



बराबरी, अमन और इंसाफ के लिए  
और महिला हिंसा के खिलाफ  
उमड़ते सौ करोड़



**ONE BILLION RISING  
AGAINST VIOLENCE ON WOMEN &  
DISPLACEMENT &  
FOR EQUALITY, PEACE AND JUSTICE**



## **OBR HIMALAYAS RISING - SHIMLA**

Jan Abhiyan Sanstha (JAS), Himachal Pradesh partnered with Jagori Dharamshala and the YWCA of Shimla and other local NGOs in Shimla to join a worldwide movement called the One Billion Rising Campaign started by Eve Ensler, the noted playwright and women's activists. In 2013 One billion women and men in 207 countries shook the earth through dance and cultural events to end violence against women and girls. This year too on 14 February 2014 women and men everywhere rose again for justice. In Shimla the movement is known as OBR Himlayas Rising and was coordinated this year by Dr. Richa Minocha of JAS. Wishing to make Shimla a part of this historical movement, Jan Abhiyan Sanstha collaborated with the YWCA of Shimla and planned cultural events on the Ridge open air theatre. The participants included Evening college students, students of Rashtriya Kanya Mahavidyalaya and a theatre society. The planned events included a signature campaign, and dances and plays. The performances on the Ridge were to be followed by a pledge taking ceremony and discussions in the YWCA of Shimla complex.

During the process of organizing the OBR, a few women came forth to share their story with us. However they were still not ready to narrate or share with a bigger audience. One among them was a young girl of 25 with a seven year old child. She was married at 17, had a child at 18 and this because her parents thought that it was enough that the boy's father had a reasonably good government job. The boy was violent, compulsively abusive and not capable of earning anything to support his wife and child. She had left her inlaws family and stayed a short while with her parents in her native village but now she was looking for work as a domestic help and a place to stay with her child. We asked her what about her parents and she said that they had a lot of land but she was not comfortable staying with them any more. She quickly added that people had stopped cultivating in her village and her father had recently sold some piece of land to help her brother buy a taxi. What she expresses is a common scenario in the state today. In many places in Himachal Pradesh cultivation has declined or been given up all together. The reasons given include land acquisition for development projects, destruction of crops by wild animals and monkeys, erratic weather, lack of water for irrigation etc.

Research conducted by Jan Abhiyan Sanstha reveals that where development projects (mining, hydro power) are on an increase in the state, the status of women has declined as has the sex ratio- Shimla and Kinnaur are examples. The impacts of development projects are not gender neutral and development induced displacement has had numerous consequences for women including loss of land and livelihoods, loss of a role in decision making and an increased struggle in organizing safe drinking water and nutritious diets for her household. Food crops feed families whereas income from cash crops is often squandered away by men on non-essentials. A play "Visthapan" was

staged on the occasion of OBR to illustrate this changing scenario for women. This is not to suggest that life for women was picture perfect earlier, many women in rural parts of the state that they work like beasts of burden from early morning to late evening and their daughters and daughter in laws should get better lives but at the same time they should relearn their cultural skills otherwise life will have them at a loss.

### **Program:**

1. Introduction regarding One Billion Rising and address to participants, audience and media- Dr. Richa Minocha
2. Song written by Kamla Bhasin. The music recomposed and sung by Avinash and Mukesh
3. Dance performance on a song based on the one billion rising campaign “Jago re Jago”
4. Play Visthapan by FLAME theatre society. The play was been directed by Munish The caste included Avinash, Ragini, Kirti, Lokesh and Ashok
5. Other songs and dance performances
6. Pledge ceremony led by Sneh Singh, Resident Secretary, YWCA of Simla

While the Ridge Ampitheatre had been booked for open air performances for maximum impact the venue had to be changed to the YWCA of Shimla at the last moment. Although most of the performers arrived inspite of bad weather, other participants were not as many as could be achieved if the performances could be conducted on the Ridge. However a significant section of the local media both print and electronic made it to

In her introductory speech Dr. Richa emphasized the various issues that were facing the women of and in Himachal. Declining sex ratio, violence against women inside and outside homes, problems faced by migrant women as well as women in the informal sector in raising children and displacement from livelihoods as a result of development projects.

Although Satwant Atwal, I.G. of police; Sanjay Chauhan (Mayor Shimla) and Tikender Panwar (Deputy Mayor Shimla) had to be a part of the OBR celebrations all three sent their apologies. However during the planning phase of the OBR, Tikender Panwar had expressed his views saying that political representation and education will go a long way for women in the state. We concluded with the pledge ceremony and a statement from Meenakshi F. Paul who guided us through planning the OBR Himalaya rising but could not be a part of it as she was travelling: She said and I quoted “ Women in Himachal have already retreated much of their spaces, we already have our backs touching walls – from here we can only come forth and fight for our rights”.

Richa Minocha

Member Secretary

Jan Abhiyan Sanstha









