Women From 16 Nations Gather for Salem Conference
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Three Saivite Aadheenams, numerous wealthy and respected local Hindus and women delegates from more than 16 nations joined hands to make possible the February 18-19 First International Conference of Hindu Women in Coimbatore, South India. Led by Thavathiru Dr. Saimatha Sivabrindha Devi, Chief of Thilakavathiar Aadheenam of Podukkottai, the women hope to forge a potent world unity of women capable of arousing Hinduism's sleeping consciousness. Curiously, the conference coincided exactly with the Second State Hindu temple Protection And Hindu Solidarity Conference, held roughly 100 miles a away in Salem. It was truly a time of examination and decision for Hindus.

From a glance at the resolutions, more than just the memory of speeches will be the legacy of the women's gathering, though speeches were abundant. Most significant is the plan to open an "International Cultural University" in Tamil Nadu for women, which some hope will provide the physical facilities needed to fulfill other resolutions. Dr. Mrs. Pramela Ganeshan of Malaysia was nominated as the first Chancellor, and more than one lack rupees (US $10,000) was pledged to begin the project.

To solve the problem of "inadequate TV and radio coverage of Hindu religious activities in general" the delegates resolved that Hinduism should set up its own media, with an aim to promote Hindu education, recognized as the antidote to conversion and the primary means of helping the religion.

Mothers are to conduct classes "at all places," and positive steps taken to educate and help the weaker sections of the populace especially Temples, mutts and the facilities of affluent Hindus, the ladies suggest, should be utilized when possible to set up classrooms, free dispensaries hostels and homes.

The controversial subject of women performing temple puja was also boldly broached, and all resolved to "afford sufficient opportunities for women in performing archanas and participating in various Hindu rituals," for which, Dr. Ganeshan stated, "There is no restriction on women...if they have the necessary qualifications."

The World Hindu Women's Association, based at Podukkottai, and other local Hindu women's associations worldwide have agreed to begin coordinating efforts toward these aims. At the next international conference, one or two years hence, who knows, perhaps the covering TV station will be "all Hindu Broadcasting"

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