

SP Youth Group Meeting in Srinagar, Kashmir, 11 June 2014



SP Youth Group Meeting in Srinagar, Kashmir, 11 June 2014 with Rajiv Vora took up two issues: 1) monitoring the difference in the reports on Kashmir in major Indian print and electronic media; and, 2) To study and take up the issue of domestic violence on women and differential treatment meted out to women employees, such as low salary for the same work and same qualification. (see SP Statement on Domestic Violence on Women in J&K)

Each one of the Srinagar group is a person of standing in his /her own right as an activist leader, journalist, editor, and head of young journalist association, writer, women activist and social worker. With three new members these times, two women-one a poet- and one man, the group is now more than twenty, out of which 16 attended a half-a -day meeting at Chinar Bagh. Shri Mushtaq Ul Haq Sikandar and Shri Rameez Makhdoomi coordinated the meeting. Both have been responsible for putting this group together and keep adding into it with care.



Why Media Monitoring: The group is deeply concerned about Indian people's unbiased view on J&K. They feel people in rest of the country are fairly mis or ill informed about happenings in J&K and therefore the Indian public opinion about the people of Kashmir is highly biased and captive of stereotypes carry the image of the one-sided past. Even Swaaj Peeth's Statement on Gandhian Initiative in J&K note right in the beginning "We must note that on visiting J&K one realizes that the ideas one had about the situation in J&K prior to the visits are too inadequate for holding any reasonable or responsible view, much less for any judgment...." The idea of conducting a Media Monitoring came from the reporting of the death of a young man in Srinagar by a bullet from the security forces during recent Parliamentary Elections in J&K. A major national English paper from Delhi reported that he was fired at because he was carrying a gun, while Kashmir based Greater Kashmir and Kashmir Times reports did not mention he was carrying any gun at all! The boy, a carpenter, came out in the open street to relax after a daylong renovation of his house for his sister's wedding ceremony a few days ahead. We double checked with our contacts in Srinagar and found the celebrated 'National' daily's news not only false but



most damaging. The next day we checked eleven major English news papers from Delhi and from different parts of the country, including Hindi. Out of eleven that we checked, except for a story on Elections in Kashmir by Sankarsan Thakur in The Telegraph of Kolkata, which did not at all mentioned the boy having a gun, rest of the papers had small news with varied versions or no news at all.

The youth group, many of them journalists, writers and scholars, thought it was their duty to see how much and what type of wrong, biased and ill-informed journalism is involved in presenting J&K to Indian people.

Follow- Up:

SP-Srinagar Chapter held its Meeting on 5 July 2014 in Srinagar under the coordination of Rameez Makhdoomi & Mushtaq ul Haq Ahmad Sikander. Shabir Ahmad, Saimah Shah, Kaiser Mir, Mariya Mushtaq, Tabzeer Yaseen, Suhail A.Khan , Adil Ahmad, Kousar Jan participated. The issue of Media Monitoring, and burning issues of women were taken up and tasks and responsibilities were distributed accordingly among all the members of the group. Among 3 women and 9 men, they decided to monitor, initially as a test case for 3 months 15 major English and three Urdu news papers; 5 major magazines and 4 major news channels. They are:

Daily News Papers: Asian Age, Times of India , The Hindu, Hindustan Times, Economic Times, Mid Day, The Statesman Urdu Newspapers, Tribune, The Telegraph, DNA, Deccan Herald, Pioneer, Mint

Magazines: Caravan, The Week Magazine, India Today, Tehelka, The Outlook

TV News Channels: Times Now. NDTV. CNN IBN , Aaj Tak

The Sprit of the Meeting:

Miss Mariya Mushtaq, a bright, articulate post graduate student of literature at the Kashmir University came to the Swaraj Peeth youth group meeting in Srinagar on 12th June.(she was here on 5th July too) For her it was the first time experience. She writes poetry and gets published. She wrote the following after attending the youth meeting on 12th June:

Where the Minds Met

It was a meet where the minds met,

Concepts were brought to the light..

A flight made to escape the narrowness..

Think out of box..

Broaden the sight...

Though strangers

We were seated together,

Still we belonged to the one cause...

*Tried to explore what is kept hidden..
Without breaking the so called laws..
The fire was put into the souls,
Which dreamt to imagine a free world..*

Where

*Oneness matters like life..
Not fame, rules or the gold...*

We talked...

Laughed ...

Shared happiness..

Started a journey

To bring a morn..

In the glory of which

*The truth would be seen.. And,
Humanity will be saved, not Torn..*
