

Roshni

July – September 2025



ALL INDIA WOMEN'S CONFERENCE



Women's Safety – Sanjeevani Mahila Sanstha



Menstrual Hygiene and Cervical Cancer- IPWDC- Delhi



*Women's Health - Swa Shakti
Abhivruddhi Samsthe, Karnataka*



Teachers' Day Allahabad



Women's Safety and Legal Awareness- AIWC Pondicherry



Menstrual Health by Akhil Hind Mahila Parishad, Gujarat

ROSHNI

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July-September 2025

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- Global Water Partnership
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From the Editor's desk...

Dear Sisters,

This issue carries a cover page featuring photographs of various activities conducted by our Branches under the UDAAN Programme initiated by the Head Office. Nearly 30 Branches have actively participated in this programme, empowering girls to become entrepreneurs and economically independent.

The half-yearly meeting this time was graciously hosted by Bhagini Samaj, Mangalore. It has been 43 years since the last conference was held in Mangalore. The event was a delightful gathering of Members from across the country, who came together with great enthusiasm to share, learn, and connect. The host Branch put in tremendous effort and ensured that the conference was a grand success.

*I once again humbly request all Members to share relevant articles and write-ups about your Branch activities. Please send them to **aiwc.roshni@gmail.com** along with two photographs. Kindly note that messages and photographs sent via WhatsApp are not suitable for publication.*

Sincerely,

Sheela Satyanarayan

Editor – Roshni



Head Office Activities

Half yearly Conference of AIWC 2025



Bhagini Samaj Mangalore, Karnataka hosted the Half Yearly Conference of AIWC 2025. The Inaugural session was held on 3 July, 2025 at Roshni Nilaya Auditorium, Mangalore. The inaugural session began with an invocation song by the members of the Bhagini Samaj. Chief Guest of the session Smt. Arundathi Chattopadhyaya, Performing Artist and Kamala devi Chattopadhyaya's grandson's wife, inaugurated the session by lighting the lamp. On this occasion she unveiled the portrait of Smt. Kamala devi Chattopadhyaya, one of the founder members of Bhagini Samaj. She highlighted the major initiatives taken by late Smt. Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya for women's empowerment before Independence. Guest Speaker Prof. Hilda Rayappan, Founder and Director of Prajna Counseling Center, mentioned the importance of voluntary social work.

Smt. Ratna Alva President of Bhagini Samaj welcomed the gathering. Secretary Smt. Bhanumathi spoke about the activities of the Bhagini Samaj, Smt. Vijayalaxmi



Bhat, Convener and Past President of Bhagini Samaj delivered keynote address and spoke about the circumstances under which Bhagini Samaj was established and its subsequent growth and progress.

Smt. Kalyani Raj President of AIWC conveyed her thanks to Bhagini Samaj for hosting this conference after 43 Years, at Mangalore, and spoke in brief about AIWC at National level. She also conveyed her thanks to Smt. Arundathi Chattopadhyaya and Prof. Hilda Rayappan for their presence.

Chief Guest, Guest Speaker, Office Bearers, Patrons and Past Secretaries were felicitated by the Host Branch Bhagini Samaj in the inaugural session.

Smt. Vajara Rao, ex-President of Bhagini Samaj and Smt. Vanamala Bhat, Vice President introduced the Chief Guest and guest speaker. Smt. Kripa Shetty, SCM Bhagini Samaj proposed vote of thanks. Treasurer, Smt. Sowmya Shetty compered the program.



Seminar on Women in Formal and Informal Diplomacy - NAWO



President, Smt. Kalyani Raj was invited to Panjab University, Chandigarh by Young Women Caucus of NAWO (National Alliance of Women's Organization) for chairing a session in the Seminar on Women in Formal and Informal Diplomacy: Issues, Challenges and Way Forward.

This topic, although probably less discussed and deliberated upon, is quite important particularly with recent gradual positive increase in the number of women taking to this field.

Formal diplomacy also known as Track 1 diplomacy, is the official, government-to-government communication and negotiation between nations conducted through established channels and by authorized state representatives. This structured approach

involves high-level officials like diplomats and ambassadors using tools such as treaties, summits, and embassies to manage international relations, resolve disputes, and foster cooperation without resorting to conflict.

Informal diplomacy refers to unofficial, often behind-the-scenes diplomatic activities and communication between parties, distinct from formal diplomatic channels like state-to-state negotiations. It encompasses various forms, including back-channel diplomacy, public diplomacy (government-to-public outreach), and Track II diplomacy (non-governmental, non-official efforts to foster dialogue).

Against this background, deliberations were made by retired Indian diplomats as

well as Ambassadors from few countries. Female diplomats highlighted challenges faced by them, extra efforts put in by them to be heard and recognized, issues relating to postings and other usual gender barriers. Example of Smt. Hansa Mehta championed the change of language from 'all men' to 'all Human Beings' in UNHR document, Smt. C.B. Muthamma who against all odds became first career woman Ambassador as Head of Mission to Hungary in 1970 and Smt. Chokila Iyer, Indian diplomat and civil servant who served as India's first female Foreign Secretary were quoted.

Ms. Chandni Joshi, former Regional Director of UNIFEM/UN Women (South Asia) and Dr. Pam Rajput narrated how they used informal diplomacy through advocacy for formation of UN Women.

Smt. Kalyani Raj shared some experiences of informal diplomacy from her banking career and shared that overall, some of the crucial challenges seemed common for females in any profession i.e. non-cooperation from support staff, disregard of ideas given, exclusion from major decisions taking, insensitive passing of comments or even taking women colleagues for granted. In fact the art of diplomacy involves conducting negotiations, building collaborations and reinforcing developmental objectives for long term goals and all these elements are gender neutral in nature. In this sense, the need for discussing gender equality in diplomacy is itself quite questionable because for diplomacy to succeed, it should

abstain from concepts of hierarchy and hegemony, and instead embrace diversity of all spheres.

Key takeaways from the discussions:

1. Challenges exist for women in both formal & informal diplomacy.
2. Women in formal diplomacy face the challenge of a higher bar set for them to prove their worth. They even have to be louder and more firm sometimes to break the glass ceiling and make their presence felt in the room.
3. Other challenges are related to gender-power dynamics, sexism, worklife balance, including restrictions in posting due to spouse and hierarchies. Women whose spouses are also from the same service face bigger challenges.
4. However, a good number of women have been able to intervene in policies and bring gender to the centre of discussion at the national and international level.
5. In India women's advocacy and diplomacy has resulted in enactment of key legislation such as Domestic Violence & POSH acts.

Since the participants were mostly students from different colleges and University, some of the way forward suggested to them were:-

- a) For diplomacy to succeed, it should abstain from concepts of hierarchy and hegemonies and instead embrace diversity of all spheres.

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- b) The art of diplomacy involves conducting negotiations, building collaborations and reinforcing development objectives and all these elements are gender neutral.
- c) Youth should shun patriarchy which is the fundamental root cause of gender equality.
- d) Gender sensitization should be a key tool for diplomacy, be it formal or informal.
- e) Integrating gender roles and commitments into formal diplomatic functioning may ease the burden and encourage more young girls to take it up as a career option.
- f) More women from minorities should be included in higher positions.
- g) Each women has elements of diplomacy within herself. She needs to recognize it, practice it and be confident about it be it work, home or family.



In India, there is no single act specifically named the "Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Act". Instead, a comprehensive framework of various laws and constitutional provisions work together to ensure gender equality and protect women's rights in the workplace.

- **The Constitution of India:** guarantees equality before the law (Article 14), prohibits discrimination on grounds of sex (Article 15), and ensures equal opportunity in public employment (Article 16).
- **The Equal Remuneration Act, 1976:** This act mandates that employers must provide equal pay for men and women performing the same work or work of a similar nature.
- **The Maternity Benefit Act, 1961 (amended in 2017):** This legislation entitles eligible women employees to up to 26 weeks of paid maternity leave, job protection during leave, and mandates creche facilities in establishments with 50 or more employees.
- **The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 (POSH Act):** This law aims to provide women with a safe work environment free from sexual harassment.
- **The Factories Act, 1948:** This act includes specific provisions for the health, safety, and welfare of women workers,
- **The Code on Wages, 2019:** This consolidated code reinforces the principle of no discrimination on the basis of gender (including transgender identity) in matters of recruitment, wages, or employment conditions for the same or similar work

The 16th Book Club meeting by MCM Library

Meeting was held on Monday, 18 August 2025 featuring a discussion on *Kaleidoscope*, a collection of nine short stories by Smt. Meenakshi Kumar, Member, AIWC. The book published by Pegasus, beautifully weaves human emotions against the rich and diverse canvas of the Indian landscape.

The session was chaired by Smt. Sherina Joshi, a retired Professor of English Literature from Deshbandhu College.

Smt. Joshi observed that the stories are women-centric and highlight the social evils that still persist in our society. She also read a few excerpts from the book that deeply moved the audience. “This book is a quiet conversation between the lines—sometimes thoughtful, sometimes mischievous, sometimes

bittersweet; hence, a *Kaleidoscope*,” she remarked.

The author shared that today’s Gen Z is living in a world where interactions are more with machines than with humans, and the sense of empathy that fosters emotional connection is fading. *Kaleidoscope* is her endeavour to rekindle human sensitivity through the detailed portrayal of characters and emotions.



Why are hobbies are so vital for seniors?

- **Mental Stimulation:** Engaging in a hobby keeps the mind sharp and active. Activities like learning a new language, playing a musical instrument, doing puzzles, or taking up painting can help improve cognitive function, memory, and even delay the onset of age-related cognitive decline.
- **Physical Health:** Many hobbies, such as gardening, dancing, or even simple walks, encourage physical activity. This helps seniors maintain mobility, strength, and balance, which can reduce the risk of chronic illnesses and improve overall physical health.
- **Social Connection:** Hobbies often provide opportunities for social interaction. Joining a book club, a knitting circle, a community garden, or a dance class helps combat loneliness and social isolation, fostering new friendships and a sense of community.
- **Emotional Well-being:** Hobbies are a fantastic outlet for stress reduction and emotional expression. They provide a sense of accomplishment and purpose, which can boost self-esteem and help alleviate symptoms of depression and anxiety.
- **Finding Meaning:** After retirement, many people struggle with a loss of identity and purpose. Hobbies can fill this void, providing a reason to get up in the morning and a new direction for personal growth and fulfillment.

Hobbies are not just a way to pass the time; they are a powerful tool for seniors to stay engaged, healthy, and happy.

Members Speak Articles by Members

Carrying the Torch: From AIWC's Vision to SACSS's Impact

By Smt. Sudha Acharya, AIWC Representative at the UN

My association with All India Women's Conference (AIWC) started when I was 16 years old and I followed my mother, then President of the Bengaluru branch, all the way to the National Conference. I volunteered and observed with curious eyes as women leaders from across India came together with a shared vision. Over time, I stepped more deeply into the work myself, becoming a founding member of a new Mumbai branch serving Sion, Wadala, Kurla, and Chembur. I witnessed and contributed to many efforts in both Bengaluru and Mumbai, until life took me to the U.S. in 1969.

Anything I have been able to build here has its roots in what I learned at AIWC. The memory of those early days never left me. It became the foundation I carry into every chapter of my life, including the creation of the **South Asian Council for Social Services (SACSS)** in New York. Even today, when people tell me, "You've continued your AIWC work," I smile, because they are right. SACSS was born 25 years ago from the same spirit.

I cannot believe it has been 25 years of building on that dream. When I look back, I still remember the urgency we felt in the year 2000. What moved me was the deep injustice—the gap between how South Asians were perceived and the lived reality

of so many in our community. The "model minority" myth painted a picture of success and prosperity, but it erased the struggles of hundreds of thousands of working-class South Asians who were living in the shadows, with no one to turn to, because everyone assumed they were "doing just fine."

SACSS was founded in August 2000, and we began by surveying the community to understand their needs and build from there. But soon after came 9/11, the tragedy shook our community deeply, many South Asians lost loved ones. We turned our focus to directly supporting the families of 46 victims through counseling, case management, and finding resources for them. Over the years, we built what our community told us they needed. When we saw how many struggled to access healthcare, we created health services to guide them through a complicated system. For so many in New York, SACSS healthcare access services have become a lifeline helping families apply for health insurance, food stamps, and social security benefits; connecting them to rent and utility assistance programs; and even teaching them how to use online systems to manage payments. In 2024 alone, our outreach touched over 78,000 people, and we connected more than 10,500 individuals to vital public benefits, rental

support, health insurance, food assistance, and social security benefits.

When we began hearing about the silent struggles of seniors in our community, particularly around mental health, we launched family support programs and one-on-one counseling with licensed social workers. In 2024, we provided 1,211 counseling sessions for 115 individuals. To further care for our seniors, we also created a vibrant community space — offering painting, yoga, karaoke, crafts, meditation, book discussions, self-defense, and workshops on avoiding scams. Each gathering is shared over a hot vegetarian lunch and a cup of chai. In 2024, we hosted 104 such senior days, and each one reminded me how healing connection can be.

When a South Asian cancer patient who had no resources shared that she could not find culturally familiar foods to comfort her during treatment, we responded by opening New York's first culturally responsive food pantry. From that moment to today, the pantry has grown beyond anything I could have imagined. In 2024, we distributed over 5 million pounds of food, and now, every week, nearly 2,000 families find nourishment and familiarity through our shelves — stocked with rice, lentils, spices, fresh produce, and more.

We also knew we had to invest in the future. When we saw how isolated multilingual youth often felt, we launched our Summer Youth Leadership Program to empower the leaders of tomorrow. Through this program, young people build confidence and skills in leadership, critical thinking, public

speaking, and teamwork — while also finding joy in bonding with peers who share their experience. Once people regained their health and stability, we walked with them into the next chapter, helping them learn English and build their futures through workforce development programs such as Stitch with SACSS and Computer Classes. Each of these milestones is tied to the lives of real people — in fact, SACSS has now served nearly one million individuals. I know people with Master's degrees who are still driving taxis in New York, struggling to find work that matches their skills. I know people who rely on our culturally specific food pantry, where we provide spices, dhal, rice, wheat flour, oil, and fresh vegetables — giving them a taste of home. I know many who endure daily pain simply because they have no access to healthcare or don't know where to turn, often facing language barriers that make seeking help even harder. From pregnant women navigating their first prenatal visits to people in hospice care, SACSS is there, providing healthcare access and mental health support in 20 different languages — walking alongside our community at every stage of life.

Just as AIWC, older than India's own independence, has adapted through decades to meet the changing needs of women, SACSS has also evolved to meet the urgent and shifting needs of our community here. Both journeys remind me of one truth: the need to uplift others is timeless. Today, SACSS is a family — one made up of staff, volunteers, and partners, the majority of them women, who work tirelessly to serve those who walk through our doors.

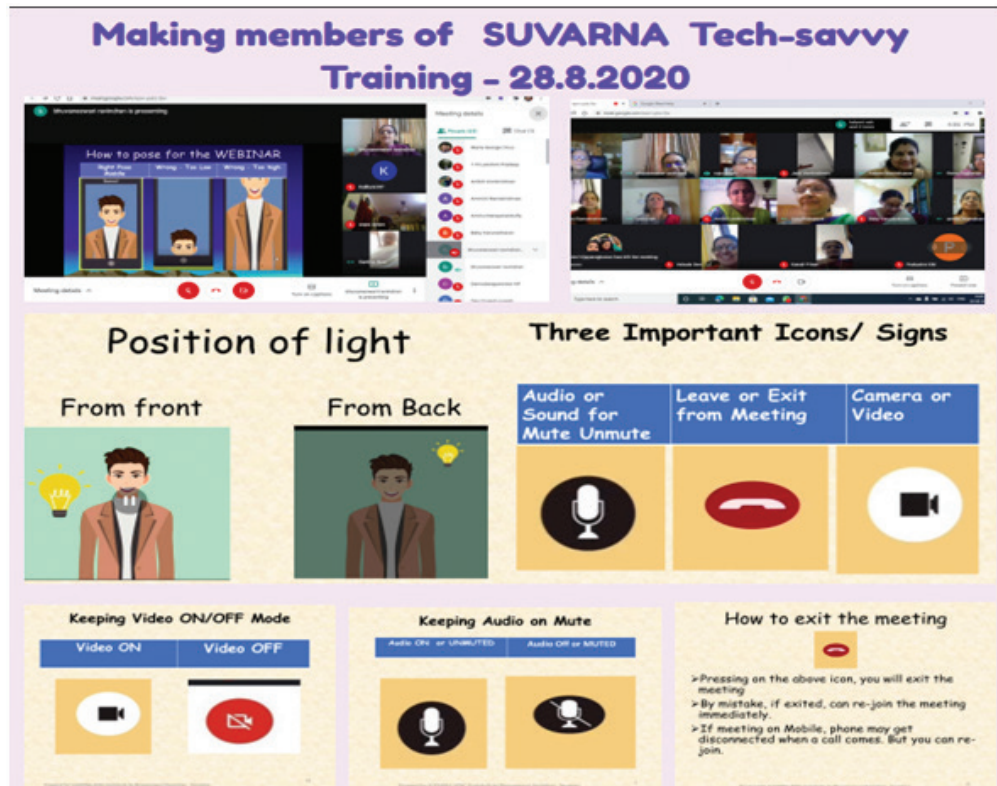


How we expanded the horizon of our work!

By Smt. Bhuvanewari Ravindran- President, Suvarna (AIWC-Kozhikode Branch) and MIC-Climate Change Programmes

There was a time, not long ago, when globally most activities had come to a standstill and many of us even wondered whether our life will ever be back to normal. I refer to the days when the whole world was in the grip of a pandemic, grappling with a “New Normal” situation of lock down, wearing masks and keeping social distance. At the time, even persons who always had a positive outlook in life, dreaded the word “Positive”. Yes, if we had to take an RTPCR test, our prayers were, “God, don’t let me be positive”. Technology was what came to our rescue then and kept us going. In so far as our social activities were concerned, life sustaining oxygen was the online meetings on different platforms such as Google, Zoom, WEBEX etc. Whoever could do it, embraced the change quickly and moved on.

All India Women’s Conference (AIWC) was no exception in accepting the inevitable



change and utilising the new opportunity. Even during such most adverse times, none of us stopped functioning. The only thing was that the focus could not be on physical activities, but on online activities.

Our Branch SUVARNA in Kozhikode took this challenge very sportingly and seriously. SUVARNA’s sojourn with online meetings started in the initial days of the pandemic, conducting the monthly Executive Committee meetings on Zoom. After a couple of such meetings, we could enlarge the scope to Google/Zoom meetings for all members. Such online meetings had

distinguished speakers from all over the country and the talks were on a wide variety of interesting topics. Being online, these Webinars were open to AIWC members across the country. The interesting part was that, at the time, we were strictly maintaining distances locally, but became much closer to people who were far away.

Training of SUVARNA members on online participation

As a matter of fact, most of our members were not used to this technology of online meetings, though most of them had smart phones or computers. We took this as a challenge and made special efforts to train them. A special Toolkit was developed by August 2020, using which we trained our members on how to attend online meetings. We familiarized them with the steps on how to join; mute, unmute and speak; switch off and on videos; and how to use other symbols/ icons found on the screen. Over a month, we gave practical lessons to the members in small groups and even individually. In that process SUVARNA gained the name of a “TECH SAVVY” Branch of AIWC.

Subjects covered in online meetings

Through the Webinars, organized by us as well as the Central Office and other branches, all of us learnt new things, gaining knowledge and authentic information from experts in the field. The WEBINARS were spread over a wide variety of subjects like Ayurveda and immunity; COVID vaccine; several health problems including mental

health issues; health problems of women; educative sessions like organic gardening; some hobbies that we can follow like Philately; Iconography; Cookery; Apps and traps that they pose; Women’s Safety (Suraksha); Environment related issues like water conservation and ground water etc., to name a few. During that period also we went ahead celebrating Onam, Founder’s Day, Communal Harmony and New Year, using videos and audios of cultural programmes performed by members.

Several series of online meetings were organised, of which one worth mentioning here is the series on Past Presidents organised by the Central Office through which our members could get a glimpse of the rich heritage of our organisation and familiarise themselves with the distinguished leaders who had founded the organisation and nurtured it. By organising the Half Yearly and Annual Meetings on WEBEX platform the Central Office could keep going with the activities. The preparatory WEBINARS held before the COP 28 meeting in Dubai, COP 29 held in Baku and the ECHO meetings held after the conference helped all members to get a feel of the Climate Change negotiations and activities better. In the South Zone B we had organised several series such as Covid 19 and Beyond, Janapratidinhi, Recalling our Legacy etc. which was followed by the formation of a Literary and Cultural Forum in Thiruvananthapuram branch that continues with lectures on a monthly basis. We even had a mega online event where members

from different parts of the country along with persons from different faiths came together to pray for succour and protection from the pandemic for the whole humanity. Titled “Loka Samastha Sukhino Bhavanthu”, the event was a novel and uplifting experience in those difficult days.

Organising these meetings was made possible mainly because of the dedicated Zoom link that our Thiruvananthapuram branch got initially for one year from a sponsor company viz., M/s UST Global, through the then Zonal Organiser, which we continue to use till date. We badly miss one young man who played an important role as our guide and adviser, Mr. Justin from UST Global, who used to patiently listen to all our queries and problems about the Zoom platform, and help us to find solutions. When I spoke to him for the last time, he was travelling and promised to call back. Little did I realise that it would be the last time I would speak to him. Just a couple of days later, I got the shocking news that he had suffered a cardiac arrest and was no more. We still miss him and every time I encounter a problem with the Zoom platform, I wish he had been there.

ONLINE meetings bringing AIWC Members of different Branches closer

Sitting so far off from the Central Office, we in the Branches would participate in several useful and interesting online meetings organised by the AIWC Head Office and by other Zones. Our Annual Meetings and Half-

yearly meetings of the Standing Committee were also conducted online on Webex, thus continuing normal functioning without a break. By taking part in all such meetings, we could have a peek into the activities of different Zones. Members of all branches could develop very close links with the Office Bearers and other officials in Head Office, and also members from other Branches. Frankly, until then, there was limited chance of exposure for branches to understand and access what happens at the national level or in other Branches. Only members who attend the Annual or Half Yearly Conferences were privy to such experiences. These online meetings gave very good visibility to the activities of Branches and vice versa, bringing them all closer. It is impossible to physically participate in the large number of meetings held across the country in areas of our interests. Such online meetings also provided opportunities for members to be a part of many international events, which otherwise would not have been feasible.

The way forward

Today, the ‘new normal’ of the COVID days, like online meetings and work-from-home, have come to stay as a part of our lives. Even now, we in AIWC continue to use this facility which has been a boon to us, throwing open the opportunity to take part in important discussions, sitting in the comfort of our homes. Let us all continue to embrace this useful technology more often and strive to be a close-knit family, even when we all reside and work in distant places.



A Generation in Crisis, a Future in Question

By Dr. KG Vijayalekshmy

Director, Sandepani School, Chairperson, WHI

Children without confidence: Can they lead tomorrow?

Children are the torch bearers of any nation's future — but what happens when that torch is extinguished before it ever lights? Tens of thousands of children in Gaza have been killed, maimed, or psychologically scarred. Those who survive carry deep wounds, both visible and hidden. In a world where trust, safety, and stability are the foundations of self-belief, Gaza's children are growing up without any of these. With their homes flattened and their schools destroyed, how are they expected to grow into confident leaders, workers, or citizens?

Confidence is born from support, safety, and the freedom to dream. In Gaza, children wake to the sound of drones, line up for aid rations instead of breakfast, and go to sleep surrounded by loss. These children will soon be adults — but can we expect them to lead when they were never allowed to simply live?

Growing Without a Childhood: A silent theft Childhood is meant to be a time of learning, laughter, and innocence. But in Gaza, it is a time of trauma, hunger, and displacement. Disrupted schooling, destroyed homes, and the death of loved ones have robbed children of even the simplest joys of growing up.

According to the United Nations, over one million children are displaced in Gaza, many living in overcrowded tents or shelters without access to basic amenities.

They are living without toys, without books, and often, without parents. Their daily routines revolve around survival, not schooling. A generation is being shaped by fear, not imagination.

Will they believe they can contribute to their nation?

The question isn't just whether these children can contribute — it's whether they believe they can. In the absence of formal education, healthcare, and emotional support, children are growing up doubting their place in the world. How can they be expected to feel a sense of national pride or responsibility when their nation feels like a prison and their future a question mark?

Hope is not just about rebuilding schools and hospitals — it's about restoring dignity. The world must offer these children more than sympathy; it must offer them opportunity.

Education: interrupted Futures

Over half of Gaza's schools have been damaged or destroyed. Many remaining structures are now used as shelters. As

a result, millions of children are out of school, missing vital years of learning and development. Even when classes are held, the psychological toll on children — hunger, trauma, grief —leaves them unable to concentrate or engage. Teachers, overwhelmed and under-resourced, try to bring normalcy to a situation that is anything but. Without intervention, this will create a lasting education gap that will affect not only individual futures but also the social and economic fabric of Palestine for generations.

Orphaned and Innocent: A Loss They Never Caused

Children bear none of the responsibility for this conflict, yet they carry its heaviest burdens.

Thousands have lost one or both parents. Many now live in child-headed households or with distant relatives. These losses are not just personal - they represent a collapse of the safety net every child needs. The global community has a moral and urgent responsibility to act, not only with humanitarian aid but with long-term strategies to protect and empower these children. We must help them process grief, access education, and rebuild trust in the world around them.

Mental And Physical Well-Being: Whose Responsibility Is It?

Malnutrition is soaring. Over 5,000 children have been diagnosed with acute

malnutrition in just one month. Clean water and medical care are nearly non-existent in many parts of Gaza. Children are dying not just from bombs, but from hunger, disease, and hypothermia. The physical crisis is mirrored by a silent epidemic of mental health trauma. Stress, fear, PTSD, and grief are everyday realities. There are not nearly enough counsellors, psychologists, or safe spaces for emotional recovery.

So, who is responsible?

Governments, international organizations, and every global citizen who believes in human rights must answer. Children are not political assets. They are not collateral damage. They are human beings, and their well-being is a global responsibility.

A Call to Global Conscience

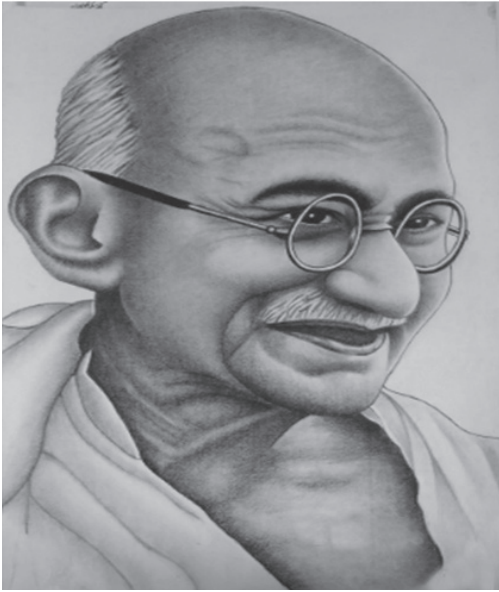
If we allow this generation to grow up without care, without education, and without healing, we are not only failing them, we are risking the future of peace and stability in the region. The children of Gaza did not choose this war. They deserve the right to live, to learn, to play, and to grow. Let us not be silent witnesses to their suffering. Let us be the voices that help shape their hope.

(Views expressed in this article are the author's personal views and do not necessarily reflect those of the organisation)



Silence for Non-Violence

*By Smt. Tara Gandhi Bhattacharjee Chairperson
National Gandhi Museum*



**On a Thread of Creation
In a Global Circle
A Pilgrimage of Silence
Seeking in Orbit
A Moment of Enlightenment
Of Peace and Truth
Within and Without**

How do we observe with significance the 2nd October and accept the challenge of Non-violence at Individual and collective levels?

Let us visualize a cosmic thread flowing from the wheel of eternity. This will be a flow of harmony that can orbit the Earth in 24 hours, starting at midday sharp of the 2nd October from Japan, and after 1 minute of silence and introspection by the humanity, it moves westwards to encircle the whole Earth in 24 hours. This can be a celebration of our consciousness for homage to non-violence in today's context.

In the flow of this silence, through introspection, we, the children of Mother Earth, pay homage to the greatest spiritual and creative flows of man and nature, of past and present, which have kept the spark of eternal love still glowing in each one of us. We have observed saving of electricity for one minute all over the world. A minute of silence will be a global moment of enlightenment.

(Published on the request of National Gandhi Museum, a friend of AIWC)



Sarojini Naidu “Nightingale of India – A tribute

By Smt. Shevata Rai Talwar (Joint Secretary)



Naidu in 1912

Dedicated to ‘womanhood’ - The girl child, the wife, the mother, the worker, the smile on their faces and to all the beauty of femininity in this world!

“When there is oppression the only self-respecting thing is to rise and say that, this shall cease today because my right is justice “said the ‘Kokila’, Nightingale of India Sarojini Naidu, so called because of her fondness of poetry writing, narration and spontaneous rendition .

A woman of stature, soft and fragrant like the whiff of perfume and muslin, a bold patriot, feminist and herself a harbinger of the unity of different religions made her into a Complete Woman. “Love reeks not of feuds and bitter follies of strangers, comrades or kin she said.

Sarojini was born on 13 Feb 1879 to a scientist father (also a social reformer of sorts) and poetess mother (who had spent a part of her in the care of the Brahma Samaj as a little girl herself) the eldest and favorite

among many children. As the emotional and sentimental little Sarojini grew in a highly creative and gifted family she preferred poetry to Algebra, in some ways disappointing her father A. Chattopadhyay an educationist and founder of Nizam College in Hyderabad.

The lissome Sarojini entered youth and was a beauty of sorts with long waist length hair, silk dresses and a sense of mimicry and humor. She soon found herself in love with a widower, ten years her senior and from a different caste and it inspired her to write love poetry like “ecstasy and autumn song “During this time she was given a scholarship to study at Kings College London, Girton College Cambridge by the Nizam. Abroad she met Nobel laureate Aurthur Simon and Edmund Gause who guided her to write on themes and topics of Indian origin.

She returned at the age of nineteen with a renewed determination of marrying Mr. Naidu and this inter caste/religion marriage was solemnized. Her marriage was very successful and she mothered five children.

She joined the Indian National Movement and came into contact with Jawaharlal Nehru, Annie Besant, Muhammad Ali Jinnah. She participated in the civil disobedience movement and was jailed for 21 months along with Mahatma Gandhi, who she jokingly called Mickey Mouse. Her sense of humour even let her to compare the Mahatma in his loin cloth and the wife

of Jinnah - Ratti, who liked wearing sleeve less blouses as to who out of the two would be more scantily clad. He is turn passes on to her little presents he received as she felt joy in these little gestures. After his assassination she wrote "lotus- But who could win thy secret, who attain, thine ageless beauty born of Bramhas breath, or pluck thy immortality, who art coeval with the lords of life and death".

Her favorite attire were her rustling bright colored silk sarees, jewellery, flowers, she believed in dressing well and gave powerful impromptu speeches. Her ready wit was noted by Nayantara Sahgal who thought her to be a fun and loving person.

Sarojini was one of the founders of All India women's Conference, a conglomerate of women working towards women's and children's education and social welfare. Later in 1930 she became its fourth President. We want deeper sincerity of motive, a great courage in speech and earnestness in action "she said. "Sarojini House" is the name given to the building which houses the AIWC Head Office currently, and her birth anniversary on thirteenth February is celebrated with much fervor in all the branches even as women's day by some .

1942 saw her being a part of the Quit India movement and she was the first Indian lady governor of Uttar Pradesh after independence of India.

"To quench my longings, bend me low by the streams of the spirits of Peace that flow in that magical wood in the land of sleep".

"All out mortal moments, a session of the infinite, How shall we reach the great

unknown Nirvana of thy lotus throne" (To A Buddha)

She breathed her last in her office on second March 1949 and India lost a great nationalist who had fought for Independence and then brought the North and South of India together by the virtue of her writings such as the "Coromandel coasts" and "Indian weavers".

It is said that her guilt in not continuing her father's wishes and fulfilling his dreams (she said there was no cure for a broken heart and her youth had left her after his death) heartache for spending less time with her children, isolation were prices she had to pay to succeed in a man's world. Is this not what we all women face balancing delicately between home, hearth career choices and family expectations.

"The bazaars of Hyderabad, The bangle sellers "will miss her forever.

As she passes into the other world "The palanquin bearers"sang:

*Lightly, O lightly we bear her along,
She sways like a flower in the wind of our song;*

*She skims like a bird on the foam of a stream,
She floats like a laugh from the lips of a dream.*

*Gaily, O gaily we glide and we sing,
We bear her along like a pearl on a string.*

*Softly, O softly we bear her along,
She hangs like a star in the dew of our song;
She springs like a beam on the brow of the tide,*

She falls like a tear from the eyes of a bride.

*Lightly, O lightly we glide and we sing,
We bear her along like a pearl on a string.*



Branch Activities

40 Years Journey of AIWC Sahaspur Rural Branch to Becoming Gramin Mahila Vikas Society

By Ms. Akshara Vadalikar, SCM



Forty years ago, in a small, remote village on the outskirts of Dehradun City tucked away from the main roads and opportunities of the modern world, the seeds of change were quietly sown by a philanthropist Smt. Rakesh Dhawan. Life here was bound by tradition and faith, yet burdened with poverty, illiteracy, and limited access to healthcare. Women's participation in community life was barely minimal, and young people's dreams rarely travelled beyond the boundaries of the village.

It was in this environment that Smt. Dhawan motivated a small group of dedicated individuals from Dehradun and the Sahaspur block villages—driven by

compassion and guided by the principles of service and dignity—founded an NGO AIWC Sahaspur Rural Branch in 1984 with a simple mission: to create opportunities where none existed. What began as a modest literacy program in her farmlands grew into a comprehensive movement for education, health, empowerment, and sustainable livelihoods.

The Early Years

In a conservative setting, the first step was not launching projects but earning trust. The NGO's team engaged in dialogue with local elders, religious leaders, and families. Women volunteers from within



the community became the bridge between tradition and change. The initial focus was on **girls' education**—a challenge met with skepticism but gradually embraced when a school was established with deeper understanding to complete their academic education along with other vocational training programs of knitting, embroidery and sewing.

Healthcare camps soon followed, addressing maternal health, child immunization, and common illnesses. The initiation of women within the community making a presence of compassionate female health workers made a world of difference in a society where women rarely consulted male doctors.

The journey was never smooth. Resistance from conservative elements, funding shortages, and natural calamities tested the NGO's resilience. Yet, three principles guided every step: respect for local culture, long-term commitment, and the belief that change must come from within the community itself.



Forward Journey Expanding Horizons with Transformation – Sustainable Change

The NGO partnered with local mosques, madrasas and government schools, integrating modern education alongside religious studies. A once-isolated generation of young girls began to dream of careers as teachers, nurses, and entrepreneurs. The NGO had woven itself into the fabric of the village. Solar street lights illuminated once-dark lanes. Women's self-help groups had evolved into cooperatives marketing their products beyond the district.

The most profound change, however, was intangible: a shift in mindset. Parents now



proudly enrolled daughters along with them in school. Village councils included women in decision making. One such icon was Smt. Natho Begum who was the first woman Pradhan. She was the first fruit sown by AIWC Sahaspur Rural Branch, a drive in reservation for women in Parliament.

Health Care was another major concern in the work area. Initially we observed many unique aspects influenced by religious and cultural beliefs. Traditional practices and family support systems remained crucial, especially for women, and during end-of-life care. Poverty restricted access to even basic healthcare services and medications. In some cases, traditional medicine and local remedies were still used alongside modern healthcare practices.

Access to corrective primary care and some specialized services have increased through various initiatives like charitable dispensary and Swasth Sudhar Village Program. Regular mobilisation within the communities to improve health, education, sanitation, and women's health care are crucial for further positive change. We are moving ahead towards health awareness, not as a novelty, but as a norm.

Today, as the NGO celebrates 40 years, the village stands as a testament to what patience, trust, and grassroots action can achieve. While challenges remain—unemployment, climate threats, and the need for advanced education—the foundation for a better future is strong.

In the words of the Branch Founder Smt. Rakesh Dhawan: “We *didn't bring change*

to this village. The people brought change to themselves—we just walked alongside them.”

The new building for the NGO was commissioned by renowned industrialist cum philanthropist Mr. Vijay Kumar Dhawan, CMD, Sara Group of Companies. This generous gift of premises will have a profound impact, that will foster innovation, collaboration, and excellence for generations to come. Mr. Vijay Kumar Dhawan and Chief Guest Smt. Kalyani Raj President, All India Women's Conference, unveiled the foundation stone of Gramin Mahila Vikas Society.

The long-term dream coming true, not only reflecting on the past achievements but also looking forward to the future with optimism and determination to build a future, where every individual has the opportunity to thrive, where every voice is heard, and where every community is empowered.

With trust established, AIWC Sahaspur Rural Branch, now a registered NGO as Gramin Mahila Vikas Society has broadened its reach. Today many of their students and members have sprouted into various careers and businesses opportunities like tailoring, handicrafts, beautician, freelance marketing, office team, teachers, medical professionals etc.

With the spirit to forge ahead with greater resolve, GMVS President Smt. Rakesh Dhawan quotes

40 साल सफर पूरा किया, अभी बाकी है।
हौसले हो बुलंद अपने रास्ते पर अकेले चलो,
देखकर तुझे काफिला खुद बन जाएगा

Financial Literacy – Awareness Program

By Smt. Sapna Acharya, President, Vikas Mahila Sangam

A one-day awareness program on financial literacy was successfully conducted at the Conference Hall, Prachin Shivalay. The event was funded by the All India Women's Conference (AIWC). Ms. Rekha Agrawal, Vice President of Vikas Mahila Sangam, warmly welcomed the participants and introduced the key resource persons — Mr. Vipin Karwal from the East Delhi Zone Post Office and Mr. Amar Kumar Shrivastav, Chief Manager at SBI, MayurVihar Phase-2.

Smt. Sapna Acharya delivered the introductory address, highlighting the importance of initiating financial literacy efforts under the banner of Vikas Mahila Sangam. She emphasized that, like other ongoing community projects, this initiative marks the beginning phase of a long-term financial literacy mission. She announced future outreach plans to organize financial awareness camps in underserved areas such as Trilokpuri, Jaibharti Camp, and Sanjay Jheel — home to many who are most in need of financial education and support.

The chief guests were felicitated by the committee members and appreciated for their timely presence and contribution.

Ms. Baby Chirvi, Former Assistant Divisional Manager at LIC of India, spoke on the significance of insurance policies for every individual. She emphasized the



importance of timely policy planning and encouraged the beneficiaries from Sanjay Jheel and Jaibharti Camp to first open accounts in nationalized banks. Once done, VMS would assist them in initiating LIC policies tailored to their needs.

Ms. Veena Chopra, Former Branch Manager at ICICI Bank, elaborated on the benefits of small savings and the Recurring Deposit (RD) system. She suggested that daily wage earners deposit a small amount each month, which over time can accumulate and be invested as a Fixed Deposit (FD) for long-term financial security.

Mr. Amar Kumar Shrivastav from SBI introduced the concept of Systematic Investment Plans (SIP) and explained how small monthly investments can yield significant returns over time. He clarified to the members that while no investment is entirely risk-free, SIPs offer good returns when held for longer durations — ideally more than two years. He assured that SIPs

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are not taxable and shared his personal investment journey to demonstrate how returns can grow significantly. Interested members were encouraged to approach him at the bank for further assistance.

Mr. Vipin Karwal from the Post Office detailed the benefits of the **Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana**, a government initiative under the “Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao” campaign, aimed at securing the future of the girl child. He explained the account's

features, including the minimum deposit requirement of Rs. 250 and provisions for partial withdrawal (up to 50%) for higher education. Pamphlets detailing various financial schemes offered by the Post Office were distributed among the attendees.

During the interactive Q&A session, members asked insightful questions and requested that similar sessions be organized in the future to deepen their understanding of financial planning and schemes.

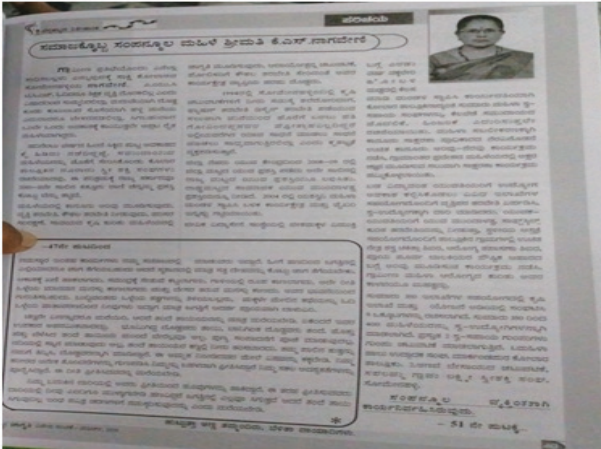
Financially literate mothers are more likely to involve daughters in household financial planning and teach them money management skills. This knowledge transfer helps break cycles of financial dependence that have persisted across generations. Children of financially literate mothers demonstrate better understanding of saving, budgeting, and financial planning. Schools in areas with high maternal financial literacy report students who are more engaged with mathematics and economics curricula.

Family financial stability improves when women participate actively in financial decision-making. Households where women understand financial planning show higher savings rates, better insurance coverage, and more strategic investment in children's education.

The economic empowerment of women through financial literacy creates positive feedback loops within communities. As more women gain financial independence, social norms around women's economic participation gradually shift to become more supportive.



Achievement in Rural Development and Women Empowerment



An article was released by “Stree Jagruthi”, about Smt. KS Nagaveni, Zonal Organizer South Zone B (Karnataka and Kerala), highlighting her contribution to women’s empowerment, rural development and social service.

Smt KS Nagaveni, dedicated social worker born in Kurgal village, Vemgal taluk and Kolar Dist., established Yashaswini Mahila Mandali® in 2004. She created awareness among rural women about self reliance and income generation, and played a major role in women’s empowerment by organizing training in tailoring, embroidery, food processing, mushroom cultivation, dairy farming etc., Many women have gained self employment and livelihood because of these initiatives.

In 2008-09 the organization was recognized at the state level. Since then her work has spread widely across Kolar district and surrounding taluks. She has worked with government departments, NGO’s and

financial institutions to bring schemes and benefits to women. She has also encouraged women to participate in Gram Panchayath and Taluk Panchayat elections, thereby ensuring their representation in decision making.

Through her leadership, the NGO has:

- Organized more than 350 women’s self-help groups.
- Provided Micro-Finance facilities.
- Trained women in different income generation activities.
- Helped women to stand on their own feet.

The organization has also worked for rural children’s education, health awareness, and legal rights of women.

Smt Nagaveni’s service has been recognized by several awards. Even today, she continues to dedicate herself to the empowerment of rural women and social service.

' Women's Safety' - Sensitization Programme By RPMWWA

By Smt.Preetha Raj, President RPMWWA

Sensitization program presented by Adv. Rose Ann, Human Rights Lawyer, to about 60 girls, on 8th September, 2025 at ITI for Women, Guindy, Chennai.

Women's safety is a multifaceted issue that spans physical, emotional, digital, and legal dimensions. When it comes to young girls, safety isn't just about empowerment, awareness, and trust-building.

Key points delivered by Adv. Rose Ann included: Laws protecting women from violence

The Child Re-Marriage Restraint Act., The Right to Education Act, Equal Remuneration For Women Act, Women's Right to Property, Right to Sex and Reproduction, Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, Right against Exploitation

- What does outraging a women's modesty mean?



- Sexual harassment and punishment for sexual harassment
- Categories of sexual harassment at work place
- Mandate to protect the modesty of Women.
- Mandate for all public and private hospitals to treat victims of rape and acid attack
- Cyber crime against women

The session was well taken and an eye-opener to all the girl students.



HPV Awareness and Vaccine-Jamshedpur

By Smt.Parul Mangal, President, AIWC Jamshedpur



The AIWC Jamshedpur Branch successfully organized a Cervical Cancer Vaccination Drive on 10th September 2025 with the aim of promoting women's health and preventing cervical cancer through timely vaccination.

A total of 44 students were vaccinated during this initiative, including 34 students from Baridih High School and 10 students from Academy of Excellence School. The drive was conducted under the expert supervision of Dr. Sujata Mitra from Meherbai Tata Memorial Hospital (MTMH), ensuring proper medical care and safety throughout the process.

This initiative reflects AIWC's commitment to creating awareness about cervical cancer and empowering young girls with preventive healthcare measures. By organizing such

drives, AIWC continues to work towards building a healthier and more informed community.

President, Smt. Parul Mangal, Vice President Smt. Vinita Shah, Charity head Smt. Sumita Nupur Singh, Charity Committee Member Smt. Usha Satish Kumar and Admin Secretary Smt.Sonu were present.

The organization extends heartfelt gratitude to Dr. Sujata Mitra, the school authorities, and all members and volunteers whose support and efforts made this program a success.

This meaningful step is another milestone in AIWC Jamshedpur Branch's ongoing mission to safeguard the health and well-being of women and children.



Skill Training Program by Women's Indian Association –Tanjore Painting Workshop

By Smt.Shanti Socrates, Secretary WIA

The Women's Indian Association conducted a skill training program for women residents of Kannammabet. The program was held at the Skill Training Center on 13th September at Nathamuni Street, T. Nagar, Chennai.

Smt. Vasanthi Ramesh, Joint Secretary (WIA) and resource person, taught Tanjore painting as a traditional art form in a simple and engaging manner. She demonstrated how to create beautiful artworks using blouse bits as the base material.

The program was inaugurated by Smt. Shanti Socrates, Secretary of the Women's Indian Association, and was further supported by several members of the organization.



Eight participants enthusiastically learned the art form and actively practiced the techniques demonstrated.

The program was a great success, with participants expressing excitement and satisfaction in learning this beautiful and traditional art form.

Priya Darshini Kandi Area (AIWC)

Priya Darshini Kandi Area (AIWC) Pathankot conducted a Medical Camp to follow up on patients who had earlier attended. A handicapped patient has been adopted by the Branch and is supported with his medical needs.



Anemia follow up Medical Camp



Patient Adopted by the Priya Darshini.



Kanika - AIWC Thrissur Branch

By Smt. Usha Nair, MIC, Liaison with International NGOs and Agencies



Smt. Vasanthi Gopalan, President of Kanika (AIWC Thrissur) has recently published two collections of Malayalam poetry. 'Poompodi' contains poems about the Almighty, greatness of Bharat, love for our country etc., poems that make us experience the lofty feelings of devotion and patriotism. 'Chameli' talks about life experiences - world and the environment etc. All the poems are gentle and give us a fresh perspective about the world around us. Excerpt from a prayer goes – "May the life bird within leave this cage silently and get absorbed in the glowing presence that always shines on us."

Another poem is given below in translation. This one reminds Lord Krishna about his promise to return – *Sambhavamiyugeyuge* – and beseeches Him to come quickly to redeem the polluted and poisoned Earth and its rivers.

Whimpers of the Earth

A mere touch of your foot lifted Ahalya's curse,

*Your dance could destroy venomous Kaliya,
the mighty serpent,*

*And your frolics in her waters restored
Kalindi's purity;*

*Your intent by itself is sufficient to purify
everything.*

*Countless Ahalyas of the poisoned Earth
await you,*

Convinced that you will lift their curse.

*Mindless humanity swarms around them
like a nest of hissing snakes*

*Polluting the rivers and oceans, once the
nourishing veins of Earth!*

*You promised to return to redeem mother
Earth*

Whenever she was in torment or distress.

*Do you not hear her now, whimpering in
fear and pain?*

Is it not yet time for you to return?

(Malayalam poem by Smt. Vasanthi Gopalan, Kanika (AIWC Thrissur branch),
(translated by Smt. Sujata Devadas)

Did you know.....

Maharani Chimnabai Gaekwad (1871-1958)



1st President of AIWC, 1927

Maharani Chimnabai Gaekwad, also known as Chimnabai II, was the second wife of Sayajirao Gaekwad of Baroda, Gujarat. A woman with progressive ideas, she worked towards girls' education and abolition of child marriage. She was the first woman to sit publicly without the veil next to her husband, sending a bold message against the existing purdah system in British India. She was the President of the first AIWC meeting held at Pune in 1927 and headed the National Council of Women in India from 1928 to 1937. Her book *The Position of Women in Indian Life* was published in 1911.

Dr Muthulakshmi Reddy (1886-1968)



5th President of AIWC, 1931

Dr Muthulakshmi Reddy was a woman of many firsts: the first female student at Madras Medical College, graduating in 1912, one of the first women doctors in India and the first in Chennai. She became the first woman legislator appointed to the Madras Legislative Council in 1926. In 1937, she was the first woman president of the State Social Welfare Advisory Board. She started a Cancer Hospital in South India in 1954. A social reformer, she recommended the minimum age of marriage for boys to be 21 and for girls 16. She established a branch of AIWC in Chennai. She received the Padma Bhushan for her achievements in the field of social reform.

Rajkumari Amrit Kaur (1887-1964)



12th President of AIWC, 1938

Rajkumari Amrit Kaur Ahluwalia, a Princess of the Kapurthala royal family, cofounded AIWC with Margaret Cousins to work for women's empowerment, education, right to vote, right to divorce and right to inherit property. She left her royal life and followed Mahatma Gandhi in India's freedom struggle, especially the Quit India Movement. A member of the Constituent Assembly, she raised the issue of women's education and civil rights. The only woman in India's first cabinet, she was the Health Minister for a decade. She was the only woman and non-doctor who became President of the World Health Organisation. She launched the most extensive worldwide BCG inoculation programme against TB. Under her auspices, the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Delhi, became the leading medical science and research institution. Rajkumari Amrit Kaur was its first President.

Smt. Kamala Devi Chattopadhyay (1903-1988)



17th President of AIWC, 1944

Smt. Kamala Devi Chattopadhyay was a freedom fighter, social reformer, promoter of arts and significant contributor to nation building. She was President of the Congress Socialist Party. From 1935, she travelled to different countries to speak about India and its culture. She joined the Seva Dal, a Gandhian organisation set up to promote social upliftment. She motivated women across India to become voluntary workers, called 'sevikas'. She was the first Organising Secretary of AIWC, encouraging handicrafts and handlooms, and laid the foundation for cultural events in India. She received the Padma Bhushan (1955), Ramon Magsaysay Award (1966) and the Padma Vibhushan (1987).



हिंदी जगत सदस्यों द्वारा हिंदी में लेखन

महिला सशक्तिकरण और कौशल प्रशिक्षण

शोभालाल, गुड़गांव ग्रामीण महिला मंडल

महिला सशक्तिकरण हमारे समाज और देश के विकास की रीढ़ है। जब तक महिलाएँ जीवन के हर क्षेत्र में आत्मनिर्भर, शिक्षित और सशक्त नहीं होंगी, तब तक संपूर्ण समाज का विकास संभव नहीं है। आधुनिक युग में यह समझा जाने लगा है कि महिलाएँ केवल घर की चारदीवारी तक सीमित नहीं हैं, बल्कि वे शिक्षा, राजनीति, व्यवसाय, विज्ञान, कला और तकनीक हर क्षेत्र में अपनी क्षमता साबित कर सकती हैं। महिला सशक्तिकरण आज के समय की सबसे महत्वपूर्ण आवश्यकता है। जब तक समाज की आधी आबादी आत्मनिर्भर और जागरूक नहीं होगी, तब तक संपूर्ण विकास संभव नहीं है। महिलाओं को केवल शिक्षा ही नहीं, बल्कि कौशल प्रशिक्षण भी मिलना चाहिए ताकि वे आर्थिक रूप से सशक्त बन सकें और समाज में अपनी भूमिका मजबूती से निभा सकें।

महिला सशक्तिकरण का अर्थ है महिलाओं को उनके अधिकार, स्वतंत्रता और अवसर प्रदान करना, ताकि वे अपने जीवन से जुड़े सभी निर्णय स्वयं ले सकें। इतिहास गवाह है कि जब भी महिलाओं को अवसर मिले हैं, उन्होंने अद्भुत योगदान दिया है। सशक्त महिला केवल अपने परिवार की स्थिति ही नहीं बदलती, बल्कि पूरे समाज और राष्ट्र के उत्थान में भागीदार बनती है।

महिलाओं के सशक्त होने से—

- परिवार में समानता और सौहार्द बढ़ता है।

- बच्चों की शिक्षा और स्वास्थ्य पर सकारात्मक असर पड़ता है।
- गरीबी और बेरोजगारी को कम करने में मदद मिलती है।
- राष्ट्र की आर्थिक और सामाजिक प्रगति होती है।

कौशल प्रशिक्षण की भूमिका

आज के समय में शिक्षा के साथ-साथ कौशल प्रशिक्षण भी उतना ही आवश्यक है। केवल डिग्री से रोजगार की गारंटी नहीं मिलती, बल्कि व्यावहारिक कौशल ही व्यक्ति को आत्म निर्भर बनाते हैं। महिलाओं के लिए कौशल प्रशिक्षण एक ऐसी कुंजी है जो उन्हें रोजगार और स्वावलंबन के द्वार खोलती है। समाज और राष्ट्र का विकास करती हैं।

कौशल प्रशिक्षण महिलाओं को रोजगार और आत्म निर्भरता की राह पर ले जाता है। सिलाई, ब्यूटी एंडवेलनेस, कंप्यूटर, डिजिटल साक्षरता, खाद्य प्रसंस्करण, हस्तशिल्प, और स्वरोजगार आधारित प्रशिक्षण से महिलाएँ घर बैठे भी आमदनी कर सकती हैं।

महिलाओं के लिए प्रमुख कौशल प्रशिक्षण क्षेत्र:

1. **सिलाई, कढ़ाई और हस्तशिल्प**— जिससे महिलाएँ स्वरोजगार शुरू कर सकती हैं।
2. **ब्यूटी एंड वेलनेस**— पार्लर और वेलनेस सेंटर के माध्यम से आय अर्जित कर सकती हैं।

3. **कंप्यूटर और डिजिटल साक्षरता**— डिजिटल इंडिया के दौर में ऑनलाइन काम और ई-कॉमर्स से जुड़ सकती हैं।
4. **खाद्य प्रसंस्करण और पैकेजिंग**— घर से छोटे स्तर पर व्यवसाय शुरू किया जा सकता है।
5. **उद्यमिता प्रशिक्षण**— जिससे महिलाएँ स्वयं का व्यवसाय (स्टार्टअप/SHG) खड़ा कर सकें।

सरकार और संस्थाओं की पहल

- **भारत सरकार और अनेक गैर**— सरकारी संगठन (NGO) महिलाओं के लिए कई योजनाएँ और कार्यक्रम चला रहे हैं। इनमें प्रमुख हैं:
- **प्रधानमंत्री कौशल विकास योजना (PMKVY)**— महिलाओं को विभिन्न क्षेत्रों में व्यावसायिक प्रशिक्षा।
- **जनधन योजना**— वित्तीय सशक्तिकरण और बैंकिंग से जुड़ाव।
- **स्टैंडअप इंडिया और मुद्रा लोन**— महिला उद्यमियों के लिए लोन सुविधा।
- **स्वयं सहायता समूह (SHG)**— ग्रामीण महिलाओं के लिए सामूहिक बचत और छोटे व्यवसाय का अवसर।
- **बेटी बचाओ, बेटी पढ़ाओ अभियान**— शिक्षा और जागरूकता पर विशेष ध्यान।

सामाजिक बदलाव

1. कौशल प्रशिक्षण और महिला सशक्तिकरण से समाज में गहरा बदलाव देखने को मिल रहा है। आज महिलाएँ केवल घर तक सीमित नहीं हैं, बल्कि

वे पंचायतों, उद्योगों और कॉर्पोरेट जगत तक में सक्रिय हैं। गाँव की महिलाएँ भी अब सिलाई सेंटर, ब्यूटी पार्लर, दूध उत्पादन, पापड़-अचार उद्योग, कंप्यूटर क्लासेज और ऑनलाइन बिजनेस चला रही हैं।।

2. परिवार की आर्थिक स्थिति सुधर रही है।
3. समाज में महिलाओं का सम्मान और सहभागिता बढ़ रही है।
4. युवा लड़कियों के लिए प्रेरणा का स्रोत बन रही हैं।

चुनौतियाँ

प्रगति के बावजूद कुछ चुनौतियाँ अभी भी बनी हुई हैं:

- ग्रामीण क्षेत्रों में जागरूकता की कमी
- परिवार और समाज की मानसिकता
- वित्तीय संसाधनों और बाजार तक सीमित पहुँच
- तकनीकी ज्ञान की कमी

निष्कर्ष

महिला सशक्तिकरण और कौशल प्रशिक्षण केवल व्यक्तिगत विकास तक सीमित नहीं है, बल्कि यह पूरे राष्ट्र की प्रगति का आधार है। जब महिलाएँ शिक्षित और आत्म निर्भर होंगी, तब वे परिवार, समाज और देश को नई ऊँचाइयों तक ले जाएँगी।

इसलिए आवश्यक है कि हर गाँव और हर शहर में महिलाओं के लिए शिक्षा और कौशल प्रशिक्षण के अवसर उपलब्ध कराए जाएँ। एक सशक्त महिला ही एक सशक्त समाज और सशक्त भारत की नींव रख सकती है।



संघर्ष के बिना सफलता का कोई अर्थ नहीं

द्वारा पिकी कुमारी



मेरा नाम पिकी कुमारी है। मेरे पिता का नाम (स्व०) फुलेना सिंह कुशवाहा है एवं मेरी माता का नाम (स्व०) उर्मिला देवी है। हम चार भाई बहन हैं। हम क्वार्टर नंबर 383, टाइप-2, सेक्टर-3 बी. एच. ई. एल. हरिद्वार में रहते हैं। मेरे पिताजी बी. एच. ई. एल. में कार्यरत थे। हमारा परिवार हँसी खुशी अपना जीवन यापन कर रहा था लेकिन कोरोना काल ने हमारी सारी खुशियां छीन लीं। मेरे माता पिता की जान कोविड में चली गई और वो हम चारों भाई बहनों को अनाथ छोड़ कर चले गए। मेरी माँ की मृत्यु 9 दिसंबर 2020 को हुई एवं मेरे पिता की मृत्यु 30 अप्रैल 2021 को हुई। बी. एच. ई. एल. प्रशासन ने ऐसे अनाथ बच्चों को कुछ वर्षों के लिए अपने क्वार्टर

में रहने की अनुमति दी जिससे हम भाई बहनों के सर पर छत बनी रही। एक छोटी सी धनराशि भी प्रशासन द्वारा जीवन यापन हेतु दी गई जिससे खाने का खर्च भी बमुश्किल ही हो पाता था। मेरे भाई और मैंने हिम्मत नहीं हारी और अपनी पढ़ाई जारी रखी तथा छोटे-छोटे कार्य करके कुछ धनराशि भी जुटाते रहे। मैंने GNM कोर्स हेतु CARE COLLEGE OF NURSING AND PARAMEDICAL SCIENCES रोहाल की, बहादुराबाद, हरिद्वार में एडमिशन लिया। तभी मेरी डायरेक्टर मेम ने मुझे AIWC EDUCATION TRUST NEW DELHI की स्कालरशिप के विषय में बताया जिसका फॉर्म जागृति वूमंस कांफ्रेंस हरिद्वार सोसाइटी की सचिव डॉ करुणा शर्मा मैडम के द्वारा हमारे कॉलेज में भेजा गया था। मैंने वो फॉर्म भरा और मेरा सौभाग्य ही था की मुझे 2024 और 2025 में निरंतर दो वर्षों तक क्रमशः Rs.15000/- और Rs.12000/- की छात्रवृत्ति AIWC EDUCATION TRUST NEW DELHI द्वारा प्रदान की गई जिससे मैं अपना GNM (GENERAL NURSING AND MIDWIFERY) का कोर्स सुचारु रूप से पूर्ण कर सकी। आज ईश्वर की कृपा से कोर्स पूरा करते ही मुझे देहरादून के प्रतिष्ठित हॉस्पिटल मैक्स हेल्थ केयर में नर्सिंग की जॉब मिल गई है। अब मैं अपने छोटे भाई बहन को भी पढ़ा पाऊँगी। मेरे संघर्ष की यात्रा में मेरा सहयोग करने हेतु मैं AIWC EDUCATION TRUST NEW DELHI की, जागृति वुमेन्स कांफ्रेंस हरिद्वार सोसाइटी की एवं अपने कॉलेज की बहुत-बहुत आभारी हूँ तथा हृदय से आप सभी का आभार व्यक्त करती हूँ।





Hemalatha Bidkar, Jeevan Gaurav Sanman and Nav Durga Sanman



Shield and Cash Award - Honoring selfless service to the Society



Building Self- Confidence – Satgamaya Kerala



Women's Safety- Thittamangalam - Kerala

Independence Day Celebration at Delhi



Ujjawal Womens' Association



Vikas Mahila Sangam



Human Touch Foundation – Noida



Shakti Women's Association - Palam