

To begin a conversation on the legacy of leaders of the women movement in India

The legacy of people active in the woman's movement in India will be discussed through conversations to be documented through 2019 to record contribution of individuals towards social development processes that evolved dignity, peace or equality in India.

The 80th birthday of women movement leaders in Delhi was celebrated this year and the issue of wither legacy of those who contributed towards the strengthening the women's movement in India cropped up. In their twilight phase they are going about strongly working, even as their contribution already has huge value. Some have begun to use a support system and others win their independence sans support defying age. Some of the pioneers are now immortalised in our mind as they Rest In Peace. These mentors and innovators will live on through those who have learnt from their work. Women movement leader's legacy needs to be nurtured as much as the legacy of others who carry forward the value created by the predecessors. However, names of just a very few women leaders is documented at present. Contribution of women who shaped our thinking by vocalising the agendas around equal rights, capabilities/skills, body politics and inheritance to challenge a dominance centric governance framework teaches us that collaborations have supported action.

Women movement leaders have nurtured their sovereignty and have provided words to vocalise the oppressions and violations. The issues each person works on is guided by circumstances, resource base, existing political dynamics, class, caste and geographies. Situationally, being migrant, single or being in or out of relationship with people who control more resources and power than them gave rise to different experiential learning. The south Asian cultural context of promoting ways caring and sharing as a preferred mode of functioning is perhaps a legacy that leaders of women movement have aspired. There were many more aspirations as the women's movement is not a monolith. Plurality will exist with a thread of values through multiple agendas. Each one of us have learnt from the motivation of those gone by and those who will leave us in the next decade.

The process of change happens due to a person's work investment with others who support them. If this community want the develop the work such that some portions of should live on, Sathi All For Partnerships would request conversations with such leaders and their supporters (called fellowship in this note) to develop legacies that have had a collective impact.

Example of the legacies that have been discussed are with following women leaders/their fellowship:

- Rajni's Tilaks contribution is her legacy of setting up different networks. These networks now require to be supported to broad base a work that Rajni committed herself to. She was instrumental in setting up the *Rashtriya Dalit Mahila Andolan*, and was part of many other networks including Buddhist, women. theatre, writers and labor networks. Rajni passed away on March 30th in 2018 and her fellowship is getting together to ascertain which aspects of her work can be strengthened towards what end. SAFP will support this process for two years.

Thankfully some women leaders are still alive to share what they may want as their legacy. Some like Mohini Giri will advise and guide the process. She forwards support of Guild of service to work on legacy of widows. SAFP ill work with Guild of service to forward the legacy of Mohini Giri.

- Dr. Jyotsna Chatterjee developed Joint Women's Programme and was able to mentor a lot of people including policy planners to impact gender equality issues in the country. She is now developing her thought towards consolidating her achievements to specify what remains to be done. She is considering the request made by SAFP that legacy of her work can be carried on by her organisation or a person she trusts.
- Dr. Vinay Bhardwaj has assisted many women with legal guidance to seek justice of their property settlement with their own families besides counselling young and old to win struggles in personal resource justice issues with their close relationships. Her work on women and property

rights needs to be documented as a simple to do list for any person to activate their own resource systems to be responsible in developing their own financial base. Her legacy development needs to be supported with her family and the ones who can carry forward her work with her at present and also after her.

- Madam Razia Ismail Abbassi has got different organisations in India to work together on child rights. She has contributed to developing the “world women view point” that ascertain how the children need to be nurtured along with development of self to sustain peace and development that provides harmony to the people at large. Her fellowship is vast spread and she is willing to contribute towards dialogues on Indian women’s legacy. The hope is that different leaders and their fellowship design succession planning of work cocreated by many.

The above examples show that each person needs to develop their own process of planning for their social development and contribute to strengthen the work they have initiated during their own life time such that the process spiral continues to be alive and documented for refinement and review from a set of people who can carry forward legacies as agreed.

While all may not care about what will happen to their work once they go away, some do care as work is cocreated with the labor of many including co-workers, mentors and family. It is prudent to discuss work of value such that nurturing, creativity and labour of love can be supported while pioneers are still here to guide and shape their work, for it to live on.

Towards the above following tasks need to be done

1. Individual reflection on current social development contribution that clarifies what needs to be done to carry forward the achievement towards a specific end.
2. Sharing the above with a fellowship to seek support towards development spiral of the work.
3. Plan work in doable terms of reference for thinkers, writers, implementers and mentors.
4. Ensuring an endowment fund to support the above work

A younger lot of women leaders have developed their own brand of work; They have standalone work and some do work as a continuum of work that existed. SAFP would like to explore if partnerships on one or some legacies is possible in terms of mentoring and nurturing, skill development, space and resource shares to develop a resource pool for women leader’s legacy between these young and others.

Will you like to engage in a conversation to develop women legacy support mission by sharing ideas towards work that you and your others are passionate about? Some of these legacies can be discussed at an event if some university campus can be open to share them with the young. At the event participants can be invited to understand work to be done from seasoned practitioners as well as those who have just begun. This can motivate youth volunteers to get involved to put together the work on the web for crowd funding towards a specific work.

Elders associated with institutions can consider committing to developing legacy endowment fund. The fund can be used to generate grants for people who will work to give meaning to the women leaders legacies for a period of time. An example of this is SAFP’s intent to strengthen fellows who will work on Rajni Tilak’s legacy for the next two years. Towards this Ms Jyotsana Siddharth, Ms Vandana Mahajhan, Tarakeshwari Negi and Rajkumar Bidla have promised a small sum towards the endowment fund. At public events call for support of individual as well as institutional commitments will be made such that work, she began can be strengthened for others to lead. For those who still have time to think and get back to a small group of people on what they want as their legacy, we are here to talk with you.

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