

## MY JOURNEY...

### - KONDAVEETI SATYAVATI



I was born in a large joint family of more than hundred persons, with parents being non-literate who were marginal farmers. I was like many women in early fifties, faced hurdles in my life, and completed High School majoring in Sanskrit. I used to walk about 10 kms a day to go to school. I did my Graduation with the subjects Politics, History and English Literature and Post Graduation in Political science.

I migrated to the State capital in search of a job and after some petty private jobs, joined as an Office Assistant in Andhra Pradesh Public Service Commission in 1979 and was an active member of Andhra Pradesh NGO Association and successfully procured Government orders enhancing maternity leave from 90 days to 120 days. In 1995, after taking the competitive examination was appointed as Tahasildar.

Since 80s I have been participating and contributing my inputs in many National Level Women's Conferences, Women's Studies Conferences.

I have been actively participating on various issues pertaining to women and among them was formation of a dowry death committee in 1980s which has been a milestone in the crusade against the loopholes in law, dowry harassments, dowry deaths, equal pay for equal work, price raise, equal job opportunities, issues concerning single women and many other such crucial issues, the A.P women

progressed in raising their voice with fellow Indian women against gender discrimination. In the process, the women activists paved way for the emergence of many women centered NGOs which advocated the cause of women by way of counseling, training, capacity building, networking, research, documentation, women's studies etc.

Another milestone has been active involvement and participation in various movements and agitations occurred in the State. The first one is the Anti-arrack movement in Andhra Pradesh grown out of the inspiration gained by women in adult literacy classes. In 1992, women of Dubagunta village in Nellore, one of the poor drought prone districts of Southern Andhra Pradesh, organized and agitated to force the closure of the arrack (liquor) shops in that village and the movement spread to all over Andhra Pradesh. The experience, however, gave the women's groups in Andhra Pradesh new confidence and power to check the alcohol abuse by men in their families, and to prevent domestic violence by alcoholic husbands. I was part of this important movement and visited the villages along with Anveshi Research Centre for Women Studies (a NGO) team and wrote a report in first issue of Bhumika.

I was part of starting the first feminist bulletin "LOHITHA" in 1989 in Telugu which ran successfully for two years.

In 1993 the First Feminist Magazine in Andhra Pradesh – "**Streevada Patrika – Bhumika**" was started with the help of Anveshi. Since then I have been

a founder editor. It is a long standing journal of its kind with a circulation of 5,000 and readership of more than 20,000.

The bridging of knowledge from the macro to micro level through articles on women's issues, the translation of papers/articles from English to Telugu on feminism or feminist theory, and making connections it to lived realities of women's lives is key factor with potential for promoting gender equality.

Bhumika aspires:

- To recover and publish women's history, art and literature and to provide space for women to share their expressive talents
- To critically analyze the socio-economic and political conditions from women's point of view

In the year 2000, I resigned from my government service to work fulltime in Bhumika.

In 2006 March first Women's Helpline was launched in A.P. with a Toll Free No.1800 425 2908 operated from Hyderabad. Currently it is operational for both the Telugu speaking States 24 X 7 with counselors handling about fifty telephone calls from women in distress due to sexual harassment, domestic violence, dowry harassment and all other problems of women. These calls are received from all over the world through phone and emails. Bhumika Helpline gave counseling and solved problems of more than 50,000 women by way of providing psychological counseling, arranging meetings with Lawyers for approaching the Courts and alerting police to rescue women in distress and due to this the Helpline number has been a known number to all. Through this effort we were able to provide

support and rehabilitate women in distress through our network and advocacy activities with various Government Departments, Civil Society Organizations.

I was instrumental in incorporating Gender as a subject in the training course of Judges through Judicial Academy and have been a trainer on the same. I have been part of the trainers group for Police of various cadres. I was also instrumental in starting Support Centres in Women Police Stations in selected Women Police Stations in Hyderabad and in district headquarters.

I have been a regular writer on women's issues in Telugu for the last three decades by contributing to the columns in magazines and newspapers.

So far I published two short story collection books, a book with my travelogues, a book with editorials of Bhumika Sthreevada Patrika, a book with selected stories published in Bhumika and a biographical story of Bandaru Achchamaamba.

**List of Publications:**

1. Aame Kala ....2003
2. Ankitham ....2010
3. Melakuva Sandarbham .... 2010
4. Bhandaru Achamamba Saccharithra ....2012 (A biography of the first short story writer in Telugu literature)
5. Vaadiponi Matalu – Bhumika Sampadakiyalu ....2012 (Compilation of Bhumika editorials)
6. Tupaakimonapy Vennela – A compilation of my Travelogues .... 2014
7. Konni urumulu konni merupulu – Anthology of Short Stories ....2016
8. Anandarnavam – My journey in search of Happiness ....2016
9. Vipasyana – My experience with Vipasyana Meditation ....2016

Two more books are in the process of printing – a book with the collection of my poetry, a book with collection of essays.

During my journey in the literary and development fields I have received awards in recognition of my contributions.

**List of Awards:**

- 2003 – Best Women Writer Award
- 2004 – Best Women Journalist Award
- 2006 – Abburi Rukminamma Award
- 2008 – Rangavalli Award for Best Editor
- 2008 – LAADLI Media Award for Southern Region for Gender Sensitivity in Media by UNFPA
- 2008 – National Award for Gender Sensitivity in Media for Bhumika Editorials by UNFPA
- 2009 – Baadam Saroja Devi Award
- 2009 – Best Editor Award
- 2010 - Best Short Story writer Award
- 2011 – Nannapaneni Laxmi Memorial Award
- 2012 - Dashaabdi Mahila (Women of the Decade) Award by JMG Communications
- 2012 – Keerthi Puraskaram by Potti Sriramulu Telugu Viswavidyalayam, Hyderabad
- 2013 – **Life Time Achievement Award** by Shiva Social Service Society
- 2013 – **Apuroopa Award** by Ms. Amruthalatha, Educationalist, Nizamabad for support services through Bhumika Helpline
- 2013 – **Best Journalist (A.P. State) Award** by Dr. Pattabhi Kala Peetam

- 2014 – **Outstanding Contribution to Community** by Lions Clubs International

I was invited by America Telugu Association (ATA) and presented paper on “Feminism in Telugu Literature” in the Literary Forum in its Silver Jubilee Conference held at Chicago, USA, in July 2016. I was also invited to talk about “Bhumika Helpline” and my work on issues related to “Violence Against Women” in the Women Forum of the same conference.

I have been nominated on various committees as a member by different department, organizations and institutions. Some of these are mentioned below:

- Non-Official Member to visit “**Chanchalguda Women Prison**” and provide counseling services to women prisoners.
- Member in Committee for the redressal of complaints pertaining to Women Employees on “**Sexual Harassment of Working Women**” in the office of **Director General of Police , Andhra Pradesh, Hyderabad.**
- Member in State Level “**Equity Working Groups (EWG)**” constituted by the **School Education (PE-SSA) Department, Government of Andhra Pradesh (2012).**
- Member in “**District Monitoring Committee (2013)**” for Hyderabad constituted by **Commissioner of Police, Hyderabad city** for effective **implementation of Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act 1995** (to look into the violation of programme code of Cable TV Network (Regulation) Act by various TV channels).
- **Department of Health & Family Welfare** - one of the NGO member in the State Level Advisory Committee and State Level Inspection & Monitoring Committee for PC & PNDT Act for effective implementation of Pre-Conception

and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (Prohibition of Sex Selection) Act, 1994 and Rules 1996 in the State.

- Internal Committee Member constituted under Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace in **Society for Social Audit, Accountability and Transparency of Department of Rural Development, Govt. Of Andhra Pradesh.**
- Nominated as one of the member in the Complaints Committee on Sexual Harassment of working women of **Office of Director General, Special Protection Force, Secunderabad.**
- NGO member in the Internal Complaints Committee on Sexual Harassment at Workplace of **SVP National Police Academy, Hyderabad.**
- Member in “**State Supervisory Board under PCPNDT Act**”, constituted by the Director of Women Development and Child Welfare Department, Government of Telangana, Hyderabad.
- Advisory Member to support effective functioning of “**One Stop Crisis Centres**” run by the Department of Women Development and Child Welfare in the State of Telangana.
- Advisory member for **BHAROSA Centre** – a centre initiated by Hyderabad Police to support women in distress.
- Nominated as “**Ex-Officio Member**” in Andhra Pradesh State Legal Services Authority.
- NGO Member in Internal Complaints Committee of **Telangana Foods, Department of Women and Child Development and Senior Citizens (WCD & SC), Hyderabad.**
- Member in Sector Level Complaints Committee for Prevention of Sexual Harassment on Working Women of **Training Sector, Central Industrial Security Force, National Industrial Security Academy.**

- External Member in Internal Complaints Committee of BITS Pilani, Hyderabad for Sexual harassment at work place.

My journey started since three decades on the issues pertaining to women and still I am playing my innings. Now I am 63 and, half of my life went into working on women's issues and women's movement... I wish to work for the same till my last breath. My dream is to work towards **a violence free home and society for all women.**

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