



Institute of Social Sciences



**25th Anniversary of 73rd Constitution Amendment
Women's Political Empowerment Day Celebrations
23 - 24 April 2018
Theme: *Swachh Panchayat, Swachh Bharat***

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Shri. Ramdas Athawale, Hon'ble Minister of State for Social Justice and Empowerment with Madhu Devi Upadhyay (Bihar), Mukti Devi (Chhattisgarh) and Prema M. Timmanagoudar (Karnataka), winners of 2018 Outstanding Women Panchayats Leaders awards.

To commemorate the 25th anniversary of the 73rd Constitution Amendment, which made Panchayats and Municipalities “institutions of self government” and to celebrate “Women’s Political Empowerment Day”, a two-day conference was held on 23-24 April 2018 at the Institute of Social Sciences (ISS), New Delhi. More than 200 elected women Panchayat representatives from 15 States participated in the two-day programme.

When the 73rd Constitution Amendment, with its provision of not less than one-third of seats reserved for women became Part IX of the Constitution on 24th April 1993, the Institute took the initiative to celebrate this historic day as “Women’s Political Empowerment Day” at the national



Hon'ble Minister Shri. Ramdas Athawale delivering the Inaugural address

level bringing together thousands of elected women Panchayat representatives to New Delhi from all over the country since 1994.

Shri. Ramdas Athawale, Hon'ble Minister of State for Social Justice and Empowerment, Govt. of India, was the Chief Guest and Ms. Farah Zahir, Senior Economist, The World Bank, the Guest of Honour of the inaugural function.

Welcoming the distinguished guests and participants, Dr. Ash Narain Roy, Director, Institute of Social Sciences, said the reason why ISS celebrates ‘women’s political empowerment day’ year after year is that celebration of milestones serves the purpose of preparing the road map for future. Another reason for the celebration is the unfinished agenda of women’s empowerment, that is, gender equity and gender justice. Panchayats haven’t delivered fully not because something is wrong with the institution; it is the political class and bureaucracy who have sought to throttle these grassroots institutions. States too haven’t devolved functions to these third tier of government.

In his inaugural address, the Hon'ble Minister applauded the initiative of the Institute of Social Sciences to celebrate the Women’s Political Empowerment Day. He stated that Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was closely linked with the socialist movement and he always worked towards development of women and Dalits. To bring about change in the condition of women and for empowerment of women, Babasaheb introduced the Hindu Code Bill in Parliament but Hindu leaders opposed it. Despite many hurdles women have made progress in various walks of life,

including governance at the grassroots level. The Hon'ble Minister expressed his concern that unlike the local governments, fifty percent reservation for women has not been introduced in Parliament and State Assemblies.

The Hon'ble Minister further highlighted how uneducated women have become entrepreneurs in Maharashtra through Lijjat Pappad industry, etc.



Farah Zahir addressing the Inaugural session

Ms. Farah Zahir congratulated the Institute for taking up “Swachh Panchayat, Swachh Bharat” as the theme of this year’s celebrations. Quoting from the Economic Survey 2017-18, she pointed out the key factors that deter women from entering politics - domestic responsibilities, prevailing cultural attitudes regarding the roles of women in society, lack of support from family, lack of confidence and lack of finance. According to her, the World Bank is working towards the social and economic empowerment of women through its project interventions. She elaborated on The World Bank’s twin goals approach: Poverty Reduction and Shared Prosperity, where the Bank’s view is that, no country, community or economy can achieve the full potential or meet the challenges of the 21st century without the full participation of women and men, girls and boys.

Ms. Farah also gave a detailed account of Bank interventions transforming lives of women through grassroots level interventions. For instance, the Bihar Rural Livelihoods Project- *Jeevika* brought about positive changes for the women in the rural household as equal economic and political participants besides making them active stakeholders for monitoring, ensuring transparency in the delivery of public services. Ms. Farah also highlighted the World Bank support to Swachh Bharat Mission, tied to performance indicators - fewer people practicing open defecation, more villages achieving and sustaining Open Defecation Free (ODF) status, and more people having access to solid and liquid waste management. The contributions made by Bank’s local government projects in Karnataka, West Bengal, Kerala and Bihar, in terms of creation of safe spaces for women to participate, increasing the political participation of women were also mentioned. She reminded that it is easier to legislate for representation of women but it is a complex task to create conditions for their effective participation. In conclusion, she highlighted that we should continue on strengthening institutional mechanisms, explore conditions that enhance women participation, and constantly reinforcing the message that the government fully supports women who are active as ‘agents of change’ in the society”.

Three women Panchayat leaders were presented awards for their outstanding contributions – (i) Ms. Madhu Devi Upadhyay, Upa-Pramukh, Chandi English Panchayat, Rohtas District, Bihar; (ii) Ms. Mukti Devi Sarpanch Bataikela Village Panchayat, Jashpur District, Chhattisgarh; and (iii) Ms. Prema M. Timmanagoudar, President, Gram Panchayat Raddernagnur, Gadag District, Karnataka.



Rajendra Singh

Dr. Bidyut Mohanty, Head Women's Studies, ISS, proposed a vote of thanks and highlighted the need for empowering women in various fields to make the democratic institutions function effectively.

Dr. Rajendra Singh, Director, Tarun Bharat Sangh, who is known as 'waterman' and a recipient of the Ramon Magsaysay Award in 2001, in his key-note address said that earlier India was better placed to share knowledge with other countries but of late disrespect was shown for water resources, rivers besides women. The reproductive nature present in vegetation

as well as in women gained importance with emphasis on good thought process. The cleaning of rivers and its surroundings is considered on priority basis and an emphasis on skill development with the meager resources even in drought-prone Jaisalmar and Barmer districts of Rajasthan was made. In 2017, 13 states and 317 districts suffered drought as there was no cleaning or draining of ponds, lakes and water flowed without storage facilities and drought followed. A conventional way to change behavior pattern as part of cleanliness drive is the emotional approach to clean water resources where people should not be allowed to throw anything on the road.

According to Rajendra Singh, water is synonymous with life and cleanliness of water should start in ponds, tanks and lakes. Water is one of the five elements around us and its preservation for proper conservation is essential. It will increase the index of community happiness than monetary benefits due to increase in the groundwater level. He explained that by digging pits for water they have recharged 2500 wells in 19 days and due to his efforts renovation of lakes took place in 8 lakes in Rajasthan, 2 lakes in Maharashtra and 1 lake in Karnataka and brought water to those areas which faced drought earlier.

"Therefore, with cleanliness and conservation of water, the behavior of people and women can change. If nature is preserved we can change the face of the earth", said Rajendra Singh.

Ms. Jaya Jaitley, President, Dastkari Haat Samiti, New Delhi, chaired the plenary session. According to Ms. Jaitley, women must raise their voice to retain their self respect and work hard to



Jaya Jaitley

reach Parliament through Panchayats and they must participate effectively in preparations of Bills in Assemblies and Parliament, and framing of rules. Women Self Help Groups have to connect with Panchayats with the political support. There is an urgent need for women to come together through the Panchayats for development work in their villages.

Dr. (Mrs.) Inderjeet Gill, Senior Fellow of the ISS, Amritsar, mentioned in her address that in several Panchayats, the representatives told her that toilets are being used for storing purposes. The women know the necessity of educating the public for proper usage and for cleanliness

drive. Elected women are aware of the need to play an active role in resolving the issues of liquor consumption and tobacco chewing by men and women, fighting domestic violence and channelising funds for community development.



Inderjeet Gill

Dr. Babita Varma, Associate Professor, Lakshmibai College, mentioned that women Panchayat members from Maharashtra underlined the tasks undertaken by the Panchayats, including completion of toilet construction, provision of insurance coverage for all family members, introduction of water ATM cards and Rs. 10 lakh provided by MLAs for developing a smart village.

Dr. Sujata Singh, Senior Fellow, ISS, spoke of the challenges women face while implementing the Swachh Bharat Mission that includes door to door visits by Rajasthan women to educate people despite resistance from shops, hospitals and hotels. The issue raised during the interactive session was about the shortage of water supply, improper usage of toilets, regular monitoring of maintenance of tanks.

The main achievements in Bihar included villages being declared ODF and alcohol free. Effective Self Help Groups are working there. In Telangana, waste disposal baskets are placed in front of every house and each Panchayat has three autorickshaws to collect the waste and dump in the dumpyard.

On the second day, the 25th anniversary celebrations of the 73rd Constitution Amendment began with the address by Her Excellency MA. Teresita C. Daza, Ambassador of the Philippines. Her Excellency said that Philippines' local government system consists of about 80 provinces, 133 cities, 1500 municipalities and 42,000 villages. The government has taken measures to ensure that the goals of democratization, reform in the electoral system, professionalizing the civil services, decentralization and devolution of more powers and responsibilities to local governments are met. The country is moving towards a federal polity. Still much work needs to be done regarding what type of federal government best suits the Philippines and how to benefit from the experiences of a

country like India through the Institute of Social Sciences.

Talking about the global situation, the Philippines Ambassador said that across the world women's voices have largely been muted whether in public, in politics or on economic or security issues.

Her Excellency cautioned women Panchayat leaders that rights and entitlements do not come on a platter. They have to remain vigilant eternally to be able to perform their role in decision and policy making procedures. As true empowerment, she said, starts at home, hence it was of utmost importance for



H E MA. Teresita C. Daza, Ambassador, of Philippines addressing the 25th anniversary celebrations.



Darwis Khudori

them to seek education, be reasonable, remain alert. Thus they will be able to make men realise their role in every aspect and all spheres of life.

While chairing the session addressed by Philippines ambassador Teresita Daza, Dr. Ash Narain Roy said that the functioning of the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) is a mixed bag of some outstanding successes and equally significant reverses. The rationale for empowering women and other disadvantaged groups is compelling: it promotes growth, reduces poverty and leads to better governance.

Prof. Darwis Khudori from University of Le Havre, France, stressed that for peaceful coexistence, liberation from hegemony and emancipation of people, what is needed is solidarity

among peoples, equality between races and nations, and, above all, equality between men and women resulting from liberation of women.



Tulsi Patel and Vijay Saluja

Prof. Tulsi Patel, S. K Dey Chair Professor at the ISS, chairing the plenary session said that women should be allowed to go for work in a progressive society and not confined to daily chores at home. Class differentiation of women is hindering their progress. Some women get elected to Parliament with support from their relatives who are MPs/MLAs but discrimination continues at the

Panchayat level and hinders their progress. Some of these issues came up for discussion in this interactive session. Panchayat representatives expressed concern over continuing incidences of violence.

Mr. Vijay Saluja, Chief Engineer (Retd.) New Delhi Municipal Council, and presently Senior Fellow of the ISS, impressed upon the Panchayat leaders to find ways and means of garbage disposal in the village Panchayats, as 62 million tonne of garbage is produced annually in different parts of India that includes plastic and medical waste as well.

Mr. Bharat Dogra, activist and journalist, shared his experience, while interacting with Panchayat women members. It was felt that unless dowry system is stopped, the female infanticide will not stop. Women representatives were also in favour of stopping sale of liquor. The Panchayat leaders wanted stringent punishment for rapes.

Dr. Sarbjit Chhina, former Professor, Khalsa College, Amritsar, and presently Senior Fellow of the ISS, linked the issue of lower participation of women in Panchayati Raj Institutions despite their increasing representation to low female literacy and their limited economic dependence.



Sarbjit Chhina



Swaraj Vidwaan, addressing the valedictory session.

Dr. Swaraj Vidwaan, Member, National Commission for Scheduled Castes, was the Chief Guest of the Valedictory Session. Dr. Vidwaan said that the Panchayati Raj has a historic role to play in terms of people's welfare. Talking about Uttarakhand, she said that progress is remarkable due to the sheer efforts of a few intelligent and hardworking women, who got elected to the Panchayats even without reservations. Only a mother can endure the difficulties in running the family and nurture the child for a healthy future. Women play a far effective role in strengthening the Panchayati Raj with regard to education, health, water and cleanliness in the villages.

her vast experience of providing training for women in Panchayats, said that women can take the lead in keeping the Panchayats clean. They are better capable of protecting the girl child and



Rita Sarin

In the Valedictory Address Ms. Rita Sarin, Country Director, The Hunger Project, based on keeping India hunger free. She added that women should take the responsibility to keep their villages clean and bring a change in their Panchayats. Ms. Rita Sarin concluded by saying when the 50th year of Panchayati Raj is celebrated, hopefully by then our Panchayats would be well-functioning and the effective third tier of government.

33% to 50% in more than 20 States. He suggested that from next year, the Women's Political Empowerment Day Celebrations should be held in all the States and it could conclude with a mega event in the National Capital.

Dr. George Mathew chaired the Valedictory Session. He expressed his appreciation for the successful two-day programme to celebrate 25 years of the 73rd Constitution Amendment. It was all possible because of the dedicated, courageous women representatives who had come from various States to participate. Due to hard work of these women representatives in their respective states, their reservation has increased from

An enthralling experience was the cultural evening on 23 April. The women representatives from Maharashtra, Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan and other States performed various folk dances. The artists from the Tibetan Women Association mesmerized the audience by their dance performance.



Dance performance by artists from Tibetan Women Association.



Panchayat Leaders from Maharashtra displaying their dancing talents



Institute of Social Sciences

New Delhi

Outstanding Women Panchayat Leaders Award

2018

Presented to

MADHU DEVI UPADHYAY

on the occasion of

Women's Political Empowerment Day Celebrations

23-24, April 2018, New Delhi

A leader is one who knows the way and shows the way. **Ms. Madhu Devi Upadhyay, Ph.D.**, Upa -Pramukh, Sanjhauli block, Rohtas District, Bihar typifies what all grassroots democracy can do. She has remained true to her promises and commitments after her election. As a result of Madhu's inspirational leadership, households have toilets. A record number of 8000 toilets were built in 52 days in six panchayats. Greater emphasis was given to the *Maha-Dalit* colonies. In her block she created awareness among the villagers not to defecate in the open and one village was made open defecation free due to her persistent initiatives. Given the distress among the farmers, she has taken timely steps to ease the availability of money for growing cash crops and encouraged farmers to learn new skills of cultivation. Allotment of 80 acres of land for growing cash crops was undertaken under her leadership. She has taken recourse to the Right to Information and Social Audit to deal with corruption.

Under her leadership, 45 Self Help Groups have been formed. Awareness programmes including vocational training, *janata durbar* for widow remarriage, dowry prohibition etc., have been taken up. Her work resulted in people getting old-age pensions, successful plantation of 1500 trees to create awareness about environment. She motivates the local women to plant a sapling after the birth of a girl child in the family.

Youth were mobilized for implementation of developmental schemes as also for promoting skill development.

With utilization of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantees funds three ponds were renovated in her constituency. Besides, she networked with two panchayats to complete laying of roads upto 3 kms with drainage facilities.

This award is given to Madhu Devi in recognition of her pioneering work on cleanliness, amazing leadership and her efforts to make village women financially independent.

Ash Narain Roy

Ash Narain Roy
Director



Institute of Social Sciences

New Delhi

Outstanding Women Panchayat Leaders Award

2018

Presented to

MUKTI DEVI

on the occasion of

Women's Political Empowerment Day Celebrations

23 April 2018, New Delhi

Smt. Mukti Devi, Sarpanch of Kansabel block of Jashpur District, Chhattisgarh, has all the credentials to be an inspiring grassroots leader. She has successfully provided safe piped water supply (Nal – Jal Yojana) to 502 households in her Gram Panchayat. Haat - Bazaar was started in the village and a commercial complex was built to provide space for villagers to sell their products. Mukti Devi has shown that it is possible to rise overcoming deprivations and handicaps of all kinds. To improve the health conditions, she has organized wellness camps and yoga in collaboration with the Ayush department.

Under her leadership 42 SHCs have been formed. She has worked overtime to ensure that the benefits of major government schemes like MGNREGA reach the intended beneficiaries especially women. Her other development work includes planting 1000 fruit saplings in collaboration with the Horticulture department. Her Panchayat implemented Swachh Bharat Mission in right earnest making her panchayat ODF (Open defecation Free). A pond was built on waste land and people from other villages offered their labor. Extensive steps were taken for developing self-reliance among the people. Transparency and accountability in the form of writing on the walls about budgetary allocations were followed by her. She also made the gram panchayat fully literate with 100% school enrollment which is an extraordinary achievement.

Under her leadership gram sabha meetings are held regularly. Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao camps have been undertaken to create awareness among the community and women from nearby panchayats. She has also worked for widow remarriage and dowry prohibition. With graduate degree and coming from a tribal community, her achievements and contributions are quite exemplary.

This award is given to Mukti Devi for her outstanding work in her Panchayat and also for her own struggle against all odds.

Ash Narain Roy

Ash Narain Roy

Director



Institute of Social Sciences

New Delhi

Outstanding Women Panchayat Leaders Award

2018

Presented to

PREMA M TIMMANAGOUDAR

on the occasion of

Women's Political Empowerment Day Celebrations

23-24, April 2018, New Delhi

Ms. Prema M Timmanagoudar was elected unanimously in 2015 as President of Raddernagur Gram Panchayat, Naragund Taluk, Gadag District, Karnataka. Under the Swachh Bharat Scheme, she was greatly instrumental in the construction of 170 toilets in one village in 45 days and 50 toilets in a day in another village. In 2016 her Gram Panchayat was declared open defecation free. As many as 625 toilets were completed. She took the support of the entire community, including youth in the construction tasks.

To her, women's empowerment is critical for societal change. Under her leadership, 100 Self Help Groups have been established. She also organized scores of health camps including cataract operations free of cost. The construction of an anganwadi centre was undertaken with financial contribution from donors. People's contribution through an emergency fund named VIVECHANA NIDHI was utilized when there was delay in receiving the government funds. Around 600 local people attend Gram Sabha meetings to create awareness about *Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao* campaign. She has done an incredible job by installing drinking water tanks, road laying, drainage issues and formation of voluntary work-groups known as *Shramadan Sangha*.

Ms. Prema took a keen interest in implementing the literacy and welfare programmes. She worked tirelessly to ensure that the benefits of the scheme reach the deserving people. In 1999, she arranged community and inter-caste marriages to bring harmony in the society. She initiated steps to resolve the conflicts peacefully at the community level without moving the court. Now the image of the Gram Panchayat has changed beyond recognition where peace reigns, welfare and developmental activities go on unimpeded.

Under Prema's leadership the Gram Panchayat received Gandhiji Gram Puraskar.

This award is given to Prema in recognition of her distinguished services. She is a role model for young women, particularly those who come from weaker sections and aspire to become leaders of tomorrow.

Ash Narain Roy

Ash Narain Roy

Director