

# GROOTS

GRASSROOTS ORGANISATIONS OPERATING TOGETHER IN SISTERHOOD (SOUTH ASIA)

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Editorial

## IS ONE WORLD ORDER POSSIBLE?

(*Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*)

The globe is currently facing series of unprecedented challenges like terrorism, religious and ethnic conflict, environmental degradation, poverty etc. Under the circumstances, it is a positive augury that the United Nations has thought to cite a quote from the ancient Indian Vedic Verse '**Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam**' meaning the **world is one family**. The verse stresses not only on avoidance of global conflict but also underlines the need for world peace. The quote is found in Upanishad in chapter 6, verse 72. It's evidently clear that the world has become quite mechanical and profit oriented. This new culture has actually created a gap between haves and have-nots leading to several inequalities.

The thought of this ancient Indian verse, meaning one world order, has great significance currently as the entire world is facing diverse problems. In India the concept of Vedas had originally preached a way of life i.e., the occupational pursuits but this eventually and slowly gave way to many caste divisions and conflicts. Therefore, other religions emerged on the concept of this one world order for the



welfare and peace in the living communities. Buddhism, Jainism and later Islam and Christianity found its way to India to preach the same though with skepticism. However Buddhism travelled to East i.e., East Asia and Jainism survives in India in a small way among the business communities. In the Middle East emerging on either sides of rivers Tigris and Euphrates, Islam and Christianity significantly made their presence in larger parts of West Asia, Europe and US. Despite their larger coverage they could not lay strong emphasis on one world concept and the welfare of the people suffered everywhere and its beyond expectation of the people whether in Asia Africa, North America, South America, Antarctica, Europe or Australia all have passed on a confused/selfish degrading heritage to their posterity. The result we are witnessing today is gender insensitivity, violence, terrorism and lack of solidarity leading to inhuman actions resulting in violent, explosive crumbling societies. Resultantly we also witness ecological crisis, population explosion, poverty, hunger, violence and in total the economically imbalanced world is



increasing expenditure on armaments leading to unquestionable arm race towards human disaster.

Coming back to the present scenario, as newspaper or TV news that make headlines everyday are incidents of girl child being killed in a heinous manner. Despite several efforts both by civil society initiatives and governmental action like passing the new laws to save the girl child/women and to punish the perpetrators of violence against women and children, the girl children continue to be a victim of all kinds of violence. As we see every day they are harassed in schools, college girls are mostly targeted and oppressed by their own colleagues and faculties and many more atrocities that one cannot deny. The country was shaken up by the Nirbhaya case few years back and similarly now the Swathi and Jisha cases have shaken up the existence of normal life among young women these days in the country. Do women and girl have no right to survive? Why do they target young women and children alone? Looking in to the incident of Swathi, is there any justification to kill just because she has not responded positively to a romantic overture ? This is nothing but demonstration that society is moving towards savagery to barbarism.

Who is responsible and who is to be blamed for this situation and action? Can we blame the parents for the failure to inculcate in their children moral values and for not treating both boys and girls equally? Is it not that the education system too has failed in imparting/moulding children (boys and girls) with proper behavior, building of character at an impressionable age. It's no surprise that the educators/faculties themselves are indulging in despicable behaviour from elementary school to higher education level and so on.

Despite growing work options the grave unemployment situation still warrants young men join terrorist groups attracted by the big resources offered to them by such groups. Isn't this the failure of the Government to create more employment to meet the requirements? Also it's shocking information that the young criminals

are mostly from the political/influential families who have the power to do and undo things and indulge in worst crimes without fear or favour. Politicians come to power spending enormous resources and to earn back the money by hook or crook, they facilitate the groups towards criminal activities in their countries. As we are writing this, a terrible attack has happened in Bangladesh, our neighbouring country and its even more shocking to hear that a local minister's son was part of the attack doing immense damage in claiming over more than 20 lives.

Examining these incidents it could be observed that one can live in harmony with each other when each individual changes from within accepting the famous quote of Ralph Waldo Emerson and of Pericles- "What you leave behind is not what is engraved in stone monuments, but what is woven into the lives of others." Therefore, in the fitness of things, the UN is currently concerned about the highly disturbed global situation and has thought of this Indian concept 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' that offers a message/hope for the one world order.

★ *This Editorial is a provocation of multiple disturbances around the world sharing the concern of UN's conceptual thought based on Vedic ideology, Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam i.e., World is one family.*

### *In this Issue you'd find....*

<b>Editorial: Is one world order possible?</b> <i>(Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam)</i>	1
Training/Awareness Camp in WWF/ICNW	3
Sharing of Experiences	4
Activities in WWF/ICNW	5
National/International Events	5
Visitors	8
What Readers say about GROOTS	8

## TRAINING/ AWARENESS CAMP IN WORKING WOMEN'S FORUM (INDIA) / INDIAN COOPERATIVE NETWORK FOR WOMEN



*Awareness training session on kidney*

A Kidney Health Awareness training in partnership with the **Tamilnad Kidney Research Foundation (TANKER)**, Chennai was conducted at WWF on 29 February 2016. With March being the National Kidney Month, WWF used the opportunity to conduct this awareness programme for its poor members to spread and gain awareness about kidney disease, prevention methods and learn more about lifesaving techniques to fight kidney disease. Mr. P. Eshwaran, programme coordinator from the TANKER advocated that kidney disease can affect anyone irrespective of age group. Further he said diabetes, high blood pressure, and cardiovascular disease are the key risk factors for

kidney disease and besides, heart attack and stroke are more common among people with kidney disease. To prevent kidney disease, one has to make certain changes in their diet and lifestyle to live a healthier and longer life. Besides, he also distributed the pamphlets to create public awareness towards the same. Over 100 members were enlightened in this programme. ■

A Diabetes Detection Cum Awareness Camp was organized by the Working Women's Forum (India) in partnership with **Achira Labs Pvt. Ltd.** i.e, based in Bengaluru on March 16 & 17, 2016 at Kanchipuram. Ms. Mithila Azad, Head of Fabric Division, Achira Labs & Mr. Dhananjaya Dendukuri, CEO & Co-Founder said that Achira Lab is focused on research to produce low cost health equipments and it is the first time that Achira labs has attempted to make silk thread as diabetes silk strips. The camp was successful as over 350 people including men/women, both members/non-members attended this camp. Most of the participants who attended this camp were poor and did not have better access to medical facilities. The testing was done by using Glucometer besides simultaneously tested on silk thread strips to know accuracy and differences between the two equipments. Doctors at Kanchipuram i.e Dr. Kavitha, Dr. Abinantharaj and Dr. Vivekanantha provided medical consultations to the patients who were found to have symptoms of the disease. The check up included height and weight measurement too.

In-addition to the free check up, a video awareness programme on diabetes, types and prevention was shown and also a lecture was delivered to the participants. The camp also highlighted the issue of good nutritional intakes.

On the final day President, WWF, complimented the work done by Achira and WWF team for successfully conducting the camp. She further praised Achira that the research work that is done for the welfare of the poor has reached the grassroots and added that WWF is always ready to facilitate groups like Achira wherever and whenever it wants to conduct similar camps. ■



*Participants at Training program, University of Madras*

10 staff from Working Women's Forum (India) participated in the two day training programme conducted by the Department of Criminology, University of Madras on Empowerment of women working in the unorganized sector through legal literacy on March 17&18, 2016. The training programme highlighted on ILO, status of domestic workers, nutritional deficiency among the women of marginalized sections, problems and issues of women working in the unorganized sector, etc. ■

## SHARING OF EXPERIENCES



*Exposure visit of Vruti & Swasti*

A 24 member team from **Vrutti and Swasti i.e part of Catalyst group** led by Mr. Narendran, from five districts of Tamil Nadu, visited WWF/ICNW on January 20, 2016. The objective of the visit was to learn the functional aspects of WWF/ICNW and how they can implement similar programmes in their areas. The Secretary, Ms. Egammai briefed them about the whole functioning of the organization and the structure. The team also visited the cooperative bank i.e ICNW and the training department. The team were eager to know whether WWF/ICNW have the same board of directors; the duration of membership of the members and enquired whether the shareholders are loanees. Later they asked for tips to improve their organization as they are also involved in similar types of programmes. They also visited the field at Pattinampakkam area in Chennai and interacted with the women beneficiaries directly. The feedback of the team was “It was a great learning and their members are recharged and excited about the concept of Multistate Cooperative. They have learnt a lot and the things that impressed them are the training sessions, policies like giving loans to those involved in microenterprises, computerization of accounts, insurance especially health insurance, etc.



*Orientation to Andhra Pradesh Team*



*Team interacting with women entrepreneurs*

Similarly on April 12, 2016 another team from **Vrutti & Swasti** from Andhra Pradesh i.e, Srikakulam, Chittoor, Vishakapatnam, Vijayawada & West Godavari districts led by Mr. Bhoopati visited WWF/ICNW to learn about the functioning of the Multi-state cooperative society. They were briefed about the organizational structure, training programmes and also about the banking aspects. Further they visited MMDA market, central Chennai and directly interacted with the beneficiaries to know their progress and facilitation of the organization in their work. The team from Andhra Pradesh felt that the training programme is not only an eye opener but also transformative. ■

## ACTIVITIES IN WORKING WOMEN'S FORUM (INDIA) / INDIAN CO-OPERATIVE NETWORK FOR WOMEN

The **fourth Project Monitoring and review Committee (PMRC)** meeting of NABARD was held on January 29, 2016 at the premises of Working Women's Forum (India) Chennai. The meeting was chaired by Dr. Jaya Arunachalam, President, WWF and was attended by Mr. T.K. George, AGM, NABARD, Ms. Sheeba Sangeetha, Manager, NABARD, Mr. Vinod Kumar, Chief Manager, Syndicate Bank and other officials of WWF/ICNW. The committee discussed on the progress of the project and reviewed the loan of Rs. 1.75 crores disbursed among the members. In addition, the discussion focused on future partnership with NABARD to facilitate on-lending to micro entrepreneurs in other states like Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka where WWF functions.



*PMRC meeting of NABARD & WWF/ICNW*

The **Fifth Project Monitoring and Review Committee (PMRC)** meeting of NABARD was held on June 10, 2016 at the premises of Working Women's Forum (India), Chennai. The meeting was attended by Shri. P.Veera Shanker, DGM, NABARD, Ms. S. Sheeba Sangeetha, Manager, NABARD; Mr. Umesh Chander, Assistant Manager, Syndicate Bank, Mr. S. Mohan Rajan, ICNW Auditor and other officials of ICNW/WWF. The discussion focused on (a) purpose for which loan is provided (b) progress of the project, (c) marketing of members' products etc. The committee also discussed whether there will be an opportunity for field visit to meet the beneficiaries directly. ■

## NATIONAL / INTERNATIONAL EVENTS

### President's Participation

A meeting of the Board of trustees of **Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Samarak Trust** was held on March 21, 2016 at New Delhi. Dr. Jaya Arunachalam participated in this meeting and suggested to create a separate library endowment so that a library can be opened for the public and the students from India/abroad. This will highlight the role of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel in India's freedom struggle. ■

### Visit to Andhra Pradesh Branches

To review the functioning of Andhra Pradesh branches, President WWF visited Narasapur, Bhimavaram and Palakol branches from February 26 to March 1, 2016. In the meeting conducted at Narasapur branch on February 2, 2016, around 60 members, mostly old members, participated in the meeting. President WWF enquired the members regarding their occupation, reason for their membership, welfare of their children and also showed keen interest to listen to the stories of their transformation.



*President WWF interacting with members*

Responding to the query of President WWF whether their children will join the organisation, the members said that their children too would join the organization as they have grown with the organization. Similarly, at a meeting conducted at Akula Vanigaruvu in Palakolu, 50 members involved in milk selling, lace, sarees, tailoring, sweet (garaj), coconut brooms, etc participated. President WWF suggested the members to take up additional new occupations as the lace business is dull. She also said the reason for low demand for lace products is due to economic/ political disturbances in other countries.

Similarly, at the meeting at Bhimavaram office, 70 members attended the meeting. President WWF also shared her experience and the story of initiation of the Narasapur branch. President WWF also highlighted the importance of using solar systems. Holding the review of the three branches meeting, President WWF delved into the membership and over-due details of the branches and listened to their explanations. Besides, she said the training has to reach more needy persons. This time the President WWF, took time off from official talk and desired to know about the staffs' personal life and their journey in this organization so far. ■



*Dr. Jaya Arunachalam presenting the Laadli Media Award*

Dr.S. Krishnaswamy, noted documentary producer and film maker invited Dr. Jaya Arunachalam, President WWF to grace the event of the **Laadli Media and Advertising Awards for Gender Sensitivity 2014-15 (Southern & Western Region)** as Guest of honor to felicitate media professionals in Chennai . The event was held at the Dr MGR Janaki College of Arts and Science for Women on March 4, 2016. The eminent economist M.S. Swaminathan was the chief guest. ■

On the eve of International Women's Day celebration, Dr. Jaya Arunachalam was invited as Chief Guest by the **Department of Women's Studies, Stella Maris College for Women, Chennai** on March 8, 2016 to inspire the students. To enlighten the students about the women's activism Dr. Jaya Arunachalam traced the history of worldwide women's movement and also shared the experiences of Working Women's Forum (India). Dr. Jaya Arunachalam highlighted that the



*Dr. Jaya Arunachalam at Stella Maris College, Chennai*

service of Christian Missionaries in India to the cause of women's education and reforms should be remembered with gratitude.

Further she said, even today the struggles of women are far from over as problems like dowry, rape, atrocities on women, gender violence still persist. She said that women's empowerment should never be reduced to individual success stories but it should lead to collective action. Concluding her speech, Dr. Jaya Arunachalam said that she has done her best and to carry forward the movement, now it is in the hands of young students like them. Dr. Sister. Helen Vincent said that over 90% of the women in India are marginalized, only 10% are shining and Dr. Jaya Arunachalam is one among them. She also quoted Dr. Jaya Arunachalam as a social activist and a dynamic lady in the field of empowerment of women. ■

President, WWF was also invited by Mr. Ravichandar, Head, HRD division of **Sundaram Motors**, Chennai to motivate and address their staff on March 8, 2016. Addressing the staff, President WWF said that true gender equality has not been achieved even after 65 years of India's Independence as women still remain as subordinates in workplaces reaching the level of Secretary and not as head of any institutions/office. In-addition, she also has to bear double drudgeries at home and work. President WWF urged women to reach ultimate goal. She advised them that one has to decide their life themselves and find their own path and motivations. Last but not least is that women should never think/feel that they are too old or incapable. ■



*Dr. Jaya Arunachalam at National Colloquium on Strengthening of Cooperative Training & Education*

President WWF participated in the National Colloquium organized by NCCT, Delhi on **Strengthening of Cooperative Training and Education** at the Natesan Institute of Cooperative Management, Chennai on March 27, 2016. The colloquium was inaugurated by Hon'ble Union Minister of State For Agriculture Shri. Mohanbhai Kalyanjibhai Kundariya and was presided over by Shri. Chandrapal Singh Yadav, President, NCUI, New Delhi.

The Guest of Honour included the legendary Prof A.Vaidyanathan, Chairman Task Force for Revival of Rural Cooperative Credit, Govt. of India, Shri.Bojjala Gopala Krishna Reddy, Minister of Environment and Forest Science and Technology and Cooperation, Andhra Pradesh; Mrs Irina Garg, Director General, Ch. Charan Singh National Institute of Agricultural Marketing, Jaipur , Mrs Shikha DGM, NABARD, besides Dr. Jaya Arunachalam, President Working Women's Forum (India).

Speaking on the occasion, Shri. Mohan Bhai Kundariya said hardly a day passes during parliamentary sessions when the name of Prof. Vaidyanathan and his report is not mentioned. Besides he said training institutes must provide training on the policies and schemes of Central and State Governments like Agricultural Insurance Scheme, issues related to cooperatives and training for those associated with Agricultural and Cooperative sector.

In his presidential address, Shri.Chandra Pal Singh highlighted that training institutes are facing acute problems of infrastructure facilities, financial crunch, lack of adequate human resource etc. Due to these handicaps, training units are unable to perform as desired. Shri. Bojjala Gopala Krishna Reddy, AP minister lauded the role being played by NCCT at National level.

The Secretary, NCCT Shri.Mohan Kumar Mishra in his welcome address highlighted the importance of colloquium, especially its role in professionalizing the cooperative organizations and the training modules in the country.

Prof. A. Vaidyanathan, Chairman, Task Force Revival of Rural Cooperative Credit Institutions, Govt. of India in his key note address gave his review of the Task Force Committee on Revival of the short term credit institutions. While praising the training institutes and their role in enhancing the capabilities of the cooperative institutions associated with deployment of rural credit, he made a special remark on the important components of Task Force Committee in which cooperative training is an important tool to bring radical reforms in the cooperative sector. He urged the policy makers like NABARD and Government to proactively work for changing the work environment to make cooperatives professional organizations.

Dr. Jaya Arunachalam, President WWF spoke of the contributions made by women cooperatives esp. Indian Cooperative Network for Women. She also welcomed the Andhra Pradesh government to visit WWF/ICNW branches in Andhra Pradesh to witness its successful functioning. Director General, NCCT Dr. Dinesh presented a summary of all the events and moved a vote thanks. ■

The staff meeting of the ICNW was held on April 16, 2016 in Chennai Head Quarters. Dr. Nandini Azad, President ICNW, CEOs, Consultant, Coordinators, Supervisors and organizers participated in the meeting. The meetings focussed on the performance of the branches, membership details and performance of the organizers were discussed in this meeting. Similarly on April 23, 2016 President WWF called for a meeting to review the performance of the cooperative and held discussions to know to performance of the fieldworkers individually. ■

Dr. Nandini Azad, President ICNW conducted the meeting of all the Karnataka branches at Bengaluru on May 10, 2016 to review the functioning of the cooperative. She commended Bellary and Bidar branches for improving and insisted on further improvement to make it profitable. Further she insisted all the branches to increase membership. ■

## VISITORS

As part of her project work, Ms. Sumithra, student of Architecture from Anna University visited WWF on January 11, 2016. She wanted to have a better understanding on how women perceive importance of spaces and how it is functioning. In this connection she had direct interaction with the women beneficiaries and the supervisors of WWF. She queried on the concentration of areas by the forum, whether counseling is provided and why women choose to join forum. The supervisors replied that women receive not only financial help but also other non financial aspects like different types of training, a platform where women can come together, discuss and solve their problems besides, they have all facilities like clean toilet and hygienic food. Ms. Sumithra appreciated that the forum is indeed accessible to women and is a great motivator particularly to the downtrodden. ■

Working Women's Forum (India)'s Founder President Dr. Jaya Arunachalam was featured and interviewed in a half an hour documentary programme titled 'Phoenix Pengal'(women of phoenix) in News7 Tamil channel as her hard work has changed/empowered the lives of many poor women. Phoenix Pengal is a documentary series that telecast the story of successful women who have achieved a goal by overcoming barriers.

## WE NEED YOUR INPUTS!!!

Contribute Letters, Ideas, Comments for our Newsletter

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## What Readers Say about GROOTS

Many thanks for Groots. I look forward to reading the newsletter with great interest.

*Dr. Manmohan Singh  
Former Prime Minister of India.*

We were struck by the report on the flood disaster in Chennai. We did not know that it was that bad. One lesson is obvious that many adverse effects of climate change and there will be in future could be prevented by proper maintenance of Infrastructure. Good that WWF again raises the voice of the affected people and will in future put even pressure on the government to take climate change seriously with proper policies and investments for adaptation.

*Klemens and Gabi, Germany*

The editorial 'Will 2016 be the year of disaster or fortune' makes a very informed reading. Your observations that nature alone should not be held responsible for the havoc are eye-opener.

*Rajen Kumar  
Chief editor- SME World, New Delhi*

Thanks for sending Groots Newsletter. The land hunger and old rules for tanks and check-dams also seem to be forgotten. This is now modern times! History is bunk. Let 2016 be the year of more justice and of more care.

*Paul-ter-weel, Indonesia*

Thank you for sending the newsletter. It is very inspiring and the editorial is impressive. The activities of WWF are very pertinent.

*Rajalakshmi Ravi, Head Awareness and Prevention  
Tanker Foundation, Chennai*





Sculpture: The World is One Family

Artist: Shiv Verma

Photo : UNIC/S. Dhillon

## The World is One Family

Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam

वसुधैव कुटुम्बकम्

Maha Upanishad (Chapter 6, Verse 72)

अयं बन्धुरयं नेति गणना लघुचेतसां ।  
उदारचरितानां तु वसुधैव कुटुम्बकं ॥

Ayam bandhurayam neti ganana  
laghuchetasam  
Udaracharitanam tu Vasudhaiva  
Kutumbakam

“Only small men discriminate saying:  
This one is a relative; that other is a  
stranger. For the truly generous, the  
whole world is but One Family”

Titled “Vasudaiva Kutumbakam: The  
Circle of Love and Unity” the giant  
sculptural installation symbolizes a  
borderless world where faith is but  
a grid in the eternal circle of life. It  
provides for well-being in times of  
peace and an overarching ideal in times

of upheaval and  
strife – a goal  
for humankind  
to aspire, live  
for and move  
towards. The  
quotation, which  
is also engraved  
at the entrance hall to the Parliament  
of India, represents a narrative of  
unity, of One World, One Family – a  
borderless world where all can live in  
peace and harmony.

The sculpture “Vasudaiva  
Kutumbakam: The Circle of Love  
and Unity” was especially created  
for the Art of Living’s World Culture  
Festival by artist Shiv Verma. The  
sculptor straddles the two worlds  
of contemporary art and age old  
metal sculpture techniques of Bastar,  
which dates back centuries. This  
work utilizes symbols of all faiths,



UN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS  
17 Goals to Transform Our World

the dove signifying peace, the Tajitu  
representing Yin & Yang, and the three  
circles within a circle representing the  
inter-connectedness of faith and life.

“The Circle of Love & Unity”  
produced by Pratima Arts ([www.Pratimaarts.com](http://www.Pratimaarts.com)), is part of a  
larger exhibition titled “Vasudhaiva  
Kutumbakam” and is a fund raiser for  
the Art of Living Tribal Schools that  
will benefit 3600 children in the states  
of Chattisgarh, Jharkhand and West  
Bengal. ■