

International Day of the Girl Child 2013

Celebrating the right of the girl child to education

Bagalkot and Bijapur, North Karnataka, India

KHPT and STRIVE



Highlights

- ✓ Mixed teams of boys and girls competed in cricket and athletics thereby challenging gender norms in a village setting in Bagalkot district.
- ✓ Participants in Arakeri in Bagalkot took a collective oath to promote gender equity, prevent child marriage, encourage girls' education, and provide equal opportunities.
- ✓ The Women's University in Bijapur committed to conduct career counseling and personality development sessions for adolescent girls associated with Sabala.
- ✓ The Department of Education in Bijapur committed to extend full cooperation to implementation of Sabala.
- ✓ Schools, which participated in the celebrations in Bagalkot committed to ensure that no girl drops out before they complete tenth grade.

Why celebrate IDGC?

"Girls are not meant to stay in the kitchen. We need opportunities to use our talents."

- Shilpa Nagawale, Xth grade, Bijapur district

"When girls are educated, they recognise good from bad, become aware of their rights and can raise their voice against child marriage."

- Bhagyashree Patil, Xth grade, Bagalkot district

Poverty, disempowering gender norms and the tradition of early marriage force many girls to leave school early. Project Sabala, jointly implemented by Karnataka Health Promotion Trust (KHPT) and STRIVE, aims to address barriers to girls' completion of secondary school education.

KHPT teams organised celebrations of the International Day of the Girl Child 2013 to draw attention to the power of education to transform girls' futures. The aim was to

generate discussion on the importance of and barriers to education for girls. The events provided good visibility for Sabala, and gathered support from the local community, government and schools to promote girls' education.

The celebrations were held on 5, 7 and 8 October in Bagalkot and 11 October in Bijapur, in North Karnataka, India.



The girls in the winning cricket team pose with their teammates at M.M.S Government High School ground, Arakeri village, Bagalkot district

“We have never played in our life with the boys. It felt good that we could win over them.”

- Iravva, Xth grade, M.M.S Government High School, Bagalkot

“We got to know that they enjoy playing and could play just like us.”

- Boys in the team, M.M.S Government High School, Bagalkot

“I have never played cricket before. When I missed the ball, the boys sitting around laughed at me. It made me want to play better.”

- Bhagyashree Patil, Xth grade, Shiraguppi Government High school, Bagalkot

Challenging Gender Norms in Rural Bagalkot

Innovative activities marked the celebrations in Arakeri, Shiraguppi and Belur villages in Bagalkot district. Sports were used as a medium to challenge gender norms in a village setting, where mixed teams of boys and girls competed in cricket and relay in both Arakeri and Shiraguppi villages. School children debated, wrote essays and drew pictures on the theme of girl child education. Skits and dance by boys and girls showcased the disempowering societal attitudes

towards the girl child. A collective oath by all participants vowed to promote gender equity, prevent child marriage, encourage girls' education and provide them with equal opportunities. Aravind Javalagi, the mathematics teacher in Arakeri school noted the significance of such events, *“Most girls from this school are from marginalised communities. Programmes such as these will build their leadership skills, encourage their active participation in the community and attract*

them to school.” The events were organised on a much larger scale in Arakeri on 11 October under the initiative of the community. Kabbadi, tug of war, and athletic competitions were held for girls and women. The event saw massive participation from self-help groups, primary and high school going girls, men and boys from the local community.



Skit on the benefit of educating the girl child

In Belur, all male youth groups actively participated in organising the celebrations.

Prakash Theli, a young community leader from Shiraguppi village noted the importance of education in changing perspectives and said, *“Boys are considered as assets because the family*

property belongs to them and they stay with the family. But the biggest asset we can give girls is education.”



Girls cheering during the traditional game Lagori



Girls building the model school in Toravi temple, Bijapur



Shilpa pointing to the separate toilets for girls and boys in her team's model school to other participants

Raising Awareness on Girl Child Education in Bijapur

The Bijapur celebration saw 100 girls come together to build awareness on and discuss about the value of girl child education. They came to Toravi Lakshmi temple grounds, from villages in all five talukas of Sabala intervention, to mark the event.

Sports competitions, design of model schools using local resources, poetry, story writing and skit highlighted the negative outcomes of child marriage. These events conveyed the importance of prioritising girls needs, especially education, within the family and schools.

Girls stressed on the need for girl friendly facilities in the model schools such as separate toilets for them. The skits addressed issues such as school drop out of adolescent girls, violence and harassment faced by them, child marriage and its adverse impact on girls. Savitri Basappa Bajentri, a IXth grade student said, *"Abolish child marriage, educate the girl*

child and you will help change the society." The speeches by girls made a strong case for valuing girls' talents and giving them opportunities to develop those.

The Head of the Department of Women's Studies, Karnataka State Women's University, committed to extending support for career counseling and personality development of girls associated with Sabala. The District Health Education Officer spoke on the reproductive and sexual health issues of adolescent girls. Rajeev Lakhappa Toravi, a SDMC member of the Government Higher Primary School in Toravi and supporter of the Dalit Sangharsha Samiti came to support the event and said, *"Girls have equal rights as boys to be educated and work. They should be able to stand on their feet if something happens tomorrow."*

The event was well supported by schools and local government institutions from the participating villages and community based organization (CBO), Jagruti Mahila Sangha.

Snapshot of the events in the districts**Participants**

- Adolescent girls and boys
- Families
- Village youth groups
- School authorities and governance committees
- Local and district government representatives
- Self help groups
- Community leaders
- District University

Number of participants

- 850 including guests

Money raised from the community

- \$793
- \$300 from village level local government
- Other donors include schools, individuals, Rotary Club in Bagalkot and CBO in Bijapur.
- 75% of the funding in both districts came from the above-mentioned sources.

Media Coverage

The events were well covered in local newspapers such as,

- Vijay Karnataka in Bagalkot
- Vijayavani, Samyukhta Karnataka, and Prajavani in Bijapur

Local leaders at the events

- CEO of District Council, Bagalkot
- Deputy Director of Public Instructions, Bijapur
- Block Education Officer, Bagalkot
- Ex-officio Member of Legislative Council, Bagalkot
- Department of Health and Family Welfare, Bijapur
- Local government representatives
- President of Rotary Club, Bijapur
- Village community leaders
- SDMC members, Bijapur

Key discussion points in the events

- Significance and aspirational benefits of education for girls
- Socio-cultural and institutional barriers that limit educational access for girls
- Adverse outcomes of adolescent girls' dropping out of school
- Negative outcomes of child marriage
- The need to support gender equity
- Importance of fighting violence against adolescent girls
- Reproductive and sexual health issues of adolescent girls

KHPT team that made it possible!**In Bagalkot**

- Tejaswini Hiremath, District Programme Coordinator
- Mahadev Dhundappagol, Field Supervisor
- Parimala Patil, Field Supervisor
- Ranganath Kuri, Outreach Worker (ORW)
- Vijayalakshmi Mundaganoor, ORW
- Savitri Jagdal, ORW
- Mahesh Doddamane, Senior Regional Manager

In Bijapur

- Kumar Vadde, Programme Coordinator
- Sarojini, Field supervisor
- Shanthappa Angadi, Field Supervisor
- Vijayalaxmi Kavali, ORW
- Sujatha Hebba, ORW
- Anjana Hugar, ORW
- Jayashree Kumbar, ORW
- Annapoorna Doddamani, ORW
- Shantha, ORW
- Shankamma Hipparagi, ORW
- Basavaraj Biradar, ORW
- H S Srikantamurthy, Senior Regional Manager

Other information

- The Rotary Club of Bagalkot donated fans for all classrooms in M.M.S Government High School in Arakeri village in Bagalkot district.



Traditional dance being performed at the event in Arakeri village, Bagalkot



Volleyball court for their model school, Bijapur



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This document draws from the preliminary reporting of the events by Mahesh Doddamane and Tejaswini Hiremath from Bagalkot and by H.S.Srikantamurthy from Bijapur.

Photos by Priya Pillai and Mahesh Doddamane

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