



IN TOUCH IN TUNE

Engaging The Philanthropic Ecosystem

Natural and human-made calamities affect the marginalised more severely. And women, mainly from Dalit, Adivasi, Trans and other marginalised communities, face the brunt of disasters much more harshly. According to a recent study published in JAMA Psychiatry, an increase in temperature by 1% was connected with an 8% increase in physical violence against women. Similarly, the increased use of pesticides and fertilisers to combat climate change in the tea gardens of Darjeeling is giving rise to a host of respiratory and skin ailments among women who comprise a large proportion of tea plantation workers. Heat waves which have been intensifying, place women at greater risk of sun strokes and dehydration as a large proportion of informal workers comprise women (52%).

Environmental degradation of water, soil and air quality affects women more severely because of their gendered workload. Women fetch water, bring firewood, cook, clean, take care of livestock, and work on family land. Needless to say, they are also most vulnerable to the consequences of ecological destruction. The urgent need to engage with resource-deprived communities and include women in designing solutions that enable them to counter the ill effects of environmental degradation cannot be overemphasised. Consultative processes and models to develop community-centric answers are essential. Philanthropic commitments to climate change have risen by 46% over the previous year, which is heartening. But it is equally important to assess who can claim these resources and how they can be deployed most effectively in designing solutions owned and led by the communities most affected by rising temperatures, poor soil quality and inconsistent rainfall. Environmental taxes and consumption linked cess, mandatory gender analysis as an integral part of environmental risk assessments and internal clearances before new business projects are launched are some ways to broad-base the compensation side of the issue.

Gender analysis means exploring where all and how women will be engaged by any given business, including the value chain, and how they will be impacted differentially by the proposed business at every stage. Environmental degradation and un-sustainable practices have a disproportionate impact on women, girls and those who identify as women. According to a UNDP report in 2022, 80% of people displaced by climate change are women. Under a fellowship we (SAWF IN) are running for women-headed households in the Sundarbans, we see heavy migration of men to Gujarat and other states as income opportunities are dwindling due to growing soil salinity and climate-led natural disasters. Women are left behind to manage and cope with everyday survival demands. At the same time, a SAWF IN change maker working in Krishna district has reported a decline in vector-borne diseases in her area due to her consistent efforts in building community awareness on waste segregation and disposal. She has also led women in her area to turn to vermicompost as an activity that enhances income and is building environmental sustainability.

Polluting our water, soil, and air has taken so many years and resources – we need to invest the same amount of resources – if not more – to clean it all up, one step at a time, intentionally and carrying everyone along. If societies are not equitable and some people are bearing the brunt of environmental degradation more severely than others, it is like the story of the dog chasing its tail endlessly. It keeps it busy but doesn't get it anywhere.

1. [India: Extreme heat worsening domestic violence – DW – 07/04/2023](#)

2. [Why Climate Impact On Tea Yield Is Making Women Workers Sick - BehanBox.](#)

WARLI TRIBAL IDENTITY'S INTERCONNECTEDNESS WITH ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Warli art, native to the Warli community of southern Gujarat and north Maharashtra in India, dates back thousands of years. Initially cherished by Savasin and Dhavaleri women – granting them a space of autonomy and self-expression – this unique art form found new life when it entered the commercial scene in the 1970s.

During weddings, Savasin women would paint the red walls of the kitchen with intricate designs using rice paste and bamboo brushes. In contrast, the Dhavaleri women sang songs that invoked the Warli gods, inspiring the paintings' motifs.

However, as Warli art gained popularity, the influence of the market economy marginalised women artists. Kirti Vartha (a passionate Warli Tribal Woman from Palgarh district in Maharashtra advocating for the rights of Warli tribal women for over 15 years) and her group, The Dhavaleri Collective, are now trying to reclaim the lost depth of Warli art and, with it women's rightful place in this tradition. The Dhavaleri Collective not only revives the art on various surfaces like walls, papers, and clothes but also preserves its primitive aspects and oral narratives. Warli art is a source of income and recognition for tribal women, and it emphasises the importance of indigenous experiences in achieving environmental justice.

In Kirti's words, "Environmental justice cannot be attained if it is dismissive of indigenous (Adivasi) experience of environmental injustices and its impact on the larger ecosystem." Her work on reviving traditional roles in the Warli Tribal economy earned her the prestigious SAWF IN's Economic and Environmental Justice Fellowship in 2021.



Artworks developed by The Dhavaleri Collective for sale

SAWF IN'S STRONG COHORT OF LEGAL FELLOWS

In April 2023, SAWF IN started its new cohort of Legal Fellows. The Legal Fellowship Programme of SAWF IN aims to develop and strengthen the abilities of women lawyers practising in district courts to recognise significant barriers faced by women and gender non-binary persons in accessing justice. It further enables the fellows to support marginalised women and trans survivors of violence to access justice through effective pro-bono assistance. New forms of capacity-building engagements and mentoring have been envisaged in the current fellowship year that is supporting four fellows from Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Nagaland and Tamil Nadu. Here is a brief profile of our fellows:



L-R, TANIYA, SHANCHOBENI, BULIA, CHETHANA

Chethana V, SAWF IN's fellow since April in Cheepuram District Courts, Tamil Nadu. Ardent in working on cases of domestic violence, gender-based violence, sexual abuse, and gender identity issues, Chethana also conducts workshops and seminars on the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 and legal remedies available for LGBTQIA+ individuals facing unlawful detention, police brutality, and malicious prosecution based on their gender identity.

Bulia Pulu, a proud member of the Idu Mishmi Tribe in Arunachal Pradesh, practices in Roing, Lower Dibang Valley District and Tezu, and Lohit District Courts. Also a fellow with SAWF IN since April 2021, she aims to provide tribal women access to the legal framework of our Constitution and inspire her community to embrace positive changes in customary laws.

Shanchobeni Lotha (from Nagaland's Lotha tribe) practices in Wokha District Court, Nagaland, and is a fellow with SAWF IN since April 2021. As an empanelled lawyer with the National Legal Services Authority, she earned recognition as the Best Panel Lawyer of Nagaland State and Northeast Zone in 2019 for her excellent work. Shanchobeni is committed to helping women facing violence and abuse, especially those whose spouses have passed away. She believes in providing legal assistance to empower these women who often suffer in silence due to fear and lack of awareness.

Taniya Laskar, a young lawyer based in Cachar District Court, Assam, joined SAWF IN as a fellow in April 2022. With a focus on women's and children's rights, Taniya aims to make a positive impact through her legal expertise.

Our fellows exemplify the power of legal advocacy in empowering communities and promoting justice for all.

A session on POCSO Act was conducted by Adv. Amala Dasarathi, lawyer and legal researcher, on 17 June 2023 which was attended by 8 participants. It was a highly interactive session as the facilitator discussed several important topics under the POCSO Act, including mandatory reporting and its implications on lawyers, age of consent and its disproportionate impact on adolescent boys and girls, debate around it in the feminist movement, adolescent sexuality, and examples of inconsistent judicial approaches seen over time across the country. The fellows were actively involved as they shared their experiences of handling similar cases in their work and life.

SAWF IN- building gender responsive funding agendas

Mayuri, SAWF IN Volunteer in Ranchi



Breaking Barriers: SAWF IN Volunteer Mayuri's Contribution to PHIA's Gender Equality Panel Discussion

In an empowering moment of recognition, Mayuri, a dedicated SAWF IN volunteer, was extended a prestigious invitation by Partnering Hope into Action Foundation (PHIA) to join as a panellist on **"Gender Equality: Issues and Possibilities"**. The panel discussion was held on **16th June 2023** as a part of the Youthsav festival to celebrate the achievements of PHIA's famous It's Possible campaign - a campaign advocating gender equity.

Passionate gender equality advocates, thought leaders and social change catalysts steered the discussion forward. PHIA's campaign is aimed at breaking gender-based stereotypes and discrimination. The panel magnified how the five themes-Language, Honour, Freedom of Choice, Division of labour at home, and Parenting-can significantly change the widely accepted notion of masculinity.

The campaign and, in turn, the discussion intends to drive more conversations around gender equity and envision a future where all people, regardless of their sex, gender and sexuality, have equal rights.

Panel Moderation by Dr Anuradha Rajan at Nasscomm



Dr Anuradha Rajan moderated a panel on ESG and Inclusion: How Gender and Sustainability are Interlinked

Driving the Conversations Towards Inclusion, Dr Anuradha Rajan, SAWF IN's Hon. Executive Director, was invited to moderate a panel discussion on ESG and Inclusion: **How Gender and Sustainability are Interlinked during the Nasscom Global Inclusion Summit 2023 held on June 28th, 2023.**

The discussion shed light on the fact that a company can only truly accomplish long-term sustainability if it achieves DEI (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion) goals.

To achieve sturdy, sustainable solutions, companies need to i) Make gender analysis integral to business plans and ii) Retain women in the workforce to commit to DEI goals. A fact here to note is that the more DEI goals are met, the better the company can achieve all of its ESG (Environmental, Social, Governance) goals.

Eminent Speakers Chung G Tham, Rajesh Ranjan, and Nidhi Pratapneni highlighted vital trends in pursuing these goals, the positive impacts of choosing inclusion on sustainability, and strategies to achieve these goals during this discussion.

Anuradha Rajan as a panellist at a Conference- by Arthan's Women at Work



Anuradha as a panellist at a Conference- by Arthan's Women at Work

SAWF IN's Hon. Executive Director, Anuradha Rajan, was invited as a panellist to the discussion titled "Intent - yes, resources - no. **How to Incentivize Gender Intentional Organizational Behaviour and Reward Gender Equitable Outcomes**" organised during Arthan's **"She the Change: Empowering Voices, Enriching Workplaces"** conference held on **4th July in New Delhi.**

Panellists from diverse backgrounds joined the conversation to offer various perspectives on policies that can cater to a diverse workforce, recognising and identifying diverse identities and curating solutions for their challenges, and how we, as women, can demand safe and inclusive workplaces to increase representation.

Anuradha, brought forth several insights and themes, such as the need to create gender-intentional organisations that align with gender-equitable values, conduct extensive studies with local communities to understand the ground realities, be adaptive and collaborative to nurture gender-equitable outcomes, and stimulate knowledge-sharing and open dialogue in an organisation.

Anuradha addressed a message to young, ambitious women, **"Claim. Do not ask. Because if you ask, you will never get it."**

ABOUT SAWF IN

Friends, Allies, and Donors

South Asia Women Foundation India (SAWF IN) is a national women's fund set up to raise and influence the flow of resources to women and trans-women-led organisations for the priorities they identify and the agendas they see as central to the feminist movement building. We are thrilled to bring you our second edition of this newsletter! We hope to share views, insights and compelling stories from the ground through this platform.

About Us

SAWF IN emerged as a national fund from efforts to build a vibrant feminist philanthropic ecosystem in South Asia. She was put forward as an idea by the Indian Board members of a regional women's fund, South Asia Women's Fund (SAWF) and registered in August 2015 in India as a not-for-profit Company under section 8 of the Indian Companies Act 2013.

What is the appropriate utilisation of women's funds?

Women's Fund is a critical safeguard of resources to be used towards women and trans-women-led institutions. With women's fund, no organisation that a woman runs has to encounter days with a shortage of resources. We constantly strive to make this fund available to the most marginalised women and their initiatives. Currently, 43 women's funds worldwide are working under Prospera, the International Network of Women's Funds. Women's fund helps claim resources that address the needs and aspirations of women from disadvantaged communities.

In short, we are best placed to ensure funding flows directly into the hands of grassroots organizations that are led by and work to advance the rights of women and trans persons. We channel funding and provide accompaniment support to such organizations, ensuring financial resources flow to the most needed, challenged, and effective organizations engaged in securing the rights of women and trans persons. We seek grants and donations to support the programmes working on ending violence and advancing women's economic participation in socially and geographically challenging regions. We seek your support in funding gender transformative programmes and organizations!

To make a contribution write in to sawfindia@gmail.com or call us on 7738153988



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