



In this issue.....

- ✓ Street Play a medium of awareness building...
- ✓ Sensitisation Programme for Pre-University Girls
- ✓ Youth Meeting
- ✓ SHG Strengthening Programme
- ✓ Children's Day Celebration
- ✓ Women's Group Meeting
- ✓ Vocational Training & Income Generation Programme
- ✓ ASHA Sensitization Programmes
- ✓ Social entitlement camp for physically challenged
- ✓ Impact Story - *I am re-born says Daisy....*
- ✓ Home Based Care
- ✓ Legal Counselling Cell
- ✓ From the Director's Desk



Streetplay being witnessed by general public at Gautampur, Ulsoor

A glance through our activities

Street Play a medium of awareness building...

Street Play has been one of the mediums through which Agni Raksha has been creating awareness on the issue of burns to the general public. This is one of the major activities of Agni Raksha. During the street plays, audience's emotions are intense as each audience member connect with the concept of the play in their own ways.

The street plays both in the urban and rural areas are well appreciated. In fact, even when the audience seem to belong to very low income families, many of the audience insist on contributing to the cause. This is indicated by the growing trend of members of the audience giving cash as a token of their appreciation. In fact, even when the audiences seem to belong to very low income families, many of the audience insist on contributing to the cause. The number of referrals of burn case is also growing as awareness about Agni Raksha's work is spreading across the communities.

Networking plays a major role while organising street plays as it is a very huge responsibility to tackle the crowd. Among the audience was an NGO worker who said "***Your street play was very effective and emotional. I have seen many street plays but this is the first time that I am seeing an actor portraying her own life story as one of the characters in the street play. This is unique.***" She assured us of all possible support.



Venilla during a session with Asha Workers Training Programme at Anekal Taluk Hospital

I am re-born says Daisy....

Being the second child and born in a family where my father was a daily wage worker and my mother a domestic worker, education was a dream come true. Yet, my parents always encouraged me and supported me in my studies. "I had always secured a first class pass, in academics, sports or crafts. But I remember when I failed my 3rd standard and still went to the 4th standard. A teacher found me and asked me to return to the 3rd standard. I was upset and a few boys started teasing me about failing. This incident changed my life, I became very strong in my thoughts and built courage and said to myself that I would stand first in every field.

continued on page 3



AGNI RAKSHA has been a recipient of the Zee News Award for Affordable Health Care in March 2013



Dr.Bindu interacting with the staff nurse during a meeting at Government Hospital, Anekal Taluk

Sensitisation Programme for Pre-University Girls

Three sensitization programmes were conducted in Marathahalli PU College, and two in Babuji College in Magadi Road. The participants were teenage girls and their teachers. The sensitization included introduction on Agni Raksha, types and causes of burns, and appropriate first aid practices. After getting very good feedback from the teachers and students after the session, the principal was very satisfied with Agni Raksha. The principal and teachers said that the talk was especially relevant to the students as they often gave in to extreme self-destructive attitudes and actions when faced with a problem in life.



Raghavendra handling a session on Burns & HIV for workers of Motimahal Lodge, Gandhinagar

Youth Meeting

Although only one youth meeting took place in the National Games Village in Koramangala in September 2014, its impact was far reaching and sustainable in many ways. This programme was attended by about 60 youth members of Nehru Yuva Kendra, who had come from 11 districts of Karnataka. As per their website, the Nehru Yuva Kendras were established in 1972 with the objective of providing rural youth with avenues to take part in the process of nation building as well providing opportunities for the development of their personality and skills.

SHG Strengthening Programme

Agni Raksha has not only formed a few SHGs but has been time to time strengthening these group by way of awareness programmes, meetings & home visits by the members of the staff. The team has been able to make extensive home visits of the SHG members (132 visits) to not only inform them about the meetings but also to follow up, enquire about their needs and to provide information leading to their or their family members' welfare. 9 SHG group meetings have been conducted.

Children's Day Celebration

14 children attended the monthly Children's Day programme on 20th September held in the office. Attended by both new and existing child burn victims, the programme started with a prayer. This was followed by different games that involved bringing out the talent of the children as well as entertaining them.

The children are usually not able to express their trauma of being burn victims, and often can withdraw into themselves. Unable to understand or cope with their own emotions, they may feel isolated in their own homes. Such frequent get-togethers help both the children and the accompanying parents to initiate the process of social and emotional rehabilitation. Hence, Agni Raksha accords a lot of importance to the children's meeting. Activities include recreation, learning as well as games that encourage socializing.

Women's Group Meeting

Women who attend these meetings are residents of urban low income community, living in houses that are congested and not properly ventilated. Additionally, there are electric wires amidst clotheslines and television cable wires. Many of the men (husbands or fathers) are alcoholic in nature. Overall, the families here have to struggle with different insecurities related to financial, professional and housing etc. In such families, it is the women, youth and children who bear the brunt of extreme emotions. As they are not able to cope with such hostile relationships and also manage their own emotions, the women or youth often try to commit suicide or end up continuing the abusive and violent atmosphere at home. The women do not have anyone to counsel them at a time like this. Hence, the women group meetings are very important from the prevention perspective, as well as from the context of improving the overall lifestyle of the women.

Vocational Training & Income Generation Programme

The IGP helps the rehabilitated burn victims in building their skills and generating their income. They are trained in handicrafts such as products made out of jute, file covers and sling bags made from laminated jute fabric, letter holders, frocks, baby petticoats. The students are taught knitting and do croche. They are learning to make booties, baby sweaters, caps and shawls. It is important for them to learn craft and knitting part of the counselling process.



Staff team interacting with children at a Streetplay

ASHA Sensitization Programme

Burn care is specialized, and requires skills and adequate care right from identification to rehabilitation. Without timely identification, treatment and rehabilitation, the proper cure of burn victims is not possible. Additionally, burn care specialists are few in number. Given this, the burn treatment and care of burn victims living in rural or peri-urban area is often inadequate and neglected. This is where the ASHA (Accredited Social Health Activists) come into picture and help us take the mission of Agni Raksha forward to the rural people. A series of sensitisation programmes have been organised and the ASHAs were very interested to learn about types and causes of burns, and appreciated the work being done by the organization.

ASHA's have been referring burn victims they come across, and also inform people about Agni Raksha.

**Are you a burn victim? Then,
call our helpline for assistance for both
legal & medical
on 080 41519360 or 41559360**

Quote Corner

Progress is impossible without change, and those who cannot change their minds cannot change anything.....

George Bernard Shaw

Social entitlement camp for physically challenged

Those burn victims, who meet a pre-specified criteria based on the assessment of Government doctors and with subsequent Departmental approval, are entitled to various types of social entitlements meant especially for persons with disabilities. For the first time ever, after several weeks of coordination with various offices, Agni Raksha conducted a day long camp in the office related to the assessment and approval of the physically handicapped certificate with persons.

The Disability Certificate will be very useful for the burn victims, as they can avail various benefits including free bus passes for 10 years, loans or subsidy, and support for income generating programmes such as telephone booth management etc. The success of the one day office based social entitlement camp in August 2014 had raised the expectation of one and all including the doctors, beneficiaries and the staff.

This time an ENT specialist was present along with the Orthopedic professional. Along with them were two representatives from the Department of Welfare for the Disabled and Senior Citizens. As per the requirement, the burn victims were assessed and 15 were found eligible for the Disability Certificate. In this context, 10 burn victims were found eligible in the category of hearing disability, while 5 others had orthopedic related disability. The beneficiaries were very satisfied and happy.



Rajesh interacting with the employees of VT Paradise Lodge

Continued from page 1....I am re-born says Daisy....

Since my family could not afford the school fees, I couldn't attend a better school and decided to go to a government school. The fee was Rs.50/annually and I was not in a position to pay even that so one of my teachers spoke to the Head Mistress and asked her to waive my fees. I have represented my school in various inter-school competitions one such being an exam conducted by Tamil Sangam in which I secured first prize. In my 10th Standard, the class strength was 42 and out of which only 2 students passed in the final board exams and the rest had failed & I was among the failed students. Only when I went to the school I came to know that I had failed in two subjects.

My family members, neighbours, relatives were very confident that I would score first in my school. My father wanted me to complete LLB. Meanwhile, I heard my friend's mother beat her up as she too failed and was yelling at her that being poor, they tried all their best to give her best education but she did not keep up their trust. This created fear in me of what my father would do after getting to know my results.

When my father came home he pacified me saying I could apply for supplementary exams. Even before the results were declared, my father had bought college admission form. After all this I felt that I had destroyed the trust of her father. I locked up myself in the bedroom and set myself on fire. My parents along with my neighbours came to my rescue and took me to Victoria Hospital. I was hospitalized for about 15 days. Since my family was not able to take care of my medical expenses, I was taken back home and after a few days' time, my body started to produce foul odor and later there were worms. All the relatives, neighbours stopped coming to my house because of the foul odor. One morning a church priest came home and he assured that I would live. These words brought relief to my parents. He visited me every day to pray and also gave me a bottle of oil which was applied on my body every day. Slowly I got cured but my lips had got stuck to my neck and because of which I could not eat or drink well. I never came out fearing people. The neighbours would threaten their children to leave them to me if they refused to eat their food. I always repented for taking such a hasty decision in my life.

In 2005, Chitra madam conducted a meeting in my neighbourhood and she spoke about Agni Raksha and how they have been treating burn victims free of cost. The same year I lost my father. Because of this loss; my mother had to struggle a lot to run the family. This situation at home opened my eyes and I decided that its time that I be independent and look after my mother. I recalled the contact details of Chitra ma'am and took courage to contact her for directions to the office. My first step into Agni Raksha, sparked an urge in me to lead a courageous life like others. The visit to Agni Raksha changed my perspective towards life and I found a lot of people victims like leading a happy life. I started to visit the office for physiotherapy treatment every alternative day. Later spoke to Chitra ma'am for a job and she offered me a counselling job.

Though Chitra madam had insisted me in undergoing a surgery, I waited for five years so that Dr.Prema would return to India and treat me. After a long wait on 22nd March 2011, I underwent a surgery and the same was conducted by Dr.Prema. I was then taken to Safe Haven for post-acute care. Even when my wound dressing was opened, the first person that I wanted to see was Chitra madam. After a few days, Chitra madam forced me to take up my 10th standard exams, which I did only for the sake of doing it. On the day of my results, my brother passed the message to me that I had succeeded in the exams and I sent a message thanking madam at 11:45pm.

Now I am perusing my Masters in Social Work through distance education. Chitra madam has been a great inspiration in my life and today my life has become more meaningful. 2014 has been a very prominent year for me as I have been able to conduct a lot of workshops for various stakeholders. Agni Raksha gave me trust and confidence, love and affection from both Chitra Madam and the staff. I feel Agni Raksha is a beauty parlour in a true sense as they beautify burn victims like me both physically and psychologically. In a few words Chitra madam is like a potter and Agni Raksha a potter's wheel in which thousands of people come here and get molded and leave. On the whole, Agni Raksha is a mother's place for victims like me.

Home Based Care

In comparison to the last few months, during this reporting, there were more of child burn victims. All these children sustained burn injuries through accidents, such as hot water scalding, or falling into hot milk containers. Youth girls and boys, and adult men and women were among the burn cases during this period.



Salomi during an awareness on burns for employees of Adigaas, Indiranagar

Legal Counselling Cell

On an average, the legal counselling cell handles about 25 cases. During the reporting period 14 were new cases and 10 were follow up cases. The overall impact of the work on the beneficiaries, especially women burn victims, are as follows:

* Earlier, those burn victims who tried to commit suicide or were burnt by their husbands would claim that their burns were caused by accidents. Now, some of the women are opening up and revealing the truth behind violence related burns. This is a big step forward as only after this, can the women be counseled about their rights and the legal options for their safety, and rights.

* Increase in the number of women burn victims sharing about violence at home, and their inability to manage pressure.

* Increase in the number of women burn victims enquiring about personal rights related to inheritance and citizen rights as well.

A crime against a woman is committed every three minutes, a woman is raped every 29 minutes, a dowry death occurs every 77 minutes, and one case of cruelty committed by either the husband or relative of the husband occurs every nine minutes.

All these crimes occur despite the fact that women in India are legally protected from domestic abuse under the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act.



IMPACT:

**Reached out to over 3000 burns victims,
Over 150 reconstructive surgeries,
Over 300 home based dressing,
Over 18 self help groups**

From the Director's Desk

While I wish each of you a very Happy New Year 2015, I would like to inform you that the first edition of Agni Raksha's Newsletter '*Raksha News*' is out for circulation. Year 2014 has been a challenging one working with burn victims especially with children but a sense of achievement remains at the end of the day. During the month of November and December, about 27 children were given medical and psychological support. It is shocking to see the number of children being victims of fire burn which has taken place due to the negligence of the parents and also victims of quarrel between the parents. It is first time in the history of Agni Raksha's service that we have been able to witness such gruesome incidents.

It is also alarming to see the number of women being burnt every day. Women are victims of bride burning in India each year. Many cases go unreported and the reason being fear created in the minds of women that they and their children would be abandoned by their husbands. Also the belief that is carried out as part part of the traditional upbringing that girls are to be carrying the honour of the family and not to let out anything personal out of the boundaries of the house. These factors silence the women and they do not have the courage to speak out against the injustice against them. Agni Raksha devotes itself to burns victims, who need expert reconstructive surgery, besides counselling and emotional support. Women are often the victims, battling both physical and emotional scars, and forced by circumstances to return to the very husbands who inflicted the damage. The challenges faced by us has built strength and courage in taking this work forward and build a society which is free from violence and no one is victimised through fire/acid.

At this point of the time I would like to thank all our supporters, donors, doctors, our network partners and especially my staff team who have been putting in endless efforts in supporting the burn victims and in realising the vision of the organisation.

AGNI RAKSHA

Project Office :

No. 6/3, 2nd Floor, 4th Cross, Nala Road,
Lalbagh Road, K.S. Garden,
Bangalore – 560027, Karnataka, INDIA

Phone : +91 80 41519360, 41559360

Mob: +91 98860 66360

Email: info@agniraksha.org

Website: www.agniraksha.org

Reg Office :

No. 58/1, Rosey Cottage,
13th Main, J.P.Nagar,
1st Phase,
Bangalore – 560078,
Karnataka, INDIA