Winter December 1, 2014

Women's Research and Action Group, Report of Activities

Professor Vibhuti Patel

Available at: https://works.bepress.com/professor_vibutipatel/73/
WOMEN’S RESEARCH & ACTION GROUP (WRAG) REPORT OF ACTIVITIES 2010-2014
Women's Research and Action Group (WRAG) is a non-profit organization, and is a registered public trust based in Mumbai.

It is a research and advocacy-group with a gender, law and human rights perspective, working in partnership with movements, networks and community-based organizations.

Its work focuses on protecting and promoting social and legal status of women, especially those from underprivileged and marginalized communities, through community empowerment and the law.
WHO WE ARE
FEMINISTS WITH A PASSION & A VISION
A small team of feminists who engage actively with the women’s movement & human rights movement at the national, regional and international levels, situating women’s concerns within a human rights framework.

Leena K.K. – administrative officer who has been with WRAG since its inception in 1993

Saumya Uma – researcher & trainer on human rights, gender & the law; served WRAG as Assistant Director 2002–2008, Executive Director 2009–10, and as trustee 2011 onwards

Vahida Nainar – international consultant on gender and conflict; co-founder & trustee of WRAG since its inception in 1993

Dr. Vibhuti Patel – renowned feminist economist, head of post-graduate department of Economics, SNDT Women’s University, & trustee of WRAG since 2004.
ABOUT WRAG
WHAT WE HAVE SET OUT TO DO

• to create a gender-just and secular society founded on the principles of equality, justice, and respect for rule of law, human rights, and democratic values; and

• to build a world where every woman, irrespective of her caste, class, religion, race, ethnicity, or any other factor, is able to live life to her fullest potential – free of fear, violence, and want

BY

➢ working at policy level interventions, aimed at creating a culture that is conducive to the promotion of women’s human rights, dignity & secularism; and

➢ Proactively seeking justice and accountability for violations of women’s rights.
## WRAG: A BRIEF TRAJECTORY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apr 1993</td>
<td>WRAG established in the wake of anti-Muslim communal violence in Mumbai in 1992–93</td>
<td>Apr 2005</td>
<td>founding member of Aekal Mahila Adhikar Sangarsh Samiti – a network of groups advocating and campaigning for rights of single women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>completion of pioneering national level research on Muslim law &amp; women’s rights</td>
<td>Aug 2005</td>
<td>Organized first event with Parliamentarians on the International Criminal Court &amp; its Relevance to India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Commencement of Community Outreach Programme</td>
<td>Jan 2007</td>
<td>founding member of Bharatiya Muslim Mahila Andolan (a national network of Muslim women)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov 1999</td>
<td>Founding member of Muslim Women’s Rights Network – a national network campaigning for gender-just reforms in Muslim law</td>
<td>May 2009</td>
<td>WRAG–initiated federation of community-based women’s groups becomes independent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov 2002</td>
<td>housing of the national secretariat of ICC–India: the Indian campaign on International Criminal Court &amp; its adoption as a WRAG project</td>
<td>2009–12</td>
<td>years of transition; WRAG, due to its work, came under attack by a hostile external environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr 2003</td>
<td>commencement of ‘Justice and Accountability Matters’ programme</td>
<td>March 2012</td>
<td>WRAG overcame the crisis to a limited extent; organized a National Consultation on ‘Current Challenges to Democracy, Secularism and Fundamental Rights’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov 2003</td>
<td>founding member of National Network of Autonomous Women’s Groups</td>
<td>Thereafter</td>
<td>funding constraints have brought WRAG’s programmes and activities to a minimum; our small team continues to carry forward the work in our individual capacities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
BROAD THEMES OF WRAG’S PRESENT & FUTURE WORK

- Changing Law & Policy
- Women, Peace and Security
- Women’s Human Development Index
- Violence Against Women
“Informality and Feminisation of Urban Poverty in India” at International Workshop on Pattern of Paid and Unpaid Work in Indian and China, organized by Economic Research Foundation-Delhi, Tsinghua University, Beijing and Yunnan normal University, Kunming (VIBHUTI)

Key Note Address on “Opportunities and Challenges for Women Entrepreneurship in India, International Conference by Surajba College of Education and B.L. Amlani College of Commerce and Economics on 23 Aug 2014 in Mumbai. (VIBHUTI)

“Gender Audit for Engendering Governance, Gender Responsive Budgets and Gender Just Laws for Empowerment of Women in South Asia”, in International Conference on Democracy and Inclusive Good Governance for Gender Equality and Sustainable Development in South Asia, Kathmandu, Khatmandu, Nepal, 14–15 May 2014 (VIBHUTI)

Delivered lecture to students of Masters in Women’s Studies of SNDT Women’s University, on ‘The Construction of Gender Identities in the Legal Discourse’, 8 October 2014 (SAUMYA)


Delivered lectures to masters students of Women’s Studies, in Research Centre for Women, SNDT University, Mumbai, on Women’s Rights in Labour and Criminal law, March 2014 (SAUMYA)
Conducted 3 day training programme on ‘Fact–finding and Documentation on Sexual Assault’, organized by Civil Society Forum on Human Rights (CSFHR), Bhubaneswar, 30 July – 1 August 2014 (SAUMYA)

Key resource person in workshop on ‘Honour Crimes’, organized by National Alliance for Women – Odisha chapter, Bhubaneswar, 26 August 2014 (SAUMYA)

Made presentation on the Muzaffarnagar Violence and Communal Violence Bill, at meeting of Forum for Democracy and Communal Amity, February 2014 (SAUMYA)

Spoke as a panelist on law related to adolescents’ health, at the launch of Rashtriya Kishore Swasthya Karyakram (RKS), by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India, January 2014 (SAUMYA)
Lecture on “Gender Equality and Human Rights” at Refresher Course on “Changing Perspective in Human Rights Education “by Nodal Centre for Human Rights Education, School of Law, Rights and Constitutional Governance, Mumbai, 26 Dec 2013 (VIBHUTI)

Lecture on “Field Research Method in Feminist Research” at ICSSR sponsored Seminar by UGC Centre for Women’s Studies, Bangalore University, 25 Dec 2013 (VIBHUTI)

Presented theme paper on “Sexual Harassment at Workplace” organised by Economics Department of SNDT women’s University and Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Delhi, 7 Dec 2013 (VIBHUTI)

Presentation of paper on “Paid and Unpaid Work of Women” and “Education, Skill and Employability” at International workshop on Feminist Economics in China and India organised by UN Women and Economic Research Foundation at India International Centre, Delhi, 11 Nov 2013 (VIBHUTI)
Lead trainer in training programmes on The New Laws Related to Sexual Assault, organised by Partners for Law in Development, Delhi in August and October 2013; (SAUMYA)

Conducted a one day training for partners of The Hunger Project, on Laws Related to Violence Against Women, Bhubaneswar, October 2013; (SAUMYA)

Addressed about 150 women under-trial prisoners in Byculla jail, Mumbai on aspects of Women’s Human Rights and Gender Justice, 8 March 2013 (SAUMYA)

Delivered lectures on aspects of human rights and the law, including the human rights movement in India, repressive laws, laws related to conflict situations in India, in a month-long human rights training programme for law students, organized by the National Law School of India, and hosted by the National Law University, Cuttack, Orissa, 18–20 May 2012; (SAUMYA)

Participated in a brainstorming session on 'Mainstreaming Human Rights Lawyering', organized by the National Law School of India University, Bengaluru, 4 March 2012; (SAUMYA)

Participated in 'Justice for All: A 10 year Review of the International Criminal Court' organized by the University of New South Wales, Australia, 14–16 February 2012; (SAUMYA)
INFORMATION DISSEMINATION
& CAPACITY-BUILDING 2012

- Prepared reading materials for distance education for School of Gender Development Studies, Indira Gandhi National Open University, New Delhi; (SAUMYA)

- Key resource person for International Expert Workshop on Victim and Witness Protection, organised by the Human Rights and Justice Section of the Office of the United Nations in Burundi (BNUB), held at Bujumbura, Burundi, 22–23 August 2012 (SAUMYA)

- Chief Facilitator of a Workshop on Litigation Strategies for Gender Crimes, Kathmandu, Nepal, June 2012; (VAHIDA)

- Panelist, History of debates and discussion on Muslim Personal Law in a training on Fundamentalisms and Law, organized by Awaaz e Niswaan, July 12, 2012, Mumbai; (VAHIDA)

- Chief Facilitator, Workshop, Litigation Strategies for Sexual Violence, Kampala, Uganda April 2012; (VAHIDA)
Session 1: Progress on Economic, Physical & Legal Security of Minorities

Session 2: Women Human Rights Defenders

Session 3: Gender-based Violations

Session 4: Security Forces and the Need for Accountability
INFORMATION DISSEMINATION & CAPACITY-BUILDING 2010-11

- Key resource person in a capacity-building programme on 'Gender-based Violence & the Law', organized by Partners in Law & Development, in Puri, 15–18 December 2011

- Key resource person in a capacity-building programme on 'Gender-based Violence & the Law', organized by Partners in Law & Development, in Ranchi, 27–29 Sep 2011

- Participated in the conference of Law and Social Sciences Research Network (LASSNET) held in Pune, India, in December 2010

- Key resource person in National Training for Lawyers on Access to Justice through Legal Service Authorities, organized by People's Watch, in Bhubaneswar, 28–30 October 2010

- Key resource person in National Training for Lawyers on Access to Justice through Legal Service Authorities, organized by People's Watch, in Lucknow, 18–20 September 2010

- Participated in a seminar on the United States, Gender, National Security and Counter-Terrorism, organized by the Centre for Human Rights and Global Justice (CHRGJ) at New York University (NYU) School of Law, Bangkok, August 2010;
Breaking the Shackled Silence:
UNHEARD VOICES OF WOMEN FROM KANDHAMAL

Research & Writing by
Saumya Uma

Research Assistance by
NAWO – Odisha

Published by
National Alliance of Women – Odisha

Authors: Saumya Uma, 2014
RESEARCH & PUBLICATION

PURSUING ELUSIVE JUSTICE – MASS CRIMES IN INDIA & THE RELEVANCE OF INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS

EDITED BY VAHIDA NAINAR & SAUMYA UMA, 2013
RESEARCH & PUBLICATION

RIGHTS OF ADOLESCENT GIRLS IN INDIA – A CRITICAL LOOK AT LAWS & POLICIES

AUTHORED BY SAUMYA UMA, 2012
RESEARCH & PUBLICATION
Kandhamal: the law must change its course & addressing domestic violence through the law authored by Saumya Uma, 2010
RESEARCH & PUBLICATION
GIRLS & GIRLHOODS AT THRESHOLD OF YOUTH & GENDER
Edited by Dr. Vibhuti Patel, 2009
RESEARCH & PUBLICATION
Discourse on Women and Empowerment
edited by Dr. Vibhuti Patel, 2009
Women activists hold press conference condemning love jihad ‘myth’, say individuals have right to choose – Two circles.net, 28 Aug 2014

Keep Politics Away from Love – Activists
Free Press Journal, 29 Aug 2014
CAMPAIGN & ADVOCACY

JUSTICE FOR VICTIMS OF KANDHAMAL COMMUNAL VIOLENCE 2008; PARTICIPATION IN KANDHAMAL DAY – THANE, MUMBAI, BHUBANESWAR & KANDHAMAL, AUGUST 2014
CAMPAIGN & ADVOCACY
ADVOCATING FOR A COMMUNAL VIOLENCE BILL
WITH INTEGRATION OF GENDER CONCERNS &
INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS 2004 - 2014
INTROSPECTING WRAG’S WORK

- Our activities and strategies have expanded greatly from local to national to international levels, but the focus has remained squarely on working with marginalized, underprivileged women.

- The strategies used include action research, community-based empowerment, and the use of national and international laws and mechanisms for advocating women’s rights.

- WRAG’s work in community outreach formed the backbone of our understanding of multiple forms of vulnerabilities faced by marginalized women, and the potential for women’s agency in addressing the challenges.

- WRAG commenced its work with a focus on Muslim women’s rights. As the work grew, we have addressed violations faced by women from religious minorities, dalit and adivasi women, and women who are adversely impacted by violations by state and non-state actors.
AN ENDEAVOUR TO REALISING WOMEN’S HUMAN RIGHTS AND RECOGNIZING EQUAL DIGNITY & CITIZENSHIP RIGHTS FOR ALL WOMEN.