

India Mahila Association

P.O. Box 67744, Station O, Vancouver, B.C. V5W 3V2

Our group came into existence in Vancouver with the recognition that there was no organized voice of Indian women in the community, that cultural, religious and political events in the community were male dominated. Meetings between a few women in 1973 led to the establishment of this women's organization with the specific aims of addressing the situation of Indian women in the Indian community and the Canadian society at large.

One of our first efforts with the aim to celebrate our culture was the formation of an Indian Women's Dance Group. Since 1974 this group has consistently performed at Folkfests, various internal social functions and also at multicultural gatherings.

We have set-up Arts and Crafts displays at neighbourhood centres and schools. These have been complemented by members speaking to community groups and schools about Indian culture and traditions.

Our biggest fund-raising effort to date was a cultural night in November 1976 which was attended by over 700 people.

In 1974 we received a grant from the Secretary of State which enabled us to hire a full-time worker for a period of nine months, to work out of the Sunset Area Information Centre. She helped women to enrol in English classes, go to Employment and Immigration offices, to look for work and provide general information regarding social services available in the city.

We held a successful public meeting on March 8th 1981, International Womens Day. The speeches focused on issues such as educational, cultural, social and economic discrimination against women.

On Sept 9 1981 we held another public meeting. This time the theme of the meeting was prevention of Violence Against Women. Various Indian organizations were invited to speak on the issue.

Our objective is to share our skills and information with our sisters, to help one another become aware of our rights, how to defend them and to provide emotional support for each other. We hope to do this through discussion groups amongst ourselves and through writing articles about issues that concern women in the local papers.

We look forward to sharing your ideas, experiences and comments. At the same time we would like to encourage you all as Indian women to join the group.