



Readers' Responses

Support for Pratima

I have just finished reading Pratima Singh's story in issue No. 156. It is a truly horrifying tale. We are all quite aware of the state of our society but have become cynical about it. The only silver lining is that there are men



and women of courage who are ready to fight against oppression in spite of the heavy odds stacked against them. Kudos to Pratima for her fighting spirit and to you, Editor, Manushi, for your infinite capacity to carry the fight against the entrenched enemy. I pray to the Divine Mother for success in your endeavours.

**Dr S. Narayanan, Gurgaon,
Haryana**

Saluting Rare Courage

Please convey this prisoner's humble regards to Pratima Singh. Her account, in No. 156, is deeply profound and displays a level of "rare courage" that gives dignity, beyond measure, to that young woman's life. May Pratima Singh find her deserved peace, both materially, and spiritually.

Her account brought tears to my tears.... I wish there was something I could do to help her. As release from prison gets closer, the hour of finally being able to financially contribute to Manushi efforts, remains one of this prisoner's primary agendas. My prison term expires in September 2011. Until then, peace to your Manushi family.

Recently, prison officers threatened to confiscate my Hindu books if I refuse to participate in a class that imposes Orwellian-Christian "cognitive skills." So while in that class I simply speak Vedic wisdom, much to the displeasure of Government instructors. America is the real "terrorist" state!

**Timothy Eby, Palestine Prison,
Texas, USA**

The South is Different

While I agree with Madhu Kishwar's arguments in her article, "The New Dalits and the New Brahmins of India", in issue No 154, I would like to point out that such wanton neglect of the use of the "mass language" is more a phenomenon of the northern, cow-belt of India, and does not occur to such a degree in other parts of the country. Scholarly tomes on history and social development are available in Tamil, Malayalam and Kannada; a casual perusal of book reviews published in *The Hindu* will substantiate this fact. Genuine talent transcends language barriers. The world's *cognoscenti* are familiar with the sublime art of

Bismillah Khan and Ammanur Madhava Chakyar, in spite of the fact that neither of these two legendary personalities was articulate in English! Difficulties experienced by persons capable of functioning in only one language when they venture out into job markets outside their own linguistic boundaries are due to the requirements of the job market, not symbols of deprivation. There cannot be any legislation, and indeed should



not be any legislation on such issues.

Those who would only care to look can find national institutions, which have assiduously cultivated and promoted the '*lingua franca*' approach to developing a link common language, rather than the '*lingua pura*' approach and have succeeded. The armed forces and the Central police forces, closely followed by the railways are shining examples of how language can integrate, rather than divide or "deprive".

Navneet, via email □