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SNL Number 08

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Forthcoming SPARROW Event

Women's Lives

Women's Words

A Festival of SPARROW Films

Organised in collaboration with

Mahila Vyaspeeth

(Y B Chavan Pratishthan)

On 3rd, 4th & 5th Nov 2006

at Y B Chavan Auditorium from 2 p.m. to 7 p.m.

[Editor's Note]

This issue of SNL that is coming out in the month of August, which is always associated with Independence Day, ought to have been designed in bright celebratory colours. Instead, it is in black to express our grief over the shocking event on the 11th of July, which was a brutal attack on the city of Mumbai. The serial bomb blasts in the local trains, the lifeline of the city, not only destroyed lives and public property, but also shattered the spirit of the city for a while. It felt as if the city was under siege. The city has faced bomb blasts in the past. It faced severe floods last year. But Mumbaikars were always ready to face another day and the media always spoke about the spirit of Mumbai. The city always rose like the mythical phoenix. This time too the city was back in track the very next day but there was a sense of weariness, as if a heavy weight was holding its wings down.

This issue, however, is a special one. It is being co-edited by Josna Rege who has been very close to SPARROW in many ways. She is an Associate Professor in the Department of Languages and Literature at Worcester State College, Massachusetts, in the U.S. In June Josna Rege came and spent a week with us doing some interviewing, translation and transcription for SPARROW. She offered to co-edit this SNL and chose to write on Kumud Rege, a veteran Gandhian who also happens to be her aunt, and on Aleyamma Vijayan and her organisation Sakhi. It seemed appropriate to write about a Gandhian and her work and about another woman from a later generation who has to deal with the contemporary realities of women's lives, in the month of August, in the fifty-ninth year of our independence.

Hope the coming months would bring the colours back into our lives. Meanwhile do get back to us on this issue. And do visit our website www.sparrowonline.org

0.2 Oral History

Travelling by a Different Path: Interview with Kumud Rege

In May 2006 I had the opportunity to interview Kumud Rege, who is a social worker in Ratnagiri District, on the Konkan coast of Maharashtra. At 84, Kumud has been a doer all her life. She speaks rapidly, as if she has no time to waste. In a June 2000 SPARROW interview with fellow-Ratnagiri native Urmila Pawar, she acknowledged, "I'm not really fond of writing. I like to work rather than write about it." While writing her memoir, *Vegalya Vatene Jatana*, or *Travelling by a Different Path*, she dictated it to a scribe, in-between meetings with a steady stream of people whose lives she has touched, either seeking her advice or simply coming to pay their respects, even though she has officially been retired for many years. Kumud was born in the district headquarters town of Ratnagiri, and lives very simply in the family home where she grew up with her parents and seven siblings (she was the fourth of eight children, and the second of three girls). In adulthood, she was the only one among her siblings who stayed in Ratnagiri and carried out her life's work there. Kumudtai is well-known and beloved in the whole district, where she has worked and remained active with almost every social institution, including mahila mandals and balwadis, schools and colleges, the juvenile court, the remand home, the mental home, and particularly the Smt. Janakibai (Akka) Tendulkar Mahilashram in Lanje

Kumudtai began her vocation of Gandhian social work in 1942 when, as one of only ten female students living in the hostel at Willingdon College, Sangli, she participated in the Quit India Movement. Her father had written to her giving her permission to take part in the movement if she so desired, and also wrote a letter to her college principal to that effect. Her father wore khadi and it was at that time that Kumud started wearing khadi herself, a practice she continues to this day. She told Urmila Pawar light-heartedly that over the years her family members have tried to persuade her to wear coloured blouses or printed saris, but to no avail. Speaking with her nieces Shubha Desai and me in May 2006, she explained her attraction to khadi as something beautiful made entirely by hand and most often by women. Outside, she said, khadi was associated with politics, but she distances herself from khadi-wearing as a symbolic political statement, and insists that "those who put on khaddar are supposed to be social workers."

In 1945, after completing her B A in Sociology, Kumud participated in an intensive 6-month workshop in Saswad run

by the newly-established Kasturba Gandhi Trust Fund for development of village women and children in Maharashtra under the leadership of one of her mentors and role models, Prematai Kantak. The daily programme consisted of lessons in environmental cleanliness (including cleaning around toilets), ayurvedic medicine, spinning, and agricultural skills, as well as prayers and other subjects such as psychology. In 1946 Kumud and Akka Tendulkar co-founded a Village Service Centre in Lanje Taluka, Ratnagiri, and soon began to focus on the many interrelated needs of women and children. This centre developed into the Lanje Mahilashram, which for the past sixty years has continuously served women of all ages with a wide variety of programmes.



In 1950, after completing a second Bachelor's Degree in Teaching in Pune, Kumudtai went to Bordi in Thane District to complete a diploma in Basic Education, following which she lived and worked for four years in a village development program in Gopuri (Kankavali taluka) with Appasaheb Tendulkar, popularly known as the Konkan Gandhi. For the next seven years, Kumudtai directed the Kasturba Gramsevika Vidyalaya in Saswad, where she ran a women's social worker training college and inspected village development efforts carried out all over Maharashtra. During this time, while Vinoba Bhave's Bhoodan movement was in full swing, she received a Central Government scholarship for doctoral study at Mouni University in Gargoti, where the subject of

her research and dissertation was "Mutual Relationship between Primary Schools and Village Social Institutions." In keeping with her hands-on approach, this was no library-based study, but one that required her to travel through many villages and schools to investigate how they worked.

In 1961, at the invitation of then-chief minister P K Sawant on behalf of the Jotiba Phule Education Society, Kumud returned to Ratnagiri as Principal of Desai Teacher's Training College. She has continued to live and work in her hometown ever since, heading the college for two decades, serving as Honorary Magistrate of the Children's Court, on the Board of the Remand Home, and, since 1982, as President of the Lanje Mahilashram. When asked to look back on all her different activities, Kumudtai considers the Mahilashram to be her greatest achievement.

The Mahilashram in Lanje serves many different aspects of women's needs at different stages of their lives: it takes in

0.3 Oral History

teenage mothers, runaways, referrals from juvenile courts or abusive homes; offers a range of education and training for self-sufficiency; helps to arrange marriages for the women if returning to their families is not an option for them, and allows them to stay on and contribute to the work of the ashram if they so desire. It also finds shelters and raises orphaned children, runs a balmandir for older children, and arranges adoptions. The ashram receives very limited government funding, and relies for its support on donations and fund drives.

Starting in 1993, the Mahilashram added another wing, Shantisadan, for women over 60. There is space for ten women in Shantisadan, and it has never yet had more than a handful in residence. Reflecting on this, Kumudtai notes that any woman who leaves her home to come there, comes somewhat unwillingly, because she has no family, or because she cannot live with them. The women who adjust and settle in best are those who enter into the life of the ashram as a whole, serving as teachers, telling stories, being grandmothers to the children, participating in weddings at the ashram, singing or leading prayers at various functions. Kumud does not call Shantisadan an old-age home, with the stigma of social isolation attached to that term, but rather a place within the ashram where elderly women can live, or simply come to stay for a while. At the conclusion of her memoir Kumud has written movingly about what the Mahilashram means to her in her own old age. "The idea that children are a stick to lean on in old age, has been shaken. Just to speak for myself, the stick of the ashram has become the main support for my later life. This is my stick and these are my children."

Kumudtai speaks about her various activities unassumingly, never volunteering information on the many awards she has been given over the years. Like many other women, she tends to downplay the significance of her own role in a project, emphasising instead the collective nature of the work. When I asked her if she would donate her documents and photographs to SPARROW's archives, she replied with some surprise that she didn't have any such records. Because she is a doer, one gains the best insights into her work through observation. In my intermittent visits to Ratnagiri over the years I have observed her steady work with Dalits and the poor, especially women and children, her thriftiness (she uses less cooking oil in a month than I use in one meal), her emphasis on service and giving rather than consumption (she asks all her family members to contribute to her various projects and gives away her award shawls to her nieces), her egalitarianism (she refuses to have servants, but rather lives with young companions, whom she educates and trains toward self-sufficiency), her experimentation with energy-saving technologies (her simple solar cooker cooked her rice, dal, and vegetables while she was away at work). I invariably find her arranging a marriage for a man left widowed

with small children, giving advice to a woman whose second husband is mistreating her child from her previous marriage, inaugurating a balwadi for Dalit children, or taking long, hot state transport bus trips to speak to village women on a job training course.

At the end of our interview my cousin Shubha and I asked our aunt about the title of her book, *Travelling by a Different Path*. We wanted to know how she had made the decision to do so, and what she thought about that choice now. However, she replied that at the time she did not think in these terms. Participating in the Quit India Movement of 1942 had influenced her, particularly the principles underlying Gandhi's idea of individual satyagraha, but it was only later on that she realised that she had in fact taken a different path in life. When we asked about her choice not to marry, she similarly insisted that she had not made a decision as such, either to marry or not to marry, but rather that she knew that she would do what felt right at the time. Asked about whether she has had the support of her family, she replied unhesitatingly, "Not the slightest resistance from anyone. They used to buy me cloth for coloured blouses. They said, why must you wear white all the time? Use some printed stuff....They do that out of their love for me. But nobody asked me, 'Why don't you wear ornaments?' or 'Why don't you get married?' They know that I have done what I wanted to do."

— Josna Rege

Urmila Pawar's June 2000 SPARROW interview with Kumud Rege is available in audiotape and Marathi transcription and is currently being translated into English. The May 2006 SPARROW interview with her is in the process of transcription. Some information for this piece was also drawn from Kumudtai's autobiography, Vegalya Vatene Jatana (Travelling by a Different Path, Ratnagiri: Konkan Marathi Sabitya Parishad, 2000) which is available in the SPARROW library. Thanks also to my father, Madbukar Rege, who is responsible for most of the translation from Marathi, and to my cousin, Dr. Shubha Desai, who helped me with the recent interview with our aunt.

[Josna Rege teaches world, postcolonial and American ethnic literatures at Worcester State College, Massachusetts. Her book, *Colonial Karma: Self, Action and Nation in the Indian English Novel*, was published by Palgrave Macmillan in December 2004. Her current research interest include South Asian women's collaborative cultural projects in India, the UK and the US that work both in and across nations including material and digital archives such as South Asian Diaspora Literature and Arts Archive (SALIDAA) in the UK, SPARROW and similar archives elsewhere.]

0.4 NGO Documentation

Making Women Visible: Aleyamma Vijayan of Sakhi

On July 7, 2005, C S Lakshmi of SPARROW interviewed Ms. Aleyamma Vijayan, Director of Sakhi Resource Centre for Women in Trivandrum, Kerala. The interview was part of SPARROW's NGO documentation project **Making Women Visible**, funded by the Amsterdam-based Mama Cash.

Making Women Visible seeks to document the work done by women's organisations throughout India. SPARROW wants to collect, archive, and compile information related to various organisations working on women's issues and to share the material in such a way that it increases the visibility of the work done by the groups and helps to foster meaningful connections among them. This process is the first step towards consolidating the collective gains made by the women's movement in India. It can help immensely in opening up a new dialogue, and it also demonstrates the active role that an archive like SPARROW can play in the development process. **Making Women Visible** will operate at many levels, including collecting the various outreach materials brought out by the organisations, compiling information about their resource persons, and creating audiovisual documentation. As of March 2005, the project had already contacted 300 organisations, conducted 3 interviews, and acquired 100 brochures, 81 newspaper articles, 61 photographs, 32 posters, 20 newsletters, 15 journals, and several books, films, and VCDs. The information thus collected will then be shared through SPARROW's various outreach programmes, such as networking with students and other organisations, and SPARROW's newsletter, publications, and website.

Sakhi was set up in 1996, and registered as a charitable trust in 1999. Its founders, who had been working with marginalised fishing communities and people's organisations in Kerala, intended the new resource centre to act as a bridge between such groups and the debates around gender and feminist issues at the national and international levels. Sakhi's aim is to build the capacities of micro-level women's groups through information, trainings, studies, and accessibility to macro-level processes and networks, thus enabling them to demand accountability from governments. Its focus is on issues of livelihood, gender and governance, the reproductive and sexual rights of women and young people, violence intervention, and all matters related to gender and development. Sakhi maintains a library and documentation centre (it brings out its publications mostly in Malayalam but with some in English), and works in a variety of ways to strengthen women's mobilisation at the local and regional level. It conducts a number of training programmes geared to the needs of other groups, specifically a course on gender, health, and development, violence intervention programmes, a gender and governance programme, gender and

masculinities education for men, and life-skills training for adolescents. Sakhi also brings out a quarterly newsletter that reaches about thousand groups and individuals in Kerala, and is a member and facilitator of Kerala Streevedi, a network of more than 40 women's organisations who work jointly on many issues.

In her interview, Aleyamma Vijayan described the experiences that led her to found Sakhi. Her Catholic upbringing made her dream of becoming a missionary like Mother Theresa, serving the very poor and working in remote rural areas, and in college she started working with AICUF (All-India Catholic Universities Federation), "which at the time was...very active, progressive, also giving a lot of social analysis." Because her two elder sisters were nuns, her parents were reluctant to allow their only remaining daughter to go into missionary work, but she persisted, and eventually, they relented. Aleyamma joined the Sisters of Charity, and worked with them for seven years. She helped to run a children's village in Bangalore and then decided to go for her Master's in Social Work. After her MSW, she started working in an orphanage and home for the aged run by the Sisters of Charity, but came into conflict with them when she started to make some changes in the strictly regimented system, allowing the children more freedom. She also clashed with some of the senior Sisters over the segregation and unequal treatment at both the orphanage and the home for the aged, between the elderly residents and the congregation. Eventually, Aleyamma decided that she did not want to spend her life struggling with the church hierarchy, and left the convent to work as a grass-roots organiser in a fishing village. Here she began to organise a union, and took a 3-month training course at the Indian Social Institute in Bangalore, a seminal experience she describes as being "like a baptism."



0.5 Ngo Documentation

Aleyamma said that it was not until 1984 that she and her colleagues started thinking about gender issues in the fishing community. Until then, they had seen women only as workers, not as women. However, when the women, who sold the fish, started agitating, she realised that their problems were gender-specific, and that they were shut out of the decision-making process in the union and the cooperative societies. The male union organisers worked hard to convince the women that they should merge to form one union, and succeeded. However, according to Aleyamma, "When it became one union, then the women's agenda was always last." Eventually, she said, "we realised that it's not just women as workers. There are also always these other aspects of power, hierarchy, survival, and also issues within the family, which nobody ever considered." After she had struggled within the union to educate the male members on issues of gender, a faction within the group decided that she and some of the other founder-members were "asking too many questions" and threw them out of the organisation. A lawsuit ensued, which is still ongoing, but Aleyamma had no desire to return to the group after that betrayal. Instead, she founded Sakhi. However, through Sakhi and Streevedi she continues to work with women in the same fishing communities.

Aleyamma discussed some of the problems faced by Sakhi and debates within the Streevedi network that are specific to the state of Kerala. One is the funding issue. On the one hand, she says, "Kerala is a low priority for any funding agency." Some of Sakhi's programmes have been funded by Macarthur and Ford Foundation grants, but when they expire, they will not be renewed: "So sustainability is a big problem for us." On the other, there are strong suspicions on the left, and among some of the women in Streevedi about foreign funding. "Anybody who is funded... has a tarnished name. We have to take the tactics of working very low key, which many of my friends in other states don't understand at all." Kerala had a very active and powerful State Women's Commission, with which Sakhi worked very closely during its first 5 years, when it sought to address the very high rate of violence against women in the state by starting a one-stop crisis centre and hospital. However, Aleyamma says that the Commission has now become "watered down," requiring Sakhi to start a violence intervention programme of its own.

Talking about microcredit and self-help schemes geared to women, Aleyamma explained that in Kerala, microcredit is coordinated by the state directly. There is a programme called Kudumbastree run by the State Poverty Eradication Mission. Automatically from the second year of that programme all these funds went to SHGs (Self-Help Groups). And in all the panchayats in Kerala, thousands and thousands of SHGs were formed. Kudumbastree call themselves a women's empowerment programme, but it is purely an economic thing, according to Aleyamma. Most of the income-generation

programmes they get into are related to stereotyped jobs. Some exceptional work may have been done by some groups. Sakhi is trying to document that. Trishur district panchayat cooperative is running buses. But, according to Aleyamma, mostly, very stereotypical microcredit programmes are being run, and she feels that in another five years, this will not work because it is really unsustainable. Women are burdened with a lot of credit which they cannot pay back, she explains.

Commenting on Kudumbastree, Aleyamma says: "I was just looking at the National Women and Child Development Ministry programme website and there is one full page on Kudumbastree. It is really the model for India. I think it is high time that women's programmes started exposing what it really is... You are... diverting all the attention of women from all their daily livelihood issues, their access to local resources. In Kerala there are major problems, because most of the resources like groundwater are exploited by multinationals including Pepsi, Aquafina... Even in the Kuwait war for American soldiers water was taken from Kerala because [of] its sweet water... All the basic resources of Kerala are commercially exploited. Women don't have time to pay attention to this, because... the logic of these microeconomic activities is taking all [their] attention. None of these microcredit groups are looking at the violence which is going up in Kerala. None of them is looking at child sexual abuses or... health issues..."

Asked about the government statistics on women's status in Kerala, Aleyamma replied:

"According to them, women have starting moving out of their homes. They are taking decisions... they have savings. Savings, huge figures—crores of rupees. But the work participation rate in Kerala is lower than the national average, hardly 14% of women in Kerala work. Then how do these women save? They save by pinching two rupees daily from the money which is given to run the household, depriving themselves of basic needs of the family. They make [say], ten rupees a week. And the money which they take as loan will go for consumption expenditure because dowry is very high. Mostly it goes to buy consumption articles or gold. It is all unsustainable. The consumer culture in Kerala is really very high. And you know, suicide in Kerala is three times higher than the national average. People get into debt, they can't pay back."

"In many of the commercial marketing centers, Hindustan Lever, that American chain—Amway, women are selling these products. It's a sure market, isn't it? And very nicely they call it direct marketing. So poor women are made into sales girls... [getting] up at 3 O'clock in the morning to finish the household work, [and then] to go and sell these products from house to house. Women are selling anti-aging creams which cost Rs. 180 a small [jar]... anti-wrinkle cream and things like that. It's very sad. You don't know what will happen in another five years'

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Campaign against violence organised by Sakhi 2003.

time, how much indebtedness these women will have.”

Aleyamma also spoke about the lack of unity among women’s organisations. “And then finally whatever unity is built up, women start fighting with one another,” she commented. She feels that there are communal forces among women too which are caste-based and community-based. And in women’s meetings there would easily be thirty thousand women in white saris and orange blouses. The SNDP (Stree Narayan Dharma Paripalana) women wear white saris and yellow blouses. Aleyamma spoke about this experience saying, “You feel so funny when you travel through the streets in Kerala sometimes, because you have all these uniformed women of different castes, communities, different political affiliations. Everybody is in the SHG formation, [it’s an] easy way of mobilising. [They] call it all women’s empowerment, but it’s an easy way to control women: you are offering money and you are controlling them.”

Aleyamma feels that there is a great need for increased networking and functioning at a national level. “We need to... start influencing the public discourses. We are trying also to link up with the National Coordination Committee for Women,

National Network of Autonomous Women’s Groups. We need to strengthen the network of women’s groups because women need to become a political force. But in the Kerala context... party-based politics divides you so much that it is very difficult... When working through elected women representatives we feel that we are also... trying to enter the mainstream political parties through these women. But the unfortunate thing is that after five years when the rotation seats become general seats, many of these women are back home. In the party also women find they are tools.”

— Josna Rege

SPARROW now has an audiotape and transcript of its 2005 interview with Aleyamma Vijayan, as well as a collection of Sakhi’s brochures, photographs, and photographs, and its study on gender-based violence in Kerala. To contact Sakhi directly, you can visit their website: www.sakhikerela.org. email: sakhi@asianetindia.com. Mailing address: Sakhi-Resource Center for Women, Convent Road, Trivandrum-695035, Kerala; phone: 91-471-2462251, fax: 91-471-2574939.

Prema Purao: Krantikari Annapurna

By Mandakini Gogate

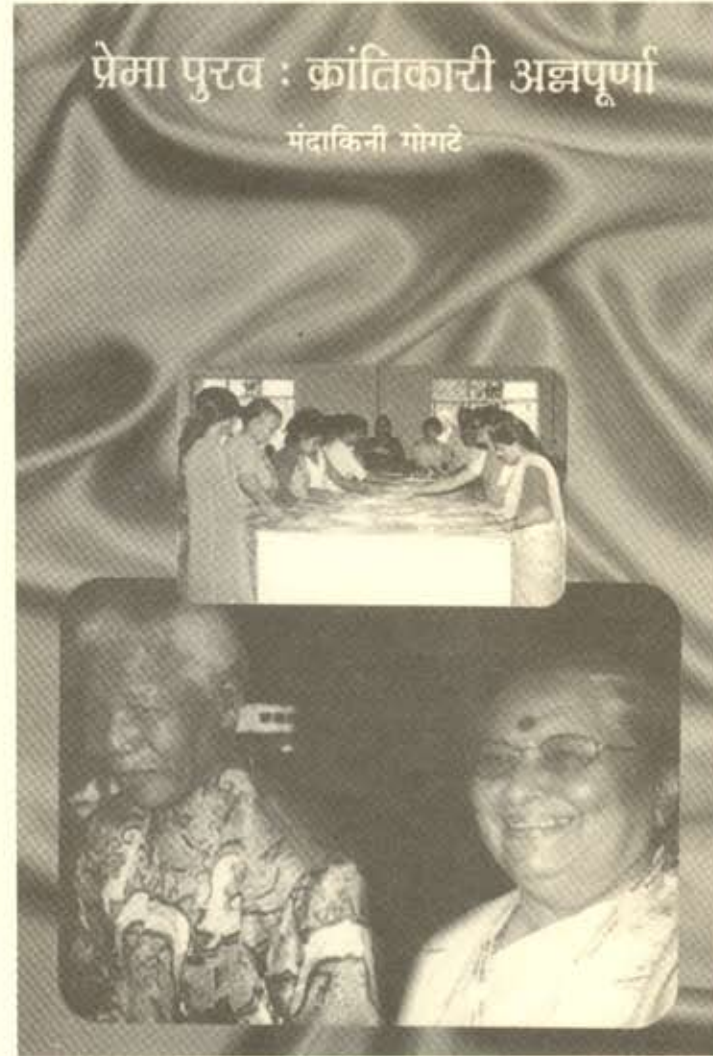
It is true that truth is stranger than fiction. Mandakini Gogate has written a factual biography of Prema Purao, founder of Annapurna Mahila Mandal, which reads like a story. With the forceful introduction by Kumar Ketkar, the well-known journalist and editor of Maharashtra Times, and the easy flowing style of Mandakini's writing, the book unfolds like a scripted film.

Many associate Prema Purao only with Annapurna Mahila Mandal. This biography tells us about the other facets of her life. Prema Purao was an active freedom fighter in the Goa Freedom Movement. She was born in Goa, into the wealthy Tendulkar family. Being the youngest child, she was pampered a lot and brought up with a lot of love. Though surrounded by wealth and affluence, she grew up as a warm and caring child who was sensitive to the feelings and needs of people who worked for the family like the farmers and household servants. She had a special relationship with her wet-nurse who became an important part of her life.

Very early in her life she was involved in Goa's freedom struggle. She was aware of her home being used as a refuge and her brother Kashinath being deeply involved in the movement. When she was twelve or thirteen, she used to supply food to the freedom fighters and she even carried messages back and forth regarding their struggle against the Portuguese. Her activities expanded and she began working with the Azad Gomantak Group. When the freedom struggle went underground, the Portuguese came to know of her involvement and forced her exile from Goa. She was shot at and injured, but received no support from the Azad Group. Disillusioned by their indifference, she recouped from her bullet wounds staying with a communist group. During this period she was influenced by their ideals. On her recovery she joined them and continued her struggle for Goa's freedom, together with fellow comrade Dada Purao, whom she married later.

After the liberation of Goa she became an activist working for Bombay's mill workers. At this time she came into close contact with the dabbawalis, the women who supplied meals to the mill workers. She understood what their problems were and how they were struggling with their lives. She worked out a co-operative scheme called Annapurna Mahila Mandal and organised them into a group. During the mill workers' strike in 1981-92, when these women lost their livelihood, she opened common kitchens and widened their supply network enabling them now to reach out to the white-collar office-goers.

Today, Annapurna Mahila Mandal has branches all over Maharashtra. The organisation has grown to be more than a



“dabawalli group”. It now has co-operative banks, schools, insurance schemes and polytechnic institutions, and is the foundation of support for many women and has enabled many women to realise their power.

“Prema Purao” is not simply a biography of a person but a history of Goa's freedom struggle, a profile of Bombay's mill workers, and the story of how a voice of protest rising against injustice in the society matured into a vision to create a new society for women to live with dignity.

— Sharmila Sontakke

Book details:

Prema Purao: Krantikari Annapurna

Mandakini Gogate

August 2006

Published by Lok Vangmaya Griha

Number of pages: 16 + 231

Price: Rs.225

0.8 Homage

Pramila: Death of An Actress



Esther Victoria Abraham, better known as Pramila, the actress, is no more. In the early morning hours of August 6, 2006 she died peacefully in her sleep. When she became very weak, her loving son Hyder Ali, who is also an actor, had thoughtfully laid her on the cot in which her mother and grandmother had breathed their last and Pramila passed away peacefully in her sleep lying there. She was buried in the Jewish cemetery in Chinchpokli the next day. It was a wet, rainy day as if nature itself was mourning her death. Pramila's death signifies the end of an era of films that had women and the nation as their core concerns. It was an era that was trying to deal with the educated, independent woman who was considered 'modern' by placing her in opposition to a Bharat Nari they were trying to create. Pramila was almost always cast as the educated woman who still had to understand the true values of Bharat. She was the woman who played the piano and fluttered her eyes at the hero. Despite the negativity such roles put her in, Pramila, with her wit and charm, always managed to outshine the heroine trying to portray the 'true' Indian woman. She retained this capacity to charm people till the end. She was a great raconteur and some of the stories she has told us are part of SPARROW in the form of a film and a booklet in English and seven Indian languages. People like Pramila may leave this physical world but they live on in the memories of those they have encountered and enriched.

— C S Lakshmi

Phulrenu Guha: An Intrepid Fighter

The news of Dr. Phulrenu Guha's demise at the age of ninety-five brought fond memories of the courageous but not too vocal a personality. Unfortunately the sad news was hardly noticed by the media in the Western zone of the country. Even when the news was flashed, it mentioned only the political positions she had held in the government during the Congress regime and there was hardly any mention of her crucial role as the chairperson of The Committee On The Status of Women in India (CSWI) which was responsible for the first comprehensive report, Towards Equality in 1975. The report is a document which is upheld as the 'founding text' and a path breaking report on the status of Indian women for it shattered quite a few notions about the 'high' position of women in Indian society.

Phulrenudi, one of the few surviving Gandhians, was the Minister in charge of Social Welfare, a part of the Ministry of Education in the Indira Gandhi government. Later she became a member of the Rajya Sabha and was honoured with the Padma Bhushan award. Phulrenudi never sought publicity for herself and her work. On the contrary, she was most content when she went for her grass root work. In fact, at the ripe age of ninety-four in spite of recovering from a fractured knee she used to spend more time with her rural sisters. Phulrenudi was the founding chair person of Centre for Women's Development Studies.

The Indian Women's movement salutes Dr. Phulrenu Guha for her remarkable role in bringing to focus the women's question.

— Neera Desai

