

As the media show relentlessly, violence against women continues to know no boundaries. The TOS has decided to reinforce its activities to defend women who are being subjected to unthinkable abuse.

For many years, the TOS has been giving attention to education and vocational training for young girls, as well as medical attention and parenting skills training for mothers. Dr Deepa Padhi, Vice-President of the TOS in Odisha State in India and President of the Mahabharat TOS group, is going a step further. In the state capital of Bhubaneswar (pop. 850,000 or 1.7 million if including larger metropolitan area), she has launched a multi-faceted programme to change people's mind-set and stop violence against women. We hope that what she is doing will serve as a model to TOS groups elsewhere. This is only a beginning.

The campaign was officially launched in January 2013 by State Governor, Sri Murlidhar C. Bhandare, who invited the hundreds present to take a New Year pledge to treat women with respect and not discriminate against them at home or in the workplace. The book *Living Courageously*, written by Lipa Rath, a TOS member and herself a victim of violence, was released at the event.

"We have now begun creating awareness among different sections of society," TOS President, Deepa Padhi said to the many reporters present. "We are working initially in slum areas to educate people on the importance of gender equality, of schooling for female children and on the cruelty of stigmatizing the victims of violence. We are using street plays, documentary films, posters and banners. Our first awareness programme took place in mid-February 2013 in Niladri Vihar slum. We have many presentations planned for this year."

Deepa Padhi reports that her team also intends to make women aware of the support available from the State Women's Commission and Mahila Police Station. Legal literacy workshops will be organized in various educational institutions and work places by the TOS. A counseling centre for women's rights will be opened. Violated women and girls will be given free legal and social advice. Pre- and post-marital counseling will also be available.