

Report on public lecture – the valedictory event of Prajnya’s 16 day campaign against gender violence.

“We need to create women leaders in politics and public life to bring about structural changes in programmes and perceptions on gender issues. Only then, can we implement gender based programmes on a large scale” said Sheela Rani Chunkath, IAS as she concluded her public lecture on "Shared Responsibility: State-Civil Society Action on Gender Violence." Organized by Prajnya Trust and the New Indian Express, the public lecture on December 10 at German Hall, Bala Mandir, was the concluding event of the Prajnya 16 Days Campaign against Gender Violence

Ms. Chunkath while sharing her experiences with the campaigns on gender empowerment and female infanticide in Pudukootai, Dharmapuri, Vellore, Salem, North and South Arcot, Madurai and Erode districts of Tamil Nadu pointed out that the government and the media co-operated and were active partners the sensitization process in these districts that today show the highest rate of maternal and infant health in the country.

Stressing that if state and administration is inclusive in its approach with civil society organizations, NGOs, the community and the media, the success rate is high. “Adding to the number of men who are sensitive to gender issues should be our goal since this involves them as much as it does us”, she added

In response to a query by the audiences, she spoke of the need for role models such as Arokia Mary and Annam, who were amazing in their work during her programme on empowerment and reminisced on several such people who showed extra ordinary patience and strength in dealing with sensitive issues such as involving families and men and youth in such gender issue debates.

The venue showcased the message boards with messages from across the city as also the branches with ‘Because I care ribbons’ on them. The collages made by college students were also on display.

The gathering was welcomed by Nandhini S , Prajnya team member, followed by Dr Swarna Rajagopalan, Managing Trustee, Prajnya who shared the vision of Prajnya through its various initiatives. Nirupama Sarathy, Co-ordinator of the 16 day campaign against gender violence presented the campaign report and shared the responses of some of the participants and resource persons through the 16 days. Dr. Uma Vangal, Prajnya team member, proposed the vote of thanks.

This was followed by a symbolic candle lighting ceremony to mark this year’s World Human Rights Day slogan “Women’s rights are human rights”. Everyone present lit a candle and observed silence for all women who have been victims of gender violence. The day wound up on a note of hope and the satisfaction of having made a beginning by the Prajnya team

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Sheela Rani Chunkath, IAS speaks at the Public Lecture of the Prajnya 16 day campaign



Symbolic Candle lighting at the 16 day campaign against gender violence



Prajnya team and audience at the end of the 16 day campaign