

The above effort is an example to explain “activism”

As an ASHA you are expected to play the role of an activist. So it is important to understand how it is done. Read the following real life examples of activism.

Anti Arrack Movement

In 1991, women from Dubagunta, Nellore district of the Indian state of Andhra Pradesh, drove away the liquor contractors from their village. This is said to have been the beginning of the Anti-Arrack (local liquor) Movement, which finally led to the prohibition of alcohol in the state on 16 January 1995.

The main participants in the early struggle were poor rural women, predominantly from scheduled castes and backward classes, supported by voluntary organisations and, later, by politicians from opposition parties.

This is not just a story, it actually happened. It is about what a miracle that common women were able to achieve collectively. It is about a community of hard-working women who laboured in the fields to earn their living. Unfortunately, all their labour was wasted on arrack and toddy (locally made liquor). The menfolk of this village were so addicted to liquor that they not only spent money on it, but also sold the hard earned food materials, pulses, chillies, rice, butter and ghee (clarified butter), in exchange for liquor. At times, when their earnings were not enough, they incurred debts or stole household articles like goblets, plates or even their wives' saris.

After drinking arrack they would use foul language, beat their wives and children making their lives miserable. The women felt extremely helpless. There were two liquor shops in the locality. The village men used to go straight to these shops in the evening after returning from work. They came home late at night, completely drunk. They would hand over some money for household expenses only if there was any left.

The situation reached a climax when one man, in an intoxicated condition, stabbed his father to death. Apart from this incident, Vijayamma, a woman of this community was embarrassed when her relatives visited her house and, to her shame, were scared away from the village by the obscene language of her closest neighbor, a heavy drinker. She felt ashamed and thought that the village would be a much better place without arrack.

Everyday while working in the fields and at the community wells the women discussed the arrack menace. One day the women joined together and approached the village president (Sarpanch) and the village elders. They expressed their problem and asked them to get remove the arrack and toddy shops. The elders and the Sarpanch, although agreeable, were unable to do anything