

INSTITUTIONAL UPDATE: ADOLESCENT HEALTH THEME

OCTOBER-DECEMBER 2021

The Adolescent Health theme works with adolescents (12-19 years old) in the North Karnataka region comprising 10 districts including Belagavi, Bidar, Vijayapura, Bagalkot, Kalaburagi, Raichur, Yadgir, Ballary, Vijayanaga and Koppal. Adolescent girls face multiple layers of vulnerabilities due to rigid gender and social norms. As an organization, we work to improve the overall quality of their lives by working with their families, boys and community groups. The interventions focus on empowering adolescents by building knowledge and skills for improving their dietary patterns and nutritional status, menstrual hygiene practices, and sexual health, as well as addressing gender-based violence and improving their mental health.

Freedom from Violence Campaign

KHPT launched a three-day virtual campaign from December 14-16 called 'Freedom from Violence' in collaboration with the Department of Rural Development and Panchayat Raj, the Department of Women and Child Welfare, and the Department

of Education, Government of Karnataka. The aim of the campaign was to reach out to **20 lakh** adolescents and educate them on gender-based violence and laws related to it, as well as to empower them to fight against the injustice they may face. The online sessions also focused on issues including child marriages and gender discrimination, as well as school drop-outs and the mental health of adolescents.

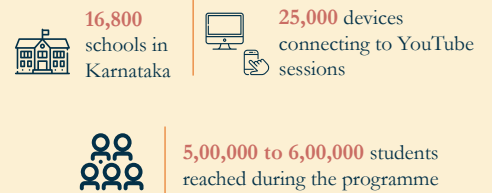
The **31** districts of Karnataka were divided into three groups and online campaigns were facilitated by adolescent girls from Koppal, and experts who have worked with youth and gender-based Violence. The campaign was aired with the technical support of the State Institute for Rural Development (SIRD) in Mysore and Bengaluru.

The 'Freedom from Violence' campaign was conceived as part of the Platinum jubilee of the country's 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' celebration, which commenced in July. It began as a 10-week programme by the Department of Rural Development and Panchayat Raj, Government of Karnataka. on October 2, of which the 3-day virtual programme for adolescents was a key component. To access the sessions, click on the links below. [Day 1](#), [Day 2](#), [Day 3](#)



Students watching the YouTube broadcast

Reach



These are approximate figures



Left to Right: KHPT staff Mr Mallappa, Pavithra, Anjali and Rubiya (role model girls) addressing school students from the SIRD studio, Bengaluru

Community Engagement

Adolescent 'Barefoot counsellors' to address mental health issues of their peers

KHPT is creating a cadre of 'Barefoot counsellors' in the **38** panchayats of Koppal block since October to address mental health and gender-based violence issues of girls and women. **20** adolescent girls underwent virtual training conducted by Baduku-Centre for Livelihood Learning. The training focused on building the knowledge of the participants on sex and gender, caste, counselling and peer counselling, the dos and don'ts of counselling, probing techniques, and support system and facilities available for the youth.

KHPT provides Fortified Blended Food (FBF) for vulnerable communities in Koppal

KHPT has implemented an intervention addressing malnutrition among adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating mothers, and children between 6 to 36 months in **153** villages of Koppal block in Koppal. During the period October-December 2021, FBF was distributed to **4031** new beneficiaries (**1767** adolescent girls, **534** Pregnant women, **471** Lactating mothers, **1259** Children) and **21, 689** repeated beneficiaries which include **12198** adolescent girls, 2069 pregnant mothers, **1829** lactating mothers, and **5593** children between 6 to 36 months.

The project will be extended to Yelburga and Gangavati taluk of Koppal district in the year 2022 and Kustagi in the year 2023.

KHPT facilitates sessions on Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (POCSO) and the Child Marriage Act for adolescents



A session on POCSO in progress

To prevent gender-based violence, awareness sessions on POCSO Act and Child Marriage Act were conducted by role model adolescent girls and paralegal facilitators in **230** villages across Koppal for adolescent girls and boys. The sessions were conducted between the October-December period. The training covered offences under POCSO, punishments for those offences and child-friendly procedures to be kept in mind during the investigation of child abuse cases. Since eloping and child marriage is also rampant in Koppal, the training also specifically focused on how eloping with a person below the age of 18 years and child marriage are considered as offences under POCSO.

Azim Premji Philanthropic Initiatives (APPI) team visits KHPT's project area in Koppal

A three-member team from Azim Premji Philanthropic Initiative (APPI) visited Koppal between November 8-10 to observe the Sphoorthi program. They visited three villages and interacted with role model girls, boys, parents, and non-Sphoorthi girls and parents. They also discussed the program experiences with the frontline team and the District Adolescent Committee. The visit gave them a comprehensive understanding of the program coverage, intervention strategies, and the impact it created in the villages.

The team appreciated the team's effort and the role Sphoorthi girls have been playing at the community level. They had detailed discussions with senior members team on the way forward for the Sphoorthi intervention in the new blocks of Koppal district.

They recommended that the team include intervention for boys, a mental health intervention for adolescents, and a scholarship program for those who graduated from the Sphoorthi intervention.



APPI staff interacting with adolescent girls

Government Engagement

KHPT presents adolescent health interventions at a NITI Aayog round table

Dr Maithreyi Ravikumar, Adolescent Health, Strategic Lead, presented KHPT's adolescent-centric interventions at a virtual round table conference organised by Niti Aayog. The NITI Aayog roundtable was organized on November 18 by Dasra, which invited various organizations working with adolescents and youth to share their experiences with NITI Aayog. She presented the learnings from adolescent-centric interventions focusing on menstrual health, gender-based violence and role model girls initiatives.

Events

Adolescents create awareness on their rights in Koppal on International Day of the Girl Child (IDGC)

IDGC was observed in 26 project villages of Koppal beginning with a rally during which adolescents from different villages raised slogans to emphasize the importance of girls' education, ending gender discrimination, and ending child marriages. There was also a stage program during which all the community leaders and the girls discussed the significance of observing International Day of the Girl Child.



Yamuna, Administrative Officer from Sakhi introducing a domestic violence helpline to adolescent girls

KHPT completes dipstick study on impact of COVID-19 on adolescents

During the COVID-19 pandemic, adolescents faced numerous challenges like disruption to education and health services in rural areas, loss of income for parents, death of near and dear ones, and increased instances

of gender-based violence and child marriages. The KHPT team in October completed a dipstick study in Koppal and Yelburga blocks of North Karnataka on the impact of COVID on adolescents and attitude, beliefs, perceptions of the different stakeholders like parents, boys, and community on adolescent issues.

About 840 adolescent girls were interviewed in the quantitative survey and about 34 in-depth interviews (240 individuals) with girls, parents, boys and other stakeholders were carried out during October.

Key findings from the report include the following:

Key Findings

Education



46% of girls were uncertain about their education plans



90% Negotiated to continue education online



78% Reported receiving priority for a mobile device



Sphoorthi girls



Non-Sphoorthi girls

Marriage



12% were asked for marriage during COVID

75% of them were able to delay marriage

Mobility



Mobility restrictions were related to the fear of COVID infection



Mobility is still socially restricted

Violence



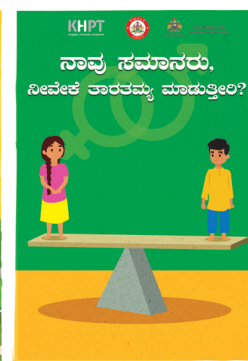
Among 20% who experienced this violence, more than 50% sought support/counselling



Are empowered enough to handle eve-teasing and abusive fathers.

Are unable to identify different forms of violence, reported feelings of shame connected to their alcoholic fathers; and reported suicidal thoughts.

Communication Materials



Posters on Gender Discrimination which were used during the Freedom from Violence Campaign

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Voices from the field

This is an unforgettable experience and it has given me the courage to communicate effectively. I can talk to people more confidently and provide counselling.

- Shilpa Mailarappa Kambli

A barefoot counsellor from Hatti village in Koppal block, about the training for counsellors.

I enjoyed being a part of this campaign and discussing self-confidence with students.

- Anjali

A role model girl who facilitated a session during the Freedom from Violence online campaign.

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