Chapter 5

Feminist movements and the state: Countervailing forces?

“We commit ourselves to creating an economic, political, social cultural and legal environment that will enable people to achieve social development.”

Introduction

The changed context since 1995, post the World Summit on Social Development and the 4th World Conference on Women in Beijing requires a critical analysis of what has happened to the women's and feminist movements. Indeed, in the wake of these conferences questions are being asked about the differences that exist between the feminist movement, women's movement and social movement activism. Further, there is growing debate on the extent to which the limited gains achieved, in the struggle for gender equality, have been reversed by both economic and other forms of fundamentalism in national and regional contexts. Moreover, the multiple and diverse relationships women of the south have with state and civil society organisations, it is argued, diffuses their impact in consolidating and advancing the social transformation agenda.

In this chapter, feminists of the south, engage in critical analyses on some of these questions. They raise issues on the nature of the state, women's historical and contemporary relationships with the state and other formations. The need to re-conceptualise and interrogate from a feminist perspective the different sites of struggle and appropriate strategies for trans-
formation are also raised. Experiences of women in the regions of the south resonate across time and space with the commonality of forms of discrimination, exploitation, exclusion and pain. The narrative of women’s exclusion and the brutal violence experienced or mediated through class, race, religious and ethnic hierarchies are a painful reminder that much more needs to be done. The views and experiences from the regions of the south underscore this.

**Feminist movements, social movements and the state: Perspectives from South Asia**

**The present context**
The last fifty years in South Asia show that religious, linguistic, regional, cultural and ethnic differences have continued to play a critical role in both social formation and fragmentation. Structures of governance have grown more authoritarian and repressive, societies have become more militarised and violence against women and minority communities has increased. In the economic arena, the move has been from protectionism (with emphasis on development of national industries and investment) to the ‘open economy’ (neo-liberalism).

**Difference and diversity**
The inability of the state to accommodate the varied demands of the different social groups led to both peaceful and violent reactions. The rise of fundamentalism and conservatism throughout the region maybe understood as a backlash against the push for equal rights by different groups. Women and members of other oppressed groups have joined together in the last few decades to form new “social movements” to address these tendencies.

Continued conflict in the region, based on ethnic, religious and class issues highlights the inability of post-colonial states to develop a democratic framework of governance that treats all citizens with equal respect.
and accommodates difference with dignity. The rise in religious fundamentalism is demonstrated by Bangladesh's abandonment of the secular principle in 1988, while the Islamic principles in which Pakistan was founded have been reinterpreted in more conservative forms; in Sri Lanka and Bhutan ongoing conflicts are more related to ethnic identities.

The inability of states to deal with issues of diversity has led to increasing intolerance and fostered the growth of forms of communalism, violence, racism, ethnic and religious hatred. The principle of secularism as a means of affirming democratic praxis in a multi-religious society has been seriously eroded. As a result there are numerous struggles for self-determination and autonomy within and across borders.

The rise in all forms of intolerance leads to an increase in violence and women's vulnerability to violence. The discriminatory laws prevalent all over South Asia based on culture and religion deny women rights in the 'private' life (marriage, divorce, inheritance, custody of children and maintenance) and impose restrictions on their mobility and autonomy. They also become vulnerable to sexual attack and abuse by the 'enemy'.

Conflicts in the region have resulted in thousands of refugees and internally displaced people, women being the largest group and most vulnerable to exploitation and oppression. The state's ability to safeguard women's rights is under siege due to both the weakening of the state and the rise in conservatism, where identity based politics is the determining factor.

Feminist movements response to difference and diversity
These prevailing realities in South Asia have led to a radical rethinking of concepts of “difference” and “diversity” within the women's movement. The recognition of difference is a key factor and the formation of the Dalit Women's Association (India) and the growing awareness of caste-based oppression and women's subordination has been an example of this process.

In parts of India the movement of dalit, tribal and indigenous people has become one of the strongest in the country and in the region – the role played by women in terms of engagement in organisational and mobilisation work has been significant (rather than at decision making level). While
the complexities of class and sexual orientation continue to play a critical role in defining the parameters of women's lives in South Asia, diversity in terms of ethnicity, language and religion have become prominent.

The feminist movement and the state

The birth of feminist movements in the region coincided with many developments in the national and international arena. Nationally, the growing concern and awareness of specific issues that affected women regardless of their other identities of ‘class’, ‘race’, ‘caste’ or ethnicity led to many debates among women activists. Violence against women within the household and outside, wage-disparities in the prevailing gender division of labour, oppressive practices that were legitimised and sanctioned in the name of religion, culture and tradition and a cursory treatment of these issues by existing organizations, whether party, non-party, left or socialists led to women forming their own organizations “autonomously” (to connote a separate, women only group and non-party affiliation) and as ‘feminists’ to address the deeply embedded structures and institutions of patriarchy that perpetuate gender discrimination.

Over the last two and half decades, feminist movement activism and the strategies devised have altered the political terrain of the region. The movement is constantly faced with the challenges of engaging with the state and its institutions. Regional dynamics, configurations and political climate dictate the options available to women. In the early phase, confrontational strategies and campaigns to demand justice and accountability were the hallmark of the movement.

However, two separate but interrelated issues have changed the course of engagement. Firstly, the nature of the state in South Asia (secular, democratic, and authoritarian) determines the strategies used to push for change. Secondly, the growing realization that the state and its actors, despite its patriarchal nature, is not monolithic and there are some spaces available for the movement to use and gain leverage. Further, the commitments made by the state through international covenants and conferences provide a
framework of rights against which women can demand accountability, though the latter raises many dilemmas for the movement.

**Influences of UN conferences and changes in the international arena**

Internationally, the declaration of the United Nations Women’s year and Decade built bridges with women’s groups outside the region and the proliferation of research studies on gender issues also provided the impetus for cross-fertilization of ideas and action. The influence and ideas of feminist groups that started in the urban areas soon spread to the rural areas in terms of influencing the agenda of rural-based groups and movements with an incorporation of issues of rape, violence and abduction of women.⁴

In the non-state sector, the second wave of feminism in the West had its impact on South Asia- activists as well as academics started taking up issues such as domestic work, violence against women, abortion and rape. The rapid incorporation of women workers in South Asia in the “new international division of labour” also became the subject of study and debate. In the region this interaction led to the creation of women’s studies centres, women’s groups that took up women’s issues and popularised feminist thought. In the state sector concern over the slow improvement of the status of women led to 1975 being declared International Women’s Year by the UN and of the Decade for Women (1975-1985) following the first Women’s Conference in Mexico.

The 1970s also saw the creation of NGOs, community-based organisations (CBOs) and peoples’ organisations (PO’s) in the region. These organisations got their support from foreign donors (bilateral and non-state donor agencies) for the establishment of community based and constituency based “non-political” development initiatives. Other major processes of economic and social transformation in the region gave impetus to self-organisation primarily amongst the poorest. Women began to create opportunities for their advancement on issues such as health, nutrition, literacy income generation and consciousness raising.
In 1977, Pakistan's constitution was abrogated, martial law was declared and fundamental rights were suspended. The process of Islamisation threatened to take away any semblance of women's rights left in the country and women's groups across the country galvanized to form a united front, the Women's Action Forum (WAF). It became an influential platform bringing together voices of all progressive women and organisations. Further, alliances were made with media, lawyers and doctors. Key media advocacy and other strategies against repressive laws received international attention, thereby embarrassing the government.

The women's movement used two strategies - confrontationalist tactics on the one hand and lobbying with key members on the other. Lobbying against the martial law regime raised its own set of dilemmas for WAF. A number of activists refused to engage with a government headed by a military dictator. However, the implementation of certain laws and the serious impacts, left women with no choice but to engage in lobbying. Another dilemma was whether or not to use religious arguments and religious scholars to counter retrogressive interpretation of religious texts by the military regime, moreover, whether the women's movement should maintain a clear secular stance.

Claiming women's rights as human rights
Another strategy of the movement has been to frame the issue of women's rights squarely under the rubric of a human rights framework. As human rights have universal legitimacy, the movement unambiguously recognizes violence against women as a crime against humanity. The women's movement in Pakistan, for instance, uses international opinion and pressure to make it difficult for religious or cultural interpretations to counter women's rights.

Dowry deaths: When culture and capitalism converge
Dowry is the custom in India, predominantly among Hindus, of giving gifts in cash and kind from the bride's family to the groom's family at the time of marriage. In recent years, consumerism has led to an increase in demands of cash and presents given in kind, failure of which leads to harassment and violence against the bride. In many instances, this results in murder of the bride by burning her alive with kerosene. This is then construed as an “accident” or “suicide” by the groom's family. The
scale and frequency of these deaths by “suicides” and “accidents” rarely evoked any investigation from the police or the state, leaving the groom’s family scot-free-free to marry again for more dowry. In the mid-seventies, a campaign started in Delhi against violence and harassment meted out to women for bringing insufficient dowry. This campaign snowballed to several metropolitan cities of India. Demonstrations against dowry deaths, recording the dying statements of women and producing evidence in the court encouraged many families to lodge complaints with the police against dowry harassment of their daughters. Trade-Unions, neighbourhood groups and teachers’ associations joined the campaign and several key strategies by women’s groups led to the state passing a law against dowry-related crimes in 1980. The loopholes and the chequered implementation of this law that went through a few amendments meant few culprits were convicted. The law hardly proved a deterrent in giving or accepting dowry.

When police protection means rape for poor women

The agitation against rape started in late seventies, with campaigns against police rape which occurred at an alarming frequency. Several cases made news across different states of India and were mostly perpetrated on the poor, labouring class women of India. In Hyderabad, in 1978, a woman named Rameeza Bee was gang-raped by the police and her husband murdered for protesting. This led to a popular uprising that was quelled only after the state government was dismissed and a commission of enquiry was set up. In 1979, in Maharashtra, Mathura, a seventeen year old girl was raped by local policemen. They were convicted in the high court, but acquitted by the Supreme Court when the defence argued that Mathura had a boyfriend and was a loose-charactered woman and therefore, by definition could not be raped. This argument implied that, in India, women who lost or were assumed to have lost their virginity before marriage were “by definition” open to sexual advances from other men which justified rape. The same logic has been used by the judiciary for prostitutes who by definition cannot be raped.

The campaign against rape was sparked off by the Mathura trial and networks spearheaded by Forum against Rape (FAR) demanded a reopening of the trial. In Bombay and Delhi, alliances were formed with Socialist and communist party affiliates, trade-unions and neighbourhood groups. The movement was covered widely by the press and police atrocities began to receive attention from the opposition parties who used it as a political lever against the ruling party in power. The turning point was yet another case, where Maya Tyagi, in Harayana, was stripped naked, raped and paraded by the police in the streets. The incident aroused much furore by
women’s movement, political parties and in the parliament who demanded the Home Ministers resignation. The government introduced a bill soon after, that defined categories of custodial rape and specified a mandatory punishment of ten years’ imprisonment, in camera trials and a shift of the onus of the proof onto the accused. This radical piece of legislation raised controversy on proof; clause on the grounds that innocent men could be framed with rape charges. Moreover, problems of implementation, interpretation and definition with what constitutes rape (technically only penetration by penis) made it onerous for rape victims to prove the crime.

The campaigns against dowry and rape by feminist movement with its mixed outcomes point to the difficulties of implementing laws to protect women. The positive lessons were the support the movement could garner and the media advocacy that paid off in highlighting the issue. However, the political exploitation of the issue and the mileage gained by the opposition parties were sobering reminders of how political expediency can co-opt women’s issues.

Feminist struggles and social movements
The phenomena of social movements, needs to be seen at best, as a process of constant change and transformation. Despite their ever-changing nature, they are able to build alliances across a wide range of differences and engage in actions that result in social, political and economic changes. Women’s movements fall within the definition of social movements and are a good example of how their policy changes. The way in which feminist and women’s movements organised with progressive coalitions did influence their ability to act coherently. This is exemplified by the pre- and post-Beijing activism, that changed the women’s movement.

The process pre- and post-Beijing
The activism and preparations towards Beijing was critical and wide-ranging. Women’s groups and organisations prepared situation reports, and analysis of the status of women, met at sub-regional meetings and participated in official meetings. Following the adoption of the Beijing platform
for Action different groups took on different roles. But the rapidly deteriorating economic and political situation has led to a dissipation of the pre-
Beijing activism and enthusiasm. While some groups have been working on specific issues there is also a sense of fragmentation and lack of connec-
tion between different issues.

All states in South Asia have prepared National Plans of Action (NPA). Women’s organisations have also been actively involved - in mobilisation,
setting out programmes of action, designing strategies for monitoring and implementation of commitments made by governments. The extent to which these plans will resolve the fragmentation and inequalities in the region is arguable.

Victories through struggles
Women who achieved certain levels of education and employment struggled to break through the barriers that impeded their advancement, while working class women fought for the right for equal pay, paid maternity leave and ben-
efits, and participation in trade union activity on equal terms with men. At policy and planning level women argued for recognition of women’s work in the home and in social reproduction as well as in the ‘informal’ sector. An outcome of this is the efforts to make national databases gender specific.

Regional initiatives
At Regional levels women’s formations have joined forces on different Plat-
forms. The Asian Forum on Human Rights and Development (Forum - Asia) - facilitates linkages between mainstream human rights groups and women’s rights groups. This is critical to develop an understanding of the common cause in the two spheres. Reproductive rights are also integrated into a human rights framework as a key issue in the Forum. The slogan “Women’s Rights are Human Rights” popularised during preparations for the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna in 1993 was a useful concept and tool for women’s groups in South Asia. The ability to locate violence against women within this framework has provided a way of ad-
dressing this issue.
New trends, initiatives and challenges
Coalitions of women’s groups have been formed to monitor the implementation of CEDAW and to focus on changing national legislation to include CEDAW principles. Collaboration with other groups involved in struggles for social justice, has had positive results, but also created tensions due to different priorities and agendas.

Conceptualising violence against women
The reconceptualisation of violence as a human rights violation, led to a critical appraisal of the way mainstream human rights groups approached the issue. Human rights groups have become more gender sensitive in their work while women’s groups started re-framing their work on legal reform and intervention in a human rights based approach. Offences against women during war (e.g. rape, forced impregnation and other forms of sexual violence) have been classified as “war crimes” by the International Criminal Court, and the Women’s Caucus for Gender Justice (which included South Asian women) played an important role in this. Moreover linking women’s experience of violence on a daily basis to the militarisation of society in general, prompted women to be more involved in the broader struggle for democratisation and social justice.

However some human rights groups remain resistant to other issues important to women, such as family law, including law governing marriage, divorce, maintenance, child custody and inheritance (as many of these are shaped by religion, culture and tradition), as well as trafficking, abortion and sexual harassment. Another positive outcome of lobbying and advocacy at the international level was the appointment of Sri Lanka woman lawyer (Radhika Coomaraswamy) as the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women. Her work on trafficking of women, the use of culture and tradition to justify violence against women and the use of violence against women in times of conflicts has created the space for these issues to be raised at national and regional levels, as well as for national legislation (India and Sri Lanka) on domestic violence.
Global interaction led women's South Asian groups to enlarge their activism to cover a wider range of issues: legal aid counselling, provision of shelters/safe houses, challenging laws and practices through legal means, launching of public and media campaigns.

Conceptualising reproductive health and sexual rights
The UN declaration that the availability of safe abortions was critical to achieve safe motherhood was a turning point in reproductive health and justice. However, the implementation of this declaration leaves much to be desired. In this regard, women need more nuanced approaches to women's reproductive health and sexual rights in their engagement with the International Planned Parenthood Federation and population control agencies.

Exclusion and discrimination
In the past, women were a part of other struggles (e.g., anti-colonial struggles, nationalist movements, trade unions, minority groups, etc.) but there was no clear consciousness of the commonality of struggles against oppression. When women's issues were taken up, these were as mothers and caregivers. Women today are forging links with dalits, indigenous people, religious, ethnic, and linguistic minorities, refugees, gays and lesbians, people living with HIV/AIDS, to take up common concerns. This focus on issues of discrimination, oppression, and exploitation results in new social movement formation and activism. As a result of such interactions, these organisations pay greater attention to women's participation and raise greater gender awareness. In India, for example, there is greater awareness of the connections between caste-based oppression and gender subordination. Likewise, in Pakistan, the tensions between different religious groups have raised awareness of the links between religious fundamentalism and gender oppression.

Poverty and globalisation
Recent initiatives of women include a focus on macro-issues of poverty and strategies for poverty eradication and alleviation. Sustainable develop-
Marketisation of Governance

ment is an over riding concern, expressed through campaigns against projects that lead to deforestation, environmental degradation, landlessness, debt cancellation, the reclamation of traditional healing and farming methods, and opposing the WTO's patenting of indigenous seeds and plants.

Peace and conflict resolution
Women in the region, both at national and regional level have focused on the peaceful and negotiated settlement of conflicts. Attempts to mediate in the context of ethnic and religious conflict are dangerous. People who do so are labelled as traitors” and even pay with their lives. In addition, sections of the women’s movement in the region have developed a feminist critique of communalism and other forms of discrimination based on race, ethnicity, language or religion. Many have committed themselves to maintaining dialogue across the different divides, and in the field of mass communication and creative arts women and cultural workers have evolved a wide range of materials that convey ideas of harmonious coexistence.

Using “Motherhood” to unite in conflict
The “Mother’s Front” was created in July 1990 by women of the Sinhala majority community in Sri-Lanka, to protest against the disappearance of some sixty thousand young and middle aged men. Over twenty five thousand women were estimated members of this front and the non-threatening idiom of motherhood was used effectively to confront the state and to mobilize women’s support. The significance of the Mother’s Front lies in its emerging in a backdrop of a country devastated by ethnic conflicts and reprisals that paralysed the nation during the brief period during of its political life. By its actions, the Front, “opened up the space in which a much larger, non-racist and more radical protest movement could be launched” and simultaneously “gendered the discourses of human rights and dissent”.

The new discourse on governance
With the collapse of governance in the last 50 years, there is an ongoing debate about the nature and the form of the state, what constitutes good
governance and the role of civil society in promoting new forms of democratic governance. Not only governance of the country but of civil society groups themselves, with focus on accountability, transparency and shared decision-making. As states have become more repressive and authoritarian, civil society movements are in more precarious positions. States in the region have instituted laws and policies that monitor and control activities of NGO’s. Freedom of information and expression has been curbed on the grounds of ‘national security’.

The failure of governance has in turn led to the hardening of identities and intensification of conflicts. Any attempt to discuss governance in such a context inevitably leads to the need for a critique on processes related to the decentralisation and devolution of power.

The feminist dilemma
In the 1990’s fewer women’s groups want to identify themselves as feminists or with feminist analysis of society. This could be as a result of feminists being identified as “western” or alienated from their society. Or because they experience difficulty in taking on the challenge posed by modernity and globalisation. While there have been studies and research on the impact of globalisation on women’s economic status and on the impact and growth of religious fundamentalism and national chauvinism on the social status of women, these have been too few and too specific in many cases.

The symbolic disappearance of words such as “liberation” and “emancipation”, oppression, and exploitation, patriarchy and feminism may explain this phenomenon, especially when one considers the word and term that seems to have replaced them: gender. As it first appeared and was used in an analytical framework that embraced the concept of patriarchy and looked at gender relations as being relations of power, it was an invaluable tool. However as it is used now, by development agencies and government bureaucrats it has been stripped of its analysis of power relations and is therefore depoliticised.

Among the challenges that confront the feminist movement in South
Marketisation of Governance

Asia is that of renewing its linkages and connections to other social movements from a perspective that deals with diversity in a democratic manner. Although in the context of identity politics in the region- it becomes extremely difficult to promote unified fronts on common concerns. Although in recent years feminists have begun to use the human rights framework as a basis for discussing issues of equality and difference. They also propose returning to concepts of discrimination and disadvantage to provide insights into the understanding of equality that postulates “equal” as being the “same”.

Another difficult process in South Asia has been that of forging links with the state (e.g. policy making) – overcoming traditional resistance to links with the state is a critical issue. As the state withdraws from its role of provider of services and protector of rights, various community-based organisations have no option but to step in to provide basic services which carries the danger of becoming part of the system and losing the capacity to remain autonomous and critical.

Feminist movements, social movements and the state: Perspectives from South East Asia

When we speak about social movements in the region, we cannot ignore the political realities prevailing in these societies. This is particularly so in countries where the state is playing a role that increasingly impinges upon the interests of social movements and citizens. South East Asian governments, with the exception of Burma, were said to be democratic. However in many instances such democracies do not genuinely work. In the past few years, the citizenry and social movements in South East Asia have found themselves increasingly confronted with a political context in which the military and the ruling elites are becoming more powerful.

Authoritarian governments and people's resistance

It is worth citing Malaysia as an example to show the nature of social movements
within an authoritarian state. Popularizing the slogan Malaysia Boleh, which literally means ‘Malaysia is capable of’, the 17-year old Mahathir administration has “an armoury of laws which provide for detention without trial and restrictions over basic freedoms of expressions, association and public assembly” to support its authoritarian state (Malaysian Human Rights Report 1998).

In the 1990s, social movements had to re-consolidate themselves and to contend with the state in the context of an economic “boom” driven by the increased liberalisation and globalisation of the economy. Most of the NGOs focused on their own issues, and were generally low-key, with the exception of a few groups such as those fighting for the urban poor and human rights issues. Being middle-class and urban-based meant that the outreach of these NGOs, including women’s groups, were limited to the English-speaking population. Nonetheless there were attempts to broaden civil society, one of which was the effort to network between these NGOs and opposition political parties to form Gagasan Rakyat (People’s Coalition) towards the middle half of 1990. With the bursting of the “bubble economy” in late 1997, the state was again put on the defensive with the unleashing of underlying tensions and conflicts, both economically and politically.

The incarceration in September 1998, of the Deputy Prime Minister and the host of sinister events that followed angered the broad Malaysian public. This led to a spontaneous outburst against the state. Particularly for the Malay masses, the public shaming of such a high profile leader led to a crisis of legitimacy of the state. Gerak (Move) came into being; a movement led by the opposition Islamic-based party in alliance with other more conventionally Muslim-based NGO’s and with the Gagasan Rakyat. With the swift unfolding of events, one after the other, these movements, generally called the Reformasi movement separated into two, but interrelated streams.

The Philippines in 1998 demonstrated that it was indeed Asia’s showcase of democracy (FEER Asia 1999). While speculations thrived that the May 1998 polls would see bloodshed, the masses voted a popular movie star, Joseph Estrada to replace six-time President Fidel Ramos. This, de-
Marketisation of Governance

despite the fact that the country’s business elite, the Catholic Church, the media and even the military were all against Estrada.

The semblance of democratic and popular participation is a reflection of the long history of people’s resistance, initially against Spanish rule and American colonialism and later the Marcos’ dictatorship. There are four major social movements in the Philippines, which must be understood against this political backdrop. Those operating underground are the Communist Party (including its New People’s Army, and the National Democratic Front, organizations) and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and its fractions. Those that are above ground include the NGO’s and the cooperatives.

Market socialism: Social movements in shield
For countries in transition, namely Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam, the situation of one-party-based governments, did not permit independent non-governmental initiatives. The existing NGO’s are either local, aligned to the state or Western NGO’s that are allowed to work within the government’s framework. It is difficult then to speak of social or women’s movements, as such, which are not part or autonomous of the state apparatus. However, it seems that there are now emerging pockets of such groups and their impact remains to be seen.

In search of democratic space: Burma under a military regime
In Burma, the NGO’s are either working underground or in exile since there is no democratic space to manoeuvre. The present military leadership body called the State Peace and Development Council tolerates no opposition and will do anything it feels necessary to repress any activities and movements that threaten its power. A telling illustration is the bloody crackdown on anti-government demonstrations against one-party rule and socialism in August and September 1988. Thousands of civilians were killed across the country.

The army, led by General Saw Maung, formed the State Law and Order
Chapter 5: Feminist movements and the state: Countervailing forces?

Restoration Council (Slorc) and assumed direct control of the state. Consequently, the new military government abolished the old socialist system and promoted a free-market economy. It also organised a general election in May 1990. The National League for Democracy (NLD) led by Aung San Suu Kyi won a landslide victory for the main opposition party. The junta's reaction was to place Aung San Suu Kyi under house arrest and detained scores of NLD leaders, while many others flew from Burma to exile in Thailand.

Effectively, this means that there are no overt social movements at all in Burma. There is, however, a pro-democracy movement in Burma although it is not a well-organized one. These groups have to work underground and, if the various groups want to collaborate, they must be very cautious because of the extensive spy networks of the junta.

Women's movements in South East Asia
The women's movement in the South East Asian region has many faces. Historically, women have been part of anti-colonial and nationalist movements. These can be distinguished as the left and right wing traditions. Women were also active in labour movements and played an important role in the struggle for the amelioration of the condition of workers. In the post-colonial period, women's movements range from women's wings of political parties, both right and left, government-sponsored women's groups, to non-governmental women's organisations. The latter again range from service-oriented bodies, which are more mainstream in nature to the more activist groups that can be said to be more feminist and progressive. Political ideologies create tensions within women's groups, as in the Filipino case. Some of these tensions evolve around the nature of women's engagement with the state.

Women's movements and the state
Feminist theorising of the state, to date, has been limited. Nonetheless, recent writings reflect a rethinking of the state as a more complex entity rather than as essentially patriarchal and/or capitalist and serving the unitary interests of men or capital (Tan, 1996). In an interesting article Connell...
(1994), points out that:

“The state is constructed within gender relations as the central institution of gendered power. Conversely, gender dynamics are a major force constructing the state, both in the historical creation of state structures and in contemporary politics”.

In deconstructing the state as a historical process and as a structure of power, Connell argues that since it is a site of political struggle, it becomes a focus of interest group formation and mobilization in sexual politics. Subsequently, the concern of feminism to capture a share of state power is a necessary response. He then poses the key question - “(the question) is not whether feminism will deal with the state, but how: on what terms, with what tactics, towards what goals?” Furthermore because the state is constantly changing and its position on gender politics not fixed, it allows for gender dynamics to intervene in its development. He further points out that “crisis tendencies develop in the gender order which allow new political possibilities”.

Feminists' engagement with selected political regimes in South East Asia comprises different modes that include, confrontation, co-operation and representation. The process of confrontation results in a more militant and distant stance against the state, while that of cooperation entails working with the state along certain issues, mainly for policy changes. The third mode, that of representation, seeks political participation in the state, for example during elections, through political parties. Throughout these years, some strategies had (limited) success, others less so. We argue that the future of the women's movement will lie not in seeking legitimacy with the state, but in mobilizing both within, but more importantly so, outside the state apparatus, and in alliance with other democratic movements.

The Malaysian experience: Restricted democracy

Mobilisation-confrontation

Confrontational politics, the Prime Minister reprimanded Malaysians, in the wake of the recent mass demonstrations regarding the alleged arsenic
poisoning of Anwar, is not part of Malaysian culture (The Star, Harakah, 20 September 1999). He continued bluntly that those who did so would face the consequences of the law. In fact, to prove the point, those who demonstrated were met with the wrath of the state. To a certain extent, mass mobilisation on a regular basis against the state has not occurred as part of Malaysian political dissent. But to say that it is not part of Malaysian culture is to obfuscate the issue, as there have been such types of mobilizing from the anti-colonial movements to the resistance by NGO’s and women’s groups. In terms of women’s demands, we cite three such occasions - two of which met with repressive actions and one which succeeded to push forward the implementation of a Bill passed two years earlier.

The first occasion was the mass mobilisation of women in the anti-colonial struggle, including the struggle against the Malayan Union proposed by the British. Participation of women was eagerly sought by both the left and right wing parties in order to “add strength to the party to push for independence”. However the colonial state came down heavily on the growing left-wing movement, and these groups were banned, including the Women’s Federation and AWAS, the Conscious Women’s Front. Many of the women were either detained, fled or were banished to China and Indonesia, or went underground to join the Communist Party. Interestingly, the demands of these progressive groups ranged from sexual equality to the establishment of child care facilities and freedom from sexual harassment.

The second instance was the rapid mobilisation of women activists in the 1980s - a period of the establishment of progressive NGO groups and confrontation against the state along a broad range of issues as discussed above. Women activists while participating in such campaigns, also mobilised around an anti-rape campaign, leading to a mass demonstration in 1987 as the result of the brutal rape-cum-murder of a nine year old girl. The campaign was led by a coalition called Citizens Against Rape (CAR) made up of NGO and welfare groups in the country, that included both men and women.
The CAR campaign did not last very long as the NGO movement became engulfed in the political crisis leading to the mass detention of activists in 1987. As a result, four women activists, three of whom were in the Women's Development Collective, one of the groups spearheading the VAW campaign, were among the forty who were given indefinite detention – their charges being the mobilisation of workers and women to overthrow the state. Thus was aborted a growing movement for democratisation. Nevertheless the amendments to the laws regarding rape were passed rather swiftly in 1989, in part due to the media blitz on the subject and the continued mobilizing by women's groups.

The third instance of confrontation, albeit on a milder note, was the handing over of a memorandum and the subsequent demonstration to the Minister in charge of Women's Affairs on March 8, 1996, to demand the implementation of the Domestic Violence Act. This strategy was used as women's NGO's were getting quite frustrated that the implementation of the Act was being delayed despite the Bill having being passed in Parliament in 1994 – after years of lobbying. As recently noted by a journalist:

“Three years ago, in an episode so unusual for placid Malaysia that it made headlines, women activists marched across a hotel lobby chanting “Act now, right now” and confronted a startled cabinet minister. The tactic worked: A law to protect battered women was implemented after 11 years of lobbying”.

Cooperation or accommodation: Uneasy politics
Compared to other laws, perhaps none other than the Domestic Violence Act has been claimed to be the result of successful lobbying of women's groups of all persuasions in the country. Women's NGO's both mainstream and alternative, and women's wings of political parties, have listed the enactment of the Domestic Violence Act as one of their main success stories in fighting for women's rights. Indeed one of the woman candidates prided her role in lobbying for the Act when she was recently campaigning to head the Women's Wing of one of the ruling political parties. Such ap-
propriation is of course not new; however what is interesting to note is the broad alliance formed among women’s groups and the state in drafting the Act, including the strengths and weaknesses of such an alliance.

The process of negotiating and contesting differences among varied vested interest groups, while useful in creating alliances at one level, worked to the detriment of the feminist cause.

Electoral politics and the women’s agenda: Limits of representation?
The third mode of feminist engagement with the state is by entering the foray of electoral politics through representation. Connell points out that this structure of state power, that is a system of representation socially organised along gender lines – electoral patriarchy – is surprisingly resilient. However in the Malaysian context, electoral politics while gender biased, has been mainly contested along ethnic lines. Furthermore, the electoral system is based on the principle of “first past the goal” rather than through proportional representation based on the actual quantity of votes garnered. Electoral constituencies in Malaysia are also not evenly distributed as gerrymandering has been used to ensure that opposition seats have as high as 400 per cent of voters more compared to the loyalist seats. Despite this inequality, the women’s movement entered this field of play, beginning with the 1990s general elections.

In fact for the first time in electoral history, there have been forums organised by the opposition where only female politicians speak. As observed “the run-up to the country’s latest elections is seeing a marked politicisation of women’s issues. The entry of Wan Azizah as a leading icon of opposition forces ... is feeding into the imagination of the public that gender may count after all”.16 Thus lie the limits to the politics of representation which is circumscribed by the parameters of electoral patriarchy.

Issues and dilemmas within the women’s movement: Philippines’ democratic transition
Prior to the split in the left in 1994, there was a broad, multi-sectoral and ‘political colourful’ women’s movement in the country. Within this realm,
there were two identifiable strands of the women’s movement - the liberal reformist strand (which did not directly address class issues but was progressive on the human rights and democracy front) and the left-leaning strand that included the militant women's network GABRIELA. This broad women's movement formed a common front against the repressive Marcos dictatorship and the puppet National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women then.

The then broad women's movement was pressurised as it found some of its former members and leaders now occupying government positions while the rest continued to use the streets and maintained its critical, and often confrontational position to the government. Nevertheless, the newfound but feeble democratic space enabled a variety of women's organizations to voice various concerns in public and to use new techniques in political advocacy. One of these was lobbying for a change of laws as it was felt that the state could be a space in which reforms beneficial to women can be lobbied.

Within this “old” paradigm, a third strand cropped up. This was called the “autonomous feminist” strand which came out of the left-leaning strand. Its political position was to carve out not an independent but an autonomous women's movement, in that it would decide on its own feminist agenda in a way that is inter-linked with the nationalist and democratic agenda of the left-leaning strand.

Violence against women, reproductive rights and sexual rights were issues that the members of this group believed were legitimate women's issues/demands but which were being given secondary attention in the analysis and advocacy of left leaning women's groups, including GABRIELA. It also believed more than the left leaning groups, that legislative advocacy and lobbying could benefit women, particularly the passage of new laws that gave women the right over many aspects and privileges denied them under the existing laws.
Chapter 5: Feminist movements and the state: Countervailing forces?

Women’s movement and the Filipino State

There seem to be visible shifts in how the progressive women's movement is presently engaging with the state. The first is the acknowledgement of the importance and integration of “the political is personal” dictum into the realm of advocacy, while the second is the entry into electoral politics.

As relatively new players, women's groups also realised that the political arena was wide and varied, and that engagement in this arena was one strategy of addressing women's concerns. Women can be involved in politics as elected officials and as advocates of women's issues, but this demands that women actively seek positions of formal political authority through elections to better fulfil their agenda.

The liberation and caring for the self in the midst of struggle is a new kind of politics in the Philippines. In the old tradition of left politics, the rule of thumb was to sacrifice oneself in the name for the liberation of the masses. For women who for the most part had no real choices and whose loyalty to their husbands through thick or thin was based on political conviction, there is now an urgent need to control one's life and to rid oneself of male dominance. There are now activist women and feminist socialist women who are addressing patriarchy in their personal life circumstances. They are also more responsive to the desire of grassroots women to control their lives, even while in the midst of a political struggle for a collective cause.

Women's political participation and advocacy: Representation for whom?

The second discernible shift is the entry of women, either as part of women's groups or in an individual capacity, into the state machinery. With the need to re-conceptualise feminism, there seems to be a tacit acceptance of such ‘femocrats’. No one, for example, renounced the decision of a number of feminists to run during the 1998 election. If anything, they were encouraged and morally supported and questions/accusations of co-optation and accommodation seem to be less of an issue now. Those who were elected, along with other male activists, are now seen as allies within the state apparatus.
Class interests in women’s organisations
The socio-civic women’s groups were generally less critical of the status quo; tend to prioritise the elimination of discrimination of women in politics; were less involved in community organising of grassroots women beyond specific political or economic objectives (e.g. credit distribution or putting up local chapters); and less concerned with the label ‘feminist’. They were largely career professionals, business women and/or former public servants.

On the other hand activist women’s groups strongly called for reforming the existing political and economic systems. They addressed gender equality issues in conjunction with the need for broader social equity and engaged community women more intensively and on a longer-term basis. They were also more conscious and articulate of their feminist identity and heritage. Such women were known leaders of mass organizations, most notably human rights, peasants’ trade unions and students’ groups.

Looking at specific issues, three primary social problems were addressed by the different agendas for women put forward by groups or parties to the voting public. These were poverty, women’s political marginalisation and violence against women and children. Activist-oriented parties promised to address overall poverty, women’s economic burdens, rural women’s low income and unemployment, and growth with equity.

Why was the issue of reproductive rights invisible in the party list electoral agenda? Was the issue highly divisive, and if so, among whom – was it among ordinary women voters, between men and women voters, or among the women and men of the parties themselves? Or is it simply because the feminist oriented or feminist influenced groups were not prepared to confront the electoral base of the powerful conservative churches?

Mobilizing for transformation: Within and without
What have been the learning experiences of these years of feminist engagement with the state? It can be said that gender democracy and social justice can only be won through a continuous combination of mobilizing within
and without the state, albeit with an intensification of mobilizing outside the instruments of state power. This is because the politics of legitimacy through cooperation and representation have proved to be limiting to the wider feminist cause.

In Burma, it can be seen that confrontation against an oppressive regime seems to be the only choice available to male and female activists. Perhaps, as can be learnt from the Filipino experience, the women’s movement in Burma, particularly those in exile, can emerge out of the pro-democracy movement.

Interestingly, the struggles of the women’s movement in the Philippines and in Malaysia seem to be converging. Historically, Malaysian women have fought mainly within the realm of advocacy and legal reform on VAW issues, since confrontational politics have limited results, not least due to state repression. Recently women have also entered the political fray, participating in electoral politics although there is still much distrust of the undemocratic state. In the Philippines, due to the opening up of the democratic space, as well as of ideological discourse, including a re-questioning of gender and feminist thinking, sexual politics are now seen as politically correct, while entry into the state machinery is perceived as strategically ‘worth trying for’.

Confrontation with the state, both from the women’s and social movements have yielded some results – but at a price. Contrary to Connell’s argument that crisis tendencies within the state might evoke some leverage and opportunities for women to transform existing sexual politics, the tendency of authoritarian states has been to repress and intimidate, rather than to negotiate and reform.

Thus, the women’s movement can only find some leverage from the patriarchal state if there is a critical mass of women in decision-making positions who are sympathetic to the women’s cause as well as the vision of a democratic society.
Feminist movements and the state in Latin America\textsuperscript{17}

The feminist movement could be, at the same time, a social movement and a political expression in pursuit of full citizenship and of a democracy comprising from particular to global aspects. At a very early stage, it was articulated with the growing and massive women's popular movement. Its main task was to recover the difference and the political nature of women's subordination in the private sphere and its impact on the public sphere.

Dealing with a great deal of issues, Latin-American and Caribbean feminism developed a great number of organizations, action, themes and identity networks, and also promoted a transnational dynamic through several modes. The most significant expression of this was the Regional Feminist Meetings, at first every two years and, lately, every three years.

The democratization of the continent together with international changes brought about modifications to feminist movements making them more open to national, regional as well as global interactions. The United Nations Summits contributed to this. Democracy and citizenship turn into new courses of action. This is essential in interacting with the states.

Vargas identifies the present fragmentation and distortion of Latin-American feminism, relating them not only to social movements’ cycles but also to the fragmenting impacts of globalization and neo-liberalism. Added to this, the feminists of the nineties express themselves basically through the work and agendas of feminist NGO’s. Although some may have less external funding, with full-time professionals, NGOs, are able to have more visible processes and strategies than other groups.

Civil society, states and feminist relations
The region is characterised by complex relationships between feminism and States, on the one hand, and between civil society and the State, on the other hand. These relationships are conflictual but contribute to the building of social movements’ and citizenship. Economic modernization and
democratization are the characteristic processes of the region, but they have different logics, which run parallel. Since there is no correspondence between them, democracy appears as a legitimating mechanism of modernization, giving priority to the market, to the detriment of citizens’ interests. Thus, the challenge is how to attain processes of political restructuring with social transformation.

Feminists have moved beyond regarding the State as a homogeneous, patriarchal and capitalist entity to understanding it as a complex site. The State is a group of arenas, discourses, institutions, the result of political struggles and specific contexts, the coherence of which can be established throughout time, but it is changing. At present, the transnational integration produced by globalization overwhelms State organization. Moreover national states seem to be too small to tackle the global problems.

The deep heterogeneity of civil societies, with unequal development, and different values, proposals, organizational forms and practices result in diverse and multiple relationships between states and movements. A characteristic of new democracies in Latin America is the growing depoliticisation of civil society.

Despite this the multiple and varied relationships feminist movements have with the state and social movements create opportunities, risks and tensions. As identified by Vargas, these include:

• the contradictions and deficits of Latin-American democracies in the neo-liberal period because, on one hand, there is a new language of citizenship and rights, yet with a different comprehension of the content of democracies and citizenship;
• the perspectives of progress in formal equality mechanisms for all women are broadened and, at the same time, those possibilities depend on the political and economical interests of governments and states;
• the states are, both, a powerful tool for the production of equality and also a source of reproduction of inequalities;
• there is a “re-masculinisation” of the state and politics through, for example, poverty alleviation programs and military threats, and a
The depoliticisation of social movements caused by their relationship with the states, among other reasons.

The two most important poles of Latin-American feminism of the nineties are the struggle for institutionalization and autonomy. These should not be considered as absolutes but as permanently changing elements influenced by the environment. Vargas further considers these processes an expression of two cycles: a cycle of the movement itself and a cycle of citizens’ participation.

In such a complex and contextual discourse, the tension between equality and difference appears again, and, for feminism, this implies a way of regrouping and a way in which strategies are externally displayed. During the eighties feminism had a complementary vision of equality and difference. This resulted in specific proposals based on new ways of relating in the public sphere, the political sphere and the State.

Vargas asserts that feminist movements do not only focus on power or identity, both are present in the poles but with different weight at different moments. There is concern about the paradox that sometimes being successful also implies losing control over the feminist project because of the dictum that ‘he who rules the system is the one who declares the equality of the other one’.

The first pole defends early feminist practices, of contributing to self-identities and resists any possibility of negotiating with the public/political sphere. The second one cautiously assumes the importance of negotiating with the society and the State. These two distinctions and critical visions derive, both, from the inside of the most institutionalized expression and from the dissident organizations of those stances. Both criticisms raise the risks of engaging the state but do not agree on the strategies. The most radical positions however still oppose strategies of engaging in the public/political sphere.

Feminist movements: Autonomy and engagement
This leads us to the problem of feminist movements’ autonomy and, in broader terms, to the autonomy of civil society in relation to the State.
Again Vargas identifies different ways through which women’s formations can retain their autonomy and yet negotiate with the state. But the question remains how to assume leadership positions and an autonomous agenda precisely when movements are diffuse and macro-dynamics emphasise fragmentation? In trying to understand this feminists in Latin America highlight the following:

• Autonomy is neither a static political principle nor delinked from reality, but a concept and a dynamic and flexible practice related to the environment;

• so as not to have only an identity of “resistance”, we must form part of broader democratic projects.

The feminist agenda must have aspects that do not consolidate only one kind of women, likewise, equality is not isolated from the diversities of the same women. In this way, there are more possibilities of having democratic alliances with the same women and with other movements and actors.

The construction of autonomous profiles of feminism should be emphasized in feminist spheres and in democratic civil society. This would help to establish alliances with different democratic sectors and create a “space for contestation”. This type of interaction with the state does not do away with the state’s responsibility to acknowledge rights and ensure their execution. Civil society and the movements that form part of it, also have to identify antidemocratic arrangements as a problem and continue the struggle for citizen rights.

Claiming space and transforming the arena
That there is a coexistence of different ideological projects in the State and also in specific institutions addressing women is unarguable. However with institutional weaknesses and low allocations from national budgets, the demand to engender equality policies is constrained. Further engendering the state and society to ensure women’s emancipation should not exclusively depend on women having a “room of their own.” This marginalises
women from the centre of power and reduces their capacity to transform institutional power from within.

Feminism, the women’s movement and the state: Perspectives from Africa

Hassim (1999) points out that feminists have held ambivalent views about the state. “On the one hand, the state is regarded in different contexts as masculinist, racist, repressive and/or excluding. On the other hand, much of feminist advocacy in the policy arena has involved demanding an expansion of the roles of the state in the provision of services and in the establishment of a juridical framework which would mitigate the gendered impacts of capitalism”. The first position is reflected in feminist literature on the impact of structural adjustment policies on women. It explains how women are controlled and regulated by the state. The second position is reflected by their calls for the state to be more inclusive and analyses seeking to determine ways of influencing state policies and policy-making processes.

Changing notions of the state

Feminists in Africa point to shifts in understanding the state. The earliest feminist view of the state was that of a benevolent organization, in which the officials were right and the perspective was right. But this unproblematic view of the state was questioned later by scholars, notably those who wrote on women and the state in the Third World. This critique led to examinations of the ways in which the state articulates its ideologies on women. Currently, there are two feminist viewpoints about the role of the state. First, there is the liberal feminist view that frames the state as a neutral arbitrator captured by men. The solution to this problem is to ensure the inclusion of women in state institutions and the creation of formal equality. Second, there is the Marxist feminist view of the state, where it is analysed as an instrument of bourgeois male domination.
The feminists’ position in Africa differs from the above liberal feminist and Marxist positions because demands for women’s participation and representation in the region stemmed from long histories of women’s involvement in liberation struggles. Some argue that the weak nature of the state in terms of institutional development and infra-structural capacity means that many women barely experienced positive impacts of social policies and service delivery. “In these situations, localized alternative states sometimes emerged under authority of local traditional leaders or warlords, producing complicated patterns of allegiance and patronage”. These alternative states exist side by side with the formal state.

Complex relationships with the state
A more critical understanding of the complex nature of women’s relationship to the state has to be developed than that offered by conventional feminist theory. Given women’s contradictory experiences of the state as both benevolent and regulating, Hassim suggests that feminists might need to consider the post-structural notion of the dispersal of power. Post-structuralists view the state as being dispersed in its apparatuses of social control, maintaining control through the reproduction as well as the production of dominant discourses. The state can also be viewed as a cultural form where women as a category of social actors do not stand outside of its formation, but are actively shaped by public policy and other cultural forms.20

Civil society substituting state functions?
Key in redefining the relationship of women’s and feminist movements with the state are the different levels of engagement with different forces and institutions. Hassim proposes that feminists do not only seek to increase women’s representation in the state but also aim at uncovering the hidden ways in which institutions and state policies (as well as counter-policies advocated by women’s organizations) constitute the particular interests of different groups of women. She points out that the impact of structural
adjustment in many parts of Africa has been to replace the state functions with privatized/international development NGOs, but these NGOs are not gender neutral regardless of their progressive content.

Feminist and democratic transition in South Africa
The transition to democracy led to a change in women’s organizations from an oppositional stance to that of engagement with the state as a key locus for redress of gender inequalities. In South Africa, women’s organizations feel confident that the state will effect change due to the activism of women in ANC over a number of years. When transitioning from Apartheid, there was a focus on preparing institutions to consolidate and sustain democracy. Hassim argues that the designing of new democratic structures provided the opportunity for demands for mechanisms to promote gender equity.

She indicates that “the package of arrangements that was created to take account of gender in the constitution and the state institutionalized women’s politics by drawing into formalized structures and processes of interacting with other stakeholders which are routine, repeatable and formalized. The intention behind institutionalization is to ensure that gender concerns are integrated or mainstreamed into the everyday work of government – procedures, policy formulation and service delivery”. Currently, women’s concerns are channelled inside government through the Office of the Status of Women (OSW) and in civil society through the Commission of Gender Equality (CGE). Representatives of constituencies of women are organized in the Parliamentary Women’s Group and through the Joint Standing Committee for Improving the Quality of Life and Status of Women.

According to Hassim, these structures and processes have made the state more permeable to the influence of organized constituencies of women. Although social movement theorists see institutionalization as having the effect of demobilizing civil society, Hassim argues that this happens on short-term basis. She posits that in the long-term demobilization does not appear to be sustained in the case of South Africa. Rather at the end of five years, organized activities in South Africa were defending gains they had won and challenging the government on key policy issues. On the basis of the South African situation, Hassim proposes that a “more nuanced view of relationship between engaging the state and the impact on the women’s movement is necessary”. Hassim gives an example of how the African National Congress party’s use of quota has contributed greatly to the 25% female representation at parliament level.
Civil society, state and women
Mama (1999) reflects that “civil society has increasingly been conceptualized as an alternative to the failings of bad government and heralded as an important site of governance, the engine for democratization and viewed as offering a panacea for all the weaknesses and failings of the state.” However, she cautions feminists about civil societies and she asks “How realistic is this view? On what evidence or knowledge about civil society is it based? What does a gender perspective bring to the theory and practice of civil society?” The majority of community associations, non-governmental organizations and social movements in Africa have entrenched gender inequality in their institutional cultures and practices. Women’s organizations have been left to push for gender equality while mainstream civil society organizations have ignored them.

Collen Seegobin (1999) illustrates civil society and opposition party resistance to SAPs policies using the case of Mauritius. Women of the Muvman Liberayson Fam, an “All Women’s Conference on the Budget” with activists from women’s associations and unions, organized in 1997 to oppose price liberalization, privatization of social services and amenities and to struggle for rights such as free education, health care, pensions, and social security. She shows how the trade unions in Mauritius also blocked labour law changes that would have introduced upper ceilings to replace wage indexation that exists in Mauritius. She asserts that Mauritius still has basic rights including utilities because women’s organizations, trade unions and political parties have mobilized to stop the government from applying the conditions for loans it received.

Feminist organizations face constraints to gender transformation because of their current set up. Mama (1999) argues that post-colonial women’s organizations tend to be hierarchical in structure, dominated by elite women and dedicated to quiet and comparatively genteel politics of pursuing legal and policy reforms. She criticizes these organizations for their tendency to be co-opted or absorbed by the state because this results in their ineffectiveness as vehicles for women’s struggles. Furthermore, they
rarely retain their linkage with grassroots organizations and women whose interests they claim to represent.

Diaw (1999) argues that the politics of exclusion were the dominant mode in development strategies adopted right after independence. Although the post-independence state defined its mission as nation-building and development, women were ignored in both areas. It was only women’s efforts to challenge the state that led to the institutionalization of structures to address women’s concerns and interests.

Conclusions

Evidence suggests that feminists and the women’s movement have a contradictory relationship with the state: we want to capture power to bring about transformation but we are uneasy with the way power plays itself out and with the forms of power that dominate political processes. So at individual and collective levels we have difficulty with accepting that power and leadership of different types is necessary to bring about change.

We need to engage with different forms of power at different stages in our struggle. If we want to bring about change we cannot be purists. Disengagement is not an option. Global space provides opportunities to express new ideas, recast democratic practices of women’s movements and to push the advocacy agenda. It has resulted in the possibility of forming new strategic alliances at global levels to push gender equality to the core of political restructuring. Moreover it provides channels to consolidate a global system of guarantees of people's rights against which to hold national states accountable. Current trends indicate that feminist movements are using existing institutions to push for greater representation and the institutionalisation of gender.

Many challenges confront feminists as they attempt to grapple with the complex forces at play in the global, regional and national spheres. How can feminist movements that aspire to democratic forms of governance work with authoritarian systems of government? What are the conditions
under which the feminist/women’s movements can retain their autonomy from the state and still use political spaces for new gains? Feminist/women individually and as a collective need to determine how to engage with the state in order to change/transform its policies, programmes and structures, and not to become co-opted into these. How to ensure accountability, transparency and representivity within the women’s movement while at the same time push for these within the state is also a key challenge to the women’s movement.

Notes
2. Feminist movement are also a part of the women’s movement, but the term feminist, sets it apart in the variety that characterizes women’s movement today. Feminist movements distinguishing characteristic is their interventions in “politics” at different levels to challenge various forms of patriarchy and gender injustice.
3. This section draws on Vanita Mukherjee, 2000, DAWN PRST Regional Synthesis: South Asia, Sunila Abeysekera, 1999 and Farida Shaheed, 1999, DAWN PRST South Asia
5. There has been much difference of opinion about lobbying with members of Majlis-e-Shoora, Zia’s handpicked nominated parliament.
6. The organisation was later renamed as “Forum Against Oppression of Women” (FAOW)
8. Sunila Abeysekera, 1999, DAWN PRST paper, South Asia
9. This section draws on a paper written by Cecilia Ng and Carol Yong, 2000, for DAWN PRST Research in South East Asia.
10. Tan, 1996
13. Maznah, 1999; Ng and Yong, 1990
14. Ng, \si Nor and Syed Husin Ali, 1987
Marketisation of Governance

17 This section is based on research papers written for DAWN PRST Research in Latin America by Gina Vargas 1999 and Line Bareiro, 2000.

18 This section draws on papers by Shireen Hassim 1999, Sheila Meintjies, 1999 prepared for DAWN PRST Africa research and the Africa Regional Report.


Chapter 5: Feminist movements and the state: Countervailing forces?