



**SPARROW
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ON
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SPARROW

newsletter

SNL Number 19

May 2010

Editor's Note	01
Art Raffle Event: <i>Songs of Sorrow, Songs of Joy</i> – C S Lakshmi	02-03
Profile: Bhimabai Dangat: Remembering A Soldier of Samyukta Maharashtra Movement – Dr. Rohini Gawankar	04
Review: <i>Burnt, Not Defeated</i> : Documentary on Acid attacks – Malsawmi Jacob	05
Food: Poison on My Platter: BT Brinjal Debate – Dr. Asha Gopinathan	06-07
Homage: Anuradha Ramanan, Prabha Rau, Asha Bhende & Tara Vanarase – C S Lakshmi, Malsawmi Jacob & Sharmila Sontakke	08

[Editor's Note]

This issue of SNL is a symbol of SPARROW's survival against great odds. Before us is the daunting task of making SPARROW stand firm on its feet and literally running an obstacle race to reach the goal. But as always we are all ready to do whatever is needed to continue our pioneering work to document women's lives and history. As we wrote in our last annual report, the SPARROW team has refused to let adverse circumstances affect its work or its attitude towards the future. That is the spirit that this SNL represents.

There is a report inside on the experience of organising a charity Art Raffle event to raise some funds for SPARROW held on 8th March. 1st May, 2010, was the Golden Jubilee of the Samyukta Maharashtra Movement. Dr. Rohini Gawankar has written an informative article on Bhimabai Dangat, who worked for the movement. Genetically modified (GM) foods have been in the news for a while now. But in the last few months what has become a blazing issue among those who are involved with issues that affect traditional methods of farming in the name of new scientific innovations, is the BT Brinjal issue. Dr. Asha Gopinathan a neuroscientist, has written about the implications of BT Brinjal in this issue.

Violence has become a constant factor in the lives of women both in urban cities and in the interiors. A film made on acid attacks on girls is reviewed in this issue. And as always we pay homage to women who have made a difference by living their lives on their own terms. Do write to us and do visit our website www.sparrowonline.org.

SONGS OF SORROW

As it always happens with people who acquire a place to live in Mumbai, SPARROW also became the proud owner of a permanent space to house its archives (which was reported in an earlier SNL issue) but was literally broke otherwise. All of a sudden all avenues of support became dead-end roads. But with our never-say-die attitude we managed to keep our smiles and think of various ways of raising funds. Looking back, we were convinced that we had done pioneering work to generate and disseminate knowledge about women's life and history in innovative ways. Now that we had a building of our own what lay before us was the daunting task of stabilising SPARROW financially to continue its work of documenting women's life and history.

SPARROW decided to plan a series of efforts to raise a modest corpus of 5 crores. As a first step in this series, we thought we should work towards raising a modest amount that will keep our work going. Anupa Mehta of ArtWorks, conceived the idea of a charity art raffle of artists' books and paintings entitled *Songs of Sorrow, Songs of Joy*. Two poems by Salma and Malathy Maitri were chosen to inspire the artists to do their paintings. Letters of request were sent out to nearly hundred artists. Intimate art works—water colours and artists' books—were donated by nearly 50 women artists for the cause. We got 78 works of art from artists who donated their works for the raffle. Verve and The Dr. Bhau Daji Lad Museum lent their support to this project as Media and Ad and Venue partners.

This 8th March event was a virtual movement of women for women and we thought some powerful women of Mumbai who have

Veils That Change Colours

Today, the world's colours faded,
And it turned, before my eyes,
Into a white veil

As thirst ate into me,
I poured my life's juices
And drew a line
It rose, wave upon roiling wave,
And held me in its hearty embrace

Needing shade to rest beneath,
I chopped and planted my hands,
Growing a thick forest

To gambol and play,
I flung my breasts,
Making for hillocks

I took my eyes out
And dropped them
Into a river's still expanse
They leapt and grew
Into shoals of little fish

I cut my tongue and threw it skywards,
So it could speak to me
A little bird is flying high
With a song on her lips

One day,
The world might vanish
Before your eyes, too

MALATHY MAITRI



Artists with C S Lakshmi and Anupa Mehta



Works of the artists

SONGS OF JOY

become symbols of what women can achieve if they set their minds to it, must be a part of the event. We felt that the presence of these women carrying with them the weight of not only their own achievements but also knowledge of how women live and work, would enhance the quality of the event and add to its importance. Shobhaa De, Gayatri Ruia, and Tasneem Mehta agreed to grace the occasion and pick the raffle tickets.

The event was held in the small garden of the Dr. Bhau Daji Lad Museum which looked like an outdoor museum with its statues. ArtWorks did a wonderful job of displaying the paintings on a specially made board erected on one side of the garden right at the entrance. The colourful tent, a delectable high tea spread and the presence of many, many women made it a special women's day event. And for SPARROW it was a special day of celebration after a long time coming as it did nine months after the demise of Neeraben. Many artists attended the event to demonstrate their support. Among those who attended were: Anjana Mehra, Bharti Kapadia, Brinda Miller, Meera Devidayal, Papri Bose, Reena Wadhwa and Sameera Khan. The raffle tickets were bought by prominent celebrities including Atul Kasbekar, Cyrus Guzder, Jaya Bachchan, Manmohan Shetty, Sunil Doshi, Srila Chatterjee and Pheroza Godrej.

The event brought a lot of attention to SPARROW and its work. Although the funds raised were less than what was anticipated, the event helped us to look forward to new friends, new supporters and hopefully new patrons.

— C S Lakshmi



L to R: C S Lakshmi, Shobha De, Gayatri Ruia and Tasneem Mehta



Home

Though I've travelled far
From my home's smoky yard
To wander across
This stone temple's compound
In an ancient city,
These stone figurines would not
Spring to life in me

Wistful faces
Of the children I've left behind
Turn silently
In my memory

Like the wind rasping constantly
On the sea's surface,
My home, bearing
The weight of my absences,
Abrades my heart

My home's empty spaces
Banish me, indirectly,
From this land;
And I return, resolving
Never to step beyond
The limits decreed,
To the courtyard of my own home

Bhimabai Dangat: Remembering A Soldier of Samyukta Maharashtra Movement



On May 1, Samyukta Maharashtra Golden Jubilee day, tributes were paid to many who were active participants of the movement. Among those who were paid tribute, there was also the name of Bhimabai Dangat. Bhimabai did not live to see Samyukta Maharashtra become a possibility. But she was one of the relentless workers of the movement.

The position she occupied

in the Samyukta Maharashtra Movement is a unique one.

Bhimabai was born around 1881. Her father was a rich farmer from the village Valhe of Pune District in Maharashtra. Besides his daughter Bhima, he also had a son. Bhima got married at the age of eight as per the customs of her times. Her husband, Gangaram Mahadba Dangat, was a millionaire and the only son of his parents. The Dangat family belonged to Pune city. Gangaram was known as Gangaram Sheth because of his social status. Gangaram did not fail to observe that his wife, who was the co-owner of this huge property, was smart and eager to learn. He took care to teach her to read and write and do simple arithmetic. Bhima was an avid reader of ancient Indian literature and a keen observer of old and contemporary political and social thoughts and practices.

When she was around 19, Bhima lost her husband. She was six months pregnant then. She had no time to shed tears or indulge in her emotions. The child in her womb was yet to be born. And there was the huge, almost unmanageable property in the city and in the outskirts of Pune to be taken care of. A great challenge lay before this young widow who was still in her teens. She earned the respect and love of people with her good nature and kind disposition towards the poor and underprivileged. She became so popular that people persuaded her to contest the Pune Municipal Council election against a Congress candidate. In 1938, she won the election with a thumping majority and became the first woman member of the Pune Municipal Council. Bhimabai was a member of the Municipal Council of Pune from 1938 to 1950. She was the member of the governing council of this body for twelve years. She proved her capacity to work for the people and was able to shape a career for herself in these twelve years. Her career in the Municipal Council brought her to the public sphere and it became the turning point in Bhimabai's life for she became an active and vociferous participant in issues concerning the region and the nation.

Bhimabai whole-heartedly supported the 1942 movement. She gave shelter to some of the important leaders like Krantisinha Nana Patil and Captain Leela Patil of the Patri Sarkar movement, an underground movement to establish a parallel government to the British government, which was supported by many freedom fighters. In 1950 the Municipal Council became the Pune Municipal Corporation. In 1950 Bhimabai contested the Municipal Corporation election and she won it a second time. She was very much against the three-state formula (of the State Reorganising Commission) of the Government. She also opposed the policy of a bi-lingual state. She was the first woman corporator to resign on the issue of a bilingual state and was followed by another woman municipal councillor Vimalabai Bagal, from Kolhapur who also resigned on the same issue.

The first Satyagraha against State Reorganizing Commission was held in Pune and the leaders of the first batch were two women: Kamala Bhagwat and Sathi Indu Kelkar. Bhimabai played a very important role in organising Satyagraha on this issue. On the 14th of April 1956, there was the inaugural function of an open air theatre constructed and owned by Pune Municipal Corporation. Hon. Minister Shri Yashwantrao Chavan was the chief guest. Bhimabai was sitting next to him. Yashwantrao rose to deliver his speech but even before he could utter a word Bhimabai stood up and pulled out a black flag which was hidden in the pallu of her sari and waved it to the audience and shouted at the top of the voice: "Oh, Suryaji Pisal, *chalate vha!*" (Hey, Suryaji Pisal, go away!) Suryaji Pisal was a traitor during Shivaji's times. All hell broke loose after that. There was utter chaos in the meeting. The police asked Bhimabai to leave the stage. She promptly replied, "I am a corporator and am cordially invited to this meeting. So I will not leave the stage." The audience spontaneously supported her, crying out slogans. The final outcome of all this was that the meeting was wound up within ten minutes. The people and the press admired Bhimabai's heroic act of using guerilla tactics and leaders like S M Joshi and Acharya Atre praised her for her spontaneous action.

Bhimabai knew charity began at home. She used her own house to organise women satyagrahis. Fifteen days after the Chavan episode, she organised a women's batch under the leadership of her own daughter-in-law Ansuya Dangat. It is said that their Satyagraha batch was the fourteenth batch from Pune city and was the first women's batch from among women's batches from all over Maharashtra. All these women were sentenced to jail for a week. She organised the third batch under the leadership of her grand-daughter-in-law Kusum Dangat followed by a batch led by

“THE CITIZENS OF PUNE loved and respected her and affectionately called her ‘Maisaheb’.”

her granddaughter Kusum Vichare. Before giving the call to others to join the movement she encouraged women from her own family to come out and join the movement. This inspired other women in the Maratha community to come forward to participate in the Satyagraha.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was to address a public meeting at Pune Race Course in August 1956. Bhimabai led a big morcha with black flags from the Statue of Lokmanya Tilak at Pune Mandai (the biggest market of vegetables in Pune city) to Race Course. It was a long walk in the hot sun followed by a downpour and it took nearly four hours to reach the venue of the meeting. This morcha was a good example of Bhimabai's organising skill, her powerful oratory and her enthusiasm and physical stamina even in her late seventies.

In Maharashtra Bhimabai's name is synonymous with gallantry. Extraordinary courage shown by anyone is called Bhimabai *parakram*. It does need *parakram* of the Bhimabai kind to protest against a freedom fighter considered the strong man of Maharashtra, and the then Home Minister of Maharashtra, Yashwantrao Chavan.

Bhimabai, though a millionaire, always liked to call herself a grass root worker. She helped the poor by paying special attention to their problems of housing, sanitation, education and other everyday problems. She donated generously for the education of girls. One of her nine big houses known as wada in Pune city, which was located in Ganesh Peth was donated to the Municipal Corporation to open a girls' school named Siddhivinayak Girls' school. Bhimabai was considered a very affectionate person but she was also a strict disciplinarian. The citizens of Pune loved and respected her and affectionately called her "Maisaheb".

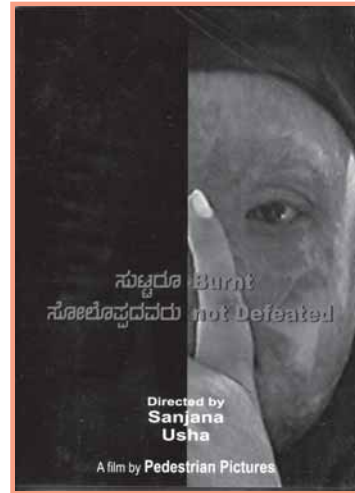
Active almost till the end of her life Bhimabai died of blood cancer on 11th February 1960 before she could see the dawn of Samyukta Maharashtra. But the women of Maharashtra have not forgotten her heroic work for the cause of Samyukta Maharashtra and on 1st May 2010, the Golden Jubilee year of Samyukta Maharashtra, she was paid the tribute that was due to her.

— Rohini Gawankar

Note

Patri Sarkar Movement: Many Maharashtrian freedom fighters like Achyut Patwardhan were part of this movement. In fact, Achyut Patwardhan ably directed the movement of a parallel government mainly in the Satara district. He was called thereafter by many as 'Sataryacha Sinha' (The Lion of Satara). The parallel government was established by terrorist methods. It was called Patri Sarkar. 'Patri' was the name given to the terrible and torturous punishments administered to Government servants and people who dared to obstruct the parallel government. These punishments disabled people for life. The leader of the movement inspired by ideas of Socialism, who along with a group of people looted Government offices, treasuries and trains, was Nana Patil who was called Krantisinha (the Lion of Revolution). The parallel government penetrated into the villages where the Government machinery broke down completely.

Burnt Not defeated



The lot of women in our country has been a hard one despite beautiful images of goddesses in most homes. From foeticide and infanticide, dowry harassment, domestic violence and sexual assaults, the female gender has received terribly harsh treatment. And more lately, the oppressors have found another horren down method of cruelty—acid attacks.

Burnt, Not Defeated is a film on acid attacks on women across the state of Karnataka. It is a campaign film produced along with CSAAW (Campaign and Struggle for Acid Attacks on Women). Identifying this form of cruelty as gender violence, the film takes a close look at the pain and permanent damage that these attacks cause. It also highlights the struggles of the victims while seeking justice.

Acid attacks on women have increased in the last five years. During the last three years before this film was made, there were 17 reported cases, while many go unreported, especially those that take place in the slums. The victims of acid attacks are from different backgrounds. Some are housewives, others working women such as teachers and computer persons. One is a first grade medical officer.

The film points out the failure of the police, the medical and legal departments, the media, the state government and society as a whole in helping victims or checking the violence.

When NurJahan was attacked in Bangalore, wide spread protests were carried out. The attacker was arrested because of the protests. And when CSAAW investigated the case of Tara, another victim, the file could not be located at first. It was found after a long search, buried under a pile. The officer on duty indicated that the case was treated lightly by the police.

Though the attacks are frequent, medical staff is not trained to deal with the emergencies. In the case of Hasina, the hospital where she was taken demanded one lakh rupees and refused to treat her because her family could not give the sum.

As Dr. Sudha points out in the film, a person's identity is strongly linked to her body, thus an attack on the body is an attack on the identity. These victims' damaged faces and bodies need a reconstruction to restore their identities. But the operations are extremely expensive. Plastic surgery in the country is geared towards movie stars and rich people. There is poor provision for these hapless victims.

Dr. Vijaya blames the media for growing cruelty against women. They show excessive violence against women, which some of the

audience emulate, according to her.

In spite of the large number of attacks, convictions have been few. Timely conviction is required to contain the crime. The whole society must fight to eradicate this heinous cruelty. The survivors must also be a part of the struggle. This is the message of the film. The victims portrayed in the film, despite their misfortune and suffering, have not given up on life. Hasina wants to get back her eyesight and work again. Tara wishes to go back to her teaching job. The brave souls have been burnt, but they are not defeated. Far from it.

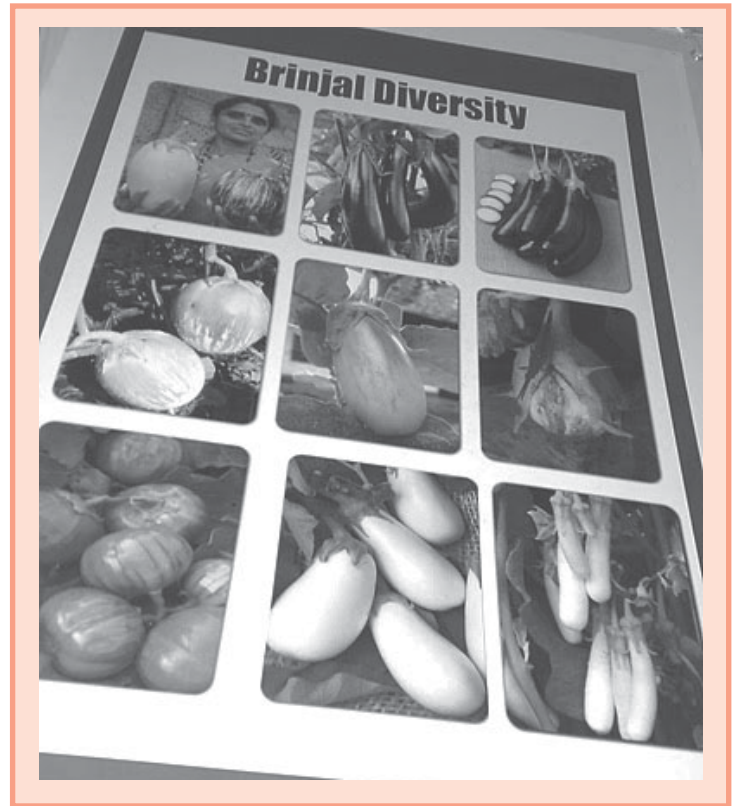
— Malsawmi Jacob

Food

Poison on My Platter: The Bt Brinjal Debate

While one had been hearing about GM foods for some time, I did not pay much attention to the pros and cons till the campaign against bt brinjal gathered momentum. For those who have not been following the debates, in a nutshell: the Indian arm of the American corporation Monsanto, called Mahyco, developed a transgenic brinjal by inserting a gene from a soil bacterium called *Bacillus Thurengiensis* (bt) into the DNA of brinjal. This results in bt brinjal which is supposed to have the ability to resist attacks by pests due to the production of bt toxin. Mahyco submitted the results of this experiment to the Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC) in January 2009 with the hope of getting approval to engage in large scale cultivation of bt brinjal. However, activists around the country filed a RTI and got the results that Mahyco had submitted. On independent verification it was seen that this was flawed and that Mahyco had left out statistically significant variations between bt brinjal and the control groups. Activists also raised the issues of health problems, problems to our traditional brinjal varieties and destruction of soil and enforced dependence of farmers on Mahyco for seeds which could result due to the introduction of bt brinjal. Additionally this would pave the way for GM foods in India much of which would not be labelled thus not giving the consumer a choice to pick the sort of foods s/he wants to eat. In this context it must be understood that Europe has banned GM foods. Union minister for Environment Jairam Ramesh agreed to hold consultations in various cities across India with activists, farmers, scientists, corporates and the public to come to a decision about bt brinjal.

My involvement with the campaign started in Trivandrum where I am currently based. Groups like Thanal (an environment group) and Sakhi (a women's group) put together an exhibition and seminar



Brinjal has meant several things to many of us. Mouth watering vaangi bath, baingan ka bharta, baingan ka bhajia, kaththirikkai ennai vadhakkal, kaththirikkai sambar, kaththirikkai thogayal are regular items put on our plates at home. Everyone has a story about how brinjal is cooked in their house. Until the GM foods became the topic of debate one never realised that it could affect a simple vegetable like brinjal which some call aubergine to make it sound poetic and some others who are more direct with language, call eggplant. Dr. Asha Gopinathan, a Neuroscientist in SCTIMST (Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute for Medical Sciences & Technology), Trivandrum, Kerala, writes here about how she got involved in the campaign against bt brinjal. The photographs have also been taken by Asha.

— C S Lakshmi

in November 2009 to make women and girls aware of the issues. There were several speakers including ayurveda doctors and scientists. I was most impressed by the innumerable varieties of brinjal that I saw there and realised how little I knew about this humble vegetable. Many of these varieties are now no longer grown or seen in Kerala. Most of the vegetables had been brought from the neighbouring state of Karnataka. I then proceeded to organise a meeting with our local residents' association so that people in my neighbourhood would become aware. We screened Mahesh Bhatt's *Poison on My Platter* and followed it up with a discussion. One of the members of Thanal taught us how to grow

a kitchen garden in minimum available space in our households. Then at the end of December there was a one-week exhibition cum seminar in Mararikulam panchayat organised by the grama panchayat itself. They held debates and discussions on the bt brinjal issue with local farmers and scientists like Prof. Pushp Bhargava, an opponent of bt brinjal. I found the exhibition very interesting as this was the first agri-expo I was attending in a rural part of Kerala. I was mingling with people who knew farming. That was very different from my urban neighbours in Trivandrum. Finally I had gone to Delhi at the end of January and fasted a day in solidarity with all those opposed to the bt brinjal project on January 30th, the Martyrdom day of Gandhiji. Later in the afternoon I joined a group of youngsters at Jantar Mantar. They came from a range of groups including Green Peace and NFIW (National Federation of Indian Women).

A few days later Minister Jairam Ramesh announced that he was staying the cultivation of bt brinjal in India till further tests and



ham sab ki yahin pukaar - bt baingan se karo enkaar off to Rajghat (New Delhi) with the signed banner

adequate proof of its safety was got by the government. But there are many in the scientific community who are opposed to this and feel that decisions like this should only be made by scientists. This has also initiated a move by the Department of Bio-technology to pass a draconian bill (Biotechnology Regulatory Authority of India 2009) which can arrest / penalise anyone who opposes any such move in future.

What are the vested interests involved in all of this? Monsanto was producing and selling DDT and PCB (Polychlorinated biphenyls) till America banned them in 1970. After that the company turned its attention to chemical fertilizers and developing genetically modified cattle feed and seeds. In fact in the development of these

and their sale Monsanto established an aggressive style. Besides, in silencing those who oppose them too the company became a model to emulate in the corporate world. For example, Dr. Marc Lappe and Britt Bailey wrote the book, *Against the Grain, Biotechnology and the Corporate Takeover of Your Food*. This book was to be published by Vital Health. An advocate of Monsanto threatened them over the phone and they withdrew the agreement. In 1998 Common Courage published the book.

In the same year the *Ecologist* magazine which addressed a wide range of environmental subjects and promoted an ecological system decided to bring out a special number titled Monsanto Files which was an assessment of Monsanto's activities. Under threat from the latter, the printer whom the *Ecologist* had known for 29 years destroyed 14,000 copies of the printed matter. The printers remained silent and Monsanto denied any intervention. The magazine too got a new printer for the Monsanto Files.



ham sab ki yahin pukaar - bt baingan se karo enkaar

So have we really won a victory in India? I do not think so—not till we are fully aware of the corporatisation of our lives and the hidden and subtle ways in which this is happening all around us. It is important that ordinary citizens understand the vocabulary of science so that they can participate in scientific policies and decisions that affect our lives. We must not let scientists become the new pundits. Scientific decisions are political decisions and as citizens of the world's largest democracy we should have the right to express our viewpoint on these.

— Asha Gopinathan

Prabha Rau: A Veteran Politician



Prabha Rau, governor of Rajasthan, passed away on 26th April at age 74, of cardiac arrest. A veteran politician, she was born in a family of freedom fighters and social reformers at Khandwa, Maharashtra. Described as a 'soft spoken and quiet person', she was an athlete in her student days and had represented the state in several sporting events. She also held a PG Diploma in Indian classical music.

She was a post graduate in Political Science and started her political career as a member of the Maharashtra Legislative Assembly in 1972. She entered the 13th Lok Sabha as representative of Wardha parliamentary seat in 1999. She spent a total of nearly 22 years as a member of the Assembly.

Prabha Rau also had the distinction of holding several portfolios in the state ministry like Planning, Industry, Education, Sports And Youth Affairs, Revenue and Cultural Affairs. She was also the chairperson of Maharashtra State Commission for Women and General Secretary of AICC. She became governor of Himachal Pradesh in July 2008, and governor of Rajasthan in January 2010.

In her death, the country has lost an accomplished leader.

— Malsawmi Jacob

Anuradha Ramanan: The Woman Who Dared



The news that Anuradha Ramanan, the popular Tamil writer, had passed away on Sunday, 16th May, at the Malar Hospital, Chennai, following a cardiac arrest, came as a shock to many. Anuradha was a frequent visitor to hospitals as she had many ailments but she always came back to tell the story. SPARROW had interviewed her for its Literature Leap project and found her a fascinating person. She had come up the hard way and had struggled as a single mother of two daughters. She began as an illustrator and became a writer. As a writer she became very popular and was much adored by her readers.

Anuradha was the granddaughter of R. Balasubramanyam, an yesteryear actor. In a career spanning thirty years she wrote more than 800 novels and 1230 short stories. Some of her stories like *Sirai* (Prison) for which she had won a prize in *Ananda Vikatan*, *Koottuppuzukkai* (Worms in a Cuckoo) and *Oru veedu, Iru vaasal* (A House, Two Entrances) and *Malarin Payanam* (Journey of a Flower) were made into Tamil, Kannada and Telugu movies. Many of her stories were popular Tamil serials. Her agony aunt column called *Anubadan Andharangam* in *Dinamalar*, gave solace to many although she did not claim to be a psychologist or psychiatrist.

Her accusing Jayendra Saraswathi, the head of Kanchi Mutt, in 2004, of sexual misdemeanour earned her praise and brickbats. Many women saw her as their spokesperson but many also viewed her as a traitor. Unaffected by any of this Anuradha continued to write stories and articles which made people laugh and think and feel she was one of them.

We will miss your humour and your never ending narrations of personal travails spiced with self-deprecating comments and jokes, Anu.

— C S Lakshmi

Do write to us if you come to know about a life, a book, a visual, a film or a song which you think must be documented in SPARROW. For reviews please send 2 copies of the book.

Tara Vanarase: Going Beyond Boundaries



Tara Vanarase born in 1930, passed away in May at the age of 80. As a young girl she was brought up in Pune and later studied medicine in Grant Medical College, Mumbai. Tara was an award winning writer who practised as a gynaecologist and like many other doctor-writers in literature, she also took to writing. She married Dr. Benedict Richards and in 1976, settled down in England permanently.

Her first book *Kaksha* (Orbit) published in 1955 was a play, which used the stream of consciousness method to tell the story of the protagonist with differently structured monologues. She wrote many stories which were published in *Satyakatha* and later in collections called *Pashchimkada*, *Keval Kanchan* and *Nurses' Quarters*. Tara Vanarase was a keen observer of life which was reflected in her stories in her characteristic restrained prose. She also penned two novels: *Sur* which is based on the feelings of twin children and *Shyamini*, which tells story of *Ramayana* with Surpanaka as the central character. Her only poetry collection *Bara Varyanvar Ghar* (A House Filled with Breeze) won her the Maharashtra State Award. She also wrote an interesting travelogue *Tila Tila Dar Ughad* (Open Sesame). Despite being handicapped with Parkinson's in the last years of her life, she began work on her last book *Gupta Varadan* (The Secret Gift), a collection of translated stories tracing the history of modern fiction in Europe. Tara Vanarase's death marks the end of an era of writers who brought many different experiences to fiction and changed the course of Marathi literature.

— Sharmila Sontakke

Asha Bhende: In Her Own world



Asha Bhende, Marathi actress and wife of Marathi actor Atmaram Bhende died on 28th May 2010. She was born in 1928 as Lily Ezekiel, a Jew. She married a Hindu in the early fifties and Lily Ezekiel became Asha Bhende, a prize-winning actress. Even as a child, she was interested in the performing arts. Trained in Indian classical music and dance, she later concentrated on acting in the theatre, radio and television.

She was a triple M A (one from the University of California) and she also did her PhD after twenty years of marriage and two children. It is difficult to believe that an actress could be actively on stage and still work as Professor and Head of the Department, Population Policies and Development Programmes at the International Institute of Population Sciences, Mumbai, for nearly 25 years. Despite a demanding career in academics, she continued to retain her interest in acting for several years and came to be recognised as a multi-faceted actress, equally at ease in highly dramatic as well as farcical roles. She received the best actress award for her role in the play *Phaas* (Execution) performed during the drama festival organised by the Government of Maharashtra in 1964-65.

After her retirement, she got involved in different projects and assignments as consultant, guide, and leader. She continued to be involved in theatre and even modelled for advertisements in between. On her eightieth birthday, she released the book she had written on her life, entitled *Majhya Jagaat Me* (Me in my Own World).

In her death we have lost a great artiste and an academician but we are fortunate that we have inherited both her world of academics and art.

— Sharmila Sontakke