

Project: National Conference on Feminist Research on Gender, Poverty and Development in honour of feminist economist and activist, Devaki Jain

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Institute of Social Studies Trust, New Delhi

Project Objective

The overall objective of the project is to contribute to the organisation of a festschrift workshop on feminist research in celebration of Devaki Jain's work including support for a short audio visual film, venue and reception.

Project Activities

1. Organising Committee

In order to prepare for the festschrift event, an organising committee was formed consisting of Ratna Sudarshan (Advisor, Institute of Social Studies Trust), Navsharan Singh (Senior Program Specialist, International Development Research Centre), Indu Agnihotri (Director, Centre for Women's Development Studies), Urvashi Butalia (Founder, Zubaan Books) and Nandini Rao (feminist activist). This group decided on the format and content of the event. It was decided that the event would comprise a panel discussion, a conversation with Devaki Jain and the screening of a short film on Devaki Jain. The organising committee also determined the composition and themes of the panel, based on Devaki Jain's long engagement with feminist concerns over the last several decades.

2. The Festschrift

Over 150 people, mostly women's rights activists and fellow travellers of the women's movement attended the festschrift that was organised on the 18th of November at the multipurpose hall, India International Centre. Photographs and a video CD of the event are attached with this report.

The evening started with the panel discussion, followed by a conversation between Devaki Jain, Urvashi Butalia and Indu Agnihotri. After dinner, a short audiovisual film on Devaki Jain made by feminist documentary filmmaker, Ms Vani Subramanian was screened. The evening provided a small slice of shared feminist collaborations during various time periods of the women's movement in India over a forty year period that Devaki Jain was a part of, such as the genesis of particular struggles on conceptualising and mobilising on women's work. It also provided a fascinating insight into the personal and the political life of a key figure of the women's movement and feminist scholarship in India. The following is a brief report on each component of the event.

The Panel Discussion

The panel was comprised of Prof Zoya Hasan (School of Social Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University) who spoke on electoral reform, Ms Renana Jhabvala (National Co-ordinator, SEWA and Chairperson, SEWA Bharat) who talked of both her personal and political connection with Devaki Jain and elaborated

on their shared collaborations on women's work, and Prof Mohan Rao (Centre for Social medicine and Community Health, Jawaharlal Nehru University) who spoke on shared collaborations with Devaki on population policy and women's health. The panel was chaired by Dr Syeda Hameed (Member, Planning Commission, Government of India), who also shared her experiences of shared purpose with Devaki Jain through the contribution of the Working Group of Feminist Economists to the planning process, particularly on the 11th and 12th Plans.

The panel discussion was started by Prof Zoya Hasan who reflected on Devaki Jain's own interest in electoral reform from the standpoint of women's issues including how to increase women's representation, as well as an understanding of women in panchayats. Prof Hasan talked at length on some of the systemic problems that face Indian elections and politics which she argued, require major institutional reform. She identified four key areas where reform was essential:

- Decriminalisation of politics
- Election funding
- Party democracy
- Representation

Election funding, Prof Hasan suggested, was by far the most important issue, which was at the heart of many of the problems confronting Indian polity, particularly corruption and the abuse of power, which she noted, centred on a politician- business -bureaucracy nexus. Her argument was that the abuse of power occurs at least partly because politicians want to recoup election investments, which are not only tremendous, requiring huge investment, but also entirely privately funded.

She traced the history of the call for reform of election funding to the 1990 Dinesh Goswami Committee Report, which recommended state funding in kind, as well as the Law Commission Report of 1999 which recommended partial state funding. Prof Hasan argued that although the President in his recent address to the Joint Session of Parliament announced that the new UPA government's intent was to move forward with the proposals of state funding, in 2006, when a meeting was convened to discuss public/state funding of elections- not in cash but in kind (in terms of facilities), the majority view on funding in kind was that it was not going to work.

Consequently, according to Prof Hasan, election funding is illicit- there is a huge gap between statements submitted and real expenditure, and one of the issues to address is the low expenditure ceiling. She noted further that the issues of campaign finance and election funding however, have not received enough attention even from the NGOs and civil society organisations engaged in democratic reforms.

Further issues identified by Prof Hasan requiring attention was the structure, organisation and internal functioning of parties. Indian political parties, she noted, are so notoriously undemocratic. The issue with regard to internal democracy according to Prof Hasan are entrenched elites and entrenched families that dominate politics. In order to function more democratically, parties should hold regular elections, though she noted that elections alone may not democratise parties, and the option of term limits could be explored. However, she noted that in India, there is no discernible trend in this direction

and this lack of intra-party democracy reduces deliberation which affects the functioning of parties and the way in which they are organised, and more significantly, this has an adverse effect on representation- particularly on women and minorities.

Prof Hasan ended her talk with an appreciation of Devaki Jain as a person and her contribution to women's movement, gender and economics, and for taking up so many public issues. She noted that public intellectuals are valuable, and one like Devaki Jain is especially more so precisely because the idea of a public intellectual- of taking public stands on issues - is now a diminishing tribe.

Prof Mohan Rao talked of the diverse facets of Devaki Jain's interests and contributions to feminist scholarship and the women's movement. While noting the visibility that Devaki Jain gave to women's labour, he talked of his own personal introduction to Devaki Jain through her brave and scathing critique of the Swaminathan Committee Report on National Population Policy (of which she was a member). Prof Rao recalled Devaki Jain's participation in the meetings around the draft population policy that Dr Vina Mazumdar organised at the Centre for Women's Development Studies in preparation for Cairo. Prof Rao remembered in particular the powerful statement that women's groups (from the 'third world') issued after Cairo, which he argued, was no small tribute to Devaki-

'The slogan of sisterhood needs to be placed in the contemporary international situation, when the so called developed first world led by the USA wants to impose its agenda on the rest of the world in the name of globalisation. The direct impact was seen in the recent conference at Cairo where the agendas of the G7 group were pushed through and issues concerning third world women were left unaddressed. For instance in Cairo, the issue of abortion dominated the proceedings. The representatives of millions of third world women in Cairo hoped, while supporting the struggles of western women for their right to abortion, at least some attention would be paid to their experience. Instead, they did not get the support of women representing the first world. We strongly believe that where the inequality of nations is increasing, and where the development of the first world is in direct proportion to the under-development and exploitation of the third world, the slogan of sisterhood would need to protect the interests of poor women in the third world, and to strengthen the global struggle against new forms of colonialism'.

He also recounted the rolling out of several state population policies, all drafted by a US consultancy firm which had a series of regressive measures, such as incentives and worse, punitive disincentives around a two child norm. He noted that the UP state policy, for instance, requires people who apply for a gun licence to have had four people sterilised.

Prof Rao also recounted the times when they organised a series of colloquia in Bangalore and then in Delhi, inviting a range of women's groups, health activists and policy makers, noting that although the state policies remain in place, the national policy does not reveal these outrageous features, and for this, Devaki can take some credit for it. Her located their critique of population policies in a conceptual framework that recognised the following: you cannot have reproductive health when you don't have health, women are more than reproductive beings, and further, the anxiety about population growth and the incentives and disincentives are unnecessary and undemocratic and, even if they were necessary, it was important to be opposed to it. Moreover, Prof Rao noted, in order to hasten the secular decline of birth rates underway, what was needed was the strengthening of public health, and the control of privatisation and so on.

Prof Rao also located one important reason for the continuing masculination of sex ratios - the two child norm. He recounted his recent visit to Muzzafarnagar where he said you could see the chilling effects of Saffron demography. The team with whom he visited was repeatedly told that the failures of Muslim community lay with their failure to practice family planning. And this understanding was used as a justification for all kinds of things.

Prof Rao further noted that Devaki Jain's arguments for a humane population policy stemmed not just from a commitment to justice but also a deep understanding of the dynamics of population change historically. Unlike some feminists, he said, she does not reify reproductive health and rights, but situates them in the here and now of the quest for health, for rights to resources, and for a common humanity. He located her perspective in a right to commons and to what Kamala Visweswaran calls uncommon cultures. Prof Rao further talked of Devaki Jain's deep awareness of the processes of knowledge creation and the power relations embodied therein. He recounted Devaki's desire to learn from people and their experiences by talking of her engagement with PRI women representatives and women from rural areas who participated in the discussions around health and population policy.

Ms. Renana Jhabvala then talked of her own personal and professional links to Devaki. She noted that Devaki Jain introduced her to SEWA which changed her life. She also recounted her association with the book *Indian Women*, which Devaki Jain was putting together in the mid 70s. This book, Ms Jhabvala argued was almost a revolutionary book for its time because it showed Indian women in all their various facets- different kinds of work performed by them, different social dimensions, etc.. In the process of Devaki's quest to find people to write interesting things for Indian women, she approached Ms Jhabvala and asked her to write about her experiences. This became Ms Jhabvala's first piece of writing: 'Girls between School and Marriage'.

Ms Jhabvala then talked at some length on Devaki Jain's contribution to the understanding of women's work recounting that Devaki did the first time use study to show that women are workers. This study was done at a time, Ms Jhabvala noted, when all statistics, figures were governed by the NSS. The NSS she argued, was the 'God of statistics' and it was not an easy challenge as everything that the NSS said was 'true' and the NSS said that women didn't work, or that they didn't work for the category called 'pay, profit and family gain'. Ms Jhabvala noted that what Devaki showed in the time use study was that women worked in farms, women worked on roads, as construction labour, in their homes- that in fact, women did all types of work. Ms Jhabvala recounted this as really the first challenge from the feminists to the NSS, which propelled the NSS to then engage her and the group of feminists in discussion. What this group of feminists tried to do was to change their ideas about what constituted work, and what constituted domestic duties, which was not very successful; and yet, this was the first time that the NSS was challenged about women's work.

Devaki Jain's contribution from 40 years ago, Ms Jhabvala argued, has now become the common sense of feminist understanding - that the NSS does not measure women's work properly, and that there is undercounting of women's work. While locating Ms Jain's ability to change mindsets in this regard, Ms Jhabvala talked of what she regarded as very important as far as SEWA was concerned- and this concerned poor women. The analysis of NSS, in this vein, showed that amongst the poorest women who

were going for labour and were counted, there was a very high percentage of women that worked and that this was higher than men.

As with the previous speakers, Ms Jhabvala noted that although Devaki Jain was a very good economist, she wasn't only an economist, and that she did more than just influence policy- she went to poor women, and she provided a link between policy makers and poor women. Moreover, she was a link that understood the reality of the poor women and took it into the language of policy makers. Further, Ms Jhabvala noted that as far as SEWA was concerned, she was the first Delhi based person to recognise the importance of poor women organising, to understand it in detail, and the first book about SEWA was done by her which entailed a set of case studies of women as workers.

Further, Ms Jhabvala also located Devaki Jain's efforts to bring SEWA, its work and its understanding to policy makers in Delhi. When Lakshmi Chand Jain was in the Planning Commission, Devaki proposed that SEWA engage with the planning process, which resulted in the first time that the planning commission had seen and heard from women when 25 women from SEWA went to meet them. Devaki Jain, Ms Jhabvala noted, used every contact to bring women into the policy process as she always identified which groups of women were the poorest and the most vulnerable and tried to bring them into the mainstream and recognise their organisation. For instance, on home based workers, Devaki Jain has been holding SEWA's hands from the beginning. Moreover, Ms Jhabvala spoke of several groups and individuals working with street vendors, and the new law on street vendors, which took a long 40 years to achieve. She noted how nearly every struggle has a history of over 40 years or more, and therein she argued lies a major lesson - that economic mindsets do not change overnight, and it takes a sustained struggle to make it happen.

Getting back to her beginnings with Devaki Jain, Ms Jhabvala noted that her first personal contact with her had been through writing for Indian women, and now 40 years on, she saw it is a real tribute to a lifetime of trying to get change that Devaki Jain was bringing out another book on Indian women. Ms Jhabvala was now looking at the same age group 40 years on, and she was happy to report that in 40 years this group of women had moved - middle class women were no longer looking to marriage, they were looking to careers and are in careers, and women in SEWA, who 40 years ago were doing 'domestic duties' looking after children, getting married at the age of 10 were all going to school and had aspirations for their own careers. Ms Jhabvala summed it up thus, 'So, our struggle, your struggle, all our struggle has made a difference but it has taken that long, and I am sure it is going to take much longer, but I think it is a tribute to you, and your friends, your group, generation, thinking that started it and I hope younger people can carry it on'.

Dr Syeda Hameed, member of the Planning Commission also shared her shared personal and political history with Devaki Jain. She said that she got close to Devaki when she joined the planning commission in 2004. She argued that Devaki taught her and the country how to bring women to the centre of the planning process. Beginning with the 11th plan going onto the 12th plan, a gender lens was applied, which was a tribute to Devaki as well as other colleagues who were part of the working group of feminist economists- they indeed made history in planning. Dr Hameed also talked of how after the 11th plan, because they had been through a process, by the time the 12th plan came along, it was difficult to

dismantle this process. In fact in the 12th plan, the group was able to bring more and more of the sectors under a feminist lens. Moreover, they were able to develop an illustrative matrix at the end of the chapter on women's agency and child rights which delegated responsibility to all the sectors for women and children thereby making the responsibility multi-sectoral. This achievement, Dr Hameed emphasised was the consequence of the contribution of feminist economists, of whom Devaki Jain was the captain.

Dr Hameed talked of the perspective from a feminist economist lens that she learnt from Devaki Jain, particularly in arguing that women, street vendors, rag pickers, etc were actually the engines of growth. Bringing this perspective into the planning process was like creating a crack in a stone. Dr Hameed also talked of her contribution to the book *Indian Women* as well, where she wrote on Qurratulain Hyder.

The Conversation with Devaki Jain

The conversation with Devaki Jain was led by Ms Urvashi Butalia and Prof Indu Agnihotri. This was the highlight of the evening and it brought out many wonderful insights around personal and political life, life choices, the processes of feminist institution and network building, as well as a slice of feminist history in India over 40-50 years. It also provided insights into the life of an unconventional woman, who 'worked her way out of what would have been her life' (as she herself so succinctly put it), in both personal and professional terms.

The tone of the conversation was set by Devaki Jain herself with Urvashi Butalia recounting Devaki's conspiratorial tone in stating that she was glad that this event was being organised while she was still around! The conversation itself started with a question about beginnings and early memories with both Indu Agnihotri and Urvashi Butalia asking about how Devaki Jain came to be a feminist activist, economist, writer, and not a neuroscientist or a hundred other possibilities. Devaki Jain responded to this question by saying that whenever she was asked when she was young what she would like to be when she grew up, she always said, 'I want to be a man. I want to have a sex change'. This was because growing up at the time, place and context that she did, girls were cloistered and being a boy provided possibilities. She wanted to be a 'brain surgeon', as she was deeply interested in medicine, but the colleges that women were allowed to go to at the time did not have Science on the curriculum. Women's colleges only offered Maths and Economics, so her career in Economics was determined through a lack of choice, and not choice. She was therefore an economist and a feminist by accident.

On her education, Devaki recounted that as her father was a civil servant, he travelled whenever and wherever he was transferred, so she was educated in a series of places including Bangalore, Chennai, Nagpur, Gwalior, and she eventually did her SSLC in Bangalore. On the question of how she landed up in Delhi, Devaki noted that as she worked her way out of what would have been her life, viz., to get married at 14-15 and settle down, she heard about a job in Indian Cooperative Union, which she took. By then, she had taken a diploma in Oxford. She eventually also fell in love with man who was running it, and so Delhi was the place she came to be.

Devaki Jain also remembered her own personal story of love, romance and marriage by recounting her courting of the love of her life, Lakshmi Chand Jain, who was then the Gen Secretary of the Indian Cooperative Union- 'the one man who I wanted to marry, my hero', as she put it. She did not know how to signal to him that she loved him and wanted to marry him, as this was not a situation where you go dating or dancing. So, instead, she strategised. She hitched a ride with him on a car journey, and told him that she loved him and wanted to marry him.

Devaki also talked of working in Miranda House as the best years of her life. She noted that if she could have the option again, she would have liked to be a teacher as she felt that this was her vocation. She had to give up the job because of the birth of her second child. It really hurt her to give up the job because she of her inability to cope with two young children and be a good teacher, not one that fudges. She talked of Miranda House as the highlight in her life, as maybe her best years in her career and her life. She loved teaching and she talked of the university as a wonderful place, vibrant, full of interesting conversations and interesting people.

On the question of her international networks, Urvashi Butalia asked her about her work with people like Julius Nyerere and Gunnar Myrdal. Speaking of her work with the South Commission, she said that this came about because of the work she had done with Development Alternatives for Women in a New Era (DAWN), which itself had started because of the desire to have intellectual freedom from northern feminists' domination. At and through DAWN, they could narrate their own stories. As she put it, 'Nyerere could not but have some of us join the South Commission because his idea also was to have a south economic affirmative plan'. The others in the South Commission were feminists such as Marie-Angelique Savane, who started the first ever continental network of feminists, AWORD. However, Devaki noted that they could not make much of a difference at the South Commission. This she thought was partly because Nyerere made the big mistake of crowding the South Commission with retired civil servants, bankers and heads of state. In her words, this was the 'most dull group of people you could ever find in the world' with a few sparklers. She said that the overall group of people were used to being bureaucrats, and they could only see the world through the eyes of the policy makers, not through the eyes of the people. They would respond to her suggestion that they should consult people on what the South Commission should do by asking "Who are People"? They were all the kind, she noted, who would write reports. In Devaki's assessment, the South Commission was not a success, and the report they submitted did not get much publicity, but for the people involved, particularly the few feminists, they learnt a lot- they travelled to nearly 14-15 countries at the time.

On Development Alternatives for Women in a New Era (DAWN), the network that Devaki Jain co-founded along with others, Urvashi Butalia noted that this was an initiative that was interested just as Kali for Women was at the time, 'in creating our own kinds of knowledge and rejecting the way in which knowledge had been monopolised and created in the west'. She asked Devaki about how she managed to get together this amazing group of people (Fatima Mernissi, Marie-Angelique Savane, Caren Grown, Sonia Correa, Peggy Antrobus), and how she managed to hold onto this group over several years. To this question, Devaki Jain recounted that between the years 1975 and 1980, she travelled a great deal- there were a few of them who had done research on women, which made them visible as people challenging the statistics on women. In those days, the UN agencies and donor agencies were hunting for women

from the third world who could represent that world in the various councils that were happening between 1975- 1985, and she was one of those who were spotted. They would go to Paris for UNESCO, Rome for FAO, Geneva for ILO, where these organisations would be having these expert group meetings, and they would need third world women, and very often she was one of 'those third world women'. In that process, she met wonderful people, for instance, she met Marie-Angelique Savane in Latin America. Devaki recounted that this group found that as the organisers put forward their ideas, they felt that these were not their ideas, and that as the 'distance and difference began to emerge in our minds and hearts, we automatically began to feel that we should have our own forum'. DAWN emerged because people were restless because others were speaking for them (Claire Slatter for instance, Devaki recounted, was restless about how Australians were speaking for Fijians). Because there was little money, they could only have one person from each continent in the network. It was partly the wide travelling during this period and partly the commonality of experience that brought the group together.

Indu Agnihotri then talked about the volume of writing that Devaki had produced. She recounted that at the first Indian Association of Women's Studies (IAWS) conference in Bombay, Devaki presented one of the most detailed papers on time use and measuring women's work. Indu then asked her what she made of the work being done of valuing women's work, whether there was any movement forward on this issue, given that she has been working on this for 40 years. To this, Devaki responded by recognising that many more people were now engaged in analysing women's work, not just in terms of measurement of work, but also in terms of enabling women to get a livelihood. In terms of what more could be done, Devaki talked at some length of the feminist use of data. She noted that she was queried at women's groups meetings about her insistence on using data, 'why are you constantly looking at data? Let us look at experience' was the usual refrain. She talked of her own conviction that 'data speaks to the enemy much more than voice'. Moreover, she noted that we have to use the tools of the enemy to be able to spar with him. She argued that in her experience data based arguments could actually make the leap into the other person's mind rather than descriptive arguments. She thought that this hasn't quite gelled within the women's movement, and that this was because people are still not very comfortable with data. She noted that many more people ought to be. So, in response to the question of what more could be done, she noted that there has been a lot of movement forward 40 years down the line, but that the broader feminist movement has not yet taken much interest in two things: a) economics and b) data.

Urvashi Butalia then asked Devaki about her contribution as an institution builder, noting that women of Devaki's generation multitasked in remarkable ways - while being firmly located in their political and historical location, they were still able to be connected to the international world. Moreover, they were activists who did not just fire fight, but also built institutions. In this sense, for people like Devaki, Urvashi noted, the personal is truly political in the best possible feminist way. Urvashi then asked her how she managed to be located at the intersection of all these things, and yet retain her selfhood.

Devaki responded by saying that she did not mean to be an institution builder. She noted, 'ISST happened by accident'. What drove her was the idea of the erroneous measurement of women's work and in order to study that, an institutional base was needed to get a grant. So, a society was registered society in order to make the application to do the time use study. She said that this is what happened,

ISST happened by chance. Thereafter, she noted that other things drove her- after the time use study, they got very interested in women workers- and went to where there were large numbers of women workers - SEWA, Lijjad papad, women in dairying, Mythila painters, beedi workers, fish workers, where large groups of women were doing one thing, in what they termed 'women dominated occupations'. They went place to place without direction, without intent, and without planning an organisation. The organisation got born because of the drive they had of doing research and writing about it.

Devaki also noted her gratitude that it was ISST who was behind the event in celebration of her work, saying that this to her was 'the summum bonum of being cherished'. This was particularly important to her as it had been very difficult for her colleagues to survive ISST as they were living hand to mouth and were moving from one issue to another. They were not as lucky as members of other organisations such as Centre for Women's Development Studies, as ISST was not a grant in aid organisation. This meant that it became a 'catch-all' for people, but that was its very virtue, and it made it fun and exciting. And it became a passion with all of those who became ISSTwallahs. She noted that it was an extraordinary experience to be a part of ISST, and was very grateful to be thought of by it.

On the issue of her engagement with Gandhian ethics and merging Gandhism with feminism, Devaki Jain was very modest in her assessment of her own contributions. She suggested that one of her failings was that she did not have a strong political ideology underpinning. She thought of herself as a greenhorn, somewhat of an amateur in politics. She recounted that in the initial forums that she was in the Marxists were very strong, but that somewhere along the line, Gandhi's ideas were very attractive to her. But she felt that she could not push that forward as she would like, as she considered herself somewhat illiterate in terms of her political ideology. Giving a nod to younger feminists such as Nandini Rao and Kavita Krishnan, she noted that 'the young feminist movement is fibrillating not only with action ideas but also thought ideas, and I am learning from them, new knowledge, new excitement'.

Indu Agnihotri then asked about the use of platforms such as the UN platform for women in the 70s- and the space these new platforms and networks gave for women and the feminist agenda, and whether these institutions and networks should be taken forward and if so how. Indu recounted that in all of Devaki's writings, she always brings in the notion of women creating spaces, building institutions differently, and the concern has been to use a gender lens and a gender perspective to humanise public spaces from women's own experiences. To this Devaki responded by recognising that one of the constant conflicts they had in ISST was that on the one hand, they had grants and had to submit time bound reports to receive money, which drove each other in ways that were painful, and on the other, they were immersed in terms such as feminists, and the idea that they were women and were trying to do things differently. She was confronted by her colleagues such as Rekha about whether ISST was a feminist group like Saheli who were all equals. In recounting the nature of the churning within the institution to define itself, she remembered a photograph with the really interesting feminist leaders of the time- Corrine Kumar from Bangalore and others from Saheli of a meeting where they were brainstorming to see how ISST could be made more of a collective. Devaki noted that they had a fiction that they were a collective, but that in fact the organisation was highly managed and she was the boss and it was very painful. She noted that this conflict now seems to be resolved and that ISST now seems very much like an institution. She concluded by suggesting that she is not really an organisation builder,

and what happened had happened by chance and ISST grew, but that growth was quite painful. However, in a short period of ten years after ISST had started, they ran so fast and did so much! She ended by saying that she was glad that the organisation was still going strong without grant-in-aid.

Urvashi responded to this by suggesting that although Devaki insists that the organisation grew organically and things just happened, effectively Devaki and others who worked with her built that institution into what it is today.

Urvashi then talked of a film that was made by Ratna Kapur and Jasjit Purewal many years ago, on Indian Feminism, where they interviewed a number of women, asking them what it meant to them, what it meant to be a woman, when they felt wholly woman, and what their relationship was with their bodies. Devaki's response, Urvashi noted, was particularly evocative, where she talked of what love meant for her.

Indu turned the lens onto the changes over 80 years from Devaki's birth in colonial India to the present 2013, and what it has been to straddle these many years. To this Devaki responded that she was very happy that she is 80, and that would she not want to be any other age. She would not have liked to be 50 or 60 because there are two experiences that she has had that people under 60 cannot have. The first is to see India in the 1950s and 1960s. India, especially Delhi, she noted, was an extraordinary place at that time. 'It was open, it was full of ideas, there was no security, no gunmen. We could go to IFAX, which is where we used to see films and theatre. Nehru would be coming out of the same hall, and some of us who were teaching would ask him how he liked the play and Panditji would sit and talk to us. When Lal Bahadur Shastri became PM, he used to call Delhi University teachers every month, and the room was open and he would ask us what was happening, what was the feel of the city'.

She talked of the time as being a very conversational and open space which was also very exciting because every institution was getting built then, and she felt a part of the change. Moreover, she noted that there was a lot of cross-fertilisation between the Planning Commission, academics and the people. She remembered being able to walk into the Planning Commission and ask Pitambar Pant for a copy of Perspective plan, his 15 year plan as they wanted to discuss it at Miranda house. 'The 1950s and 60s were glorious years,' she noted, as, 'there was a kind of exchange between politicians, academics, young people and civil servants. Things were open then'.

The second reason she gave for being happy she was 80 and not younger was the changes that she has seen in middle class families like the one she came from. Remembering the girlhood she had, she shared that it was like a cloister, with pre puberty marriages being the style in her house. There were no friends, except for maternal cousins, and there were no toilets and cloth was used for periods. 'To come from that and see modernity', she noted, 'is just wonderful. I am glad I had that experience, because then this experience is more exciting- to see modernity'. She concluded by noting that being 80 now also meant that she could experience being part of the women's movement in the 60s and see the movement and how it has changed and grown now, for which she was glad and grateful.

The Film by Vani Subramanian 'Devaki Jain: Eighty Years is Not Enough'

This short audio visual produced by feminist documentary film maker, Vani Subramanian, provides glimpses of Devaki Jain's political and personal life, and her contribution to the feminist movement and scholarship. Featuring several feminists and other co-travellers, the film gives a flavour of Devaki Jain's personal and consistent commitment and dedication to a gender just equal society over the decades.

The film has been uploaded for public viewing on youtube (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kCg7_rDbSJK) and has been widely publicised on social networking platforms as well as through our online community of practice on gender and evaluation (<http://gendereval.ning.com/main/search/search?q=devaki+jain>).

Project Outputs

The short film, 'Devaki Jain: Eighty Years is not Enough' and the video recording of the event (both submitted along with this report) are two substantive outputs of the project. The more intangible outputs of the project are the contributions that it has made to inter-generational feminist learning on movement, institution and network building, as well as feminist research and scholarship, which consistently get flagged as important and necessary amongst women's groups for leadership building amongst young feminists, as well as for inculcating a sense of history and past struggle.