

‘Orange the World’ to fight gender-based violence

Sisters of the Good Shepherd who are having their mission in 74 countries around the world are known for working for the rights of women and children. Wherever they are present, they ensure that the women and children enjoy their rights. It is their spirituality. Following the footsteps of St. Mary Euphrasia, their Mother Foundress, Sisters work strenuously to see the women and children are taken care of in all respects. Over the last 165 years of presence in India, the Sisters of the Good Shepherd moved by the spirituality of the Good Shepherd have been striving to create a society where the rights of the women and children are protected and promoted.

In the event of increasing incidences of violence on women and girl children, this year, the Sisters and the Partners in the Good Shepherd Mission around the world committed themselves to prevent and end violence against women at the regional, national and global levels. In continuation of their mission, Good Shepherd Partners in Mission have joined the 16 Days of activism against gender-based violence which is an annual international campaign that kicks off on 25 November, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, and runs until 10 December, International Human Rights Day.

In India, Sisters of the Good Shepherd who are present in 10 States have taken a vow to organise various events in connection to the issue of gender-based violence. In all their working area, on 7th December 2019, activities such as rallies, public meetings and signature campaigns were organised to promote the respect towards women and children. The slogan “Orange the World” means generation equality against violence on women and girl children.



A big rally was organised in Amaravathi (Andhra Pradesh, India) on 7th December 2019 with the participation of general public and girls and boys from Amaravathi-based St. Augustine High School, St. Pallotine Junior College and Balayogi Gurukul Patasala

In Amaravathi, the capital of Andhra Pradesh, Good Shepherd Partner in Mission have conducted a big rally on 7th December 2019 with the participation of general public and the girls and boys from Amaravathi-based St. Augustine High School, St. Pallotine Junior College, Balayogi Gurukul Patasala. Altogether around 1100 people were there to join the rally. This shows that there is widespread impunity on sexual violence and rape. The rally was taken out in the main streets of Amaravathi; the rally started at 11 am in front of Good Shepherd Convent, Amaravathi and ended near Krosuru Cross Road; the participants stopped in three cross roads and the eminent personalities invited for the day had delivered their message on ending violence on women and children. As the rally passed one point to another, slogans were raised to alert the public on the issues and problems faced by the women and girl children.

Following are the short messages being delivered by the eminent personalities invited as the chief guests of the day.

Rallying for Stopping Violence on Women and Girl Children

Mr. Sivaiah, Sub Inspector of Police, Amaravathi (Rural) who had declared the rally open said that this rally for women and girl child rights is a very good move towards addressing the gender violence. He appreciated the efforts of the Sisters and all the participants.



Mr. Sivaiah, Sub Inspector of Police, Amaravathi declared the rally open on 7th December 2019 for Stopping Violence on Women and Girl Children

Violence-free Future

Mr. Krishna Anjaneyalu, President of Journalist Forum of Andhra Pradesh, in his opening speech to the gathering narrated the relevance of the day and the story behind this 'Orange the World Campaign'. He narrated the story of the Hermanas Mirabal sisters who followed their convictions with bravery and selflessness to fight for what they believed. Fighting against the Dominican Republic dictator's rule they felt was wrong. Three of them – Patria, Minerva, and Maria Teresa gave their lives for their cause when some henchmen, following the orders of Dictator Rafael Leónidas Trujillo, killed them savagely on 25th November 1960. The four sisters and the group they were involved in were a threat to this commanding dictator because they were involved with plotting to over throw Trujillos cruel, ruthless and fascist government. The assassinations turned the Mirabal sisters into 'symbols of both popular and feminist resistance'.

In 1999, in these sisters' honour, the United Nations General Assembly designated 25th November as the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women.

Despite stringent laws, the incidences of violence on women and girls children are increasing year after year. In this backdrop, the campaign organised by the Good Shepherd Partners in Mission, is a worthy and timely, Mr. Krishna Anjaneyalu said. He appreciated all the institutions and the individuals who have gathered there as sign of support to protect the women and girl children from all forms abuse and violence. He concluded saying that efforts such as this rally is bound to bring in changes in the mind set of the people and of course a violence-free future.



Mr. Krishna Anjaneyalu, President of Journalist Forum of Andhra Pradesh dreams of a violence free future for girl children and women

Cultivate Respect for Women

Fr. Prasad, Correspondent of St. Palloti Junior College, Amaravathi focused his message on the importance of respecting girls and women by the males. He said that the older women must be treated as one would treat his mother, and treat the younger women with all purity as they would treat their own sisters. Fr. Prasad said that the cycle of violence starts with disrespect. Not all disrespect towards women ends in violence but all violence against women starts with disrespectful behaviour. He said that disrespect starts with what we see, the stories we hear and what we learn from adults when we are young.

Women are not Material to be Used

Mr. Prasad, Vice Principal of Balayogi Gurukul Patasala, Amaravathi in his brief message to the participants of the rally said that women and girls are not commodities; rather they must be treated as human beings with equal rights to men. They are human beings with rights and privileges. In all advertisements, he said, that women are used to popularise the products. We must stop objectifying women to sell products. Most of the advertisements whether it is for food, fashion and alcohol industries – all utilise women's bodies to sell their products, often in incredibly sexual and uncomfortable ways. He said that the advertising industry is sending damaging messages to young women and girls that could potentially harm their self-esteem and confidence. Such a trend must be stopped, Mr. Prasad said.



Respecting girl children and women is the first step towards upholding the rights of girls and women, says Fr. Prasad, Correspondent of St. Pallotine Junior College, Amaravathi

Mr. Ravindrababu, Sub Inspector of Police, Amaravathi (Urban), after hearing slogans from the participants about the very many good efforts taken by the police in support of standing for the rights of women and girl children, volunteered to talk to the participants. He said that he is very happy today to listen from the public appreciations which are an encouragement to the work the police department is doing. He assured that the Police Department is there with the women and children and around the clock any girl or women in trouble call the toll free numbers such as 100, 112, 181, 1090, 1091 and 1098. Mr. Ravindrababu's talk created happiness among the



Police Department is ready round the clock to protect girl children and women from all forms of abuse and violence, says Mr. Ravindrababu, Sub Inspector of Police, Amaravathi

Participants for his assurance to protect the rights of girls and women.

Orange the World is Continuous Process

Sr. Sundari, Superior of St. Augustine Convent, Amaravathi appreciated the efforts of the Partners of the Good Shepherd Mission. She said that orange the world is not a one day event but should continue all through lifelong in everyone's lives.

Curbing Violence on Women and Girls

Mr. Suribabu, Member of CITU & President of Amaravathi Mandal Peace Committee in his turn said that Government must play a major role in curbing the violence on women and children. Though in India, the Government seemingly working hard to end the scourge of violence on women and children, the laws that are created for the protection of women and girl children are not practiced fully. More than the law, there is much has to be done with respect to developing appropriate character, transform attitudes, practices and behaviours. Mr. Suribabu said that we must work together to tackle all crimes against women and children. Men in particular must take it upon themselves to rid our society of violence, he observed.



Mr. Suribabu, Member of CITU & President of Amaravathi Mandal Peace Committee says that men in particular must take it upon themselves to rid our society of violence

Violence has no place in our Country

Sr. Aruna George, Local Community Leader of Good Shepherd Convent, Amaravathi in her concluding speech said that India has been a nation and a tradition which respects and protects women and girl children. But, over the last few decades the lives of women and girl children are at grim. Violence and abuse against women and children has no place in our society. The main objective of this campaign is for all Indians to be active participants in stopping violent behaviour. This campaign is an effort to ride our society of victimisation of women and children. We respect the women goddesses in the temples but beat the wives at home who are taking care of all in the family. Women have the right to be free of fear and abuse. Women have the right to safety, security, health, dignity and the integrity of their bodies. Sr. Aruna George said that she is deeply saddened to know that a number of women in our country have not had the opportunity to enjoy all the rights in the Constitution because they are abused. Violence perpetrated against women is an offence against the founding values of the supreme law of the Republic, our Constitution. She said that she strongly aspires to create a society where women can walk freely in the streets and children can play safely outside.



Sr. Aruna George, Local Community Leader of Good Shepherd Convent, Amaravathi aspires to create a society where women can walk freely on the streets and children can play safely outside

Handbills for Awareness Creation: As the rally moved from one point to another, the spectators and the other observers were circulated handbills with information related to violence in different forms inflicted on girl children and women all over the world. This was prepared to enable the public to reflect and act upon the violence faced by the women and children and also an invitation to create a world fit for them. It also draws the attention of the Government to implement the laws pertaining to the protection of women and girl children. The participants were mostly being adolescent girls and boys; this handbill was a ready reference for them to reflect on the violence being inflicted on women and girl children.

Signature Campaign: A display room was created for the participants and the public to sign and vouch their commitment to join the campaign to end violence on women and girl children.

The rally ended at 1 pm with magnificent and grand feeling of creating a world fit for all, especially for the women and children.

How to Orange the World?

We have been for generations have recorded in the minds of the women that they are weak and second class citizens. This is the best time that we change the situation. Without women, the world will be not only half empty; it will be empty with all good qualities. If only women stop cooking, at least in India, the children and men will go hungry and naked. Without women, the world will be full of chaos and confusion. It is the women who set things right. We read in the Book of Genesis, God took 6 days to create the world. After creating Adam, the first Man, He was not satisfied with the man. He saw Adam not happy and content. After a long reflection, he created Eve, the first woman to be the partner for the Adam who looked gloomy and made the life beautiful. For every sad moment, she is the solution then and now. No one can deny this truth; however, her life is under threat. 'Orange the World' is the day for reflection and action on the threats being faced by the girl children and women. They say that God cannot be present to all, instead God created women to be the mother for all of us.

Hereunder are few reflections on how we can go about changing the society, a better place for the women and the girls:

- i. Let us start celebrating the birth of girl children;
- ii. Ensure that the girls are taken care of fully their early childhood;
- iii. As they reach their adolescent age, let them be provided with life skills education recommended by the World Health Organisation as this would help them become creative, assertive, analytical, creative and skills to manage the social situation;
- iv. Ensure that all girl children are given formal education that would equip them become skilful to decide on their future.
- v. Let the girls after their 21 year completion decide on their marriage and choose their partner;
- vi. Ensure equity share in the ancestral property;
- vii. Ensure women's participation in the decision-making process;

- viii. Support the to secure economic independence; enable them to become business people and thereby develop their income-earning capacity;
- ix. Ensure that the laws are implemented;
- x. Respect and be supportive to women in all her undertakings; let all men start working with women in managing the families for managing the families is everyone's job; men need to shoulder the burden of running the families;

Without women, there is no procreation; though children are made to born, there is none to equal to women. Let us join hands swear to love women and children and share everything with them and make the world fit for all of them. This is a collective responsibility and it is for our own good.

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