

Biographical note

Mrs. Chennupati Vidya

Date of Birth: 5th June 1935

Educational Qualification: Bachelor of Arts, Professional Social Change Worker.

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Chennupati Vidya, daughter of Gora and Saraswathi Gora, an atheist, rationalist and social change worker on Gandhian lines and President of Vasavya Mahila Mandali (in 1975) is a relentless champion of women and children and Gandhian constructive work. For the last four decades she has been in the forefront of eradication of untouchability and the caste system, for the promotion of secular and humanist values and empowerment of women. Under her valuable guidance, covers a broad spectrum of rural development activities through its major organisations, Vasavya Mahila Mandali, Arthik Samatha Mandali and Andhra Pradesh Harijan Sevak Sangh for comprehensive rural development in more than three hundred villages in various districts of Andhra Pradesh.

She stayed at Seva Gram, Ghandiji's ashram in 1940s imbibed National spirit and educated under the guidance of prominent Sarvodaya leader, Sri. Prabhakarji.

Married to Seshagiri Rao, a revolutionary step taken in 1949 breaking caste barriers. She started casteless marriages with herself and family and set an example to others. She also advocated and practiced the registration of marriages under the Special Marriage Act which emphasis the quality of spouses. She has championed the cause of widow remarriages and promoting inter-caste and inter-religion marriages. She involved in the Sarvodaya and the Bhoodan movement.

At the age of 25 she was co opted as a member in Gollapudi village Panchayat (1962 – 66) and co-opted member of Zilla parishad Krishna from (1967 – 76), Member of Parliament from 1980–84 (7th Lok Sabha and 1989 – 91 (9th Lok Sabha). Her active

involvement in Panchayat Raj has given inspiration to many women to enter in to decision making bodies and gave training to elected women in Panchayat Raj, to deliver effective services.

As a Parliamentarian, she has introduced private Member Resolutions and Bill for the promotion of secularism, casteless ness and criminal reformation.

Established Kasturiba Mahila Mandali (in 1965) and extended skill development for women in Amber charka, tailoring and embroidery

She is involved in Cooperative Movement as President, Milk Suppliers society (1970) and Mahatma Gandhi Agricultural cooperative society, through which marketing, financial and resource availability is extended to farmers. She became a role model in successful functioning of 9 women cooperative for thrift and credit.

She is the founder Director of AP State Women Finance Corporation (in 1975) through which micro credit is available to poor women to start income generating programmes. She is the Director (1970-75) Vijayawada Cooperative Central Store, promoted Vijaya Krishna Super Bazar, serving to the people of Vijayawada with quality; discipline and promptness are the landmarks.

She was the member, CAPART, central Social Welfare Board, National Executive Bharata Jana Gnana Vignana Jatha for promotion of scientific temper, awareness and education and Director, Indian Overseas Bank, member, NGOs cell, Planning Commission, New Delhi, and chairperson, core committee for 33% women reservation movement.

She is the President, Krishna Zilla Parishad Girls High School Development Committee (since 1965) till now which is the Best school in the District for building up the personality of Girls in academic, vocational, cultural and life education. Mrs. Vidya's

relentless effort for women's education has attracted the people to build up the infrastructure for the institution.

Vasavya Mahila Mandali, a non-governmental organisation, is guided by Gora and Saraswathi Gora, established in 1969 and registered in the year 1975, aim at Social change and economic development with main focus on women, children and Youth. Vasavya is an acronym for;

Vasavya, under her dynamic leadership, Vasavya was able to run multifarious activities since its inception. A few to quote are,

- Member NGO, AP. State Advisory Committee, for PC and PNDT Act.
- Nodal NGO for Government observation home for boys, Vijayawada
- Lead partner in Andhra Pradesh to International/India HIV/AIDS Alliance, working with a network of 42 NGOs, mobilising the communities, to reduce social stigma and discrimination and to improve the quality of life of people living with HIV/AIDS, Families and Children affected/infected by AIDS with a focus on Child Centric Programmes.
- As a partner to Andhra Pradesh AIDS Control Society, Hyderabad, working with street children towards Behavioural change and communication, STD care, Condom promotion and enabling environment through Partnership sexual health project in Vijayawada urban.
- Local partner to Krishna Community Health Interventions Programme, support by Community Fund, UK and working in 132 urban slums of Vijayawada with a focus on creating awareness and building the capacities of the marginalized communities on four communicable diseases like Malaria, Filariasis, Leprosy, Tuberculosis and also working on HIV/AIDS as a community driven approach.
- Taking care of Positive pregnant women through referrals and follow ups to prevent parent to child transmission of HIV/AIDS.
- Priyadarshini Working Women's hostel, for 125 women working in and around Vijayawada.
- Gora Abhay Nivas, a short stay home for women in distress and moral danger.

- Swetcha Gora Eye Bank, the only eye bank promoted by a Women's organisation and life member in Eye Bank Association of India, gifted vision to more than 200 through caratoplasty, till date.
- Under Reproductive Child Health project, running two urban health centres, assisted by Health and Family Welfare, Government of AP, through Municipal Corporation, Vijayawada.
- Anganwadi workers training centre, supported by the Department of Women development and Child welfare, government of AP.
- Implemented Medicare and extended the services to Urban as well as rural with a mobile health care unit.
- Implementing HIV/AIDS care and support programme in Vijayawada urban, with focus on women and children through support groups formation and developing positive speakers to reduce stigma and discrimination, supported by Catholic Relief Services.
- Vasavya rehabilitation centre for torture victims of Law Enforcing Agencies, working with Human Rights perspective is providing diagnosis, psychological treatment with rehabilitation and reformative activities for women and children.
- Day care centre for fifty aged women is providing mid day meal, medical aid and recreation facilities.
- Women Economic Rehabilitation Project for the rescued victims of Trafficking, destitute, deserted, widows, HIV/AIDS affected family members and street children, started nutrition food training cum production unit and Calamari printing unit.
- Multi Purpose Health Workers training institute for 40 girls, recognised by Government of Andhra Pradesh, provides training for 18 months.
- Skill development for women and children in tailoring and embroidery, crochet making, soft toys, hospital assistant training

Mrs. Vidya, Chairperson, is the driving force of Arthika Samatha Mandal. It has implemented a comprehensive of rural development in 150 villages of Krishna, Guntur, West, East Godavari, and Nalgonda districts. It helps hundreds of children

through child and family sponsorship programme, supported by Save the Children Fund UK and Plan International.

Mrs. Vidya is central working committee member in All India Harijan Sevak Sangh, New Delhi, and President in Andhra Pradesh Harijan Sevak Sangh, working for the mainstreaming of Harijans through a network of District Harijan Sevak Sangh Committees. Established an Ashram school for 125 children at Hyderabad.

Mrs. Vidya is Member, AP Women and children empowerment society, Govt of Andhra Pradesh

Mrs. Vidya is Member, Vijayawada Police Commission rate constitution of committee for the redressal of complaints pertaining to women employees of Police department.

Vidya's life is a saga of struggle to achieve social justice and equality and to translate humanist ideas into practice. Although rooted in Indian society, she has the global perspective.

- She is the recipient of Saraswathi award, instituted by Shikshit Samaj, Delhi in 1983
- Festive award by Telugu academy, Delhi
- Best Non governmental organisation in Rural development by the collector, Krishna, in 1998
- Best voluntary organisation award by Nehru Yuva Kendra.
- Honoured at social reformers Conference in 1975.