



**SPHOORTHY**  
**BI-MONTHLY**

**JULY-AUGUST**  
**2024**



## ABOUT US

**KHPT** is a not-for-profit entity, founded in 2003 to improve the health and wellbeing of communities in India through focused, scalable, evidence-driven interventions, particularly among vulnerable communities in India. Starting with interventions to address HIV/AIDS, which were scaled well beyond Karnataka, we learned and reflected on our decade-long experience leading us to look beyond HIV to four other thematic areas namely Maternal, Neonatal & Child health (MNCH), Tuberculosis (TB), Adolescent Health (AH), and Comprehensive Primary Health Care (CPHC).

The **Adolescent Thematic** focuses on gender-based empowerment programmes to address malnutrition, menstrual hygiene, gender-based violence and the mental health of adolescent girls, particularly across the Kalyana Karnataka region. KHPT's 'Sphoorthi' adolescent girls' empowerment program has been scaled up by the Government of Karnataka to prevent child marriages. The Sphoorthi model works to build 'power within' adolescent girls through life skills education, leadership and communication training, exposure visits and sports camps; improves parent-daughter relationships to build girls 'power with' significant stakeholders, and encourages community-level participation of girls to gain 'power over' or access to community resources.

## Consultation workshop organised to identify strategies to strengthen Kavalu Samitis

Kavalu Samitis were instituted by the Government of Karnataka in 2019 by merging three committees- the Committee to Prevent Trafficking in Women and Children, the Child Marriage Prevention and Coordination Committee and the Child Protection Committee. The objective of their formation was to create a more streamlined and effective committee at the Gram Panchayat level to address critical issues related to women and children.

A two-day consultation workshop was organised in Gadag from August 22-23 to identify strategies to strengthen Kavalu Samitis (Vigilance Committee for Women and Child Protection) across select Gram Panchayats of Koppal and Yadgir districts. The workshop participants included Gram Panchayat functionaries, beat police, Women and Child Development department staff, and School Development and Monitoring Committee members.

"It was a friendly environment and the faculty handled the sessions well. We learned more about Kavalu Samitis during this process."

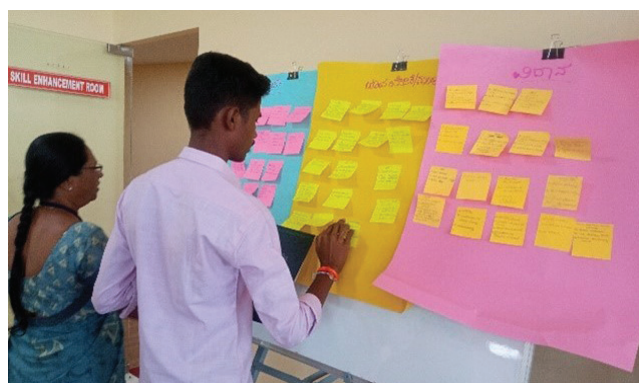
**Shashikala**, Anganwadi Supervisor, Yadgir district.

"I learned from this workshop that we should safeguard our children and help them build their own lives so that they will remember us for their entire lives. I think this is the actual social work."

**Ravichandra B Bavikatti**, Gram Panchayat member, Koppal district.



**Stakeholders participating in the Problem Tree Analysis activity**



**A participant during the 'Action Plan' activity**

The participatory workshop focused on how Kavalu Samitis can address issues related to child marriages, child labour, teenage pregnancy, malnutrition, violence, trafficking, and school dropouts.

### A few key recommendations from the workshop:

- Ensure all Kavalu Samiti members are aware of their role within the committee and few representatives from vulnerable villages should be included in the Samiti.
- The Kavalu Samiti president should be a female representative to ensure gender-sensitive leadership.
- When a case involving children and women, such as child labour, teenage pregnancy or child marriage is reported, all committee members should be available and visit the affected family to provide support.
- The need support from officials, particularly from the Zilla Panchayat and state government, was discussed, along with the requirement for a separate budget allocation for Kavulu Samiti activities.

## EMPOWERMENT INITIATIVES

### Married adolescent girls participate in a workshop

Under-age marriage is a critical issue in Yadgir, significantly impacting the lives of adolescent girls. This leads to adverse health, educational, and socio-economic consequences. The Sphoorthi staff in



### Sphoorthi staff explaining on menstrual health to the girls

Yadgir organized a workshop called “Prerna” on July 28 for 17 married adolescent girls who are part of the Sphoorthi project. The workshop aimed to understand the needs and perspectives of married adolescent girls, the root causes of child marriage, and its effects. The workshop aimed to increase the girls’ knowledge and confidence in effective communication and negotiation with their partners and family members through games and interactive activities. It was also intended to help them advocate for their needs, resolve conflicts within their households, and create a supportive peer group for sharing experiences. Based on the insights from this workshop two more workshops are being planned in Yadgir.

“Through this workshop, we openly shared our problems and it was nice of the Sphoorthi team to take care of us,” a married adolescent girl from Hunasagi taluk.

### Sphoorthi staff identify and train ‘Resource Girls’

**504** proactive and interested adolescent girls have been selected as “Resource Girls” in Vijayapura, Raichur, Kalaburagi, Bagalkot, and Belagavi districts.

Their role is to ensure the Sphoorthi project’s sustainability and keep its activities going. These girls will uphold the program’s objectives in their gram panchayat by conducting Life Skills Education sessions for their peers, forming girls’ groups, and involving girls in celebrating International Day of the Girl Child and National Girl Child Day.

In August, two training sessions were organized for the girls in the districts by the Sphoorthi staff. The staff conducted games and interactive activities to show the challenges that rural adolescent girls may face and the support services available to them.



### Resource Girls during the training



They were also taught about the significance of volunteerism and the importance of reporting. In the coming months, these trained Resource Girls will take a leading role in project implementation within the current geography, with limited support from field staff.

“From the training, I learnt about leadership qualities and responsibilities of a leader. I will carry

these learnings to my peer girls and support them to resolve their issues,” **Ishwari Dodashyanatti**, Champion girl from Karaguppi GP, Hukkeri Taluk, Belagavi district.

“I liked the session on ‘Who am I?’. I understood the responsibilities of a Resource Girl. These learnings will help me confidently face problems and solve them,” **Danamma**, Tamba GP, Vijayapura district.

## WHAT ARE OUR GIRLS UP TO?

### Sphoorthi girls interact with high-level government stakeholders

In July and August, the Sphoorthi girls met with many high-level government officials to discuss the Sphoorthi project, present their problems, and seek solutions from the officials.

During the meeting with the MLA of Hungund, Mr Vijayananda Kashappanavar, the girls explained how the Sphoorthi project had positively impacted their lives. They also informed him about the lack of proper toilets at Hawaragi High School in his constituency, and he assured them that he would resolve the problem.

At the Janaspanda program (Integrated Public Grievance Redressal System of the government of Karnataka) in Jewargi taluk, Kalaburagi district, adolescent girls shared several issues including the lack of bus facilities, improper roads, inadequate toilets, drinking water, and a playground at school, as well as the shortage of teachers. The Tahsildar assured the girls that he would personally visit to investigate these problems and propose suitable solutions.

A special Samvada was organised (dialogues) between adolescent girls and Mr Vishwas Vaidya, MLA of Savdatti. The girls expressed various challenges in their villages, such as limited access to education, lack of sanitation facilities, and social restrictions. Mr Vaidya listened to their concerns and immediately engaged with the relevant officials present at the meeting. He instructed them to take prompt action to address the issues raised by the girls, ensuring that their concerns were given priority.

While interacting with the CEO of Chittapur Taluk Zilla Panchayat, Kalaburagi district, the girls shared their experiences, stating that the library has become



**A Sphoorthi girl interacting with the MLA of Savdatti**

more than just a place for reading. They explained that they are also learning computer skills, reading newspapers, and accessing study materials, such as question papers, through mobile devices. He took the opportunity to ask the girls why they had left school, to which they responded that they had come to submit some of their demands directly to him. The girls requested better water facilities, improved sanitation, and additional books for the library. The CEO assured them that their demands would be addressed within a week.



**The ZP CEO of Chittapur interacting with Sphoorthi girls**

## Sphoorthi girls participate in District Coordination and Executive Committee meetings

The Sphoorthi girls from, Vijayapura, Bagalkot, and Raichur participated in the District Coordination and Executive Committee (DCEC) meetings held in their respective districts, between July and August.



### ■ Sphoorthi girls in the DCEC meeting in Vijayapura

The DCEC meeting in Vijayapura on July 4 was chaired by the District Commissioner and attended by the Superintendent of Police, and officials from the Education and Social Welfare Department. During the meeting, the Sphoorthi girls performed an Interactive Intimate Theatre show on child marriage, earning applause for their act. Ms. Vijayalakshmi Kohalli, the Vijayapura District Program Coordinator (DPC) from KHPT, briefed the committee on the progress of the Sphoorthi project.

On July 19, the DCEC meeting was held in Bagalkot, presided over by the Deputy Commissioner of Bagalkot. The meeting was attended by the Chief



### ■ Adolescent girls interacting with Raichur DC

Executive Officer, the Superintendent of Police, and other key district officials. Ms. Vijayalakshmi Kohalli, Vijayapura DPC, and Mr. Arjun Mirji, Bagalkot DPC, provided updates on the progress of the Sphoorthi program and explained various activities conducted. The Deputy Commissioner interacted with some adolescent girls to discuss the impact of child marriages on them. The girls raised concerns about the lack of proper public transportation, and the Deputy Commissioner requested them to submit a letter outlining their issues, assuring prompt action to address them. Subsequently, a letter was submitted to the Deputy Commissioner's office.

In Raichur, the DECEC meeting was held on August 27 and was presided over by the Deputy Commissioner. Mr. Nagesh Patwadi, the DPC of Raichur, presented the progress of the Sphoorthi Project. The DC interacted with the Sphoorthi girls and expressed his happiness at witnessing their empowerment and the project's contribution. The Deputy Commissioner requested the Deputy Director WCD to recommend to the WCD Department for the continuation of the project and allocate sufficient funds for the next year.

## DISTRICTS' CORNER

### KHPT puts up a stall at Sampoonata Abhiyan in Yadgir

At NITI Aayog's 'Sampoonata Abhiyan' (NITI Aayog's campaign to improve the health and nutrition of people in aspirational districts) in Yadgir, KHPT participated by setting up a stall to showcase its impactful work in empowering adolescent girls and reducing malnutrition in the district. During the event held on July 4, 2024, the KHPT team explained their efforts to improve the nutrition levels of rural adolescent girls through counselling and encouraging them to set up kitchen gardens.



### ■ KHPT's stall at Sampoonata Abhiyan event



## Adolescent Health team conducts a Polling Booth Survey in Koppal

A baseline Polling Booth Survey (PBS) was conducted in July with **288** adolescent boys from Koppal to understand how gender and masculinity norms influence boys' attitudes, relationships, and behaviours in the community. Based on the insights from the survey, a gender-transformative intervention with boys is being planned. The baseline survey will help us evaluate the outcomes of the intervention and the changes in boys' attitudes, behaviours and relationships, as well as the effects of this on their well-being at the end of the project period.



Boys during the polling booth survey

### Findings from the survey



#### Education and Work



**1** in **4** boys opine that only boys should be given priority for education



**6** out of the **10** boys opine that girls should get married and not be sent to higher education



Approximately **half** of the boys opine that men should work outside their home



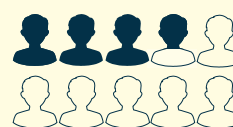
#### Harassment



Almost **7** in **10** boys opine that it is a girl's fault if a male student or teacher sexually harasses her



#### Boys and household chores



Less than **half** of the boys opine that helping with household chores is their responsibility

No. of boys surveyed: 288

## ADVOCACY EFFORTS

### KHPT's CEO meets WCD Secretary to brief on the Sphoorthi project

Mr Mohan HL, CEO of KHPT, Dr Satyanarayana Ramanaik, Thematic Lead, Adolescent Health and Mr Manohar PV, Advocacy Lead, KHPT met the Secretary of the Department of Women and Child Development, as well as the Director of Integrated Child Protection Services to provide an update on the Sphoorthi project. During the meeting, Mr Mohan emphasized the significance of Role Model approach for sustainability, Life Skills-based Education sessions for empowerment, and the positive impact in strengthening parent-daughter relationships and the success of remedial classes for adolescent girls.



Mr Mohan interacting with the Secretary

## STORIES FROM THE FIELD

### Turning the Tide!

In rural parts of North Karnataka, lack of support from fathers for their daughters affects their self-esteem and discourages them from discussing their aspirations. But this is not the case in Gundappa's home, a businessman, where he has created a safe and friendly environment

Gundappa vividly remembers a heartwarming incident. Due to his business losses, he became stressed and anxious. When he confided in his daughter, her kind words helped him relax. She spoke to him like a friend, reassuring him that everything would be fine in a few days. This surprised him and made him realise that



for his daughter Hemavathi to express herself without inhibitions. This was possible after Gundappa attended the Samvada sessions as part of the Sphoorthi project.

Gundappa participated in two Samvadas (or 'Dialogues') an activity, to increase communication between adolescent girls and critical stakeholders that affect their lives. The Samvadas helped him understand adolescent issues and the importance of supporting girls in fulfilling their aspirations. He also discussed with other parents about their expectations of their children. The environment at home also changed as a result of increased interactions with his daughter, Hemavathi.

"Samvada was a different experience. It was an opportunity to learn how to behave and interact with our children, especially, with girls," says Gundappa.

a daughter can support her parents through challenging times.

"Now I have a friend in my daughter," says Gundappa, who pledges to support his daughter in achieving her dreams!

Gundappa remembers another incident in which he advised the father of Hemavathi's friend. Her friend was not allowed to go on a class trip with her friends because she had not been studying well. Gundappa advised the girl's father to reconsider and let his daughter go on the trip, urging him not to be so strict. The father recognized his mistake and changed his mind.

For Gundappa, the Sphoorthi project has changed his perception of girls and made him happy as his little girl now will grow up to become a strong woman!





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