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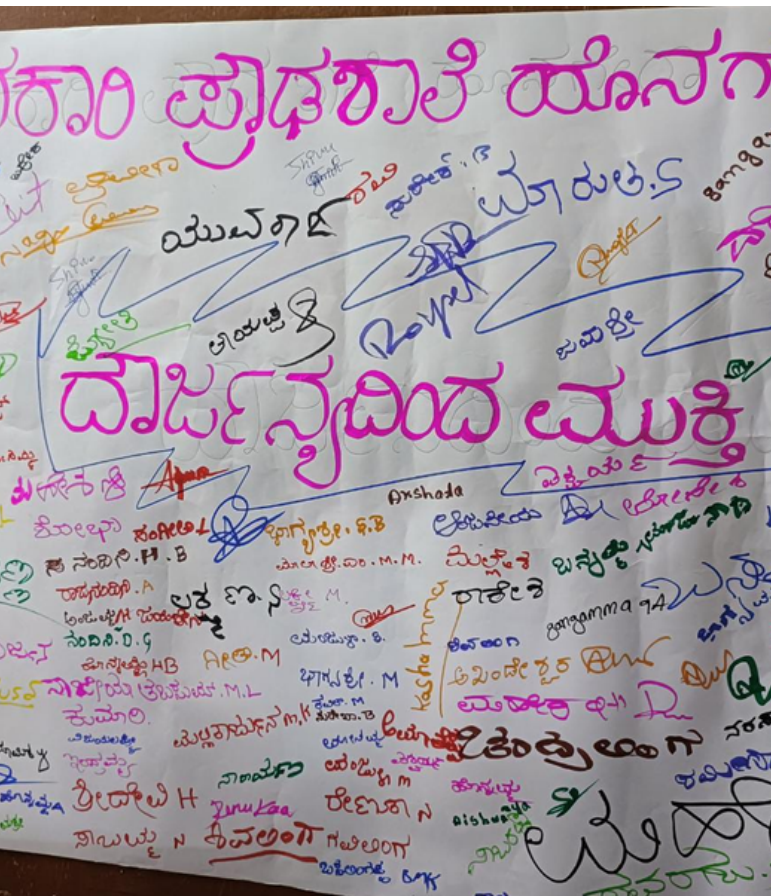


**KHPT**  
engage, innovate, empower

# BREAK THE SILENCE, FREEDOM FROM VIOLENCE

An awareness campaign on Gender-based Violence for adolescents across Karnataka

DECEMBER 23, 2022



# Background

The central Ministry of Rural Development, under the Deen Dayal Antyodhaya Yojana National Rural Livelihood Mission (DAY NRLM), initiated an annual campaign on the prevention of Gender Based Violence (GBV) to empower gender-sensitive youth towards an equitable society. The ministry advised state governments to organize awareness activities on the theme of "Ending Gender-based Violence " from November 25 to December 23, 2022 at Gram Panchayat (GP) level, in collaboration with different departments, Non-Government Organizations and with the cooperation of local elected representatives. As a part of this campaign, the Department of Rural Development & Panchayat Raj (RDPR), Government of Karnataka, organized GBV awareness campaigns in one high school in each district on December 23, 2022, for the adolescents studying in high schools and pre- university colleges from 8th to 12th grade. KHPT supported the implementation of the campaign through the Sphoorthi which focuses on empowers 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. At the district and GP level, this campaign was implemented under the aegis of the Graama Panchayath Arogya Amrutha Abhiyaana (GPAAA).

## A Convergence Initiative

The 'Freedom from Violence' awareness campaign was a joint initiative of the Department of RDPR, Women and Child Department and Department of Education. Hence while organizing the campaign at GP level, all the three departments converged at GP level and activities were organized under GP leadership. One school in the district was selected to conduct this awareness activity under the leadership of the GP. The local school teachers, School Development and Monitoring Committee, and frontline workers were engaged in conducting the awareness activities. KHPT supported and facilitated this process with active involvement of the GP and organized awareness events in the schools identified by the GP.

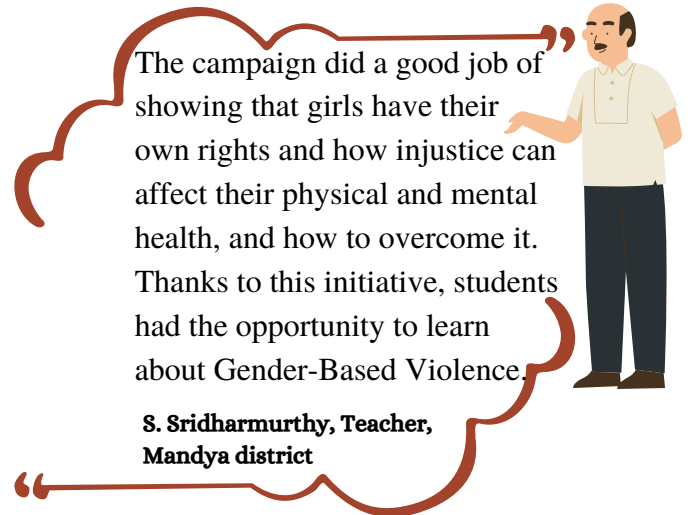
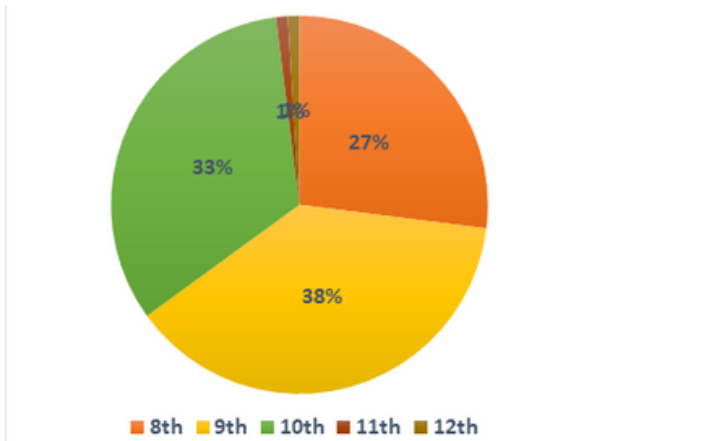
As a part of this campaign, a half-day awareness event was organized in the school identified by GP and other key stakeholders. During this half day orientation program for the adolescents four key sessions were conducted. The first session was on Understanding gender and gender-based violence, followed by knowing the ability within oneself to deal with violence. The third session was on laws relating to freedom from abused for children and adolescents, and the last session was on empowering relationships and support systems. These sessions were facilitated in a participatory manner using posters, charts, video clippings, case studies etc. The sessions culminated in an oath-taking ceremony on condemning and stopping GBV.

## Key highlights

- Panchayat members of all levels participated in GBV awareness programs at schools and motivated students.
- The campaign was planned for only one school per district, but due to demand, more schools participated. The districts of Mysore, Udupi, Chikkamagaluru, Haveri, Hassan, Dakshina Kannada, Kodagu, and Chamarajanagar took the campaign to the taluka level and implemented it.
- A campaign was conducted in Udupi and Vijayanagar districts with hands-on activities such as discussions and games.
- The event resulted in the emergence of a Girl Champion from a remote village in Mullur Gram Panchayath, Chamarajanagar district. She held a session on self-confidence.
- Campaign images and student feedback on the sessions were posted on social media. As result, 1003 engagements from Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn,
- The campaign was also covered in 8 local newspapers and online
- Teachers and students were very enthusiastic and engaged; their on-site experiences were recorded.



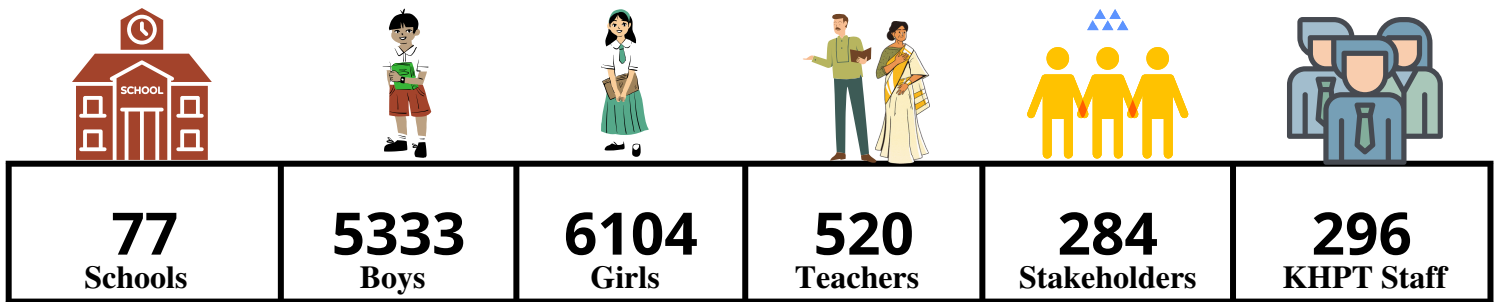
## Students' profile



A total of 11,525 students benefited from the campaign, out of which, 3096 (27%) were from 8th grade, 4431 (38%) students were from 9th grade, 3846 (33%) students were from 10th grade, 70 (1%) were from 11th grade, and 82 (1%) students were from 12th grade.

## REACH

The campaign was conducted in 31 districts, and involved



## Learnings from the Campaign

Below are some lessons learned from the awareness campaign to replicate on a large scale and in a sustainable way

- Sphoorthi girl's superpower talks have really influenced the students on valuing themselves and accepting as they are. Students were able to connect and relate to their experiences and learn the key issues in an easy-to-understand format. Peer-to-peer learning as a methodology has its own special benefits.
- It is important to identify at least two-three 'super students' (both boys and girls) and have them as peers at the forefront of awareness campaign.
- Continuous awareness programmes are needed as co-curricular activities in the form of clubs or other interactive activities for students at the local level.
- Active involvement of the GPs would help the students understand and access the services available at local level.
- To have lasting impact, ensuring teachers' participation is important and making them realize the importance of having such programs in schools. Periodic sessions on GBV can be planned for teachers/principals, and one teacher can be nominated to help in facilitating these programs.
- Participation of parents is essential during GBV awareness programs going forward to help parents learn what they should do differently.
- Information materials for students about the topic with important information and services may be developed to help them further engage with the topic.
- A complaint/suggestion box has been placed in some of the school. When a student has a problem, they write it down and drop it in the complaint box. The teacher in question will then help solve it.

# Voices from the ground

"I have noted all the helpline numbers that are mentioned during the session as well the mental health helpline".

**-Student (Boy), 8th Grade, Chikkamagaluru district.**

"Information on child marriage's effects and how to prevent it is very helpful".

**-Priya, 10th Grade, Mandya district.**

"It makes a big difference when mothers encourage girls to learn instead of telling them to cook and do the dishes. It is also our responsibility as women to change ourselves".

**-Student (Girl), 10th Grade, Mysore district.**

"This kind of event was held for the first time at our school and was very helpful for all of us. Many girls struggle at home, school, and in the community with a variety of issues stemming from gender-based violence, including child marriage, child labor, and sexual assault. The way people see girls needs to change, first at home and then in the community".

**-Darshini, 10th Grade, Mysore district.**

"The government and organizations should take more action to provide these kinds of events to various community groups. In the upcoming days, our Gram Panchayat will conduct this program regularly. Every family should take efforts to raise children without bias".

**-Baby, President, Bunnikuppe Gram Panchayat, Mysore district.**

"Women today are abused in many different ways. Because of the mentality that women are inferior, such atrocities occur at all levels. Gender equality must be achieved to abolish this mentality. These programs support that. We live in a male-dominated culture where everyone from young children to 60-year-old grandparents are lustfully stared at and sexually harassed. In addition, women witness violence in the home. Women are still exposed to sexual violence, domestic violence, child marriage, child labor, etc. Therefore, this kind of session will be very useful if we want to prevent problems. Everyone should understand the concepts presented in this program and implement them in their daily lives to eliminate gender discrimination".

**-Sharan Basavaraj, Deputy Secretaries, Zilla Panchayath, Ballari district.**

“ Now that science has made such advances, a change of gender is a matter of time and money. To change opinion about gender it takes mental willpower. This program was well designed. ”

**Usha P J, Teacher, Chickmagaluru district.**




## Way Forward

- The program will be gradually expanded to all schools and colleges in 31 districts of Karnataka and plans to cover one high school in each taluka every week.
- Line listing of High Schools, pre-university colleges, and other Govt-aided institutions in each taluk to systematically expand and spread the campaign.
- Virtual training of GPAAA staff by zone and district leaders on the operational plan for the campaign, including the format and content of meetings and coordination with schools in their area.
- Organise regular and structured GVB sessions with orientation on services available on GP with support from GPAAA teams and GP members.
- Activation of child/adolescent Grama Sabhas and related structures where the issue of gender-based violence and the role of community structures in addressing the problem can be discussed by GP members.
- Building a resource pool of students interested in volunteering to raise awareness among students in surrounding schools through a peer-to-peer model.
- Create linkages to the Sahita Careline for confidential counselling and psychosocial support for people who have experienced GBV and are in need of psychosocial/grief/trauma counselling.

Every day women and girls experience some form of violence. The impact of violence against women and girls can be devastating and is a breach of the most fundamental human rights. Uniting to end violence against women and girls and empowering them to stand up for themselves and their communities and supporting men to become agents of change must remain the priority. The commitment to prioritize gender-based violence reduction by the government is commendable. The month-long campaign initiated by the Ministry has given a great impetus to this movement. Preventing violence against women and girls is now to consistently be the focus of all activities for the GPs and other civil society organizations

Recognizing the structural link between the gender inequality and violence against women remains a fundamental challenge. More and more awareness raising programs to change the attitudes, behaviours and beliefs that justify the violence against women and girls should take place. In this regard, under the GPAAA program, the awareness creation and girl's empowerment activities will extend to all the schools, youth groups, and Self-help Groups under the leadership of the GP. The GP members and other members of mandated committees will be sensitized on child marriage and preventive measures. Girls' access to education will be encouraged and enhanced to support them. Parents and communities will be educated on child marriage, early motherhood and other negative norms which supports violence against women and girls.



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