

Yashodhara Katkar's Book Released 'Swayam Shikshit Swayam Prakashit'

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A compilation of articles about the earthquake affected women of Maharashtra by Yashodhara Katkar of Essel Infraprojects Ltd, was released at a 'Mahila Melawa' at Osmanabad recently.

The book, 'Swayam Shikshit Swayam Prakashit' is published by Swayam Shikshan Prayog, an NGO working in the districts of Solapur, Nanded, Beed, Latur and Oosmanabad for the past 15 years.

The members of Swayam Shikshan Prayog played a crucial role in the rehabilitation of the affected areas and helped women rebuild their lives.

"When I first met these women, I was struck by their simplicity and awesome dignity. The rural woman has to combat with nature, overcome barriers of caste and creed, take care of a joint family, handle her daily chores in the field as well as at home and then spare some time to connect with 'self help' groups in her village. The 'self help' groups are instrumental in giving the women the required confidence, training and exposure to enable them to turn entrepreneurs," says Yashodhara.

Today, there are 5,000 such 'self help' groups under Swayam Shikshan Prayog. Many of these women have now taken on the roles of Asha (marketing of health insurance and providing health services), Jyoti (marketing smokeless stove and biofuel), Laxmi (home retail marketing) and Federation members (microfinance). They have learnt to use the cell phones and are aware that the rates of wholesale commodities that they market can be found on the internet.

"The rural woman may be semi-literate but she has a tremendous ability to learn new things, great adaptability and a sharp sense of giving and taking value for money," adds Yashodhara.

The compilation brings out the spirit of the rural woman.