

LADIES PROGRAMME

A number of social and cultural programmes were arranged for ladies accompanying the participants during the Sixth World Conference. A special feature introduced in the programme was the ladies seminar on the "Role of Wives in Technology" the details of which are given on page cxcvii. The details of the other events are as follows:

Sightseeing visit to Badkhal

Badkhal lake, 32 km from New Delhi is a holiday retreat. The glittering lake is protected by the rise of reddish rocks. The country side and the quiet, all conspire to entice holiday makers. The ladies visited Badkhal lake on Jan. 11, 1977 from 12.00-16.00 hrs. and witnessed folk dances and listened to the traditional Qavali. Lady participants also danced with the folk dancers. Camel ride, dance by monkeys and show by snake charmer provided additional attractions for the visit. Lunch was served in The Grey Falcon restaurant which commands a beautiful view of the lake.

Rangoli, Mehendi, Jewellery and Saree demonstration

A demonstration of India's traditional Indian folk arts (Rangoli), the use of Henna (Mehendi), display of distinctive Indian Jewellery and the use of Saree, the traditional dress of Indian women was held on Jan. 13, 1977 from 9.30 to 12.30 hrs. at Dhaula Kuan Club, which was followed by lunch.

Rangoli is an Indian folk art and characteristic of a way of life. Rangoli etymologically finds its origin in the words Rang. Rekhandi which means colourful designs created by the use of lines. Historically it has its roots in the very beginning of Indian life. The famous epic heroine Sita was supposed to have been protected from demons by a line drawn in front of the hut by Lakshman. From times immemorial Indian women have drawn these designs in white or coloured powder in front of the main entrances as means of warding off evil. Despite regional variations the art of Rangoli is particularly popular in Maharashtra, South India and Bengal. But all over India it has the magical implication of a charm.

The orient is familiar with Henna, which is known as the auspicious 'mehendi' in India. Indian ladies use Mehendi on all auspicious occasions such as festivals, marriages, birth etc. The bridal hands and feet are decorated with intricate designs. In fact the tradition has it that the degree of the husband's love is indicated by the tint of the Mehendi. Among the Muslims in India, a pilgrim of Mecca, proclaims his enhanced religious status by dying his hair bright orange with Henna. In modern times Mehendi is used as a conditioner and colouring agent by hair dressers. The leaves of the Mehendi tree are dried and ground into fine powder. A few drops of kerosene oil and some juice from the Okra vegetable are added with water to make it into a sticky paste. After 15-20 minutes the mehendi is applied on the hands which is previously coated with lemon juice. After the design has been traced, the surplus is removed after 2 hours. Mustard oil is applied on the hands and feet and kept overnight. The next morning the design stands out in bright red colour, indicative of the joy that the occasion is to bring.

Jewellery in India is distinctive for its aesthetic nature, for the vigor and sturdiness and for the simplicity of motifs picked up from the immediate environment. It is in fact a part of

Indian culture and a facet of its socio-economic pattern with deep religious overtones. Every important landmark of 'sanskara' in an individual's life, like birth, marriage, death has a corresponding ornaments to it. In the social pattern, it has taken the form of 'stridhan' or wealth (in form of jewellery) given to the bride at the time of marriage. It is thus a form of investment. Despite the wide range in jewellery which stems from local and regional varieties, the wearing of jewellery is very common in India for all important occasions. Though jewellery is worn in profusion, the Indian women carry it so that it never looks ostentatious.

If ever a symbol was to be chosen for the Indian women, it would be as a personification of modesty and it is her traditional dress, 'the sari', which contributes to this. The sari remains amidst the turbulent changes of fashions, six yards of flowing material, mould every curve of her body leaving much to the imagination. A full length petticoat is tied to the waist before a sari is draped. The upper portion of the body is covered with a matching blouse or choli. One end of the sari is tucked into the petticoat at the righthand side. The rest of the material is taken around back to the initial tuck leaving plenty for the 'palla', the remaining is twisted into pleats which are tucked in at the centre. The 'palla' is then taken around and draped on the left shoulder giving a graceful finale to the ensemble.

Saree competition for the foreign ladies provided excellent opportunities of learning saree draping. Mrs. K. Kubo of Japan won the first prize.

Visit to Yoga Centre

A visit of a yoga centre, was made in the afternoon of Jan. 13, 1977, where demonstrations of various yoga exercises were witnessed by the ladies. Laboratories and hospitals attached to the Yoga Center were also visited by the ladies.

Cooking Demonstration

The demonstration of Indian cooking of vegetarian and non-vegetarian dishes was arranged on Jan. 14, 77 from 9.30 AM to 12.30 at Dhaula Kuan Club which was followed by lunch. Ladies had a chance to taste the various dishes demonstrated and received the recipe of various traditional Indian cooking.

Shopping at State Emporia

In the afternoon on Jan. 11, 1977, from 14.30 to 14.50 hrs. ladies were guided to State Emporia for their shopping. These emporia present a glimpse of the handicrafts of the various states of India.