

BHUMIKA HELPLINE

ANNUAL REPORT 2006-07

BHUMIKA WOMEN'S COLLECTIVE
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Annual Report of Bhumika Helpline

Introduction

Atrocities on women have been increasing, Particularly in Andhra Pradesh in recent years. According to 2004-2005 analyses 30,000 cases were registered. Out of these 18336 Cases related to Domestic Violence, 6063 cases of ragging, 1803 suicide cases, and 1796 cases of rape and 1353 cases of women being kidnapped In order to provide support advisory moral and otherwise to the effected women in distress. In the year 2006-07, on March 16th, with the basic objective of providing advisory helpline services to the affected women in the state of Andhra Pradesh. Through Tele helpline, Bhumika helpline has done a commendable job during its inaugural. Not only in providing support to the distressed women through its helpline services but also by way of creating and improving the awareness among the women in the state for spreading about the helpline and educating women about their rights.

According to Bhumika helpline analyses, a trend indicates increased violence against women into 2006-07 compared to earlier years and the maximum number of cases occurred in Hyderabad city followed by Vijayawada, Nellore, Guntur etc. Therefore, Bhumika feels that there is a need to increase the helplines in each and every districts of Andhra Pradesh.

The following report details of various activities carried out by Bhumika helpline in supporting the affected women in the state. The report also explained various actions taken by Bhumika in creating improving awareness among the people of the state about the helpline and how the Bhumika impacted the society with its activities and programmes.

Bhumika helpline activities during 2006-2007

Providing help to women in distress through Tele helpline:

Bhumika established a Tele helpline to help women who are facing Domestic Violence and other forms of violence in life. Bhumika appointed counselors who receive the calls from the affected women through this helpline. The counselors are trained personnel in the process of counseling and are adopt with the skills acquired for the same. The counselors patiently listen to their problems and try to understand the socio-religious cultural situation of the women and then give suggestion to the women in distress. They build good rapport with the client and act like a friend, philosopher and guide in identifying their problems and providing a solution. They also provide alternatives suggestions to the callers to resolve the problems by themselves and also help them in deciding their choices if necessary.

In this process, many women are able to bring out positive changes to their attitudes and become more confident to face the problems rather than meekly submitting themselves to the fate.

Help and develop a link with Formal System of Justice

As a part of providing solutions to the distressed women, Bhumika helpline also provides a linkage to the different affected women with police and judiciary to enable the distressed women to interact with formal system of justice and take its help in crises situations like physical security or risk of life or at state. For this purpose, Bhumika helpline had appointed several advocate volunteers in every district to whom it refers the client cases who in turn provide proper legal advice to the effected women at the situation or help them to take up the matter with appropriate authorities. As on date there are around 50 advocates available to Bhumika helpline as volunteers and the list is likely to expand further in due course.

Providing referral services to help distressed women

Bhumika helpline also takes up some of the cases that do not require solutions though judicial process. The helpline refers such case to several other organizations, public Institutions to Provide proper solution to the distressed women. These cases are referred to the following depending on the nature of case and situation.

- Protection Officer
- Family counseling center's
- Psychiatric
- Short stay homes
- Child rehabilitation centers
- Mahila pranganam,
- Jana sikshana samstan for vocational courses
- Disabled welfare department for challenged children
- De-addiction centers
- Educational guidance
- Satyam health line for health problem
- Child line
- HIV-AIDS counseling
- Women N.G.O's, other helplines
- Social activists
- Personality development
- Muslim N.G.O's etc.

Bhumika maintains data base information relating such affairs and institutions to provide immediate attention in such cases.

Total number of cases attended by Bhumika helpline in 2006-07. Bhumika is proud to report that a total of 1260 cases have been received by the helpline during the year 2006-07. All of them have been successfully handled through the existing system. The break up the different types of cases received is as follows.

Type of case	No. Of cases received
Domestic Violence	412
Family counseling center	201
Short stay home	117
Psychiatric cases	46
Health	39
Property case	109
Depressive cases	36
Enquiry	202
Other cases	98
Grand total	1260

Success stories:

Some of the success stories of Bhumika as are briefly explained below

A distress wife

On July 22nd helpline received a call from one Ms. Padma [name changed]. Padma got married to an impotent After marriage she came to know about that and he also harassed her for each and every thing. So, she requested the helpline as to how she can take divorce. Helpline has given all necessary information about Family Court and also

proceedings of Family courts. She approached the Family Court and got divorce within 2 months through court. She gave her heartfelt thanks to bhumika helpline.

Getting Shelter for women in need

On 27th Feb. at 7.30 pm we received a call from Ms. Rajini, resident of Lower tank Bund Road to discuss about her helper's problem. Laxmi (name changed) was thrown out of their house by her husband. We informed Rajani about the shelter home swadhar and spoke with the counselor of Swadhar shelter home. Laxmi got the shelter to stay.

Rescued a women who was missed in Maldives

Bhumika helpline co-ordinator received a call around 11.30 p.m at night on 17/12/10, from Trivendrum, Kerala. The client runs a helpline and rehabilitation center at Trivendrum. The client was approached by a lady Rani [name changed], who was detained and sent back by the Maldives airport officials for not carrying valid documents. She reached Trivandrum and approached the client for help.

The lady is originally from Tallapudi in W. Godavari Dist. Of Andhra Pradesh. A broker, to whom she paid Rs.45, 000/- promised her a job at Maldives. She was put into the Maldives Flight from Trivandrum and subsequently sent back by Maldives officials for not possessing a VISA.

The co-ordinator immediately asked her to send the lady to Hyderabad and necessary arrangements would be made for her return to her native place.

The Co-ordinator kept in touch with her counter part at Trivandrum throughout the process. She contacted DIG Women's Police Station, and made necessary arrangements for her return.

And the lady is back in her native place and expressed indebted gratitude to Bhumika helpline for saving her life from these duping men. Thus Bhumika helpline is successful in lending a helping hand both financially and emotionally.

It is heartening to note that 30 beneficiaries came back to Bhumika helpline formally expressing their gratitude for solving their problems. One woman rendered the following poem in Telugu appreciating helpline.

**Chekatilo velugu Nestam
Eenadulo 'Sakhi' Nestam
ETV Sakhulandariki Bhumika
helpline Nestam.**

Increasing the awareness about Bhumika helpline

Bhumika helpline has taken extensive steps to create and improve the awareness its of helpline through out the state by the use of prints, electronic media and radio services. Some of the programmes carried out thought out to achieve these objectives are as follows.

Popularizing the toll free number

Bhumika helpline distribute the material in buses. It also comes out with printed material about its objectives and activities. It planned to distribute and paste helpline stickers in public places like STD boots bus stations, temples, theaters, hospitals, N.G.O's, apartments, general stores shopping complex and Bastis to create extensive awareness.

To popularize helpline number in rural areas helpline material is posted to all mandals, M.R.O's, sarpanchs, that women in the remote areas could also approach our helpline to resolve their problems.

Bhumika helpline material is sent to almost all the Mandal Resource centers or Indira kranti padham groups to popularize the number. Bhumika gets almost all the magazines published in Andhra Pradesh.

Use of Electronic Media:

The co-ordinator of Bhumika helpline and the editor of Bhumika Magazine and also a feminist Ms. K.Satyavati, writes on many on women issues. The help line got extensive publicity due to untiring efforts and personal contacts of our Co-ordinator. Bhumika helpline co-ordinator has also given interviewes many times in TV9 'Naveena' programme and participated in talk shows related to women issues, such as Domestic Violence and different violence against women. For the ETV2 also approached Bhumika helpline to know its activities and introduced Bhumika helpline in 'Sakhi' programme. Through this programme all the districts came to know about the helpline in Andhra Pradesh and the activities, which they are doing for the women.

Strenuous efforts of the co-ordinator resulted in TV9 and ETV channel giving continuously free scrolling of Bhumika Toll free helpline number and several districts women started enacting the helpline from different parts of the State.

Use of Print Media

In print media Bhumika have published the our helpline Toll free number in almost all reported and highly circulated papers in Telugu, English and Urdu in the State.

In Telugu newspapers we published our toll free number in Eenadu, Andhra Jyothi, Praja shakthi, Hyderabad Mirror, Andhra bhoomi, Vaartha. The helpline advertisement appeared in these newspapers from April 2, 2006 onwards. Recently Andhra Jyothi newspaper has taken helpline co-ordinator interview and the same was published in Navya page on March 17th 2007. Through this advertisement Bhumika helpline received good publicity and got many calls with this reference.

On March 14th the Indian Express representative visited Bhumika and taken the interview of the co-ordinator, and on March 8th 06, also once again they have taken interview of the helpline coordinator. And the interview is due for publications any time.

Apart from the newspapers publicity about Bhumika helpline is receiving in other Telugu Magazines. These include Prajatantra, Vignana sudha, Praja Sahithi, Janabalam, Veekshanam, Stree Spurthi, Navodayam, Chinuku, Nadustunna Charita, Samacharam [non-gazitted officers], Praja shakthi, Charcha, Praja Dwani, Samajika Nyayam, Mannemlo, Gradhalaya Sarvasvam and Patrika etc. we also have started giving helpline advertisement in Bhumika Magazine.

FM Radio

Bhumika gave an advertisement in FM rainbow 101.9. And the result is very positive. Helpline Co-ordinator also gave a live show for one hour in FM Rainbow on helpline to popularize the toll free number among general public.

The Impact created by Bhumika helpline

The major success of bhumika helpline has been to popularize Tele helpline as a concept and as a tool that has gained success to help people in need. Many organizations/people working several other issues like Dalit, Physically challenged etc. have made enquiries with bhumika about starting helpline and have initiated helplines along with similar lines.

Another major impact of bhumika help line is that many people are coming forward to start similar helplines in their districts. Ms. Priya bhandhavi started helpline in Tenali. Mrs. Anuradha and Revathi started a counseling center and giving service voluntarily for the helpline. It is called as Harshini Family Counselling Center. Mr.R.K.Narayana murthy from Nuzuveedu also planning to start a helpline.

Bhumika helpline has generated positive thinking amongst civil society/women's groups that these issues need to be and can be addressed. In Hyderabad city alone Bhumika helpline received around 450 calls.

Another major impact of Bhumika helpline has been that "Indira Kranthi Padam" (World Bank supported rural poverty project) has come forward to establish link with helpline and provide training and capacity building of their SHG leaders on the helpline concept and in general counseling. Women from 3 districts namely karimnagar, W-godavari and Krishna have been deputed to Bhumika to get

practical Training. They appreciated the practical training and followed it up with field visits and have gone with developed capacities.

Several persons from all over Andhra Pradesh are offering themselves working as volunteer's to support helpline in its endeavor to mitigate the distressed women. Bhumika helpline is planning to select some of these volunteer's and give them effective training on helpline skills and counseling process. To increase awareness about women problems in the State. Human Recourse Development programmes for counsellor's skill improvements and improving

Bhumika helpline has taken several steps in developing the skill of the counselor's through Human Development Resource programmes. Some of which are listed below.

Trainings and meetings

- Bhumika Helpline coordinator attended the orientation training programme for the operators and Directors of the women's helplines located in southern states of India conducted by Sri Venkateshwara university of Tirupathi, as resource person and shared the information and gained valuable inputs.
- Bhumika coordinator also attended a meeting conducted by OXFAM and SWARD on 14.10.06 on Domestic Violence. Bhumika Helpline invited advocates from various districts from this meeting and requested their participation
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- Bhumika helpline Coordinator also attended an international Journalists conference in New Delhi on the 16th and 17th November. Prime Minister Mr. Manmohan Singh and President Mr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam have also attended to this meeting. It is important to note that Ms K. Satyavathi is the only women journalist present at the two-day conference on the issue of gender sensitization program to Journalists.
- Bhumika helpline co-ordinator attended a south zone meeting conducted by CWS on the implementation of Domestic Violence Act, for two days on the 20th and 21st November. The representatives of women groups and organizations attended it from districts of our State and other States.
- Bhumika helpline coordinator also attended to the workshop on family counseling process and skills. It was organized for the police department, N.G.O's at NISIT function hall, by SWARD in collaboration with OXFAM.

- Bhumika helpline coordinator has also involved in a number of other activities. She has attended literary, and book release functions organized by different organizations. Here is the list of a few among many meetings attended
- Dalit women Workshop, Yuvakalavahini's Gopichand's award, Pride of Indian cinema award, Govindaraju Sita Devi sahithi puraskar, top ten film award functions, meeting on Dalit women issues, Russian Sita, Sharmaji Padmashree and the legend of Ramulamma book release functions etc.

In the month of March Bhumika chief functionary attended a number of meetings on the eve of International women's day. She attended as a speaker at all these meetings.

- March 8th meeting organized by Loksatta
- March 8th meeting organized by women employees of AG Office
- March 8th meeting organized by Postal employees, Abids
- March 8th meeting organized by AP NGOs, Association
- March 8th meeting organized by FICCI
- Bhumika helpline coordinator attended one-day seminar on Domestic Violence Act organized by Government of AP. Protection officers, NGOS and legal authorities also attended this meeting. She also attended the meeting on Domestic violence Bill Implications-Relevance for Women at Sannihita.

Exposure visits

To provide better service through helpline counselors have made several exposure visits to the following organizations.

- Family courts
- Women police stations
- Women protection cell
- Women organizations
- Family counseling centers
- Other helplines
- Volunteer's organizations like Roshni helpline and SEVA organization.

Review of Bhumika helpline Activities

Bhumika helpline periodically conducts review meetings to the counselors and other staff. To get feed back on its activities their impacts on the society and whether the activities are meeting their intended objectives on the occasions

On the occasion of completion of one year of its existence Bhumika helpline conducted a Review meeting at Celebrity Resorts. Many women writers, well-wishers attended for the review meeting and gave their valuable suggestions.