TOWARDS REALIZING WOMEN'S HUMAN RIGHTS: Report of Activities 2003-2009

Saumya Uma
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FOREWORD

WRAG has provided a democratic platform to the most marginalized sections of women in terms of counseling, legal awareness and support to women in social distress. WRAG has given equal emphasis to an analytical understanding as well as practical intervention to change women’s lives. Its unique contribution to legitimizing human rights of Muslim women through strategic intervention at the time of communal carnage in Mumbai (1992-93) and Gujarat carnage (2002) has placed WRAG as one of the leading women’s rights groups. A team of highly qualified, sincere, dedicated and articulate Co-Directors has allowed WRAG to spread its base among women in communities, students, researchers and legal professionals.

Trustees of WRAG contribute to strategic thinking and provide direction for long-term policy matters. Clarity of perspective for determining priority areas to create critical mass that contributes to women-friendly transformatory processes is the most important element to match with WRAG’s vision of promoting women’s agency. Instead of providing piecemeal solutions to different problems, WRAG collective tries to examine institutional factors and interplay of class, caste, religion, ethnicity and gender that determine women’s predicament. Five focus areas of WRAG - development, education, networking, law and deprived minorities - are the most relevant and important themes in the contemporary context.

Doorstep education in collaboration with the Department of Distance Education of SNDT Women’s University, Mumbai is a significant initiative of WRAG as many underprivileged women living in communities find it difficult to access university education. This progressive step of WRAG has brought new rays of hope in the lives of poor women who will be empowered with higher education. Summer camps of WRAG give intensive training to adolescent girls from different communities in Mumbai.

In focusing on different programmes and their inter-linkages keeping in view the overall strategy of WRAG, the organization respects the plural meaning of feminist praxis and feminist research. Its strength lies in intellectual vibrancy, rapport between young and not-so-young feminists, highly educated professional women and women deprived of formal education, and an inter-disciplinary team that is keen to establish inter-linkages. WRAG’s library has rare and carefully collected books, documents and journals that can be useful for scholastic and practical work on Islamic jurisprudence and debates on family laws and human rights. Teaching, training, documentation and dissemination, debates and discussions within the group and with the outer world and extension work are major thrust areas of WRAG. It has culminated in a significant contribution to a national campaign for Muslim women’s rights. WRAG has published several books, working papers, booklets in English, Hindi and Urdu. WRAG team members write in highly respected academic and movement journals.

WRAG is linked with various social movements of the subaltern masses, with local and global NGOs and with the legal system. Due to its close connections with Muslim women, many young Muslim women have joined WRAG. As a result of participatory action and multi-centric research, WRAG has been able to attract M.S.W. (Masters in Social Work)
and law students who volunteer their time and energy as interns. WRAG’s meetings, workshops, conferences and publications challenge every day communalism and sexism. Its work with women’s groups in providing institutional support to women survivors of violence, desertion and divorce, has contributed to a debate on personal laws.

My association with WRAG has been a really inspiring experience as I get to interact with highly committed women activists with courage of conviction.

— Dr. Vibhuti Patel
Professor & Head of Post Graduate Department of Economics,
S.N.D.T. Women’s University &
Trustee, WRAG
INTRODUCTION

This Report has been in the making for over three years. The preparation and publication of the Report was delayed, not because we gave it a low priority, but rather because we were extremely conscious of the importance of documenting our work and the value that this Report would bring to our future activities. This Report not only aims at recording the varied activities we have undertaken, but also attempts to analyze, introspect and evaluate the effectiveness of our strategies and approaches. The Report is for us to learn from our best practices, strengths, positive approaches and successful strategies as well as from our inadequacies. By way of publishing this Report, we wish to share this learning process with like-minded individuals and groups working on issues of common concern.

2003-9 has been an extremely crucial phase in the life of our organization. It is a time when WRAG has remained bustling with activities. We expanded and consolidated our capacity-building activities with marginalized sections of women, reaching out to many more bustis than in the past years. When we realized that we wanted to work at a preventive level in a proactive manner, we commenced our work with adolescent girls and male youth living in communities. As we worked with more and more mahila mandals (community-based women’s groups) in Mumbai, our community outreach activities reached new heights through creation of a Federation of mahila mandals, to have a unified voice on issues of concern, culminating in its independent functioning from May 2009. We explored and acquired new skills in capacity-building, and created many training modules and tools to assist us with our work. At the same time, as our expertise increased, we expanded the range of topics on which we disseminated information and built perspectives.

This was the phase when the two major campaigns that function from our organization – the campaign on Muslim family law and ICC-India: the Indian campaign on International Criminal Court – took shape and spread their activities all over the country through strong alliances with strategic partners. The support base for both the campaigns expanded. We commenced and intensified our work on issues of mass crimes and human rights. This was also the phase when we have actively involved ourselves in many other campaigns, notably on the implementation of Srikrishna Commission recommendations, Communal Violence Bill, the implementation of Sachar Committee recommendations, and formation of a National Forum on single women’s rights, culminating in many heightened activities pertaining to each of the campaigns. Our participation in human rights campaigns increased and intensified manifold. We broke new ground through our participation as jury members in the People’s Tribunals on Torture and in the All Women Fact Finding Committee to Chhattisgarh, as these newer experiences enriched our perspectives from within. Our associations with Parliamentarians – with whom we held consultative meetings - and the experience of drafting complaints for the U.N. Human Rights Council - provided fresh impetus to our campaign and advocacy initiatives.

The phase is also indicative of the intellectual growth and increased conceptual understanding within our organization, leading to a sharp increase in activities pertaining to research and publication. Our skills in feminist and law research were enhanced. Action research projects that we involved ourselves in through the invitation of like-minded organizations, such as the Imagine New South Asia (INSA) (initiated by Action Aid) and
Minority Women Negotiating Citizenship (initiated by Yugantar) were, at one level, indicative of the credibility that our work enjoyed. At another level, our participation in such projects provided us new avenues for expanding the horizons of our work. In this phase, we published 19 books in English, Hindi and Urdu, on issues ranging from single women’s rights and Muslim family law to International Criminal Court and human rights.

In the years prior to 2003, we preferred low-profile work at the community level with little visibility, away from the glare of the media. However, with our involvement in campaign and advocacy work from 2002-3 onwards, engaging with the media became a logical and necessary corollary. After years of successful media outreach, we have emerged confident and equipped with skills in this regard that we did not adequately possess in the years prior to 2003.

2003-9 is also a phase when we forged alliances with like-minded individuals and groups in a substantial manner, and consolidated the alliances already built, particularly those engaged in women’s rights, secularism and minority rights, and human rights work in general. Notably, our alliances with Aekal Mahila Adhikar Sangharsh Sangathan (AMASS), Bharatiya Muslim Mahila Andolan (BMMA), Jan Manasik Arogya Abhiyan and Mumbai Initiative for Human Rights Education (MIHRE) resulted in many collaborative activities. We shared resources, ideas, strategies, information, contacts and skills through such mutually-beneficial alliances.

Strides of advancement were made on aspects of institution-building. This included formulation of staff, accounting and other policies, determination of a salary structure, commencement of performance appraisals, construction and launching of our organization’s website, a determination of work plan for the next three years, strategies for fund-raising and a new organizational structure.

In this time period, we have had the maximum number of personnel, with diversities in class, religion, ethnicity, gender, professional qualifications and technical skills. The diverse professional backgrounds, in particular, led to a healthy and constant exchange of ideas within the team and a vigorous questioning and analysis of the positions we took on various issues. The ‘churning’ process was a beneficial one that helped hone our perspectives on issues that we engage with. The manner in which such seemingly diverse persons came together and gelled as a team with common objectives, passions and ideals, is noteworthy. While we have faced testing times and challenges to our work from internal and external sources, it was the cohesive nature of the team that largely helped mitigate and face such challenges and obstacles.

In retrospect, 2003-9 is a phase when we could say that WRAG truly came of age. I am fortunate to have associated with WRAG in this phase. It gives me immense pleasure, satisfaction and pride in preparing and presenting this Report of our activities.

— Saumya Uma
Executive Director
Women’s Research & Action Group (WRAG)
1. OVERVIEW

Women’s Research and Action Group (WRAG) is a non-profit organization, whose work focuses on protecting and promoting social and legal status of women and girls, especially those from underprivileged and marginalized communities, through community empowerment and the law. We are a registered public trust based in Mumbai, but with activities that extend beyond the state and national boundaries. We consist of a group of young feminists who engage actively with the women’s movement in India, constantly re-examining and questioning established norms and ideologies within. We also focus our activities towards situating women’s concerns and interests within a human rights framework.

A. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

WRAG was founded in April 1993 in the wake of the communal violence that shook Mumbai in 1992-1993. After the violence, Muslim women, who have historically been subordinated by the politics of gender and family law, became further marginalized by identity politics both within and outside the community. Our organization stemmed from the need to create space to raise issues of gender and identity that concern women from marginalized sections of society. While we continue to address issues confronting Muslim women, we simultaneously work for the promotion of social and legal status of women and girls from all underprivileged and marginalized communities.

B. VISION, MISSION & STRATEGIES

Vision: Our vision is 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 other factors, is able to live life to her fullest potential, free of fear, violence and want.

Mission: We seek to work with individual women in the community, particularly those from marginalized sections of society, in order to bring about improvement in the socio-economic and legal status within the family and society. In addition, we work at policy-level interventions aimed at creating a climate that is conducive for promotion of women’s human rights, dignity, and secularism. We remain proactive at efforts for justice and accountability concerning violations of women’s rights.

Strategies: Our strategies and activities include capacity-building, campaign and advocacy, research and publication, and alliance-building.
PAST PROJECTS

Women & Law in the Muslim Community (1994-1998): We initiated a pioneering research in the country on Muslim women’s social, legal and economic status and their views on family law, involving interviews of more than 15,000 women from 45 districts in 15 states in India in collaboration with other organizations and individuals. We published the findings of the action research in 3 volumes. The findings of this research led to the creation of Community Outreach Program – the first programme of our organization.

In the past six years, our work has been primarily carried out through two programmes: the Community Outreach Programme and the ‘Justice and Accountability Matters’ Programme.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH PROGRAMME (COP)

This programme was started in 1999 as an off-shoot of the findings of a national level research on Women & Law in the Muslim Community, details of which are stated above. The findings of this research indicated the willingness of Muslim women to see reforms in Muslim family law (MFL). However, the pre-requisites for initiating such reforms were absent. This included a gender perspective among women’s groups, solidarity between the groups, awareness and knowledge on MFL, an understanding of ways in which negative interpretations of the Quran impacted women’s lives, impetus to form a network/pressure group to campaign on the issue and a belief that it was possible to reform MFL without being seen as “unIslamic”. With the objective of filling these lacunae, we started initiating a dialogue with the members of mahila mandals (community-based women’s groups). This resulted in the commencement of the Community Outreach Programme.

The programme aims at empowerment of women within their families and communities through community work and policy-level interventions. Through the programme, we have reached out to

- 26 mahila mandals in Mumbai with a membership of over 450 women;
- 6 groups of single and destitute women with a membership of above 200 women (Saheli project);
- 6 groups of adolescent girls with an approximate membership of 70 girls;
- a federation of mahila mandals, called Hukook-e-Niswaan Mahila Sanghatana (hereinafter referred to as Hukook-e-Niswaan or Federation) with a membership of over 25 mahila mandals, representing atleast 5000 women living in communities; and
- a group of community-based men and youth with a membership of over 40 persons (Saathi project).

These form the direct beneficiaries of the programme. Please see page 21, Map 1.1 for outreach activities of Hukook-e-Niswaan and Saheli in the state of Maharashtra, and page 22, Map 1.2 of this Report for outreach activities of adolescent girls’ groups and Saathi in Mumbai.
The nation has witnessed a complete polarization of people on religious lines, the targeting of minority and marginalized communities and a subjugation of women’s human rights to issues of survival and existence as communities. The gap between the powerful and the powerless is ever increasing, resulting in a climate of impunity for grave human rights violations. Further, the poor, illiterate, disadvantaged and marginalized groups of people, particularly women, are ignorant of their basic legal rights, thereby weakening their access to justice. In processes of demanding justice and accountability, women’s voices are rarely heard or considered. We initiated the ‘Justice and Accountability Matters’ (JAM) program in 2003 to respond to the challenges that have emerged through these developments. Please see page 23, Map 1.3 of this Report for activities of this programme.

The beneficiaries of the programme include:

- Women and girls from underprivileged and marginalized communities;
- Members of civil society who are marginalized, unrepresented / under-represented including religious minority groups and groups that are victims of human rights violations;
- Human rights and women’s rights activists, members of non-profit and community-based organizations working on human rights issues, and social activists;
- Police personnel;
- Members of the Bar and the Bench (lawyers & judges);
- Students of various disciplines – including law, human rights, political science, international relations and social work;
- Academia – faculty members of educational institutions and law researchers;
- Media persons from the print and electronic media;
- Parliamentarians – from Lok Sabha (lower house) and Rajya Sabha (upper house); and
- Other policy-makers including government officials, bureaucrats and diplomats.

D. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE & DECISION-MAKING

The structure of our organization is more lateral and less hierarchical, in an attempt to promote values of collective decision-making, democracy and transparency in functioning and mutual accountability. The trustees of WRAG have taken a conscious decision to encourage leadership among young women to lead the team of staff in the organization. All the trustees, directors and staff of the organization are women.

We are a women’s organization registered as a Trust in Mumbai under The Bombay Public Trust Act. The Trust is managed by a minimum of three trustees. At present, we have five trustees. The structure of our organization is two-tier in nature, consisting of the staff members and trustees. WRAG is primarily managed by a Board of Trustees. The trustees appoint a Managing Trustee who manages the affairs of the Trust in compliance with the statutory requirements under the law of the land. Trustees are also the advisors
Chart 1.4 Organizational Structure of Women's Research & Action Group, 2003-2008
of the organization. They meet at least twice a year to keep abreast of the activities, advise the organization on programmes and administrative matters, take major decisions on financial matters and give overall guidance to the organization.

The Trustees collectively appoint one / two Directors to head the team of staff, oversee and coordinate the activities of WRAG and to guide the organization towards fulfilling the objectives of the trust. The Directors, in turn, appoint other staff members. The Directors head the administrative functions of our organization.

Under the guidance of the Directors and Programme Coordinators and based on an annual work plan of each programme, each staff member draws up her own Key Result Areas (KRAs), writes monthly reports and time diaries intended to encourage self-accountability rather than accountability to a higher authority. Each staff member is individually responsible for planning and executing aspects of the programme, including budgeting, financial allocation, preparation of statements of accounts and narrative reports. The role of the Programme Coordinator is to facilitate, guide and coordinate the programme activities. Weekly staff meetings facilitate an exchange of reports and are also intended as a mechanism for mutual accountability. Decision-making is decentralised to a large extent. The programme staff makes programmatic decisions collectively. The Directors make administrative decisions jointly. The trustees make other major administrative and programme-related decisions that have a long-term impact on the organization.

There is no membership to WRAG. However, other than our organization’s personnel, there are a number of individuals and organizations who participate in our activities. The leaders and members of mahila mandals participate actively in most activities of the Community Outreach Programme. Several men and youth from the communities that we work in also participate in WRAG’s activities on a voluntary basis. WRAG also has a Board of Advisors for each of its two campaigns - the ICC-India campaign and the campaign for Muslim Family Law reform. The Boards consist of eminent persons working on the issues on an honorary basis. In addition, both the campaigns are coordinated with the active participation of several volunteers who contribute to the activities out of a personal sense of commitment to the issue. Further, students from educational institutions in Mumbai and elsewhere work with us either as interns or as volunteers, in order to gain work experience. Please see chart on Organizational Structure of WRAG on page 12 of this Report.

### E. SOME MILESTONES

Since inception, we have had milestones of achievements in our work, some of which are captured in the chart on milestones. Please see Chart 1.5 on the next page of this Report for further details.
Chart 1.5: Major Milestones of WRAG

1998 - Completion of pioneer national level research on Muslim law & women's rights; publication of findings

1999 - Commencement of Community Outreach Programme

November 1999 - Founding member of Muslim Women's Rights Network - a national network campaigning for gender just law reforms for Muslim women

November 2002 - Housing of the national secretariat of ICC-India: the Indian campaign on International Criminal Court in WRAG and its adoption as a project of WRAG

April 2003 - Commencement of 'Justice & Accountability Matters' Programme

May 2003 - Founding member of Mumbai Initiative for Human Rights Education (MIHRE)

November 2003 - Founding member of National Network of Autonomous Women's Groups (NNAWG)

December 2004 - Engagement with the Communal Violence Bill begins

December 2006 - Held the 1st National Consultation to formulate an Ideal Muslim Family Law

January 2007 - Founding member of Bharatiya Muslim Mahila Andolan (BMMA)

April 2007 - Launch of WRAG's website

April 2009 - WRAG-initiated Federation of mahila mandals (Hukook-e-Niswaan) becomes independent

January 2008 - Initiated, drafted and submitted new draft of Communal Crimes Bill (along with other groups) to the government upon its request

November 2007 - Drafted and sent a complaint to the United Nations Human Rights Council on the non-implementation of Srikrishna Commission recommendations

December 2004 - Engagement with the issue of victims / witness protection begins

January 2008 - Engagement with the Communal Violence Bill begins

December 2005 - Organized 1st National Consultation on ICC & India, with the participation of Judge Kirsch, President of International Criminal Court

December 2005 - Drafted and sent a complaint to the United Nations Human Rights Council on the non-implementation of Srikrishna Commission recommendations

January 2007 - Initiated, drafted and submitted new draft of Communal Crimes Bill (along with other groups) to the government upon its request

April 2007 - Launch of WRAG's website

March 2005 - First use of standard nikahnama drafted by WRAG and other organizations, in communities that WRAG works with.

April 2005 - Founding member of Aekal Mahila Adhikar Sangharsh Sanghatan (AMASS) - a network of organizations working on single and destitute women's issues

August 2005 - WRAG has its first event with over 45 MPs of Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha, on the issue of International Criminal Court & its relevance to India

December 2005 - Founding member of National Network of Autonomous Women's Groups (NNAWG)

December 2006 - Held the 1st National Consultation to formulate an Ideal Muslim Family Law

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We believe in working in collaboration with other community-based organizations, women’s organizations and human rights organizations in various ways since this would facilitate us to draw from the wide experience of these organizations and integrate our perspective into the women’s and human rights movements, in addition to a sharing of resources, training tools, ideas, information and strategies. As such, WRAG is an active member of several networks, campaigns and initiatives, at the local, national and international levels. These include:

- **Aekal Mahila Adhikar Sangharsh Sanghatan, (AMASS)** – campaign on rights of single and destitute women at state level – founding member
- **Bharatiya Muslim Mahila Andolan** - founding member
- **Campaign on Communal Violence Bill** - member
- **Campaign for Implementation of Srikrishna Commission Report** - member
- **Coalition for International Criminal Court** - member
- **Ekal Nari Shakti Sanghatan** - campaign on rights of single and destitute women at national level – founding member
- **Jan Manasik Arogya Abhiyan** - campaign for right to mental health - member
- **Jan Swasth Abhiyan** - right to health campaign - member
- **Maharashtra Mahila Maha Panchayat** - Maharashtra Women’s Collective - member
- **Mumbai Initiative for Human Rights Education (MIHRE)** - founding member
- **Musawah** - International campaign on Muslim Family Law for justice and equality - member
- **Muslim Women’s Rights Network** - founding member
- **National Network for Autonomous Women’s Groups** - founding member
- **South Asian Network Against Torture and Impunity (SANTI)** - member
- **Violence Against Women campaign** - member
- **Women’s Initiative for Socio-economic Development (WISE)** – member

For more details, please see Chapters 4 & 6 of this Report.

In the past five years, we have focused our efforts towards institution-building and streamlining of processes within the organization. These efforts have resulted in a formulation of the following policies:

- Staff policy (revised periodically)
- Rationalized salary structure (revised every 3 years)
- Rationalization of performance-based salary increments
- Annual performance appraisals
- Loan policy
Other highlights include:

- In keeping with the spirit of a women’s organization, facilities for flexible hours of work and work from home have been incorporated into our work practices, with sufficient emphasis on transparency and accountability.
- We are a premier organization that sanctions 3 months’ adoption leave, in order to encourage adoption as a social issue.
- Medical insurance has been introduced as a staff benefit to staff who have worked with us for a minimum of three years. Other benefits are likely to be introduced shortly.

H. PERSONNEL

1. FOUNDER MEMBERS AND PRESENT BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Our organization was founded by three women living in Mumbai – Vahida Nainar, Seema Kazi and Razia Patel. They founded WRAG in 1993, by forming a public trust, and were the initial trustees. Subsequently Razia Patel and Seema Kazi resigned from trusteeship, and new trustees were added, including Ms. Saeeda Khan and the late Ms. Vipula Kadri. Members of the present Board of Trustees are: Ms. Nasreen Mohammed, Ms. Noorjehan Safia Niaz, Ms. Vahida Nainar, Dr. Varsha Rajan Berry and Dr. Vibhuti Patel.

Ms. Nasreen S. Mohammed is the Managing Trustee of WRAG. She holds a Masters Degree in Social Work from the College of Social Work, Nirmala Niketan. She has worked closely with community groups and NGOs in Mumbai city, India and the South Asia Region. Her subject areas include: poverty, gender, peace and conflict studies, education advocacy and non-formal adult education. She is a General Body Member of YUVA (Youth For Unity & Voluntary Action) and the Peace Mumbai Alliance. She currently works in freelance capacity for programme development, proposal writing, documentation, training material development, training facilitation, and information-communications. She is a visiting faculty with the College of Social Work, Nirmala Niketan. She actively participates and works on civil society campaigns and capacity-building around the above issues.

Ms. Noorjehan Safia Niaz is a trained social worker from the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, where she graduated in 1992. She has worked as a Development Officer with Mahila Arthik Vikas Mahamandal - a Maharashtra State Government Corporation - working for the economic development of women, and with Anjuman-e-Islam, an institution working for the educational development of the Muslim community. She has also worked with YUVA as a Project Coordinator. Noorjehan has spearheaded our organization’s campaign for reform of Muslim family law from a gender perspective, and collaborative work
Ms. Vahida Nainar has been working on women’s rights / human rights issues for the past 18 years. She was the Founder-Director of Women’s Research and Action Group, Mumbai and continues to remain involved as member of the Board of Trustees. She is the former Executive Director of the Women’s Caucus for Gender Justice, New York that worked to include a gender perspective in the International Criminal Court. She has been closely associated with Women’s Initiatives for Gender Justice, The Hague; the Urgent Action Fund for Women’s Human Rights, USA & Kenya and International Solidarity Network of Women Living Under Muslim Laws, London. She was an Adjunct Professor of Law at the International Women’s Human Rights Clinic, CUNY School of Law, New York. She is a life member of the Indian Association of Women’s Studies. She works nationally and internationally on issues of justice, human rights, gender and conflict.

Dr. Varsha Rajan Berry joined Focus India Programme in 1999 as a Research Associate. She has done her post-graduation in Political Science from Delhi University. She has also done her masters in philosophy from Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi in International Politics. She has been awarded doctorate on ‘Women and War in the experience of American Women since World War II’. She had also visited the United States in 1997 on University Scholarship for the successful completion of her doctorate. She coordinates the Security programme of Focus on the Global South, India. She joined WRAG as a trustee in July 2007.

Dr. Vibhuti Patel holds a Doctorate in Economics. At present, she is Professor and Head of P.G. Department of Economics; Director, Department of Post Graduate Studies and Research and Director, Centre for Dr. Ambedkar Studies of SNDT Women’s University. She is also an Academic Advisor of Sophia Center for Women’s Studies. She is a member of subgroup on Gender and Agriculture of the 11th Five Year Plan, Planning Commission, New Delhi and also a member of the Expert Committee for School of Gender and Development and School of Gandhian Studies at Indira Gandhi Open University, New Delhi. She is a life-member of Indian Association of Women’s Studies, Maharashtra Association of Women’s Studies and Gujarat Association of Women’s Studies. She was also a founder member and an active member of Forum against Oppression of Women (1980-1992), Women’s Centre (1982-1992) and Forum against Sex Determination and Sex Pre-selection (1982- 1992). She is a trustee of Anusandhan Trust, Vacha, Institute of Community Development and Research and Olakh.
2. STAFF

**Saumya Uma** has served as Co-Director of WRAG from 2002-2008, and presently works in the capacity of Executive Director. She is a human rights lawyer and activist. She is a British Chevening scholar on human rights (1998-99). She graduated from National Law School of India, Bangalore in 1994; completed her first LL.M. in family law and human rights from Bombay University in 1998, and completed her second LL.M. in international human rights from the University of Nottingham, U.K. in 1999. From 1994 to 1998, she practised as a lawyer representing women in cases of domestic violence in the Bombay High Court and Family Court. She has earlier worked with Majlis – a women’s organization - and with India Centre for Human Rights & Law. She has worked as the Coordinator of ICC-India: the Indian campaign on International Criminal Court since its inception in 2000 till date. As part of her work, she conducts information dissemination programmes on law and human rights with varied groups including lawyers, academics, police, students of law and social work, human rights activists, women, adolescent girls and youth, particularly from underprivileged and minority communities. She has also been closely associated with the campaign on Communal Violence Bill and the Campaign for Implementation on Srikrishna Commission report that made findings on the Mumbai communal violence of 1992-93. She has authored two books on the International Criminal Court and India, which have been published in 2004 and 2005 respectively, a book on Supreme Court judgments on Muslim law and women’s rights titled ‘Supreme Court Speaks’ in 2007 and edited a reader on human rights titled ‘Unpackaging Human Rights: Concepts, Campaigns and Concerns’ in 2009. Her field of specialization is women’s rights, human rights and the law.

**Akhtari Sheikh** is a para-professional social worker who has worked with WRAG as a Field Officer for the Saheli Project, from 2003. She is the President of the Saheli group and undertakes capacity-building and advocacy activities with groups of single women living in communities, directing her efforts towards developing peer leadership. She is a core committee member of Aekal Mahila Adhikar Sangharsh Sanghatan and an active member of the National Forum for Single Women’s Rights. She is a member of mohalla committee set up by the police department for communal harmony, and a member of zopadpatti police panchayat where police and social workers jointly address community-related issues. Currently she is also studying for her graduation entrance exams from SNDT Women’s University, Mumbai. She has been awarded ‘Savitribai Phule Struggle and Network Award’ for her commitment to single women’s issues in February 2009 by the state level network of single women.

**Khatoon Sheikh** has over fifteen years of work experience in working with women in marginalized communities. She has worked as Project Officer for the Mahila Mandal Project of Community Outreach Programme, where she has helped to secure valuable contacts with qazis, police, governmental authorities, and mahila mandals alike. She has headed Hukook-e-Niswaan (Rights of Women) - a federation of mahila mandals (community-based organizations) in Mumbai consisting of a membership of over 25 mahila mandals.
Her able leadership in the federation has given visibility to community women’s demands for reform of Muslim family law. She has now enrolled with the SNDT Women’s University, Mumbai for completing her graduation studies. She has been appointed by the state government as a member of a committee constituted to implement the recommendations given by Sachar Committee report. She is presently the Maharashtra State Convenor for Bharatiya Muslim Mahila Andolan. She is also the recipient of seven awards including Rajeev Gandhi Award for Best Social Worker from Yuva foundation, National Education award given by Priya Dutt (member of Parliament), the late Achyutrao Apte award and Savitri Bai Phule Award for her work and commitment on women’s issues.

Leena K.K. is the longest serving member of WRAG, having been with the organization since its inception in 1993. She played an active role during the data collection and assimilation phase of the action-research titled Women & Law in the Muslim Community (1994-98). She now works with WRAG in the capacity of Accounts Assistant and is responsible for office administration and accounts. Over the years she has assisted WRAG in organizing various state and national level meetings and conferences. She is also responsible for coordination of WRAG’s resource material and is actively involved with the distribution of WRAG publications.

Shilpa Kashelkar-Nipunge completed her Masters in Social Work from College of Social Work Nirmala Niketan, holds a diploma in counseling psychology from St. Xavier’s Institute, Mumbai and a post-graduate degree in Research Methodology in Social Sciences from Mumbai University. Her prior experience in the social field includes empowerment projects for women living with HIV/AIDS and women in sex work. Her areas of special interest include mental health of women and rights of single and destitute women. She joined WRAG in 2001. Soon afterwards, she initiated Saheli – a project on empowerment of single and destitute women from marginalized communities. Now, in her capacity as Project Coordinator at WRAG, she coordinates various activities of the Community Outreach Programme. She has authored a publication titled ‘Our Voice’ – a study on needs of single and destitute women in Mumbai, in 2006. She is a founder member of Aekal Mahila Adhikar Sangharsh Sanghatan - a network of single women’s rights and National Forum for Single Women’s Rights. She has assisted in WRAG’s campaign on Muslim family law. She also coordinates research and publication programme of WRAG. She is a member of the Anti-Trafficking Committee established by the state government for Mumbai and Thane districts, and works closely with the police crime branch in this regard. She has been awarded the Vocational Excellence and Humanitarian Service Award from Rotary Club of Bombay Juhu Beach and Dombivili for her commitment in the social field in October 2007 and November 2008 respectively. She is also the recipient of Social Service Award from Tilaknagar Social & Cultural Group of Dombivili in May 2009 for her social work and commitment on women’s issues.
Suraiyya Razzak is a para-professional social worker, with a passion for community work with women. She joined WRAG in 2001 after completing Standard XII. She has worked as the Project Officer for the adolescent girls’ project of the Community Outreach Program, and has been actively involved with the capacity-building of six girls’ groups and a group of youth and men living in communities. She has joined the SNDT Women’s University for completing her graduation studies. She is a member of mohalla committee set up by the police department for communal harmony, and a member of zopadpati panchayat where police and social workers jointly address community-related issues. She has been awarded the Best Social Worker Award called Maitri Yuva Gaurav Puruskar by the Maitri Organization, Mumbai in 2005.

1. Consultants and Other Associates in the Past & the Present

- Geeta Kumana – activist associated with issues of lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgendered persons.
- Manoj Chhabra – consultant who designed and maintains the organization’s website.
- Maya Nair – social worker and human rights activist associated in the past with ICC-India campaign.
- Pouruchisti Wadia – lawyer and activist associated in the past with ICC-India campaign, information dissemination on law and human rights, and law research.
- Shabana Rehman – lawyer and activist associated in the past with both the programmes of the organization, and presently as a resource person for information dissemination programmes on women’s rights and the law.
- Sheetal Palande – social worker associated in the past with adolescent girls project.
- Rajendra Asher – associated in the past with office administration.
- Veena Gowda – lawyer and women’s rights activist, associated with WRAG since 2006 as a law consultant providing legal aid to women living in communities.
- Uma S, Pinky Pandey, Samira Nazem, Atul Agarwal, V. Sasidhar, V. Ramanathan, Ruhi Peerzada, Devyani Pendse, Shaila Penday, Shriharsh Kaushik, Kshama Agarwal, Richa Sood, Shivani Agarwal, Poonam Jain, Shama Khan, B.K. Tiwari, Tabassum Malik and other consultants and volunteers who have contributed to administrative and programmatic activities of our organization from time to time.

2. Student Interns

We encourage internships for students from varied disciplines. We feel duty-bound to mould young minds, and to provide students with information and experience in human rights and community-based work, in order that they may be motivated to work for social causes at present and in the future. Upon completion of the internship, we actively communicate with the students, facilitating a further association of such students in our activities, extending far beyond their internship period.
MAP 1.1: Outreach Activities of Hukook-e-Niswaan Mahila Sanghatana & Saheli in Maharashtra, 2003-08
MAP 1.2: Outreach of Adolescent Girls' Groups & Saathi in Mumbai, 2003-2008
MAP 1.3: Activities of ‘Justice & Accountability Matters’ Programme
January 2002 - June 2009

Programmes on gender, human rights & the law
Participating in / organizing events on Communal Violence Bill
Workshops / Seminars on International Criminal Court & India
Participation in Anti-Torture Campaign
### 1.6 Grants / Donations Received: 2003-2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local sources</td>
<td>38,522</td>
<td>30,468</td>
<td>353,174</td>
<td>3,690,426</td>
<td>3,842,951</td>
<td>4,275,679</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign sources</td>
<td>1,540,595</td>
<td>749,528</td>
<td>922,309</td>
<td>921,097</td>
<td>39,428</td>
<td>37,097</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,579,117</td>
<td>779,996</td>
<td>1,275,483</td>
<td>4,611,523</td>
<td>3,882,379</td>
<td>4,312,776</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Graph showing grants and donations received from 2003-2009]

### 1.7 Pattern of Expenditure: 2003-2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local sources</td>
<td>77,620</td>
<td>376,248</td>
<td>434,331</td>
<td>3,056,245</td>
<td>3,481,635</td>
<td>3,984,488</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign sources</td>
<td>1,276,634</td>
<td>1,387,025</td>
<td>1,212,373</td>
<td>357,634</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Graph showing pattern of expenditure from 2003-2009]
Students who have done internships with ‘Community Outreach Programme’ include:

- **Bhakti Sathe Arora** - masters student, College of Social Work – Nirmala Niketan, Mumbai
- **Sr. Cicily Jose** - masters student, College of Social Work – Nirmala Niketan, Mumbai
- **Sr. Kulwant Kaur** - masters student, College of Social Work – Nirmala Niketan, Mumbai
- **Sr. Monty** - bachelors student, College of Social Work – Nirmala Niketan, Mumbai
- **Anagha Dev** – masters student, College of Social Work – Nirmala Niketan, Mumbai
- **Chandni Basu** - masters student, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai
- **Bhakti** - bachelors student, College of Social Work – Nirmala Niketan, Mumbai
- **Vijay** - masters student, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai
- **Manisha Lat** - masters student, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai
- **Debusmita** - masters student, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai
- **Shikha Lakpal** - masters student, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai
- **Neha Mascarenhas** - masters student, College of Social Work – Nirmala Niketan, Mumbai
- **Bhumika Tulalwaar** - masters student, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai
- **Reema Mehta** - law student, SVKM College of Law, Mumbai
- **Anita Rajpurohit** - law student, SVKM College of Law, Mumbai
- **Simi Wilson** - law student, SVKM College of Law, Mumbai

Students who have done internships with ‘Justice and Accountability Matters’ programme include:

- **Aditya Swarup** – law student, NALSAR University of Law, Hyderabad
- **Bhargavi Kannan** - law student, NALSAR University of Law, Hyderabad
- **Bhavit Sharma** – law student, Rajiv Gandhi National University of Law, Patiala
- **Manveen Singh** – law student, University Institute of Legal Studies, Panjab University, Chandigarh
- **Niharika Rao** – law student, National Law School of India, Bangalore
- **Rubal Garg** - law student, Rajiv Gandhi National University of Law, Patiala
- **Shreya Shah** – law student, National University of Juridical Sciences, Kolkata
- **Srinidhi Kulkarni** - law student, NALSAR University of Law, Hyderabad
- **Veena Jacob** – masters student, Department of International Relations, Stella Maris College, Chennai

In addition, there are a number of students of courses in mass media and communication from Mumbai-based colleges, who have made short films as part of their academic projects. Further, both College of Social Work – Nirmala Niketan and Tata Institute for Social Sciences conduct annual orientation visits to our organization and the communities that we work with. In the last six years, students from educational institutions in Bangladesh, United
States, Canada, Ireland and the Netherlands have interacted with our staff and communities that we work with for their research projects.

I. OVERVIEW OF FUNDING SOURCES

We receive donations and grants from local and foreign sources, and from individual and donor organizations. In the past five years, we have made concerted efforts to increase donations / grants from local donors and donor agencies. Donor agencies that have supported our work in the past include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Name of donor organization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002-3</td>
<td>Ford Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003-4</td>
<td>Global Fund for Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003-4</td>
<td>Mama Cash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003-4</td>
<td>World Federalist Movement / NGO Coalition for International Criminal Court</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003-4</td>
<td>Oxfam (India) Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004-5</td>
<td>Mama Cash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-6</td>
<td>Global Fund for Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-6</td>
<td>Consulate General of Germany, Mumbai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007-09</td>
<td>Yugantar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-9</td>
<td>J.R.D. &amp; Thelma J. Tata Trust</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We express our gratitude to the above-stated institutional donors, as well as many individual donors whose donations and grants have facilitated our organization to carry on its activities. We appreciate the confidence reposed in our organization and its work.

The annual income and expenditure of WRAG, with the proportion of foreign and local grant contributing to the same, in the past 6 years is as illustrated in *Graphs 1.6 and 1.7 on page 24 of this Report.*
2.

CAPACITY-BUILDING

Capacity-building forms the backbone of our activities since the inception of our organization. Our capacity-building activities comprise of:

- solidarity-building at the community level;
- information dissemination / perspective-building on aspects of women’s rights, human rights and the law;
- skill-building; and
- socio-legal, educational and medical assistance to underprivileged women and girls.

The beneficiaries of our capacity-building activities include:

- members of mahila mandals;
- single and destitute women living in communities;
- adolescent girls;
- youth & men living in communities;
- members of federation of mahila mandals; and
- Others - including law and social work students, activists, representatives of non-profit organizations, seminarians, police personnel, lawyers, academics and our personnel.

I. SOLIDARITY-BUILDING

Solidarity-building is an activity that our organization has been involved in, with the objective of promoting self-reliance among women and girls living in communities.

Solidarity-building involves two aspects:

- facilitating women living in communities to form groups to help and support each other, and to collectively address issues pertaining to them; and
- to help groups that have been formed to strengthen their formations and to function effectively, efficiently, in a professional manner and with a purpose.

Beneficiaries include groups of adolescent girls, mahila mandals, federation of mahila mandals and single and destitute women. Our staff makes regular visits to the groups to facilitate the process of solidarity-building.
1.1 MAHILA MANDALS

We have been working with mahila mandals since 2000. We have directed our efforts at strengthening the functioning of mahila mandals as they are the first point of crisis intervention for women living in communities. The effort has also been directed at building the capacities of mahila mandals to function in an independent, efficient and self-reliant manner, incorporating principles of professionalism, democratic decision-making, transparency and accountability. Towards these ends, the following activities have been conducted regularly in the past six years:

- registration of mahila mandals with the Charity Commission;
- group-building exercises;
- opening of bank accounts for the mandals;
- trainings on financial management and keeping of accounts;
- trainings on documentation and case work;
- formulation of values and principles that the mandals will abide by;
- formulation of rules for crisis intervention and assistance to women;
- inter-mandal exposure visits;
- joint celebrations of religious festivals; and
- conducting external audit.

1.2 FEDERATION OF MAHILA MANDALS

In 2005, Hukook-e-Niswaan Mahila Sanghatana - a federation of more than 25 mahila mandals was formed with the active assistance of WRAG. The objective behind formation of the federation is to ensure that collective voices of women are heard by the policy makers, particularly on the issue of gender-just reforms in Muslim family law. Apart from representatives of the mandals, the federation consists of several members in their individual capacity. By December 2008, the federation has more than 25 mahila mandals as its members, representing over 5000 women.

In order to encourage members to take initiative, feel a sense of ownership and to facilitate the democratic functioning of the Federation, election was conducted in the year 2005 and a core group formed for chalking out its annual work plan. Vision and mission, rules and regulations for membership of the Federation and criteria for membership were also formulated in 2005. Since 2006, elections are being held annually; the elected committee continues to conduct the affairs of the Federation. In May 2009, the Federation started functioning independently. We see this as the result of many years of perspective-building and solidarity-building efforts of WRAG.

1.3 SINGLE & DESITUTE WOMEN

During the work with mahila mandals and women living in communities, we came to realize that while all women in the community are vulnerable to discrimination, harassment and violence from the family and society, single and destitute women were a minority within the minority and faced extreme vulnerability. Hence, with the initiative of our
organization, and with some women who were single from underprivileged backgrounds, Saheli (female friend in Hindi) was born in 2001. Saheli is a group of and for single and destitute women from underprivileged communities. The main objective of this activity was to create a platform for women to share their feelings and experiences, and to help them gain strength and support from each other through an exchange of experiences. Saheli now consists of six community-based single women’s groups, based in the Mumbai suburbs of Behrampada in Bandra, Jarimari in Andheri, Dharavi in Sion, Navpada and Bharatnagar in Bandra and Mira Road.

We have been instrumental in bringing these groups together and gradually formalizing Saheli’s structure to enhance its independent functioning. Saheli now has a 3-tier structure: it has an elected committee of eleven members who take important decisions regarding the performance and expansion of the group. The group is headed by women living in communities. This committee forms the core of Saheli’s structure. Second tier consists of approximately 250 members from the communities. Members assist approximately 100-150 women per year in their respective communities. The third tier consists of about 50 support group members, who are persons supportive of the issues raised by Saheli, and may or may not be living in communities. Saheli independently participates in campaigns specifically related to single women’s rights, such as the Mental Health Campaign, AMASS and the Ekal Naari Shakti Sanghatan (National Forum for Single Women’s Rights).

Activities of Saheli directed at solidarity-building include:

- weekly meetings with members - to share their day-to-day stress, learn coping strategies from and provide emotional support to each other;
- meetings with mothers of single women – to create a better support system at home for the member of Saheli;
- counseling and emotional support through a) peer counseling; b) referrals to professional counselors; c) home visits; d) counseling to mothers of single women; e) telephone counseling and support; and
- celebration of cultural festivals.

1.4 ADOLESCENT GIRLS

In the year 2003, we decided to extend our activities towards working at a preventive level too – through formation of groups of adolescent girls living in communities. Purpose of this exercise was to enable our organization to work with such girls at a preventive level on violence against women, and to build their capacities to resist exploitation, harassment and violence.

We presently work with adolescent girls in six communities in Mumbai, with a total membership of 70 girls. The membership is floating in nature, with some girls getting married and moving to reside outside the communities that we work with, while other unmarried girls join the groups. Contact is maintained with past members of the group who get married, to ensure that they do not face any violence / harassment within their matrimonial relationship. Activities initiated in order to build solidarity between the
members of the groups include:

- weekly meetings among members – to share their experiences and feelings;
- activities in team and group-building;
- celebration of religious festivals and other occasions such as Teachers’ Day, Valentine’s Day, Friendship Day and New Year; and
- meeting with parents.

II. INFORMATION DISSEMINATION

Information dissemination is an activity geared towards creating rights-awareness among women and girls, and building their perspective with regard to asserting such rights. Gender, law and human rights form three important components of this activity. The common topics that are covered include gender, patriarchy, women’s movement, group-building, communication, health issues including food and nutrition, sexuality, reproductive health, mental health, various aspects of rights in law and human rights. Please see Table 2.1 below and Graphs 2.1 - 2.8 on pages 37-38 of this Report for more details on direct beneficiaries of our activities on information dissemination.

| Table 2.1: Direct Beneficiaries of Information Dissemination - Year-wise & Activity-wise |
|-----------------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Human Rights & the Law                       |         |         |         |         |         |       |
| Certificate course - Women & Law             |         |         |         |         |         |       |
| Certificate/refresher course - Hindu law/family law |         |         |         |         |         |       |
| Summer camp for adolescent girls             |         |         |         |         |         |       |
| Training camp for youth & men                |         |         |         |         |         |       |
| Information dissemination with single women  |         |         |         |         |         |       |
| Information dissemination on ICC             |         |         |         |         |         |       |
| Information dissemination for Federation     |         |         |         |         |         |       |
| Total                                        | 759     | 1449    | 1155    | 3685    | 3864    | 10912 |

A. PROGRAMMES ON LAW AND HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION

Programmes on law and human rights education are organized among staff members of WRAG, among the communities that we work with, mahila mandals, community-based organizations, non-profit organizations, college students, school and college teachers and other persons working on implementation of law (including the police). Significant aspects of this activity are the varied beneficiaries for the programmes, and the fact that most presentations are made at the invitation of like-minded individuals and organizations. For further details of the topics covered, beneficiaries involved and organizations / institutions that invited us, please see Table 2.2 on pages 31-33 of this Report.
### Table 2.2: Programmes on Law and Human Rights Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Venue</th>
<th>Beneficiaries</th>
<th>Other Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Women &amp; Law</td>
<td>Amberath</td>
<td>Para-professionals</td>
<td>Invited by 'Media Matters'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Genocide</td>
<td>Mumbai</td>
<td>Activists &amp; lawyers</td>
<td>5 lecture series organized by WRAG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Women’s Human Rights</td>
<td>Mumbai</td>
<td>Middle-level anganwadi workers</td>
<td>Invited by Nirmala Niketan Extension Programme for Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Human rights, Women’s Human Rights, Indian Constitution &amp; Women’s rights, Law relating to Dowry, Domestic Violence &amp; Sexual Assault</td>
<td>Mumbai</td>
<td>Police officers</td>
<td>Jointly organized by Police of Western Region, Mumbai, and the Women’s Cell of Mohalla Committee Movement Trust; the training consisted of 5 half-day sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Muslim law &amp; women’s rights</td>
<td>Mumbai</td>
<td>Law students, activists, social workers</td>
<td>Invited by K.C. Law College in workshop organized on Personal Laws</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Women’s Rights as Human Rights</td>
<td>Mumbai</td>
<td>Activists, lawyers, students</td>
<td>Invited by Sophia Centre for Women’s Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Women’s Rights as Human Rights, Campaign strategies</td>
<td>Mumbai</td>
<td>College teachers teaching and interested in teaching human rights</td>
<td>3 day residential workshop organized by Mumbai Initiative for Human Rights Education (MIHRE) of which WRAG is a founder member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Human Rights: Issues and Challenges</td>
<td>Thane</td>
<td>Rotarians</td>
<td>Invited by Rotary Club, Thane (West) for Human Rights Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>‘Gujarat Carnage: Three Years On’</td>
<td>Mumbai</td>
<td>Human rights activists, lawyers, social activists, students</td>
<td>WRAG co-organized along with other like-minded organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>International Law on Torture</td>
<td>Guwahati</td>
<td>Human rights activists, lawyers</td>
<td>Invited by People’s Watch - Tamil Nadu as a part of its Training of Trainers’ Programme to Combat Torture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Protection of Victims and Witnesses</td>
<td>Mumbai (for West Zone)</td>
<td>Human rights activists, lawyers, law students</td>
<td>Consultative meeting organized by WRAG in collaboration with India Centre for Human Rights &amp; Law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Mass Crimes and Violence Against Women</td>
<td>Delhi</td>
<td>Activists, academics, researchers, students</td>
<td>Organized by WRAG against the backdrop of International Women’s Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Subject</td>
<td>Venue</td>
<td>Beneficiaries</td>
<td>Other Comments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Communal Violence Bill &amp; Women’s Rights</td>
<td>Mumbai, Kolkata, Ahmedabad</td>
<td>Activists, students, social workers, lawyers</td>
<td>In Kolkata, the workshop was held under the auspices of 7th National Conference of Autonomous Movements in India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Death Penalty: A Gender Perspective</td>
<td>Mumbai</td>
<td>Lawyers, law students, social activists</td>
<td>Invited by India Centre for Human Rights and Law for its public meeting on Death Penalty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Dowry, Domestic Violence, Sexual Harassment at Workplace</td>
<td>Mumbai</td>
<td>Adolescent girls belonging to lower income groups</td>
<td>Collaborative activity with YWCA - Andheri, Mumbai; Half days twice a month.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Muslim Family Law</td>
<td>Mumbai</td>
<td>Congress workers from Maharashtra</td>
<td>Invited by Mahila Congress Maharashtra section for a Conference on Legal Literacy organized by them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Women’s Movement &amp; the Law, Women’s Property Rights &amp; the Law, State Obligation</td>
<td>Puri (Orissa)</td>
<td>Social activists and lawyers</td>
<td>Invited by Partners for Law in Development as a resource person for its 5 day workshop on Gender and the Law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Story-telling as a Technique for Human Rights Education</td>
<td>Mumbai</td>
<td>Lawyers, trainers on human rights</td>
<td>Organized by WRAG in collaboration with Akshara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>The Story of Women Organizing Internationally</td>
<td>Mumbai</td>
<td>College teachers</td>
<td>Invited by Research Centre for Women’s Studies, S.N.D.T. Women’s University for its refresher course for teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Role of Media in Human Rights</td>
<td>Bhubaneswar</td>
<td>Students of journalism</td>
<td>Invited by Academy of Management &amp; Information Technology, Bhubaneswar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Muslim family law &amp; Women’s rights</td>
<td>Mumbai</td>
<td>Activists, lawyers, journalists</td>
<td>At a National Consultation to Formulate an ideal Muslim Family Law, organized by WRAG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>U.N. Conventions; Case study of ‘Comfort Women’</td>
<td>Mumbai</td>
<td>Teachers of Mumbai colleges of various disciplines</td>
<td>Organized and invited by Research Centre for Women’s Studies of S.N.D.T. Women’s University as a part of their annual refresher course on women’s rights.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Women’s Movement’s Engagement with International and National Institutions &amp; Campaigns</td>
<td>Mumbai</td>
<td>Social activists, teachers, lawyers, feminists</td>
<td>Organized jointly by WRAG and Research Centre for Women’s Studies of S.N.D.T. Women’s University under the auspices of Indian Social Science Congress 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Human rights, Indian Constitution, fundamental rights</td>
<td>Mumbai</td>
<td>Male masseurs, male sex workers, men having sex with men</td>
<td>Invited by Samabhavana, Mumbai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Matrimonial law &amp; women’s rights</td>
<td>Mumbai</td>
<td>WRAG’s staff and members of mahila mandals</td>
<td>Was a 7 day intensive training organized and conducted by WRAG.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Positive judgments of the Supreme Court on Muslim family law and women’s rights</td>
<td>Mumbai</td>
<td>Members of Hukook-e-niswan federation</td>
<td>Jointly conducted by WRAG and the federation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Impact of Armed Conflict on Women</td>
<td>Chennai</td>
<td>Teachers, social activists, students</td>
<td>Organized by Post-graduate Department of International Relations, Stella Maris College and International Committee for the Red Cross (ICRC)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
B. CERTIFICATE COURSE ON WOMEN & LAW

We have been conducting certificate courses on Women & Law for community women since 2003. The duration of these courses is six months. Feedback received from the beneficiaries at the end of the course indicate that the participants’ confidence level in dealing with the police as well as with the women who approach the mahila mandals has increased. Women have become pro-active in protecting their own and their friends’/relatives’ rights in marriage, by making a list of gifts signed by both parties to marriage and by creating proofs related to the marriage. The participants found group activities in drafting the First Information Report (FIR) and complaint letter to the police particularly useful, as also the use of S. 498A of the Indian Penal Code and the Domestic Violence Act to deal with domestic violence. For more details, please see Table 2.3 below.

Table 2.3: Details of Certificate Courses on Women & Law

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Venue</th>
<th>Beneficiaries</th>
<th>Other Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Concept of law, structure of courts, FIR &amp; NC, women’s rights under criminal law</td>
<td>Jeri Meri, Mumbai</td>
<td>Members of mahila mandal</td>
<td>Invited by Jagruti Kendra and Humraaz Committee, Mumbai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Accountability for Mass Crimes in India</td>
<td>Bangalore</td>
<td>Students of law and political science</td>
<td>Invited by Christ College, Bangalore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Family law and women’s rights</td>
<td>Mumbai</td>
<td>Counsellors from Gujarat</td>
<td>Organized and invited by Tata Institute for Social Sciences</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

C. CERTIFICATE COURSE ON FAMILY LAW / HINDU LAW & WOMEN’S RIGHTS

In May 2005, a five session certificate course was conducted by us for members of mahila mandals, as they had expressed a need to have information on Hindu law and women’s rights. This need was felt in the light of an increasing number of Hindu women who were approaching the mahila mandals for crisis intervention. On demand, this course was repeated for new sets of beneficiaries in 2007 and 2008. In addition, refresher courses on the subject were also conducted for participants of past courses. The course has focused not only on
provisions of law but also on quazi-legal strategies, and the role of mahila mandals with regard to women whose cases are governed by Hindu law. For further details, please see Table 2.4 below.

Table 2.4: Details of Certificate Course on Family Law / Hindu Law and Women’s Rights.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purposes</th>
<th>To build the capacity of members of mahila mandals to assist Hindu women in matrimonial disputes and to have better familiarity with all family laws.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Course Duration</td>
<td>1 week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of Classes</td>
<td>Six full days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beneficiaries</td>
<td>Members of mahila mandals in Mumbai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course contents</td>
<td>Marriage, Divorce, Judicial Separation, Maintenance &amp; Alimony, Custody &amp; Access, Matrimonial Home, Family Courts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource persons</td>
<td>WRAG staff and consultants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training methods</td>
<td>Lecture, group activities, audio-visual, role plays</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refresher course</td>
<td>Conducted once a year for 2 full days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Batches completed upto December ’08</td>
<td>5 batches, with a total of about 205 women</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

D. SUMMER CAMP FOR ADOLESCENT GIRLS

In 2005, we conducted a summer camp for adolescent girls for a duration of 6 days. This was conducted in response to demands from the adolescent girls for intensive inputs. About 45 girls participated in the camp from all the communities that we work with. This created an opportunity for interactions between girls from different communities, and to develop cooperation and support among the different groups. Due to the positive feedback received from the beneficiaries, we organize and conduct such a camp for adolescent girls every year. For further details, please see Table 2.5 below.

Table 2.5: Details of Summer Camp for Adolescent Girls

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Short term objective</th>
<th>Information dissemination and perspective-building in an intensive manner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Long term objective</td>
<td>To strengthen the capacities of adolescent girls to oppose any forms of exploitation, violence or oppression that may be meted out to them in future.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course Duration</td>
<td>1 week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of Classes</td>
<td>Six full days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beneficiaries</td>
<td>Adolescent girls living in communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course contents</td>
<td>Gender, patriarchy, feminism, introduction to law, law related to sexual assault, dowry, domestic violence and family law, sexuality, health, nutrition and mental health, personality development, inter-personal relationships, creative writing, career guidance and leadership skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource persons</td>
<td>WRAG staff, consultants and external resource persons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training methods</td>
<td>Lecture, group activities, audio-visual, role plays, exposure visits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Batches completed up to December ’08</td>
<td>5 batches, a total of about 195 girls</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
E. TRAINING CAMP FOR COMMUNITY YOUTH & MEN

Our work with community men and youth commenced in the year 2003, in consonance with our policy of viewing men and youth as partners in the process of empowerment of women. Through our interactions with the men and youth, it was found that the men, who had undergone decades of socialization and whose perspectives on women had hardened, were less open to new ideas. On the other hand, male youth were more receptive to new perspectives on women’s rights. We found youth in the age group of 17-25 to be an important age group to work with on a preventive level on violence against women, and in perspective-building on gender issues. We also found them more open to discussion on issues pertaining to women’s rights in general and violence against women in particular. For further details, please see Table 2.6 below.

Table 2.6: Details of Training Camp for Community Youth & Men

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Short term objective</th>
<th>Perspective building on women’s rights</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Long term objective</td>
<td>Challenging the patriarchal mindset among the younger generation of men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course Duration</td>
<td>1 week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of Classes</td>
<td>Eight to ten half days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beneficiaries</td>
<td>Youth and men living in communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syllabus</td>
<td>Patriarchy, gender, equality, violence against women, masculinity and femininity, health, family planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource persons</td>
<td>WRAG staff, consultants and external resource persons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training methods</td>
<td>Lecture, group activities, audio-visual, role plays</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Batches completed up to December ‘08</td>
<td>5 batches, with a total of approximately 123 youth and men</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

F. INFORMATION DISSEMINATION ON MUSLIM FAMILY LAW

A federation of mahila mandals, called ‘Hukook-e-Niswaan (rights of women) was formed in 2005 with the aim of building the capacities of women living in communities to participate actively in the national campaign for gender-just reforms in Muslim family law. Perspective-building activities through information-generation and discussion on aspects of gender and Muslim family law are carried out with the Federation every month. For more details, please see Table 2.7 below.

Table 2.7: Details of Perspective-Building Activities with Hukook-e-Niswaan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Short term objective</th>
<th>Information dissemination on Muslim family law and women’s rights</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Long term objective</td>
<td>■ Building the capacity of women living in communities to participate in and campaign for reform of Muslim family law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>■ Ensuring that changes in law and policy take into account experiences and demands of grassroots women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course Duration</td>
<td>1 year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of Classes</td>
<td>Half day every month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beneficiaries</td>
<td>Members of the federation Hukook-e-Niswaan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Course contents

- Myths relating to women
- Patriarchy and feminism
- Health issues including food and nutrition, mental and reproductive health
- Structure of Muslim society in India, history of development of Muslim law, feminist interpretation of Quranic verses, provisions related to marriage, divorce, property rights and polygamy under Muslim law, the practice of purdah (veil), significance of standard nikahnama, and linkages between the work of mahila mandals and the Indian women’s movement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource persons</th>
<th>WRAG staff and consultants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Training methods</td>
<td>Lecture, group activities, games</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of direct beneficiaries up to December ’08</td>
<td>About 200 women</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

G. INFORMATION DISSEMINATION ON INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT & INDIA

ICC-India campaign: the Indian Campaign on International Criminal Court, has its national secretariat in WRAG. As such, information dissemination is the backbone of the ICC-India campaign. Between the years 2003-2009, ICC-India has made presentations on ICC and its relevance to India in over 56 events of which atleast 35 of them were organized by ICC-India, covering 13 states of India. These include meetings, workshops, seminars, training programmes and press conferences with varied groups of beneficiaries including lawyers, law students, academics, human rights activists, representatives of non-profit organizations and social work students. For more details, please see Tables 2.8 and 2.9 below. Please also refer to Map 1.3 on page 23 of this Report for a geographic distribution of workshops/seminars on ICC & India that we have organized/participated in.

Table 2.8: Geographic Distribution of Information Dissemination Programmes on International Criminal Court & India

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Event</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>City level</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Delhi (6), Kolkata, Bhubaneswar (2), Bangalore (2), Chennai, Vishakapatnam, Pune, Mumbai (2), Patiala (2), Jodhpur, Muzaffarnagar, Ajmer, Rangareddy district (A.P.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State level</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Gujarat, Tamil Nadu (2), Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional level</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Southern at Bangalore, Western at Mumbai (2), Northern at Chandigarh, North eastern at Guwahati (2), Eastern region at Jamshedpur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Level</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Delhi (7), Mumbai (3), Jaipur, Patiala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Asian Level</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Bangalore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International level</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Mumbai (World Social Forum), Delhi (2), Kathmandu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Press conferences</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Delhi, Guwahati, Bangalore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total events</td>
<td>56</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Graph 2.5: Direct Beneficiaries of Training Camps for Youth & Men 2003-08**

**Graph 2.6: Direct Beneficiaries of Information Dissemination Programmes with Single Women 2003-08**

**Graph 2.7: Direct Beneficiaries of Information Dissemination Programmes on International Criminal Court & India 2003-08**

**Graph 2.8: Direct Beneficiaries of Information Dissemination Programmes with Federation of *Mahila Mandals* 2003-08**
Information Dissemination & Perspective-building

2.1 Perspective-building program on gender with male youth living in communities, April 2007

2.2 Certificate course on women & law, with members of mahila mandals, June 2005

2.3 Training on Hindu law & women's rights, with WRAG's staff and members of mahila mandals, June 2007

2.4 Workshop on 'Story-telling as a Training Technique on Human Rights', organized by us, June 2006

2.5 Training on women's rights, human rights and the Indian Constitution, with seminarists of Khrist Premalaya Theologate, Astha, Madhya Pradesh, September 2004

2.6 Information dissemination on matrimonial law & women's rights, February 2008
Information Dissemination & Perspective-building

2.7 Training on fundamentals of criminal law & women's rights, Jeri Meri, Mumbai, May 2008

2.8 Capacity-building of adolescent girls on Domestic Violence Act, December 2006

2.9 Training programme on human rights and the Indian Constitution, with members of Samabhavana, Mumbai, January 2008

2.10 Seminar on 'Custodial Torture & Violence', February 2009

2.11 Capacity-building programme for adolescent girls & members of mahila mandals, June 2007

2.12 Participation in Roundtable on 'Universal Declaration of Human Rights & Contemporary Society', Mumbai, December 2008
2.13 Discussion on formulation of values and principles of *mahila mandals*, October 2006

2.14 Capacity-building programme with *mahila mandals* on financial management and keeping of accounts, September 2008

2.15 Training programme with adolescent girls on team-work and leadership skills, July 2007

2.16 Group activity in summer camp for adolescent girls, June 2006

2.17 Discussion on peer-counselling among single women of *Saheli*, May 2006

2.18 Inauguration of *Saheli*’s office space, March 2005
2.19 Skill-building programme for economic empowerment of single women, April 2006

2.20 Exposure visit of adolescent girls to the local police station, June 2005

2.21 Skill-building programme for members of *mahila mandals*, on counselling and home visits, March 2004

2.22 Medical assistance during the Mumbai deluge, July 2005

2.23 Meeting organized with local Member of Parliament, Ms. Priya Dutt, for relief and rehabilitation for victims of a local fire, March 2006

2.24 Press coverage of our efforts at making education accessible to underprivileged women, in collaboration with S.N.D.T. Women’s University, October 2006

*The AGNI TIMES, 2-8 Oct 2006*

**DISTANCE EDUCATION AT DOORSTEPS**

By Shalini Siddik Taraiyar

S.N.D.T. Women’s University, Center for Distance Education, Women’s Research and Action Group and Lydia & Helen Women have jointly organized an *Education Camp* for women in the slum communities of Madanpura and Bhandupwadi. The Camps in the form of its kind were conducted in the slum areas of various towns and cities where the most vulnerable and marginalized exist. Many women of NGOs have done excellent work in organizing education for school going girls, but better education for women especially Muslim women has always been at the backburner. Some of Muslim women have a strong desire to educate themselves, but due to poverty and socio-cultural reasons they are not able to do so. S.N.D.T. University has joined hands with organizations like WILAC and Mahaberi to train the educators, especially higher education counselors, to work with marginalized communities. The camp was held on 26th September 2006 in the community of Khairoli and then it expands in the neighboring areas of Andheri and Goregaon.

This experiment has brought a revolution in the lives of more than 100 Muslim women who are now gaining higher education. Women are slowly and steadily empowering themselves with education which will eventually help the community to strengthen itself educationally, socially and economically.
Table 2.9: Details of Information Dissemination Programmes on International Criminal Court & India

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Short term objective</th>
<th>Information dissemination on the ICC and its relevance to India</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Long term objective</td>
<td>To create a sound foundation for campaign, advocacy and alliance-building initiatives on the issue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beneficiaries</td>
<td>lawyers, law students, academics, researchers, human rights activists, representatives of non-profit organizations and social work students, media persons, parliamentarians</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Contents             | - Introduction to International Criminal Law  
- Concepts, Principles and Historical Development  
- Fundamentals of the ICC  
- An Understanding of Crimes within the Jurisdiction of the ICC  
- Geo-Politics on the ICC  
- Violence Against Women in Special Contexts: History & Responses of the Law  
- Gender Integration in the ICC  
- Torture & the ICC  
- Genocides in International History  
- Victims & the ICC  
- Human Rights Dimensions  
- Transitional Justice  
- Responses from Asia and South Asia  
- Indian Official Responses to the ICC  
- ICC’s Relevance to Law Reform in India  
- Current Developments in the ICC including Cases / Situations Pending before the Court  
- ICC-India campaign |
| Resource persons     | WRAG staff, consultants, members of Board of Advisors of ICC-India campaign and external resource persons |
| Training methods     | Lecture, group activities, case studies, resource kits, posters, power point presentations, film screenings |
| Follow up            | 2 Training of Trainers programmes held in 2007 and 2009 respectively, for a total of 31 and 48 participants respectively |
| Number of direct beneficiaries | approximately 2864 persons |

### III. SKILL-BUILDING

Skill-building activities have been carried out with all the communities and groups that we work with. For further details of skill-building activities, please see Table 2.10 on page 44 of this Report.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mahila mandals &amp; Federation of Mahila mandals</td>
<td>Training of Trainers, case handling, counseling techniques, documentation</td>
<td>Vocational training, counseling and home visit skills</td>
<td>Case handling, skills in counseling and crisis intervention</td>
<td>Case handling and counseling skills, English-speaking</td>
<td>Public speaking, dialoguing with government, administration of Federation, report-writing, budget-making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single &amp; Destitute Women</td>
<td>Supply of tiffin to small scale industries, accessing the employment bureau for domestic work, literacy classes, training on self-help group, counseling skills, training on self-employment</td>
<td>Vocational skills, peer counseling, mental health, training on self-help groups and income-generation</td>
<td>Vocational skills, documentation, first aid treatment, food and nutrition</td>
<td>Exposure visits, case work, English and Hindi classes, stitching and knitting, workshop on insurance and savings</td>
<td>Administration, accounts, marketing and distribution of products, presentation about the group, report-writing, budget-making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adolescent girls</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Stress management, personality development, group-building, poster-making</td>
<td>Diya-making, stress management, self-defence (Wen Lido), leadership &amp; communication</td>
<td>Stress management, self-perception, self-esteem, self-defence (Wen Lido), leadership and communication</td>
<td>Research methodology, exposure visits to support structures (court, banks, police stations, post office, educational institution etc.), computer skills, yoga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community youth &amp; men</td>
<td>Health and stress management</td>
<td>Communication, mental health, group-building</td>
<td>Guidance on vocational training &amp; income generation, leadership for social cause</td>
<td>Administration, accounts, networking</td>
<td>Administration, accounts, networking</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In order to build the capacities of communities, other forms of assistance are extended from time to time. We felt that this was necessary to create an enabling environment for capacity-building with community-based groups. Such activities include:

- Scholarships & educational support - to adolescent girls living in communities, and to single and destitute women and members of *mahila mandals*;
- Legal counseling and aid - to members of *mahila mandals* and single and destitute women;
- Medical assistance, including health camps and referrals to medical professionals – to single and destitute women, and women living in communities; and
- Relief and rehabilitation during natural disasters – including the deluge in Mumbai and fire.

**Table 2.11: Table of Beneficiaries of Socio-Legal, Medical and Educational Assistance to Women and Girls Living in Communities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Medical assistance</strong></td>
<td>43</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>314</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Educational support</strong></td>
<td>22</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Legal aid</strong></td>
<td>19</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>84</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>696</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.

RESEARCH & PUBLICATION

Research and publication have been major activities of our organization from its inception. An action research titled ‘Women and Law in the Muslim Community’ that studied Muslim women’s social, legal and economic status and their views on Muslim family law, carried out in the years 1994-1998, laid the foundation for our future course of work. This was a pioneering research in the country, involving interviews of more than 15,000 women from 45 districts in 15 states in India in collaboration with other organizations and individuals. The findings of the research were published in 3 separate publications, two of which were subsequently translated and published in Hindi.

I. ACTION RESEARCH

IA. NEED ASSESSMENT STUDY OF SINGLE & DESTITUTE WOMEN

Since 2001, Saheli – a project of WRAG, has been working towards providing emotional and economic support to single and destitute women living in communities in Mumbai. Single and destitute women face discrimination from every institution of the Indian society, and are vulnerable to physical, mental, sexual and economic harassment. We work with six solidarity groups of single and destitute women, situated in the slums of Behram Nagar, Navpada, Dharavi, Zarimeri, Bharat Nagar and Mumbra.

In order to make our interventions effective, we found it necessary to collect factual information about the needs of single and destitute women in the areas of socio-economic, legal and health status, and document their experiences. The study was commenced in the year 2005 and the findings published in 2006. The focus of the study was on Muslim women as they are among the most marginalized groups.

50 women were interviewed, a majority of whom lived in slum communities in Mumbai, belonging to the lower socio-economic strata of the society. We conducted the research through group discussions and one-to-one interviews. A significant aspect of the research was that a majority of the interviews were conducted by single women who are members of Saheli, and with their active participation. The findings of the research were as follows:

- Most single women face extreme physical, mental and sexual violence.
- There is a need to work on social as well as legal reforms to bring about an improvement in the status of single women, with a particular focus on the women’s right to live with dignity.
- Muslim law as practised in India is extremely discriminatory against women, and plays a significant role in disempowering single women even further.
- An urgent need exists to address discriminatory practices and oppressive systems of society, and to challenge the mindset of society that offers a secondary status to single women.
The findings have facilitated enhanced rights-based interventions among the groups of single and destitute women. The findings of the research were published in the form of a book titled ‘Our Voice’ in 2006. For details, please see page 56 of this Report under ‘Publications’.

IB. MINORITY WOMEN NEGOTIATING CITIZENSHIP

Despite the gross human rights violations and everyday brutality and terror, violent conflicts such as the Gujarat carnage brought to fore another trend which is less visible but is nevertheless significant. In many places, despite the disempowering effects of violence on women and on gender relations, there were also some empowering effects in the form of women taking up traditionally male-dominated roles, thereby challenging the old social order. These occurred both during and in the immediate post-conflict situations. The previously strictly-held boundaries between public and private were shattered brutally, but this gave women opportunities, sometimes aided by NGOs, to create collective spaces both for sharing and strength. However, while the disempowering effects of violent conflagrations are often documented well, the empowering aspects often go unnoticed. The learning from such an experience does not make its way through more established networks and it almost never becomes a part of women’s collective experience. A need was felt to validate women’s experiences, and make visible the process of transformation of victims to agents through a more organized form of sharing and networking.

The significance of the emergence of this kind of leadership by women at the community level and among socially marginalized groups - marginalized both in their class and religious identities - is that it has the potential to secure justice and accountability from the state and other power-holders at a level where it matters most - in the lives of ordinary citizens. The aim of the action research titled ‘Minority Women Negotiating Citizenship’ is to strengthen activities that build ‘voice’ and agency of Muslim women (especially the poor), particularly at the meso (city) and macro (state or country) level, in order to transform accountability relationships both at the state and community levels. This research project, initiated and implemented by Yugantar, was carried out in the cities of Baroda, Hyderabad and Mumbai, as well as in the rural areas of Sabarkantha, Dangs and Dahod in Gujarat.

The themes around which testimonies have been recorded include:

- Experiences of women who have taken on leadership roles;
- Changes in the traditional roles of women;
- Accountability and responsiveness of state machinery;
- Living with fear and its impact on women;
- Changes in economic dependencies between the communities;
- New economic roles played by women;
- Family relations; and
- Changing perceptions of religious leaders and other male leaders towards women.

We conducted the research and implemented the project in Mumbai, involving in-depth case studies of 15 women and also preparing profile of the communities from which the
cases studies have been taken. The preliminary findings of this study reinforce the fact that women victims of communal violence have indeed played a leadership role within their families and communities, thereby challenging the traditional notion of public-private divide. At the time of this Report going into print, the final report of the study was awaited.

IC. IMAGINE A NEW SOUTH ASIA (INSA)

Imagine a New South Asia (INSA) is a broad-based citizens’ campaign to advance a shared sense of South Asian vision and mission to promote policy convergence on key issues, more regional cooperation, joint initiative at the government and civil society levels. It seeks to promote the vision of a peaceful, prosperous, just and democratic South Asia. To realize its objective INSA created a task force to work on various themes. One of the themes was peace and justice – an issue that our organization has been working on since inception.

As part of the task force, we contributed to the campaign by carrying out a survey of 100 men and women who have been in conflict situations to understand their ideas of peace and justice. Apart from this we also held five focus group discussions and interviews of 5 eminent people. The results of the surveys, discussions and the interviews are being tabulated and analyzed and the same would be published shortly by Action Aid, India which has initiated and supported the study.

ID. NEED ASSESSMENT STUDY ON GROUPS OF MARGINALIZED WOMEN

Our mandate is to build capacities of and empower marginalized and underprivileged women. Apart from working with groups of underprivileged women from Muslim communities, we felt a need to extend our activities to work with new groups of marginalized women. The following marginalized groups were identified: sex workers, women prisoners and physically-challenged women. We initiated a pilot study on each of these issues, involving a literature review, a detailed survey of organizations working on each of these issues (Mumbai specifically but also elsewhere), existing policies, programmes and efforts on each of these issues and identifying the gaps between existing efforts and the need at the ground level. This study will help us in commencing activities with one or two marginalized groups of women. Needless to say, we aim at building the capacities of the most vulnerable, invisible groups where interventions by non-profit organizations have been minimal or non-existent. This study is being concluded in June – July 2009, subsequent to which our Board of Trustees will consider the findings of the study for future course of action.

IE. STUDY ON ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION MECHANISMS & THE ROLE OF COMMUNITY-BASED INTERVENTIONS

There are multiple implementing agencies that make quazi-legal interventions on issues pertaining to violence against women and family laws, in addition to the formal legal system. In case of the Muslim community there exist shariah courts, qazis, muftis (religious clerics) and jamaats (sect arbitration councils) that also arbitrate and settle family disputes. Muslim women access these bodies more readily as they have closer contacts with the
community unlike the secular court structures, which are more expensive and are time-
consuming. Though accessible, these bodies are dominated by men with a patriarchal
and conservative mindset, whose actions are often based on anti-women interpretation of
religious texts, and hence undermine the interests of women.

Many women’ organizations offer legal counseling to women including Muslim women.
However, when it comes to providing legal aid, they refer the women to lawyers. Some
organizations, such as ours, have built the capacity of community-based women’s groups
(mahila mandals) to become para-legal workers, and to make quazi-legal interventions on
behalf of a woman in distress, including networking with the local police, state commissions
for women, minority rights and human rights, and other government institutions. As a
result of widespread incidence of domestic violence and the inability of state structures to
remedy the situation, such informal systems have emerged and are gaining approval form
the state. Nari adalats and mahila panchayats use innovative community responses to tackle
violence against women living in communities. Mandated by Article 39A of the
Constitution, these nyaya panchayats are people’s courts with people-friendly systems and
procedures.

In Mumbai, in the last decade, many mahila mandals have played a crucial role in making
quazi-legal interventions on behalf of women in distress within their communities, even
in the absence of a theoretical understanding of gender, patriarchy, feminism and the laws.
Such mahila mandals, functioning as alternative dispute resolution mechanisms, enjoy the
confidence of the entire community, which is the foundation on which the success of their
strategies lies. Partnerships and symbiosis relationships also emerge between members
of such mahila mandals and legal professionals who initiate litigation on behalf of distressed
women in courts, when required.

We have initiated a study that seeks to explore this partnership and suggest ways in which
the work of the mahila mandals could be developed into a sustainable system. This is a
comparative study that looks at alternative dispute resolution mechanisms developed by
women living in communities in Gujarat, Tamil Nadu and Mumbai.

The objectives of the study are:

- to understand the origins of alternative dispute resolution mechanisms developed
  by women living in communities, their growth and strategies in making interventions
  on behalf of women in distress;
- to evaluate their contribution to assisting women in distress, in the context of other
  formal and informal structures for dispute resolution; and
- to analyze the relevance (or otherwise) of their work in relation to the recent initiative
  taken by the Indian judiciary on alternative dispute resolution.

In addition to a doctrinal approach and a study of documented cases, we have also
interviewed women in distress who have benefited through such interventions. This study,
when completed, is expected to augment our conceptual understanding on the work and
role of such mechanisms developed by underprivileged women in Mumbai and their
contribution to assisting women in distress. We are convinced that the study would
positively impact our activities pertaining to community outreach.
II. RESEARCH FOR CAPACITY-BUILDING

Capacity-building has been the back-bone of our organization’s work. Information dissemination, in particular, is a major aspect of capacity-building activities. For information dissemination to be effective, we believe that it not only needs to be backed by sound research but also updated periodically. For this purpose, we undertake ongoing research pertaining to women’s rights, human rights and the law. The training modules prepared are used for information dissemination programmes with varied groups of beneficiaries. These include women, adolescent girls and youths living in communities, as well as with members of community-based organizations, non-profit organizations, police, lawyers and students of law and social work. Please see Table 3.1 on page 51 of this Report for research topics undertaken for capacity-building activities.

III. RESEARCH FOR CAMPAIGN & ADVOCACY

III.A. RESEARCH ON SUPREME COURT JUDGMENTS ON MUSLIM LAW & WOMEN’S RIGHTS

Many path-breaking judgments of the Supreme Court on Muslim law and women’s rights are not known to lay persons, particularly women. Hence, practices that adversely affect women’s rights continue to exist and remain mostly unchallenged in courts of law. As a response to this situation, we undertook a law research to identify, collect, compile, summarize and analyse pro-women judgments of the Supreme Court on Muslim law. A primary objective of this research is to contribute to bridging the existing gap between the law and practice, by disseminating information on landmark judgments of the Supreme Court on Muslim law and women’s rights.

We believe that such judgments have the potential to strengthen individual and collective struggles of Muslim women for equality and justice in the family sphere. The judgments are useful not only for lawyers representing Muslim women in courts of law on matrimonial issues, but also for members of mahila mandals, mahila panchayats, special cells, mahila courts, persons involved in informal dispute resolution mechanisms as well as the judiciary. The aim is to equip the readers with pro-women judgments of the Supreme Court, which may strengthen and inform the process of negotiating and adjudicating upon the matrimonial rights of the Muslim woman.

The research findings were published in 2007 through a book titled 'Supreme Court Speaks: Judgments on Muslim Law and Women’s Rights'. It contains judgments on the issues of marriage, matrimonial remedies and property / economic rights of women. For more details, please see page 56 of this Report under 'Publications'.

IIII.B. VICTIM & WITNESS PROTECTION

Due to the fact that no law exists in India on the issue of protecting victims and witnesses, the higher judiciary in India has been issuing repeated guidelines on witness protection, especially in the context of the Gujarat carnage 2002. We believe that the issue of victim and witness protection is pertinent in contexts of mass crimes such as communal violence. We conducted a study of the issue of victim and witness protection, which included the following components:
Table 3.1: Topics Researched for Capacity-Building Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Women's Rights</th>
<th>Muslim Family Law</th>
<th>Other Laws</th>
<th>Human Rights</th>
<th>International Criminal Court</th>
<th>Skill-building in Communities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indian Women's Movement and the Use of Law</td>
<td>Basic Understanding on Quran, Sharia, Hadis and Fiqha</td>
<td>Introduction to Law</td>
<td>Basics of Human Rights</td>
<td>Fundamentals of ICC</td>
<td>Stress Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women's Rights in the International Arena</td>
<td>Meher, Polygamy and Concept of Marriage in Islam</td>
<td>Structure of Courts</td>
<td>Women's Rights as Human Rights</td>
<td>Crimes under ICC</td>
<td>Team-building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminism, Gender and Patriarchy</td>
<td>Purdah</td>
<td>Differences Between Civil &amp; Criminal Law</td>
<td>Universal Declaration of Human Rights</td>
<td>Global Dynamics</td>
<td>Leadership Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEDAW</td>
<td>Anti-Women Hadiths and Reality</td>
<td>Fundamental Concepts &amp; Rights in Criminal Law</td>
<td>International Covenant on Civil &amp; Political Rights</td>
<td>India &amp; the ICC</td>
<td>Family Life Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The 'Comfort Women' Phenomenon</td>
<td>Muslim Women's Identity</td>
<td>Matrimonial Laws, Family Courts &amp; The Debate on Uniform Civil Code</td>
<td>International Covenant on Social, Economic &amp; Cultural Rights</td>
<td>Gender Integration in the ICC</td>
<td>Counselling Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women Human Rights Defenders in India</td>
<td>Status of Women in Pre-Islamic Society</td>
<td>Gender-Based Violence &amp; The Law</td>
<td>Campaign against Death Penalty</td>
<td>Victims &amp; ICC</td>
<td>Peer Counseling for Single Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Muslim Law Related to Marriage (Statutory and Judge-Made)</td>
<td>Law Related to Dowry Harassment, Domestic Violence, Sexual Harassment at Workplace &amp; Sexual Assault</td>
<td>Right against Torture as a Human Right</td>
<td>Situations Handled by the ICC</td>
<td>Public Speaking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Triple Talaq</td>
<td>Communal Violence Bill</td>
<td></td>
<td>ICC &amp; International Humanitarian Law</td>
<td>Accounts and Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Repressive Laws</td>
<td></td>
<td>ICC &amp; CEDAW</td>
<td>Report-writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A Visual Tour of the ICC</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Philosophy Behind Advocating the Rights of Victims & Witnesses;  
Existing Safeguards under Indian Law;  
Experiences of Other Countries;  
Programmes in International Tribunals;  
Programme of the International Criminal Court;  
Lessons for India; and  
Conclusion, Issues and Dilemmas

The findings of the study were published in the form of an article titled ‘Intimidated Witness and Victims: Treated with Hostility’ in Combat Law – a human rights magazine, Volume 2 Issue 5, December – January 2004. The study formed the basis to commence advocacy work on the issue, discussed in detail in Chapter 4 of this Report.

In 2005, the Law Commission of India prepared a consultation paper on the issue and invited suggestions and feedback from civil society in this regard. We sent a critique and suggestions, including provisions in international law that could be used for setting standards for law reform in India. The critique was published in Combat Law, Volume 4 Issue 1, April – May 2005. When we visited the Law Commission of India in November 2007, we took the opportunity to persuade its members to renew their efforts to build consensus on a draft law on victim and witness protection. We look forward to further engagement with the issue.

IIIC. COMMUNAL VIOLENCE BILL

A historic neglect has existed in making persons accountable for mass crimes against women in India. While the civil society in India is grappling with ways in which the legal system can be improved, especially in the context of the Gujarat carnage 2002, the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government formulated a draft of The Communal Violence (Prevention, Control and Rehabilitation of Victims) Bill, 2005 in 2006. Although this Bill is a vast improvement on the toothless Communal Violence (Suppression) Bill 2005, this draft too contained few new or innovative provisions that would facilitate justice for mass crimes against women, falling back instead on existing laws and mechanisms that have been a proved failure in such contexts.

We are part of a larger group of like-minded organizations and individuals that has been spear-heading the campaign on the Communal Violence Bill for the past few years. We, along with like-minded individuals and organizations, presented a feminist critique of the draft law, organized consultative meetings in various cities, and played an active role in drafting a memorandum to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Home Affairs.

The consultative meetings and the drafting of memoranda needed to be backed by research, not only of the provisions of the Bill themselves, but also comparing the same with the reality in India in terms of mass crimes against women, recommendations made by Commissions of Inquiry set up by the government to enquire into various contexts of communal violence, directives of the judiciary in this regard, the responses of international law in similar contexts and an analysis of provisions that would be appropriate to strengthen Indian law on the issue. For the purpose of the consultative meetings, we
undertook a research and compiled relevant documents including:

- Chronology of Events Related to Communal Violence Bill;
- Salient Features of the Bill;
- Summary of Critiques;
- Summary of Alternative Drafts;
- Memorandum to Standing Committee on Home Affairs;
- Report of Consultative Meetings; and
- Draft Resolution & Suggested Non-Negotiables.

The compilation and research documents were used as tools for disseminating information and garnering civil society support to the campaign in 2006 and 2007.

III.D. CAMPAIGN FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF SRIKRISHNA COMMISSION REPORT

We have engaged with the issue of implementation of Srikrishna recommendations that enquired into communal violence in Mumbai 2002-2003 for the past several years. For details of the context and history of the campaign, please see Chapter 4 of this Report.

In this campaign, WRAG has worked in close collaboration with other organizations in Mumbai including Nirbhay Bano Andolan, Aawaz-e-Niswan, Citizens for Peace and Justice, Communalism Combat, Dilassa, Forum Against Oppression of Women, Hukook-e-Niswaan, India Centre for Human Rights and Law, Jan Jagruti Manch, Joy Social Group, Lok Rajnaitik Manch, Majlis, National Alliance of People’s Movements, National Campaign for Dalit Human Rights, Nirmala Niketan College of Social Work, Republican Sena, Samatavadi Chatra Bharati, Shahu Phule Vichar Manch, YUVA and other organizations and networks.

As in other campaigns, this phase of the campaign for implementation of Srikrishna Commission recommendations required a comprehensive study of recommendations made by the Commission, action taken by successive governments consequently, experiences of survivors of communal violence, ground realities and the gaps in implementation of the recommendations. We undertook some aspects of this study, which subsequently influenced the strategies that were chalked out collectively by members of civil society, and in formulating demands of the campaign.

III.E. RESEARCH INITIATIVE OF ICC-INDIA CAMPAIGN

Through ICC-India campaign – a project of WRAG – we have initiated a study on mass crimes in India, legal responses and initiatives in this regard, and the relevance of international legal standards including the International Criminal Court (ICC) for the same. The climate of impunity for mass crimes such as communal violence and atrocities against dalits and adivasis that has prevailed in India has necessitated this research. Various factors exist for impunity for mass crimes in India, including a legal requirement of prior sanction for prosecution of government officials, inadequate laws and procedures to prosecute for mass crimes, lack of impartial investigation and efficient prosecution, setting up of Commissions of Inquiry whose recommendations are not binding on state governments, scuttling of justice through perpetrators’ political clout, lack of political will to prosecute...
perpetrators, enactment and use of repressive laws that give unfettered powers to the police and armed forces and a lack of witness protection measures. In the light of the existing climate of impunity for mass crimes within the country, we are convinced that there are important lessons to be learnt from the response of international law to situations of mass crimes, such as the standards set by the ICC. In particular, we hope that the study could help identify lacunae in existing Indian laws that contribute to the climate of impunity. Such an understanding is imperative to initiate reforms in the domestic legal system, so that individual perpetrators of mass crimes maybe more effectively prosecuted and brought to justice.

The research was initiated in late 2007; a major part of the work took place in 2008. This study is sought to be completed and published in 2009 by a renowned publishing house. The study focuses on many topics that are of contemporary relevance such as rights of women, victims and persons of alternate sexuality, atrocities against *dalits*, mass crimes as crimes against humanity, law related to genocide, the Indian military system, punishments and transitional justice. Contributors to this research consist of a mix of academics, advocates, social scientists and activists. The research papers are being co-edited by Ms. Vahida Nainar and Ms. Saumya Uma of WRAG.

### IV. PUBLICATIONS

During the time period January 2002 to June 2009, we have published a total of 19 books, in three languages, namely English, Hindi and Urdu. Apart from reports of our activities, the publications focus on topics such as Muslim family law, rights of single and destitute women, human rights, and the International Criminal Court. Please see pages 55-58 of this Report for a summary of the contents of each publication.
Unpacking Human Rights: Concepts, Campaigns & Concerns is a reader on human rights for the use of students of bachelors courses who undergo a foundation course on human rights, as well as for educators, human rights advocates, activists and social scientists. The publication, edited by Saumya Uma, consists of eight chapters written by six authors who have several years of experience in human rights education. The book has been made reader-friendly and contains relevant photographs and suggested activities. Co-published by WRAG and Documentation Research and Training Centre (DRTC), 2009, English, 184 pages.


Islam Mein Mahilaon Ka Sablikaran is a Hindi translation of a book titled ‘Empowerment of Women in Islam with Special Reference to Marriage and Divorce’ authored by Dr. Zeenat Shaukat Ali. The publication focusses on marriage and divorce in Islam and the matrimonial rights of women during marriage and upon divorce. Published by WRAG in February 2009, Hindi, 443 pages. Translated in Hindi by Sudhir Joglekar.

Islam Mein Vivahsanstha is a Hindi translation and compilation of selected chapters of the book ‘Empowerment of Women in Islam with Special Reference to Marriage and Divorce’ authored by Dr. Zeenat Shaukat Ali. Published by WRAG in July 2007, Hindi, 120 pages. Translated in Hindi by Sudhir Joglekar.

The Supreme Court Speaks: Judgments on Muslim Law & Women's Rights, authored by Saumya Ulma, contains a compilation of pro-women judgments by the Supreme Court on issues pertaining to Muslim family law. It explains 18 landmark judgments in a simple language and briefly analyzes the impact and usefulness of the judgments for furthering women’s rights. Published by Women’s Research & Action Group, November 2007, English, 50 pages.

Our Voice (Humaari Aawaaz), authored by Shilpa Kashelkar-Nipunge, contains the findings of a study on needs of single and destitute women in Mumbai, undertaken by WRAG in 2005-2006. The findings of this research have shaped our subsequent interventions and capacity-building activities with groups of single and destitute women living in communities in Mumbai. Published by Women’s Research & Action Group, 2006, 56 pages (English), 56 pages (Hindi). Translated in Hindi by Monika Kulkarni.

International Criminal Court: Conversations with Indian Parliamentarians, contains a transcript of speeches and discussions held at a consultative meeting organized by the ICC-India campaign with Parliamentarians in December 2005. Co-published by WRAG and People’s Watch Tamil Nadu, 2005, English, 52 pages.


The publication, International Criminal Court & India: Some Questions & Answers, authored by Saumya Uma, brought out in October 2004, contains answers to frequently raised questions on the ICC and its relevance to India. Published by Women’s Research & Action Group, 2004, 49 pages (English); 2006, 63 pages (Hindi). Translated in Hindi by Sudhir Joglekar.

A set of five booklets on Muslim Personal Law, authored by Noorjehan Safia Niaz, focuses on issues of Muslim law and women’s rights, including history of development of Islamic law, sources of Islamic law, divorce, maintenance and other relevant laws. Published by Women’s Research & Action Group, 2003 in English, Hindi & Urdu. Translated in Hindi and Urdu by Feroze Ashraf.

ICC-India campaign’s first publication, titled ‘Combating Impunity’, is a compilation of published and unpublished articles written on the relevance of ICC for India. Vahida Nainar and Saumya Uma have compiled the articles. Published by Women’s Research & Action Group in 2003, 138 pages (English); 2006, 160 pages (Hindi). Translated in Hindi by Feroze Ashraf.
Release & Review of Our Publications

3.1 Release of 'Combating Impunity' at a Workshop on International Criminal Court & Women's Rights by Ms. Nehama Jeyawardene and Ms. Ramani Muttettuwegama, April 2003

3.2 Release of set of five books on Muslim Personal Law by Ms. Anees Syed, August 2003

3.3 Release of 'Our Voice' by Ms. Vahida Nainar, June 2006

3.4 Book review of 'Our Voice'

3.5 Release of 'Supreme Court Speaks: Judgments on Muslim Law & Women's Rights' by Dr. Asgarali Engineer at the 1st Annual Convention of Bharatiya Muslim Mahila Andolan, November 2007

4. CAMPAIGN & ADVOCACY

As an active member in the women’s movement, with experience in working with marginalized and underprivileged women living in communities, and as a partner in the larger movement for human rights, we engage in the activity of campaign and advocacy on a range of issues on human rights, women's rights and the law.

Objectives of our campaign and advocacy activities are:

- To ensure that the reality of women’s experiences in general, and that of marginalized, underprivileged women in particular, reflect in and impact the formulation of laws and policies;
- To demand justice and accountability of perpetrators of human rights violations, particularly for violence against women;
- To promote and integrate a gender perspective into existing and future laws; and
- To explore the relevance and application of internationally-recognized human rights norms and standards to Indian laws.

Our advocacy work focuses on impacting political processes, formulation and implementation of law and policy through information dissemination, alliance-building, critiquing legal initiatives and Bills, responding to judgments of courts of law, campaigning on violations of rights and engaging in the process of law reform. Through this activity we work in partnership with groups of marginalized women and communities, as well as like-minded individuals and groups engaged in advocacy initiatives.

I. CAMPAIGNS INITIATED BY US

A. MUSLIM FAMILY LAW & WOMEN’S RIGHTS

As an offshoot of the research on ‘Women & Law in the Muslim Community’ undertaken by us from 1994 to 1998, where we found that Muslim women wanted changes in law, we have been working on issues confronting Muslim family law and women’s rights. In the past few years, our work on Muslim family law has extended from information dissemination in communities to a campaign for law reforms, highlighting the anti-women practices that exist at the ground level with regard to Muslim family law, and making demands for a just law that integrates women’s rights and concerns. In this process, we have associated ourselves with diverse players including religious leaders, community leaders, police, commission for women at the state and national levels, commission for minorities at the state and national levels, All India Muslim Personal Law Board and the media.
A.1 Promoting a Progressive Nikahnama

Our organization is a founding member of the Muslim Women’s Rights Network that was created in 1999 to address the issue of Muslim family law reform. From the years 1999 to 2006, we played an active role in the Network, and undertook the responsibility of drafting a nikahnama (standard marriage contract), incorporating into the same conditions to protect the interests of the women. The final draft of this contract paper was prepared by our organization in collaboration with other organizations and in consultation with many Qazis (religious leaders) and lawyers. In the past three years, we have conducted over 35 marriages in the community using the progressive nikahnama, both for renewal of marriage vows as well as for new marriages. In addition, women’s groups in Gujarat, Kerala and other states have also started using the nikahnama prepared by us to the benefit of women. This nikahnama has been widely disseminated to groups and individuals all over India with the view of protecting and promoting Muslim women’s matrimonial rights. Please see page 83 of this Report for photographs and press coverage on the use of the progressive nikahnama by us in the communities we work in.

A.2 Information Dissemination

From 1998 onwards, information on Muslim family law and women’s rights has been disseminated to members of over 26 mahila mandals in Mumbai that are situated in Muslim bustis. We initially carried this out through informal weekly / monthly trainings within each mahila mandal. In 2003, when a 6 month Certificate Course on Women & Law was commenced for women and girls belonging to underprivileged communities of Mumbai, Muslim family law was incorporated into the syllabus of the same. Atleast 8 batches have completed the course from 2003 to December 2008, comprising of over 430 women and girls.

A federation of community based women’s groups (mahila mandals) comprising mainly of Muslim women was formed in 2005. The objective was to consolidate the activities of mahila mandals and bring them under one umbrella for taking up issues at the policy level. From the years 2005-2008, the members of the federation received intensive training on Muslim law and women’s rights. The following topics were covered:

- Conceptual clarity on issues such as Quran, sunnah, hadees and fiqh;
- Quranic injunction on marriage, divorce, maintenance and polygamy;
- Concepts of purdah, gender equality and inequality in Islam;
- Distinction between various sources of Islamic law; and
- Politics of interpretation of Quranic verses.

Apart from working with women and girls living in communities, we have also extended our information dissemination activities to members of community-based organizations, non-profit organizations and social activists. In this regard, details of events that we organized / participated in are as follows:

- 2007 & 2008 – We have organized and conducted workshops on Muslim family law and women’s rights in various states including Maharashtra, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh,
Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Orissa, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. These workshops have been held in collaboration with local women’s groups.

- **December 2006** - Participated in a 3 day National Camp on Rights of Muslim Women in Islam organized by Centre for Study of Society and Secularism, Mumbai.
- **November 2006** - Organized and conducted a workshop on Muslim family law with the activists of *Aman Samuday*, in Ahmedabad.
- **November 2006** - Workshop on ‘Land, Resources & Matrimonial Rights of Muslim Women’ at Indian Social Forum, co-organized by WRAG and Consult on Women & Land Rights. Over 200 persons, including activists, academics, college students and NGO representatives participated in the same. WRAG staff made presentations on Muslim family law and women’s rights.
- **August 2006** – National workshop on Muslim law and women’s rights, co-organized by WRAG and Centre for Study of Society and Secularism.
- **August 2006** - A seminar was jointly organized by WRAG and other organizations to discuss issues concerning Muslim women in the present context of communal politics. A resolution was unanimously passed in the meeting asking for a ban on unilateral divorce, polygamy, and inclusion of the women’s delegated right to divorce. The women demanded gender-just Muslim family law based on the principles of equality and justice as enshrined in the Constitution of India.
- **June 2006** - Perspective-building programme for *Saathi* group of youth and men.
- **April 2006** – Capacity-building of staff of *Disha* – the only women’s organization in Uttaranchal to work with Muslim women.
- **January 2006** - Capacity-building of staff of *Mahila Patchwork* – a women’s organization based in Ahmedabad – on the issue of Muslim law.
- **September 2004** – Participated in a seminar on family laws, organized by K.C. Law College and National Commission for Women. Presentations on Muslim law were made by WRAG staff.
- **June 2004** – A 2-day workshop was organized to discuss the provisions for Muslim women in Muslim personal law with a focus on codified and uncoded laws of divorce and maintenance. Participants were members of community-based and non-profit organizations.
- **March 2003** – The first workshop with non-profit and community-based organizations on the issue of Muslim family law and women’s rights was held, organized by WRAG. Please find photographs of some of the events mentioned above on page 84 of this Report.

Another aspect of information dissemination is our effort in popularizing positive judgments of the Supreme Court on women’s rights pertaining to Muslim family law. Through the 2007 publication titled ‘Supreme Court Speaks’, we compiled 18 judgments on various aspects of Muslim women’s matrimonial rights, including on marriage, matrimonial remedies and property rights, and explained the judgments in simple language, and analyzed the usefulness of each such judgment in furthering the cause of Muslim women’s matrimonial rights. While we brought out the publication in English, other organizations have taken initiative to translate the same into regional languages as they find the same useful for their effort in furthering the cause of Muslim women’s rights.
in family law in various parts of the country. More details about the publication are stated in page 56 of this Report.

A.3 Protests, Rallies and Demonstrations

In June 2005, along with other organizations, we visited some of the communities that we work with in Mumbai. We observed the strong influence of conservative forces from the Wahabi group – a sub-sect of the Muslim community - in these communities. The group had issued fatwas (religious edicts) asking women to refrain from using cosmetics, going out of their homes, or entering restaurants unless accompanied by men. It had forcibly stopped marriage ceremonies that use loudspeakers, musical instruments or have ceremonies involving applying of turmeric on the bride, as it considered these to be Hindu practices. We, along with women living in such communities, protested against such measures that narrowed women’s democratic spaces and choices, through acts of defiance in the communities.

In July 2005, a Muslim woman, Imrana, was raped by her father-in-law in the state of Uttar Pradesh. Rather than initiating criminal action against the perpetrator, the local representatives of the community issued a fatwa (religious edict) stating that Imrana’s marriage to her husband was dissolved. WRAG, along with other individuals and organizations, held a mass demonstration on 23 July 2005 to protest against this fatwa, expressing our anger at the violation of women’s right to live with dignity. The demonstration strongly condemned the rising strength of extra-judicial forces such as the shariah jamaat all over the country, including in Mumbai. Many organizations participated in the demonstration and the rally. The rally passed through the largest Muslim ghettos in Mumbai and areas that are home to many conservative religious organizations. Please see pages 80-81 and 107 of this Report for photographs and press coverage of the demonstration.

A.4 Rapport-building with Religious Leaders

Most religious clerics (qazis) have opposed the women’s organizations’ work in crisis intervention on behalf of Muslim women, accusing us of encouraging divorce and helping assert women’s rights that they see to be against the religious tenets of Islam. However, in the last few years, we have established a good rapport with at least 5-6 qazis who are progressive in their outlook to Muslim women’s rights. Through our rapport-building efforts with such persons, we have secured their support in mahila mandals’ efforts in intervening in domestic violence and other matrimonial problems on behalf of community women. Such qazis have also helped conduct Muslim marriages using the progressive nikahnama that protects and promotes women’s matrimonial rights. For more details, please see Chapter 6 under the head ‘Networking with Community and Religious Leaders’. The campaign sees the religious leaders as an important and influential group to work with, and will intensify its dialogue with such leaders in forthcoming years.

A.5 Engaging with the Media

The campaign on Muslim family law reform has held press conferences from time to time, to condemn regressive and anti-women moves made by conservative forces including the All India Muslim Personal Law Board. The press conferences have highlighted the
experiences and demands of ordinary Muslim women living in communities, and rejected conservative interpretations of religious texts and provisions propagated by self-appointed representatives of the Muslim community. In addition to organizing and addressing press conferences, we have also written letters to the editor and facilitated media coverage of our activities pertaining to Muslim family law and women’s rights. To increase the campaign’s outreach, we have, from time to time, written articles on various related issues on rights of women under Muslim family law. These have been published in newspapers and journals in English, Hindi, Marathi and Urdu. For further details, please see Chapter 5 of this Report – Engaging with the Media.

A.6 Advocacy

Advocacy with regards to the Muslim family law campaign was commenced in 2006 after the members of the Federation of mahila mandals felt ready to voice out their issues in public forums.

- **National / State-level Consultations:** We felt the need to create a platform where Muslim women themselves would be able to articulate the demand for a just Muslim family law that could be based on the Constitution and the liberal interpretations of the Quranic injunctions. A 3-day National consultation on Muslim personal law was organized for this purpose in December 2006. This Consultation had a participation of over 111 persons from 10 states and 58 organizations, consisting of social activists, journalists and lawyers. It was concluded in this meeting that WRAG would take the initiative in drafting an alternative Muslim family law. Innovative suggestions came forward from the participants which were to be eventually incorporated in a law drafted by us along with eminent lawyers and scholars in the following year. This Consultation was the first step in evolving a Muslim law that integrates a gender perspective. This was followed by a National Consultation in 2007 and state-level consultations in 2008. The consultations created a platform to discuss proposed reforms in Muslim family law in a constructive manner. Further they provided a great opportunity to meet women’s groups from across the country, share information and resources, and to formulate collective strategies to address issues of common concern. Please see page 84 of this Report for photographs of the Consultations.

- **Interactions with State Commission for Minorities:** In January 2006, the State Commission for Minorities, a statutory government body, invited civil society groups to discuss issues concerning religious minorities. Representatives from the National Commission for Minorities were also present at the meeting. We participated in the meeting and made a brief presentation on the issue of legal reforms for the Muslim community and suggested that the Commission take the initiative in suggesting gender-just reforms in Muslim family law. The Commission subsequently formed a cell called Women’s Initiative for the Socio-Economic development (WISE) in March 2006, with the purpose of addressing issues pertaining to Muslim women. Our organization is a member of WISE. Reproduced on page 121 of this Report are photographs of our meetings with the State Commission for Minorities.

- **Drafting Muslim Family Law:** The experience of mahila mandals that we work with in making crisis interventions on behalf of Muslim women and family law led to a
conviction that Muslim family law needs urgent reform with an integration of women’s rights concerns. Based on the mandate given to WRAG by the participants of the National Consultation held in December 2006, we commenced the process of drafting an ideal Muslim family law on marriage and divorce. The process involved law research as well as continuous consultations with members of mahila mandals, Muslim women leaders, lawyers, Islamic scholars, women’s organizations and other like-minded groups. In addition, persons working on Muslim family law and women’s rights in other parts of the world were also consulted for their feedback and suggestions. In 2007 and 2008, we have coordinated state level meetings to understand and compile views and experiences of community women, customary practices of communities and strategies and best practices in legal interventions. For more details, please see Chapter 6 - under the sub-head ‘Collaborative Activities with CBOs and NPOs’.

Some of the salient features of the proposed law include a ban on the practice of polygamy and oral unilateral divorce, as well as a unique formula for ensuring the economic rights of women during the subsistence of marriage, including mehr. The process of drafting an ideal law would not have been possible without the inputs and experiences of hundreds of Muslim women who have been making quazi-legal interventions on behalf of Muslim women. In Mumbai, we have worked closely with the federation of mahila mandals, called the Hukook-e-Niswaan Mahila Sanghatana. This Federation, consisting of over 25 mahila mandals representing more than 5000 women, has provided useful insights on the experiences and pressures that women living in communities face with regard to Muslim family law, and the impact of such experiences and pressures on the women’s right to live with dignity. Such insights have formed the basis for the draft law formulated by us.

The process of formulating an alternative Muslim family law has been a challenging yet enriching one for us, as we see Muslim women participating in a historical process of drafting their family law - a process that has so far been the prerogative of the Muslim male religious leaders with a patriarchal mindset. At the end of the year 2008, the draft law is ready, which would be taken up for further consultations in the present and forthcoming years.

A.7 Alliance-building

WRAG has been a founder and active member of the Muslim Women’s Rights Network since 1999 – a network consisting of secular groups, feminist and community-based organizations. In the year 2006, based on differences in the ideology, priority areas of work and methods of functioning among the members of the Network, we, along with other organizations, felt the need to create an alternative platform where Muslim women, particularly those living in communities, could freely air their concerns and take active steps to ameliorate their conditions. Such like-minded groups and individuals came together and formed the Bharatiya Muslim Mahila Andolan (BMMA). We are a founding member of BMMA.

As part of the alliance-building efforts, we have undertaken exposure visits to organizations situated in other states that are working on the issue. In the past few years, we have visited COVA and Shaheen in Hyderabad, Olakh, Sahiyar and Anandi in Gujarat, Tehreek and Bahin in
Uttar Pradesh, Institute for Minority Women in Madhya Pradesh, and STEPS in Tamil Nadu. A key objective of the visits was also to learn from other organizations’ experiences and forge alliances where we could work in collaboration with other groups on the issue of Muslim law reform. In December 2005 and March 2006, we interacted with a Gujarat-based women’s organization called Mahila Patchwork, when its members visited Mumbai on an orientation programme. Such visits promote an exchange of information, strategies, approaches, existing practices that are state and culture-specific, thereby paving way for a greater clarity on reform of Muslim family law. Photographs of our collaborative activities on the issue with other organizations are reproduced on pages 84 & 124 of this Report.

A.8 Formation of a Board of Advisors

We felt the need to have a Board of Advisors that would guide us in the campaign on Muslim family law reform. In 2006, after interactions with many academicians, lawyers, activists and Islamic scholars on the issue, an Advisory Board was formed. Members of the Board include Ms. Anees Syed, Dr. Asgarali Engineer, Dr. Hasnat Mansoor, Dr. Syeda Hameed and Ms. Vahida Nainar.

B. ICC-INDIA: THE INDIAN CAMPAIGN ON THE INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT

The International Criminal Court (ICC) is the first permanent international judicial institution capable of prosecuting individuals for genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. It came into force on 1 July 2002. Known as the “court of last resort,” the ICC is an independent treaty-based institution that is designed to serve as a safety net for use only when national courts are unwilling or unable to prosecute perpetrators of the most serious crimes under international law. The Court is located in The Hague, the Netherlands and is now a fully functional judicial institution. Currently more than hundred countries representing all regions of the world have become members of the ICC’s governing Assembly of States Parties. India has not joined the ICC.

A campaign called ICC-India was started in the year 2000 as a premier project for carrying out an awareness and advocacy campaign in India on the issue of International Criminal Court. ICC-India is an anti-impunity campaign on mass crimes and international law. The activities of the campaign include information dissemination, research and publication, campaign and advocacy and networking and outreach. The campaign works through a nation-wide network of organizations and individuals committed to justice and accountability for mass crimes, with a conviction to end the prevailing climate of impunity in India, especially pertaining to mass crimes. The national secretariat of ICC-India is located within WRAG and functions as a project of our organization.

B.1 Information Dissemination

The most fundamental rationale for the initiation of the ICC-India campaign in 2000 was the apparent lack of awareness about the ICC in India, together with its relevance for the human rights situation in India. There was a realization that an awareness campaign would have to precede advocacy and building of a national support network. With this backdrop, conducting of meetings and workshops to disseminate information about the ICC has been one of the key activities of the ICC-India campaign from the time of its inception.
Between the years 2003-2009, the campaign’s representatives have made presentations on the ICC in over 56 events, of which at least 35 of them were organized by ICC-India, covering 13 states of India. These include meetings, workshops, seminars, training programmes and press conferences with varied groups of beneficiaries including lawyers, law students, academics, human rights activists, representatives of non-profit organizations and social work students. Please see Table 4.1 below for details of the type of events, number of events and the location, and Map 1.3 on page 23 for the geographical distribution of information dissemination activities of ICC-India between the years 2003 and 2009.

### Table 4.1: Details of Information Dissemination Activities of ICC-India 2003-2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Event</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>City level</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Delhi (6), Kolkata, Bhubaneswar (2), Bangalore (2), Chennai, Vishakapatnam, Pune, Mumbai (2), Patiala (2), Jodhpur, Muzaffarnagar, Ajmer, Rangareddy district (A.P.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State level</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Gujarat, Tamil Nadu (2), Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional level</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Southern at Bangalore, Western at Mumbai (2), Northern at Chandigarh, North eastern at Guwahati (2), Eastern region at Jamshedpur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Level</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Delhi (7), Mumbai (3), Jaipur, Patiala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Asian Level</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Bangalore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International level</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Mumbai (World Social Forum), Delhi (2), Kathmandu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Press conferences</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Delhi, Guwahati, Bangalore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total events</td>
<td>56</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In order to make the information dissemination activity more effective and interesting, we have developed training tools including resource kits, power point presentations, case studies, films and posters on many aspects of ICC & India.

Through our experience in conducting information dissemination programmes on ICC & India, we conducted the first residential Training of Trainers (TOT) programme in June 2007, in order to expand the pool of resource persons and increase the multiplier effect of our information dissemination activities. Based on the positive response from participants, we conducted the second Training of Trainers on International Criminal Law. This three day residential training, held on 27 – 28 February and 1 March 2009 in Patiala, had the participation of over 45 teachers and researchers associated with varied academic institutions in the country, from the disciplines of political science, social work, sociology, history, human rights, international law and international relations. Photographs of information dissemination programmes that we organized and participated in are reproduced in pages 85 & 86 of this Report.
**B.2 Research & Publication**

ICC-India campaign is grounded in research-backed advocacy. For the past several years, we have felt a strong need for research, in order to be able to draw linkages between the ICC and the Indian context. Apart from on-going research that feeds into the information dissemination programs of the campaign, we have initiated a research focusing on a comparative analysis of international standards including those set by the ICC with Indian laws and human rights situation in India. More than 12 researchers, consisting of academics, activists and lawyers, are presently preparing their research papers on varied themes related to the ICC and India. For more details, please see Chapter 3, pages 53-54 of this Report.

Since 2003, we have brought out 6 publications in English and 2 in Hindi on ICC & India. These publications have been widely disseminated to civil society groups and like-minded individuals interested in the campaign, and have been used as a part of the information kits provided during the information dissemination programmes. For a summary of each publication, please see Chapter 3, pages 56-57 of this Report. In addition to the publications, we have been contributing articles that have appeared in mainstream newspapers and journals, in order to generate public opinion and provide a platform for discussion and debate on the issue of ICC and its relevance to human rights in India.

**B.3 Advocacy work with Parliamentarians & Policy Makers**

The advocacy activities of ICC-India have revolved around efforts at enhancing the political influence of ICC-India by expanding the NGO support-base for the campaign within the country. With the change in government in May 2004, the feedback received from our advisors and the support and encouragement received from campaign partners, we began to work with Parliamentarians and policy makers in 2005. In the past, Parliamentarians such as Fali Nariman, Kapil Sibal, Soli Sorabjee, Eduardo Faleiro, Prema Cariappa and Alka Kshatriya have raised the issue of ICC and the Government of India’s policy on the same in the Parliament. The objective of ICC-India in wanting to engage in a dialogue with Parliamentarians was not to convince or to urge the MPs to take positions, but to disseminate information that would facilitate an informed discussion on the possible relevance of the ICC to India, situated within a global perspective.

On 3 August 2005, we initiated the first formal discussion with Indian Parliamentarians on the ICC when the Parliamentarian Group on Human Rights convened a meeting in Parliament House, New Delhi, to discuss the issue of ‘International Criminal Court & India’. The participants consisted of more than 40 Parliamentarians from Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha (Upper and Lower Houses respectively), belonging to various political parties. Parliamentarians Sudarsana Nachiappan, Pawan Kumar Bansal and the late Nirmala Deshpande, as well as Saumya Uma of WRAG, addressed the participants.

This meeting which was planned as a preliminary discussion evoked immense interest and curiosity in the issue among the participants. A long list of queries on the ICC and its implications for India were raised, which could not be responded to at the event due to a paucity of time. We answered the queries subsequently and published them as a small pocket book titled *International Criminal Court: Responses to Queries Raised by*
In response to this suggestion, we organized the second consultative meeting with Parliamentarians, timed to coincide with the visit to India of Judge Philippe Kirsch – erstwhile President of the ICC - in December 2005. This meeting was organized by the Parliamentarian Forum on Human Rights, in association with ICC-India and other partner organizations working on issues of law, justice and human rights. This meeting gave the parliamentarians an opportunity to receive information, seek clarifications and freely discuss apprehensions and concerns on the issue of the ICC with the President of the ICC. The transcript of this consultative meeting was published, in a book titled International Criminal Court: Conversations with Indian Parliamentarians. For details, please see Chapter 3, page 57 of this Report. Reproduced on pages 86 and 121 of this Report are photographs pertaining to our events with Parliamentarians.

In the year 2005 we also commenced advocacy work with Indian policy makers. Discussion meetings were held with National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), Legal and Treaties Division of the Ministry of External Affairs, National Commission for Women, National Commission for Minorities, National Commission for Scheduled Castes and National Commission on Minority Educational Institutions. Dialogue was also initiated with several European embassies and UN agencies based in India. We believe that it is imperative to continue dialoguing with policy makers and consider it as a focus area in our future advocacy work related to the campaign.

**B.4 Participation in Law Reform Initiatives**

We believe that the ICC sets important international standards which have the potential to be incorporated into Indian law through law reform initiatives. In this regard, we have engaged in domestic law reform initiatives on three issues, namely victim / witness protection, Communal Violence Bill and combating torture.

**Victim and Witness Protection**

In the past few years, the higher judiciary in India has issued repeated guidelines on witness protection, especially in the context of the Gujarat carnage 2002. Taking a cue from this, the Law Commission of India prepared a consultation paper and issued guidelines in this regard. Some of us had already written articles on this issue as the ICC Statute has exceptional provisions which could be used for setting standards for law reform in the area of victim and witness protection. We wrote further articles critiquing the consultation paper. This was published in *Combat Law* (Volume 4, 2005, Issue 1).

We conducted a one day west zone workshop on Victim and Witness Protection in Mumbai in collaboration with India Centre for Human Rights and Law (ICHRL) on 30 April 2005. The event commenced with a discussion of experiences of other countries, statutes of international tribunals and the ICC that have detailed guidelines for victim and witness
protection, proceeded to discuss the Indian experience within and outside courts of law, and concluded with challenges and dilemmas to be countered in formulating a witness protection regime in India. About 45 human rights activists, lawyers and media persons from Maharashtra and Gujarat attended the workshop. The event had nine resource persons including defence lawyers, public prosecutors, women and child rights activists. We made presentations on need for victim and witness protection and challenges for India and plans for future course of action. The workshop ended on a positive note but it was felt that further discussions were required on this issue.

Subsequently, we planned to replicate this exercise in other parts of the country but were unable to do so due to extraneous circumstances. We look forward to further engagement on the issue as and when the government formulates a draft law / rules on victim / witness protection.

**Campaigns on Communal Violence Bill and Torture**

ICC-India campaign has also worked closely with the campaign on Communal Violence Bill and the campaign to combat torture. Right against torture and degrading / inhuman treatment is a basic human right from which no deviation is allowed even during times of national emergency. Torture, when committed in a widespread or systematic manner targeting civilians, also constitutes a “crime against humanity” for which the ICC has the mandate to prosecute perpetrators. We were able to contribute to both these campaigns, which involve domestic law reform initiatives, by facilitating an integration of gender and victims’ rights perspectives, and of international standards / principles / concepts that could be incorporated to strengthen the domestic legal framework to address these issues. *For details of our participation in the campaigns, please see the next section of this chapter, under “Other Campaigns”.*

**B.5 Engaging with the Media**

ICC-India campaign’s media outreach activities started in the year 2005. From time to time, there were a few reports / articles that appeared in national dailies with regard to the ICC, some of which contained erroneous information. Moreover, information dissemination being the backbone of the Indian campaign, we felt strongly that the media could be a partner in this process. Media outreach activities related to ICC-India’s work are aimed at:

- building partnerships with media persons for information dissemination on the issue;
- increasing visibility to the issue; and
- ensuring that information on the ICC and its relevance to India brought out through print and electronic media is accurate and up-to-date.

Some of the ways in which we have engaged with the media on this issue are by

- Sending letters to the editor;
- Initiating letter campaigns & issuing press statements;
Inviting media persons for reporting on programmes organized by the campaign;
Holding press conferences;
Facilitating interviews of key ICC personnel and ICC experts in India with leading newspapers; and
Contacting television channels and collaborating with them to hold and air panel discussions on the issue.

For further details, please see Chapter 5 – ‘Engaging with the Media’. Photographs of press conferences and press coverage related to the ICC in the Indian context can be found on pages 101-103 and 108 of this Report.

B.6 Alliance-building

A Board of Advisors was formed soon after the commencement of the campaign in 2000, in order to guide the campaign in its activities. Members of the Board are eminent persons working on human rights issues in India and abroad, and are a combination of lawyers, activists and academics. The members of the Board at present are

— **Dr. Ahmed Ziauddin**, Convenor, Asian Network for ICC & Director, Bangladesh Centre for Genocide Studies, Belgium
— **Mr. Henri Tiphagne**, Executive Director, People’s Watch - Tamil Nadu, Madurai
— **Mr. Jitendra Sharma**, President, International Association of Democratic Lawyers (IADL) & Senior Advocate, Supreme Court, New Delhi
— **Ms. Maja Daruwala**, Executive Director, Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative, New Delhi
— **Mr. Mihir Desai**, Human rights advocate and Co-Founder, India Centre for Human Rights & Law (ICHRL), Mumbai
— **Dr. Sitaramam Kakarala**, Director, Centre for the Study of Culture and Society (CSCS), Bengaluru
— **Dr. Usha Ramanathan**, law researcher, New Delhi
— **Ms. Vahida Nainar**, Chair, Women’s Initiatives for Gender Justice & Co-Founder, Women’s Research and Action Group, Mumbai
— **Ms. Vrinda Grover**, Human rights advocate and Executive Director, Multiple Research & Action Group (MARG), New Delhi

Our work in the ICC-India campaign is collaborative in nature. Most workshops on ICC & India have been organized in collaboration with local organizations that have shown interest in the issue. While a loose network of individuals and organizations was formed in the year 2000 when the campaign commenced, and has been growing in numbers since then, in 2006, we invited organizations and individuals to become ‘partners’ of the campaign – a formal acknowledgment of their association and involvement with the campaign. As on 1 July 2008, 66 organizations from various states of India, working on human rights issues, have become partners of the Indian campaign, in addition to numerous individuals.
The partnership is at the core of the support base for the campaign. For details of organizational partners of ICC-India campaign, please refer to Table 6.2 on page 130-132 of this Report.

In addition, the campaign has alliances and associations at the regional and international levels, particularly with the New York-based Coalition for International Criminal Court (CICC), Dhaka-based Asian Network on the ICC (ANICC), and other human rights organizations. Representatives of the campaign also participate in regional and international conferences, held abroad and in India. Please see Chapter 6, pages 128-129 of this Report for further details.

An important aspect of the campaign’s alliance-building initiative has been to encourage student internships. In the past 3 years, at least 9 students studying law and international relations have interned with us and have specifically worked on ICC-related issues. We continue to remain in touch with the students and facilitate their participation in our activities, extending far beyond the period of internship.

II. OUR PARTICIPATION IN OTHER CAMPAIGN & ADVOCACY INITIATIVES

We also actively participate in campaigns and advocacy initiatives that are initiated by like-minded individuals and organizations. The extent of participation ranges from extending solidarity to letter campaigns to jointly planning, strategizing, organizing and conducting campaign-related activities with other secular-humanist groups and like-minded individuals. Further our campaign and advocacy initiatives often focus on issues of justice, accountability, implementation of and reforms in the law, incorporating and highlighting the voices of the underprivileged and marginalized communities that our organization works with.

II A. CAMPAIGN ON THE COMMUNAL VIOLENCE BILL

In pursuance of its Common Minimum Programme, in June 2005, the UPA government formulated a draft of The Communal Violence (Suppression) Bill. After severe criticisms from the civil society stating that the Bill was toothless, it presented an improved draft of the Bill in the Parliament in December 2005 titled The Communal Violence (Prevention, Control & Rehabilitation of Victims) Bill 2005. The Bill was then referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Home Affairs for receiving suggestions for its improvement. The Standing Committee tabled its recommendations in the Parliament in December 2006. Many civil society groups and human rights activists, including ours, have expressed serious concerns with regard to provisions of this Bill and have rejected the government version of the Bill, asking instead for a formulation of an entirely new Bill, after wider consultations with civil society groups including groups of victims / survivors of communal violence.

Human rights groups, including WRAG, believe that the Bill does not remedy the present situation of political despotism and hold persons accountable for the violence, irrespective of the person’s political or official position. Instead, it shields perpetrators who are state officials, by requiring the state government’s prior sanction for prosecution of such officials – a sanction left to the will of the government. Further, a matter of serious
concern to us is that the Bill continues to perpetuate the silence around gender-based crimes, despite the fact that in recent times, sexual violence has played a fundamental role as an engine for mobilizing hatred and destruction of vulnerable groups and communities.

We have engaged with this issue since December 2004, when one of the first NGO consultative meetings was held in Mumbai to formulate the Bill through initiatives of human rights organizations. Our specific effort has been directed towards incorporating gender and victims’ / survivors’ perspectives into such a law, and relevant standards and principles from international law. The narrative below outlines our engagement with the Bill at various stages of the campaign:

- **Memorandum to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Home Affairs** - Since the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Home Affairs was given a special mandate to invite suggestions and feedback from members of the civil society to the Bill, like-minded individuals and organizations including ours, formulated and sent a memorandum to the Committee. The memorandum, sent in July 2006, focused on a comprehensive critique of the Bill from the gender perspective.

- **Discussions for Consensus-building** – We held discussion-meetings in various places to work towards consensus-building on the issue among members of civil society. Some of these discussions were organized and initiated by us, either independently or in collaboration with other organizations, while we actively participated in others. These include
  - A half-day meeting on Accountability for Mass Crimes Against Women: Relevance of the International Criminal Court, Delhi, March 2006;
  - A workshop on ‘Communal Violence Bill, 2005’ at the 7th National Conference of Autonomous Women’s Movements in India, Kolkata, September 2006;
  - Discussion-meeting on Communal Violence Bill, Ahmedabad, December 2006;
  - Discussion meeting with law students in National Law University, Jodhpur, January 2007;
  - Seminar on Communal Violence Bill at A.K.Khan Law College, Pune, August 2007;
  - Discussion at College of Social Work – Nirmala Niketan, Mumbai, September 2007; and
  - Seminar at NALSAR University of Law, Hyderabad, October 2007.

*Please see pages 87-88 of this Report for photographs of selected events held on the issue.*

- **Rejection of the Bill by Members of Civil Society** – We participated actively in a National Consultation on The Communal Violence Bill, organized by Anhad and held in Delhi, June 2007. The Consultation, which consisted of former judges of Supreme Court, High Courts, eminent lawyers, jurists and activists, issued a public statement rejecting the Bill in its present form and emphasized the urgency to pressurize the central government into adopting a new appropriate law on the
subject. The public statement was sent to many agencies of the government, including the President of India, Prime Minister, Leader of the Opposition, ministries of Home Affairs and Law.

- **Public Meetings with Victims / Survivors of Communal Violence:** Subsequent to the National Consultation, we focused our efforts on disseminating information about the Bill among communities of survivors of communal violence, and facilitating their voices and experiences to impact law and policy-making in Delhi. In this regard, we held three public meetings in Mumbai in collaboration with other organizations and networks, namely - 5 July 2007 at Dadar, 26 July 2007 at Govandi, and 15 August 2007 in Bandra. Each public meeting had more than 200 participants, mainly from communities of survivors of communal violence. In each of these public meetings, public statements were released rejecting the Communal Violence Bill in its entirety, endorsed by the panellists and the participants. We also participated actively in a similar public meeting held in Ahmedabad in August 2007. *Photographs of the public meetings are reproduced on pages 87-88 of this Report.*

- **Press conferences, media outreach** - As in the case of every successful campaign, we realized that the role of the print and visual media was imperative for the campaign on Communal Violence Bill too. We convened a press conference in Mumbai on 4 July 2007 in collaboration with other human rights organizations to inform the media about the real dangers that the Bill posed. The media took interest and covered the event in several newspapers. On 11 August 2007, WRAG, together with, Sahyog Trust’s Human Rights & Law Defenders, organized a study circle for media persons in Pune on the issue. Maharashtra Herald and other Pune-based newspapers carried articles on the issue in pursuance of the study circle. Media coverage for the public meetings organized by us with communities of victims / survivors of communal violence has also been extensive. *For more details, see Chapter 5 of this Report.* Press coverage on the issue is reproduced on page 104 of this Report.

- **Drafting a Complaint to U.N. Human Rights Council** - On 18 June 2007, one year after its first meeting, and in compliance with General Assembly resolution 60/251, the Human Rights Council of the United Nations established a new mechanism, called the Universal Periodic Review (UPR). Through this mechanism, the Council decided to review on a periodic basis the fulfilment of the human rights obligations of all countries, ensuring that all States, including members of the Council, are treated equally and are subject to a review of their human rights record. Non-governmental organizations have a special role to play in this process by drafting complaints (similar to ‘shadow reports’) highlighting issues on which the respective governments have not complied with their human rights obligations under international law.

India’s review was fixed for the month of April 2008. As one of the groups spearheading the campaign on Communal Violence Bill, we helped draft a complaint on the Bill, highlighting the concerns of members of civil society towards the Bill. The complaint was endorsed by concerned citizens and groups and submitted to the Human Rights Council on 20 November 2007. The act of drafting and submitting a complaint to the U.N. Human Rights Council indicated
an increased level of our advocacy work, and was a learning experience for us in dealing with an international human rights institution for the purpose of advocacy on human rights in India.

- **Drafting a New Law** – On the request of government sources for a new draft, in January 2007, like-minded individuals, including us, worked intensively to put together a new draft that would address the concerns of civil society groups with regard to communal violence. Through this draft, definitions of new crimes were formulated that do not exist under present criminal law in India. The draft also incorporated a victim’s and gender perspective, and provided for the creation of an apparatus within each Sessions Court which will act as an interface between victims and witnesses on one hand, and the court on the other. Mandatory duties of various government agencies were stated, and provisions related to accountability of public officials were included. Further, new concepts derived from international law such as reparations and command / superior responsibility were introduced to make the law more effective. The draft was submitted to the government for its consideration on 24 January 2008.

- **Consultative Meetings on the New Draft** – We were convinced that our responsibility did not end with active participation in the civil society draft on the issue; information with regard to the draft needed to be disseminated to like-minded organizations and individuals all over the country, in order that feedback and suggestions may be elicited from them to further improve the draft, and to expand the support base for taking the campaign ahead. Consultative meetings with academics, human rights activists, lawyers and representatives of non-governmental organizations were also imperative for collectively formulating advocacy strategies. With these purposes, we initiated a series of consultative meetings in Secunderabad, Jaipur, Chennai and Bangalore in 2008, with varied strategic groups. *Photographs of some such meetings are reproduced on pages 87-88 of this Report.*

Our overall efforts on the campaign on Communal Violence Bill have been three-pronged:

a) to facilitate survivors to articulate the type of law required, based on their experiences with communal violence and the obstacles faced in obtaining justice and accountability;

b) to highlight and advocate the necessity for inclusion of sexual and gender-based crimes into the Bill; and

c) to incorporate international standards on mass crimes as and where necessary.

### II B. CAMPAIGN ON IMPLEMENTATION OF SRIKRISHNA COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS ON COMMUNAL VIOLENCE IN MUMBAI (1992-93)

The communal violence that shook Mumbai happened in two phases. The first phase occurred when the Babri Masjid was demolished on 6th December 1992. The second phase occurred between January and March 1993. Following the violence, Justice B.M. Srikrishna (who was a sitting judge in the Mumbai High Court at that time) was appointed as a Commission of Inquiry. He submitted his report in 1998. The Commission, in its report, named 31 police officers against whom it found substantial evidence of indiscriminate
shootings that led to the killings of many civilians, a majority of who were Muslims, and other such cognizable offences. The Commission had therefore recommended that they be prosecuted for their crimes. Some of the prominent cases that the Commission highlighted include the Hari Masjid Case and the case of Sulemaan Usman Bakery. The Commission further recommended that 1371 cases, which had been closed by the government for want of evidence, should be re-opened and re-investigated as there was concrete evidence against the accused in all these cases.

We have been engaged with the issue for the past several years. The campaign has been revived with renewed vigour since August 2007, exacerbated by the many convictions in the Mumbai bomb blast cases that followed the communal violence of ‘92-‘93. Our interventions have been in the following manner:

- Co-convening strategy meetings;
- Media outreach;
- Co-organizing / participating in demonstrations / public protests;
- Lobbying and advocacy efforts with the state and central government and other democratic institutions;
- Drafting a complaint to the U.N. Human Rights Council;
- Support and solidarity with individual survivors of communal violence, including monitoring of pending litigations; and
- Information dissemination, particularly among students.

The campaign is far from over, as the demands articulated by us have not been fulfilled by the government. It would be pursued to its logical end by us as well as other partner organizations involved in the campaign. Please see page 89 of this Report for photographs pertaining to our participation in the campaign.

II C. ENDING IMPUNITY FOR TORTURE

In the past five years, there is a move by many organizations to raise voices of protest against custodial and other forms of torture. Right against torture and degrading / inhuman treatment is a basic human right from which no deviation is allowed even during times of national emergency. We have actively participated in efforts to end impunity for torture through the following activities:

- Participation in information dissemination programmes on torture, victims’ rights and international standards;
- Research and publication of articles;
- Participation as jury members in state-level People’s Tribunals on Torture, in the states of Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Rajasthan, organized by People’s Watch;
- Participation in a National Consultation of Experts on a Domestic Law on Torture; and
- Participation in national and regional (South Asian) conferences and campaigns on the issue.
Custodial torture that the People’s Tribunals deal with is a mass crime that is being committed with impunity in India. It is also a crime against humanity as spelt out in the ICC Statute, when committed in a widespread or systematic manner - as it is in India. Our participation in these tribunals has enriched the work of our organization in general and the ICC-India campaign in particular in combating impunity for mass crimes in India. The interaction with victims / survivors of torture will enhance our work in our understanding and articulating on mass crimes in India and factors contributing to its impunity. More information about the tribunals are available at www.pwtn.org/eupttallstates.htm

II D. PARTICIPATION IN CAMPAIGN FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF SACHAR COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS

The Rajinder Sachar Committee was a high-level committee set up by the Prime Minister’s Office in 2005 for preparing a report on the socio-economic and educational status of the Muslim community in India. It prepared a 403-paged report that was tabled in the Parliament on 30 November 2006. This committee, headed by a retired judge of the Supreme Court, visited Mumbai and gathered recommendations from organizations, educational institutions and representatives of the community. We made a submission on the socio-economic and legal status of women in the communities that we work in. The submission covered issues such as access to education, implementing the recommendations of Srikrishna Commission that enquired into the Hindu-Muslim riots in Mumbai in 1992-3 and Muslim family law and women’s rights.

The Committee’s report contained suggestions and suitable mechanisms to ensure equality of opportunity to Muslims in residential, work and educational spaces, and strategies for mainstreaming the Indian Muslim community. Subsequent to release of the report, we have played an active role by participating in meetings organized by concerned citizens and groups for formulating strategies to implement the recommendations of the report. We also organized a discussion-meeting with community women and another with community-based and non-profit organizations in Mumbai on 4 March 2008 and 6 March 2008 respectively. The meetings were aimed at discussing strategies, responsibilities and state accountability. We discussed the issue of implementation of the Committee’s report in various bastis in Mumbai. Our endeavour has been to facilitate community-based women’s organizations to work in collaboration with local Members of Legislative Assembly (MLAs), corporators and other local government officials to promote education, livelihood, health, sanitation and other social needs of the Muslim community. Please see page 90 of this Report for photographs pertaining to events organized by us on this issue.

II E. PARTICIPATION IN AN ALL WOMEN’S FACT-FINDING TEAM TO CHHATTISGARH

A team of diverse women professionals consisting of lawyers, social scientists, academics, development workers and social workers, from different parts of the country (Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh and Delhi,) visited Dantewada and Bijapur districts of Chhattisgarh between 7-10 October 2008, to make a first-hand assessment of the impact of the controversial Salwa Judum counter-insurgency strategy, specifically on the lives and
livelihoods of adivasi women. The team met and interacted at length with a large number of women, men and children some of whom are living as refugees or “internally displaced people” in Khammam district, Andhra Pradesh, others who continue to live partially in the Salwa Judum camps, those who have returned to their villages during the course of the last one year and finally those who continue to live in the forests located near their original villages.

The team consisted of:

— Prof. Kalpana Kannabiran (Phd, LLM), Professor of Sociology, NALSAR University of Law, Hyderabad, AP;
— Prof. U. Vindhya (Phd), Professor of Psychology, Centre for Economic and Social Studies, Hyderabad, AP;
— Dr. Sagari R Ramdas (MV Sc), Veterinary Scientist and Development worker working with Adivasi Communities, Hyderabad, AP;
— Ms. Shalini Joshi, Co-Director, Nirantar, New Delhi;
— Ms. Mamta Kujur, adivasi women’s rights activist, Chhattisgarh; and
— Ms. Saumya Uma, (Advocate), Coordinator, International Criminal Court - India Campaign & Co-Director, Women’s Research & Action Group, Mumbai

The final report of the fact-finding team has been released. The interim report has been presented personally to the UN Special Rapporteur on Indigenous People and to the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women in Delhi in October 2008 during their visit to India. Participation in this fact-finding mission has enriched our perspective on the complexity and gravity of the issue, and strengthened our involvement on this issue pertaining to state accountability for mass crimes.

II F. NATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR RIGHTS OF SINGLE WOMEN

From the year 2001, we have been working on issues of single women’s rights and empowerment in Mumbai. In 2002-03, along with other organizations, we initiated a state level network to raise the human rights issues of single women at state level. In 2006 various women’s groups from the country came together to commence a national level campaign for single women’s rights, called Ekal Naari Shakti Sanghatan (The National Forum for Single Women’s Rights). The focus of the campaign has been on implementation of government schemes and visibility to the issue at the national level. The campaign is presently preparing a Charter of Demands on legal, financial and social issues related to single women, which would be submitted to the policy makers in 2009. We are a founding member and an active participant of the national level campaign.

II G. PARTICIPATION IN OTHER CAMPAIGNS & INITIATIVES

We work closely in collaboration with other ongoing human rights and anti-impunity campaigns. To this end, some campaigns and initiatives that we have engaged with in recent times are as follows:
■ Participated in a *padayatra* and demonstration on reparations for victims / survivors of the Bhopal Gas Tragedy, Delhi, 28 March 2008;

■ Participated and made a presentation in a national seminar on Impact of Armed Conflict on Women organized by the International Committee for the Red Cross (ICRC) in Chennai, 28-29 February 2008;

■ Participated in Indian Social Congress, held in Mumbai, and co-organized symposium on ‘Women’s Movement and National / International Institutions and Mechanisms’, December 2007;

■ Participated in National Conference against Fascism, Terrorism and Fake Encounters in Ahmedabad, September 2007;

■ Participated in the campaign against Indo-U.S. Nuclear Deal, September 2007;

■ Participated in conference in Delhi on ‘State Violence & Women: Survivors, Defenders & Leaders’, in July 2007, thereby extending solidarity to the issue of adverse impact on women through militarization and accountability to perpetrators of violence;

■ Participated in Campaign Against Use of Narcotics as Interrogation Techniques, July 2007;

■ Participated in discussions on Model Police Act and Police Reforms, May 2007 onwards;

■ Endorsed and supported a letter campaign on Kausar Bi’s and Sohrabuddin’s extra-judicial killings in Gujarat, May 2007;

■ Participated in Human Rights Assembly preceding the 14th South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Summit, April 2007;

■ Participated in a rally against rape and murder of a *dalit* family in Khairlanji, Maharashtra, December 2006 - January 2007;

■ Participated in the International Festival on Peace and Justice, held in Mumbai, and co-organized a seminar titled ‘Women Against Wars; Wars Against Women’, December 2006;

■ Endorsed a clemency petition to the President of India against death penalty awarded by Supreme Court to Afzal Guru, October 2006;

■ Endorsed a statement to repeal the draconian Armed Forces Special Powers Act 1959, October 2006;

■ Participated in candle light vigil on farmer suicides in Maharashtra, October 2006;

■ Endorsed a joint statement to repeal Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, September 2006 (jointly signed by 120 women’s organizations of the country);

■ Endorsed and supported clemency petition to President of India on harsh punishment of Zahira Sheikh, victim of Gujarat carnage, for contempt of court, March 2006;

■ Endorsed and supported campaign protesting against amendments to Right to Information Act intended to shield bureaucrats for their actions, 2006 onwards;

■ Participated in consultative meetings on Sexual Assault Bill, 2006 onwards;

■ Endorsed and supported a litigation on the Banning of Bar Dancers in Maharashtra, August 2005 onwards;
- Participated in a demonstration and meeting with Mumbai’s Commissioner of Police on rape of a minor girl by police personnel at Marine Drive, April 2005;
- Participated in a Consultation with women’s groups, on HIV/AIDS Bill, April 2004; and
- Participated in a rally on Violence Against Women, at Gateway of India, November 2004.
Campaign on Muslim Family Law & Women’s Rights
Mass Demonstration, Protest Against the Fatwa Issued in Imrana’s Case, July 2005
Campaign on Muslim Family Law & Women’s Rights

Mass Demonstration, Protest Against the Fatwa issued in Imrana’s Case, July 2005
Our Participation in Other Campaigns

Expressing Solidarity

Member: CFWI, 200 people represented over 100 NGOs ( incl. Viva, Kranti, AIVU, JAVI,
Secrue Foundation, Nirmal, Mumbai, Delhi, National, National Small, and Delhi, etc.)
Familly Against Oppression of Women, Women's Health, and Women's Rights
Suno Janta! 

The fact that Janta, a key woman's rights group, had already been on the front lines of the antitorture movement, was not lost on them. The NGO leaders, who had been part of the anti-torture movement in Gujarat, were quick to respond to the call for action.

The event was chaired by Bharathi Bhavan, the founder of the NGO, who emphasized the importance of solidarity and support in the fight against torture. She highlighted the role of women in the struggle for justice, and the need for collective action to ensure that the human rights of all individuals are respected.

On capital punishment

Bhavan's College professor Anthony Kannan and Sasiyav
Uma, a lawyer attached to the Women's Research and Action Group (WRAG) and Coordinator for International Criminal Law (ICL) - India, wrote a letter to the Chief Justice of India on the death penalty in India. They followed by a discussion on the execution of Sajjad Hussain, ramifications of the same, and future strategies.

Global Protest week:

YAV

Nov 25 5 pm Shades of Courage: A protest in memory of women who have suffered from violence—VT-Hutatma Chowk-Churchgate Sth
6.30 pm Concert-Gateway of India
8.30 pm Reclaim the Night-Chowpat Point

Dec 3-5 Film Festival—Bhavan's, GuPTA, Churugate, and AYVA
Dec 5 Lunch—Bhavan's, GuPTA, Churugate, and AYVA
Dec 6-9 Film Festival on

The Hindu, Friday, May 30, 2008

SEEKING JUSTICE: A victim of alleged police brutality deposing before the People's Tribunal on Torture in Madurai on Thursday.

MADURA: Ever since the death of her son, Manalmedu Shankar, who was killed in an encounter, Boopathi, her relatives and members of her caste are suffering from police brutality.

Boopathi had moved the Supreme Court apprehending that Shankar would be named as the Tamil Nadu police officer in an encounter. The Court, while dismissing the plea, said that the agency concerned would ensure Shankar's safety. Shankar died in an encounter on February 5, 2007, while being escorted by the police to the Madurai Central Prison from Pudukottai.

The encounter took place near Pudunagar village of Gandavarthi in Pudukottai district when Manalmedu Shankar allegedly attempted to escape after the police vehicle hit a tree.

On Thursday, she deposed before a panel seeking action against the policemen involved in her son's death. The public hearing of torture victims was organised by the National Project on Preventing Torture in India, in association with 220 other organisations, at the Fatima College here. Victims from across the State narrated tales of police brutality and torture committed against them in various forms.

The panels included legal experts like H. Suresh, Kalpana Kannabiran, Vahida Nainar, Ashok Chakrabarti and former Vice-Chancellors N. Markandan and Vasanthi Devi.
Campaign on Muslim Family Law & Women's Rights
Conducting Marriages in Communities Using the Progressive Nikahnama Prepared by Us, May 2005

Seven Muslim couples renew vows

In Behrmпадa, a new start
6 couples sign nikahnama, women get right to divorce

New Contract
Campaign on Muslim Family Law & Women’s Rights
Information Dissemination & Consensus-building

4.11 Public meeting on Muslim women's legal rights, Goregaon, 2008

4.12 Discussion on minority women's rights, Bandra, 2008

4.13 Perspective-building programme on Muslim women’s rights, for Saathii group of men and male youth, June 2006

4.14 1st National Consultation on Muslim women & law, December 2006

4.15 A seminar was jointly organized by WRAG and other organizations to discuss issues concerning Muslim women in the present context of communal politics, November 2004

4.16 Presentation on Muslim law reform strategies in a meeting organized by Tehreek, Astitva & Parcham, May 2006
Information Dissemination Programmes on International Criminal Court & India

4.17 Mumbai, July 2004

4.18 Guwahati, November 2004

4.19 Delhi, November 2005

4.20 Bhubaneswar, January 2006

4.21 Bengaluru, January 2006

4.22 Chandigarh, November 2006

4.23 Ajmer, June 2008

4.24 Hyderabad, July 2008
Information Dissemination Programmes on International Criminal Court & India

4.25 Consultative meeting with Parliamentarians, December 2005

4.26 Panel discussion at the 1st National Consultation on ICC & India, December 2005

4.27 South Asian Conference, January 2007

4.28 2nd National Consultation on ICC & India, April 2008

4.29 1st Training of Trainers Programme, June 2007

4.30 2nd Training of Trainers Programme, February 2009
Campaign on Communal Violence Bill

4.31 Consultative meeting, Delhi, March 2006

4.34 Press conference, Mumbai, July 2007

4.32 Discussion meeting, Mumbai, August 2006

4.35 Public meeting at Dadar, July 2007

4.33 Workshop at the 7th National Conference of Autonomous Women’s Movements in India, Kolkata, September 2006

4.36 Endorsement of the statement rejecting the Communal Violence Bill, Govandi, Mumbai, July 2007
Campaign on Communal Violence Bill

4.37 Study circle for media persons in Pune, August 2007

4.38 Seminar at A.K.Khan Law College, Pune, August 2007

4.39 Speakers rejecting the Communal Violence Bill at Bandra, Mumbai, August 2007

4.40 Participation in public meeting at Ahmedabad, August 2007

4.41 Discussion with students of NALSAR University, Hyderabad, September 2007

4.42 Consultative meeting with women lawyers, Chennai, July 2008

4.43 Information and strategy-sharing session, Bengaluru, July 2008
Our Participation in Campaign on Implementation of Srikrishna Commission Recommendations

4.44 Demonstration at Azad Maidan, Mumbai, September 2007

4.47 Public meeting, Delhi, October 2007

4.45 Demonstration at Azad Maidan, Mumbai, September 2007

4.48 Press conference, Delhi, October 2007

4.46 Discussion at College of Social Work Nirmala Niketan, Mumbai, September 2007

4.49 Participants at press conference, Delhi, October 2007
Our Participation in Other Campaigns

4.50 Rally on peace, secularism & human rights, Mumbai, October 2003

4.52 Participation in rally on Violence Against Women, at Gateway of India, Mumbai, November 2004

4.54 Discussion meeting on abolition of death penalty, co-organized with Mumbai Initiative for Human Rights Education (MIHRE), January 2007

4.55 Public meeting on Implementation of Sachar Committee recommendations, March 2008

4.56 Participation in People's Tribunal on Torture, Ajmer, Rajasthan, July 2008
ENGAGING WITH THE MEDIA

Since inception, we have considered the media to be a partner in our efforts on various campaigns and initiatives that we are involved with. However, it is only in the past five years that we have developed the skills and confidence to engage with the media. Our organization’s partnership with the media extends beyond the immediate campaigns that we are involved with, and also includes issues that cover the larger gamut of our work, pertaining to gender, minority rights, justice, accountability, rule of law and secularism.

I. PRESS CONFERENCES ORGANIZED / ADDRESSED BY US

In July 2004, we held one of our first press conferences on the issue of oral and unilateral talaq. Through a narration of personal experiences of affected women, we highlighted the negative experiences of underprivileged Muslim women in Mumbai pertaining to Muslim family law. The conference was aimed at exposing the ground realities with regard to discriminatory and anti-women practices in the Muslim community, in response to claims from influential groups in Mumbai that such practices do not exist.

In April 2005, All India Muslim Personal Law Board – a self-appointed committee of conservative persons representing the Muslim community - released a standard nikahnama (marriage contract). This contract was regressive in nature and contained many clauses that violated women’s right to a life with dignity, including a clause that permitted domestic violence. Soon afterwards, in May 2005, we, along with Awaaz-e-Niswan, Forum Against Oppression of Women and India Centre for Human Rights and Law, held two press conferences. Women living in communities participated in the press conferences and shared their grievances with Muslim law. The events was successful in not only condemning the contents of the nikahnama released by the Board but also in denouncing the Board as the sole representative of the Muslim community. In the same press conference copies of the nikahnama prepared by the Muslim Women’s Rights Network (of which WRAG is a member) were distributed and the gender-just provisions of the same were compared to the retrograde provisions present in the Board’s nikahnama. Please find press coverage of the same on page 100 of this Report.

In May 2005, we also organized a press conference on the issue of oral unilateral divorce. More than 20 women living in communities, whose rights have been adversely affected due to the practice of oral unilateral divorce, participated in and shared their experiences. Mediapersons from English, Urdu, Marathi and Hindi newspapers and television channels attended the press conference and reported on the same.

On the issue of International Criminal Court (ICC), we held our first major press conference on 9 December 2005 in Delhi. This press conference was held in association with partner organizations working on issues of law, justice and human rights, and was held to
take advantage of the presence of Judge Philippe Kirsch, the erstwhile presiding judge of the ICC. He was the main speaker for the event, held in Delhi, and highlighted the need for the ICC, the features of the Court which make it well-suited to meet that need, the challenges that the Court faces in carrying out its mandate, the present situations that the court is studying and what will be required for the ICC to succeed. Subsequently, two speakers - Ms. Vahida Nainar (Founder Trustee, WRAG) and Dr. Usha Ramanathan (law researcher, Delhi) - outlined the efforts to integrate a gender perspective into the statute creating the ICC, the significance of ICC in providing justice for mass crimes, and the relevance of ICC standards for human rights in India. In this press conference, we had the participation of over fifteen media persons representing mainstream newspapers and the electronic media, several advocates of the Supreme Court, and representatives of non-profit organizations. The press conference was reported by The Press Trust of India, The Hindu, The Times of India, Hindustan Times, The Telegraph and The Statesman on 10 December 2005; an exclusive interview with President Kirsch that was facilitated by us was published in The Hindu on 12 December 2005; another interview with President Kirsch was published by The Times of India on 15 December 2005. Reproduced on pages 101-108 of this Report are some press clippings and photographs of this press conference.

On 18 January 2006, we organized a discussion-meeting on ICC & India at Utkal University, Bhubaneswar in collaboration with Martin Luther King Centre for Democracy and Human Rights. Subsequent to the meeting, an informal discussion with press persons from three local newspapers was held, following which they carried a write up on the issue in the subsequent days. The discussion was aimed at familiarizing the local media on the issue. The event as well as an interview of the speakers, including WRAG personnel, was aired on Doordarshan (national) on 19 January 2006 at prime time, as well as by Orissa television (OTV) - a state level media channel. Please find photograph of the informal discussion with press persons on page 108 of this Report.

A seminar on Media & Human Rights was held on 24 January 2005 at Bhubaneswar, Orissa. This seminar was organized by the Post-graduate Department of Journalism & Mass Communication of the Academy of Management and Information Technology (AMIT), Bhubaneswar. Saumya Uma of WRAG was invited as the main speaker and talked on the role of media in respecting, protecting and promoting human rights. Participants included students and faculty members of the department. The local print and visual media covered this event with enthusiasm. Please find press coverage of this event on page 105 of this Report.

On 31 January 2006 we held a press conference on International Criminal Court and India at the Bangalore Press Club in collaboration with People’s Watch Tamil Nadu and South India Cell for Human Rights Education & Monitoring (SICHREM). Vahida Nainar and Saumya Uma of WRAG addressed the media at this event. The event was attended by eleven media persons and was covered in at least two local newspapers, and was aimed at generating interest on the ICC and its relevance to Indian among the mediapersons, particularly the local language media. Please find photograph of the press conference on page 108 of this Report.

On 3 March 2006, we held a press conference in Guwahati on ‘Setting New Standards for Mass Crimes: Relevance of International Criminal Court’. This was organized in
collaboration with Citizens’ Collective, Guwahati. Dr. Subhram Rajkhowa, President of Citizens’ Collective and Reader in Law, Guwahati University and Saumya Uma of WRAG, addressed the media at this conference. One significant aspect of this press conference was that from the eighteen media persons who attended, a majority of them were from the local (Assamese and Hindi) press. The press conference provided an excellent platform to take the issue of ICC and its role as a standard-setting mechanism for mass crimes, to media persons situated in and covering human rights issues pertaining to the North Eastern states of India. In pursuance of the press conference, atleast 4 newspapers (Hindi, Assamese and English) carried reports on the issue. The reports are reproduced on pages 101 & 103 of this Report.

In July 2006, against the backdrop of serial bomb blasts in Mumbai’s local trains, we organized a press conference to confront the anti-Muslim prejudice that had spread among the laypersons. In the conference, leaders of communities that we work with condemned the bomb blasts and categorically stated that acts that violate humanity also violate Islam. They drew a distinction between the perpetrators of the bomb blasts and laypersons from the underprivileged Muslim community in Mumbai, emphasizing that the latter’s efforts were only focussed on securing basic rights for themselves and their families. The speakers also expressed concern at a high number of Muslim youth from the bustis who were being detained by the police on suspicion of involvement in the bomb blasts. Our personnel also spoke about the pressures they faced from their families and communities for working with women from Muslim communities.

On 4 July 2007, we held a press conference in Mumbai on the issue ‘Communal Violence Bill: A Remedy Worse than the Malady?’ This press conference was organized by us in collaboration with Documentation Research and Training Centre (DRTC). The speakers for the event were Justice H. Suresh (retired judge of Bombay High Court and an ardent campaigner of human rights), Ms. Saumya Uma (human rights advocate and Co-Director of Women’s Research & Action Group), Mr. Shakil Ahmed (advocate, founder of Nirbay Bano Andolan and activist campaigning for implementation of Srikrishna Commission report that enquired into Mumbai communal violence) and Ms. Shabana Sheikh (survivor of Bombay communal violence, activist and member of Hukook-e-Niswaan). The press conference was facilitated by Ms. Saumya Uma. The press conference highlighted the flaws with the government-initiated Bill as its underlying premises were dangerous and it fell short of international human rights standards. The press conference was covered both in English and vernacular dailies, including Inquilaab (Urdu), Maharashtra Times (Marathi), Free Press Journal (English) and Times of India (English). Some press reports are reproduced on page 104 of this Report.

On 16 July 2007, we held another press conference in response to a fatwa issued by the Darul-Uloom-Deoband school in Lucknow, exhorting young girls and boys to refrain from studying in co-educational institutions, and insisting that women and men must interact with each other only if the women are veiled. The press conference, addressed by us, challenged the authority of the Deoband School to issue such an anti-women fatwa, and explained that the said fatwa contradicts the spirit of equality between the sexes that exists in the Quran. We further condemned and rejected the fatwa, specifically in the context of educational backwardness of the Muslim community, and Muslim girls in
particular. The conference was addressed by persons including Dr. Zeenat Shaukat Ali – Islamic scholar and professor of Islamic Studies at St. Xavier’s College, Mumbai, Shabana Rehman of WRAG and Khatoon Sheikh of WRAG and Hukook-e-Niswaan.

On 11 August 2007, we, together with, Sahyog Trust’s Human Rights & Law Defenders, organized a study circle for media persons in Pune on the issue, where civil society concerns to the Communal Violence Bill were highlighted. 20-25 media persons concerned with the issue, working with English, Marathi, Hindi and Urdu newspapers, participated in this study circle. Maharashtra Herald and other Pune-based newspapers carried articles on the issue in pursuance of the study circle.

As part of the efforts on implementation of Srikrishna Commission recommendations, our organization, along with Nirbhay Bano Andolan, Awaaz-e-Niswan and Forum Against Oppression of Women, held a press conference in Mumbai on 17 August 2007. At this press conference, our specific demands from the government with regard to the implementation of the Commission’s recommendations were stated. The speakers at the conference were Adv. Flavia Agnes – renowned feminist advocate, Adv. Shakil Ahmed of Nirbhay Bano Andolan and Ms. Shabana Sheikh (survivor of Bombay communal violence, activist and member of Hukook-e-Niswaan). The press conference triggered renewed interest in the issue among the media persons.

On 23 October 2007, we, along with other like-minded organizations, held a press conference at the Press Club of India in Delhi on the issue of state’s failure to implement recommendations of the Srikrishna Commission. At this conference, a delegation of activists, lawyers and survivors addressed the status of the cases and the continuing struggle of the survivors of the Mumbai 92-93 communal violence. The objective of the press conference was to increase the visibility for the issue through the national media. The press conference was addressed by Adv. Shakeel Ahmed (advocate, Nirbhay Bano Andolan), Mr. Farooq Mhapkar (survivor), Ms. Saumya Uma of WRAG, Mr. Prashant Bhushan (senior advocate, Supreme Court) and was facilitated by Adv. Vrinda Grover (a human rights advocate from Delhi). More than 25 media persons representing various newspapers and television channels participated in the press conference, giving impetus to increased visibility to the issue. Please find photographs of the press conference on page 89 of this Report.

II. MEDIA COVERAGE OF OUR ACTIVITIES

In October 2003, Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) made an announcement that it would be celebrating sankalp divas by performing maha aartis throughout Mumbai in favour of Ramjanmbhoomi temple at Ayodhya. VHP had planned to organize the maha aartis at 173 temples in Mumbai. As a counter to this step, we took the initiative of organizing a peace rally to highlight the values of peace, secularism and human rights. More than 200 demonstrators, consisting of representatives of non-profit organizations as well as men, women and children in their individual capacities, stood in demonstration in prominent areas in Bandra (East), protesting against communal violence and incitement of communal hatred through religious practices. The demonstration was widely covered in the local press. Please find press coverage of the said rally on page 105 of this Report.
In July 2004, in a meeting held by All India Personal Law Board, the Board decided not to take any action to stop the practice of oral unilateral divorce. We protested against the inaction by the Board, and issued press statements from a gender perspective.

In December 2004, in collaboration with other women’s organizations, we held a public meeting on concerns of Muslim women in the backdrop of identity politics and minority fundamentalism. Speakers included Sajid Rashid, Hasan Kamal, Adv. A.S.Uraizze and Noorjehan Safia Niaz of WRAG. The event had more than 250 participants, including women living in communities, representatives of women’s organizations and individual activists.

In April 2005, women’s groups in Mumbai decided to jointly protest against the rape of a minor girl by police officials at Marine Drive. The protest was found necessary as no action had been taken against the officials accused of rape. The demonstration, which took place at Azad Maidan, Mumbai, was followed by a rally to the Police Commissioner’s office. Representatives of women’s organizations, including ours, met with the Commissioner of Police and handed over a letter with demands from civil society groups. The Commissioner promised to take prompt and necessary action. More than 300 women participated in the demonstration. The demonstration was extensively covered by the print media. Please find press coverage of the same on page 105 of this Report.

In the communities that we work in, we have used the progressive nikahnama prepared by us in a widespread manner, both for renewal of marriage vows as well as for new marriages. This nikahnama contains clauses that protect and promote women’s rights during marriage and after divorce. The mahila mandals and the federation have played a major role in this process. An event held on 13 May 2005 where seven couples renewed their marital vows using this nikahnama was extensively covered by the local media. Please find press coverage of the same on page 83 of this Report.

In July 2005, a Muslim woman, Imrana, was raped by her father-in-law in the state of Uttar Pradesh. Rather than confronting the rapist and handing him over to the police, the local representatives of the community issued a fatwa (religious edict) stating that Imrana’s marriage to her husband was dissolved. We, along with other individuals and organizations, held a mass demonstration on 23 July 2005 to protest against this fatwa. About 200 women representing various community-based organizations participated in the rally and expressed their discontent and anger over the rise in strength of extra-judicial forces like the shariah jamaat all over the country, and being subjected to fatwas that infringe on their life and liberty. The rally passed through the largest Muslim ghettos in Mumbai and areas that are home to many conservative religious organizations. The demonstration and rally were covered by English, Urdu, Hindi and Marathi newspapers. Please see pages 80-81 of this Report for press coverage of the demonstration.

In the year 2005, ICC-India campaign had two consultative meetings with over 60 Parliamentarians from Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha, cutting across all party lines. A
Report of the first event with parliamentarians was included in ICC Monitor - a newsletter brought out by the Coalition for the International Criminal Court (CICC), with a readership that spans across the world. Subsequently, the success of the media outreach at the parliamentarians’ event gave us the impetus and confidence to invite media persons to information dissemination programmes conducted by us. This helped in increased information dissemination as well as visibility to the campaign. Please find press coverage of events on ICC on pages 101-103 of this Report.

In August 2006, our organization, in collaboration with the Centre for Study of Society and Secularism, organized a 3-day National Camp on rights of Muslim women. This camp was attended by more than 50 participants who were activists working on issues of Muslim women, hailing from at least 10 states. Resource persons included Dr. Asgarali Engineer, Dr. Zeenat Shaukat Ali and Ms. Noorjehan Safia Niaz of WRAG. This event was widely reported in mainstream newspapers, including the Times of India.

Our organization in collaboration with the Federation of mahila mandals (Hukook-e-Niswaan) also took the initiative to organize a camp in collaboration with S.N.D.T Women’s University for facilitating women’s enrolment for higher education. Forty women who were former school dropouts took admission for the graduation, at the camp organized in October 2006. The women who enrolled themselves have become role-models and sources of inspirations within their communities, thereby facilitating a multiplier effect on the issue of marginalized women’s formal education. The press coverage of this camp further inspired many underprivileged women to pursue higher studies. Reproduced on pages 42 & 110 of this Report are press reports of the same.

As part of the campaign on Communal Violence Bill, our organization, along with other like-minded organizations and networks, held three public meetings in Mumbai on 5 July 2007 at Dadar, 26 July 2007 at Govandi, and 15 August 2007 in Bandra. The meetings, which had more than 200 participants each, a majority of who were survivors of communal violence, were extensively covered by the media. Please find press coverage of the same on page 104 of this Report.

On 16 July 2007, in response to a fatwa issued by Deoband School stating that co-education schools should be disallowed, and girls should compulsorily wear a burqa in public, we organized a protest at and rally from Azad Maidan. The protest and rally received considerable press coverage, and gave visibility to the issue.

As in the Campaign on Communal Violence Bill, WRAG’s role with regard to the Campaign on Implementation of Srikrishna Commission Report was focused on dialoging with policy makers and facilitating the participation of survivors of communal violence in the campaign. On 6 September 2007, our organization, along with many others, organized a dharna (public protest) at Azad Maidan, Mumbai to demand implementation of recommendations of Srikrishna Commission. This was extensively covered and contributed to strengthening the campaign and ensuring that the voices of the survivors of communal violence were heard by the policy makers at the state level.
III. PUBLICATION OF ARTICLES WRITTEN BY WRAG PERSONNEL

We have had modest success in not only ensuring media coverage of the press conferences and other events organized by us, but also in having our articles published in mainstream newspapers and journals in Hindi, Urdu, Marathi and English. Publication of our articles has helped disseminate our viewpoints among readers. Pursuant to the publication of our articles, many readers have contacted us to learn more about our work and to explore ways of associated with campaigns that our organization is involved in. These include:

- Saumya Uma, Response to Law Commission, critiquing a consultative paper on witness protection brought out by the Law Commission of India, published in *Combat Law*, April-May 2005
- Shilpa Kashelkar-Nipunge, about activities of Saheli group, in Marathi, *Sakal – Madhura*, July 2005
- Saumya Uma, ‘For Women, A Court of Last Appeal’, on the gender aspects of the International Criminal Court, published by *The Indian Express* on 9 December 2005
- Shabana A. Rehman, ‘Purdah’ – on asserting the right of women not to be coerced into wearing purdah and the need to have regulations for men, published in Urdu, in *Inquilaab*, January 2006
- Shilpa Kashelkar-Nipunge, about the efforts of Saheli members, in Marathi, *Prerak Lalkari*, June 2006
- Akhtari Sheikh & Shilpa Kashelkar-Nipunge, about the work of Saheli group, in Marathi, *Maharashtra Times*, October 2006
The first press conference organized by ICC-India campaign in Delhi on 9 December 2005, titled ‘The International Criminal Court: Contributions India Can Make’, was aired in television channels including CNN-IBN. In the subsequent year, a discussion-meeting on ICC & India was held at Bhubaneswar under the auspices of Utkal University. The event as well as an interview of panelists was aired on Doordarshan (national) on 19 January 2006 at prime time, as well as by Orissa television (OTV) - a state level media channel. A subsequent event in Bhubaneswar on ‘Media and Human Rights’ on 24 January 2006, which involved a discussion on the ICC, was aired in ETV – another state level media channel in Orissa.

On 28 October 2006, Zee TV Marathi filmed and aired activities of our adolescent girls’ groups for its programme ‘Yuva’. The media coverage included interviews of adolescent girls about their sense of empowerment, rendering of activist songs by the girls as well as meetings and discussions conducted by and with such groups.

On 17 July 2007, against the backdrop of the World Day for International Justice, a one hour programme on International Criminal Court & India was aired live in an Indian television channel called Lok Sabha TV. Dr. Usha Ramanathan (law researcher, Delhi) and Vrinda Grover (human rights advocate & activist, Delhi) were the panelists for the programme and elaborately talked about the ICC as a mechanism for international justice, the context which necessitated its creation, its relevance in today’s world, the Indian government’s concerns and ICC’s relevance to the human rights context in India. Saumya Uma of WRAG was interviewed live through the telephone on the importance of awareness-raising in India and the objectives and activities of ICC-India campaign. The one-hour programme is the first of its kind squarely on the ICC in an Indian television channel, and is a major milestone for us in our effort at improving the visibility of the issue in the Indian media. The achievement is augmented by the fact that it was aired in Lok Sabha TV - a dedicated sattelite channel owned by the government to telecast live proceedings of Lok Sabha (lower House of Parliament). It airs programmes of national interest when the parliament is not in session. Since it is not a commercial channel, its viewership consists of people who are interested in national and international issues of importance.

Building up on the contacts made in the previous year with Lok Sabha TV channel, we approached the channel in July 2008 with a request to have a panel discussion on the issue of ICC, in the context of the 10th anniversary of the adoption of the Rome Statute creating the ICC, on 17 July 2008. The channel agreed, and sought a briefing from us and asked us to identify panellists for the programme. Adv. Vrinda Grover (human rights advocate, Delhi), Prof. Radha Kumar (Director of the Mandela Centre for Peace and Conflict Resolution at Jamia Millia Islamia University, and trustee of the Delhi Policy Group), Mr. Praful Bidwai (former senior editor of The Times of India, a freelance journalist and regular columnist for several leading newspapers in India) and Ms. Saumya Uma of WRAG participated in the panel discussion, which was aired live during prime time: 7.30 – 8.30 p.m. on 17 July 2008. The programme helped immensely in disseminating information and generating a discussion on the issue, particularly with regard to the relevance of ICC in the Indian context.
Many of the press conferences organized and addressed by us, have been aired in television channels, along with an interview of the speakers of the respective press conferences, including our personnel. In addition, demonstrations, rallies and other events organized by us have also received coverage in the electronic media from time to time.

A short film for a duration of 15 minutes was produced on the work of *Hukook-e-Niswaan* federation of *mahila mandals*, by students of mass communication in 2006. Another short film, titled ‘Uljhan’, for a duration of 22 minutes, was produced by the Rotary Club of Versova, Mumbai in 2007, on the work of *Saheli* project of WRAG on single women’s issues. The film was screened at a district-level conference of the Rotary Club in 2007. A documentary film on the work of WRAG was made by Focus TV in 2009. The duration of the film is about 25 minutes. Excerpts of the film were aired by the channel Focus TV in June 2009. The production of films on various aspects of our work contributes to the overall visibility of our organization and its activities.
Press Conference Against the All India Muslim Personal Law Board's Model Nikahnama, May-June 2005

Women refuse to accept model nikahnama

Muslim women up in arms against AIMPLB's Nikahnama

Nikaahnama: time for a gender just model

by Geeta Sesto

Women's Rights

Women's research & action group
Media Outreach of the Indian Campaign on International Criminal Court

Living up to the legacy of Nuremberg

With 160 countries on board, the International Criminal Court is slowly negotiating the hurdle of universality. But with countries like the United States (and India) outside its purview, how effective will it be in dealing with war crimes, aggression, and Genocide? In an exclusive interview to The Hindu, ICC president Philippe Kirsch speaks about the court’s limitations and stresses the work has got off to a good start. Excerpts.

The Hindu, December 12, 2005

Dainik Jagran, July 21, 2003

Dainik Jagran, January 19, 2007

The Assam Tribune, March 19, 2006

National

City

Relevance of International Criminal Court discussed

Dainik Sadashay, January 19, 2007

Amar Ujala, January 19, 2007
Media Outreach of the Indian Campaign on International Criminal Court


The Times of India, December 23, 2006
Activists campaign for global court watch on India

Indian Express, April 26, 2008
Justice has another address

Shah Times, January 19, 2007
Manavadihaki Uladhane Jivanale Samanava

International Criminal Court -- a court of last resort

This workshop, organized by The Indian National Women's Convention and the Indian Criminal Court and India in Delhi on April 25 and 26, was attended by a wide range of human rights activists. The discussion was aimed at increasing awareness about the ICC and its role in promoting international justice.

The event was attended by a variety of speakers, including MPs, activists, and legal experts. The speakers discussed the importance of the ICC in promoting international law and justice.

The event was organized in collaboration with the Indian National Women's Convention and the Indian Criminal Court and India in Delhi on April 25 and 26. The event was attended by a wide range of human rights activists.

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Media Outreach of the Indian Campaign on International Criminal Court

Hindustan, July 21, 2003

The Tribune, March 3, 2009

Programme on global criminal law ends

Patna, March 2

The three-day Training of Trainers (TOT) programme was concluded today which was organised at Rajiv Gandhi National University of Law, Patna, in collaboration with the ICC-India: The Indian Campaign on International Criminal Court.

Beginning on February 27 with the welcome speech of Dr Gurjeet Singh, Vice-Chancellor of RGNUL, Patna, the programme was on international criminal law, primarily for the educators and advocates working in the fields of international law, international humanitarian law, human rights, political science and social work.

As many as 40 participants from all over India took part in the programme, which included teachers and researchers. The programme was conducted by eminent resource persons having wide experience and knowledge in the subject.

Starting with the brief introduction to the programme, Suajanya Uma, coordinator of the ICC-India, brought forth different aspects of international law. She said that international criminal law was a body of international rules designed to ensure that international criminal law was a body of international law and the rules making up this body of law emanate from sources of international law such as treaties, custom and law etc.

There have been important advances made in incorporating standards of human rights law and implementation of some of these standards. Though India was not a party to the treaty creating International Criminal Court, the standards created by the treaty were relevant in the Indian context, she added.

Eminent resource persons, including Dr Sitaraman Kaka and Vahida Nainar, also spoke on international criminal law.


The Tribune, November 26, 2006

Loopholes in present legal system bared

Chandigarh, November 25

Launching the "International Criminal Court: relevance and challenges for India" was held at ICC-India, Chandigarh, Punjab University, two days ago. The workshop was organized by the Indian campaign of Chandigarh-based human rights organization, The Tribune.

The workshop was attended by the coordinator Suajanya Uma, law researcher Dr Uma Rane, and experts from Punjab University. Uma said that the workshop was aimed at raising awareness about the laws on global promotion.

The seminar took the opportunity to raise issues of human rights in India, especially in India, where there are still issues of human rights.


India and the ICC: MPs Discuss Questions and Concerns

The ICC-India campaign, a project of the Indian Campaign on International Criminal Court, in India, the meeting was convened in collaboration with the Parliamentarians Group on Human Rights, a network of parliamentarians from around the world who are committed to promoting and protecting the human rights of the people of the world.

Subsequently, discussion followed on the role of the ICC in enforcement and how the Court functioned in practice. There were also concerns expressed about the crime of aggression, which was committed in the recent past, as well as about the possibility of a new crime of aggression being committed.


The International Criminal Court MONITOR - November 2005
Communal violence must get new bill: NGOs

By OUR CORRESPONDENT

Mumbai, Aug. 15: The Women’s Research and Action Group (WRAG) and Gulkoor-e-Niswan (Gn), both non-governmental organisations (NGOs), demanded that the Communal Violence Prevention, Control and Rehabilitation of Victims of Communal Violence Bill, 2005, be replaced with a new one, during a public meeting at Kherwadi, Bandra (East) on Wednesday.

“We want the Central government to set up a drafting committee to formulate an entirely new bill on communal violence, with the participation of civil society through a transparent process,” said Ms Khatoon Shaikh, president of Gn.

The members of both NGOs are also survivors of the 1992-93 communal riots that had paralysed Mumbai.

In an interaction with the public, Ms Neerajini Saha, country director of WRAG said, “This bill has not yet been passed in Parliament, states that even if a police officer is at fault during riots, the maximum punishment he will get is that of a year.”

The bill mentions that the police officer on duty will not be biased. “In the 1992-93 riots, a police officer in Bhelpurpada, Bandra said to a youth that when we wear the uniform we are police men and when we remove it we are Shiv Sena,” said Ms Saha.

The Communal Violence Bill will only assist those who are in power like the politicians, policemen and rioters. According to her the bill is not for the victims of communal violence.”

Mr. Samauna, a lawyer, pointed out the problems with the present bill by stating that the Communal Violence Bill will only assist those who are in power: like the politicians, policemen and rioters. According to her the bill is not for the victims of such violence.

“There is no need to have a law degree to understand how biased the bill is, the preamble of this bill itself shows it,” said Ms Uma.

The bill did not give adequate protection to victims, witnesses and survivors.
Press Coverage of Our Other Activities

Press Coverage of Seminar on Role of Media on Human Rights, Bhubaneswar, January 2006

Press report of rally on peace, secularism & human rights, October 2003

Press coverage of protest rally on rape of a minor girl by police personnel at Marine Drive, April 2005
For women, a court of last appeal

The international criminal court could act as a much needed safety net

Efforts have also been directed at promoting women's access to justice through procedural guarantees such as in-camera proceedings, recording of evidence by electronic means and the establishment of a Victims and Witnesses Unit. Exemplary rules have been established. Victims' testimony does not require independent corroborations. Evidence related to the sexual conduct of the victim prior to, or subsequent to, the crime cannot be used to infer her character or credibility. The ICC cannot take consent from the victim of the crime where the crime took place in a non-state environment.

Structurally, the bench of 5 judges provides for a fair representation of males and female judges. In the bench, 3 judges and 2 (male judges. Reporting occurs of sexual and gender violence in a manner that is in line with the ICC's charter.

Similar to the national courts, the International Criminal Court can act as a temporary stopgap measure or punish all wrongdoers. However, the existence of a supranational machinery to prosecute offenders will also further help to address situations where national courts are unable, or unwilling, to prosecute offenders. In such situations, the ICC will act as a safety net to end impunity for serious crimes, including violence against women.
Media Outreach on the Muslim Family Law Campaign

Muslim women open up, queries flow on property, talaq and music

"Controversial Muslim Women" seminar

Rise of the fatwa

Religious clerics are barring Fatimah from marrying outside their family, watching television or from sleeping in the afternoon as they are not允许.

Nanoozah Saba Shyam

Hotel are collaborating with these people and organizing events outside.
Media Outreach of the Indian Campaign on International Criminal Court

Press Conference & Public Seminar on
THE INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT:
CONTRIBUITIONS INDIA CAN MAKE
9 December 2005, New Delhi
Organized by ICC - INTFA in association with
Women's Research & Action Group

‘ICC may even take up terrorism’

The Times of India, 15 Dec 2005

Q&A

The International Criminal Court, based in The Hague, is a unique and historic addition to the system of law. Its importance cannot be overstated. It is the first in history to focus on的感情性 crime, making it a landmark achievement for international law.

The court has the power to prosecute individuals for crimes against humanity, war crimes, and genocide. The ICC is not just a court of last resort, but a court that aims to ensure justice for victims of these crimes.

The court also has the potential to prevent future atrocities by deterring potential violators from committing these crimes.

Below the court, the International Criminal Court's mechanism for investigating and prosecuting crimes is established. This mechanism includes the prosecutor, judges, and other members of the court.

The court's jurisdiction is limited to crimes committed after July 1, 2002, the date the Rome Statute of the ICC entered into force. However, the ICC can exercise jurisdiction over crimes committed before this date if it has been referred by a UN member state or a UN body.

The court's primary role is to bring to justice those responsible for the most serious crimes under the court's jurisdiction. However, it is also committed to providing justice, truth, and reparation to victims and their families, as well as to deterring future crimes.

The court's decisions are binding on all states parties to the Rome Statute, and it has the power to impose individual sanctions, including arrest warrants and travel bans.

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Media Outreach on Communal Violence Bill Campaign
Press Coverage of Our Other Activities

- A consultative meeting with Maharashtra State Commission for Minorities

Report on the work of Aekal Mahila Adhikar Sangharsh Sanghatan (AMASS) a state level network on rights of single and destitute women, of which WRAG is a founding member.

Press coverage of our efforts at making education accessible to underprivileged women, in collaboration with S.N.D.T. Women's University, October 2007.

Write up on the work of Saheli WRAG's programme on rights of single and destitute women.
6.

ALLIANCE-BUILDING

I. COLLABORATIVE ACTIVITIES WITH COMMUNITY-BASED (CBOS) & NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS (NPOS)

WRAG has believed in collaborative work with like-minded individuals and organizations on issues of common concern, through a sharing of information, resources, training tools, strategies and best practices. In particular, the modest success achieved in the two campaigns initiated by us, as well as other campaigns on human rights, women’s rights and the law, can be ascribed to fruitful collaborations with CBOs and NPOs.

In our work on Muslim family law, we have been working closely with many community-based groups as well as non-profit organizations. Such collaborations intensified in 2008, when we conducted several state level consultative meetings on the draft prepared by us on Muslim family law. In this process, alliance has been forged with several organizations based in various states. Please see below for details:

**Table 6.1: Collaborating Organizations in Campaign on Muslim Law Reform**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>Name of Organization</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chhattisgarh</td>
<td>Raipur</td>
<td>Institute for Minority Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delhi</td>
<td>Delhi</td>
<td>Nazareth Mahila Samiti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gujarat</td>
<td>Ahmedabad</td>
<td>Niswa, Aman Samudhay, Mahila Patchwork, Pravasi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karnataka</td>
<td>Dharwad</td>
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<td>Kerala</td>
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<td>Catalyst Forum for Ideal Thoughts</td>
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<td>Madhya Pradesh</td>
<td>Bhopal</td>
<td>Institute for Minority Women</td>
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<td>Maharashtra</td>
<td>Nasik</td>
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<td>Orissa</td>
<td>Bhubaneswar</td>
<td>Bird Trust</td>
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<td>Rajasthan</td>
<td>Jaipur</td>
<td>National Muslim Women’s Welfare Society</td>
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<td>Tamil Nadu</td>
<td>Tiruchirapalli</td>
<td>Women’s Integrated National Development (WIND) Trust</td>
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<td>Uttar Pradesh</td>
<td>Lucknow</td>
<td>Tehreek, Bahin</td>
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<td>West Bengal</td>
<td>Kolkata</td>
<td>Right Track</td>
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</table>
The ICC-India campaign has been able to formalize its alliances with other human rights organizations in the country through organizational partnerships. Please see Table 6.2 on pages 130-132 for a list of organizational partners of the campaign, and the states where they operate. By becoming partners of the campaign, the organizations have expressed their concern for growing impunity for mass crimes within India, support to the ICC principles, acknowledge the need for an awareness and advocacy campaign in India, and undertake to contribute to and participate in the activities of ICC-India campaign within the capacities of such individuals and organizations. Many of the partner organizations have collaborated with us in organizing and conducting information dissemination programmes and press conferences, either prior to or subsequent to their partnership.

We work closely with women’s organizations, organizations working on human rights and secularism, both in the city of Mumbai as well as in other parts of the country. More information on collaborative activities with CBOs and NPOs are detailed below, under the sub-topic of ‘Co-founding and Participating in Networks and Initiatives’.

For Saheli (single women’s project), we work in close collaboration with organizations working on mental health issues such as Bapu Trust, skill-building groups such as Sophia Centre for Women and Navjeet Community Centre and organizations working for economic empowerment of women such as Women’s India Trust (WIT). We also work closely with the Rotary Club of Versova, Mumbai, which produced a documentary film on the work of Saheli, organized a health camp for single women and provided space for setting up stalls exhibiting products made by Saheli.

In implementing the adolescent girls’ project, we have worked in collaboration with Akshara – a women’s resource centre based in Mumbai – for capacity-building of adolescent girls. Many adolescent girls living in communities (bustis) in Mumbai become school drop-outs due to financial constraints. With the collaboration of Akshara, such girls are being provided scholarships to complete their school and college education. Further, training programmes on gender, law, health, skill-building, self-defence, career guidance and personality development are also conducted for such girls through the joint efforts of both the organizations. This collaborative activity commenced in 2006 and is in continuance. We have also collaborated with PUKAR – a research-based organization working with youth groups in Mumbai, as well as Yuva Parivartan and Parishramalay for skill-building of adolescent girls. A loose network of organizations working with adolescent girls has been formed in the city of Mumbai. The network consists of WRAG, Akshara, Daya Sadan, Stri Mukti Sanghatana, Akanksha and Sneha. This network is a new platform created to share strategies, resources and expertise, and to initiate concerted activities on issues pertaining to adolescent girls.

In our work with male youth living in communities, we work in partnership with Salokha – an organization working on issues related to communal harmony, Parishramalay for vocational training, Umang - a federation of community-based persons working on cleanliness of slum communities and CORO for conducting training programmes with Saathi members on issues including gender, masculinity, patriarchy and health. Our collaboration with Nao Bharat Yuva Andolan facilitates Saathi members to participate in courses on para-professional social work.
II. NETWORKING WITH COMMUNITY AND RELIGIOUS LEADERS

We have focused our efforts on establishing rapport with community and religious leaders, as we believe that the same would contribute to creating a conducive atmosphere for the promotion of social, economic and legal status of minority women living in communities. We have approached religious leaders for four main issues: a) for intervention on behalf of individual women who approach the mahila mandals for quazi-legal assistance, where the husband has approached religious leaders; b) for consulting on clauses in the progressive nikahnama drafted by us; c) for conducting marriages using the progressive nikahnama drafted by us; and d) for dialoging on provisions of the draft Muslim law on marriage and divorce formulated by us.

For these purposes, we have engaged with Imaarat-e-shariat, Dar-ul-Qaza (shariat courts), All India Muslim Personal Law Board, All India Muslim Women’s Personal Law Board, Wakf Board, religious leaders including qazis, muftis and ulemas in different states. We have also interacted with religious trusts such as Khair-e-Umar Trust and Sahayata Trust.

Rapport has been established with community-based committees in Bandra, Mumbai for educational, medical, economic support and employment assistance to women and children living in communities. Local committees also play a role in issues related to sanitation, health and hygiene in the slum communities. These include Ekta Committee, Aman Committee, Young Committee, Bazm-e-Gulzar Committee, Taj-Baand-e-Hind and Sudhaar Committee.

We have also held capacity-building programs with seminarians. The invitation to us by Ashta Seminary, Indore in 2004, to conduct a three-day training session on human rights, the Indian Constitution, Christian family law and women’s rights provided us a rare opportunity to interact with seminarians, and help challenge the patriarchal mindset that many of them have imbibed. Since Christian women often approach their priests with matrimonial problems including domestic violence, we found it important to avail of this opportunity to hone their perspective towards gender discrimination and women’s rights in law.

III. CO-FOUNDING AND PARTICIPATING IN NETWORKS & INITIATIVES

As stated in Chapter 1, we are an active member of several networks and initiatives, both at the local and national levels. Our role has varied from being a founding member in some networks to active participation in others, and extending solidarity and support in some others. The decision to join and endorse networks and initiatives is a carefully weighed one, taking into consideration many factors including relevance of the issue to our vision, mission and priority areas, skills, competencies and expertise within our organization to do full justice to our association with networks and initiatives. Given below is a brief write up of the major networks that we are a part of:
- **Aekal Mahila Adhikar Sangharsh Sanghatan (AMASS)**

AMASS is a state level network on rights of single and destitute women. During the course of our work with single women, we felt a need to have a collaborative effort to highlight single women’s diverse concerns and demands. We initiated a network process in Mumbai and Thane districts. This network which commenced in 2002 has Saheli group, Maitreen group, Gyandeep Stri Jagruti Manch, Yuva, Apnalay and Ayki along with WRAG as members of the network. The objective is to build a collective voice articulating the socio-economic and legal rights of single women and to make their issues more visible. As a founding member, we have not only been an active participant in this network but have also frequently initiated programmes and activities to take the work of the network forward, particularly on issues related to law and policy concerning single and destitute women.

- **Bharatiya Muslim Mahila Andolan (BMMA)**

Bhartiya Muslim Mahila Andolan, launched in January 2007, is a collective of Muslim women from across India. It was founded with the objective of acting as a voice for Muslim women to demand social, economic, political, civil, legal and religious rights for the realization of equal citizenship. WRAG is a founding member of this Andolan. The network has four areas of work pertaining to the Muslim community in general and women in particular: law, security, employment and education. It is a mass membership organization, with a leadership of Muslim women. Members of many mahila mandals based in Muslim-dominated bustis in Mumbai that we work with are also members of the network. Our personnel have also assumed responsibilities in the network by way of being state convenors for the state of Maharashtra. Active participation in the activities of the Andolan contributes to realization of our organization’s mission of working with women from marginalized groups to promote their socio-economic and legal status within the family and in society.

- **Coalition for International Criminal Court (CICC)**

The Coalition for International Criminal Court (CICC) is an umbrella organization consisting of more than 2000 organizations from all parts of the world. ICC-India campaign is a member of the CICC, based in New York. The Indian campaign works closely with the CICC headquarters in sharing resources, information and strategies with regard to the campaign at the international and Indian spheres.

- **Ekal Naari Shakti Sangathan (National Forum for Single Women’s Rights)**

This is a forum that was commenced in 2006 through the joint initiative of WRAG, Aastha and Prayatna Foundation. This Forum consists of organizations and individuals working in Maharashtra, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Delhi. The Forum has conducted two annual capacity-building programmes for the leaders of the Forum. The Forum is now commencing research work on government schemes and policies pertaining to single women. We are a founding member of the Forum, and our personnel play a proactive role in conducting the study in the state of Maharashtra.
Jan Manasik Arogya Abhiyan (JMMA)

Jan Manasik Arogya Abhiyan (JMMA) is a human rights-based, people’s campaign in the area of mental health, initiated by Bapu Trust. It is a state-level forum working in Maharashtra, aiming to humanize the mental health system and restore self-determination, rights and dignity of persons with psycho-social disabilities. It is a platform built in order to engage various stakeholders on the right to mental health care. JMMA is not a service providing forum but is a pressure group challenging the state of Maharashtra to execute its responsibilities in mental health. At the moment, the forum is active in Pune and Mumbai cities. WRAG is actively involved in this campaign through the campaign’s Mumbai chapter and coordinates with the campaign at various levels, focusing particularly on mental health of underprivileged, single women living in communities.

Maharashtra Mahila Maha Panchayat (Maharashtra Women’s Collective)

This collective was commenced in 2007 through the initiative of Action Aid – Mumbai, to give a collective voice to women’s rights issues. Through public hearings, the collective is intended to encourage and facilitate women’s leadership in decision-making, justice and liaison with policy makers. The public hearings, with jury panels consisting of distinguished members of the women’s movement, the state government and the media, help highlight violations of women’s rights and facilitate speedy justice. The collective consists of over 17 organizations working on women’s rights in Maharashtra to raise issues pertaining to women’s health, mental health, housing rights, food security, property rights, violence against women and unorganized labour. The collective also focusses specifically on issues pertaining to groups of marginalized women, including dalit and Muslim women. WRAG personnel are particularly active in the Panchayat, with regard to Muslim women’s issues.

Mumbai Initiative for Human Rights Education (MIHRE)

The Mumbai Initiative for Human Rights Education (MIHRE) commenced after a National Human Rights Education Workshop organised by the International Human Rights Education Consortium in Mumbai in October 2003. It arose out of a need felt by most participants of the workshop, including us, for a Mumbai-based initiative to promote human rights education in schools, colleges and universities in the Mumbai region. It aims at providing a platform for interaction and collaboration between educators, educational institutions, non-profit organizations and other interested individuals on issues related to human rights education / human rights. It also aims at building & enhancing capacities of educators and other stakeholders for imparting human rights education to various constituencies. To that end MIHRE conducts seminars and workshops for human rights educators and organizes talks/ lectures on various human rights issues. We have played an active role in both organizing events under the banner of MIHRE, and in participating as resource persons in some of the events so organized.

Muslim Women’s Rights Network

WRAG has been a founding member of the Muslim Women’s Rights Network since 1999. This is a network consisting of women’s groups concerned about and working on issues
of Muslim women’s rights all over the country. As an active member of the Network, we have worked closely with secular groups, feminist organizations as well as community-based groups. We have initiated and organized annual consultations among members, and assumed responsibilities pertaining to Muslim family law in general, and preparing and promoting a progressive nikahnama (marriage contract) in particular. In the year 2006, based on differences in the ideology, priority areas of work and methods of functioning among the members of the Network, we, along with other organizations, felt the need to create an alternative platform where Muslim women, particularly those living in communities, could freely air their concerns and take active steps to ameliorate their conditions. Such like-minded groups and individuals came together and formed the Bharatiya Muslim Mahila Andolan (BMMMA), details of which are stated above.

- **National Network of Autonomous Women’s Groups (NNAWG)**

The National Network of Autonomous Women’s Groups (NNAWG) is a coalition of groups and organizations that actively participate in the women’s movement in India. It was set up in 2004 during the World Social Forum (WSF) in Mumbai, in response to the need to take feminist political and networking efforts beyond national organizing and strongly advocate for making women’s issues visible. NNAWG is closely linked to the National Co-ordination Committee, which initiates and organizes the massive 3000 strong national conferences every few years. As a founding member, we played an active role in organizing the International Feminist Dialogue Meet/Workshop when it was held in Mumbai prior to the World Social Forum 2004.

- **South Asian Network Against Torture and Impunity (SANTI)**

South Asian Network Against Torture and Impunity (SANTI) was formed by a group of human rights organizations in 2003 at a regional meeting organized by SAARC Peoples Forum, and reactivated through a regional discussion meeting on Criminal Responsibility for Torture: A South Asian perspective, organized by Odhikar, Bangladesh in October 2004. Through this network, we work in partnership with Asian Human Rights Commission – Hong Kong, National Human Rights Commission – Nepal, Human Rights Commission of Pakistan and Banglar Manabadhikar Suraksha Mancha (MASUM) of India. The network works towards protecting victims, combating the practice of torture, effective monitoring of national security laws and ensuring justice and accountability in contexts of torture. Our participation in SANTI is complemented by our effort to combat torture in India, through participation in people’s tribunals on torture as jury members, conducting trainings and workshops on international law relating to torture and participating in domestic law reform initiatives on torture.

- **Women’s Initiative for Socio-economic Development (WISE)**

WISE is a cell established by the Maharashtra State Commission for Minorities in March 2006. The idea for setting up this initiative came to the Commission after an officer on special duty, attending a special meeting called by the commission in January 2006, felt that the concerns express by us for gender-just reforms in Muslim family law had to be
taken up on a long term basis. We play an active role in the initiative in building alliances with non-profit organizations, members of the commission as well as other like-minded individuals both in the government and non-governmental sectors, in order to take forward our work on bring about reforms in Muslim family law from a gender perspective.

IV. ALLIANCES WITH THE LAW FRATERNITY

The law fraternity forms an important strategic group for our organization’s activities that pertain to law and policy. In the work of ICC-India campaign, lawyers form a major beneficiary in almost all the information dissemination programmes. A majority of the programmes held in 2008 in the states of Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh consisted of advocates working on civil liberties and human rights. Some information dissemination programmes have been organized exclusively for and by lawyers’ groups, in which most, if not all participants, comprise of lawyers. Examples include a workshop on the International Criminal Court & India, organized in Chandigarh in November 2006, in collaboration with the India Chapter of Lawyers for Human Rights International (LHRI). A conference on ‘Human Rights and the ICC’ organized by Muzaffarnagar District Bar Association in January 2007 met with an overwhelming response from over 200 participants, a majority of whom were lawyers. Another such instance is a lecture on the ICC organized by the Rangareddy District Court Bar Association, Andhra Pradesh, for its lawyers, in 25 July 2008, in which we participated as resource persons. In July 2008, through the invitation of Asmita - a resource centre for women, based in Secunderabad, we also had the opportunity to conduct a training for district women lawyers on aspects of mass crimes, women’s rights and international law.

Many individual partners of the campaign comprise of lawyers practising in various courts in the country. A substantial number of members of ICC-India’s Board of Advisors are lawyers. Very often, lawyers and judges are also invited as resource persons in information dissemination programmes organized by the ICC-India campaign. High profile lawyers with whom we have built alliances with include Mr. Ram Jethmalani and Mr. Sudarsana Natchiappan (senior advocates of the Supreme Court and Members of Parliament). We have also participated, as speakers, in events related to the International Criminal Court, organized by the International Bar Association (IBA), in February 2006, January 2007 and February 2008 in Delhi.

Consultations with lawyers have also been an essential part of taking our initiative on the Muslim family law reform ahead. Consultative meetings with lawyers in the cities of Ahmedabad (Gujarat), Lucknow (Uttar Pradesh), Bhopal (Madhya Pradesh), Raipur (Chhattisgarh), Dharwad and Bengaluru (Karnataka) and Thiruchirapalli (Tamil Nadu) have been held in 2008 to obtain feedback on the draft law on Muslim marriage and divorce formulated by us, in the light of challenges and experiences faced by lawyers in courts on the issue of Muslim family law.

The campaign on the Communal Violence Bill gave us an opportunity to work closely with lawyers and judges who were like-minded and shared similar concerns. For example, Justice Hosbet Suresh (retired judge of the Bombay High Court) addressed the press in a major press conference organized by us on the issue in July 2007. The National
Consultation on the Communal Violence Bill, where we made presentations, had the participation of many senior judges of the Supreme Court and High Courts. The discussion-meeting on Communal Violence Bill, held in August 2008, co-organized by the Women Lawyers’ Association, High Court, Chennai and WRAG, provided us a platform to interact with over 50 women lawyers concerned about impact of law reform processes such as the Communal Violence Bill, on women’s rights.

The campaign for implementation of the Srikrishna Commission Recommendations on the communal violence in Mumbai (1992-93) has also involved working closely with a large number of human rights advocates and judges, both in Mumbai as well as Delhi. Such persons have represented the victims / survivors in courts of law in Mumbai and Delhi, helped chalk legal strategies for implementing the Commission’s recommendations and have participated as speakers in press conferences and public meetings organized by the campaign.

Other programmes held on human rights issues, including a Consultative Meeting on Victim Witness Protection (held on 30 April 2005), have witnessed a high level of participation from members of the law fraternity, both as speakers and as participants. These include public prosecutors, defence lawyers and lawyers working on issues of human rights and civil liberties.

We have worked in partnership with the law fraternity not only for campaign and advocacy initiatives, but also for capacity-building. The law fraternity has helped us in extending legal counseling and legal aid to underprivileged women from the communities that we work with, integrating a strong gender perspective in their work. Through an alliance with lawyers specializing in family law, property law and criminal law, we have been able to refer underprivileged women to them for legal assistance at subsidized costs.

V. WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS

Delivering Lectures: Our work in partnership with academic institutions has been at various levels. In some instances, we have been invited to deliver lectures as part of the programmes organized by the institutions. Lectures have been delivered on human rights in the Post-graduate Department of Journalism and Mass Communication – Academy of Management and Information Technology - Bhubaneswar and Tata Institute of Social Sciences – Mumbai. On issues pertaining to the International Criminal Court, we have made presentations and delivered lectures in more than 10 institutions, including National Law School of India – Bengaluru, University Law College – Guwahati, Christ College – Bengaluru, College of Social Work - Nirmala Niketan – Mumbai, Indian Society for International Law – Delhi and Institute of Advanced Legal Studies - ILS Law College, Pune. On the Communal Violence Bill, lectures were held in A.K.Khan Law College – Pune, NALSAR University of Law – Hyderabad, National Law University - Jodhpur and College of Social Work – Nirmala Niketan, Mumbai. On issues pertaining to family laws and women’s rights, WRAG personnel have been invited by K.C. Law College and Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai to make presentations. Presentations on Sexual Violence in Armed Conflict were made at events organized by the Department of International Relations, Stella Maris College – Chennai.
Collaborative Activities with Academic Institutions

6.1 Workshop on International Criminal Court & India, in collaboration with the Department of Law, Andhra University, Vishakapatnam, June 2008

6.2 Workshop on International Law, ICC & India, in collaboration with the National Law University, Jodhpur, January 2007

6.3 Discussion on Communal Violence Bill, at NALSAR University, Hyderabad, September 2007

6.4 Lecture on 'Sovereignty & Human Rights' at National Law School of India, Bangalore, May 2004

6.5 Seminar on International Criminal Court, hosted by Rajiv Gandhi National University of Law, Patiala, November 2006
Collaborative Activities with Academic Institutions

6.6 Seminar on 'Media and Human Rights', organized by Post-graduate Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, Academy of Management and Information Technology, Bhubaneswar, January 2006

6.8 Session on 'Implementation of International Humanitarian Law: Relevance of ICC' in South Asian Training Programme on International Humanitarian Law, organized by ICRC and National Law School of India, Bengaluru, May 2004

6.7 Lecture on Communal Violence Bill, delivered at A.K.Khan Law College, Pune, August 2007

6.9 Discussion meeting on Implementation of Srikrishna Commission recommendations at College of Social Work Nirmala Niketan, Mumbai September 2007

6.10 Training of Trainers Programme on International Criminal Law & India, organized in collaboration with Rajiv Gandhi National University of Law, Patiala, February 2009
Alliance-building with Government & Other Democratic Institutions

6.11 Our participation in a public meeting organized by the Maharashtra State Commission for Minorities


6.13 1st Consultative meeting of Parliamentarians on India and International Criminal Court, co-organized with the Parliamentary Forum on Human Rights, Delhi, August 2005

6.14 Consultative meeting with the Maharashtra State Commission for Minorities, on rights of minority women

6.15 2nd Consultative meeting on International Criminal Court with Indian Parliamentarians, co-organized with Parliamentary Forum on Human Rights, Delhi, December 2005

Anger at minorities commission hearing

Special Correspondent
MUMBAI: Anger and frustration boiled over during the public hearing of the National Commission for Minorities on Wednesday, as the Muslim community voiced its anguish at the "betrayal" by the Congress government and the lack of political will to implement the Srikshna Commission's report on the Mumbai riot of 1992-93.

NGOs also made the point that ensuring justice was not the responsibility of Muslims alone. The entire society must participate in demanding it, Saumyee Uma from Women's Research and Action Group said that when the State government decided to implement the Srikshna Commission's report, the Shiv Sena said it would cause problems. Why did the State not act against the Sena's threats and punish politicians inciting the people, she asked.

Collaborative Activities with the Law Fraternity

6.18 Participation in the Conference on 'ICC: Responses of States in South Asia', organized by International Bar Association (IBA) and others, Delhi, January 2007

6.16 A discussion on the International Criminal Court & India with the lawyers of Manabudhikar Suraksha Mancha (MASUM), Kolkata, November 2004

6.17 Seminar on 'ICC and India', co-organized with the India chapter of Lawyers for Human Rights International, Chandigarh, November 2006

Collaborative Activities with the Law Fraternity

6.20 Training on International Criminal Court & Women’s Rights, conducted for women lawyers’ project of Asmita Resource Centre, Hyderabad, July 2008

6.21 Discussion on Mass Crimes and the Relevance of International Law, for lawyers of criminal courts, Ajmer, July 2008

6.22 Discussion-meeting on Accountability for Mass Crimes: Relevance of International Law, at Rangareddy District Court, Andhra Pradesh, July 2008

6.23 Consultative meeting on Communal Violence Bill, co-organized with the Women Lawyers’ Association of High Court, Chennai
Our Associations with Other Networks, Campaigns & Movements

6.24 With the National Single Women's Forum at World Social Forum, Mumbai, January 2004

6.25 Our participation in the International Peace Festival, Mumbai, December 2006

6.26 Our participation in 'Maitri Mela' organized by Aekal Mahila Adhikar Sangharsh Sanghatan (AMASS), April 2005

6.27 Workshop on Land, Resource and Matrimonial Rights, organized at the Indian Social Forum, in collaboration with Consult for Women and Land Rights (CWLR), Delhi, November 2006

6.28 Our participation in the 7th National Conference of Autonomous Women's Movements in India, Kolkata, September 2006

6.29 Addressing a consultative meeting on Muslim women & the law, organized with Bharatiya Muslim Mahila Andolan in Nashik, November 2007

6.30 Our discussion on challenges to realizing minority women's rights, with colleagues at STEPS, Pudukottai, Tamil Nadu, June 2009

6.31 Participation in and presentation on Muslim women's issues, in a panel discussion organized by Mahila Patchwork, Ahmedabad, 2008
Our Participation in Regional / International Conferences

6.32 Preparatory meeting with International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and Coalition for International Criminal Court (CICC) at World Social Forum, Mumbai, January 2004

6.33 South Asian conference on the International Criminal Court, Dhaka, April 2004

6.34 Conference on Criminal Responsibility for Torture: A South Asian Perspective, Dhaka, September 2004

6.35 Representatives of ICC campaigns in Asian countries, at the Third Session of Assembly of State Parties (ASP) of the ICC, the Hague, September 2004

6.36 At the 4th Regional Experts Meeting on the ICC, Bangkok, March 2005

6.37 At the Asia Experts Session and Regional Meeting on the ICC, Guiyang, China, March 2006.
Our Participation in Regional / International Conferences

6.38 Participation in the Sixth Session of Assembly of State Parties (ASP) of the ICC, held in United Nations, New York, December 2007

6.39 Symposium on Women’s Movements & National / International Institutions, held in the auspices of the Indian Social Science Congress, Mumbai, December 2007

6.40 At the regional workshop on Indian and South Asian Perspectives on the International Criminal Court, Delhi, February 2008

6.41 Asian strategy meeting on the ICC, Kathmandu, March 2009

6.42 At the Conference on Global Movement for Equality and Justice in the Muslim Family, Kuala Lampur, February 2009

6.43 At the Conference on Global Movement for Equality and Justice in the Muslim Family, Kuala Lampur, February 2009
Co-organizing Programmes: The second level of our work with academic institutions involves jointly organizing programmes in partnership with those institutions that we have been able to develop a closer rapport with. For example, seminars and consultative meetings on the International Criminal Court have been jointly organized with Rajiv Gandhi National University of Law - Patiala, National Law University – Jodhpur, Centre for Culture, Law and Society, NALSAR University of Law – Hyderabad, Department of Law, Andhra University - Vishakapatnam and Department of Psychology, Utkal University – Bhubaneswar. We extended our collaborative work with the Research Centre for Women’s Studies (RCWS) of S.N.D.T. Women’s University, Mumbai by jointly organizing a seminar on ‘Wars Against Women, Women Against Wars’ with the Centre, held in the auspices of an International Peace Festival, Mumbai, on 2 December 2006. We also organized a symposium on ‘Women’s Movements’ Engagement with National and International Institutions / Campaigns’ jointly with RCWS at the Indian Social Science Congress on 27 December 2007.

Capacity-Building of Teachers: In May 2004, we participated as resource persons in the annual South Asian Regional Training Session on International Humanitarian Law and Refugee Law, organized by ICRC - South Asian delegation, held in National Law School of India, situated in Bengaluru. Over 40 persons, consisting of academics teaching international law and related disciplines in universities in India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, the Maldives, Bhutan and Myanmar, participated in the teaching session. On the invitation of the Research Centre for Women’s Studies – S.N.D.T. Women’s University, Mumbai, we have regularly participated as resource persons in the Centre’s refresher courses on women’s rights conducted for teachers of colleges in Maharashtra in 2005, 2006, 2007 and 2008. Topics covered by us include history of women’s rights in the international arena, introduction to international conventions and treaties, case studies on protection of women’s human rights and women’s rights as human rights. In February – March 2009, we conducted a three day residential Training of Trainers programme on International Criminal Law in collaboration with the Centre for Advanced Studies in International Humanitarian Law, Rajiv Gandhi National University of Law, Patiala. Through this programme, we were able to share insights with more than 40 teachers working in educational institutions and research institutes across the country on disciplines including political science, law, human rights, social work, sociology and international relations. Please see Table 6.3 on page 133 of this Report for a list of academic institutions that we have collaborated with.

VI. RAPPORT-BUILDING WITH GOVERNMENT AND DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

With the expansion of our advocacy initiatives, we have found it necessary to liaison and interact with government and democratic institutions. We regularly approach the Human Rights Commission, Commission for Women and Commission for Minorities at the national and state levels, for implementation of policies and guidelines pertaining to underprivileged and minority communities, and to ensure justice and accountability for mass crimes such as communal violence.

We have also approached Maulana Azad Artik Vikas mandal and Mahila Artik Vikas Maha mandal for economic and educational empowerment of women living in communities. For purposes of health and education, we engage with municipal hospitals and schools. On issues of communal harmony, peace and justice, we regularly interact with mohalla committees, zopadpati police panchayats and the police.
On the invitation of the police department, we have had the opportunity to conduct workshops with police personnel in Mumbai on issues pertaining to gender, women and law and human rights.

Through our work with Parliamentarians through the ICC-India campaign, our organization broke new ground. By establishing an alliance with the newly-formed Parliamentarian Forum for Human Rights in 2005, we were able to jointly organize two consultative meetings with the Forum on the issue of International Criminal Court and India, which provided us a platform to interact and dialogue with more than 80 Parliamentarians. The rapport established by us with individual Parliamentarians helped us ensure their participation in our activities in subsequent years.

VII. PARTICIPATION IN REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES

Our activities on the International Criminal Court have given us an opportunity to participate in regional and international conferences, where we could share information, resources, campaign strategies and concerns with like-minded organizations and individuals from other parts of the world. Our participation in such programs has helped understand and articulate current issues, challenges and dilemmas faced by the ICC, as well as the role of NGOs in addressing the same in collaboration with the ICC.

These include

- Third Regional Experts’ Meeting on the ICC (Bangkok, July 2003);
- Third Session of the Assembly of States Parties of the ICC (The Hague, September 2004);
- Regional Conference on the ICC (Dhaka, April 2004);
- Fourth Regional Experts’ Meeting on the ICC (Bangkok, March 2005);
- Regional Conference on International Law and Jurisdiction in the Era of Globalization (Delhi, February 2006);
- Asian Experts Session and Regional Meeting (Guiyang, China, March 2006);
- Conference on ‘ICC: Responses of States in South Asia’ (Delhi, January 2007);
- Sixth Session of the Assembly of States Parties of the ICC (New York, November – December 2007);
- Regional Workshop on Indian and South Asian Perspective on the International Criminal Court (Delhi, February 2008); and
- Asia Regional Strategy Meeting on the ICC (Kathmandu, March 2009).

We participated in a two-day discussion meeting on ‘Criminal Responsibility for Torture: A South Asian Perspective’, organized by Odhikar in Dhaka in September 2004. Our participation paved the way for our participation in South Asian initiatives on impunity for torture, rule of law, justice and accountability, and to integrate gender concerns into such initiatives.

We participated in the International Peace Festival held in Mumbai in December 2006, where we organized a seminar on ‘Wars Against Women, Women Against Wars’ in
collaboration with the Research Centre for Women’s Studies, S.N.D.T. Women’s University. This gave us an opportunity to interact with peace activists, social workers and human rights activists from India and other Asian countries.

We also participated in a 4 day South Asian conference called ‘Imagine New South Asia’ which focused on a South Asia without borders. The conference took place in Amritsar in early 2007, and had the participation of more than 300 persons from South Asian countries. The conference focused on strategies and responsibilities of civil society groups in improving the living conditions in South Asian countries, with a specific focus on peace and security.

Our participation in an international conference titled ‘Musawah’ in Kuala Lampur in February 2009, gave us an opportunity to build alliances with individuals and organizations working on Muslim family law and women’s rights in other countries. Over 200 participants from more than 40 countries came together to work for reform of Muslim family law. The platform provided an opportunity to exchange experiences, share strategies and best practices for promoting and protecting rights of women within Muslim family law. Please see pages 125-126 of this Report for photographs of our participation in regional and international conferences.

VIII. OUTREACH TO STUDENTS

We encourage internships / placements for students from varied disciplines. In a context where law and social work students are increasingly drawn to the corporate sector, we feel duty-bound to mould young minds, and to provide students with information and experience in human rights and community-based work, in order that they may be motivated to work for social causes at present and in the future. Our relationship with the students extends beyond the internship period, as students continue to contribute to our activities and participate in them.

Each internship is finalized months in advance, to enable us to organize and plan activities to be held during the internship period, in order to maximize the learning experience for students. As a policy, we do not accept more than 2-3 internships per programme at a time, in order to enable us to focus our efforts fully in guiding and mentoring the student interns. For a list of students who have done internships with our organization, please see page 25 of this Report.

IX. EFFORTS AT INCREASING THE ORGANIZATION’S VISIBILITY

Construction of our website (www.wragindia.org) was completed in April 2007 and it became operational soon thereafter. Our preparation of contents, design, presentation and format of the website led to healthy interactions and exchange of views internally and with the web designer. The website not only contains information about WRAG’s staff, trustees and activities, but is also intended to serve as a site from which our publications and promotional material can be downloaded. Reports of events as well as our periodic reports have also been uploaded on the website. Regular updates and maintenance of the website has been carried on subsequently. The website has been a milestone in increasing our organization’s visibility, and in sharing resources and information with like-minded individuals and organizations across the world.
TABLE 6.2: ORGANIZATIONAL PARTNERS OF ICC-INDIA CAMPAIGN  
(As on 1 July 2008)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Organization</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Alternative Law Forum</td>
<td>Bengaluru</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Aman Biradari</td>
<td>Ahmedabad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Amnesty International – India</td>
<td>Delhi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Association for Socio-Cultural and Environmental Development (ASCED)</td>
<td>Guwahati</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Awaaz-e-niswan</td>
<td>Mumbai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Aarzoo</td>
<td>Ahmedabad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Banglar Manabadhikar Suraksha Mancha (MASUM)</td>
<td>Kolkata</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Cheyutha Rural and Urban Development Society (CRUDS)</td>
<td>Hyderabad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Citizens’ Collective</td>
<td>Guwahati</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. CISRS, Project of Joint Women’s Programme</td>
<td>Delhi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Creative Society for Training and Development (CSTD)</td>
<td>Hyderabad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Dalit Women’s Forum</td>
<td>Secunderabad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Documentation, Research and Training Centre (DRTC)</td>
<td>Mumbai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Ekta Committee for Communal Harmony</td>
<td>Mumbai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Forum Against Oppression of Women</td>
<td>Mumbai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Free Legal Aid Committee (FLAC)</td>
<td>Jamshedpur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Human Rights Cell of Behavioral Science Centre</td>
<td>Ahmedabad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Human Rights and Law Defenders</td>
<td>Pune</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Human Rights Law Network</td>
<td>Hyderabad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Human Rights Social Educational and Awareness Society</td>
<td>Nalgonda, A.P.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name of Organization</td>
<td>Location</td>
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<tr>
<td>24. Human Rights Watch – India</td>
<td>Mumbai</td>
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<tr>
<td>25. Hukook-e-niswan Mahila Sanghatana</td>
<td>Mumbai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. India Centre for Human Rights and Law</td>
<td>Mumbai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. Indian Social Institute</td>
<td>Delhi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. Institute of Human Rights Education</td>
<td>Chennai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. Integrated Rural Development Organisation (IRDO)</td>
<td>Hyderabad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. Jananeethi Institute</td>
<td>Thrissur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. Juliet Sheeba Welfare Society</td>
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<tr>
<td>32. Lawyers for Human Rights International (LHRI) – India chapter</td>
<td>Chandigarh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33. Legal Management Group</td>
<td>Muzaffarnagar</td>
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<tr>
<td>34. Living Bread Organisation</td>
<td>Medak, A.P.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35. LORDS</td>
<td>Nalgonda Dist, A.P.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36. Manavatavadi Vishva Sansthan – The School of International Humanitarian Thought and Practice</td>
<td>Kuruikshetra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37. Mangal Rural Development Service Society</td>
<td>Warrangal, A.P.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38. Marathmoli Mumbai</td>
<td>Marathwada and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39. Martin Luther King Centre for Democracy and Human Rights</td>
<td>Bhubaneswar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40. MV Foundation</td>
<td>Rangareddy Dist, A.P.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41. National Commission for Justice, Peace and Development</td>
<td>Delhi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42. NOCER-India</td>
<td>Kannur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43. North East Network</td>
<td>Delhi, Guwahati,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44. Partners for Law in Development</td>
<td>Delhi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45. People’s Service Society (PSS)</td>
<td>Mahbubnagar, A.P.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46. People’s Watch</td>
<td>Madurai</td>
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<tr>
<td>47. Poor People Welfare Development Service Society</td>
<td>Warrangal, A.P.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name of Organization</td>
<td>Location</td>
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<tr>
<td>48. Pragathi Rural Development Society (PRDS)</td>
<td>Mahbubnagar, A.P.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49. PRASHANT Centre for Human Rights, Justice &amp; Peace</td>
<td>Ahmedabad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50. Programme on Women’s Economic, Social and Cultural Rights – PWESCR</td>
<td>Delhi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51. SAHR WARU</td>
<td>Ahmedabad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52. SANGATH</td>
<td>Bardez</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53. Social Action Forum Against Oppression</td>
<td>Ahmedabad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54. Society for Health and Educational Development</td>
<td>Hyderabad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55. Society for Human Activity for Rural Environment (SHARE)</td>
<td>A.P.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56. Society for Promotion of Integrated Rural Development – SPIRD</td>
<td>Hyderabad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57. Society for Solidarity and Reconstruction</td>
<td>Hyderabad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58. Social Educational Economic Development Society (SEEDS)</td>
<td>Hyderabad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59. SPRED</td>
<td>Khammam Dist, A.P.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60. Sree Priya Social Service Society (SPSSS)</td>
<td>Narmetta, A.P.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61. St. Xavier’s Social Service Society</td>
<td>Ahmedabad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62. The Bridge and Peace Society</td>
<td>Hyderabad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63. Ushodaya People’s Service Society</td>
<td>Warrangal, A.P.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64. Victory Rural Development Society (VRDS)</td>
<td>Hyderabad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65. Vinoba Nagar Development Society</td>
<td>Hyderabad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66. Youth Development Programme</td>
<td>Nalgonda Dist, A.P.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# TABLE 6.3: Academic Institutions We Have Collaborated With

*(As on 1 May 2009)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Organization</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Academy of Management and Information Technology (Post-graduate Department of Journalin</td>
<td>Bhubaneswar, Orissa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and Mass Communication)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. A.K.Khan Law College</td>
<td>Pune, Maharashtra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Andhra University (Department of Law)</td>
<td>Vishakapatnam, A.P.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Burhani College</td>
<td>Mumbai, Maharashtra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Christ College</td>
<td>Bengaluru, Karnataka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. College of Social Work - Nirmala Niketan</td>
<td>Mumbai, Maharashtra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Institute of Advanced Legal Studies</td>
<td>Pune, Maharashtra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. ILS Law College</td>
<td>Pune, Maharashtra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Indian Society for International Law</td>
<td>New Delhi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Indira Gandhi National Open University</td>
<td>New Delhi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. K.C. Law College</td>
<td>Mumbai, Maharashtra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. NALSAR University of Law</td>
<td>Hyderabad, A.P.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. National Law School of India University</td>
<td>Bengaluru, Karnataka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. National Law University</td>
<td>Jodhpur, Rajasthan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. National University of Juridical Sciences</td>
<td>Kolkata, West Bengal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Rajiv Gandhi National University of Law</td>
<td>Patiala, Punjab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. S.N.D.T. Women's University</td>
<td>Mumbai, Maharashtra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Research Centre for Women’s Studies, Department of Political Science)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Stella Maris College</td>
<td>Chennai, Tamil Nadu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. St. Xaviers' Institute for Communications</td>
<td>Mumbai, Maharashtra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. SVKM College of Law</td>
<td>Mumbai, Maharashtra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Tata Institute of Social Sciences</td>
<td>Mumbai, Maharashtra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. University Law College</td>
<td>Guwahati, Assam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Utkal University (Post-graduate Department of Psychology)</td>
<td>Bhubaneswar, Orissa</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7. CHALLENGES & LEARNINGS

During the last five years, we have faced many challenges and testing times. Mitigation strategies were chalked out through discussion among our personnel as well as with the Board of Trustees. Such processes have made our organization emerge stronger, more resilient and cohesive as a team.

I. ISSUES OF IDEOLOGY

In our long-standing work on Muslim family law reform, our approach has been to facilitate reform from within the Muslim community by building the capacities of community-based women, while simultaneously supporting efforts at law reform of issues that are common to all religious communities. Despite the fact that we endorse and extend solidarity to efforts at reforms in all laws discriminatory to women, be they secular civil laws or family laws, there have been attempts at labelling and straight-jacketing our efforts towards reforms in family laws in the ‘secular/religious’, or the ‘within/outside religion’ dichotomy. Avoiding compartmentalization through such false dichotomies, and instead asserting the ‘pro/anti-women’ dichotomy that we believe in, has required considerable effort on our part.

Unlike most organizations that have one or two key persons as its leaders over a period of many years, our organization has a changing leadership of young women as a conscious policy of our founder trustees. This has been challenging for two reasons: a) internally, the leadership of WRAG has had to acquire skills and expertise on the job; and b) externally, since our organization cannot be associated with one or two renowned persons, our credibility has had to be proven solely through our work.

WRAG’s work with single women (including deserted, widowed, unmarried and divorced women) is based on the discrimination, oppression and harassment meted out to them by society. When we commenced our activities with single women living in underprivileged communities, we were accused of ghettoizing such women further and overlooking the homogeneity of all women. Time and again, the long term objective behind the initiative – of integrating such women in mainstream society, after recognizing and addressing their specific experiences and issues - had to be articulated.

As part of our ideology of community-based empowerment of women, we believe that underprivileged women living in communities have the potential to make effective interventions on behalf of women in crisis. Our capacity-building efforts have been directed at honing such potential, through counseling, leadership and communication skills, with a gender perspective. We believe in creating para-legal activists and peer counselors among the communities of women that we work with, with the objective of making such communities more self-reliant and less dependent on us. However, the
capability of underprivileged and semi-literate women to counsel women in crisis and to negotiate their rights on their behalf, with the help of law, democratic and quazi-legal institutions, has often been called into question by civil society actors.

Further, not many organizations engage in issues of international law. On one hand, the breadth of WRAG’s work ranging from community initiatives to advocacy with state level and national level policy makers, to campaigning on international law issues, has given us an insight on intervention strategies across many levels. On the other hand, in a climate where civil society continues to be largely suspicious and critical of international law and standards, and the government hostile to the same, WRAG’s approach has sometimes been seen to be “western”, undermining India’s national interests and politically naive. The emphasis on national sovereignty that is often posed in relation to human rights in India, finds its resonance with many civil society players too. The importance of using international human rights standards, jurisprudence and principles for strengthening the system of justice and accountability within the country is an issue that we have had to explain and emphasize time and again.

II. ISSUES PERTAINING TO IDENTITIES

Muslim women’s organization or a women’s organization working on Muslim women’s issues?

We have often been wrongly perceived to be a Muslim women’s organization, due to our engagement with issues of Muslim women since 1993. Making a distinction between a Muslim women’s organization and a women’s organization that engages with rights of Muslim women, and asserting our identity as the latter, has not been easy. Yet, it is important for us to be seen as a women’s organization as we have often engaged with research, campaign and advocacy for rights of other marginalized groups of women as well, including women victims / survivors of armed conflict, dalit women, single women, victims of torture, adivasi women and rights of bar dancers. Our organization’s engagement with law reform processes has also extended beyond that of Muslim family law, as the preceding chapters have outlined. We have worked closely with Muslim-dominated slum communities in Mumbai. However, the vision and the mission of our organization clearly give us the mandate to work with other marginalized groups of women as well. Unless this was internalized among our personnel, such an identity of our organization could not have been projected externally.

Secular in Character?

Perceiving us to be a Muslim women’s organization has also had its repercussions on our secular identity. WRAG was founded as a secular women’s organization. Such a vision has been carried forward throughout the life of the organization, and secular-humanist principles have been infused into all our programmes and activities, including capacity-building, research and campaign and advocacy. Yet, due to our engagement with issues of Muslim women in general, and that of Muslim family law reform in particular, other players in civil society have sometimes questioned our secular credentials. We believe that it stems from an erroneous understanding that secular organizations do not or should not work on issues of or with women
bearing any religious identity. We do not assume any religious identity; neither do we prioritize, impose or deprive women of the identities they assume.

**CBO or NPO?**

A question often posed to us is whether WRAG is a community-based organization or a non-profit organization. We believe that WRAG is a combination of the two. WRAG functions as any other non-profit organization does, but the backbone of its work has been with women from marginalized, underprivileged communities. They have been the major beneficiaries of our programmes and activities; our work plans are often formulated according to the demands articulated by women living in communities; the community base has given us credibility to engage in research, campaign and advocacy initiatives, as the positions taken by us on many issues are backed by ground realities emerging from the experiences of women from underprivileged communities. However, we are not a community-based organization in the sense of mobilization of communities through mass membership.

**Capacity-Building & Advocacy or Service-Provision?**

While we have been functioning clearly from a rights-based perspective, focusing our work on capacity-building, research & advocacy, the fact that we engage closely with underprivileged communities has sometimes resulted in the potential to expand our work towards a provision of services. We acknowledge that promotion of socio-economic empowerment of women would contribute to an enabling environment for underprivileged women to enjoy their human rights. Unless issues such as education, health and nutrition, livelihood, community development, hygiene and sanitation are addressed squarely, women, particularly those from underprivileged communities, may not be able to enjoy their human rights in actuality. Times of natural disaster, such as floods and fire, warrant immediate responses in relief and rehabilitation measures. While we have engaged in relief and rehabilitation in the past, it has been challenging for us, as an organization focused on capacity-building, research and advocacy, to engage with activities of service-provision, which require specific skills and expertise.

**Rights-based versus Needs-based**

Further dilemma was caused in our role and approach in the communities that we work with when we engaged ourselves with the campaign for implementation of Sachar committee report. One strategy collectively decided among organizations, for example, was to conduct a survey of municipal schools to assess the quality of education that was being provided to Muslim-dominated bustis, to evaluate the implementation of the government-initiated *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan* programme. Communities that WRAG has worked with also expected that we would provide financial support to meet the medical expenses of women and girls from such communities, more particularly against the backdrop of privatization of the health sector and the consequent increase in the cost of health services. Women from the *mahila mandals* that we have worked with have often expressed the need for assistance in finding sources of livelihoods for their male family members, citing that this would have a positive impact on domestic violence faced by
women in such communities. Adolescent girls living in communities expressed their aspirations of completing graduation, and often cited financial constraints for not being able to do so. At all such occasions, the needs expressed at the community level have weighed on our ability to implement rights-based programmes in such communities. Despite the temptation of involving ourselves in a survey of educational services provided by the state, subsidy of medical expenses, awarding scholarships to deserving girls for school and college education, distribution of rations, provision of vocational training and employment generation in the communities we work with, we have had to take considerable effort to maintain our character and role as a rights-based organization that focuses on capacity-building, and yet not disappoint women living in communities. Collaborating with other organizations that make need-based interventions, and referring the needy women and girls to such organizations are some ways in which we have addressed the issue.

Multiple Identities of WRAG’s Personnel

We have helped create groups, campaigns and networks at various levels – local, regional and national. We started working with one mahila mandal, but with the expansion of work into more than 25 mahila mandals, a Federation of mahila mandals was formed. The Federation then came to be an active member of a national movement called the Bharatiya Muslim Mahila Andolan (BMMA), of which WRAG is a founding member too. Some personnel of our organization are members of mahila mandals, the federation as well as BMMA. Wearing multiple hats has been a challenging task for some of us, as a consciousness about which group / campaign / network / organization that one was representing was required at all times – both for self and for others. Complications arise when the position and approach to issues is not uniform across the various entities, as players and their perspectives differ. Which position / approach / strategy would be endorsed by the personnel? Which identity is predominant for each such personnel? These are questions that we are continuously exploring and addressing within our organization.

III. CHALLENGES / RISKS AT WORK

In our capacity-building initiatives with women and girls living in communities, we have faced potential hostility from family members, religious leaders, fundamentalist and conservative forces, political parties, local committees and anti-social elements within the communities. Such forces have opposed empowerment of women and girls living in communities, wanting instead, to maintain status quo. In our campaign and advocacy work, we have had to contend with the spread of religious hatred and identity politics as these adversely impact an enabling environment for promoting and protecting women’s human rights, justice and accountability. Further, we have also had to address squarely the resistance to / suspicion in understanding and using law, particularly international law, in campaigning for justice and equality.

IV. OTHER CHALLENGES

Not having a presence in Delhi has posed a challenge to our campaign and advocacy work, where frequent trips to the national capital to dialogue with parliamentarians and
policy makers have been found imperative. To an extent, we have addressed this by working in close collaboration with like-minded individuals and groups based in Delhi.

Due to our work with Muslim women, we have faced difficulties in finding and retaining an office space on rent. The Mumbai terror attacks of 26 November 2008 have further exacerbated the anti-Muslim prejudice that was already prevalent in the city, leading to harassment and suspicion from neighbours. This has adversely affected our work as well as posed a threat to the security of our personnel.

We have been directing our efforts at fund-raising for our programmatic activities and institution-building. The challenge has been to raise funds for activities and campaigns that are considered sensitive or seen as questioning the establishment. In the present situation of global market crunch, such efforts are only going to be more challenging in the months to come.

V. SUPPORT TO OUR WORK

While we have faced challenges to our work, we have received support as well, sometimes from unexpected sources. This chapter would not be complete unless we acknowledge those who have supported our work.

The enthusiasm of the communities that WRAG works with, and the zest with which they have demanded capacity-building programmes from us, have given us the moral courage and the inspiration to continue our community-based capacity-building work at all times, and against all odds. We have seen transformation in the lives of women who have participated in our capacity-building programmes, in the manner in which they assert their viewpoints with their family members, community leaders, religious leaders and the police. Their continuous feedback on the usefulness of our work has given us a sense of purpose and satisfaction.

In our campaign and advocacy work, our achievements so far can largely be attributed to our close collaborations and partnerships with other like-minded individuals and organizations. The faith reposed in us by the Board of Advisors, partner organizations, individual members, friends, supporters and well-wishers of the ICC-India campaign, Muslim family law campaign as well as other campaigns that we have actively participated in, has been tremendous. This has motivated us to take on a leadership role in determining and initiating campaign strategies and areas of work. At the same time, such persons and organizations performed a crucial function of being the sounding boards for our work, often giving us critical inputs, which have been a source of learning for us.

The academic community, in particular law and social work institutions, has supported our work on law and rights awareness in a big way. Unless they were convinced that their students require exposure to campaigns, movements, activism and ground realities, as well as reposed a confidence in our work, they would not have facilitated our training programmes / lectures / workshops / seminars to be conducted in their academic institutions. Thankfully, the initiatives taken by dynamic leaderships of academic institutions have also paved the way for our collaborative work with such institutions as well as the participation of students in our activities.
In our work on legal counseling and aid to underprivileged women, without the support of lawyers, access to the legal system and ultimately access to justice, would have remained a distant dream for our beneficiaries from the communities. Lawyers have also played a significant role in our efforts at capacity-building and law research. In our law reform efforts, they have given critical insights into how a proposed legal provision would play out in a court of law. Judges’ support of our work has encouraged us to work with increased confidence, while their association with and support to our activities have also given visibility and credibility to our work.

Mediapersons have supported WRAG’s work by giving it the visibility it requires, not only through a coverage of press conferences and events organized by us, but also by profiling our personnel and writing about their work and achievements. Some mediapersons based in Mumbai and Delhi have participated and continue to participate in our campaigns, and have also suggested ways of strengthening our interactions with the media. They are friends whose judgments we trust in the work we do.

Government agencies and personnel, including parliamentarians, policy makers, police, members of the Human Rights Commission, Commission on Women and Commission on Minorities, both at the national and state levels, have extended support to our work in many small ways. Their continued association with us has paved the way for a fruitful dialogue on issues of common concern.

Students of law, social work and other disciplines have contributed to our work in meaningful ways. Our interactions with them, which commenced either through their placements / internships in WRAG or through programs conducted by us in their institutions, have often extended beyond such immediate contexts. Since we are perpetually short-staffed in carrying out varied activities, we have often drawn upon the enthusiasm of students to participate in our activities. We have sought the help of students, often at short notice, to assist us in logistical responsibilities while organizing workshops, conducting research and compiling resource materials for our capacity-building programs. Students have also helped us with informal translations and preparation of training tools. Their constant questioning of our strategies, approaches and positions on the issues we are engaged in, has helped us articulate our thoughts with clarity and conviction.

Our donors have had a complete and unshakeable faith in our work. In the past six years, not once have we had a situation of a donor intervening / interfering in our activities or questioning / monitoring the same in any manner whatsoever. Their support and understanding have enabled us to focus completely on our programmatic activities, instead of diverting our energies on justifying our work.

Finally, it is the team spirit within the organization that has kept us going through the tough times. We have derived strength and confidence from each other within the team and from among the members of our Board of Trustees, with whom we share a close rapport.

CHALLENGES & LEARNINGS
8.

THE WAY FORWARD

We believe that it is imperative to incorporate in-built mechanisms for constant introspection, reflection, review, analysis and evaluation of our programs and processes. Such mechanisms provide opportunities for improving our activities, including a modification of our strategies and approaches for a greater impact of the initiatives of our organization.

There are many ways in which we conduct such evaluations. Every event organized by WRAG is succeeded by an internal evaluation by the staff at the next weekly meeting. Feedback from beneficiaries, in the form of evaluation forms, written and oral tests / quizzes at the end of our capacity-building programs, and other such means are often used to evaluate and modify the activities, where required. Our Board of Trustees also provides inputs and give insightful suggestions when a report of the organizational activities is presented at the periodic meetings. In addition, the process of Organizational Development initiated in 2007 and 2008 also provided an opportunity to all of us to spend time exclusively on aspects of institution-building, and analyze the performance of our organization from a macro perspective.

Seen in this light, the preparation of this Report of our activities has provided us yet another opportunity to

- document and understand the scale and varied focus areas of activities undertaken;
- introspect and evaluate areas of achievement;
- identify challenges faced and strategies used to overcome the same; and
- think of ways in which structural / programmatic changes within our organization could boost the effectiveness of our work.

A. A REVISED ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

In introspecting the organization’s work in the past five years and beyond, it is clear to us that we have focused our efforts on 3 major activities: a) capacity-building; b) campaign and advocacy; and c) research, publication and documentation, apart from an overall effort on alliance-building and outreach with like-minded individuals and organizations. These are the three essential components of both the parallel programmes of the organization – ‘Community Outreach Programme’ (COP) as well as ‘Justice and Accountability Matters Programme’ (JAM). The organizational review we undertook in 2007 and 2008 triggered us to analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of the present structure of the organization, particularly in terms of the two parallel programmes that have been functioning. A logical corollary of the deliberations held throughout the year was the proposal for a revised organizational structure.

In the new organizational structure, our activities are categorized into 3 parallel programmes - a) capacity-building; b) campaign & advocacy; and c) research, publication
and documentation. Implementation of this structure requires that particular activities of the existing programmes would be merged and re-categorized. We are convinced that the new structure would facilitate better information-sharing, team work and a more conducive environment for focused and intensive work on the three parallel activities of the organization.

Although the new organizational structure envisages many more personnel, with varied and specialized skills, we plan to undertake such an expansion of our organization in a phased manner. Please see Chart 8.1 below for the new organizational structure finalized by the Board of Trustees of WRAG.

**CHART 8.1: ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF WRAG 2009**
*(as approved by the Board of Trustees on 11 Oct 2008)*

**B. FINALIZING A FIVE YEAR WORK PLAN**

Introspection of our past work also led us to chalking out the work plan for the next five years, and identifying focus areas for WRAG’s activities. After deliberations, it was decided that the following ongoing activities would be continued for the next 5 years:

- Capacity-building activities with single women’s groups (*Saheli*);
- Perspective-building and educational programmes on women’s rights, human rights & law with varied beneficiaries including groups of underprivileged women and girls;
- Campaign on Muslim Family Law reform;
- Campaign on International Criminal Court & India (ICC-India campaign); and
- Campaigns & advocacy work on other issues related to human rights, women’s rights, secularism and the law.
WRAG’s vision spells out a gender-just as well as secular society, while its mission statement includes working with marginalized (including minority) women and policy level interventions aimed at creating a climate that is conducive for promotion of women’s human rights, dignity and secularism. We have been involved in issues pertaining to secularism and communal violence since inception, at various levels including in relief and rehabilitation, as well as in campaigning for justice and accountability for violations. In the context of increased incidence of communal violence in recent years, and the widespread use of sexual violence as a tool for mobilizing hatred in such violence, we have decided to commence more focused activities on issues related to secularism. Such activities would be commenced shortly and include –

- Research on issues related to communal violence, communalism & women’s rights;
- Campaign & advocacy initiative;
- Support to victims and survivors; and
- Peace initiative - for peace and harmony in communities and ensuring women’s participation in peace initiatives of the state.

Further, we are convinced of the need to extend the activities of WRAG to reach out to new groups of marginalized women. The following marginalized groups have been identified:

- Sex workers
- Women prisoners
- Physically-challenged women
- Women in mental health institutions
- Aging women (senior citizens)

At the time of printing of this report, a pilot study is in its final stages of completion on some of the groups identified. The literature review, survey of organizations working on these issues, existing policies, programmes and efforts on each of these issues would enable us to identify the gaps between existing efforts and the need at the ground level, based on which a maximum of two issues would be taken up for future work of the organization. Such activities would be commenced in late 2009 – early 2010.

**CONCLUSION**

The backbone of our work has been our efforts in empowering women living in communities, both in their individual capacity as well as through a strengthening of the *mahila mandals* that they associate with. During the last six years, WRAG’s support-base in the slum communities of Mumbai has increased manifold. In 2002, we worked with 5 *mahila mandals*, but by end of 2008, we engaged in capacity-building activities with at least 26 *mahila mandals* in the city of Mumbai. Needless to say, the capacity-building activities expanded to meet the ever-increasing demand from *mahila mandals* for information dissemination on aspects of their rights, and from groups of single women and adolescent
Deliberations at Sessions on Organizational Development, January 2008

8.1 Facilitator, Gagan Sethi, explaining the life cycle of an organization

8.2 Sharing thoughts on administrative and programmatic tensions

8.3 Presentation on the interplay between product and process in organizational activities

8.4 Discussion on our relationship with other groups and organizations: dependence, inter-dependence and independence.
Alternative Visions of WRAG in future

8.5 As a tree that produces more and more trees and plants

8.7 As a river that houses many types of sea creatures and flows in many directions

8.6 As a forest consisting of many types of trees and plants

8.8 As an entity with a global presence
girls for skill-building, capacity-building, information dissemination and socio-economic and legal aid. In the last few years, after a federation of mahila mandals (Hukook-e-Niswaan) was formed, our capacity-building activities with mahila mandals came to be channeled through the federation. This lead to training activities being conducted in a more organized and non-repetitive manner. This positively impacted the time constraint and limitations in human resources faced by us.

This process has reached a new milestone in 2009 with the federation of mahila mandals becoming independent. In the immediate future, we seek to build upon the experience and expertise gained by us in the last six years in solidarity-building with mahila mandals, community-based empowerment and direct intervention in the communities. This will be done by directing the expertise and knowledge gained by us towards research and advocacy initiatives with underprivileged community-based groups of women. In the forthcoming years, we perceive a transformation in our organization’s role in its community-based interventions, from solidarity and skill-building, to one that focuses primarily on information dissemination, rights awareness and perspective-building.

The research initiative catapulted in the past 5-6 years, as we undertook action research, law research, research for campaign and advocacy and research for our capacity-building activities. The fact that like-minded organizations invited us to participate in larger research projects, such as ‘Minority Women Negotiating Citizenship’ and ‘Imagine a New South Asia’ is an indicator of the recognition of our work among secular-humanist groups. At the same time, we have found it essential to conduct action research ‘within’ – among communities that we works with (as in the case of the study on single women’s issues), as well as a broad-based study on Indian law and human rights situation in collaboration with varied actors that we ally with (as in the case of the research initiative of ICC-India campaign).

Our activities on publication came in for a strong focus in the past several years. In the years prior to 2003, we had published 4 books in English and Hindi, whereas in the years 2003-2009, 19 books have been published in English, Hindi and Urdu. While the publications prior to 2003 were related to Muslim family law and reports of our activities, in the last six years, topics of publication have included Muslim family law, rights of single and destitute women, human rights and the International Criminal Court in addition to reports of our activities and programmes. This is yet another indicator of the expanding horizons of our activities.

In the years 2003-2009, there have been heightened activities in both the campaigns - Muslim family law campaign and the ICC-India campaign. ICC-India campaign broke new ground by initiating a research on international standards & Indian laws - the first of its kind in any country that has not ratified the ICC Treaty. The National Consultations on the International Criminal Court & India, held in 2006 & 2008, gave a fresh impetus to the campaign in determining the focus and strategies for future work. The Consultations also strengthened the campaign’s rapport-building effort with parliamentarians, media persons, senior advocates, policy makers and bureaucrats, apart from members of the civil society. The campaign’s specific contribution to human rights in India has been by advocating and facilitating standards and principles pertaining to the ICC to be
incorporated into Indian law in order that a strengthened domestic legal system would address the issue of impunity for mass crimes in India in a more effective manner.

Similarly strides of advancement have been made in the Muslim family law reform campaign. Through an active participation in the National Conventions of Bharatiya Muslim Mahila Andolan (BMMA), held in 2007 and 2008, we were able to forge new alliances with policy makers, bureaucrats, institutions working on rights of minority communities, representatives of non-profit and community-based organizations as well as with groups engaged in rights of Muslim women. Our significant contributions to the Muslim family law reform campaign have been through promoting the use of a progressive nikahnama in the communities that we work with, preparing a draft law on marriage and divorce, and by disseminating information on positive judgments of the Supreme Court on Muslim women’s matrimonial rights through the publication ‘Supreme Court Speaks’.

At the same time, our participation in other human rights campaigns also increased and intensified. We have played an active role on campaigns related to the Communal Violence Bill and implementation of Srikrishna Commission’s report, often assuming important responsibilities assigned to us collectively by groups and individuals working on the campaigns. Our advocacy activities reached new heights by way of drafting and submitting complaints to the U.N. Human Rights Council on non-implementation of Srikrishna Commission recommendations and the negative aspects of the government-initiated Communal Violence Bill, as well as through active participation, along with many like-minded individuals and organizations, in drafting an alternative law on Communal Violence. Through these activities, we broke new ground in our efforts to hold perpetrators (both state and non-state actors) accountable through international and domestic mechanisms.

We have continued to remain proactive in other campaigns related to human rights, women’s rights and the law. Our associations with these campaigns helped expand the horizons of our work, and enriched the perspectives from within. In particular, our engagement with the issue of implementing Sachar Committee’s recommendations has led to a broader understanding of the importance of promoting social, economic and cultural rights of the Muslim community as an enabling environment for promoting the human rights of women within the community.

Continued association with the Communal Violence Bill helped us reach out to newer groups and persons, in particular – victims and survivors - and disseminate information about the same, and to expand the support base for the campaign. Our participation as jury members in the People’s Tribunals on Torture held in various parts of the country and in the All Women Fact Finding Committee to Chhattisgarh in 2008, have been eye-openers on ground realities. These newer experiences enriched our perspective as well as helped forge stronger alliances with the human rights movements in the country.

Strides of advancement have also been made in our efforts at building alliances with the media. Over the years, we have transformed ourselves from conducting low-profile activities among the communities that we work in, to an organization that works in strategic partnership with the print and electronic media. The media coverage of activities conducted
by us, and the positive response from the media to press conferences and events organized by us from time to time, are an indication of the good will that our organization enjoys with media persons, as well as the skills we have acquired in engaging with the media.

In 2008 - 2009, in particular, we have witnessed a consolidation of activities aimed at institution-building including a determination of work plan for the next five years, strategies for fund-raising, and a revision of the organizational structure and salary structure. We are convinced that these activities are a long-term investment in the growth and sustainability of the organization, in order to ensure that the vision and mission of our organization are fulfilled.
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