

Beijing Conference Experience

The NGO Forum on Women 95 held in Huairou, China from 30 August to 8 September 1995 was extraordinary and memorable event in my life. I consider myself lucky to be with 30,000 women, men and children and listen to distinguished women like Helvi Sipilä, Secretary General of Women's Year 1975, Irene M Satiago, Executive Director, NGO Forum 1995, Getrude Mongella, Secretary General UN Fourth World Conference on women, Kuninjing Supatra Masdit and many other wonderful people from all over the world. It was also frustrating moment when I could not enter into the Hall to listen Hillary Rodham Clinton, then First Lady of the USA, her plan for future after queuing hours in the rain.

In this extraordinary event I represented International Federation of University Women (IFUW) as a panelist in the discussion on Higher Education and Women –The curriculum, Access and Discrimination in conjunction with UNESCO, Paris. In this connection, when I entered room No. 12-M67 at Hoairou NGO forum on 03-09-95, I was little nervous, as it was my first opportunity to be with international community. My nervousness turn into fruitful discussion as I found everybody was there with same vision and determination to empower women and change world order. IFUW conducted many workshops during the event covering wide aspects related to improvement of women and girl child, which were well received.

During the weeklong event, I had opportunity to share my viewpoint on women education, the field in which I have been involved for last 35 years as Tribhuvan University teacher. I had also rare opportunity to listen to so many men, women and youths from various backgrounds- religions, languages and races. Rain, hunger, thirst, religion, age, language, geographical backgrounds, it seems, nothing prevent participants to present more than 5,000 activities to provide valuable inputs to formulate future plan of action for human development everywhere.

When I saw circulation for writing memories of Beijing 95, I reflected myself to where is the world today. Is it little better, now? My feeling is mixed. Yes, in my own country, high-level women commission was formed. Many gender-related issues were addressed in policy level according to CEDAW. But, what about those women who have never heard about that wonderful conference and never felt impact in their lives in spite of Beijing Plan of Action. I wonder whether all those plan and policy still hidden in bundle of paper when I think poor women are still trapped in vicious circle of poverty and insecurity in life./.

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