

RASHTRIYA SEVA SAMITHI (RASS)
BRIEF REPORT ON
THREE DECADES CELEBRATIONS AND
SEMINAR ON WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

Venue : Mahathi Auditorium
Place : Tirupati
Date : 06.07.2011



A seminar has been conducted by Rashtriya Seva Samithi (RASS) on various aspects of women empowerment, legal rights for women protection and to safeguard women from various atrocities in observance of completion of Three Decades of services for women. The event is planned and organized on 06 July 2011. HE President of India, Smt.Pratibha Devisingh Patil ji, had consented to be the Chief Guest, HE Sri E.S.L. Narasimhan, Governor of Andhra Pradesh,

Hon'ble Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh Sri N.Kiran Kumar Reddy, Sri N.Raghuveera Reddy, Minister for Revenue, Relief, Rehabilitation, ULC, Dr.J.Geetha Reddy, Minister for Major Industries for Andhra Pradesh, Dr.Chintha Mohan, Member of Parliament, Tirupati and Dr.K.



Chiranjeevi, Member of Legislative Assembly, Tirupati constituency along with various VVIPs, VIPs, Resource Persons, women SHG members and delegates are participated in the event.

After lightening the lamp by SHG members, Dr.M.Ramadevi, Girl Child Development Officer, Rajiv Vidya Mission, Chittoor has shared her experience. She advocated the



importance of vocational skills for the income generating activities among the women and the life skills, especially for the adolescent girls. She explained with examples of their importance among adolescent girls as well as women's life. She sensitized the gathering to concentrate on inducing life skills for adolescent girls especially to protect themselves from acid attacks, eve teasing and harassment by the neighbours or in public places. She also explained the importance of vocational skills for the SHG women and to gain some income by adopting income generating activities and utilize the credit flow from the SHGs as working capital.



Later, Dr.R.Varalakshmi, Professor & Dept. of Home Science, shared her observations that health is one of the important aspects for adolescent, newly married and expectant mothers. She explained the importance of personal hygiene, sanitation and nutrition for the wellbeing and

development of the family, especially those from the lower strata of the society. The triangular effect of nutrition, personal hygiene and sanitation is manifold and directly influence the health condition of children, women and family and minimizes the risk of being ill. As the health factors influences the fund flows as well as debt trap for the families, the women has to take care of the family health.

Then, a team of folk artists sung few sensitization songs on the importance of women in the society as well as their contribution to the nation, literacy and the children's future.



Afterword's Dr.Padmavathi, Professor, Department of Women Studies and Director, Dept. of Lifelong Learning and Extension, Sri Padmavathi Mahila University, discussed about various forms of atrocities on women and

constitution provisions as well as rights for women. She explained how to protect women themselves. She discussed about work load, gender



discrimination, domestic violence and trafficking of women. She narrated various acts, provisions, legal rights, constitutional support and protective mechanisms such as family counseling centers, state and national level bodies including National Commission for

Women (NCW) to safeguard the interests of women. She provides few examples from the District and across the State. She interacted with the participants to express their modes of protection against various atrocities.

Ms.Krishnaveni, Project Officer, ICDS, Pichatur shared her learning's about various mechanisms and Regional level institutions, organizations and bodies for protection of street children, orphans and trafficked victims. She explained about Sabala Scheme of Ministry of Women and Child Development, GOI. She invited the attention of participants such that the spread of ICDS and support women can seek from ICDS.



Later on, Prof.N.B.Sudhakar Reddy, Psychologist explained the about the mutual trust, gender equity and family relationships to be maintained and due participation either by women or by men is equally important for cordial relationship within the family, which leads to development of family.



Beneficiaries of SHGs promoted by RASS are also reflected about their experiences as well as the support from the SHGs and RASS. N.Bujjamma, Navodaya SHG explained that when all the relatives, friends are not supported their family during the critical period of her husband ill health. At that time, through SHG RASS supported her with the emergency loan and guided her to approach appropriate hospital with a reference. It saved their family due to support from SHG. She explained the process and the step ahead taken by the SHG women shows the cohesiveness in the SHG.

R.Chandrakala, Baba SHG explained the process of federating the SHGs and the way they are progressing. She explained the incidences of safeguard in the women interests through the federation. The federation is owned, operated and



maintained by the representatives of the SHGs and with the internal fund mobilization. She specified how the internal funds are become basis for external fund mobilization. She reflected on importance of economic empowerment in the process of women empowerment.

A.Subbarathanamma, Venkateswara SHG of R.Agraharam village shared the collective action experiences in protecting women against domestic violence. As all the women in the village are in the SHG fold as well as all SHGs are federated, the husbands, who are frequently manhandling women, are facing critical criticisms. Thus, many of such persons are avoiding wife battering and other forms of domestic violence. She explained two such events and their participation to protect their co-women.



The artist team sung two songs on disability and motherhood. They sensitized the gathering on disabled women and all the mothers. One of the RASS beneficiaries daughter performed classical dance. She was a recipient of state level award.



Honorary Founder General Secretary of RASS Dr.G.Muniratnam explained about various programmes implemented by RASS for empowerment of women. He explained about the promotion of women empowerment programmes in the State, which left a

contemporary legacy for other organizations to follow. RASS Mahila Pragathi has been a flagship programme in this direction. As on date RASS promoted 4578 SHGs in Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu under the banner of RASS Mahila Pragathi. With the support of Ministry of HRD, GOI, RASS is running State Resource Center for Adult and Continuing Education with a focus on female literacy.

Hon'ble Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh explained about the state initiatives for women empowerment such as providing housing sites and Indiramma houses on the name of women. He also specified recent announcement by the state government about the rehabilitation package for the trafficked victims. Further, he specified that Andhra Pradesh is on forefront in promotion of SHGs and



regulating microfinance on commercial basis. He told that the State Government is planning to establish a separate autonomous banking system to provide additional loaning to the SHG women with low rate of interest. He added that, the State Government is subsidizing the rate of interest for

SHG women. He further, suggested the SHG women will get around Rs.9000 crores as loan in the current financial year. He applauded the efforts of RASS for empowering women and sustaining them through promotion of CBOs.

His Excellency Governor of Andhra Pradesh Sri E.S.L.Narasimhan addressed the participants by initiating over the women as mother. He expressed women as important with the roles of mother, daughter, sister and wife. He expressed his concern over female literacy rate, which is a growth engine for national development. The decreasing male, female ratio and nutritional status of adolescent girls as one of the immediate needs to be fulfilled. He revealed that the Government of Andhra Pradesh announced 50 % reservation for women in local body elections.



Her Excellency President of India Smt.Pratibha Devisingh Patil ji addressed the gathering by sharing her association with Dr.Nirmala Deshpande, who was associated with RASS for more than a decade. HE informed that constitutional rights were followed up with legislative measures for women, which help women to make remarkable contributions and to achieve excellence. Even then, a large number of women are still to emerge from their limiting circumstances. She quoted Acharya Vinoba Bhave "Women's Social, family and political rights and responsibilities should be exactly the same as men's".

She exemplified as men and women are two wheels of chariot. She expresses their concern on social evils like female infanticide, female foeticide, child marriages, dowry and crime against women. The hallmark of secure nation is



when its women are secure. She advocated for any crime against women should not be tolerated and the perpetrators should be dealt most severely. This can be achieved through social movement, an awareness campaign that spreads the understanding that a daughter is as precious as a

son. Man and women will attain equality only when the birth of a girl is celebrated with as much joy as in the case of boy.

HE expressed concern about the provisional census of 2011 reveals that female population ratio in 0-6 year's age group is 914 which is ever lowest since our independence, which causes imbalance in the society. Girls when given education and opportunities have excelled in



studies, in sports, in arts, in the sciences and have brought laurels not only to their families, but to the nation. They are no less than boys. Hence, health, education and capacity building, which would equip them to avail of income generating opportunities, are basic and essential tools of empowerment.

Education widens the horizons of opportunities. Now with the Right to Education having become a fundamental right, all girls and boys of our country will receive free and compulsory primary education. Our endeavours should be to prevent drop-outs of girls from schools, and to ensure that a large number of girls continue their higher studies. We have to also vastly improve female literacy. Educated women can be the voices in the fight against the discrimination and biases that exist in society against women. This places her in a position to be a driver of change and growth in a rising India. India's burden of maternal, newborn and child mortality is one of the highest in the world and needs to be



addressed. Access to and affordability of healthcare, especially for women and children, are tasks that must be accomplished.

Another critical aspect is the economic empowerment of women which will make women financially self reliant, giving them confidence and a sense of self esteem. Self Help Groups

movements have been a useful tool for bettering lives. By pooling their skills and resources, however meager, women have undertaken income generating activities. Building the capacities of Self Help Group through better training in organizing themselves, so that they can have better access to credit facilities, as well as widen their market outreach, will further strengthen them.

HE expressed satisfaction over a million elected women representatives for villages and towns in India. HE invited the coordinated efforts of Government civil society, local community and women for women empowerment as well as to safeguard themselves from various forms of atrocities.

The seminar concluded with vote of thanks by Dr.G.Muniratnam, Founder General Secretary of Rashtriya Seva Samithi (RASS) to the VVIPs, VIPs, Resource Persons, supporters, National Commission for Women (NCW), Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) and Akhil Bharat Rachanatmak Samaj (ABRS) as well other dignitaries especially women.

