

India - Trupti Shah : A Tribute. "In 90s Gujarat, she along with a few others stood firm with NBA"

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New Delhi, May 27, 2016 : National Alliance of People's Movements (NAPM) mourns the death of comrade Trupti Shah, feminist, environmentalist, and human rights activist. Born in to a family of activists, she went to jail at the age of 11, in anti price-rise movement in 1973, later got involved during the Nav Nirman Andolan and struggles during the time of Emergency. She was committed to the question of women's equality and against the violence and couldn't tolerate any form of injustices. She was part of many agitations as a member of the Communist League - Indian Section of the Fourth International. A turning point in her own thinking came after attending the founding conference of the Autonomous Women's movement in Bombay in 1980. In her own words,

"I could feel the stark contrast in the way of functioning, the concerns and almost every thing between the Autonomous women's movement and the local forum - Nari Shoshan Virodhi Samiti - in Baroda. Unable to articulate my observations and feelings I declared in the last plenary session of the conference that, "we need more young blood, young girls' in our organisation in Baroda." This was a hilarious move as I was perhaps the youngest delegate in this national conference.

This was a turning point in my life. A decision was made, 'there is a need to have an autonomous women's organisation in Baroda which will uphold the interest of women above all other issues and political affiliations.' And rest of the life became a persistent effort towards building such an organisation.

It took several years of efforts along with like-minded friends, students from the Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda to initiate the Sahiyar Stree Sangathan in 1984. The consciousness of the secondary status of women through our experiences of women at home and in the public sphere and the influence of the autonomous women's movement were two important factors that had strengthened our urge to start an organisation by women and for women with the long term aim to work towards a society free from inequality, injustice and atrocity - a society whose women enjoy equal status and recognition as human beings." [1]

She and Shiyar fought many battles since then. For Narmada Bachao Andolan, what specifically remains etched in memory is the fact that in 90s Gujarat, in a completely polarised society on question of Sardar Sarovar Dam, she along with a few others stood firm with NBA. She and her group Sahiyar along with a motley group of people portrayed the same courage in aftermath of 2002 riots, which not only engaged itself in the relief work, but also worked tirelessly to build bridges between communities, establish peace and continue to fight for the justice for the riot victims.

She left us all at 9.15 p.m. on May 26, 2016. She battled lung cancer that was detected in October 2014. Rohit Bhai and family could not honour her last wishes to donate her body to the hospital as Hospital authorities refused to accept due to her critical illness. She continued to work even till last day. Cancer could slow her down but not break her. She leaves behind a wide body of work, commitment, grit and a team of dedicated activists.

We remember our last meeting with her, on March 27th in Ahmedabad, when some of us came together to celebrate collective struggles and remember time spent together. We were all touched by the sheer greet, determination and her love for life. Life of Trupti and Rohit, as a couple, continue to be an inspiration for many.

Our heart goes out to Rohit Bhai and their Son Maanav and the wider activist community who will feel the loss everyday. Trupti Behn you are in our thoughts and memory and we will miss you in our struggles. Rest in Peace and Power !

Medha Patkar - Narmada Bachao Andolan and the National Alliance of People's Movements (NAPM); Aruna Roy, Nikhil Dey, Shankar Bhai, Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan; Prafulla Samantara - Lok Shakti Abhiyan & Lingraj Azad - Samajwadi Jan Parishad - Niyamgiri Suraksha Samiti, NAPM, Odisha; Dr. Sunilam, Aradhna Bhargava - Kisan Sangharsh Samiti & Meera - Narmada Bachao Andolan, NAPM, MP; Suniti SR, Suhas Kolhekar, Prasad Bagwe - NAPM, Maharashtra; Gabriele Dietrich, Geetha Ramakrishnan - Unorganised Sector Workers Federation, NAPM, TN; C R Neelkandan - NAPM Kerala; P Chennaiah & Ramakrishnam Raju - NAPM Andhra Pradesh, Arundhati Dhuru, Richa Singh, Nandlal Master - NAPM, UP; Sister Celia - Domestic Workers Union & Rukmini V P, Garment Labour Union, NAPM, Karnataka; Vimal Bhai - Matu Jan sangathan & Jabar Singh, NAPM, Uttarakhand; Anand Mazgaonkar, Krishnakant - Paryavaran Suraksh Samiti, NAPM Gujarat; Kamayani Swami, Ashish Ranjan - Jan Jagran Shakti Sangathan & Mahendra Yadav - Kosi Navnirman Manch, NAPM Bihar; Faisal Khan, Khudai Khidmatgar, J S Walia, NAPM Haryana; Kailash Meena, NAPM Rajasthan; Amitava Mitra & Avik Saha, NAPM West Bengal; Bhupender Singh Rawat - Jan Sangharsh Vahini & Rajendra Ravi, Joe Athialy, Vijayan M J, Madhuresh Kumar and Shabnam Shaikh - NAPM, Delhi

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* <http://www.sacw.net/article12789.html>

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Footnotes

[1] Read her life story in her own words for Zubaan Poster Women Project, dt July 25, 2011, available on ESSF (article 38069), [Gujarat \(India\) - On my involvement in the women's movement](#).