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# 'Achievers owe it to Rajiv Gandhi'

## Women power to the fore at AGRASRI awards distribution

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Be it the field of scientific research or sanitation, achievers owed their roaring success to the pioneering efforts of the former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, said speakers at a function organised by the Academy of Grassroots Studies and Research of India (AGRASRI) to present Rajiv Gandhi National Awards for the year 2016.

Tessy Thomas, Director, Advanced Systems Laboratory, Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), Hyderabad, attributed the growth and development of India into what it is today to the seeds sown by Mr. Gandhi.

Dr. Thomas received the Mahila Shakti national award from former Assembly Speaker Nadendla Manohar



(From right) Tessy Thomas, Asha Prashant Aihole, V.R. Sarala and Madhu Saran Vel with the awards. \*K.V. POORNACHANDRA KUMAR

and AP High Court former judge D. Subrahmanyam, while Rajiv Gandhi outstanding leadership award was presented to ICSSR former Chairman V.R. Panchamukhi and Gram Swaraj national award to former parliament-

arian S. Ramachandra Reddy, in absentia.

Asha Prashant Aihole, president of Belagavi Zilla Panchayat (Karnataka), V.R. Sarala, president of Cherpu Block (Thrissur, Kerala) and G. Prabhakar, sarpanch of

Chandurthy in Rajanna Sir-cilla (Telangana) received the awards at the district, taluk and gram panchayat respectively for ushering in change at grassroots level. Madhu Saran Vel, founder of the Chennai-based The River Foundation received the Yuva Shakti national award for contributing to women empowerment. The presentation ceremony signalled display of feminine power.

### Decentralisation

In her address, Dr. Thomas explained how Rajiv Gandhi ushered in Panchayat Raj system to ensure decentralisation and localisation of power, and information technology to give power to the people. On the robust growth of technology, she said it impacted sectors as diverse as agriculture to

aerospace and manufacturing to medicine. "As one who has been with computing from the stage of punching cards to Internet of Things (IoT), witnessing analog, digital computer, servers, laptop and tablets, I see India emerging into a single entity from village to the national level," she said, while hailing the present regime's visionary policies on smart cities and Digital India.

On DRDO's role, she said her organisation was committed to enhancing the nation's indigenous defence capabilities.

AGRASRI vice-president A. Ranga Reddy read out Dr. Panchamukhi's Rajiv Gandhi memorial lecture. AGRASRI founder D. Sundar Ram welcomed the gathering, while co-founder Bharathi Sundar proposed a vote of thanks.