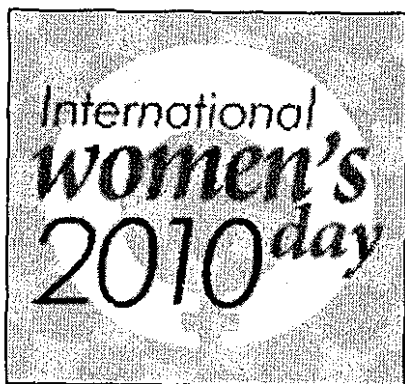


100 years

International Women's Day



**Long Live March 8 !!!**  
**International Day of Solidarity**

**AIDWA**

(All India Democratic Women's Association)

# International Women's Day (IWD)

IWD is celebrated/observed on March 8 every year across the globe. It is a day to declare our determination to continue to struggle for our rights. This year marks 100 years of International Women's Day.

## History

International Women's Day is the story of ordinary women as makers of history; it is rooted in the centuries-old struggle of women to participate in society on an equal footing with men. The origin of the women's right movement is very closely linked with the working class movement – the universal suffragette movement and the working class movement, which are interlinked, gave birth to the women's movement.

The idea of having an international women's day was first put forward at the turn of the 20th century amid rapid world industrialization and economic expansion that led to protests over working conditions. One hundred years ago, on August 27 1910, the revolutionary leader Clara Zetkin along with her comrades Alexandra Kollantai and others, moved a resolution at the International Socialist Women's Conference in Copenhagen to observe an "International Women's Day."

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## The Historic Resolution

The resolution read "In agreement with the class conscious, political and trade union organizations of the proletariat of their respective



countries, the Socialist women of all countries will hold each year a Women's Day, whose foremost purpose it must be to aid the attainment of women's suffrage. This demand must be held in conjunction with the entire women's question according to socialist precepts. The Women's Day must have an international character and is to be prepared carefully." The slogan accepted was 'The vote for women will unite our strength in the struggle for Socialism.' At that time no specific date for the observance was decided.

The vote for women will unite our strength in the struggle for Socialism...

### The First Observance

The hundred women delegates from 17 countries representing trade unions, socialist parties, working women's clubs and including the first three women elected to the Finnish Parliament, unanimously adopted the resolution. The following year, in 1911, as a result of the Copenhagen initiative a million men and women marched in Germany, Austria, Denmark, Switzerland and some other European countries. The first celebration of International Women's Day in 1911 in the words of the revolutionary Alexandra Kollontai about its observance in Germany, *"one seething trembling sea of women. Men stayed home with their children for a change and their wives, the captive housewives, went to meetings.*

The date chosen was March 19 to commemorate the 1848 revolution when there was an armed uprising against the Prussian king. In Russia, women observed the day on the last Sunday of February according to the Russian calendar, which according to the English calendar was March 8.

In America, it was against the intolerable working conditions and 12 hour workday that women textile workers of New York City organized themselves to fight, as early as in 1857. They were attacked by the police. Within two years the first women's labour union was formed. Socialist women had already observed a National Women's Day in 1908, the first of its kind when large demonstrations took place calling for the vote and for economic rights of women. Women workers in garment factories were staging militant strikes facing police repression



and their cause was taken up as part of Women's day celebrations.

On 28 February 1909, at the initiative of Socialist party of the US, socialist women organized demonstrations all over the country, demanding political rights for working women along with the slogan of better working conditions. Later in the year, 2the women shirtwaist workers of the International Ladies Garment workers union organized the first strike, 'the uprising of the twenty

thousand', which lasted 13 weeks.

Thousands of women all over the world supported the strike. The strike was against the miserable working conditions, of course, but also for the recognition of their union. Rallies, demonstration and programmes highlighting the issues of women were held all over the world during that period.

The imperialist preparations for war added a new dimension to an international day cutting across national boundaries. Women across countries called for peace against war. It was in 1913 that International Women's day was transferred to March 8.

But the following year the world war broke out. In 1915 and 1916 although efforts were made to observe the day, the warmongers in all countries hounded those who dared to call for peace and public demonstrations were banned. According to Kollontai, the only demonstration for March 8 that could be held in that period was in Norway when some women delegates could assemble and courageously adopt a resolution for peace.

### Women's Day, 1917

Then came the great year of 1917. The storm against the hated Tsarist rule started from the workers' quarters in Petrograd when women workers started mobilizing for March 8. Women workers, wives of

soldiers, working class housewives, victims of hunger and the trials of war poured out on to the streets of Petrograd. They denounced the war, they demanded an end to their humiliation they called for peace and bread. Gathering strength and passion they swept through the streets joined by workers and soldiers. It was these women demonstrations on March 8 that triggered the historic peoples upsurge heralding the beginning of the tumultuous and revolutionary events which led to the establishment of the first Socialist State in the world. The women of Petrograd and elsewhere in Tsarist Russia through their actions substantiated the comments made by Karl Marx in a 12 December 1868 letter to Ludwig Kudelmann "Everyone who knows anything of history also knows that great social revolutions are impossible without the feminine ferment."

Everyone who knows anything of history also knows that great social revolutions are impossible without the feminine ferment - Karl Marx

### Subsequent Developments

In 1922, the first Workers' State declared a holiday on March 8 to mark Women's Day. That was also the year when it was first celebrated in China. The observance of the day gained momentum. In India the first time it was observed was in 1931 on the occasion of the Lahore Conference of Asian Women for Equality. A resolution demanding women's equality and linking women's equality to the freedom of nations was adopted.

In India the first time it was observed was in 1931 on the occasion of the Lahore Conference of Asian Women for Equality.

Whereas left wing women's organizations along with women in Socialist countries continued the tradition of observing women's day, from the sixties onwards as the "feminist wave" hit the United States and much of Europe, the observance of the day became more widespread and finally led the United Nations to adopt a resolution in 1975 officially declaring March 8 as International Women's day. Today countries across

the world observe March 8. While this is welcome, it also provides the ground for a dilution of the socialist origins of March 8, of its history as the symbol of struggles of women particularly working women in challenging exploitative capitalist structures. It is important to recall the socialist origins of March 8 and to prevent its cooption into a market driven celebration of frivolous femininity.

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### Two Aspects

There are two aspects to the history of March 8. The first and most important is the early understanding of the importance of organizing women workers in particular and women belonging to the working classes in general against capitalist exploitation and to fight for the Socialist alternative. The recognition of the key role that proletarian women must play in the development of women's movements for emancipation was based on the militant actions of working class women across Europe, in Russia and in the United States. Drawn into industry in the worst possible conditions, women and children's labour was used to make super profits.

A second equally significant development was: that under the leadership of liberal bourgeois women's organizations and groups a militant women's movement for the political vote for women was sweeping Britain and the United States and some European countries. Known as the suffragette movement, educated women from the elite classes took to the streets in militant actions for the vote. What should be the Socialist women's approach to the movement? A hundred years later the answer seems obvious. But at that time, Socialist women led by Clara Zetkin had to wage a strong battle within the ranks of the Socialists to have a resolution adopted to support women's right to vote on equal terms as men.

**These two aspects of the March 8 observance, namely the economic and the political intertwined to form a solid platform**

**for action which influenced large masses of women which went beyond the times in which the call was given.** The 100 women assembled in Copenhagen could hardly have imagined that their call for an international women's day would resonate through the world even 100 years later. The relevance of the nature of the initiative remains as significant as it was then.

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### **Contemporary Significance**

One hundred years ago the women demanded an 8-hour working day, equal wages and universal suffrage. A century later there is a concerted effort to strip the IWD of its class and political content. It is sought to be commercialised to sell products ranging from kitchen utensils to ornaments and beauty products. There is also the propaganda that the class struggle is 'non-inclusive' of the problems of women and other marginalised sections, therefore it needs to be separated from the class content.

A century later there is a concerted effort to strip the IWD of its class and political content.

The struggle against capitalism and in particular its relentless drive for super profits in the neo-liberal framework is more urgent than ever. The drive for militarisation, the violence of war and aggression of the imperialist powers recall the need for the kind of heroic mobilizations of women across national boundaries against the First World War. Unfortunately and deeply regrettably, the de-ideologisation of contemporary women's movements led by feminist groups in different countries have played into capitalist driven cultures which denigrate organized resistance and women's collective action as outdated and unnecessary. An earlier initiative taken by some Canadian women's groups who had organized a platform called the World March of Women focussed against imperialism and the impact of globalisation on the lives of women, weakened with the focus shifting to issues connected with

female sexuality mainly on the rights of homosexual and lesbian groups. The right of a woman over her own body and expression of her sexual preferences has become the key issue, interpreted in a narrow way for a substantial section of women activists including in India. They do not see these issues as part of a wider social problem. Conversely, they present all other problems as appendages to the issues concerning women's sexuality, which to them is the main social contradiction through which all others are affected. They refuse to see the class forces, which subordinate women in new ways. Under imperialist globalisation we are seeing new forms of women's subordination and sexual oppression and exploitation. The exponential increase in trafficking, in the sale of children for sex, in the increasing number of women being forced into prostitution due to war, displacement, and poverty. This requires a concerted and united movement against aggression, against the international powerful drug and mafia lobbies which operate with political patronage. In India the most medieval forms of honour killings flourish within a continuing caste system. Certainly Indian women's movements will have to confront the caste system in any strategy for women's emancipation. In other words if we have to fight against the most blatant and brutal forms of control over a woman's body as shown in the reactionary fatwas of caste panchayats against women (and men) who dare to challenge caste boundaries in questions of personal relations, we have to take into account the socio-economic conditions, such as the caste system. Unfortunately those who see themselves as champions of women's autonomy are unable to see these crucial links and in their hostility to organized leftwing women's mobilizations prove themselves to be on the side of the establishment.

### **Condition of Women**

Statistics of the UN and other agencies show that 70% of the 1.2 billion people living in poverty the world over, are female. According to the UN, women do more than 67% of the hours of work done in the world, earn only 10% of the world's income and own only 1% of the world's property. The value of unremunerated work was estimated at about \$16 billion, from which \$11 billion represents the invisible contribution of women. Women are paid 30-40% less than men for comparable work, on an average.

In the world of work in India, female share of non-agricultural wage employment is only 17%. Participation of women in the workforce is only 13.9% in the urban sector and 29.9% in the rural sector. Women's wage rates are, on an average only 75 % of men's wage rates and constitute only 25% of the family income. Although 60-80% of the food in most developing countries is produced by women, in no Indian State do women and men earn equal wages in agriculture.

The universal women's suffrage achieved by the struggles of our ancestors, gave women the right to vote, but an equal share in the decision making process and the bodies remains unfulfilled. Even now in some countries women do not have the right to vote and contest elections. There are other rights - to work, to study, to have equal marriage rights, the right to own and inherit property, right to drive, to have an abortion, so on which are yet to be achieved legally, in many parts of the world. The whole question of housework is addressed nowhere in the world except for socialist countries.

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After 60 years of the India's Republic, women occupy only 9% of parliamentary seats, and less than 4% seats in High Courts and Supreme Court, in our country. This shows that universal voting rights are only a primary step towards women's equality. It is necessary to have a share in decision making - for this we need other means such as reservation in elected bodies. The 73rd Constitutional amendment, which gave 33% reservation in posts in all elected Panchayati Raj institutions to women has proven to be a powerful instrument for empowerment of women in a socially backward country like India. It has resulted in over one million women participating in decision making at the local level.

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Experience shows that although there was very strong opposition by

feudal society to the very concept of women having political power, particularly dalit and downtrodden women, the experiment was very successful. In many states, particularly in left ruled states, the number of elected women is now more than 33%, with women winning in general, unreserved seats. This has been further advanced by the demand for 50% reservation in local bodies, which has already been implemented by some state governments and is being processed by the Central government.

The demand of 33% women's reservation in Parliament and state assemblies is faced with much stronger opposition. Except for the left parties, no other political party is supporting this demand firmly.

The neo-liberal economic policies implemented in India have undermined all the existing labour laws. The first and foremost demand achieved by the world working class movement, for an 8-hour working day, is under severe attack in our country, in the name of 'labour market flexibility'. Earlier, it was a problem of implementation of the existing laws. Now the government has declared a policy shift, through the Second National Commission on Labour and other policy recommending forums. The Economic Survey, before the last budget, clearly suggested the increase in working hours upto 12. This has to be fought tooth and nail.

Many of the issues that dominated the early years of the International Women's Day movement - the fight for universal suffrage for women, the fight against war, the fight for social security and care for mother and child, the fight against price rises are still part of the movement today. From the demand for suffrage we have moved forward to the demand for representation. For the rest, we need to remember that they remain with us because the system that keeps them alive has still to be brought down. It is for this struggle that the great banner of Women's Day continues to call for solidarity, assertion of rights, and that driving force of militant struggle. For we cannot forget the latent power of March 8 etched forever in history on that most famous March 8 of 1917, when women in Petrograd went on strike demanding *Bread and Peace*, a strike that heralded a revolution and an end to the oppressive Tsarist rule in Russia. It is with the memory and striving of that great force that we continue to carry the message of March 8 each year. Not as ritual, not as mere formalistic observance, not as slaves to empty

rhetoric, but as a day to press forward for women's rights.

From the demand for suffrage we have moved forward to the demand for representation.

### On this March 8

- **We reiterate the commitment of the International Women's Day movement to peace and against war.** From India we send our message of international solidarity to women fighting against imperialist aggressions and wars. If the first years of the International Women's Day raised the banner of peace against world war imposed by rivalry within imperialist powers, we today raise the banner of peace against the concert of war by imperialist powers and its renewed attempt at neo-colonial domination.
- As women of India, a country that leads the world in hunger, we demand a universal right to be free of hunger and food deprivation. **We demand food security as part of a basic right to life.** We demand employment and the right to livelihood. We demand the right to a life free of violence within and outside the home.
- In all corners of the country, women are today concerned, frightened and angry at the tremendous increase in prices of food. Almost two decades of neo-liberal policies - of deliberate wrecking of the public distribution system, of withholding of food stocks while millions remained hungry, of imposing flawed and arbitrary divisions into BPL and APL thus depriving millions of the poor from access to cheap foodgrain, of cutbacks in state investment in agriculture, of tardy and inadequate price protections to farmer producers and of pushing them into export crops dependent on the vagaries of international markets - have all resulted in increasing levels of hunger and an erosion of the self-sufficiency in food production that was one of the primary objectives of decolonisation. Experience has shown that cutbacks in subsidies to Indian farmers have only resulted in the government paying higher prices to multi-national agribusiness companies for imports required to meet the needs of the country, and rising prices for common people. This year we have been promised the enactment of a National Food Security Act, although

in the Union budget, food subsidy has been reduced by over Rs. 400 crore, and the fertiliser subsidy cut by Rs. 3000 crore. The bill that has been proposed by the Government seeks to confine the entitlement to families with BPL cards, and to 25 kg of rice or wheat a month at Rs. 3 a kg. Today a family with an Antyodaya card is entitled to 35 kg of wheat at Rs. 2 a kg, paying Rs. 70 a month. If the Food Security Act is implemented in its present form, this sum will rise to Rs.75 and the family will get 10 kg less of subsidised foodgrain. **We demand that the benefits of a mandated food security framework be made universal and not confined to those who have a BPL card.**

- At a time when controlling the rise in prices of food has become the most urgent need of the day, **we demand withdrawal of the proposed increases in the price of petrol and diesel.**
- In a context of growing food insecurity, more and more women are in search of employment. If in the 1990s rural women were hardest hit by growing unemployment leading to a drastic fall in their work participation rates, in the first decade of the 21st century, increasing unemployment rates can be seen among both rural and urban women. Where open unemployment rates increased in the first half decade of this century from 1.5 per cent to 3.1 in rural areas, among urban women it increased from 7.1 to 9.1 per cent. It needs to be remembered that in our country, these open unemployment rates hide the much larger proportions of workers who might be able to find employment for just a few days in the year or are forced to accept incomes below subsistence, especially among the 96 per cent of women workers who are unorganised workers. Nor does it include the army of unpaid workers who are counted as employed. While NREGA has offered some relief to rural women in search of work, insufficient financial allocations, delayed payments, unrealistic task targets and financial irregularities have been subverting rural women workers' entitlements. The problem of urban women's unemployment has remained unaddressed and **we demand employment guarantee for women in both rural and urban areas at minimum wages.**
- Addressing issues of food security and work and livelihood are

critical necessities for providing a safe environment for women to access their rights and entitlements. Even as the movement has pushed for better laws for women, the implementation of existing laws such as against Dowry and the more recent Domestic Violence Act, as well as PCPNDT Act to check sex selective abortions leave a lot of scope for improvement. As of now, existing provisions as per these laws are not being implemented and those guilty of violations continue to go scot free. More recent incidents of violence have pointed to the critical need to bring in new legislation as well as amendments to address issues of sexual assault and sexual harassment. While recent pronouncements by government have accepted the need for speedy trials and fast track courts the urgent issue of definitions of assault continue to be evaded even as government took speedy measures to propose amendments which have effectively diluted provisions with regard to crimes against women over the last one year.

- In addition to violence at home, we note that the biggest threat to women's participation in the democratic process comes from the forces perpetuating terror, and inflicting violence on women in multiple ways. This has to be countered. Moreover, growing attacks on women in conflict situations, including by state agencies continue to be a matter of concern. Be it in Kashmir or the North East, the Armed Forces have shown scant respect for the civil rights of the people of these states, least of all the women. Women continue to be made the target of attack in caste and religion based violence as also in situations of ethnic and political conflict, as well as state violence.
- It is imperative that women are not made victims of false notions of 'honour' and that those responsible for implementing and upholding the law not be allowed to walk away free even as they collude in its violation in their respective areas of jurisdiction. Further, self-proclaimed proponents of the moral brigade inflict their views and retrogressive notions on all and sundry enjoying immunity from the law even as the social climate gets vitiated by their acts of violence as per fundamentalist prescriptions.
- We demand that existing provisions with regard to violence

**and crimes against women be implemented. The definition of crimes be expanded to effectively address the lacunae that exist in the law and that state agencies be made more accountable for violations that occur.**

- On this the 100th anniversary of March 8, we, in the women's movement fighting for equal rights and gender justice resolve to continue the fight against imperialism, and terrorist violence. We resolve to strengthen the struggle for food security, right to work, and women's rights to a life without violence. We call on all peace loving forces to unite against war, and for a just, humane and equal society.

### **Conclusion**

International Women's day is a symbol of the struggle for women's emancipation against the shackles of capitalism and the patriarchal cultures it strengthens. We know that in India at the stage of democratic demands and struggles we need to mobilise the widest sections of women on a platform for equality. At the same time we also know that such mobilisations can be successful only if they have as their core the voices and demands of the oppressed and exploited working women, the dalits, tribals, the crores of women in the rural and urban unorganised sector who make up the mass of the Indian women and who have the highest stakes in changing the present system of inequalities. On this March 8, celebrating 100 years of its observance this is what we must pledge to take that struggle forward.



## More women choosing to work, but gender equality remains a long way off

--A New Report by the International Labour Office (ILO)

Despite signs of progress in gender equality over the past 15 years, there is still a significant gap between women and men in terms of job opportunities and quality of employment, according to a new report by the International Labour Office (ILO).

The report, entitled Women in labour markets: Measuring progress and identifying challenges, says that more than a decade after the 4th World Conference on Women in Beijing adopted an ambitious global platform for action on gender equality and women's empowerment, gender biases remain deeply embedded in society and the labour market.

The ILO report shows that the rate of female labour force participation has increased from 50.2 to 51.7 per cent between 1980 and 2008, while the male rate decreased slightly from 82.0 to 77.7 per cent. As a result, the gender gap in labour force participation rates has narrowed from 32 to 26 percentage points.

The increases in female participation were seen in all but two regions, Central and South-Eastern Europe (non-EU), and the CIS countries and East Asia, with the largest gain seen in Latin America and the Caribbean. In almost all regions, though, the rate of increase has slowed in recent years. It was in the 1980s and early '90s that gains in numbers of economically active women were strongest.

At the same time, the share of women in wage and salaried work has grown from 42.8 per cent in 1999 to 47.3 per cent in 2009, and the share of vulnerable employment decreased from 55.9 per cent to 51.2 per cent.

"While there have been areas of improvement since the Beijing conference and more women are choosing to work, they still don't enjoy the same gains as men in the labour markets", said Sara Elder of the ILO's Employment Trends unit and main author of the report. "We still find

many more women than men taking up low-pay and precarious work, either because this is the only type of job made available to them or because they need to find something that allows them to balance work and family responsibilities. Men do not face these same constraints."

The report shows that there are three basic areas of lingering gender imbalances in the world of work.

- First, nearly half (48.4 per cent) of the female population above the age of 15 remain economically inactive, compared to 22.3 per cent for men. In some regions, there are still less than 4 economically active women per 10 active men.
- Second, women who do want to work have a harder time than men in finding work.
- And third, when women do find work, they receive less pay and benefits than the male workers in similar positions.

"Labour markets and policies must be much more attuned to a broader paradigm of gender equality, one that adapts and builds on the unique values and constraints of both women and men," Ms. Elder said. "Faster and broader progress towards equality in occupations and employment opportunities is required and possible".

The ILO report says the initial impact of the global economic crisis was felt in sectors dominated by men, such as finance, manufacturing and construction, but the impact has since expanded to other sectors – including services – where women tend to predominate.

The ILO estimates that the global female unemployment rate increased from 6.0 per cent in 2007 to 7.0 per cent in 2009, slightly more than the male rate which rose from 5.5 to 6.3 per cent. But in four of the nine regions, it was the male unemployment rate that rose more than the female. In 2009, female unemployment rates were higher than male rates in seven of nine regions, and in the Middle East and North Africa the difference was as high as 7 percentage points.

The report also says that while women and men workers may now be almost equally affected by the crisis in terms of job losses, the real gender impact of the crisis may be yet to come.

ILO Director-General Juan Somavia, in a statement issued for International Women's Day, said, "Gender inequality in the world of work has long been with us – but it is likely that it will be exacerbated by the crisis. In times of economic upheaval, women often experience the negative consequences more rapidly and are slower to enjoy the benefits of recovery. And already before the crisis, the majority of working women were in the informal economy with lower earnings and less social protection."

Mr. Somavia cited a number of policy measures that could help rebalance the burden placed on women and address the impact of globalization, such as sustainable and quality jobs open to both men and women, broader social protection including unemployment benefits and insurance schemes that recognize women's vulnerable position in the labour market, and social dialogue with the active inclusion of women in decision-making processes.

Statistics of the UN and other agencies show that 70% of the 1.2 billion people living in poverty the world over, are female. According to the UN, women do more than 67% of the hours of work done in the world, earn only 10% of the world's income and own only 1% of the world's property. The value of unremunerated work was estimated at about \$16 billion, from which \$11 billion represents the invisible contribution of women. Women are paid 30-40% less than men for comparable work, on an average.

In the world of work in India, female share of non-agricultural wage employment is only 17%. Participation of women in the workforce is only 13.9% in the urban sector and 29.9% in the rural sector. Women's wage rates are, on an average only 75% of men's wage rates and constitute only 25% of the family income. Although 60-80% of the food in most developing countries is produced by women, in no Indian State do women and men earn equal wages in agriculture.

## March 8th 2010

### Resolution

8th March 2010 marks a century after that first call for an International Women's Day. On this March 8th we remember the International Conference of Socialist Women held at Copenhagen in 1910 where Clara Zetkin, great pioneer of the socialist women's movement proposed that women throughout the world should observe a particular day each year to press for their demands. We remember those 100 women from 17 countries, representing unions, socialist parties, working women's clubs, who supported Zetkin's resolution that read "*the Socialist women of all countries will hold each year a Women's Day, whose foremost purpose it must be to aid the attainment of women's suffrage. This demand must be handled in conjunction with the entire women's question according to Socialist precepts. The Women's Day must have an international character.*" We remember the words of the revolutionary Alexandra Kollontai about its first observance in Germany, "*one seething trembling sea of women. ...Men stayed home with their children for a change and their wives, the captive housewives, went to meetings.*"

On this March 8th, we remember that many of the issues that dominated the early years of the International Women's Day movement, - the fight for universal suffrage for women, the fight against war, the fight for social security and care for mother and child, the fight against price rises are still part of the movement today. From the demand for suffrage we have moved forward to the demand for representation. For the rest, we need to remember that they remain with us because the system that keeps them alive has still to be brought down. It is for this struggle that the great banner of Women's Day continues to call for solidarity, assertion of rights, and that driving force of militant struggle. For we cannot forget the latent power of March 8th etched forever in history on that most famous March 8th of 1917, when women in Petrograd went on strike

demanding *Bread and Peace*, a strike that heralded a revolution and an end to the oppressive Tsarist rule in Russia. It is with the memory and striving of that great force that we continue to carry the message of March 8th each year. Not as ritual, not as mere formalistic observance, not as slaves to empty rhetoric, but as a day to press forward for women's rights.

On this March 8th, we reiterate the commitment of the International Women's Day movement to peace and against war. From India we send our message of international solidarity to women fighting against imperialist aggressions and wars. If the first years of the International Women's Day raised the banner of peace against world war imposed by rivalry within imperialist powers, we today raise the banner of peace against the concert of war by imperialist powers and its renewed attempt at neo-colonial domination. On this March 8th, as women of India, we demand a universal right to be free of hunger and food deprivation. We demand food security as part of a basic right to life. We demand employment and the right to livelihood. We demand the right to a life free of violence within and outside the home.

In all corners of the country, women are today frightened and angry at the tremendous increase in prices of food. Almost two decades of neo-liberal policies - of deliberate wrecking of the public distribution system, of arbitrary divisions into BPL and APL depriving millions of the poor from access to cheap foodgrain, of cutbacks in state investment in agriculture, of tardy price protections to farmer producers - have all resulted in increasing levels of hunger and an erosion of the self sufficiency in food production. Reducing subsidies to Indian farmers has resulted in the government paying higher prices to multi-national companies for imports, and rising prices for common people. This year we have been promised the enactment of a National Food Security Act, although in the Union budget, food subsidy has been reduced by over Rs. 400 crore, and the fertiliser subsidy cut by Rs. 3000 crore. The bill that has been proposed by the Government confines the entitlement to BPL cardholders, and to 25 kg of rice or wheat a month at Rs. 3 a kg. Today an Antyodaya card holder is entitled to 35 kg of wheat at Rs. 2 a kg, paying Rs. 70 a month. If the Food Security Act is implemented in its present form, they will have to pay more and get 10 kg less of

subsidised foodgrain. On this March 8th, we demand that the allotment of 35 kg should not be cut to 25 kg in the Food Security Act. We demand that the entitlement of Antyodaya families to receive wheat at Rs. 2 a kg be continued. We demand that the benefits of a mandated food security framework be made universal and not confined to those who have a BPL card. At a time when controlling the rise in prices of food has become the most urgent need of the day, we demand withdrawal of the proposed increases in the price of petrol and diesel.

In the 1990s rural women were hardest hit by growing unemployment leading to a drastic fall in their work participation rates. In the first decade of the 21st century, open unemployment rates doubled in rural areas, but increased the most among urban women. Even those officially counted as employed might be employed for just a few days in the year, those forced to accept incomes below subsistence, especially the 96 per cent who are unorganized workers as well as unpaid family workers. While NREGA has offered some relief to rural women in search of work, insufficient financial allocations, delayed payments, unrealistic task targets and financial irregularities have been subverting rural women workers' entitlements. The problem of urban women's unemployment has remained unaddressed and we demand employment guarantee for women in both rural and urban areas at minimum wages.

The need for a safe environment for women is critical to accessing rights and entitlements. Existing laws such as against Dowry, the Domestic Violence Act, as well as PCPNDT Act to check sex selective abortions need improvement even as those guilty of violations continue to go scot free. There is a need to address issues of sexual assault and sexual harassment through new legislation as well. Although speedy trials and fast track courts have been promised, problems in definitions of assault continue to be evaded even as government effectively diluted provisions with regard to crimes against women over the last one year. In addition to violence at home, we women's participation in the democratic process is threatened by the forces perpetuating terror. Attacks on women in conflict situations, including by state agencies continue to be a matter of concern. Be it in Kashmir or the North East, the Armed Forces have shown scant respect for the civil rights of the people of these states, least of all the women. Women

continue to be made the target of attack in caste and religion based violence, in situations of ethnic and political conflict, as well as state violence. Women are made victims of false notions of 'honour'. Further, self-proclaimed proponents of the moral brigade inflict their views and retrogressive notions on all and sundry enjoying immunity from the law even as the social climate gets vitiated by their acts of violence as per fundamentalist prescriptions.

We demand that existing provisions with regard to violence and crimes against women be implemented. The definition of crimes be expanded to effectively address the lacunae that exist in the law and that state agencies be made more accountable for violations that occur.

On this the 100th anniversary of March 8th, we, the national women's organizations and groups fighting for equal rights and gender justice resolve to continue the fight against imperialism, and terrorist violence. We resolve to strengthen the struggle for food security, right to work, and women's rights to a life without violence. We call on all peace loving forces to unite against war, and for a just, humane and equal society.

**All India Dalit Mahila Adhikar Manch, All India Democratic Women's Association, All India Women's Congress, Centre for Women's Development Studies, Domestic Worker's Forum, Guild of Service, Joint Women's Programme, JAGORI, Muslim Women's Forum, National Federation of Indian Women, NACDOR, Swastic Mahila Samiti, Young Women's Christian Association, Nirmala Niketan,**

## Highest Unemployment in History

*Unemployment is expected to increase worldwide, with the exception of China -- ILO report*

According to this year's annual Global Employment Trends report, following the global economic crisis, world unemployment has reached a record high in 2009. The number of jobless worldwide reached nearly 212 million in 2009 following an unprecedented increase of 34 million, compared to 2007, on the eve of the global crisis.

Based on IMF economic forecasts, the ILO estimates that global unemployment is likely to remain high through 2010. In the **Developed Economies and European Union** unemployment is projected to increase by an additional 3 million people in 2010. With the measures taken by the Chinese government and its impact over the neighborhood, the unemployment rate in that region will decline, the ILO report says. In Latin America too, unemployment may decline.

The ILO also stated the number of unemployed youth worldwide increased by 10.2 million in 2009 compared to 2007, the largest hike since 1991, the earliest year for which global estimates are available.

According to the ILO, the share of workers in vulnerable employment worldwide is estimated to reach over 1.5 billion, equivalent to over half (50.6 per cent) of the world's labour force. The number of women and men in vulnerable employment is estimated to have increased in 2009 by as much as 110 million, compared to 2008.

The report also says that 633 million workers and their families were living on less than USD 1.25 per day in 2008, with as many as 215 million additional workers living on the margin and at risk of falling into poverty in 2009.

The report finds that preliminary estimates of growth in labour productivity, measured as output per worker, indicate that productivity levels fell in all regions except East Asia, South Asia and North Africa. The largest decline in output per worker occurred in Central and South-Eastern Europe (non- EU) and CIS, - 4.7 per cent, thus reversing part of the gains that were made in the first half of the decade.

As a result of declining output per worker, working conditions are deteriorating, especially in regions where labour productivity was already low preceding the economic crisis, such as in Sub-Saharan Africa.

The unemployment rate in the Developed Economies and European Union jumped to 8.4 per cent in 2009, up from 6.0 per cent in 2008 and 5.7 per cent in 2007. The number of unemployed in the region is estimated to have surged by more than 13.7 million between 2007 and 2009, with an increase of nearly 12 million unemployed in 2009 alone. Employment in the industrial sectors has suffered more than employment in agriculture or services.

**Cases Registered(CR), Cases Chargesheeted(CS)  
Under Domestic Violence Act during 2005-2007**

SNo	STATE	2005		2006		2007		
		CR	CS	CR	CS	CR	CS	
1	ANDHRA PRADESH#							
2	ARUNACHAL PRADESH	0	0	0	0	0	0	
3	ASSAM	0	0	1	0	2	0	
4	BIHAR#							
5	CHHATTISGARH	1390	1186	1421	1214	1651	1249	
6	GOA	0	0	0	0	3		
7	GUJARAT	0	0	150	147	883	862	
8	HARYANA	0	0	1	0	17	10	
9	HIMACHAL PRADESH	0	0	0	0	3	2	
10	JAMMU & KASHMIR	Central Act and its provisions are not applicable						
11	JHARKHAND#							
12	KARNATAKA#							
13	KERALA	0	0	2	0	14	9	
14	MADHYA PRADESH#							
15	MAHARASHTRA	0	0	9	8	117	109	
16	MANIPUR	0	0	0	0	0	0	
17	MEGHALAYA#							
18	MIZORAM	0	0	0	0	0	0	
19	NAGALAND	0	0	0	0	0	0	
20	ORISSA#							
21	PUNJAB	0	0	17	11	37	14	
22	RAJASTHAN	0	0	3	2	25	14	
23	SIKKIM	4	2	6	5	6	4	
24	TAMIL NADU	0	0	0	0	0	0	
25	TRIPURA	0	0	0	0	0	0	
26	UTTAR PRADESH	21	13	13	7	25	20	
27	UTTARAKHAND	0	0	0	0	0	0	
28	WEST BENGAL	0	0	1	1	5	2	
	<b>TOTAL STATE</b>	<b>1415</b>	<b>1201</b>	<b>1624</b>	<b>1395</b>	<b>2788</b>	<b>2296</b>	
29	A&N ISLANDS	5	3	10	8	20	6	
30	CHANDIGARH	75	56	102	68	112	37	
31	D&N HAVELI	0	0	0	0	0	0	
32	DAMAN & DIU	2	2	0	0	1	1	
33	DELHI UT#							
34	LAKSHADWEEP#							
35	PUDUCHERRY	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	<b>TOTAL UT</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>44</b>	
	<b>ALL INDIA TOTAL</b>	<b>1497</b>	<b>1262</b>	<b>1736</b>	<b>1471</b>	<b>2921</b>	<b>2340</b>	

# means data in respect of these States/UTs is not available  
Note: Information on disposal of police and courts includes the information on pending cases from previous years also.

**Percentage of households having drinking water  
and sanitation facility**

State	Rural		Urban		Rural		Urban	
	Drinking water facility				Sanitation facility			
	inadequate	adequate	inadequate	adequate	inadequate	adequate	inadequate	adequate
Jammu & Kashmir	13.5	39.2	2.7	81.6	42.3	32.7	11.7	63.5
Himachal Pradesh	14.2	29.4	1.6	83.1	58.3	14.9	10.4	51.7
Punjab	2.9	81.1	0.3	90.1	36.7	37.9	16.1	55.9
Chandigarh	--	65.7	1.3	91.6	36.9	20.3	19.2	47.5
Uttaranchal	9.3	43.4	0.0	90.0	57.9	25.4	24.9	55.8
Haryana	10.0	39.5	3.3	79.8	55.3	16.6	19.7	59.2
Delhi	10.6	32.3	6.8	73.0	8.3	50.9	19.1	48.3
Rajasthan	11.7	21.9	5.3	66.9	79.2	7.3	27.3	44.7
Uttar Pradesh	1.5	48.4	0.9	78.0	83.6	4.4	25.5	47.8
Bihar	2.0	51.2	2.9	75.3	86.3	3.3	36.3	31.2
Sikkim	6.4	47.6	0.3	85.8	17.2	35.7	3.2	53.2
Arunachal	6.9	33.9	0.7	85.6	58.6	14.2	10.3	45.1
Nagaland	39.8	10.9	25.5	38.6	4.7	76.8	0.1	77.2
Manipur	14.0	10.9	17.0	28.8	25.1	8.1	11.2	21.4
Mizoram	21.2	5.0	7.0	51.5	6.2	58.7	2.1	77.9
Tripura	26.1	18.9	5.1	58.4	15.5	2.1	23.2	20.9
Meghalaya	8.9	16.4	5.4	53.5	42.0	30.3	23.9	38.5
Assam	4.7	58.6	2.0	83.7	27.1	32.3	3.6	71.8
West Bengal	10.0	24.1	6.0	45.9	73.5	11.5	27.1	41.9
Jharkhand	10.6	20.1	13.9	51.9	85.5	2.4	31.5	35.1
Orissa	15.7	14.4	5.0	53.3	92.5	3.2	37.0	35.2
Chhattisgarh	8.5	11.5	9.5	48.0	89.7	3.4	40.6	36.1
Madhya Pradesh	12.3	12.9	10.6	44.8	84.1	4.0	32.6	46.7
Gujarat	11.2	41.9	1.7	83.8	68.2	17.3	11.6	70.2
Daman & Diu	3.9	66.2	0.6	78.1	55.4	30.5	20.7	54.3
Dadra & N.Haveli	15.7	15.9	--	81.2	61.6	18.8	20.3	67.3
Maharashtra	15.9	21.8	5.5	67.0	74.9	8.6	43.7	40.5
Andhra Pradesh	6.9	22.9	5.4	51.4	71.2	11.4	19.7	47.6
Karnataka	13.4	18.3	4.8	60.6	42.8	16.9	17.9	50.8
Goa	--	76.7	9.5	42.9	38.8	37.1	49.8	33.0
Lakshadweep	--	88.6	--	80.7	4.6	84.1	10.2	84.8
Kerala	7.3	57.6	4.5	71.2	12.4	63.6	5.5	74.7
Tamil Nadu	11.8	12.2	8.6	46.9	71.9	9.9	22.7	45.6
Pondicherry	13.1	36.4	3.6	68.0	79.6	14.4	23.3	52.6
A & N. Islands	0.5	31.1	--	92.4	62.3	21.3	26.0	53.2
India	8.7	31.8	5.2	63.6	70.8	12.1	25.9	47.9

Note: Computed from unit level data as indicated in the text. "--" indicates that sample size is not enough to provide the estimate.

CASES REGISTERED(CR), CASES CHARGESHEETED(CS), CASES CONVICTED(CV), PERSONS ARRESTED(P), PERSONS CHARGESHEETED(PCS) & PERSONS CONVICTED(PCV) UNDER DOWRY DEATHS DURING 2005-2007

STATE	2005						2006						2007					
	CR	CS	CV	PAR	PCS	PCV	CR	CS	CV	PAR	PCS	PCV	CR	CS	CV	PAR	PCS	PCV
1 ANDHRA PRADESH	443	473	118	1280	1329	202	519	428	73	1274	1082	248	613	573	97	1562	1450	252
2 ARUNACHAL PRADESH	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3 ASSAM	99	81	-15	174	99	31	105	74	30	201	144	33	100	72	20	172	139	29
4 BIHAR	1014	680	110	2323	2182	223	1188	749	138	2674	2255	355	1172	1028	187	3265	2512	375
5 CHHATTISGARH	100	91	26	296	289	60	103	89	23	273	267	69	100	106	23	247	241	131
6 GOA	2	3	0	2	8	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	8	0	0
7 GUJARAT	49	48	10	138	139	16	50	43	3	150	133	5	42	38	4	121	138	11
8 HARYANA	212	185	52	481	502	141	255	215	89	533	514	169	269	238	62	572	581	160
9 HIMACHAL PRADESH	2	1	1	8	3	1	3	4	1	12	13	1	8	5	1	31	29	3
0 JAMMU & KASHMIR	5	7	1	28	23	1	10	8	0	12	13	0	9	7	0	21	21	0
1 JHARKHAND	257	166	71	503	421	118	281	170	60	557	474	140	303	223	92	559	518	131
2 KARNATAKA	261	233	63	578	538	129	244	213	41	587	521	81	251	189	27	582	620	66
3 KERALA	21	18	10	31	19	18	25	21	6	39	37	13	27	27	4	40	52	8
4 MADHYA PRADESH	739	715	262	1992	2023	716	764	735	280	2203	2187	683	742	738	279	2127	2120	727
5 MAHARASHTRA	341	336	34	1379	1315	72	387	374	27	1348	1266	76	436	376	30	1349	1286	89
6 MANIPUR	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
7 MEGHALAYA	1	0	0	1	0	0	6	3	0	0	2	0	2	1	0	4	1	0
8 MIZORAM	4	4	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
9 NAGALAND	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
10 ORISSA	334	288	35	708	714	72	457	317	44	969	990	123	481	338	31	958	866	175
11 PUNJAB	89	89	28	246	248	89	130	106	31	331	258	106	133	119	43	316	291	141
12 RAJASTHAN	381	281	119	560	559	256	394	327	127	685	672	357	439	330	118	683	674	215
13 SIKKIM	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
14 TAMIL NADU	215	212	71	492	507	152	187	169	48	457	403	98	208	189	64	503	457	117
15 TRIPURA	34	28	7	43	35	4	35	22	10	25	11	8	36	21	11	42	40	23
16 UTTAR PRADESH	1564	1367	678	4523	4233	1900	1798	1464	695	5280	4944	2206	2078	1768	739	7310	6018	2551
17 UTTARAKHAND	53	48	14	160	135	43	80	51	18	227	187	68	70	74	28	244	228	81
18 WEST BENGAL	448	389	94	956	805	173	445	478	57	1058	1039	129	451	459	46	1068	1148	73
TOTAL STATE	6685	5703	1821	16896	16107	4417	7467	6069	1781	18875	17394	4946	7950	6919	1896	21784	19428	5358
29 ANDHRA ISLANDS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0
30 CHANDIGARH	3	4	0	6	9	0	10	9	0	30	24	0	1	2	3	3	7	8
31 DAN HAVELI	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
32 DAMAN & DIU	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	3	3	0
33 DELHI UT	114	95	40	287	227	158	137	134	47	320	309	192	138	123	56	313	272	211
34 LAKSHADWEEP	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
35 PUDUCHERRY	4	2	0	4	5	0	3	7	2	7	9	6	2	3	1	8	7	3
TOTAL UT	122	102	40	277	241	158	151	151	49	359	343	198	143	129	60	329	289	222
TOTAL ALL INDIA	6787	5805	1861	17173	16348	4573	7618	6220	1830	19234	17737	5144	8093	7048	1946	22113	19717	5580

Note: Information on disposal by police and courts includes the information on pending cases from previous years also

SOURCE: CRIMINAL IN INDIA

**Right to Food  
Against Price Rise**

**Right to Work  
Against Jobless Growth**

**Right to a Violence Free Life  
Within and Outside the Home**

**Right to Peace and Well Being  
Say No to War**

**Long Live March 8!!!**