

APWWS: the journey so far

ITANAGAR, Oct 10:

Formed in 1979, against Child and Forced Marriage, Polygamy and to seek for better educational opportunities for girls in the state, Arunachal Pradesh Women Welfare Society, a pan Arunachal organisation, has come a long way since.

It was officially registered under the societies Act on 10th April 1981, with its by-laws drafted by Mediram Dodum, D Mihi Malo as the first president and Lomtey Riba as the secretary general.

APWWS has for long been advocating for codification of customary practices wherein women and children rights are protected especially property inheritance, rights of girl child within the ambit of customary Laws.

In 1994 a bill was passed on customary practices, which was partial to the rights of women and girls, much to the resentment of APWWS.

Its intervention led to withdrawal of Arunachal Pradesh customary practices bill which was passed in the State Legislature. Society intervened by withholding assent of President

of India for re-examination of the said bills so that the women /girl child rights are protected. The bill was withdrawn in 2005.

During the long span of over three decades, the struggle of Apex Women Organization for equality of opportunities and economic, political and social empowerment has been achieved to some extent in the form of establishment of APSCW in 2005, Gender Budgeting from 2011, inclusion of 33% reservation in Panchayat Raj, Establishment of Women Police Station in Capital City and district headquarters, appointment of women member in Arunachal Pradesh State Civil Service Commission, and A.P. State Information Commission.

At present there are more than 30 branches of APWWS and affiliated bodies which work under the banner of the APWWS thus forming a strong network of women's group.

The arduous journey towards inclusive development, peace and harmony continues for APWWS as there are continued challenges including crimes against women and children.

