



Gnana Prakasamma Gnanaprakasamma was born in 1970 to Mrs.Charamma and Mr. Abraham, a farmer and business man in a village in Andhra Pradesh, India. She has two brothers and one sister. She was married in the 1986 at a tender age of 16 years to Mr. Ratna Raju a Railway employee (Class IV). After marriage she stayed in the joint family and had to work hard, serving all her in-laws and family members.

She realized that her husband was an **alcoholic** and a gambler even before marriage. He never used to spend money for his family. After the birth of two female children she and her husband separated from the joint family and started living independently. Her husband was transferred to another place and she along with her children was kept at Guntur by her husband. She did not receive any communication or money from him for the next three months and her brother and other family members looked after them during those torrid times.

After waiting for three months, her brother took them to his work place at Narsarao Pet and her parents tried to keep her family united. This worked for six months but her husband continued his irresponsible behaviour in spite of her parent's efforts to make him shoulder some responsibility. They even went to the extent of beating and placing him in jail. Her parents went to her husband's native village and complained to the elders and held a village Panchayat (meeting of village elders) who were told about his quarrelsome, and irresponsible actions and his involvement with local political parties but to no avail. Her parents were aggrieved seeing her plight and took her to their house where she stayed for a long time. The children were admitted to a school with a hostel for higher school education.

After some time she again tried for a rapprochement with her husband but he never stopped taking alcohol and during alcoholic binges, he used to beat, scold and behave rudely with her and the children. The children used to run away from home and hide in their neighbor's house. Around this time she came in touch with "Railway Women's Empowerment and AIDS Prevention Society" (REAPS) and joined them as a **peer counselor**. As a peer counselor under Project I49 she decided to first resolve the drinking problem of her husband as she realized that alcohol is the only reason for the destruction of their family. She was empowered through trainings and teachings which she could implement in her family. Gradually she became bold and started to argue, question, cajole and convince her husband about his misdeeds and misbehavior.

In order to assert her independence she even separated from him for a short time and ran the family with her salary, and financial support provided by her parents. During this time she completed her daughter's higher education through her salary. Her husband finally responded to her motivating influence and agreed for de-addiction. The Railways also helped in his rehabilitation and at last he stopped using alcohol in Jan 2007. He is at present working at Tenali Railway station and even though she could not join him due to their children's education he is maintaining sobriety and after so many years of service is drawing full salary and has started sending money to her for the family. There is a visible change in his behaviour and now he is motivating other alcoholics to go for de-addiction. She bought herself a saree to commemorate the change in her husband. She is very happy, the children have started respecting their father and she is looking towards a better future since they plan to live together again.