



I am a sponthi girl

Sphoorthi Bi-Monthly

July-August 2023

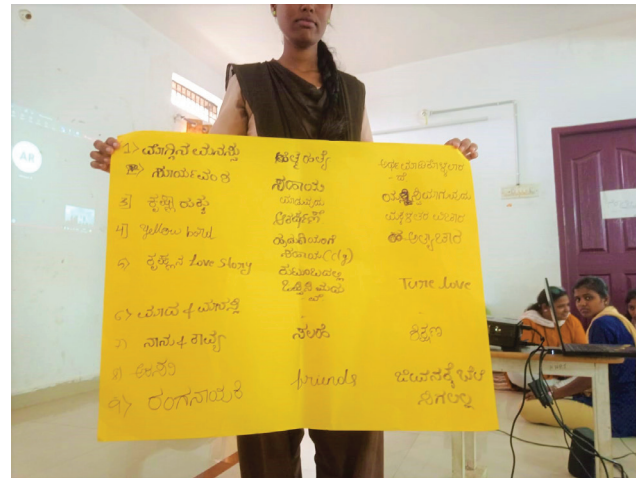
Empowerment Initiatives

Barefoot Counsellors trained to handle complex love-related issues

Dr Aditi Arur, Assistant Professor of Psychology, Christ University trained Barefoot Counsellors (adolescent peer counsellors), on issues related to adolescent sexuality, love and attraction.

Barefoot Counsellors (BFCs) often encounter clients who share their love-related problems and these clients expect them to provide solutions. However, the BFCs' efforts to address such complex issues leads to backlash.

To help the BFCs handle such cases in a more gender-sensitive manner, Ms Aditi used Kannada romance films as a medium to highlight and analyze different forms of love. During the training, she emphasized the importance of telling clients to prioritize themselves and be responsible for their own decisions.



■ A BFC presenting her chart during the training

Role Model Girls taken on exposure visits to improve their confidence

As part of the exposure visit activity, approximately 500 Role Model Girls from the seven Sphoorthi districts of Bagalkot, Kalaburagi, Belagavi, Raichur, Vijayapura, Koppal, and Yadgir were taken to various places like police stations, local courts, government hospitals, tourist spots, fire stations, and public parks. The main objective is to help these girls gain knowledge by taking them to a new place and making them meet other successful women role models and breaking any misconceptions or fears they may have had about conventional spaces like police stations and courts.

This activity also highlights the fact that their mobility is not restricted and they should not be bound by cultural norms that prevent them from traveling.

By going on exposure visits, the girls' confidence is boosted and they get to spend time with other girls as well.



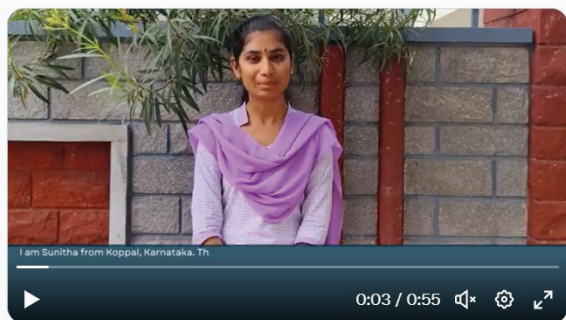
■ Sphoorthi girls at a police station

What are our girls up to?

Sphoorthi girl participates in 'High Commissioner for a Day' competition

KHPT @khpt4change · Aug 18
Meet Sunita, a bright young lady from Koppal, Karnataka. She passionately advocates for the empowerment of adolescent girls to promote gender equality

#DayOfTheGirl @UKinIndia



■ Sunita's screen grab from X

Sunita, a Sphoorthi Resource Girl from Koppal participated in the 'High Commissioner for a Day' competition by recording a one-minute video on the topic of 'How can young people help lead the way in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)?' In her video, Sunita emphasized the significance of adolescent girls being able to make independent decisions and being educated and economically empowered to have freedom. Additionally, she discussed the importance of having the courage to overcome socio-cultural and gender norms and the skills necessary to build a better society.

The video was published on KHPT's X (former Twitter) handle on August 18. The video can be accessed [here](#).

Adolescent girls set up kitchen gardens

More than 200 kitchen gardens are being set up across the seven Sphoorthi districts. To promote good nutrition behaviours among adolescents. These gardens have been set up within their homes, where they have planted palak, methi, and dill leaves. Through this initiative, the girls are learning about the importance of eating nutritious food and taking control of their health by using the produce to cook meals at home.



■ Adolescent girls at their kitchen garden

Sphoorthi girls celebrate Friendship Day with parents

Sphoorthi girls celebrated Friendship Day on August 6 in a unique manner. The girls and their parents in Basapur village of Hukkeri Taluk, Belagavi district, came together to build a stronger bond between them. The parents shared their childhood memories and expressed their hopes for their daughters. The girls were fascinated to hear about their parents' experiences, struggles, and triumphs. The daughters realized how they didn't have to face the same challenges their parents did when they were their age; and felt happy to have supportive and understanding parents.



■ A mother tying a friendship band to the girl

The activity helped create a deeper understanding and appreciation between girls and parents, fostering a stronger connection. The girls tied friendship bands around their parents' wrists, spreading happiness and deepening their bond.

Three Sphoorthi girls meet the Deputy Commissioner of Yadgir

Shivalila Bheemanna, Sujata Paramanna, and Hanumavva Pujappa Yennewadiger, three Sphoorthi girls from Yadgir met Dr Susheela, IAS, Deputy Commissioner of Yadgir district on August 19 to request access to a bus that would take them to school, which is located 7 km away from their village. The girls presented a letter with the signatures of 45 adolescents in support of their request. The Deputy Commissioner accepted the letter and interacted with the girls.



■ Adolescent girls with the DC of Yadgir

Districts' Corner

Azim Premji Foundation organizes training on the Principles and Values of the Indian Constitution

Azim Premji Foundation (APF) organised a two-day training session on constitutional values for 12 NGOs and KHPT Koppal staff between August 21-23. The session's main objective was to emphasize the significance of adhering to the principles and values of the Constitution while working with adolescents. Over the course of two days, 10 APF staff led the training which covered topics such as the contributions of Indian leaders in drafting the constitution, rights and duties, directive principles, fundamental rights, amendments, schedules, religion and constitution, and gender and gender roles.



■ APF staff addressing the participants of the training

Sphoorthi project's progress presented at a meeting called by the DC

The Deputy Commissioner and the Chief Executive Officer of Zilla Panchayat Kalaburagi called for a progress review meeting of department programs of the women and child development department and education department on July 14. To discuss DWCD department programs/schemes related to adolescent health, nutrition, education, child marriage prevention, school dropouts, etc. In attendance, Mr Shivayogi, the District Program Coordinator, KHPT and Ms Renuka, Taluk Coordinator of the Sphoorthi project briefed the panel of officials on KHPT and Sphoorthi programme implementation in Chincholi, Chittapur, and Jevargi taluks of Kalburgi District.

KHPT's Adolescent Health Team makes a presentation on Sphoorthi's progress at the District Coordination and Executive Committee meeting



■ KHPT staff at the DCEC meeting

The District Coordination and Executive Committee (DCEC) meeting was held on July 6 at the District Commissioner's Office, Raichur. Deputy Commissioner Mr Chandra Shekhar Nayak, officials from the Department of Women and Child Development, Health and Family Welfare, Department of Public Education, Superintendent of Police, and other government departments, and Child Development Project Officers of all taluks of Raichur district participated in the meeting. A detailed presentation to brief the five-month progress made in Lingsugur and Devdurga taluks as part of the Sphoorthi project was done. Later, the district officials interacted with the Role Model Adolescent Girls to understand how the Sphoorthi project benefits them. All the members and officials assured to extend all support required to implement the project effectively.

Boys' Mentors and Community Organisers in Koppal oriented on masculinity, sexuality, and gender norms

Training on masculinity and empowering boys was conducted for a team of seven Boys' Mentors and 20 Community Organisers as part of the Sphoorthi project in Koppal.

Unlike other programmes, KHPT's boys' intervention is focused on helping them recognize how gender norms also act as barriers to their own personal development.

The activity-based training aimed to help the team members understand the deeply ingrained gender roles in the community, challenge stereotypes, and encourage meaningful conversations about the roles assigned to men and women.

Through group activities, presentations, and a screening of the Hindi film "Udaan," the participants gained a better understanding of the complex gender roles in society. This understanding will help them address the issues faced by boys during the project's implementation. Additionally, they were introduced to a board game called "Budget Battles," which was developed by KHPT. This will game will be the first step in teaching the boys the importance of managing finances and understanding relationships better.

"We have learned about trust, gender equality, bonding, and how to take this further," Santosh

"Never knew that boys and men also undergo social pressures, and are also affected by gender norms, until this training," Nikitha, Community Organiser



■ KHPT staff playing the 'Budget Battles' game

Advocacy Efforts

KHPT's CEO introduces the Sphoorthi project to the new Director of DWCD

On July 13, the CEO of KHPT, Mr Mohan HL, met Ms Archana, the new Director of the Department of Women and Child Development (DWCD), Government of Karnataka. During the meeting,

Mr Mohan provided Ms Archana with a comprehensive overview of KHPT's ongoing projects in collaboration with various government departments. One of the projects that he highlighted was the 'Sphoorthi' project, which is currently being implemented across five districts - Belagavi, Bagalkot, Vijayapura, Raichur and Kalaburagi.

Other Update

KHPT supports RDPR's initiative on Child Responsive Local Governance

In July, KHPT participated as a resource NGO in a training organised by the Department of Rural Development and Panchayat Raj to capacitate

SIRD master trainers who will work with the Gram Panchayats on child-related rights and safety. KHPT jointly developed content and trained the master trainers based on project Sphoorthi's experiences and Freedom From Violence Campaign.

Stories From The Field

A SUPPORTIVE MOTHER

Mothers who have daughters, particularly those residing in rural areas, are often concerned about the safety and well-being of their girls. These mothers tend to be extra vigilant and doubtful when there is a deviation in their daughter's daily routines.

But mothers like Savithri, a farmer from Kalikere village in Koppal district are an exception. She not only supports her daughter in pursuing her dreams but also believes that it is important for girls not to be discriminated against. She also spends time with her 13-year-old daughter Manasa so that she can openly discuss her problems and seek help or guidance. Such a friendly atmosphere at home, helps Manasa step out of her home and attend the Life Skills Education sessions as well.

Initially, Savithri was not sure of the Sphoorthi project. However, when the field staff discussed in detail about the project and its goals, she was impressed and decided to send Manasa to attend the Life Skills Education sessions.

For Manasa, a Role Model Girl, the LSE sessions have been an eye-opener. "I liked the team building session and understood the importance of teamwork." She thoroughly enjoys the sessions and learns valuable lessons.

Mothers like Savithri are taking small steps to see big changes in their homes first. She hopes positive changes at home can cause a ripple effect in the community.

"My daughter has become more alert and sharper now," says Savithri.



Savithri with her daughter



■ **Ramya being introduced to her classmates**

GETTING HER SELF-CONFIDENCE BACK

Ramya* is an eighth-grade girl who comes from Shravnatgal village in the Alkod panchayat of Devdurga block, located in the Raichur district. Due to genetic reasons, Ramya's growth did not match her age. The school closest to her was 2 km away, which made it physically challenging for her to attend. As a result, her parents decided to enrol her in Allkera School, which is 20 km away and provides a hostel facility.

As her parents completed admission formalities, Ramya entered her classroom only to be teased for her short height. This made her feel inferior, affecting her self-esteem and confidence.

After the incident, Ramya decided not to continue her education and returned home with her parents without giving any reason. The teasing had a negative impact on her, making it difficult for her to eat properly. When the Community Organiser (CO) learned of this, she decided to meet with Ramya and her parents. Ramya's parents expressed their concern for their daughter's behavior, as they were unaware of the reasons behind it.

Ramya shared her experience with the CO and revealed her dislike for school due to the fear of being teased. The CO offered to assist Ramya and accompanied her to Allkera school. Upon arrival, the class teacher greeted Ramya and informed her that another student with similar teasing experiences had also enrolled in 8th standard.

The CO was concerned about Ramya being teased and asked the class teacher to share the story of Radha# from the Sphoorthi Life Skills Education session. The teacher used the story to teach the students that one's physical appearance is not important and that possessing good qualities is essential for personal growth. Following the story, the CO introduced Ramya to the class and encouraged them to support each other in their studies. This act of kindness boosted Ramya's confidence, and she made the decision to continue pursuing her education. Since July, Ramya has been going to school.

*Name changed to protected identity

Radha's story is about an overweight girl who gets teased at school and how her singing talent helps her overcome her insecurities.

Independence Day Celebrations

On Independence Day, Sphoorthi girls participated in various activities that included rallies, essay competitions, and a kabaddi match. They used this day to express their opinions and establish their significance in the community.



■ **Girls' painting and drawings**



■ Girls taking out a rally



■ Girls in a kabbadi match

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