

Women activists launch new political party

Fed up with the neglect of gender issues by mainstream political parties, women activists from across the country are getting together to form a party that will focus on women's empowerment.

The United Women Front (UWF), led by prominent women's activist Suman Krishan Kant, widow of former vice president Krishan Kant, has been started by those who feel disappointed about the political parties' 'hollow promises' on women's empowerment and their cold responses towards gender issues.

The party, to be formally launched Tuesday, is planning to field its candidates in the November-December elections in Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh.

'Anyway we will have huge presence in the general election whenever it is held,' Kant told IANS here.

She said her party has been registered and has 100 active members already.

The UWF activists have already begun their groundwork in states like Punjab, Haryana, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Orissa and Tamil Nadu. 'We will soon expand our area of work to Jammu and Kashmir,' Kant added.

After championing the cause of women for over five decades, Kant said she found an increasing number of women victims of violence.

'No political party, be it the Congress, the Left or the Bharatiya Janata Party, is taking the women's issue seriously,' she held.

'Even (Congress president) Sonia Gandhi is not able to do things for women because men in her party dominate the decisions.'

The other areas of interest for the UWF will be education and poverty alleviation.

However, Kant swore that getting reservation for women in parliament and legislative assemblies would not be on the UWF agenda.

'We want equality, not reservation,' she declared, referring to the proposed legislation to reserve 33 percent of seats in all legislative bodies for women.

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