

## VAMP Board Election 2018

Veshya Anyay Mukti Parishad (VAMP) is a registered collective which has over 5000 members working in Sangli, Satara, Kolhapur districts and two districts of North Karnataka Belgaum and Bagalkot.

Since VAMP was formed, the governing board has always been chosen in a democratic manner. At a review meeting of the VAMP leadership in Kolhapur it was decided to hold the next elections for the VAMP Governing board. The leadership felt that it was time to give young people who had been associated with VAMP a chance to run the collective. Over 50 leaders of VAMP from the five districts participated in the review and reflection meeting in Kolhapur on 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> of August 2018. It was decided that VAMP members were now at a stage where they understood the importance of the collective and could elect for their representative. It was decided to constitute a 13 member board of VAMP which would be representative of all sites where VAMP was functional and also representative of various types of sex workers in VAMP (brothel, street, lodge, sex worker living with HIV/AIDS and open about her status). It was further discussed that the board would function for a five year period.

Advocate Aarthi Pai was unanimously chosen as the Electoral Officer to lay down the rules and the process of conducting the elections. Some of the rules of the election process were as follows

Election would be held in the sites where VAMP had members and where they were actively working. These sites include

1. Miraj – (a.) Uttamnagar and (b.) Miraj Street
2. Sangli – (c) Gokulnagar, (d) Swaroop Area, (e ) Rajmane Chawl and (f) Swaroop Street
3. Karad – (g) Karad Street and (h) Paani (Paanichya Taanki)
4. Satara – (i) Satara lodge
5. North Karnataka – (j) Mudhol

The eligibility criteria for the candidates to stand for elections as follows:

1. The candidate should not be more than 40 years old.
2. The candidate should be able to read and write
3. The candidate should be a sex worker (current, previous, ever done sex work)
4. Should not have criminal case against her.

The voting day was declared on 6<sup>th</sup> September 2018 from 10.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. 13 seats for the VAMP board were declared open for elections.

A team of representatives was appointed from SANGRAM and Mitra as the site election officers who would conduct the election process under the scrutiny of the Electoral Officer. These include Shashikant Mane, Shantilal Kale, Raju Naik, Deepak Modi, Mahesh Manoji, Kavitha Mali, Yashoda Nyanit, Sulabha Howale

Each sex worker could vote only once and from the area in which their names were in the TI list. The list of voters was drawn area wise based on the list of names in the TI

Names of candidates interested in standing for elections was sent to the electoral officer. Once the qualifying criteria were checked for all participants and approved, the final list of candidates was declared. 20 candidates stood for elections and their names are

**Miraj Brothel and Street Based :**

- 1.Ms Manisha Sunil More
- 2.Renuka Vijay Kamble
- 3.Neonats (Aayesha ) Rai
- 4.Renuka Sanjak Kale

**Gokulnagar:**

- 1.Seema Mahadevi Kamble
- 2.Madhura Laxman Isarde
- 3.Sangita Ramu Manoji

**Swaroop Talkies Area:**

- 1.Maya Ramesh Gurav
- 2.Sabavva Vitthal Aiwale
- 3.Geeta Kamal Awale
- 4.Roshani Dilip Varma

**Rajmane Chal:**

- 1.Reshma Suresh Jadhav

**Sangli Street Based:**

- 1.Sharda Shankar Salunkhe

**Karad brothel and Street:**

- 1.Bharati Lalppa Hosmani
- 2.Sujata Dilip Jadhav
- 3.Bhartai Sabappa Nadgeri
- 4.Jyoti Sunil Chavan

**Satara:**

1. Jaya Ganesh Jadhav
2. Khushali Harishchandra Patel
3. Rupali Bali Kamble

2000 Ballot papers carrying the logo of VAMP were printed and distributed to the election team. Since a large number of people were not able to read and write, it was decided to have ballot boxes carrying the pictures of each candidate placed inside the voting room. These ballot boxes were sealed and handed over to the site election officers on the morning of voting.

At the site the election process opened at 10 a.m. Each sex worker who was eligible for voting was given one ballot paper and explained the process of ballot boxes inside the rooms.

Once her name was confirmed on the voting list and after she signed / placed her thumb imprint on the electoral register she was given a ballot paper which was signed by the site election officer on the spot.

A three member team of Meena Seshu, Shital Pratap and Aarthi Pai who functioned as the monitoring team visited the sites to ensure that the voting was being conducted in accordance with the rules. Renuka Jadhav, local SP of Miraj in charge of Anti Trafficking Bureau; local councilor of Miraj also visited the sites to understand the voting process. They interacted with the election team and the voters.

Over 575 women cast their vote in the election process on 6<sup>th</sup> September 2018 which was declared closed at 4.30 p.m. in all the sites.

The ballot boxes were carried by the site election offices to Sangli. All the candidates who stood for elections and senior mentors of VAMP were invited to Sangli to the SANGRAM office to participate in the counting process. The ballot boxes of candidates were opened site wise and counted in the presence of the candidates. The following were elected to the VAMP Board

1. Maya Gurav
2. Roshni Varma
3. Sujata Jadhav
4. Renuka Kamble
5. Bharti Nadgeri
6. Sangita Manoji
7. Rupali Kamble
8. Jaya Jadhav
9. Seema Kamble
10. Geeta Avale
11. Sarika Patil
12. Reshma Jadhav
13. Renuka V Jadhav

It was decided that all members who had contested elections and the previous board members would be invited to all meetings as the Advisory Committee of VAMP.

Due to Diwali and other festivals of the community it was agreed that the first meeting of the Board would be held post Diwali when it would take over from the old board. On 23<sup>rd</sup> November the first meeting of the Board was held to hold elections for the Management Committee. There are four positions for the Management Committee including President, Vice President, Treasurer and General Secretary. Elections were held to each post and the following were elected

1. **President** – Maya Gurav
2. **Vice President** – Sujatha Jadhav
3. **General Secretary** – Renuka Kamble
4. **Treasurer** – Bharti Nadgeri

Other Board Members are

1. Roshni Varma
2. Sangita Manojji
3. Rupali Kamble
4. Jaya Jadhav
5. Seema Kamble
6. Geeta Avale
7. Sarika Patil
8. Reshma Jadhav
9. Renuka V Jadhav

The members of the Advisory Committee include

1. Meenakshi Kamble
2. Chanda Wajane
3. Nilavva Sidhreddy
4. Durga Pujari
5. Suvarna Ingalgave
6. Madhura Isarde
7. Bharati Hosmani
8. Jyoti Chavan
9. Khushali Patel
10. Aayasha Rai

The VAMP Board selected Raju Naik as their coordinator to aid, advise and provide logistics support, assist the management committee in discharging its functions.

