Changing the Face of Feminism

***Interviewed by* HANA SHAMS AHMED**

In an article titled 'Feminism Remixed' journalist and writer Ammu Joseph writes, "The fact that women coming of age in the new millennium wish to reclaim feminism and make it their own is, I think, a fairly clear sign that it is alive, kicking and, more importantly, evolving. It certainly contradicts the common assumption that young women have no time or use for feminism." Feminism has become almost a 'dirty word' in male-dominated newsrooms. In her articles Ammu Joseph explores how the struggle for women to show that they are capable of doing as well as men have been changing over the years. She has interviewed 200 women journalists for her book 'Women in Journalism: Making News' and explored from different angles what it means to be a woman journalist today. As the variables in the society change so do the challenges. The challenges for women today it seems are quite different from those in newsrooms 20 years ago. Working as an independent journalist now it is clear that the work for Joseph was anything but easy. Carline Bennett in an article about her writes about how Joseph while preparing a report for the United Nations on women stayed up till the 4 a.m. to finish her report. In 1986 she quit The Indian Post as The Editor of the Sunday supplement magazine when the newspaper editor asked her to concentrate on food, fashion and fun.

Ammu Joseph has been a journalist for 20 years. She began her career as a journalist with Eve's Weekly, for which she served as Assistant Editor for four years. She has also been a visiting lecturer in journalism for the post-graduate course in 'Social Communications Media' at the Sophia College Polytechnic, Bombay, since 1995.

> "There are many varied opinions on that issue. Some people say that if you want to be treated as an equal you can't expect any special facilities. But others say that as long as society does not change and women have to shoulder the burden of the family and household it should be possible to accommodate it."

In addition to writing freelance for various publications in India and abroad on issues related to women, children, human development and the media, she has contributed a fortnightly column for children to The Hindu's Young World. Based in Bangalore, India Ammu Joseph is a freelance journalist, media analyst and editorial consultant. She has co-authored and edited, with Kalpana Sharma, a book entitled, Whose New? The Media and Women's Issues (Sage, 1994).

She received her B.A. in English Literature from Women's Christian College in Madras, a diploma in Social Communications Media from Sophia College Polytechnic in Bombay, and a B.S. in Public Communications from Syracuse University, New York. She has also been a press fellow at Wolfson College, Cambridge University, England. Her other books include 'Terror, Counter-terror: Women Speak Out' and 'Storylines - Conversations with Women Writers'.

Recently at a conference in Kathmandu organised by Working Women Journalists (WWJ) of Nepal Ammu Joseph spoke about women journalists in India. She spoke to The Star magazine about what it means to be a woman journalist today.

It is a common observation throughout the region that although we see a lot of working women journalists the decision-making positions are mostly taken up by male journalists. Why do you think there are so few women journalists in decision-making positions in the media?

Actually there has been an increase of women in decision-making positions, particularly in television, and