GANDHI AND THE INDIAN WOMEN’S MOVEMENT

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The acquisition of publications from India in English is the responsibility of the British Library’s Overseas English Section, together with the Oriental and India Office Collections (OIOC), the Science Reference and Information Service (SRIS) and Official Publications and Social Sciences (OP&SS), and over the years material relating to Gandhi’s influence on the emancipation of Indian women has been an interesting part of this intake. The present essay looks at the subject from a necessarily broad perspective, given the status quo of women in India, who do not make up a homogeneous group. As a result, ‘the problems they face in development vary in kind and degree according to the differences in class, community, religion and caste backgrounds.’

So when Mahatma Gandhi came to India after his long sojourn in South Africa, the ground for women’s emancipation was prepared. Sensitive to imposed indignity, conscious of the worth of men and women, he devoted or wove women’s needs into the fabric of the fight for freedom; and women could not have wished for a better champion.

The above quotation comes from a study carried out by Aloo J. Dastur and Usha H. Mehta at the Smt. Nathibai Damodar Thackersey University for Women (founded in Bombay in 1916) on the impact of Gandhi’s influence on the emancipation of Indian women. Gandhi’s contribution was far-reaching in bringing awareness to the masses about the need for improvement in the status of women. He declared:

I am uncompromising in the matter of women’s rights. I have always had a passion to serve the womankind. Ever since my arrival in India, the women have come to look upon me as one of themselves. I hold radical views about the emancipation of women from their fetters which they mistake for adornment. My experience has confirmed me in the view that the real advancement of women can only come by and through their own efforts.

Gandhi’s arrival transformed politics and society in India. He concerned himself with the issues relating to India’s women by questioning existing Hindu practices which limited the involvement of women in the national awakening. Gandhi called purdah a custom which did harm to the country and was an impediment to the growth of women. He unleashed the same condemnation on the customs of sati (suttee) and the dowry: sati
he denounced as blind egoism by man and the dowry as reducing women to the position of mere cattle and property to be bought and sold.

Although Gandhi held high ideals of marriage, he strongly urged women to fight for their own self-development in order that they might not be seen as ‘mere sex symbols, playthings or dolls’. ‘The wife,’ Gandhi asserts, ‘is not a slave of her husband, but a comrade, his better half, colleague and friend. She is co-sharer with him of equal rights and duties.’ B. R. Nanda, Director of the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi, sees Gandhi’s views as not ‘liberal but radical’.

India’s innumerable problematic customs included not only sati and purdah, but child-marriage, the fact that widows were not allowed to remarry, the caste system, untouchability, and, not least of all, colonial rule. Early marriage, which was very common, made the physical, intellectual and spiritual development of women almost impossible. ‘The girl-child,’ observes M. Fuller, ‘from the moment of her birth to her death, undergoes one continuous life-long suffering as a child-wife, as a child-mother and very often as a child-widow.’

A survey of Calcutta in 1891 found 10,000 widows below the age of four (fig. 1).

In the proceedings of the Legislative Council of India on 17 November 1855 it was noted of the Hindu widow that

not only must she see no man, she must also avoid [e]very approach to ease, finery and pleasure. She must neglect the care of her person, must wear no ornaments; her hair must be shaved or
at least must be worn dishevelled. She must not see her face in a mirror, nor use perfume or flowers, must not anoint her body; and her dress must be coarse and dirty. The use of any kind of conveyance is prohibited. And she must not rest in bed. Her food is limited as to quantity and quality. She must not take more than a single coarse meal a day. Besides other facts [sic] perhaps a dozen in a year, a Hindu widow is required to abstain absolutely from food and drink from which not even severe sickness can give her dispensation.®

Gandhi’s great sense of justice made him work towards emancipation for all those oppressed and suppressed sectors of society including women. He declared in the February 1925 edition of Young India

To call women the weaker sex is a libel. If by strength is meant moral power, then woman is immeasurably man’s superior. Has she not greater intuition, is she not more self-sacrificing, has
she not greater courage? Without her, man could not be. If non-violence is the law of our being, then the future is with women.

However, not all women were prepared to forego violence. According to Aparna Basu, Reader in Modern History at Delhi University, 'there were a few women who could not accept Gandhi's creed of non-violence. Two young girls in their teens shot and killed Stevens, the District Magistrate of Comilla in December 1931. They were arrested and given life sentences.' Young college girls joined the revolutionary organizations that sprang up in the thirties. Aparna Basu suggests that 'all these girls had a strong streak of idealism in them and were highly emotional and impulsive. Their contempt and hatred for the British was quite intense and contact with revolutionaries and their literature fired their imagination and a world of heroism and romance was unfolded before their eyes.'

A valuable recent study of this subject by Usha Bala and Anshu Sharma contains a short history of the many famous, and less famous, women freedom fighters in India.

In *Gandhi and Status of Women* S. R. Bakshi suggests that Gandhi 'wished to awaken in as many minds of as many women as possible, a consciousness of their present condition', as well as stirring them to patriotism and encouraging them to fight 'shoulder to shoulder' with the men against the Raj, and to join the Indian National Congress. According to S. Shridevi, a former Principal of University College for Women, Hyderabad, 'Gandhi had to go slowly in the beginning', realizing that it was not going to be easy for women to escape from seclusion because of their own self-doubt about taking part in the national struggle. They were further hindered by their menfolk, who in general were too conservative to permit them to participate in public activities. Perhaps some men were also frightened that women's emancipation would erode their power-base and shake the traditional patriarchal power they had over them.

However, there were some simple unsophisticated rural women who marched side by side with women of the Nehru family at Allahabad and the Sarabhs at Ahmedabad. There were also some Muslim and Parsi women who shed their purdah and joined Gandhi in the movement. In the Congress-led freedom movement, women's participation was impressive. Many shops selling foreign goods were picketed and foreign cloth was burned on bonfires.

Gandhi saw that in some respects women's strength lay in their weakness. He appealed to their non-violent strength 'against the brute masculinity of the British power'. According to Susie Tharu and K. Lalita, in 1930 Sumit Sarker quoted a white police official from Uttar Pradesh, who wrote:

> The Indian woman is struggling for domestic and national liberty at the same time, and like a woman she is utterly unreasonable and illogical in her demands and in her methods, but like a woman she has enormous influence over the stronger sex...Many local officials have suffered more from taunts and abuse from their female relatives than from any other source.

Although Marx believed that change only occurred in society when the middle classes became dissatisfied, Gandhi desired to reach the masses as well as the middle classes who
supported the National Social Conference and the Indian National Congress. He had therefore to appeal to people by his writings (*Young India*) and public addresses. Although his outward appearance was not striking to some, even the British were impressed by Gandhi’s extraordinary personality. One Viceroy was genuinely moved on meeting him by the value of his words and the sincerity of his belief in ‘non-violence and love’, the ingredients that Gandhi saw would eventually give India its independence. Gandhi’s appeal to women to join the Congress brought forth an amazing response. According to S. Shridevi, one English observer said, ‘There was a breathtaking abruptness about the energy of the Indian women in political life. One moment they were not there, the next they had sprung like Athene from the head of Zeus fully armed into the forefront of the scene.’

Gandhi’s goals were numerous: not only was he striving to achieve independence for India but he laboured tirelessly to bring about social change. The one injustice that hurt him the most was the branding of millions of people in the country as ‘untouchables’. This was a special problem for women in the lower-scheduled castes (fig. 3). Many ‘untouchable’ women lived in deplorable conditions and such extreme poverty forced young girls into prostitution. Eleanor Morton, an American Quaker, recalls Gandhi’s declaration to the British Parliament that he would not agree to separate elections for the ‘outcast class’; to prove his great concern and as a protest against the division of the ‘untouchables’, he had entered a ‘fast unto death’. Gandhi’s wife Kasturba, a valiant participator who followed him in his crusade, was like him sent to prison. The reaction
in India was quite remarkable: temple doors closed to the ‘untouchables’ for centuries were suddenly open. It was while in prison that his idea for a periodical called Harijan (Children of God) was born. Since independence the practice of untouchability has been declared an offence in the constitution and therefore legally abolished. However, even with legislation, to remove the idea of it from people’s minds can take longer than a lifetime, and political freedom without a change of heart is meaningless. Coupled with this, discrimination was sanctioned by some Hindu religious fundamentalists.

In the struggle for women’s emancipation in India, many eminent women joined Gandhi. Among them was Sarojini Naidu (1879–1949), a distinguished poetess and political crusader who worked tirelessly to spread the message among women. She not only agitated for political reforms, but fought hard to end the old customs of purdah and child-marriage. As early as 1917 she was demanding the full franchise for women. Her inspiring work was recognized and in 1925 she became President of the National Congress. Naidu worked closely with Gandhi, and in her Presidential address in 1922 referred to him as the ‘flute of Sri Krishna’. She was one of the thousands who joined him in the ‘March to the Sea’ against the salt-tax. Travelling the length and breadth of India, Sarojini Naidu made powerful and passionate speeches to the large crowds who gathered to listen to her. However, her dreams of unity between Muslims and Hindus were shattered by the partition of India and Pakistan. It was not only Indian women whom Gandhi influenced. Annie Besant, for example, had first met Gandhi in London in 1887 and inspired by him she became one of the most influential female orators of her time in India. She preached against child-marriage, purdah and the enslavement of women and she maintained that the progress of India depended on women’s emancipation. She became the first President of the Indian Women’s Association, founded in 1917, was the first woman to be elected President of the Indian National Congress, and was largely responsible for putting forward the demand for political rights for women. Aloo J. Dasrur and Usha H. Mehta argue that ‘unlike other reformers, who tried to seek an intellectual solution to women’s problems, Gandhi sought to emancipate them emotionally’. His appeal is illustrated by the fact that women rallied to his belief that they were strong and unshakeable and he made them realize that their strength lay in their ‘gentleness, dedication, tolerance and maternal love. Moreover...they could be a force for establishing a non-violent society.’ For bringing women out of purdah, Gandhi seems to stand foremost among reformers.

In an attempt to gauge the extent of Gandhi’s impact as a social reformer for both men and women, the Smt. Nathibai Damodar Thackersey University carried out a survey approximately covering the years from the Champaran Indigo Planters Movement of 1917 to the Quit India struggle of 1942. Almost inevitably most of the participants felt that Gandhi had had an enormous effect on their lives and according to the survey, one respondent, a non-Gandhian, who became a convert to his ideology simply because of his contact with Gandhi, confessed that but for Gandhi’s influence he would never have taken a realistic approach to the problem of poverty. According to others, Gandhi’s ideas on basic education revolutionized the educational system. Sincerity and patriotism,
concern for the poor, simplicity, revolutionary zeal, non-violence, love for humanity, and respect for basic values were some of the factors that attracted people to Gandhi, together with his fearless childlike innocence and qualities of leadership. This is well illustrated by Hugh Tinker, Director of the Institute of Race Relations, 1969–1972, who concludes in his foreword to *The Lonesome Pilgrim*, a biography of Gandhi, that ‘during his long life, Gandhi was able to reach out to hundreds, perhaps thousands. Because those who came closest to his ideals were often the humble people, the people by the wayside, the unknown, the silent people, we shall never really know the extent of his influence.’

Even Gandhi’s critics have acknowledged his contribution to the emancipation of Indian women. It should not, however, be forgotten that the new image of women that he created was drawn from one political, historical and social setting and for one particular political goal, namely to unite the different strata in India against imperialism. Gandhi was a figure of his times. Nonetheless it cannot be denied that Gandhi’s influence made women aware of their potential in contemporary society: he gave them encouragement and confidence, making them realize that the national movement would not succeed without their involvement. Vina Mazumdar, Chief Editor at the Indian Council of Social Science Research, New Delhi, believes that he was the ‘only one who went beyond customs, and individuals, and sought a new social and moral code for women outside sex relationships’.

In the 1980s the British Library acquired a selection of interesting pamphlets on the ‘women’s question’ in India that looked at some of the issues from the nineteenth century through to contemporary research. Vina Mazumdar’s paper, *Emergence of Women’s Question in India and Role of Women’s Studies*, suggests that the women’s question in the nineteenth century grew out of a sense of an identity crisis of the new educated middle classes, products of the colonial system of education. However, the issues addressed were still confined to a woman’s traditional role within the family; and social reforms were concentrated on ending the traditional customs, child-marriage, purdah and the ban on widows’ remarriage. Very few reformers attempted to go beyond these basic abuses or face the effect that patriarchal values had had on women. The women in the vanguard of the Nationalist movement were urban and upper class. Little notice was taken of the millions of Indian women who formed the backbone of the Indian economy. According to Vina Mazumdar, ‘the women who formed 50% of the work force in the jute industry at the turn of the century were rejects from rural society – single women who had to come into town in search of a livelihood.’

In 1927 the All-India Women’s Conference (AIWC) was formed and from the 1930s it became more involved with highlighting the plight of women and the inequality between the sexes. ‘All women’s struggles for reforms when analysed are our expressions of revolt against a double standard,’ insisted Margaret Cousins, an Irish woman who was closely associated with the women’s suffrage movement in Ireland and who in 1927 became the first honorary secretary of the AIWC. These double standards had been observed in very early Indian history. Vina Mazumdar points to the early Buddhist period, when the Therigatha songs composed by Buddhist nuns portray women as
feeling oppressed by their subordinate position. In the Tamil poetry of the Sangam period, writings by women challenge the double standards prescribed by society for men and women. The AIWC played a large part in pushing for new social legislation. The Sarda Act (1929), forbidding child-marriage, and the Dissolution of the Muslim Marriage Act (1939) were reforms made possible through pressure from the AIWC. Local organizations, including Women’s Aid Centres, were set up in the 1930s but, although these provided shelters for women, there was still no attempt to show them the roots of their suffering. An important aspect of women’s participation in the Nationalist movement was that it led them to question the traditional value placed upon them in India. Nehru too argued that ‘if the women’s struggle in India had remained isolated from the general political and economic struggle, the women’s movement would have lacked a mass base’. Neera Desai points to the ‘considerable ambiguity among the leaders on the question of women’s equality’. She argues that, apart from Gandhi and Nehru, many Congress leaders espoused traditional values with regard to women and moreover ‘were not in favour of giving social or economic equality to women’. It would seem from most of the research that British imperialism was the great enemy for many during this period of pre-independence, and until India was freed from colonial rule the women’s question would remain absorbed in the larger movement for independence.

**THE POST-INDEPENDENCE ERA**

There must have been a good deal of optimism and hope for Indian women after independence in 1947. In the Constitution, women were given the same rights as men: Article 14 ensured equality before the law, while Article 15 prohibited discrimination and Article 16 guaranteed equality of opportunity for all citizens in matters of employment in any office under the state. However, Neera Desai’s and Vina Mazumdar’s papers communicate a sense of apathy in the women’s movement after independence. There was such a vital link between the political struggles and the women’s movement during the colonial period that the one had become totally entangled in the other. This was perhaps not an isolated phenomenon, for despite the important and active role British women played during the Second World War, they were encouraged back into the home and domesticity in 1945, when the war was over. As mentioned earlier, in Nehru’s comment, if the women’s movement had remained isolated, it might well not have strengthened or become a movement at all. Neera Desai says that even among some women the principle of equality was accepted up to the level of franchise and political participation but to go further into social, economic personal and family relations was not always seen as acceptable. Like the early suffragette movement in England, it would seem that the Indian women’s movement did not extend much beyond ‘bourgeois feminism’. Gail Omvedt makes the point that ‘Indian women have benefited from the democratizing aspects of the National movement, but it is primarily upper-class women who have been able to consolidate these gains’. Consequently, the period from 1947 to the late sixties has been seen by some
researchers as a time of silence for the women’s movement in India. Despite an increase in women’s organizations, the principle of equality in the Constitution and women’s rights in education, it was still the urban middle classes who benefited. Neera Desai identifies ‘three major steps’ taken by the Indian National Congress in the hope of bringing about social change and the establishment of an egalitarian society: these were the adoption of the constitution and legal reforms, development planning, encouraging a mixed economy and the introduction of state-supported social welfare activities. Desai believed these steps played a large part in determining the type of women’s organizations that would emerge during this time.

Legal reforms were introduced under the Constitution to guarantee rights of divorce and remarriage to Hindu women, equal shares in property for women and the establishment of the principle of monogamy. Thus, through the Constitution and the law, women were given formal equality with men. In spite of an attempt at a mixed economy, with the State helping, and taking responsibility for, those areas in need of social and economic investment and the private sector operating in other areas, economic development did not materialize as the legislators had hoped. In 1978, the Janata Government, which held office from 1977 to 1980, took the view that the goals of full employment, eradication of poverty and the establishment of a more equal society had not been achieved.

The Central Social Welfare Board (CSWB) had been established in 1953 and set out to improve existing welfare programmes, but, although a number of new groups emerged during this time, in order for them to be eligible for grants, their activities had to be linked to programmes for which grants were available. Some of the CSWB’s programmes were therefore unable to benefit the poor rural areas effectively. There emerged in 1954 a community development programme which sought to help and organize activities for rural women. Clubs were set up to help the vulnerable groups and they organized nursery schools, family planning programmes and adult literacy classes. All these received finance from the CSWB.

From the late sixties a period of crisis developed. According to Neera Desai this was caused by ‘stagnation, rising prices, economic crisis, and a general feeling of discontent in the urban and rural areas’ and the political arena on the left began to show interest in women’s issues. According to a 1971 census, there were 31 million women workers in India out of which 28 million were in rural areas. The same year the communists, who had previously subordinated women’s demands to the political goals of the party, created a working women’s organization to mobilize women from the middle, lower and working classes. This body attempted to agitate against economic hardship brought about by rising prices and scarcity of essential foods. The Socialist Party had its own women’s group and some of its members were actively involved in the Anti-Price Rise movement of 1973, while between 1973 and 1975 several other protest movements were active. Such was the repressiveness of the emergency period, however, that the Socialist Party had to terminate its activities. It is interesting to note that the state of emergency was introduced by a woman prime minister, Indira Gandhi. In some rural areas, Kerala,
Tamil Nadu and parts of Andhra Pradesh for example, Gail Omvedt found that women were militant in their involvement in the unions' organization of agricultural labourers. Their protests were concentrated on wage and land issues and their experiences during long periods of struggle pointed to specific cases of ‘untouchable’ women who were constantly harassed by upper-caste landlords. As late as the 1970s, and even today, women are still being beaten, and the women’s movements had to confront the issues of alcoholism and the dowry.

International Women’s Year in 1975 increased the awareness of women’s issues and generated an atmosphere for learning about the roles and lives of women in other countries. Young Indian women made attempts to organize activities around issues that were also being faced by their Western counterparts and women’s courses started in India, while many Western scholars came to India to study the problems of Indian women’s issues. The Committee on the Status of Women carried out numerous exercises aimed at putting together some basic statistical and social information about women on a national level. According to Neera Desai, the publication of the Committee’s report drew attention to many problems and disturbing trends that had previously been obscured: in women’s employment, political participation and health, including an increasing number of wife burnings and beatings over the dowry and mounting atrocities committed against untouchable (harijan) and tribal women. This evidence left Desai in no doubt of the need to develop women’s organizations which would ‘spearhead the struggle for change’. Scholars and policy-makers consequently focused on the great majority of women who were at the bottom end of the hierarchy. There were many ingrained myths and assumptions about the needs of women, based largely on middle and upper caste role models. Most of the earlier research had concentrated on role conflicts among middle class working women. After 1975, the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR) put pressure on the social service agencies and university departments to broaden their knowledge of low-income rural and urban women. The Research Centre on Women’s Studies (RCWS) has also been deeply involved in collecting data and holding discussions on women’s lives and issues through seminars and workshops. Gail Omvedt points to the range of studies covered:

feminist concepts like patriarchy, housework, reproduction; burning issues like the dowry; the impact and effectiveness of the suppression of the Immoral Traffic Act on the problem of prostitution; the role of the invisible women who were involved in the gigantic textile strike of Bombay; the role of women in Warli revolts; land-mark judgements in recent years that have implications for women’s status; women’s autobiographies and depiction of women in Marathi and Gujarati theatres; the performance of girl students; careers of women in non-traditional professions; etc.

The political climate of the 1980s led to a changing perception of women’s oppression. Although the Indian women’s movement still concerned itself with some of the same issues, like violence to women, rape, wife-battering and marriage, it was now not just about widows and child-marriage but, rather, about divorce, maintenance and child
custody; not the enactment of more laws but amendments to existing ones. Within educational institutions, however, the movement concerned itself with attacking the sexist, stereotyped textbooks in use. Equality, too, was still an issue for women; they wanted equal opportunities with equal pay. So by the end of the International Women's Decade in 1985, there was still a variety of ideologies present within the Indian women's movement.

Nandita Gandhi and Nanita Shah\(^{27}\) have examined the Left's understanding of the women's question and why it was prompted to try to identify the primary reasons for women's subordination, which Gandhi and Shah themselves give as exploitation by a capitalist system, and the feudal tradition. According to Gandhi and Shah, the 'Mahila Mandals' (women's clubs) and the socialist branch of the AIWC considered women's secondary status to be the result of social customs, aberrations in religious practices, and the increasingly materialist and acquisitive attitudes of a consumer society. Echoing the Mahatma's influence, they urged all women to tap their inner strength and use rational persuasion for change.

Gail Omvedt argues that 'nearly all feminists in India are Socialist feminists'. Although Indian women are also very conscious of the overall problems of poverty, economic backwardness and exploitation, men in general are not invariably seen as 'the enemy' but companions in the fight for liberation.\(^{38}\) Within this belief, however, Omvedt feels that women have to understand themselves and their position in society as a whole. If they remain oppressed within the structure of society, they come to be left out of the overall fight for social change, equality and liberation. But despite the tremendous advances made by women in India, they still feel themselves discriminated against.

History shows that the Indian women's movement was never a single ideological body. The differences and divisions have sometimes detracted from the shared concepts of oppression and struggle. There is therefore a great need to narrow the gap in communication between the many groups that exist within the movement. Publishing houses like Kali for Women\(^{39}\) are helping to bridge that gap by publishing books at a rapid pace and the British Library has acquired a number of works from this source over the last few years. One such recent acquisition, *The History of Doing* by Radha Kumar,\(^{40}\) surveys the pictorial evidence produced by the Indian women's movement from 1880 to 1990. It shows women workers in the mines and women activists who were involved in the struggle for independence and the Quit India Movement. Many of the later posters and illustrations record women's activities in their resistance to the many forms of oppression that they experienced in their lives, highlighting some of the marches, sit-ins and demonstrations which women organized and took part in: for example, the anti-price rise, anti-dowry, anti-rape, anti-sati and anti-violence demonstrations. What is interesting in these pictures is the number of rural women who appear as a collective force and who fought against the authorities, fought to be heard, and fought to find expression outside the confines of the household.

Some of these voices belonged to women who were responsible for helping to create the Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA).\(^{41}\) Low wages and very poor working
conditions were the common experience of these women. SEWA's aims were to help poor women, for example with loans to set up small businesses, as otherwise they had little or no hope of organizing themselves, and, in a world that devalued them, they had little reason to value themselves. SEWA encouraged women to look to their own strengths but, more importantly, in keeping with Gandhian ideals of Satyagraha (truth), it encouraged them to shed their feelings of unworthiness and help develop their self-esteem.

In *Issues at Stake*, Nandita Gandhi describes the ongoing reality of this crucial and personal transition for India's women:

We do not know the answers. We do not know the way. But our journey has convinced us that even in the face of despair, there is hope. We lean out of the railway window to feel the fast rushing breeze against us. We know there will always be some friend, activist woman at the other end, someone whose hands will help, whose voice will pick up the echoes. We are sure of it. And that is the 'achievement' which outweighs our despair. Today, the women's movement in India has created an ethos and environment, it has put forward a hope and future which every woman can claim and gain strength from so she may work out, in her own way, her struggle for a better life and society.*^2

Perhaps Mahatma Gandhi's own personal journey to find a truth within oneself parallels the many developments in the Indian women's movement today, that persistent personal and public struggle to find within themselves courage and strength to fight against all exploitation and oppression.

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3 Ibid., p. [ix], quotation from M. K. Gandhi.
6 Ibid., p. 8.
8 *Indian Women from Purdah to Modernity* (as in n. 4), pp. 31–3.
13 Shridevi, op. cit., p. 75.
15 For some of her writings, see *Speeches and Writings of Sarojini Naidu* (Madras, 1918). There are also editions of her poetry in the British Library.
18 Dastur and Mehta (as in n. 2), pp. 1–5.

21 Occasional papers from the Research Centre for Women’s Studies, SNDT Women’s University, New Delhi, and the Centre for Women’s Development Studies. Both these bodies publish papers which the Library holds: see Bibliography below.
22 Vina Mazumdar, *Emergence of Women’s Question in India and Role of Women’s Studies*, Occasional papers, 1985, no. 7 (New Delhi: Centre for Women’s Development Studies, [1985]).
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24 Neera Desai, *Emergence and Development of Women’s Organisations in India* (Bombay: Research Unit on Women’s Studies, SNDT Women’s University, [198–]). The author is the founder Director of the Research Unit.
25 Ibid., p. 7.
26 Ibid., p. 8.
27 The author is an American sociologist who spent some time at the University of California as Associate Professor of Sociology and now lives in India: see Bibliography.
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30 Neera Desai (as in n. 24), p. 20.
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32 Publications of the Committee on the Status of Women held in the BL are listed in the Bibliography.
33 Vina Mazumdar, *Emergence of Women’s Question in India* (as in n. 22), p. 20.
34 There are holdings for this organization in the BL, in H&S, OIOC and OP&SS.
35 The BL holds many publications from The Research Centre for Women’s Studies: see Bibliography.


39 Kali for Women is a feminist publishing house set up some time in the 1980s in New Delhi. It publishes books in collaboration with radical publishers, such as Zed, Women's Press of London and Forlaget Oktober, a Norwegian publishing house. The BL holds a good selection of its publications, in the Humanities and Social Sciences and in the Oriental and India Office Collections; see Bibliography.


41 SEWA was formed in 1972 from the Textile Labour Association (TLA), which had been founded by Mahatma Gandhi. See Bibliography for SEWA publications.
