

**MINUTES OF THE 20<sup>TH</sup> REGIONAL WOMEN'S  
COMMITTEE MEETING  
FEBRUARY 3-6, 2011  
HONG KONG**



**World Student Christian Federation  
Asia – Pacific Region**

**Minutes of the 20<sup>th</sup> Regional Women's Committee**  
**World Student Christian Federation – Asia Pacific Region**  
**February 3-6, 2011, Hong Kong**

**4<sup>th</sup> February 2011**

At the outset, Ms. Sunita Suna, Women's Coordinator, WSCF-AP, welcomed the members of the Regional Women's Committee (RWC) and led the opening worship which was followed by a group Bible Study on the text John 8:1-11. The group reflected on the text and shared from their discussions. Some of the reflections were:

- The text is misinterpreted by most of the religious leaders to project only the woman as the sinner; hence she should be punished to death.
- The woman became the innocent victim in the hands of men who used her to trap Jesus
- Though the incident was unlawful and injustice for the woman according to Mosaic law, the woman couldn't protest or resist the oppressive power of men
- If the woman was caught in adultery then why did the men not bring the man also, who was engaged in adultery with the woman?
- Probably Jesus was waiting for the accusers to bring that man too while he bent over and wrote on the ground
- What is our understanding of sin?
- The religious laws are often biased against women and even today this tradition is practiced against women in our society for ex: the Iranian woman Sakineh Mohammadi Ashtiani who was sentenced to death by stoning.

After the group Bible study Sunita briefly introduced the schedule and also the roles and functions of the RWC. Sunita also informed that Misato Sasaki, the representative for the North East Asia region couldn't come as she needs to look after her ailing father in the hospital. So Fanny Lam, the Standing Committee member from Hong Kong is invited to attend. Janejinda Pawadee, the Vice Chair of the WSCF global Ex.co is also attending the RWC as an observer.

According to the By laws one of the two women members from the Standing Committee shall be the moderator of this committee. So Sunita proposed Ga yeon Lee (Standing Committee (SC) member at large) to moderator the business session for 4th.

**Decision:** The RWC accepted the proposal

## **I. Roll call**

### **The following members were present at the meeting:**

- |  |                                    |
|--|------------------------------------|
| 1. Bronwyn Crowe (Australia),<br>representative of Pacific | Member of the Global Ex co and     |
| 2. Ga yeon Lee(South Korea)<br>Asia representative         | SC member at large & North East    |
| 3. Mani Clara Mandal (Bangladesh)                          | South Asia representative          |
| 4. Selfitriani Kulla (Indonesia)                           | South East Asia representative     |
| 5. Fanny Lam (Hong Kong)<br>Misato Sasaki                  | co opted member in the place of    |
| 6. Sunita Suna (India)                                     | Regional Women's Coordinator       |
| 7. Janejinda Pawadee (Thailand)<br>observer                | Vice Chair for WSCF Global Ex co – |

### **Apologies:**

Misato Sasaki (Japan)

Bronwyn Crowe (Australia), had requested to join the RWC from 5<sup>th</sup> March.

There was quorum with 5 voting members present so the moderator announced to precede the RWC.

## **II. Approval of the agenda**

1. Roll call
2. Approval of agenda
3. Appointment of Recording Secretaries
4. Brief orientation about the Regional Women's Committee
5. Reading of the Minutes of the 19<sup>th</sup> RWC and matters arising out of the minutes
6. Sharing on women's issues and briefing on the women's programmes in sub regions and discussion (*incorporate the shared concerns in pre women's meeting*)
7. Regional Women's Coordinator's Report and discussion
8. Critical analysis of the women's issues - by summarizing the shared concerns
9. Review of the RWP and National Women's programme 2009-2010
10. Discussion on the women's issues, challenges and proposed plan of actions for 2011-2012 by the members of the Pre Women's Meeting 2010 and the RWC members (2009-2010)
11. Visioning and programme strategies for the RWP for 2011-2014
  - a. Women Doing Theology 2011

- b. Planning to observe the International Women's Day 8<sup>th</sup> March and 16 Days of Activism for the Elimination of Violence Against Women – 25 November to 10 December
- c. Praxis ( 6 issues – 2011-2012)
- d. Guide Book
- 12. Evaluation of the Regional Women's Coordinator
- 13. budget for 2011-2014
- 14. Brainstorming on fundraising for the RWP
- 15. AOB
- 16. Closing Worship

**Decision:** The proposed Agenda was approved by the members.

### **III. Appointment of Recording Secretaries**

**Decision:** The members approved for Sunita Suna to be recording secretary for 4<sup>th</sup> February and Ga yeon Lee for 5<sup>th</sup> February. to record the minutes of this RWC.

### **IV. Brief orientation about the Regional Women's Committee**

Sunita Suna briefly explained about the significance and functions of the RWC and role and responsibilities of the RWC members.

### **V. Reading of the Minutes of the 19<sup>th</sup> RWC and matters arising from the minutes**

The members suggested the following corrections in the minutes

- Correction in page 29 – from Chung Chi to Chinese University
- Spelling correction for Bronwyn's name in page 5,9,1 – This should be read as - Bronwyn Crowe

### **VI. Discussion on women's issues, programmes, and challenges shared in the pre women's meeting 2010**

#### **Discussion:**

In addition to the reports of the pre women's meeting, Fanny added about the Hong Kong SCM's present concerns on the issue of freedom and democracy in Hong Kong. They joined hands with other like minded organizations to strengthen the voices and demand against the high speed rail project by the government which would displace the people for the economic gains. SCM HK organized protests against the High speed rail, and during the protest they could learn and realize the significance of the relation with the mother earth from the community living in the Choi Yuen Tsuen village, home to about 500

people. Other area of engagement is on the issues of women's concern in Hong Kong is of the Mainland women who married to Hong Kong men, but can not stay in Hong Kong due to the legal restrictions and have to wait for 7 years before they get legal citizenship.

Gay Yeon shared that KSCF has been focusing on the issues of sexuality and women, feminism to overcome the prejudices in Korean Churches on different sexual orientation. They found out that in Korea or even in general, within the different sexual orientations, lesbians are discriminated most and not accepted by the community. Another focus area is commercial sex workers. Since most of the commercial sex workers belong to the immigrant community, they are deprived of basic benefits in the country like medical services, etc.

Intercultural marriage, 'mail order bride' is another concern, – women face vast cultural differences and experience violence in the hands of their husbands. The law also biased against the women as the married women need to wait for 2 yrs to get the citizenship, but once they are divorced they lose citizenship. Therefore they are left with little choice or option and most of the cases they forced them to remain in the violence relationships. Many married women are sent back home by their husbands due to the cultural differences and language differences.

KSCF is exploring to raise funds for the shelters through the like minded groups. And through the Hangdong programme in Korea they visit shelters and organize the people. KSCF is creating awareness among the KSCF and churches through study groups. There are challenges of lack of staff, and skills to organize activities and Bible studies in the university,

Effy shared about the women's concerns and activities of South East Asia. The SCMs continue to working on the areas of Poverty, Trafficking, Migrant Worker, Prostitution, HIV AIDS, Abortion and AKI, KTP dan KDRT, Civil war causes political situation, etc.

According to her, some of the major challenges to initiate women's programmes in SEA are:

**Cambodia:**

- No suitable woman have come forward to represent in this post

**Indonesia:**

- Patriarchy culture still a big challenge for us as women in Indonesia

- -Structure is too hierarchical and patriarchal
- -Gender or women's issues are given no or less attention in the branches
- -did not have data base and hence have a mapping problem
- -no awareness even among the women

### **Myanmar**

- • one of the major challenges with the present generation of students is – the consciousness and skills for critical analysis is declining which needs extra efforts to deal with situation like this.
- • in addition to the above mentioned challenges we have to deal with the patriarchal structure within the SCM movements. Women’s programmes and activities are no longer a concern or priority for most of the national movements.

### **Thailand:**

- Small numbers of SCMs and lack of “full time” coordinator / staff.
- Lack of Gender/ women concern in church and community, less awareness on women issues eg violence against women and children, HIV and AIDS. Many women do not understand women issues and do not want to involve in women activities.

Mani shared the women’s issues and some of the present engagement of SCMs in South Asia to address these issues locally. The women’s concerns in general in South Asia are: Domestic Violence, Sexual harassment, there is an increase rate of Acid throwing on women, Rape, kidnapping/ abduction, forced prostitution, etc.

The SCMs in South Asia responded to these issues by creating awareness among the student communities by organizing programmes / workshops like: women and men in partnership, Human rights and Gender Justice, observing the 16 days activism against VAW through International day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, by participating various women’s programmes organized by other ecumenical and women’s organizations.

Some of the challenges in SCMs in South Asia to initiate women’s programmes are :

- The system even within SCMs are patriarchal and hierarchical

- Lack of awareness and skill to address the women's concerns in the national movements
- Lack of staff in national movements to carry out the women's programmes / activities
- Financial constraints to initiate women's programmes/activities
- Difficult to maintain proper communication with rural areas women members and ensure their participation
- Lack of coordination and network between women students and senior friends

After the sharing from the members, Sunita shared about the concerns of the women's programmes. She said there are numbers of women's issues and concerns and they are interlinked to each other. Most of the issues are complex and of global concerns. She also shared about the nature of the WSCF programmes and Regional Women's Programmes. She said the target groups of the WSCF programmes are students, hence the RWP mainly meant for women's students, aiming to enable the young SCM women to develop critical thinking perspectives and analysis (both socially and theologically) for personal transformation for a liberating experience which inspire them engage in their own communities. The RWP has become a unique space for women to come together to reflect and articulate on their personal experiences together with the experiences of women in general. Therefore, RWP is certainly not aiming for any income generating activities, charitable or welfare activities for the women in need and we should be clear of our understanding on this and decide what kind of programme (women) we need to organize in our SCMs, which is feasible and more effective. She also shared the concerns of reviving, or creating alternative ways to form women caucus for women empowerment, if there is lack of space for women to get-together in a formal structure. Women can develop a network / touch base in each SCM / for get together, Bible Study groups etc.

## **VII. Regional Women's Coordinator's Report and Discussion**

Sunita reported the programmes for the year 2008-2010. She explained that the RWP happens in 3 levels: **i. RWP - SCM Joint Women's Program, ii. Sub Regional Program, iii. Regional Program. (WDT)**. South Asia Sub Regional Women's program was held in 2008, in Dhaka, Bangladesh. It focused on HIV/AIDS, Trafficking, and Poverty. Pre-RCM and South East Asia sub regional program were also held. South East Asia Sub regional Program, focused on the issue of Women and Migration. The WDT workshop 2009 theme was "Women and Identity". The RWP – SCM Myanmar Joint Women's Programme was organized on the theme – "Women and Men in Partnership."

### **Discussion:**

Sunita was asked to share some response from the participants who attended these women's programmes. She said, these RWPs created space for women from Asia and the Pacific and tried to address the concerned issues together with the participants and during the process of all the workshops the participants found it insightful and developed critical thinking and theological perspectives to understand and respond to the women's concerns in general and at an individual level in particular.

Jane asked Sunita to share her own reflection as a women's coordinator and her inspiration. Sunita said, she was happy to be a part of this journey of women's emancipation through WSCF and has learned and unlearned many things from her experiences. She derives her inspiration from the potential leaders, young women/men. However, she is also concerned of the growing demands from the students academically, and otherwise which is creating a gap among women members as well as with the hard realities in our environment and the critical thinking / awareness is declining.

**Decision:** The Regional Women's Coordinator's report was accepted with thanks.

Hong Kong was celebrating the Chinese New Year during the RWC, so the women wanted to go out to experience the joy of celebration by watching the fire works. Therefore the discussion couldn't continue with recommendations and suggestions and postponed the discussions to the next day. Before leaving the women collectively prayed and upheld the people, especially the students and SCMers in Egypt who were participating in the struggle to bring down the dictator regime of Mubarak and restore democracy in the country.

## **2<sup>nd</sup> Day: 5<sup>th</sup> February 2011**

The meeting started with a morning worship by Fanny, Ga-yeon, and Jane.

### **VIII. Review of the RWP, JWP, Sub Regional and National Women's programs through a SWOT Analysis**

#### **Discussion:**

The SWOT analysis was based on the Regional women's programmes, Sub regional Women's programmes, and RWP- SCM Joint women's programmes. Detail of the SWOT analysis is attached in the appendix.

#### **Recommendations:**

- Organize more women's programmes in national levels
- Produce guide book to help the women to develop analytical skills theological perspectives on women's concerns

- Organize Training for Trainers
- Continue to organize the WDT workshop
- Ensure women's full participation through equal participation of women and men in national, and international level
- Expand women's voice, leadership and participation
- In order to reach out to a larger women in an effective manner create a (closed) facebook group to connect with the SCM women in Asia and the Pacific and also conduct Bible studies / discussions through facebook by inviting feminist theologians.

#### **IX. Visioning and programme strategies of the RWP for 2011-2014**

The RWP planning was based on the Vision of the RWP – WSCF AP

#### **Vision**

- WSCF AP women envision to:
- seek for self-liberation and transformation;
- build an inclusive non-violent community,
- break the structures of domination and subordination,
- promote equality and build up women leadership within SCM and the Church.

#### **Programmes for 2011-2012**

The following programmes were proposed to be implemented during the year 2011 under the RWP:

#### **Recommendations/ decisions for the 2011 RWP and other Activities**

- Feb 23-28 RWP – SCM Sri Lanka Joint Women's Program in Sri Lanka
- March 6-10 RWP – SCM Japan/ Student YMCA Mirama program in Japan
- Regional Women's Program – Women Doing Theology (Proposed venue and date: Taiwan, India, Thailand, Hong kong, Date: July or October)

Recommendation of resource person: Wong Waiching (Hongkong), Yong Ting Jin(Malaysia), Monica Melanchthon(India), Nina Nayon (Indonesia), Lydia Tandilrerung (Indonesia), Hope Antone(Philippines, lives in Thailand). It was suggested that inviting the resource persons should depend on the venue, priority should be given for inviting local resource persons. In addition to the resource person, one Regional Women's Committee member also to be part of the programme, priority is based on the sub region where the programme will be held.

#### **Suggested topics were:**

- Re reading the Bible together from Critical Feminist Perspectives
- Eco-Feminism
- Capacity Building Training workshop
  
- Observe International Women's Day (8<sup>th</sup> March or any day of the month March)
- Observe the 16 days activism for International Day for the Elimination of Violence against ( 25<sup>th</sup> November -10<sup>th</sup> December).
- Collect women's stories of violence from different part of Asia and make a video of these stories. Also to enquire & propose UNIFEM for financial support.
  - Peace campaign, Exposure (Related to women issues), Joining other women's groups' activities, Organizing a seminar, or the national movements may decide the activities according to their need and availability.

## **Recommendations / decisions for the 2012 RWP and Activities**

### **Sub-regional women's programs**

Proposed region : i. North East Asia , ii.: Pacific or South East Asia need to be finalised

Proposed venue: Taiwan, Japan, Korea, Hongkong for NEA

Singapore, Thailand, Cambodia for SEA

### **Pre-Women's Meeting**

Venue is the same with the Regional Committee Meeting

## **Recommendation for the 2013-2014 RWP and other Activities**

- **1. Women Doing Theology**
- **2. RWP – SCM Joint Women's Programme**
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## **Budget for the RWP**

## **Discussion:**

Sunita informed that group that every year RWP receives US\$ 15,000 for women's programmes.

However, we're not very sure about the budget from the year 2013.

**Decisions:**

- To strengthen the efforts of fundraising in whatever way possible locally or internationally to continue the RWP, without compromising on the values and ethics of WSCF.

**Recommendations to raise funds in local level:**

- Connection with senior friends(especially women) who are in a position to help us and request them to contribute for specific programmes
- Distribute the piggy banks (saving box) to the SCM women and request them to contribute according to their capacity and that money can be used for the local women's programmes
- Prepare and sell T- shirts, bags, etc

At the end of the meeting Sunita thanked all the members for their contributions and support to continue the RWP and requested Effy and Mani to conclude with a closing worship.

**Recorded by**

**Sunita Suna and Gay eon Lee**

Appendix

	STRENGTH	WEAKNESS	OPPORTUNITIES	THREAT
RWP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-space for women</li> <li>-learning opportunities from many countries, culture, traditions</li> <li>-helps to develop different perspectives from a diverse group</li> <li>-contextual Bible Studies</li> <li>-connect to each other from various traditions as our faith is linked to our daily lives</li> <li>-Theological resources</li> <li>-Cooperation within ecumenical groups</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Logistic-visa problem</li> <li>-Preparation of participants(visa, communication, orientation)</li> <li>-Workload for RW Coordinator</li> <li>-Funding</li> <li>-Limitation to the no. of participants(1 woman from each natl, movements) and time (duration of the prog)</li> <li>-Language</li> <li>-Communication</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Space for women to share stories and struggle</li> <li>-Help to identify problem, causes and be critical</li> <li>-Reread the bible from the Feministic perspectives together</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Finance and funding problem</li> <li>-Missing support and work between the new coordinator and the RWC</li> <li>-Hard to find participants</li> </ul>
Sub RWP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Space for common problems on women's</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Do not have a diverse perspectives so there might be lack of critical</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Interfaith link is possible</li> <li>-Challenge men in the SCMs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Finance and funding problem</li> </ul>

	concerns -Share ideas easily or communication is easy	thinking -preparation of participants -Language	-Build solidarity and network with the secular groups	
JWP	-Strengthen the women's participation in national movements -Collaboration with other organization -Less preparation for participation -Ownership of the programs -Language	-Do not have a diverse perspectives so there might be lack of critical thinking	-Participation of men -Energize, empower of national movements -Network with other likeminded groups/secular organizations	- Participation of men

## **Report of the Regional Women's Coordinator**

### **20<sup>th</sup> Regional Women's Committee Meeting**

**February 3-6, 2011, Hong Kong**

### **Regional Women's Programme 2009**

The objectives of the Regional Women's Programme (RWP) for 2009 were:

1. To initiate a process for young women leaders of SCM to articulate their life experiences, struggles, challenges with critical analysis
2. To create awareness of the social, political, cultural and religious implications on women's identity in their own contexts.
3. To re-define a woman's identity and reclaim self as subject, self towards liberation and transformation through A Critical Feminist Hermeneutics of Liberation.
4. To re-read the Bible together as young women centred on the focus/theme from critical feminist perspectives.

5. To promote and practice “Doing Critical Feminist Liberation Theology” in SCMs on all levels as well as in Asia and the Pacific.
6. To form a working group with a two-fold aim of i) making a critical evaluation of the significance of the ongoing “Women Doing Theology” programme of WSCF AP; and ii) coming up with a guide book for the National Movements to encourage and enable the young women and men to promote “Doing Critical Feminist Theology” in the SCMs.

In the Year 2009, the Regional Women’s Programme initiated one sub regional workshop, one regional workshop and the Regional Women’s Committee to execute our vision and goals.

**A. Workshop on Feminist Critical Analysis through Re reading the Bible from the Feminist Perspectives, March 11-13, 2009, Bangkok, Thailand**

**Goals:**

- i. To enable the women members to develop perspectives and guide them to envision the future women’s programmes of WSCF AP
- ii. To enable the women members to develop feminist critical analysis framework, and looking at gender for the purpose of going beyond gender analysis
- iii. To study Bible by using critical feminist hermeneutics

This workshop was held from March 11-13, 2009 at the Bangkok Christian Guest house just before the WSCF AP Regional Women’s Committee (RWC) Meeting. The representatives of the RWC from South Asia, East Asia and Pacific were the participants of this workshop. The intention of this workshop was to help the members develop perspectives and guide them to envision the future Women’s Programme of WSCF AP. The contents of the workshop were: forming perspectives and develop feminist critical analysis framework, and looking at gender for the purpose of going beyond gender analysis etc. Bible studies were done using critical feminist hermeneutics. Yong Ting Jin, a feminist theologian from Malaysia was there to facilitate these sessions.

All the sessions were conducted through various exercises and active participation of the group. The participants were able to identify the issues/problems and root causes of violence against women when they did an analysis of stories on VAW depicted in the news papers. They realized the need to develop a tool of analysis which is more wholistic, going beyond gender analysis and include the intersectionality problem while doing the critical feminist analysis.

There were two Bible studies conducted on the texts Luke 10:38-42, and Mark 5:21-43. The method of reading the Bible together was quite insightful to discover the important roles of Mary and Martha in Jesus' movement and their leadership roles in the House Churches. Even in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Bible Study it was an eye opening to read the text from the perspective of the hemorrhage woman and understand the relations of power and authority. The group realized that our mindset or frame of thinking is also based on patriarchy and androcentrism. Hence it is important to develop the critical feminist analysis an alternative analysis for liberation and transformation of "self" and society/structure.

## **B. 19<sup>th</sup> Regional Women's Committee of WSCF AP Region, March 14-15, 2009,**

### **Bangkok, Thailand**

#### **Goals:**

- i. To share the on going activities on women's concerns in the WSCF AP region and critical analysis of the women's issues
- ii. To review the Regional Women's Programmes and National Women's programme from 2007-2008
- iii. To envision and planning for the RWP for 2009-2012
- iv. To evaluate the work of the Regional Women's Coordinator of WSCF AP
- v. To work on budget for 2009-2012

The 19<sup>th</sup> Regional Women's Committee (RWC) met on 14-15, March 2009 at the Bangkok Christian Guest House, Bangkok, Thailand. The Regional Women's Committee is the decision making body of the Regional Women's programme, comprising of six women. The committee meet once in two years to concrete plans for the Regional Women's Program in the new quadrennium; evaluate the program and the work being done; implement concrete plans; drawing up specific plans for program implementation,. The following members attended the RWC. Ashani Rodha John – Sri Lanka-South Asia Representative, Bronwyn Crowe- Australia – Ex Co of WSCF AP and Pacific Representative, Cha Eun Hye- South Korea – North East Asia Representative, Poon Wan Yu- Hong Kong – Standing Committee Member at large and North East Asia Representative, Sunita Suna – India (Regional Women's Coordinator) Yong Ting Jin – Malaysia (Observer), Janejinda Pawadee – Thailand (Vice Chair – WSCF Global Ex Co -Observer), Necta Montes Rocas – Philippines (Regional Secretary)

The evaluation and analysis of the ongoing programmes helped the committee to envision the thrust and direction of the future women's programme as follows:

The WSCF- AP and SCM women strive to :

- seek for self-liberation and transformation;
- build an inclusive non-violent community,
- break the structures of domination and subordination,
- promote equality and build up women leadership within SCM and the Church

The RWC planned the women's programmes for the next quadrennium 2009-2012 based on the vision, direction and thrust. In addition to the above mentioned activities the RWC also did the evaluation of the Regional Women's Coordinator based on her report and personal reflection and recommended the Standing Committee to renew the contract of the Regional Women's Coordinator for another term.

### **C. Women Doing Theology Workshop on the theme Women and Identity , November 14-22, 2009, Jakarta, Indonesia**

#### **Goals:**

1. To initiate a process for young women leaders of SCM to articulate their life experiences, struggles, challenges with critical analysis in relation to the workshop focus/theme.
2. To create awareness of the social, political, cultural and religious implications on women's identity in the Indonesian context.
3. To re-define a woman's identity and reclaim self as subject self towards liberation and transformation through A Critical Feminist Hermeneutics of Liberation.
4. To re-read the Bible together as young women centred on the focus/theme from critical feminist perspectives.
5. To promote and practice "Doing Critical Feminist Liberation Theology" in SCMs on all levels as well as in Asia and the Pacific.  
To form a working group with a two-fold aim of i) making a critical evaluation of the significance of the ongoing "Women Doing Theology" programme of WSCF AP; and ii) coming up with a guide book for the National Movements to encourage and enable the young women and men to promote "Doing Critical Feminist Theology" in the SCMs.

The Women Doing Theology Workshop was held from November 14-22, 2009 in Jakarta, Indonesia on the theme "Women and Identity". 18 young women from Asia and the Pacific participated in the said workshop, representing the national movements of **Australia, Cambodia, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Myanmar, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Timor Leste and Thailand.**

The 9 days workshop focused on the general and broad theme “Women’s Liberation and Transformation” with a specific focus on the concern of “Women and Identity”. This theme/focus was recommended by the Regional Women’s Committee (RWC) after a deep reflection on the issue of women leadership in SCMs, followed by a critical feminist analysis on the issues/concerns of women in SCM, Church and Society during the RWC meeting in Bangkok 2009. The Committee strongly felt that we must address the issue of women’s liberation and transformation among ourselves as SCM women who struggle also for emancipation, equality, justice and peace in church and society.

The process and methodology of the workshop was based on the steps/tools of a critical feminist hermeneutics of liberation in the following components:

- Using feminist critical analysis, participants shared Her Story of their life experiences, struggles, challenges as women in their own context.
- Thematic inputs by the resource persons on:
  - Women’s Identity in Islam
  - Socio-political, cultural and religious implications on women’s identity in Indonesian context;
  - Doing Critical Feminist Liberation Theology and A Critical Feminist Hermeneutics of Liberation.
  - Re-reading selected Biblical texts using critical feminist hermeneutics.
- Exposure to the local communities to understand and experience the struggles and challenges of women in Indonesian context.
- Prepare feminist liturgies and conduct creative worship by the participants around the theme of the workshop.

The following resource persons were present to facilitate the whole process:

**Amina Wadud** – Islamic feminist and scholar, currently a visiting professor at the Center for Religious and Cross Cultural Studies at Gadjah Mada University in Yogyakarta, Indonesia

**Anna Marsiana** – Coordinator of Asian Women’s Resource Centre for Culture and Theology (AWRC), Yogyakarta, Indonesia

**Yong Ting Jin** - Feminist Theologian and former coordinator of (AWRC) Malaysia

**Nina Nayon** – the former regional women’s committee member and intern of FIM from 2007-2009, Timor Leste

**Sunita Suna** - Regional Women’s Coordinator of WSCF-AP, Hong Kong, and the coordinator of this WDT workshop.

The workshop started with an opening Worship. The worship was prepared based on the theme “women and identity” led by Nina Nayoan followed by a series of community building activities conducted by Sunita Suna

### **Sharing of Her Story**

Sharing of Her Story was an essential process of the WDT workshop as feminist theology begins with our lives, our stories and struggles. This was a space for the women to share and listen to each others life story as we engaged in doing theology. Sharing of Her Story initiated a process of storytelling on women and identity and enabled them to articulate and critically analyzed their own life story to understand and reclaim their identity. The critical analysis of their own story led them to identify the factors which are the stumbling blocks in reclaiming their identity. This process helped the group to realize that though the struggle for women’s emancipation is common, but the struggles and challenges women are confronted in their lives are diverse and multifaceted. Therefore, SCM women must be encouraged to tell their stories and sharing Her Story was the basis to set tune for the rest of the process in the workshop.

### **Re-reading selected Biblical texts using critical feminist hermeneutics**

Luke 10:38-42 – who is Mary? Who is Martha?

Ting Jin explained that the text shows many struggles and questions in the first Christian communities that there are 2 types of ministry, namely “teaching” and “diakonia”. this text is a result of the struggle, which the term integrated “diakonia” was separated into two models of ministry, namely teaching and “diakonia” as narrowly defined into “serving”. The one integral meaning, role and praxis of “diakonia” were “eucharistic table service, proclamation, and ecclesial leadership”. Martha and Mary were both prominent leaders of the Jesus movement and community. In view of the above critical study of the text, each reader as a subject self is asked what has been oppressive, negative and inhibiting? What has been liberating, empowering and transforming based on one’s experience of struggle for change, liberation and transformation?

### **Four Biblical Paradigms/models: A theoretical framework to look at the Bible**

**Tingjin explained the following 4 paradigms:**

- 1. Doctrinal-Revelatory Paradigm**
- 2. Scientific-Positivist Paradigm**
- 3. Hermeneutic-Cultural Paradigm**

#### 4. Rhetorical-Emancipatory Paradigm

**Women's Identity in Islam** was facilitated by the Islamic feminist **Amina Wadud**. This session was more of dialogue with the resource person. The group discussed about polygamy, Sharia law, women religious leaders in Islamic community, the struggle and obstacles for gender justice etc. She explained to the group that there are no roles designated for women in the Qur'an except **khalifah** (a **khalifah** is one who is a trustee of Allah). Women and men are created to serve Allah, each other and the creation as agents or trustees of God.

As a moral relationship: everything that enhances fulfilling that **khilafah** is encouraged everything that limits fulfilling that **khilafah** is discouraged. The most noble of you in the sight of God is the one with the most **taqwa**. **Taqwa** is a moral spiritual term that carries the dimension of awareness and remembrance of Allah, action, transparency in actions, moral responsibility. The **Qur'anic Models** Eve: Hawa'a, Aasiyah, Bilqis: leadership, Maryam: mother of Jesus.

It was also interesting to know that when she explained, in Quran its mentioned that both Adam and Eve are responsible for disobeying God. This helped to rethink how Christianity has created the image of Eve as a sinner. She said, Gender relations are prescribed and promoted in families. Gender asymmetry has been a major part of human culture and history. She said, Muslim women in every country, every economic class, every level of education, every spiritual inclination are engaged in transforming life for the betterment of all humankind.

**Socio-political, cultural and religious implications on women's identity in Indonesian context** was facilitated by **Anna Marsiana**. Anna tried to give a general picture of the status of women in Indonesia. She said, Indonesia is declared as a Muslim state and the religious laws/family laws are implemented faithfully which are often biased against women. Indonesian society is highly patriarchal and man is the decision maker for everything including what kind of clothes women should wear. Women have a secondary status in the socio, political field and women are more vulnerable economically. Many young women are forced to migrate to other countries as domestic workers.

It is a challenge to talk about religious and cultural implications against women within the community, because the laws are accepted within the religion and the oppression and exploitation is carried out in the name of religion. So there is a small room to talk against the laws and its quite challenging to bring awareness within the Indonesian community. Yet, there are women's groups and social movements trying hard to make people

understand and change the mindset of the people, and the good thing is gradually changes are happening.

**Exposure:** the participants were divided into 2 groups to visit the communities. Group 1. visited to the **National Commission on Violence against Women, Migrant Care, and Association of Migrant Workers** . They met and interacted with the women domestic migrant workers, heard their painful stories as well as courageous stories of their life experiences when they lived in a strange/ foreign land. Some of them were raped, sexually abused, and exploited by their employers, even some of their friends are being killed. But the government does not help or has not taken any serious action against the violence occurring to the women. The group was able to analyse the issue as a power game and political abuse for economic reasons. Indonesia is one of the largest exporters (sending countries) of domestic workers in South East Asia. The government is definitely benefiting by the remittance, hence the government is promoting the labor export policy. On the other hand majority of the Indonesian women do not have any choice, but migrate to other countries for survival of their families back home.

The National Commission on Violence against Women, Migrant Care, and Association of Migrant Workers are providing shelter, legal support to the women and advocating against the labor export policy.

Group 2. Visited **Indonesian Conference on Religion and Peace(ICRP) and the Islamic college of Nurul Kasyat – the Pesantren putri (boarding school for females)**. The group met with ICRP they explained that more then 80% of the total population in Indonesia are Muslim, hence Islam and religious laws plays a significant role in the country. The government has declared Indonesia a Muslim state and has literally imposed on citizens to identify themselves by a religion. It is mandatory for every citizen to mention religion in their ID cards. The Sharia Islamic law is biased against women and women’s identity has to be identified with a male member of the family. Motherhood is a strong part of identity among Muslim women in Indonesian community. The issue of polygamy is having a significant influence on women and affecting them socially, politically, economically. The laws are sanctioned by the religion, and imposed on women in the name of religion.

Visiting the 2<sup>nd</sup> place the Islamic college of Nurul Kasyat – the Pesantren putri (boarding school for females) was very meaningful and related to the theme “women and identity” of the workshop. They women students study religion – Islam, but they cannot become the leader or Ulema. The female students have no choice and freedom what they want or how they decide for their own life. The authority of the boarding school will decide and determine their life. In the name of religion, the school will control, and shape their identity how Muslim women should be.

**Systemic Analysis or a Critical Feminist Analysis** was facilitated by Tingjin. She said, **Story telling** need to interpret experiences / stories. our stories/Life experiences are shaped by social, cultural, religious locations and constructions.

**Social Location and Domination-Subordination Analysis:** It is important to analyse, examine our own social location and participation in the power relation of domination and subordination. become conscious of how our experiences are constructed by you yourself / we our selves and construct your/ our self identity in terms of gender, race, ethnicity, culture, religion, age, class, sexuality, nationality/ nation, colonialism, education, state, social status, health, geographical location.

Social location group categories / systems and structures – interfere/ interact / multiply each other in different situation, context etc. by these and through these categories women are assigned identities, women and individuals are defined, determined, constructed, which are not voluntary. Social, cultural and religious location has shaped our life experience. All are social, cultural and religious construction. She challenged us to ask ourselves who am I? What am I? Who defines my social location? In whose interest within the structures/system? Who does it function /work?

**Reclaiming self as a subject within the Ekklesia of Wo/men.** Tingjin said our own self is a constructed self, a lot of self denial, self hate and self alienation. We need to reclaim and re affirm our own self as subject. Love of self – as a subject, meaning we must have faith in our own self. Self love, self realization, self- affirmation and reclaim self as a subject. At the end of the session Tingjin asked every one to make a paper bird and write down there how are we going to determine our identity, and how are going to affirm our own self as subject as an act of commitment.

### **Reflection and Evaluation**

The RWP in 2009 has certainly provided opportunity to young women by creating unique space for them. These workshops have challenged, motivated, empowered and transformed the young women. Sharing their stories made them empowered to love themselves, love friends, and love neighbors. This space has made them realized that the Bible can be re read, which is liberating and their faith conviction has enabled them to accept that women are created in the image of God, and there should not be any violence against women. They have determined to fight for their own rights and fight for the rights of the women who are oppressed and exploited. Some of the delegates shared their feelings that this space is sacred and we develop the courage to share, to listen and learn from each other – that made us feel great and powerful. They were able to do the analysis of their own life stories, and were able to identify the stumbling blocks in the path of liberation and transformation. Re reading

Biblical texts using critical feminist hermeneutics helped them to be critical and Rhetorical-Emancipatory biblical Paradigm has opened their mindset to read Bible as a subject and affirm self as subject against structure of domination and subordination.

The evaluation process of each women's programmes happens in 2 levels.

1) At the end of the programme there was an Individual written evaluation where each one of them have given feed back of the programme. There was also group dynamics where participants came up with different action plans to initiate the activities in local level according to the context and situation in their countries.

2) In the second part this programme will also be reviewed and evaluated by the Regional Women's Committee – which is a committee of 5 young women representing South Asia, South East Asia, North East Asia and the pacific based on the report by the Regional Women's Coordinator

The committee is in the process to come up with the guide book of the Women Doing Theology for the women leaders in the national movements. This guide book would help them to continue the follow up work and promote WDT

### **Regional Women's Programme 2010**

The objectives of the Regional Women's Programme (RWP) for 2010 were:

- 1.To initiate a process for young women leaders of SCM to articulate their life experiences, struggles, challenges with critical analysis
  - 2.To create a deeper understanding of gender and develop skills through gender analysis workshops/ sessions.
  - 3.To enable participants to realize that all gender awareness and analysis must lead to equal representation of men and women in the SCMs and in the Federation as a whole.
  - 4.To challenge and transform attitudes, structures and system in Church that limit women's participation and leadership.
  - 5.To re-read the Bible together as young women centred on the focus/theme from critical feminist perspectives and partnership
  - 6.To facilitate the development of strategies and plans for gender justice and women-men partnership works in the SCMs.
  - 7.To experience the realities of women in different context and strengthen the women's struggles by joining in advocacy programme through exposure
- In the Year 2010, the Regional Women's Programme initiated 3 Joint Women's Programmes in the national movements, and the Regional Women's meeting to execute our vision and goals.

#### **A. i. Regional Women's Programme – SCM Myanmar Joint Women's**

**Programme (RWPJWP) June 22-26, 2010, Yangon, Myanmar,  
Women and Men in Partnership for empowerment in the Challenging  
World**

**Goals:**

- i. To empower young women and men for ecumenical leadership in their communities
- ii. To develop biblical and theological reflections from feminist perspectives and partnership
- ii. To encourage and promote partnership of women and men to respect God's creation,
- iii. To reflect and respond on contemporary women issues.

The RWP-JWP was organized by the SCM Myanmar on the theme "Women and Men in Partnership for empowerment in the Challenging World". The programme was held from June 22-26, 2010 at the Myanmar Council of Churches. Around 40 women and men student members attended the programme from different branches of SCM Myanmar.

The content of the 5 days programme were consist **of Bible studies from feminist perspectives and partnership, understanding SCM & Ecumenism , Women and Men's identity in the Challenging world, Partnership for Empowerment, Challenges of Women in different leadership Positions**

Nan Phyu Phyu Lin , Kaythi Min Din, Yin Yin Maw, Sunita Suna, Tun Tun and Chaw Chaw were there to facilitate the sessions.

Nan Phyu Phyu Lin from Care International, conducted the session on partnership for empowerment through various community based games. Her games and different exercises helped the participants to understand the existing discrimination between women and men in different institutions and communities. During her session she made them realize that the role of partnership is significant in order to continue our work especially within SCM and in the local community.

Yin Yin Maw from the women's department of the Anglican Church, and the chair person of the MCC, and the former chair person of the WSCF AP shared her challenges in these positions as a woman. Chaw Chaw from the anti trafficking department of the UN in Myanmar also shared her challenges in her position as the director. They tried to explain that though women are in the higher positions they still confront with the discrimination within the working places.

Sunita Suna the regional women's coordinator of the WSCF AP facilitated the session on Women and Men's identity in the Challenging world. She conducted various games and exercise to understand how we have become woman and man. How the role of gender roles and the social construction has shaped us to be a woman and man and set expectations by the society. She also explained how we can go beyond gender and understand the dynamics of our various identities based on our social locations and power relations and the need and importance of the model of partnership within SCMs.

Beside these sessions there were bible studies from the feminist perspectives and partnership and reflections on SCM and Ecumenism.

**i. Regional Women's Programme – SCM Sri Lanka Joint Women's Programme (RWP-JWP)**

**iii Regional Women's Programme – SCM Thailand Joint Women's Programme (RWP-JWP)**

**iv Regional Women's Programme – SCM Japan Joint Women's Programme (RWP-JWP)**

**Theme:** Women Doing Theology on Feminist Critical Analysis through Re reading the Bible from the Feminist Perspectives

**Goals:**

1. To form perspectives and develop feminist critical analysis framework to understand women's oppression
2. To understand gender for the purpose of going beyond gender analysis
3. To re-read the Bible together as young women centred on the focus/theme from critical feminist perspectives.
4. To promote and practice "Doing Critical Feminist Liberation Theology" in SCMs

*NB: The RWP – SCM Joint women's programmes in Sri Lanka, Thailand and Japan were scheduled to be held in the year 2010. Due to some practical difficulties in the region and national movements the scheduled programme is proposed to be held in 2011. ( Sri Lanka – February, Japan - March, Thailand – May)*

**B. 19<sup>th</sup> Regional Pre Women's Meeting, July 18-21, 2010, Manado, Indonesia**

## **Theme: Renewing the Earth: Climate Justice and Equity - Feminist perspectives**

### **Goals:**

1. To understand the historical significance of the women leadership within the WSCF Asia Pacific region and the federation as a whole and the importance of the Regional Women's Programme
2. To do theological reflection on the theme
3. To share and reflect of the National Women's Programme by the members
4. To evaluate and re visioning the Regional Women's Programme
5. To discuss the challenges and promote women leadership in SCMs and in the Ecumenical movement
6. To Select / elect the Regional Women's Committee members for the biennial (2010-2012)

The 19<sup>th</sup> Pre Women's Meeting was held from July 18-21, at the Yuta Hotel, Manado, Indonesia, prior to the Regional Committee Meeting (RCM). 15 young women delegates of the RCM representing their national SCMs of *Australia, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, Pakistan Philippines, Taiwan, and Thailand* attended the meeting.

The pre women's meeting was a space for the SCM women to get to know each other, their activities in SCMs for the women's concerns, their challenges for and in the leadership roles within SCMs in order to promote women leadership and women's concerns for women's emancipation for themselves and women in general in a wider community.

The delegates shared and analyzed the national women's programmes and various activities initiated by the women's groups/members in the national SCMs. The issues and challenges were identical especially in the sub regions and in Asia overall, which helped the group to related easily and analyze them from their own contexts. Some of the similar issues/ challenges SCM women and especially women in Asia experiencing are: *Patriarchy and hierarchy, Gender stereotype, Religion, culture, tradition which is biased against women, Women as cheap labor, Migration, trafficking – a global concern, as most of the women are forced to migrate due to the unjust economic system, System of discrimination/ oppression paving the way to sex industry,, Domestic violence, sexual harassment, incest, drug addiction etc.*

The analysis also helped the group to introspect, and share the concern that the women's programs/activities are declining in the national movements due

to lack of staff in the national movements to carryout/facilitate the women's programmes. More concerns were shared as the national movements are not prioritizing women's issue and concerns in the local SCMs and there is lack of feminist theology/ perspectives among the SCMs. After having a deep reflection and analysis the group proposed programmes for 2011-2012 to initiate more women's programmes in national level on Women empowerment training, workshop on feminist theology, women's programmes for both women and men on partnership, More critical analysis of global concerns like migration, trafficking, Marriage migration and gender, Critical analysis of the root causes of the VAW and organize open discussion – within SCM/ like minded organizations and involve in awareness campaign on VAW through participation in forums.

The pre women's meeting was also a place for us to develop theological reflections on the theme from the feminist perspectives. Dr. Hope S. Antone, the Executive Secretary for Faith Mission and Unity (FMU), from Christian Conference of Asia conducted bible studies based on the Biblical text Genesis chapter 1 by using ecofeminism as lens. Dr. Hope's bible studies helped us to understand ecofeminism, the greater involvement and participation of women's movement across the globe to protect and taking care of the mother earth and how women and nature are interconnected. She said that the link between women and nature is *empowering*: with their positions as mothers and homemakers, they are more likely to be more environmentally aware and this idea is embraced. And link between women and nature is *degrading*: imposed by patriarchy; men will continue to exploit women and nature – seeing both as eternally fertile and for providing life. The theological reflection helped us to affirm that we are part of the creation and we must be taking the role of stewardship to protect God's creation instead of controlling and exploiting God's creation.

At the end of the pre women's meeting the following members were selected as the representatives for the Regional Women's Committee for the year 2011-2012

**Selfitriani Kula** – South East Asia – SCM Indonesia,

**Misato Sasaki** – North East Asia – SCM Japan,

**Bronwyn Crow** – (ex co) Pacific – SCM Australia,

**Mani Mandol** - South Asia - SCM Bangladesh

**Ga-yeon, Lee** - Member at large – SCM Korea,

**Regional Women's Coordinator** (ex officio)

### **Reflection and Evaluation**

This project of the Regional Women's Programme has empowered not only women but also men from the local SCMs through the women and men in partnership programme. In Myanmar context its not only women who are oppressed but at the same time men are also oppressed under the military junta. Therefore, this space was unique and significant in Myanmar's context to bring both women and men for this programme. The people in Myanmar do not have freedom even to express their thoughts and mobilize people for a greater cause. This JWP was also a platform for the different ethnic communities to come together and learn to accept the differences and break the prejudices of the differences of the diverse ethnic group. Though the JWP was a small space to bring the young women and men together to talk and discuss about the problem they are struggling with had a great impact in the lives of the participants. The 19<sup>th</sup> Regional Women's Meeting brought the young women from different Asian countries. This was a place to understand the women's concerns in different context and learn from the different cultural contexts.

The evaluation process of each women's programmes happens in 2 levels.

1) At the end of the programme there was an Individual reflection of evaluation where each one of them have given feed back of the programme. There was also group dynamics where participants came up with different action plans to initiate the activities in local level according to the context and situation in their countries.

2) In the second part this programme will also be reviewed and evaluated by the Regional Women's Committee – which is a committee of 5 young women representing South Asia, South East Asia, North East Asia and the pacific based on the report by the Regional Women's Coordinator.

### **Programmes and conferences attended and space created for young SCM women**

#### **Celebrating Life: Women Prophets, Healers and Reconcilers**

The Women's Pre-Assembly of the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) was held on the above said theme from April 10-13, 2010 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. More then 60 women and few men from Asia and the Pacific representing the churches and ecumenical organizations participated the event. The pre assembly was intent to promote wider participation of women Church leaders in the decision making process of CCA in its ecumenical pilgrimage. This event was also aimed to strengthen Asian Ecumenical Movements to promote gender justice in Church and Society and also to recognize the prophetic voices of Asian women in building communities of peace.

There were participatory Bible studies, plenary, workshops to share and listen our stories as women and articulate and interpret for empowerment. The powerful stories from the women leaders who are not only challenging the hierarchical structure within the Church but also fighting against the oppressive military government for democratization were empowering. The struggle to create an inclusive community also challenged the men – how they can be genuine partners with women in building inclusive communities of peace. During the sharing and dialogue the women also realized and recommend that churches must come forward to address the issue of violence against women in a more meaningful way. One of the recommendations to CCA in the statement was to create and adopt policy against sexual harassment and encourage the churches to do so.

Overall, the pre women's assembly was a time of fellowship and celebration, and a place to share and to listen stories of women as prophets, healers and reconcilers. Thanks to CCA especially to Moumita Biswas the executive secretary, EGY for creating this unique space and bringing together the women from different parts of Asia.

### **Coordinating Team Members (CTM) Meeting of the Asian Women's Resource Centre**

#### **for Culture and Theology (AWRC)**

The Coordinating Team Members (CTM) meeting took place in Jogjakarta, Indonesia, from May 17-21, 2010. The CTM is the policy/ decision making body, which acts as the executive committee of the organization and meets once a year. This meeting was attended by the following members from different organizations in Asia:

Hope S. Antone, Hisako Kinukawa, Yong Ting Jin, Anna Marsiana, Iswanti Suparma, Liza B. Lamis, Chung Sook Ja, Anshi Zachariah, and Sunita Suna.

The five days meeting was planned to share, discuss, review/evaluate, plan of the ongoing activities of the AWRC. Reports were shared by the coordinators, working groups, publications secretary of the continuing activities of the AWRC. Sunita Suna briefly shared about the Regional Women's Programs of WSCF AP (*The WSCF AP and AWRC have a historical significance of working together. The Regional Women's Coordinator of WSCF AP region is co-opted as voting member of the CTM*)

The members tried to reflect, review, evaluate the activities of the AWRC. While upholding many positive outcome of the activities of AWRC like the regular publications of the journal In God's Image and other module books and programmes on Young Women Doing Theology has enriched the Asian women in different ways. At the same time the organization also confront many

challenges and one of the major challenges is to sustain the financial support for the proposed activities. After a lot of reflection and thoughts the members were able to plan for the programme and proposed a budget for the year 2011-2013.

The CTM also selected the following members for the Working Group Committee to work closely with AWRC: Hisako Kinukawa, Yong Ting Jin, Iswanti, Anna Marsiana.

During the CTM the members also remembered Malini Devananda, a feminist theologian from Sri Lanka, who was the member of CTM and WG recalling her legacy.

### **Scholarship for Women Students in Ewha Graduate School of Theology (EGST), Seoul, South Korea**

I am happy to inform you that Ms. Daisy Roy from SCM Bangladesh and Ms. Milka Hanook from SCM Pakistan who are being selected by the EGST for full scholarship to study Masters of Theology in EGST. EGST has been one of the best theological institutions for Korean and Asian Christian women. Ewha faculty members have strong academic commitment to develop theological study and practice from Asian feminist perspectives. EGST also has strong networks with other Asian theological associations and feminist organizations. Ewha graduates have contributed to women's humanization and liberation, and

promoted ecclesiastical and social transformation in Korea, Asia and the world. Daisy and Milka is in EGST since 24th February 2010.

### **United Nations Commission on the Status of Women**

This year the 54th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) was held on 1st March to 12th March 2010 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. The CSW focused on reviewing

the Beijing Declaration on and Platform for Action, which was adopted 15 years ago with the support of 40,000 women. Around 8500 women and men from the NGOs, civil societies, faith based groups, students, youth, government officials participated in the said event. Monika Biswas, from SCM Bangladesh attended the event and represent WSCF Asia Pacific.

**Sunita Suna**  
**Regional Women's Coordinator**  
**WSCF AP**



Pictures of the RWC members during the RWC activities.....

