

**ANNUAL REPORT**  
**1 April 2010 to 31 March 2011**



**SPARROW**

Sound & Picture Archives for Research on women

SPARROW'S FORTHCOMING PUBLICATION

# SWEEPING THE FRONT YARD...

Poems and Stories of Women in  
English, Malayalam, Telugu and Urdu



Edited by  
Sampurna Chattarji

**SWEEPING THE FRONT YARD...**  
Poems and Stories of Women in  
English, Malayalam, Telugu, and Urdu

**SWEEPING THE FRONT YARD...** is the third in the series of five volumes to be published with the writings of 87 writers from 23 languages along with excerpts from interviews with them. As in the first and second volume, Bharati Kapadia, well known painter and a friend of SPARROW, has done the cover and most of the drawings. **SWEEPING THE FRONT YARD...** is a literary journey into various regions. English writers in the volume: Arundhati Subramaniam, Eunice de Souza, K R Usha and Shashi Deshpande. Malayalam writers in the volume: Anitha Thampi, Chandramathi, K R Meera, Rosemary and V M Girija. Telugu writers in the volume: Abburi Chayadevi, Shahjahana, Silalolitha. Vimala and Volga. Urdu writers in the volume: Afroze Sayeeda, Fatima Taj, Jameela Nishat, Shafique Fatima Shera and Qamar Jamali

Contribution Price (India): Rs.500/-

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SPARROW

Sound & Picture Archives for Research on Women

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*PREFACE*

The year 2010 -2011, like most other years, had its challenges and triumphs for SPARROW, as well as for the whole country. Sad to say, women continue to be at the receiving end of harassment and violence, even murder. A number of women committed suicide due to desperation over family discord and ill treatment. There were many cases of rape and murder of girls, including young children.

Not only crime against women, but crime by women is also growing. In many cases of rape and human trafficking, women were found to be in collusion with the perpetrators. Besides, despite the existence of Pre-natal Diagnostic Techniques (Regulation and Prevention of Misuse) Act, in order to check female foeticide, the crime still goes on. The sex ratio continues to go down. One could be overwhelmed with the dark scenario had it not been for some bright spots.

In its annual report for 2010-2011, the government Ministry Of Women and Child Development has listed raising of sex ratio for age group 0-6 from 927 in 2001 to 935 by 2011-12 and to 950 by 2016-17 as one of its goals. The Government also introduced 'Protection of Women against Sexual Harassment at Workplace Bill, 2010' in Lok Sabha on 7th December, 2010.

SPARROW's work this year is set against this background.

Mumbai, C S Lakshmi, 2011



### *POLICY DECISION, STAFF STRUCTURE AND TEAM SPIRIT*

During the year, two staff members resigned and one opted for part time. One of them who left was part of the project team. Her replacement was appointed, and the work that had slowed down began to pick up speed again. The new appointee is one who had worked with SPARROW earlier, but had left to join her husband, who was working in another place. The family is back in Mumbai, and we were so happy to welcome back our old co-worker. But unfortunately, she is currently out of the force again due to her second pregnancy.

A senior staff, who had been working here for many years, left us for another job that offered better salary. Another one from the accounts department is now doing part time as she finds it difficult to come to office at regular time. She is looking after small children and an elderly ailing mother-in-law.

Despite staff shortage and other difficulties, SPARROW work goes on.

### *PROJECT AND ARCHIVAL ACTIVITIES*

SPARROW continues to play its role in doing what it can for women. DST project on 'Women in Science', where more than 20 women scientists were interviewed with a view to write a compendium, is about to be completed. The book is in its final stages of editing. This project aims at encouraging girls to take up science as a career. It has been noted that very few female students pursue science studies at the higher levels. They tend to drop out at some stage even though they may be brilliant in the subject. This is to a great extent due to the perception that science is for men and not for women. SPARROW wishes to dispel this misconception through this project with the Department of Science and Technology.

The third volume of the works and interviews of 87 women writers from 23 different languages is on the way to the press. Altogether five volumes of the series are to be published. We are now working on the next two volumes.

We are happy to get a three-year project with The Flowering Tree; a USA based financial Organisation, which will support part of our infrastructure expenses and projects. Each of their grantee has to choose a flower's name and SPARROW has chosen to be Coral Jasmine, the divine tree. The Global Fund for Women has also given a small grant for infrastructural



support. The work of collecting materials for our archives and recording them continued. We also brought out our usual newsletters. This has been done with support from Stichtung De Zaaier.



Some researchers, students and others visited our library for consultation of material and for or watching our films. There were occasions when SPARROW films could be shown outside too. On 14<sup>th</sup>. March, 2011, 25 students from the Krantijyoti Savitribai Phule Women's Study Centre, University of Pune, visited SPARROW for a one day workshop. After a brief introduction about the organisation and its works, they were given a tour of the archives and library. They spent some time browsing through SPARROW publications and after break for lunch they viewed part of *Degham*, a film on the transgender experience produced by SPARROW.

### ***SPARROW EVENTS AND OTHER ACTIVITIES***

An interesting event which took place in the SPARROW premises is the one-day workshop with Nordic students. This is part of the training programme that Indian Institute of Population Studies (IIPS) offers students from Nordic countries every year. This year, as part of the programme, SPARROW conducted a one-day workshop on 23<sup>rd</sup> July, 2010 which involved film screenings and interactive sessions on women's history and life experiences.



India's first woman press photographer, Homai Vyrawalla, has been honoured with a Padma Vibhushan this year. An exhibition of her photographs archived with Alkazi Foundation and curated by Sabeena Gadikoke was held in various cities. A film on Homai Vyrawalla, produced by SPARROW and directed by Anik Ghosh, was part of the exhibition.

The Director, Dr. CS Lakshmi, attended India Festival at Sodra Teatern, Sweden in October 10-15. It was



originally meant to be a time for reading Dr. Lakshmi's stories as well as conversations on women's movement with her and Urvashi Butalia. But as things turned out, it became entirely a SPARROW programme.



Several events were organised in different parts of Mumbai on the occasion of International Women's Day, 2011. Some members of SPARROW took part in some of these events:

On 5<sup>th</sup> March, Maitra, the women's wing of Maharashtra Seva Sangh, Airoli, arranged a programme in their auditorium. A film produced by SPARROW, *Vitabhai Narayangaonkar*, on the life of a tamasha artiste was screened there. About 50 women watched it and appreciated it. Sharmila Sontakke, our senior librarian, attended the meeting.

Men Against Violence & Abuse (MAVA) organised a programme on 7<sup>th</sup> March. They had a session of poetry reading and a musical presentation of the last 200 years in women's history with a slide show. Priya D'Souza, SPARROW photographer and co-ordinator, joined the function and took photographs to document the function.



Jestha Nagarik Sangha (Senior Citizen's Club), Dahisar West, organised a lecture by Renutai Gawaskar on 7<sup>th</sup> March. Renutai is a social activist who works with underprivileged children. She spoke about





her life and work to an enthralled audience. Sharmila Sontakke was present at the function.

From 26<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> March, 2011, Sahitya Akademi, Delhi, and Nepali Sahitya Parishad, Sikkim, organised an All India Women Writers' Meet at Gangtok. Dr. CS Lakshmi participated in the Meet and had a memorable time there.

### SPARROW COLLECTIONS AND WORK RECORD 1 April 2010-31 March 2011

#### SPARROW NEWSLETTERS

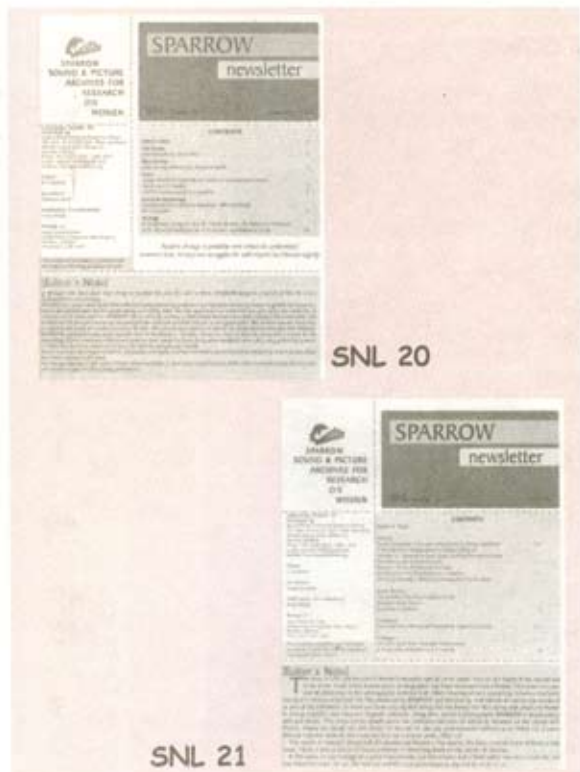
This year instead of 3 SNL we brought out 2 issues. The third issue is combined with the fourth issue in order to make a double issue

#### WEBSITE POSTINGS

There were regular website updates with postings on projects, SPARROW Newsletters, Annual Reports, different kinds of Rangolis (threshold designs), Events, information for supporting SPARROW etc.

#### SPARROW COLLECTIONS

The rest of the collection acquired and work done during the period is shown in the table below:



**PHOTOGRAPHS**

Total Photographs received	867
Mukul Dube Collections	718
Other Personalities	149
Data Entry Completed (Backlog)	721

**FILMS**

**Documentary Films**

**DVD**

English	10
Tamil	3
Hindi	2
Processed and digitized	15
Edited Entries	15

**CARTOONS**

Received	75
Processed and digitized	75

**BOOKS**

English	33
Hindi	1
Marathi	5
Tamil	4
Gujarati	4
Kannad	1
Malayalam	1

**Total** 49

Processed and digitized	49
Edited with Elizabeth	745

**REFERENCE BOOKS**

Processed and digitized	5
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**SPARROW Collections**

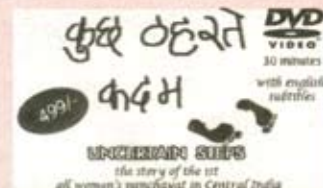


**Mukul Dube  
Collections**



**Therookoothu  
Artist**

**Documentary Films**



**ADVERTISEMENTS**

English	110
Total	110

**PRINT VISUALS**

English	182
Hindi	14
Marathi	18
Total	214
Processed and digitized	182

**POSTERS**

English	4
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**CALENDARS**

English	2
---------	---

**BROCHURES**

English	3
Tamil	1
Marathi	1
Processed and digitized	5

**NEWSLETTERS**

English	20
Hindi	6
Marathi	16
Processed and digitized	42

**NEWSPAPER ARTICLES**

English	1030
Marathi	125
Hindi	100
Total	1255
Processed and digitized	1255

**SPARROW Collections**

⇒ party snacks ⇒

**Building a new image**  
 The BJP in Uttar Pradesh has been struggling with softening images, but Manu Chauhan, MP, has kept himself out of this fog of war. After his unsuccessful experience in the last Lok Sabha elections, Manu is an ardent building member. He is help meeting various leaders and helping their monetary. In Rajasthan, his cousin, Manoj Chauhan, accompanied him. Looks like Manu is preparing for a long struggle in the BJP.

The Week, September 19, 2010

s a l e

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Linking Rd-Dadar TT-Malad SV Rd - Inorbit Mall  
Anarbi Vasthi-Hughes Rd-Ghatkopar

Mumbai Mirror, August 15, 2010



**PRIVATE PAPERS**

Leela Dube's private papers

**JOURNAL ARTICLES**

Total Journal Articles received

English	66
Tamil	19
Marathi	23
Kannada	01
Hindi	01
<b>Total</b>	<b>110</b>
Processed and digitized	382

**AUDIO CASSETTES / CDS**

Total Audio Cassettes & CDs received	03
Hindi	01
Marathi	02
<b>Total</b>	<b>03</b>
Processed and digitized	03
Data Entry Completed (Backlog)	60
Checked by Elizabeth	234

**ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION**

Marathi 2 Personalities  
2 digital recordings

**SPARROW Collections**



**BOOKS**

**PRIVATE**



**PAPERS**

Leela Dube

**OHRP COLLECTION**



Dr. Rohini Gawankar



Renutai Gawaskar



## *SOME REFLECTIONS*

We look back every year and assess our work, our lives and our commitment to SPARROW. We have not reached that stage as an organisation when we can confidently say that the future is bright and colourful like an aurora. We are still at the 'woods are lovely dark and deep... miles to go before I sleep' stage. It is amazing how the SPARROW team has kept up its spirits. The team is burdened with a lot more work than it can handle. While there is scope for general improvement the team did very well when one-day workshops were conducted and researchers and students came to visit and consult the archives. The team once again proved that it is capable of coordinating and organising activities in an impressive manner. The financial crunch had a severe impact on our work and also affected the team personally. There were days when there was no laughter in the office. But we cheered ourselves up eating together. Our senior accountant Ranjana works part-time these days but she was always there to boost our morale with home-made panipuri and bhelpuri with sweet, sour and hot chutneys. If on a particular day we really felt very low, someone or the other brought a box of sweets or home-made meal or pickles. Food has a way of loosening the tongue and we spoke to one another more freely and began celebrating when we got an appreciative letter or when a media article on SPARROW appeared.

Along with archival and project activities, fund-raising activities have been going on. We have tried to reach out to more people with last year's fund raising proposal entitled A Sky to Fly. We have also been inviting contributions for The Dr. Neera Desai Memorial Library.

The publication project of Prince Claus Fund and the Department of Science and Technology book, as usual, gave us many hours of work sometimes extending into late nights in far away places like Belapur. But we cannot deny that what we have learnt from these projects is something that will be useful always. From Sampurna, the editor of our third volume of interviews and works of women writers, we have learnt how not to overlook even small mistakes of punctuations or minor inconsistencies. Working on a science book for young girls has meant relearning our high school science. It has also been a moving experience in a way to know the life experiences of women scientists.

It has been a hot summer for us both in the real and metaphoric sense. We are looking forward to the monsoons. It will mean potholes and flooded roads. Trains will slow down and sometimes stop running. But it will also mean unexpected rainbows and a surging sea with waves rising like our hopes.





## | Sweeping The Front Yard... |

Anitha Thampi

Malayalam Writer

he back aches,  
as the broom sweeps  
into memory, at dawn  
soil-pimples sprouted  
on the front yard  
of the house in slumber  
eyes deep shut.

The rain must have  
eased the ground  
last night.  
Earthworms must have  
stirred it under,  
toiling sleepless, to  
build tiny homes of earth.

Only to be razed,  
to be spread,  
in the finger-streaks  
the broom leaves behind  
after the sweeper girl's  
morning dance,  
her Bent Backstep.

The sweeping done,  
dawn alights  
light falls, the eyes  
of the house open.  
No footprint,  
not even fallen leaves,  
how clean it is!

The newspaper arrives  
having scoured  
the depths of night, it falls  
stumbling against the door.  
Then she rises from clearing the shreds  
so thirsty, she'd drink the coffee to its dregs.



Translated by J Devika from the original Malayalam *Muttamadikkumbol* published in *Muttamadikkumbol*, D C Books, Kottayam, 2004



It has been a hot summer for us both in the real and metaphoric sense. We are looking forward to the monsoons. It will mean potholes and flooded roads. Trains will slow down and sometimes stop running. But it will also mean unexpected rainbows and a surging sea with waves rising like our hopes.