centre for Interdisciplinary Research on Women and Gender, one of the organisers of the workshop, at the University of Oldenburg, on Literature and Translation. Professor Sheila Meintjes, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa, who has been a visiting scholar at the University of Oldenburg for some decades, introduced me and a young intern from South Africa, Tinyiko Sithole, had been asked to read my "Squirrel" story as it had to do with books, archives and women. Tinyiko read one paragraph with great difficulty stumbling over words like Urvashi and then I asked her to relax and told the story to those who were there. Not all of them were students of the Centre; some of them were friends of students and some had come from other departments. A good discussion ensued and even those who were not into reading stories took part in the discussion.

The Feminist Memory Workshop had been aptly named "No More Sewing Machines!" by Dr Katharina Hoffman who had taken the term from an article I had written some years ago on how development programmes did not try to take women out of their traditional roles. Katharina Hoffmann had planned the workshop with two of her young colleagues Pia Wienholt and Katrin Windheuser. The other participants who were going to make presentations were Professor Sheila Meintjes and Tinyiko Sithole, the young intern, and Karin Weber from the Lesbians' Archives in Frankfurt, Rebecca Hernandez Garcia from the Robert Havemann



1 April 2019 TO 31 March 2021

---



L to R: Professor Sheila Meintjes, Johannesburg, SA, Regina Engel, Dr Lucyna Darowska, C-S Lakshmi, Elke Koltermann, Oldenburg, Katharina Hoffmann and Sruti Bala.

Society to make a presentation on the Grau Zone part of the Robert Havemann Society's Archive of the Opposition to the GDR, Lou Kordts of the FemRef, students' organisation at the University of Oldenburg, Regina Engel from the Centre for Women's History in Oldenburg. SPARROW, of course was being represented by me and Dr Sruti Bala, our Advisory Committee member and a friend and well-wisher of SPARROW. Unfortunately but for the

participants themselves there were no other students or researchers who attended the workshop. One or two who came left after a while as they had other projects to do. Katharina and I thought it would be a good idea to pep up the group if we start with Sruti Bala inaugurating the workshop with some mnemonic syllables (*bols*) of tabla as she is a tabla player. Sruti sportingly agreed and the first day sessions began with Sruti presenting tabla *bols* and explaining them.

The workshop thus became an intimate discussion with a small group as many had not turned up. And what became obvious in the presentations and the discussions (which Sruti Bala ably translated into English and German whenever it was needed) was that all of them committed to the work which they were doing voluntarily, had set up documentation centres in the heat of the eighties which they were still managing and that these were really not archives. Their experiences of how they functioned were very interesting but some of the experiences evoked laughter and were told in good humour but had a tinge of sadness.

Karin Weber, for example, goes around with a rollator and has health problems and is the only one running the Lesbian Archives in Frankfurt, which is really a space full of non-catalogued books and other materials. She was not computer savvy she said, and had worked hard to prepare a PPT for the workshop and spoke humourously about the experience of creating a logo for her archives when they participated in the anti-war protests in the US, taking images from the web and photo-shopping those images to create a logo. She said she would like to digitise all the archival materials but needed funding to buy a professional scanner. She was the only one managing the Lesbian Archives. The experience of Regina Engel of Centre for Women's History in Oldenburg was somewhat similar. Despite programmes to organise tours etc., the Centre had been unable to interest young people in its management. She had been there from the beginning but was the only one now managing it and was not sure of its future.



---

SPARROW

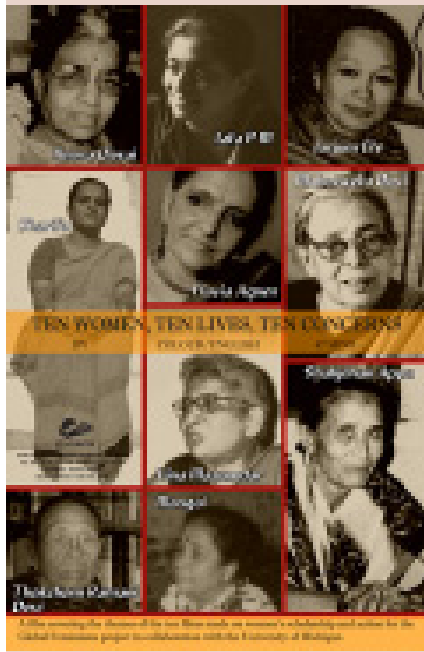
## SPARROW ANNUAL REPORT

Lou Kordts, a transwoman from FemRef, the students' organisation at the University of Oldenburg, spoke about how they had got together and collected many books which spoke about alternate sexuality and how the books have now become part of the main library. Compared to these experiences the work of SPARROW which had been set up around the same time seemed more organised and professional and truly archival. It was much appreciated but Katharina Hoffmann felt that a critical engagement with the work of SPARROW and that of others would have been more fruitful.



C S Lakshmi with Rebecca Hernandez Garcia, in charge of the Grau Zone, the Robert Havemann Society's Archive of the Opposition to the GDR, Berlin.

The most interesting presentation was made by Rebecca Garcia. On the Grau Zone (Gray Zone) women's archives which is now part of GDR Opposition Archives, in Berlin. It is an archives with material like secret documents, letters, surveys and interviews with women from East Germany brought after the Berlin wall came down. I visited the archives in Berlin later details of which I give below.



The public screening of SPARROW'S film *Ten women, Ten Lives, Ten Concerns* on the first day went very well and there was good interaction. Where the workshop itself is concerned, despite it being a small group the discussions and presentations were going well with lunch breaks and tea breaks becoming extended time for discussions. Pia Wienholt's mother had prepared an excellent pumpkin soup for everyone and with sandwiches and fruits and other snacks we began to look forward to the lunch breaks on both the days! On the second and last day we had just begun the afternoon session which was to last till the evening to wrap up all the sessions when Karin Weber made a comment that transwomen were taking away the public spaces Lesbians and others had fought for. She was referring to the use of women's toilets by the transwomen. The comment infuriated Lou who felt that this was not a safe place for her to be as she was being attacked and she left abruptly bringing the entire discussion to a halt. Karin's comment and her walkout surprised me coming from India because



1 April 2019 TO 31 March 2021

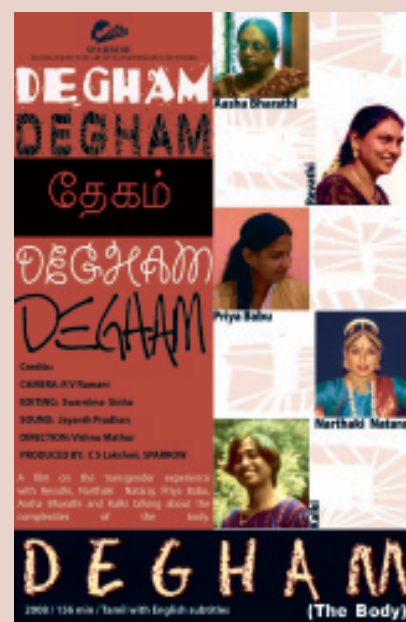
---

we are used to transwomen travelling in the ladies' compartments in the local trains in Mumbai and other places and using ladies' toilets with no objection from other women. The walkout upset everybody and Pia and I went looking for Lou but she had disappeared. We did the wrapping up after we had collected ourselves from this sudden disruption, and it went well. I had taken what we call in Tamil Nadu, a *ponnadai*, a silk shawl, as a gesture of honouring Kathairna Hoffmann and Sruti Bala put it around her and we had some more excellent tea and biscuits to wind up the whole workshop.

I left the next day for the University of Marburg taking a ride with Karin Weber for a SPARROW Workshop organised by Professor Susanne Maurer so that I could interact with feminist colleagues from different faculties regarding the work of SPARROW and also get to know about their own work. Dr Susanne Maurer herself had been a co-founder and long-time co-chair of a feminist archive in the south of Germany (in the city of Tübingen), and during the 1990s she was also involved in the network of feminist archives in the German-speaking countries (later known as i.d.a.). She was currently working with colleagues from different countries on the topic of transformative processes within and mediated by social movements and political activism. She was professor for social pedagogy in the faculty of education (since 2004) and also one of the committed volunteers of the Centre for Gender Studies and Feminist Future Research.

The public screening organised on the first evening of SPARROW's film *Degham* was very well received by a large group of students from different departments who patiently watched the entire film of more than two hours. The next day when the actual interdisciplinary workshop on the subject "Which archive and memory is needed in Gender Studies?" there were only four of us! Two were Dr Susanne Maurer's students Julia Korell who had very efficiently done the coordination along with her colleague Jacob and another was a researcher who came in for a while. This became another intimate discussion between Susanne Maurer and me. Susanne Maurer spoke about her own work on feminist memory while I made a presentation on SPARROW and its work. It was a pity that the large audience of students that was there for the film was not there for this discussion.

The trip to Berlin and the visit to the Robert Havemann Archives on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July made up for some of the disappointments in both the workshops. The Robert



---

SPARROW

Havemann Archives in which is also the *Gray Zone* (*Gray Zone Women's Archives*) is in the eastern side of Berlin. It is a four-floor building with an underground vault of books, posters, photographs and objects like T-shirts the prisoners wore which Rebecca Garcia said would take fifty years to catalogue! The material catalogued from the *Gray Zone* itself is about 1/3 of the entire material of private papers, secret surveys, meetings, posters, photographs and other documents. So much of material apart from audio interviews done to tell the dark tale of Communist rule in GDR.

The workshops in Oldenburg and Marburg and the later visit to the *Gray Zone* Archives in Robert Havemann Archives made possible by Rebecca Garcia who was a participant in the Oldenburg workshop, were, on the whole, very fruitful in terms of knowing about where the documentation and archiving work with regard to women's history and women's movement is heading and there were those wonderful trips to Bremen and trips within Hamburg that Katharina and I thoroughly enjoyed together.

In August 2019 some interesting useful archival travels happened. Sharmila Sontakke, Senior Librarian at SPARROW, wrote a note on how useful the trips were in terms of our archives. The note explaining how much we learnt from the trips is given below:

Asmita Deshpande, my librarian colleague at SPARROW, and I left Mumbai on 18<sup>th</sup> August 2019 and reached NCBS, National Centre of Biological Sciences, Bangalore. On 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> we attended the Workshop on 'British Library: Archival standards and digitisation workflows' organised by British Library and NCBS Archives.

On the first day, Tom Derrick and Nicholas Moretto from British Library introduced participants with South Asian Collection at British Library and major digitisation projects taken up by British Library. They also guided us on Digitisation Strategy and workflows.

In the afternoon session participants were told to form groups and each group was given an imaginary situation of an archives and told to present digitisation strategy best suited for that situation. The next day the sessions were on Accessibility, Metadata standards and OCR. They introduced us to a new OCR software which reads Indian scripts called Tesseract. We also did a hands-on experiment on the software and were satisfied.

On both the days between two sessions they organised sessions called Lightning Session where the participants presented the archives they were representing. SPARROW was presented well by Asmita with a PPT. In these sessions we got to know about more than 30 other archives like the Indian Institute of Astrophysics and the Indian Music Experience, to name some of them, which were functioning in and around Bangalore and the different areas, themes and subjects their collections focus on.



1 April 2019 TO 31 March 2021

---



Asmita Deshpande, Librarian from SPARROW presented SPARROW archival work with a powerpoint presentation at the Workshop on 'British Library: Archival Standards and Digitisation Workflows' organised by British Library and NCBS Archives, Bangalore.

On both the days after the workshop we visited the NCBS Archives. It is a new initiative which archives developments in the sphere of biological sciences in India. Though the archives is just a year or two old, the way the archives is maintained and the thorough manner of digitisation of each item is worth seeing and learning from.

On 21<sup>st</sup> August we headed to Chennai where we reached around 2.30 in the afternoon. Our host Kirubanandan came to pick us up at the station. For the next four days we stayed in his house with him and his wife Gowri Kirubanandan, a SPARROW awardee, who has since become our friend and Chennai contact. Both of them hosted us with warmth.

On 22<sup>nd</sup> August we visited RMRL, Roja Muthiah Research Library, which is trying to archive the history of Tamil language and culture and provide these materials to the research scholars of Tamil Studies. R Prakash, Documentation Officer, showed us the entire library with its different methods of stacking materials and different methods of preservation. He discussed with us about the library collection, library catalogue and the software they use for cataloguing. We also met and discussed with G. Sunder, Director of RMRL. We finished our visit to RMRL in the afternoon and later, as suggested by Prakash, we visited another library in Chennai, the Anna Centenary Library. It is a huge, 8-floor public library which is well-maintained and open to all.

On 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> August we fixed the meeting with Chamki Raj, a practising lawyer, the daughter of Shajadhi and Govindarajan, both of whom were active in the Communist Party and its various meetings, protests and marches. Chamki Raj had expressed a wish to give the private papers, photographs and newspaper articles of her mother to SPARROW for archiving. Her mother Shajadhi had been President of AIDWA, South India Region. On the first day she got photocopies of the private papers of Shajadi which included letters, party notices and cards which belonged to her mother. She also spoke in detail about the



---

SPARROW

## SPARROW ANNUAL REPORT

---

work of her parents. The next day she brought photographs and newspaper articles. There were 37 photographs that she handed over to us. We went through the usual archival procedure of taking down the details of all the photographs and getting her signature on the copyright form.

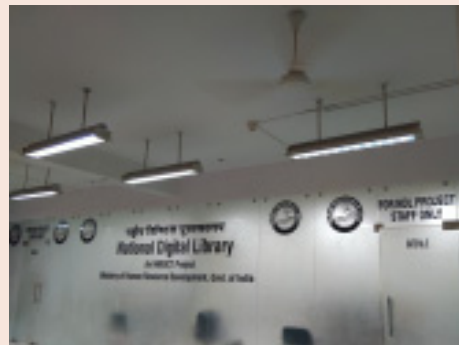
The next day, 25<sup>th</sup> August, we took the flight from Chennai to Kolkata with a lot of eagerness to visit the National Digital Library of India (NDLI) at IIT, Kharagpur. At the Kolkata airport, Dr C S lakshmi, Director, and Pooja Pandey, our colleague from SPARROW, joined us. It was a three-hour drive to Kharagpur and at Kharagpur NDLI had made very comfortable arrangements for our accommodation and food. When we got tired of the hostel food we went to Sahara, a nearby restaurant for some mouth-watering aloo ka paratha, ghee-dripping dal and spicy vegetables.

On the 26<sup>th</sup> August we visited NDLI, National Digital Library of India, a project of Dept. Of HRD, Govt. Of India, that is being developed by and housed at IIT Kharagpur. We met Nanda Gopal Chattopadhyay, the Chief Technical Officer of NDLI, who explained to us the aim and working methods of NDLI. Two types of professional experts—Computer Science and Library Science—work in tandem at the NDLI. We got to know how they work together. When an organisation or an individual send their digital content with the metadata to NDLI for sharing, the library science experts filter and modify the metadata as per NDLI standards and computer science experts put the metadata along with the actual content or its link on their server.

Later we visited the Central Library. IIT Kharagpur being the first IIT in India, it has a huge library with a large collection and separate departments to process the library



Assistant Librarian,  
Mr. Samrat Guha  
Roy with  
SPARROW Team at  
Central Library, IIT,  
Kharagpur



National Digital Library,  
IIT Kharagpur



## 1 April 2019 TO 31 March 2021

---

materials. We visited all the departments and officials in charge of the various departments, explained to us the work flow of the departments.

In the afternoon we paid a visit to an interactive science museum in IIT and the Hijli prison where freedom fighters had been detained, the site and its surrounding area which later became the location for IIT, Kharagpur. After that we took a tour around the entire massive IIT campus.

Next day we went again to NDLI to meet Suparna Chaudhuri, who explained to us about the kind of material an organisation can share with NDLI. After the official trip was over in the evening we went to see the river Subarnarekha and the bridge constructed on it, which has become a tourist spot, and the garden nearby.

Next day began with the drive to Kolkata, where we first visited two temples and then headed towards the airport to start our return journey. At the airport we ate sondesh and mishtidahi to our hearts' content. We were assured by Dr C S Lakshmi that it was all part of archiving! We landed at Mumbai at 7.45 p.m. So ended a very fruitful trip where we learnt a lot about archiving and could also share our own archival experiences.

Some more travels happened in October 2019 and this time it was to Toronto and Chicago. On 1st October 2019 in a programme organised by Tamil Worlds Initiative, The Bissell-Heyd Chair in American Studies, UTSC Libraries and Historical and Cultural Studies, UTSC, Dr C S Lakshmi made a presentation on SPARROW entitled **Women's Lives, Women's Words: Some Thoughts on Feminism as Experience and Writing Women into History.**

The event took place in the AC260 Archives & Spl Collections Room, UTSC Library. It was a two-hour session and was received very well. With the use of literature, history, oral history, performance and visual resources and drawing on her own experience as a writer and archivist Dr C S Lakshmi illustrated the specificity of mainstream history narratives with regard to women, and counter narratives which she perceived as a feminist. Dwelling on memory and recall she reflected on how making unheard voices heard is the way to understand, reinterpret and rewrite history. She explained that when the Sound & Picture Archives for Research on Women (SPARROW), Mumbai, was started in 1988, the idea was to create an archives that would be vibrant and more communicative and not just an inert repository about women. She also explained that SPARROW, as an archival space, contained tens and thousands of cartoons, oral history recordings, photographs, art work, documentaries, books, journal articles, private papers, print visuals and more.

While at Toronto there was also an interesting meet made possible by Professor Rick Halpern, The Bissell-Heyd Chair in American Studies, with Tracey Thompson, Olivia



## SPARROW ANNUAL REPORT

---

Saunders and Francine Grussel, feminists from The Bahamas, who are trying to establish a women's archives there and they found SPARROW's work inspiring.

At the University of Chicago Dr C S Lakshmi again spoke about the work of SPARROW under the title, **Body in Living Spaces: Reading, Writing and Archiving Women** on October 7<sup>th</sup>. The talk was about ways of viewing contemporary Tamil literature, the acts of reading, writing and translation and about the need to archive women's history, women's lives and women's expression. The talk covered a wide range of experiences from the personal to the universal.

Before we knew that a crisis like COVID-19 was going to hit us and that there would be a total lockdown SPARROW held a one-day workshop on February 20<sup>th</sup> 2020 in collaboration with the Research Centre for Women's Studies and Dr Putul Sathe. It was a workshop meant for students of Women's Studies and the students of the English Department and also some teachers. It was planned as an audio-visual workshop on SPARROW'S usual theme for presentations: **Women's Lives, Women's Words: Some Thoughts on Feminism as Experience and Writing Women into History**. The one-day workshop began with a lecture by Dr C S Lakshmi on women's contribution to history with a power-point presentation and in the course of the day two films produced by SPARROW, *Ten Women, Ten Lives, Ten Concerns* and *Malathamma* were screened. The first one was on women's scholarship and action and was on the life and work of ten women from different parts of India. The second one was a biographical film on Malathamma, a musical theatre artiste, daughter of the legendary Gubbi Veeranna of Karnataka. The film screenings were followed by interactive sessions and the students enthusiastically participated with some students opening up to talk about their own lives and struggles for education.



Dr C S Lakshmi addressing the students

Dr C S Lakshmi, Putul Sathe with RCWS and SPARROW Team



1 April 2019 TO 31 March 2021

## SPARROW EVENT: SPARROW LITERARY AWARD 2019

SPARROW-R Thyagarajan Literary Award 2019 event on 21<sup>st</sup> December 2019, was as usual a quiet, intimate function celebrated among friends and well-wishers.

The theme was poetry and the awardees for Tamil language for 2019 were senior Tamil poet and writer Yuvan Chandrasekhar, who writes poetry in the name of M Yuvan and is a prolific writer and a much acclaimed and interviewed writer, poet and translator who has been a prominent writer in the Tamil literary scene for the past thirty years, and young poet and translator Geetha Sukumaran, a poet and also a translator who has brought out books which are both historically relevant and important contributions to Tamil and world literature. The non-Tamil language chosen this year was Punjabi and the awardee this year was the poet Simrat Gagan, a poet, novelist and educationist and a well-known voice among young aspiring Punjabi writers. The judges on the panel for Tamil were Ambai, a Tamil writer and currently the Director of SPARROW and D I Aravindan who was Executive Editor of Minnambalam.com and who is now Editor for the Tamil web section of Times Internet Limited of the Times Group. Poet Sukumaran Narayanan who was one of the judges on the panel in the previous years kindly agreed to be a consultant and helped in short listing the poets. The judge on the panel for Punjabi language was Dr Charanjeet Kaur, Retd I/C Principal and Associate Professor and Head, Department of English, Smt. Chandibai Himathmal Mansukhani College, Ulhasnagar, Dist. Thane, Contributing

### SPARROW LITERARY AWARD 2019



L to R: Dr Shoba Venkatesh Ghosh, Dr Charanjeet Kaur, Dr Divya Pandey, Yuvan Chandrasekhar, Senthamarai Kannan P (Geetha Sukumaran's Father), Simrat Gagan & Dr C S Lakshmi.



Krithika Sreenivasan's lecture-demonstration on the subject "Contribution of Women to Indian Classical Music."



SPARROW Team with Awardees and Friends



SPARROW

Editor, Indian Writing in English. Muse India and Associate Director, SPARROW.

Maithreyi Yagnik compered the event and began by welcoming the writers and the audience. On this occasion all of us remembered our friend and associate, Kannada writer Tulasi Venugopal, who succumbed to cancer and passed away in April 2019. After introducing the awardees the award citations were read out and the awards given to them by former trustee, patron, friend and well-wisher Dr Divya Pandey.

The award event ended with Krithika Sreenivasan's lecture-demonstration on the subject "Contribution of Women to Indian Classical Music." From the Bhakti movement to present times Krithika detailed women's contribution to Indian classical music in terms of singing and composing. It was an inspiring session with interludes of Krithika singing the songs of some of the women composers.

### SPARROW EVENT: SPARROW LITERARY AWARD 2020

SPARROW Literary Award, instituted by R Thyagarajan, Founder, Shriram Group, was announced in December. The award function is usually held every year in December but due to the pandemic we had to cancel the SPARROW Literary Award function but SPARROW hopes that sometime in the future we will be able to meet the awardees in person.

This year for consideration for the SPARROW-R THYAGARAJAN Literary Award 2020 was the genre of translation. In the category of translation, translation from Tamil to another language and another language to Tamil and direct translations into Tamil from non-Indian languages were taken into consideration. The languages chosen were Sanskrit, and Kannada in Indian languages and French in non-Indian language. The SPARROW Literary Awards are normally given for a woman and a man in Indian languages and either a woman or a man for the non-Indian language category. The SPARROW panel of judges this year were D I Aravindan and Ambai for the Indian languages. For the French language award we consulted many including Nagarathinam Krishna who kindly suggested many names. The final award decisions were taken by D I Aravindan and Ambai in the panel of judges. This year SPARROW decided to award three persons instead of two in the Indian languages category and one person from the non-Indian languages category.

The awardees this year are K Nallathambi for translation from Tamil to Kannada and Kannada to Tamil, Krishangini for translation from Hindi to Tamil, Madhumitha for translation from Sanskrit to Tamil and S A Vengada Soupraya Nayagar for translation from French to Tamil and Tamil to French. The awardees have honoured SPARROW and the panel of judges by accepting the awards.



1 April 2019 TO 31 March 2021

---



**Dr S A Vengada Soupraya  
Nayagar**



**SPARROW  
LITERARY  
AWARD  
2020**

**Krishangini**



**Madhumitha**



**K Nallathambi**



---

**SPARROW**

### INTERNS

In 2019 three M A Part II students Ms. Timrawon Grace Ramror, Ms. Tabassum Khan and Ms. Payal Subash Chandra Shukla from Department of History, SNDT University successfully completed their internship with SPARROW with Dr Charanjeet Kaur as their mentor.

Ms. Neelima Mundayur (2nd Year Undergraduate student of Liberal Arts) from FLAME University, Pune also completed her internship with SPARROW with Dr Charanjeet Kaur as her mentor.

### VISITORS

In 2019 and 2020 many scholars and researchers, professors and students visited SPARROW for consultation and to take a SPARROW Walk.

Librarian Ms. Pravin Puralkar from Vidya Mandir, Dahisar, Maya Pillai, Rekha Modi from Stree Shakti, Jyoti R Joshi, Sheena Sajith, Saurabh Udhani, Maitreyee Mhatre and Ravija Srivastava visited SPARROW.

In November 2019, Dr Suja Roy Abraham, Member Secretary of Women's Development Cell, Joshi Bedekar College, Thane, along with Asst. Professor Dr Indrani Roy, Pradnya Rajebahadur and Ms. P N Sindu visited SPARROW with 15 students from undergraduate and post graduate level.

In February 2020, Mr. Venkat Srinivasan from NCBS Archives Bangalore, visited SPARROW.



1 April 2019 TO 31 March 2021

---



Students from Joshi Bedekar College, Thane



Dr C S Lakshmi with Students from Joshi Bedekar College, Thane



Dr Charanjeet Kaur with intern Neelima Mundayur and SPARROW Team



Mr. Venkat Srinivasan with Dr C S Lakshmi and SPARROW Team



Students and Professors from Joshi Bedekar College, Thane with SPARROW Team



---

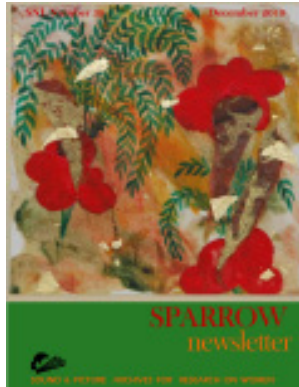
SPARROW

## SPARROW ANNUAL REPORT

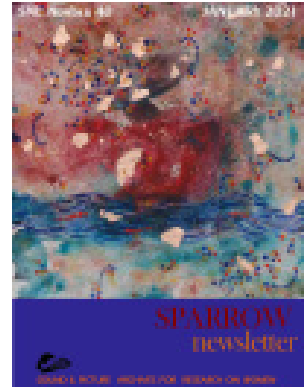
### SPARROW COLLECTIONS AND WORK RECORD 1 April 2019-31 March 2021



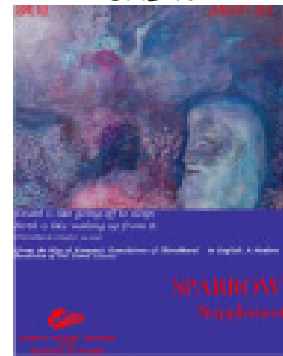
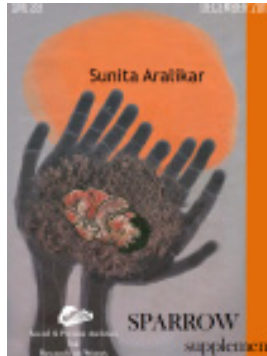
SNL 38



SNL 39



SNL 40



### SPARROW NEWSLETTERS

Three newsletters (SNL 38, SNL 39 and SNL 40 with supplements) were published in two years. All our newsletters are available on SPARROW website or available in the following link <http://www.sparrowonline.org/newsletter.html>

### WEBSITE POSTINGS

There were regular website updates with postings on projects, SPARROW Newsletters, Annual Reports, Interviews, Events, and information on supporting SPARROW. SPARROW also has a Face Book Page with regular updates. Do visit SPARROW page at <https://www.facebook.com/sparrowngo/>



## 1 April 2019 TO 31 March 2021

### 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:

#### Photographs

Photographs Original/  
Copies/Digital 42

Processed 42

#### Cartoons

English 60

Processed 60

#### Books

English 65

Hindi 1

Marathi 5

Tamil 42

Telugu 1

Gujarati 1

Konkani 7

Punjabi 3

Total 125

Processed 125

#### Print Visuals

English 202

Marathi 7

Total 209

Processed 197

#### Audio Cassettes/CDs

Audio CDs 3

Processed 3

#### Brochures

English 16

Processed 16

#### Newsletters

Marathi 22

Processed 22

#### Advertisements

English 116

Marathi 13

Hindi 2

Tamil 4

Total 135

Processed 135

#### Newspaper Articles

English 1110

Marathi 44

Hindi 15

Total 1169

Processed 1169

#### Journal Articles

English 22

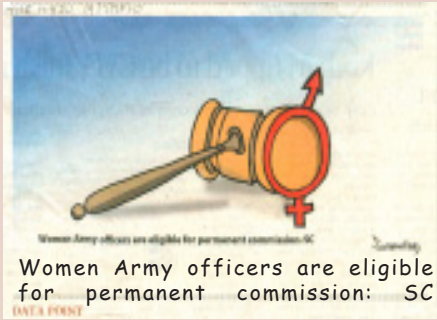
Tamil 42

Total 64

Processed 64



SPARROW Collections

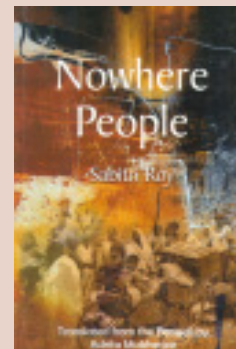
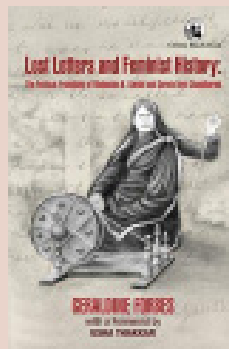
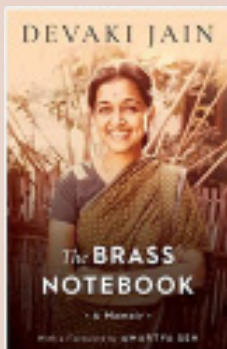


Women Army officers are eligible for permanent commission: SC  
The Hindu, 19 February 2020



Mumbai Mirror, 10 December 2020

C  
A  
R  
T  
O  
O  
N  
S  
  
B  
O  
O  
K  
S



1 April 2019 TO 31 March 2021

SPARROW Collections

P  
R  
I  
N  
T  
  
V  
I  
S  
U  
A  
L  
S

Remembering Mahavir



Jain Sadhvis participate in procession for both Mahavir Jayanti, at Bhuleshwar on Wednesday.   
THE HINDU 17/4/2019 75/PHI 14 2019-07

Remembering Mahavir : Jain Sadhvi's participate in a procession to mark Mahavir Jayanti, at Bhuleshwar.   
The Hindu, 18 April 2019

A village dedicated to books



Keeping reading alive: Tourists engrossed in reading books as 78-year-old Phulabai Parthe blows air to burn charcoal to protect the books from fungus, stiffness during the rains, and to maintain the temperature at her home in Bhilar village in Satara district of Maharashtra. This first 'village of books' in India - at Puthlisavne in Satara, in Maharashtra - was set up on May 4, 2018 inspired by Kizhidiyil, a town in Kerala known for its bookstores and literature festivals, as much as 30 villages offer space as their residence for the large variety of books.   
THE HINDU 31/7/2019 61237

A village dedicated to books : Tourists engrossed in reading books as 78-year old Phulabai Parthe blows air to burn charcoal to protect the books from fungus, stiffness during the rains and to maintain the temperature at her home in Bhilar Village in Satara district of Maharashtra.   
The Hindu, 31 July 2019



SPARROW

**DIGITISATION WORK  
(1 APRIL 2019-31 MARCH 2020)**

I) With the help of IT professional successfully transferred following entries from WINISIS to Koha and Excel to Koha

- A) Books-6419
- B) Videos-1177
- C) Cartoons - 4674
- D) Audio CDs - 529
- E) Journal Articles - 4944
- F) Newspaper Articles -44444
- G) Print Visual - 5657

II) Additional Entries directly in Koha

- A) Books - 198
- B) Journals Articles - 7

III) Scanned Material

- A) Posters - 166
- B) Photos - 37

IV) Audio Cassettes transferred into CDs - 24

**DIGITISATION WORK  
(1 APRIL 2020-31 MARCH 2021)**

I) With the help of IT professional successfully transferred following entries to Koha

- A) Journal Articles - 1145
- B) Brochure - 755
- C) Reference Books - 1478
- D) Posters - 1613

II) Additional Entries directly in Koha

- A) Books - 532

III) Scanned Material

- A) Advertisements - 2850

**SPARROW Collections**



Masseur turns art teacher as Covid nicks income. TOI, 1 September 2020



TOI, 17 October 2019



Hindustan Times, 4 August 2019

N  
E  
W  
S  
P  
A  
P  
E  
R  
  
A  
R  
T  
I  
C  
L  
E  
S  
  
A  
D  
V  
E  
R  
T  
I  
S  
E  
M  
E  
N  
T  
S



1 April 2019 TO 31 March 2021

---

### **LOOKING BACK, LOOKING FORWARD**

While looking back at these two years of work and the experience of COVID the question constantly on the mind of everyone at SPARROW was what is the takeaway from these two years? Do we feel satisfied that despite the COVID and the office being shut down for six months we managed to get some work done or do we feel despondent about the lost six months of work and a total transformation of our lives by a virus? In conversations we had we realised that what we feel is a mixture of both. When the two years are taken as a whole, the travels and the people we met, the Literary Award event that we held in 2019 which always brings together different writers, the extra hours we put in the next year to make up for lost work time, making the office functional after COVID, the zoom meetings some of us attended, successfully choosing a set of writers for the SPARROW Literary Award 2020 and designing the plaques for them even though we could not have an event, the continuing efforts to pursue the renewal of our FCRA and the tireless WhatsApp conversations we maintained did give us a sense of satisfaction. But what gave us an entirely new experience and understanding of life was the Homages section we did for the Newsletter. We had to bring out a separate supplement for homages. As those who archive women's lives and women's history we became conscious of the fact that there were so many women whose lives and work we had not archived. The realisation made us humble and also comprehend the fact that a complete women's history can never be written for every woman carries a history with her. Sometimes in the course of her life, it may get revealed or sometimes she leaves behind her redolence in a diary, a journal, letters, a book or maybe she just leaves behind a cow she loved, a land she cultivated, a girl child she sent to school, a woman she stood by or the memory of fragrance of the food she cooked. There is really no end to archiving. Archivists can never stop looking for traces of a woman's life.



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



1 April 2019 TO 31 March 2021



*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



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



Name of Account Holder:  
**SOUND AND PICTURE ARCHIVES  
FOR RESEARCH ON WOMEN  
-SPARROW**  
Bank Name: **STATE BANK OF INDIA.**  
Address: FCRA Cell, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, State Bank  
of India. 11, Sansad Marg,  
New Delhi 110001  
BRANCH: New Delhi Main Branch  
FCRA Account number:  
**FCRA Current A/C NO:  
40267768469**  
**IFSC: SBIN0000691**  
**SWIFT: SBININBB104**  
**Bank code: 00691**  
**MICR Code: 110002087**

*Join us in our mission*



SPARROW





*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.*

*Shri. R Thyagarajan*

*Mr V. Ravishankar*

*Uma Shankar*

*Devaki Jain*

*Savita Damle*

*Neelakantan Chidhambarakrishnan*

*Bharat Re Insurance Brokers Private Limited*

*Geraldine Forbes*

*Aroon Raman*

*C R Ashok*

*Rama and Kanchana Viswanathan*

*Vijaya Dass*

*Meenakshi Venkatesh*

*R V Rajan*

*Ramachandran Mahadevan*

*Menka Shivdasani*

*Vimmi Sadarangani*

*Venkateshwaran Suryanarayan*

*Meenakshi Shedde*

*Singh Foundation*

*B Venkatesan*

*Bhavani Thyagarajan*

*C S Lakshmi*

*Aniruddhan Vasudevan*

*Sarayu Kamat*

*WDC Joshi Bedekar*

*College*

*RCWS*

*Rajakumar*

*Vijayakumar*

*Shobha R Subramaniam*



1 April 2019 TO 31 March 2021

---



As those who archive women's lives and women's history we became conscious of the fact that there were so many women whose lives and work we had not archived. The realisation made us humble and also comprehend the fact that a complete women's history can never be written for every woman carries a history with her. Sometimes in the course of her life, it may get revealed or sometimes she leaves behind her redolence in a diary, a journal, letters, a book or maybe she just leaves behind a cow she loved, a land she cultivated, a girl child she sent to school, a woman she stood by or the memory of fragrance of the food she cooked. There is really no end to archiving. Archivists can never stop looking for traces of a woman's life.