

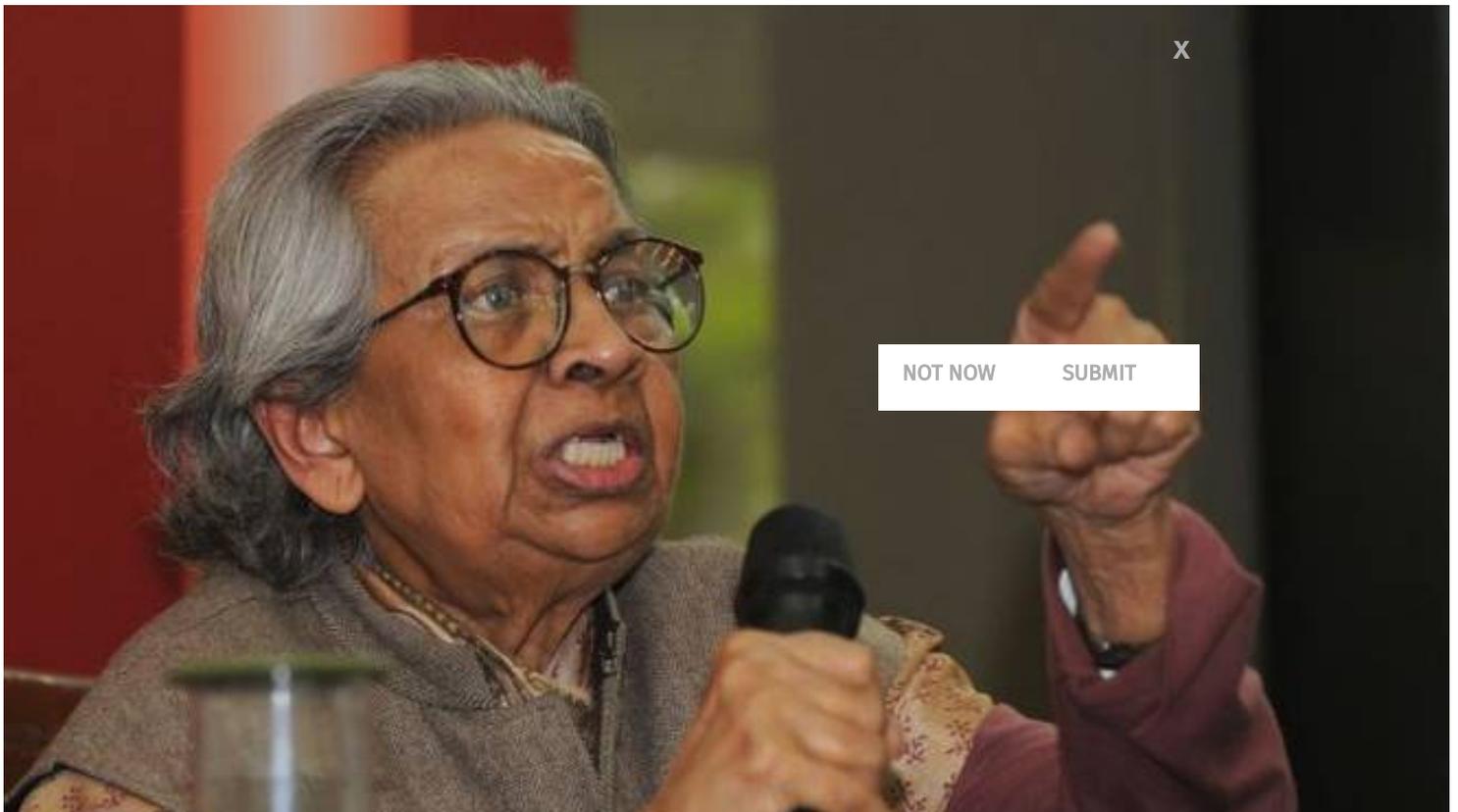


Click submit to get news alerts from The Hindu

You can manage the notifications any time from your browser settings.

Add alerts from your favourite topics:

- Business Entertainment Sport
 Life & Style



SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI, MAY 30, 2013 16:15 IST

UPDATED: MAY 31, 2013 11:38 IST

Vina Mazumdar, doyenne of the Indian women's movement, architect of the epochal Report of the Committee on the Status of Women in India in post independent India, passed away in a central Delhi hospital on May 30 after a brief illness.

In the introduction to her memoirs published by *Zubaan* in 2010, she described herself as a "women's activist", a "feminist", a "trouble-maker", but the one she liked best was that described herself as a "recorder and chronicler of the Indian Women's Movement" and a "grand-mother of women's studies in South Asia."



Click submit to get news alerts from The Hindu

You can manage the notifications any time from your browser settings.

Add alerts from your favourite topics:

- Business
 Entertainment
 Sport
 Life & Style

Delhi at the time. She saw herself as a link between the unfulfilled ideals of the freedom struggle and the women's movement that emerged in the seventies.

She was born in a middle class Bengali family as the youngest of five siblings, three brothers and two sisters. She joined Patna University in July 1951 as a lecturer in Political Science and found that there were many in the department who willingly accepted her "unconventional" teaching methods. In 1952, she married Shankar Mazumdar who she met in Patna following her newly acquired taste in classical music. The only change in her name, she wrote in her memoirs, was that the letter 'j' in her surname was replaced by 'z'.

Vina Mazumdar was a fighter. Never to get cowed down in front of what she felt was palpably wrong and unjust, she became the first Secretary of the Patna University Teachers' Association and was at the forefront of a teachers' agitation against the state government's new Bill for Bihar Universities. Before that as a student and secretary of the Ashutosh College Girls Students Union, she helped organise a meeting to support the recommendations of the Rama Rao Committee on Hindu Law Reform (to expand the inheritance rights of daughters). She also arranged a trip, in the "teeth of opposition" for the girl students to meet Mahatma Gandhi who was then staying at Sodepur Khadi Ashram.

History was always her first love, she wrote but no one in her family ever thought of recording her story of their lives – not even her father or uncle, the historian R C Majumdar, both of whom had contributed substantively to India's development. She resisted the idea for several years before agreeing to write her memoirs.

She was not averse to being called a rolling stone. She changed seven jobs in fourteen years and then at the age of 53, she started the Centre for Women's Development Studies, an institution that has pursued the idea of "action-research", an experiment that she began in organising landless peasant women in Bankura district, West Bengal.

This article has been corrected for a factual error. Pandit Nehru's speech is known as "Tryst with Destiny"