

March 09, 1993



Students of the Stella Maris College enacting a street play on women's problems at Veperi, Madras on Monday.

'The fight against gender bias will go on'

MADRAS, March 8.

Several women in the city today came together to remind society of the plight of women and reaffirm their faith in the fight for change. The International Women's Day was observed today.

Street plays by students of the Stella Maris College highlighted the violence perpetrated on women by men addicted to drugs and alcohol. Children from 150 schools who participated in a drawing competition, portrayed the problem in vivid colours and images.

Elsewhere, hundreds of women participated in meetings and seminars held to analyse the problems and chalk out new strategies. Many speakers discussed the increasing threat to women. The female foetus was often aborted and the girl child discriminated against. Sexual assault, unpaid domestic labour, unequal wages and job opportunities, dowry deaths and female illiteracy were some of the issues discussed. Education, awareness and economic independence would empower women to wage war against inequality, they said.

At a function organised by the Asha Nivas Social Centre and the Year of the Child Development Centre, women swayed to music and took the mike. The Sirpi Cultural troupe, through songs and skits, raised questions and furnished answers to women's problems such as divorce, property disputes, dowry and bigamy.

Ms. Rukmini Sempeth Kumar, professor of his-

tory, Madras Christian College, said women were an embodiment of sacrifice and love and they also taught values. Mrs. Nandini Rajendran, Chairperson, State Social Welfare Board, said education alone would contribute to family progress. Rev. Kurian Thomas, director, Asha Nivas, called for gender equality.

At a meeting organised by the Director of Social Welfare, Mrs. Zeenat Sherfuddeen, MLA, Mrs. Thilakavathy, senior police official, Mrs. Shanta Sunderarajan, social worker, Sachchu, film actress, Mr. K. Deenadhayalan, Director of Social Welfare and Mr. M. Raman, Madras Collector, dwelt on women's issues.

The Women's Voluntary Service of Tamil Nadu held awareness campaigns at Villivakkam Sidco Nagar, Arumbakkam and Koyambedu.

Coinciding with the day, a training course in counselling and legal literacy, organised by the Tamil Nadu Social Welfare Board, was inaugurated.