

CONFERENCE REPORT



STATE CONFERENCE ON KEEPING GIRLS IN SECONDARY SCHOOL: SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES

Dharwad, Karnataka | 20 – 21 June 2015





**'Keeping Girls in Secondary School:
Successes and Challenges'**

State Conference, Dharwad, Karnataka,
20 – 21 June 2015

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CONTENTS

SUMMARY	6
BACKGROUND	12
Landscape	12
About Samata	12
Note on the conference	13
SESSIONS	
Day One – Saturday, 20 June 2015	14
Opening Speeches	15
Panel: Keeping girls in secondary schools – an overview	18
Panel: Structural barriers to girls' education	24
Day Two – Sunday, 21 June 2015	32
Panel: What has worked to keep girls in schools – evidences and practices.....	33
Panel: Developing a comprehensive strategy for adolescent girls' education.....	40
Closing Speeches	46
RECOMMENDATIONS ON GIRLS' EDUCATION	50
ANNEX A: Conference Invitation	54
ANNEX B: Speaker Bios	56
ANNEX C: Photo Exhibits	60
ANNEX D: Conference Schedule	64



SUMMARY

India's commitment to realising universal education has been demonstrated through its landmark Right to Education Act and flagship programmes such as Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and the Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan. These initiatives have considerably narrowed the country's school enrolment gap. Yet, serious challenges still remain. Karnataka Health Promotion Trust (KHPT) organised a state level conference *Keeping Girls in Secondary School: Successes and Challenges* to address the issues of retention, quality and equity in girls' secondary education and rally support for KHPT-STRIVE's Samata project. The conference offered government officials, practitioners, field and project workers, and community members the opportunity to share

experiences, achievements and concerns.

Shri Kimmane Ratnakar, Minister for Primary and Secondary Education, Government of Karnataka inaugurated the conference and noted the importance of education for individual and social development. Shri Arvind Bellad, Member of Legislative Assembly commended Samata for addressing the link between HIV and education. Shri Basavaraj Horatti, Member of Legislative Council and former Minister for Education, Government of Karnataka in his closing ceremony speech acknowledged the need to increase the age of compulsory education to 18 years to make secondary school education mandatory under law. Shri Jagdish Shettar, Leader of the

Opposition in the Karnataka Assembly asked for comparative data on education between north and south Karnataka.

Experts from the fields of education and youth and girls empowerment spoke at the different panels on barriers and enablers to girls' education. The presentations covered a comprehensive range of topics such as gender and social norms, child/ early marriage, school infrastructure and systems, quality and curriculum concerns, and interventions with stakeholders to ensure that girls completed their secondary schooling. Deliberations at the conference questioned whether our education system is truly egalitarian, inclusive and accessible, emphasised the need for inter-

departmental convergence and stressed on the importance of multi-stakeholder partnerships to realise the goal of universal adolescent girls education. The conference also highlighted the need for priority budget allocations to northern Karnataka as the development parameters here rank among the worst in the country.

The conference noted that adolescent girls' development is priority area cutting across sectors. As such, efforts to combat child labour and marriage should combine with measures to improve water, sanitation and hygiene practices in schools, reaching out-of-school girls and better delivery of education and health services.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Interventions to **improve adolescent girls education** must be guided by policies, implemented at the school and community levels, and enforced by law.

1. Design a multilevel and multi-stakeholder response

Several factors in and out of school prevent girls from completing school. Hence, comprehensive interventions require galvanising support from various actors involving girls, families, school administrators and teachers, village community and institutions and local government. Likewise, a multilevel framework that integrates gender perspective into school plans and teacher training, promotes the girls' right to education within the community, creates targeted responses to low enrolment of girls' and incentivise education for girls from poor, rural, disadvantaged communities need to be put in place.

2. Implement norm change interventions

Expansion of education opportunities for girls must invest in and include interventions that facilitate the creation of new gender norms towards increasing equality and agency for girls. Gender norms embedded in social structures manifest within households and families, communities, schools and the wider society to maintain the discriminatory social order often producing inequitable outcomes for girls and women. Activities should aim at individual and household level change, engaging communities, engendering schools, and working with boys and men to reducing violence against women to increase the value of the girl child and remove the restrictions on girls' education.

3. Create girl friendly and safe schools

Learning environment influences the academic performance and well being of

the children in school. This is especially the case for girls, who often face violence from boys and men on their way to and at times, within school thereby negatively impacting their school experience and increasing their chances of drop out. Hence, facilities, teacher-student and student-student interactions within schools need to cater to girls' specific needs including separate toilets, water availability, empathetic teachers, violence redressal mechanisms and supportive peer groups.

4. Provide gender and comprehensive sexuality education in schools

Comprehensive sexuality education that recognises human rights and gender equality and provides the essential life skills to help children make responsible choices about their social and sexual relationships will enable both girls and boys to understand and question social norms and practices. It gives them a better understanding of their adulthood, improves their sexual and reproductive health and enables them to take advantage of educational opportunities that can improve their wellbeing. Hence, school based programmes from primary to secondary that have gender and human rights at their core need to be developed to address adolescent girls' vulnerabilities.

5. Increase the compulsory age of education under the Right to Education (RTE) Act

Policy frameworks need to be strengthened by legislative reform that enhance girls' access to and retention in school such as raising the age at first marriage, sanctions against the withdrawal of girls from school and increasing the compulsory age of education. In India, the RTE Act 2009 makes free and compulsory education a fundamental right only to children in the age group of six to fourteen years i.e. for the first eight years of schooling. The 2001 Census of India puts the total number

of children between 14 to 18 years, the adolescents, at 88.5 million. Given that the provision of secondary education in India is not legally mandated, it leaves this large group unsupported by law to access their right to education. Hence, the RTE Act needs to be amended to mandate state obligation to develop free and accessible secondary education for all children. In addition, monitor the implementation of RTE guidelines stipulating a student teacher ratio of 30:1 to fill vacancies for teaching positions and increasing the ratio of female teachers in schools.

6. Improve convergence, coordination and linkage between various sectoral programmes

Multi-sectoral programmes become key as problems to girls' education lie both within and outside of the education system. Therefore, there needs to be improved collaboration between the Departments of Education, Women and Child Development, Backward Classes and Minorities, Social Welfare and Rural Development and Panchayathi Raj. Lack of convergence means that different departments run parallel programmes that address the same issues or that some schools receive funds to create adequate facilities while others remain persistently uncovered by any of the departmental programmes. There is a need to streamline the process for better synchronisation of different departmental programmes at the field level. This can not only avoid duplication of initiatives and investments but also allow for pooling and better utilisation of resources for improved impact.

7. Allocate higher capital investment in education to northern Karnataka

The Karnataka Human Development Index (HDI) 2005 show wide regional imbalances between southern and northern regions of the state. The general living

standard of the poor was found to be low in northern Karnataka. The regions lagged behind in rural housing, sanitation, female literacy, malnutrition, anemia and development of scheduled caste and tribes (SC/ST). Some of the lowest HDI and gender development index (GDI) are in north Karnataka districts such as Bijapur with a HDI of 0.589 and Bagalkot with a GDI of 0.571. Disparities in human and gender development negatively impact girls' education. Hence, there is a need to allocate higher investments to the region to mitigate the impact of deprivations arising out of a comparatively higher socio-economic backwardness of the region.

8. Build partnerships with non-governmental organisations working on adolescent girls' issues

The primary responsibility for financing of education lies with the state. However, partnerships with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) can help the government to address the prohibitive indirect costs, such as family reliance on daughters for their labour contribution or for child care, that prevent girls from staying out of school. In education, NGOs can assist the government to map who is not in school, provide gender training for teachers, build capacities of School Development Management Committees (SDMC), create safe school plans and influence and empower communities to tackle barriers that keep girls from school. Systematically mapping factors of adolescent girls' vulnerability to school drop out can help design better tracking systems to prioritise and monitor vulnerable girls.

9. Revitalise existing platforms for children's participation in governance

A 2007 order of the Karnataka State Government mandated the constitution of *Makkala Grama Sabha* (MGS) and *Makkala Panchayats* (Children's Village Committees

(CVC)) to conduct an annual meeting of children from the age group of 5 to 15 years in all *Gram Panchayats*. Modify the processes of MGS and CVCs to mandate proportionate participation of girls, include children up to 18 years and out of school children in the village so that girls' realities inform the decisions of these meetings. Activate the committees formed under the Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS) of the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD). Strengthen girls' participation in these committees so as to gather timely information of potential child safety issues such as early marriage, unsafe school experiences or trafficking.

10. Revive and invest in successful programmes such as *Kishori Sanghas* or *Meena*

The state should continue to invest in programmes that have proven successful in the past in empowering adolescent girls. Few of them including the Kishori programme, from Mahila Samakhya, to bring adolescent girls, between 11 to 18 years, back into mainstream education and enhance their life skills, and Meena clubs that promote active participation of girls in school activities and bring back out of school children, are particularly significant in the context of adolescent girls' education.

A new alliance born at the conference united a number of participants in an advocacy group to further the cause of adolescent girls' education. Political leaders across the parties agreed to follow up on the recommendations that emerge from the conference. The alliance will provide technical inputs to the government on measures to improve the secondary education of girls. The conference was organised with the support of the Secretary and Commissioners, Department of Education, Government of Karnataka and saw wide participation from Deputy Directors of Public Instruction and District and Block Education Officers.



BACKGROUND

LANDSCAPE

In terms of critical development indicators, the Bijapur and Bagalkot districts of Karnataka rank as Category 'C' backward districts. Poverty, early marriage, the prevailing *devadasi* tradition, and social norms that undervalue girls and their education are some of the causes of this disturbing trend. The education statistics are sobering – in Bijapur, 17 per cent of girls drop out after Class 7; the figure stands at 12 per cent in Bagalkot, compared to the state average of five per cent. At nine per cent compared with six per cent for children from other groups in the state, girls from the Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Tribes (STs) are most likely to drop out [SEMIS 2013]. The northeast districts score low on the education development index because of the high number of vacancies, too few women teachers, and poor infrastructure and facilities. SDMCs and school staff do not conduct systematic gender analyses or effectively address the needs of girls. And finally, the girls lack role models, aspiration for professional careers and a sense of solidarity with other girls.

In this scenario, there is a strong rationale for intervening to increase adolescent girls' rate of secondary school enrolment and completion. Education has been found to improve girls' quality of life, social standing, agency, and health. It reduces extreme poverty, promotes gender equality and empowers women. Educated girls marry three years later, have healthier and fewer children, earn more, are more inclined to educate their children, are better able to understand and exercise their rights, and are three times less likely to acquire HIV than uneducated girls.¹

¹ Herz, B and Sperling, G. 2004. What Works in Girls' Education: Evidence and Policies From the Developing World. New York: Council on Foreign Relations.

ABOUT SAMATA

In July 2013, Karnataka Health Promotion Trust (KHPT) launched the five-year Samata project to reduce vulnerability to HIV and improve quality of life among adolescent girls from the SC/ ST communities by increasing the rate of secondary school enrolment among them. Samata covers 69 high schools and 605 teachers serving approximately 3,600 adolescent girls in 1,800 families in 119 villages in Bijapur and Bagalkot districts.

The project is structured in three phases:

- i) planning and piloting;
- ii) implementation; and
- iii) evaluation, consolidation and dissemination.

To increase the numbers of girls who enrol in and complete high school,

Samata:

- provides special tuition, career counselling and leadership training to improve girls' academic success and broaden their aspirations
- establishes reflection sessions for girls to share experiences and build solidarity and confidence
- sensitises parents to value girls and recognise the importance of educating them
- links families to government schemes that provide incentives for educating girls
- uses sports to encourage boys to respect girls and appreciate their rights
- trains SDMCs and school staff to institute measures to increase girls' safety and academic success
- supports community structures to understand the importance of girls' education and take action.

The one-year planning phase was spent conducting assessments to inform Samata's design and piloting strategies. The three-year implementation phase focuses on implementation and intervention. The fifth year is for consolidation, evaluation and dissemination.

Samata is designed to intervene at the levels of schools, girls, families, boys, the community, officials from the Department of Education, and the media to address the most proximate structural barriers impeding girls' access to education and academic performance.

NOTE ON THE CONFERENCE

Keeping Girls in Secondary School: Successes and Challenges was a two-day state level conference organised by KHPT in Dharwad, Karnataka, in June 2015. The conference aimed to rally support for adolescent girls education by creating a platform where policymakers, NGO staff, field workers and community members, including the girls themselves, could reflect on a common concern – how we can intervene at various levels to urge more adolescent girls, particularly those with least access – to attend school and ensure that they complete their secondary education.

The conference brought together over 300 participants including representatives from the Department of Education, senior Karnataka Administrative Service officers and civil society groups and technical experts. The film 'On Our Own Two Feet' made under the Samata project of KHPT was screened at the event. The film documents the lives and views of local officials, schools, parents, boys and the girls themselves in north Karnataka to identify barriers to girls' education. A photo exhibition showcased the different intervention elements of Samata along with the impact

The event received wide coverage in the local media.



OBJECTIVES

The conference aimed to:

- share knowledge on structural barriers and enablers to entry and retention of girls in secondary education in Karnataka and India
- share intervention experiences and lessons learnt to address the barriers to retain girls in secondary education
- provide policy inputs to the government to effectively address structural factors to increase entry and retention of girls in secondary education especially from marginalised communities in northern Karnataka

THEMES

The key themes of the conference were:

- gender and social norms
- underage marriage
- school infrastructure and systems
- curriculum and quality of education
- interventions with adolescent girls, youth and community to retain girls in school

SESSIONS

Day One – Saturday, 20 June 2015



OPENING SPEECHES

The official opening speeches included speeches by Kimmanne Ratnakar, the Minister for Primary and Secondary Education in the Government of Karnataka; Arvind Bellad, Member of Legislative Assembly, Karnataka; Dr Reynold Washington, Trustee, Karnataka Health Promotion Trust (KHPT); and Raghavendra T, Director, KHPT.

Dr Reynold Washington welcomed participants to the conference stating that KHPT was honoured to host the conference on adolescent girls' education under project Samata. He referred to the importance of tackling inequities in education for adolescent girls to empower them, including achieving better health outcomes.

Raghavendra T presented an overview of project Samata. He elaborated on the significance of addressing structural barriers to keep girls in secondary school. He described Samata's multi-stakeholder intervention design that comprehensively addressed the barriers to enable girls from disadvantaged communities to complete secondary school.

KEY DISCUSSION POINTS

- Comprehensive, multi-stakeholder interventions that address structural factors, such as social and gender norms, is important for removing the barriers to girls' education
- Societal and individual development is directly linked to progress in education
- Government and non-government organisations should partner to realise the goal of universal secondary education for adolescent girls
- Education can reduce discrimination against girls and women and usher in social change

In his inaugural speech, **Kimmanne Ratnakar** reiterated the importance of education for individual and social development. He exhorted the officers present to document the recommendations as a reference for future schemes and strategies. The minister drew attention to the pressing need in districts such as Yadgir, where about half the population has never attended school. He said that while education or lack thereof is not a measure of an individual's intrinsic worth, it is essential for progress and development. He quoted Mahatma Gandhi's words about freedom and safety, especially for women, even at midnight.

“Development is directly related to education, and education levels in North Karnataka, especially those of girls, are very low. The Department of Education has to work together with the NGOs to provide girls with a safe environment and extensive opportunities. I request all the officers attending the conference to send me recommendations on strategies that the government should adopt to further girls' education.”

- **Kimmane Ratnakar**, Minister for Primary and Secondary Education, Government of Karnataka

Aravind Bellad, Member of Legislative Assembly, commended Samata for addressing the link between HIV prevention and education, and extended his support to the project. He urged the participants to act upon the recommendations, as the north Karnataka region, in particular, requires concerted initiatives in this direction. Calling for new ideas to keep children in school, he reminded the audience that education reduces gender discrimination and increases avenues for employment. It is thus instrumental in ushering social change.

“Education of women and girls opens the door to employment and can reduce discrimination. It is an instrument for social change.”

- **Arvind Bellad**, Member, Karnataka State Legislative Assembly

PHOTO GALLERY – Inaugural Ceremony



PANEL ON KEEPING GIRLS IN SECONDARY SCHOOL – An Overview

The first panel of the conference focused on gaining an overview of the scenario, globally and within Karnataka, on secondary education of girls. It featured a senior technical expert and a government representative from the flagship Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan programme in Karnataka. Enakshi Ganguly Thukral from HAQ:Centre for Child Rights moderated the session.

SESSION PARTICIPANTS

Chair:

Enakshi Ganguly Thukral, Co-founder, HAQ: Centre for Child Rights

Panelists:

- Dr K.G. Santhya, Associate II, Population Council
- Dr H.B. Chandrashekhar, State Coordinator for Pedagogy, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Karnataka

KEY DISCUSSION POINTS

- Both supply and demand side barriers continue to prevent girls in developing countries from completing school
- There is a need to generate more evidence on strategies that have helped to keep girls in school
- The minimum compulsory age for education under the Right to Education needs to be increased to 18 years
- Drop out rates of girls from socially disadvantaged community groups remain high
- Continued efforts are required at the family, school and community levels to keep girls in school

In delivering the keynote address, **Dr K.G. Santhya** congratulated KHPT for organising the conference in the 15th anniversary year of Dakar Framework for Action and the deadline year of the MDGs. She focused specifically on the state of the evidence from developing countries and stated that in many countries, completion of Class 8 is well below 50 per cent with secondary school completion (Class 10) at 25 per cent or less.

International Commitments to Promoting Girls' Education

Education for All, Dakar Framework for Action (2000)

- Ensuring that by 2015 all children – particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities – have access to complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality
- Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005 and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality

Millennium Development Goals (2000)

- MDG 2 – Achieve universal primary education- Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling
- MDG 3 – Promote gender equality and empower women - Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015

Source: Presentation 'Why girls are not in school: A review of the situation in developing countries'. KG Santhya, AJ Francis Xavier, Shilpi Rampal. Population Council. June 2015.

Dr Santhya highlighted that girls' primary school attendance has increased substantially in the past 15 years. National level data in 16 countries indicates that it is nearly universal, with more girls in early adolescence (up to age 14) opting for education as well. However, it dips by 10 percentage points after age 15. Therefore, although many countries are on the path of gender parity in primary school, progress in secondary school completion is less marked.

In developing countries, limited physical and economic access, poor quality of schools and education, early marriage and pregnancy and limited engagement of parents in girls' education prevent girls from reaching school. Despite the investments in educational infrastructure in India and other developing countries, distance to school and lack of transportation continues to exclude 15–18 year old girls from attending school.

“Girls' enrolment and continuation are particularly sensitive to distance to school.”

- Dr K.G. Santhya (DHS analysis; UNESCO, 2012)

A four-country analysis in sub-Saharan African shows that their attendance falls from 40–50 per cent to about 10–15 per cent when their school is located six kilometres outside the village. Dr Santhya quoted a community worker in Andhra Pradesh who commented on the lack of secondary schools in every village as a reflection of the lack of planning to educate girls beyond the primary level.

Dr Santhya mentioned that primary education in most countries, and in some, even secondary education, is free. However, the indirect costs of schooling for girls who could be taking care of siblings, household chores or farming poses a barrier to their education. Further, parental involvement in the education of daughters as compared to sons varied considerably. A study conducted by the Population Council in Gujarat found that mothers spent less than two hours a week in their daughters' education.

The problem lies both with schools, which do not engage the parents, and parents, who consider their duty done with sending their children to school. While lack of interest, low aspirations and poor performance are partly rooted in the family attitude to education, they are more often a reflection of school quality. Quality education encourages aspiration, makes learning interesting and imparts age and level appropriate competencies.

“Learning assessments of rural children in India show that only 75 per cent of Class 8 students can read Class 2 texts in their local language. Just 34 per cent can do simple division, and just 47 per cent can read simple sentences in English.”

- Dr K.G. Santhya (ASER, 2015)

Dr Santhya emphasised on the influence of social norms, such as early marriage of girls, in keeping girls away from school. She cited an econometric analysis of the demographic and health survey data from India, which indicate that each year of early marriage is likely to reduce the fulfilment of education goals by three percentage points [DHS analysis; Field and Ambrus, 2009; Nguyen and Wodon, 2012]. She underscored the need for a stronger evidence base on strategies that work to keep girls in school.

“There is a need for generating a stronger evidence base on the successful strategies to keep girls in school. Samata's rigorous research design that aims to fill the evidence gap on what works to promote girls' secondary education is commendable.”

- Dr K.G. Santhya

Dr H.B. Chandrashekhar began his address by drawing attention to the extreme disparity between women and men in the state of Karnataka. He cited the 2011 census data that showed the overall sex ratio to be 973, the child sex ratio to be 948 and women's literacy rate to be 68%, with the literacy rate of rural women even lower at 60%.

“Karnataka has 8.38 lakh less women than men. Among the children between the ages of 0 to 6 years, rural Karnataka has only 950 girls for every 1000 boys.”

- Dr H.B. Chandrashekhar (Census 2011)

He elaborated on the state initiatives and innovations to promote education for girls including free education; special enrolment drives, providing bicycles, Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidhyalayas (KGBVs), girls' hostels and residential schools. Financial incentives include those under Rashtriya Madyamik Shiksha Abhiyan and the Bhagya Lakshmi scheme, which entitles girls who complete their education without getting married before the age of 18 to a cash deposit of Rs 1,00,000.

Dr Chandrashekhar mentioned that the government has undertaken several gender sensitisation initiatives as part of its efforts to encourage girls to enrol and finish secondary school.

“The Kishori programme has successfully sensitised teachers and adolescent girls to subjects such as puberty, menstrual hygiene, child rights and empowerment. The Meena programme builds girls' collectives that raise awareness about gender issues and increase their general participation in their schools. Girls in government high schools are also taught self-defence skills.”

- Dr H.B. Chandrashekhar

Initiatives to improve the quality of education include Nali-Kali, an activity-based methodology implemented in Classes 1 and 2 in all government schools, exposure to technology through the CALC programme, satellite-based tele-education, video lessons through the Edusat programme, and daily radio broadcasts from 13 All India Radio (AIR) stations for students from Classes 1 to 8 across the state. As a result of these efforts, the number of girls enrolled and female teachers employed has increased and dropout rate decreased over the years.

Dr Chandrashekhar concluded by describing the continuing challenges to get girls to school. The problems of child marriage, the *devadasi* tradition, education for children of migrants and the high dropout rate of girls from the most socially disadvantaged sections persist. Low value for girl child education, limited freedom for girls at home, school and society, and girls being unaware of their rights worked against their education achievements. Additionally, violence against girls and puberty related social norms caused girls to drop out of school.

At the school level, gender stereotyping in the school curriculum, lack of gender awareness among School Development Management Committees (SDMC) and inadequate monitoring of girls attendance, poor infrastructure such as no toilets or unavailability of sanitary napkins, and absence of counselling facilities acted as the barriers. He specifically mentioned that the districts of northeast Karnataka, as compared to the rest of the state, continued to fare poorly in gender equality including girls' education.

“Girls still do not constitute 50 per cent of the total number of children in schools. Sustained efforts are required to spread gender sensitivity, improve curriculum development, incorporate inclusive methodology, increase access to school for girls in remote areas, and raise awareness about the rights of girls.”

- Dr H.B. Chandrashekhar

Enakshi Ganguly Thukral concluded the panel discussion by emphasising the significance of girls' education and the importance of legislation to realise human rights.

“Human rights that are not enshrined in law must be formalised legally. Our fundamental right to free education, for example, extends from the age of six to 14, after which girls may be forced into marriage, labour or sex work, so it has proven inadequate.”

- Enakshi Ganguly Thukral

Ms Thukral urged the participants to ask if our education system is leading to transformative change, accessible in a safe environment for girls, keeping pace with the changing times and aspirations of children and is non-discriminatory and egalitarian? If it was not, then what actions could be taken to change it?

Ms Thukral reminded the participants of the 20 per cent cut in the education budget by the Central Government. Are there too few schemes, or are the schemes not percolating to those in real need, she asked. She concurred that the RTE age limit was inadequate, and stressed that education must become a safe and secure path, not least to counter the arguments of parents who claim they are marrying off their children young for their own good.

Ms Thukral closed on a note of pride and a question:

“Karnataka is one of the few states where children form part of the Gram Sabha. We have given them a big and significant place. Are we capitalising on its full potential?”



PHOTO GALLERY – First Panel



PANEL ON STRUCTURAL BARRIERS TO GIRLS' EDUCATION

The panel on structural barriers to girls' education – also the focus of Samata's work in north Karnataka – highlighted, both qualitatively and quantitatively, the extent to which adolescent girls' education is hindered by socio-economic norms and practices. Gurumurthy Kasinathan, Director, IT for Change chaired the session.

SESSION PARTICIPANTS

Chair:
Gurumurthy Kasinathan, Director, IT for Change

Panelists:

- Arunima Bose and Prarthana Kumari, Research Associates, Nirantar Trust
- Sonykutty George, Child Protection Specialist and Raghavendra Bhatt, UNICEF
- Rishikesh Shanker, Leader, Hub for Education, Law and Policy, Azim Premji University

KEY DISCUSSION POINTS

- Social norms and practices hinder adolescent girls' education
- School curriculum reinforces heteronormativity, strengthening patriarchy. Provisions, such as uniforms, playgrounds, and toilets - also reinforce the gender binary.
- Adolescent girls and school staff internalise prevalent social norms.
- It becomes easier to reinforce gender norms of a 'good wife' and 'good woman' among girls who are pulled out of school.
- Secondary school enrolment of girls decreases the rates of child marriage

- Removing school level barriers has the potential to retain more girls' in schools
- Districts in north and north east Karnataka and Educationally Backward Blocks (EBB) that lag behind in critical development indicators need to be given special focus

Arunima Bose and Prarthana Kumari made a joint presentation about the Impact of Discriminatory Gender and Social Norms on Adolescent Girls' Education.

“Understanding education from a gender and sexuality perspective is essential to addressing norms that prevent adolescent girls from completing secondary school. Our education systems replicate gender binaries but gender is neither an identity that exists in isolation, nor is ‘girl’ a biological category.”

- Arunima Bose

Ms Bose described how subscribing to the traditional way of thinking fails to take into account other social identities and genders that influence and impact access, provision and inclusion of adolescent girls in school. School curriculum, classroom processes and the school set up tends to reinforce heteronormativity thereby strengthening patriarchy.

“When education is viewed in isolation rather than as a right and a means of empowerment, it is regarded purely as an investment with guaranteed returns in the case of boys. In the case of girls, however, that sum is put away for their dowry and marriage.”

- Prarthana Kumari

Ms Kumari stressed on the importance of valuing girls' education because it is their right and not because the investment will yield economic benefits in the future. Girls who are forced into marriage at 15-16 years of age lack options for further education. Currently, girls who choose to re-enrol are ineligible for the government's cash benefit schemes, as these are only available to girls who remain single until they turn 18.

The subject of sexuality is inadequately addressed within the schools and families. The fear of sexual harassment or the possibility that the girl may fall in love or elope remains a major factor for taking girls out of school. The situation calls for understanding adolescence and fostering a positive approach to sexuality, rather than using age as an axis of power to dismiss young people as ignorant of the world or insist on their becoming 'ideal citizens'.

Ms Bose and Ms Kumari called for sustainable long-term programmes for young people, schools, government and organisations that work on education and violence against women and dialogues with funding organisations to effect a change in the scenario.

“Create sustainable long-term programmes for adolescents, invest in creative and empowering material for, about and with young people, expand the definition of gender, and build capacities and perspectives on gender and sexuality with school staff, educators and policy makers.”

- Arunima Bose and Prarthana Kumari

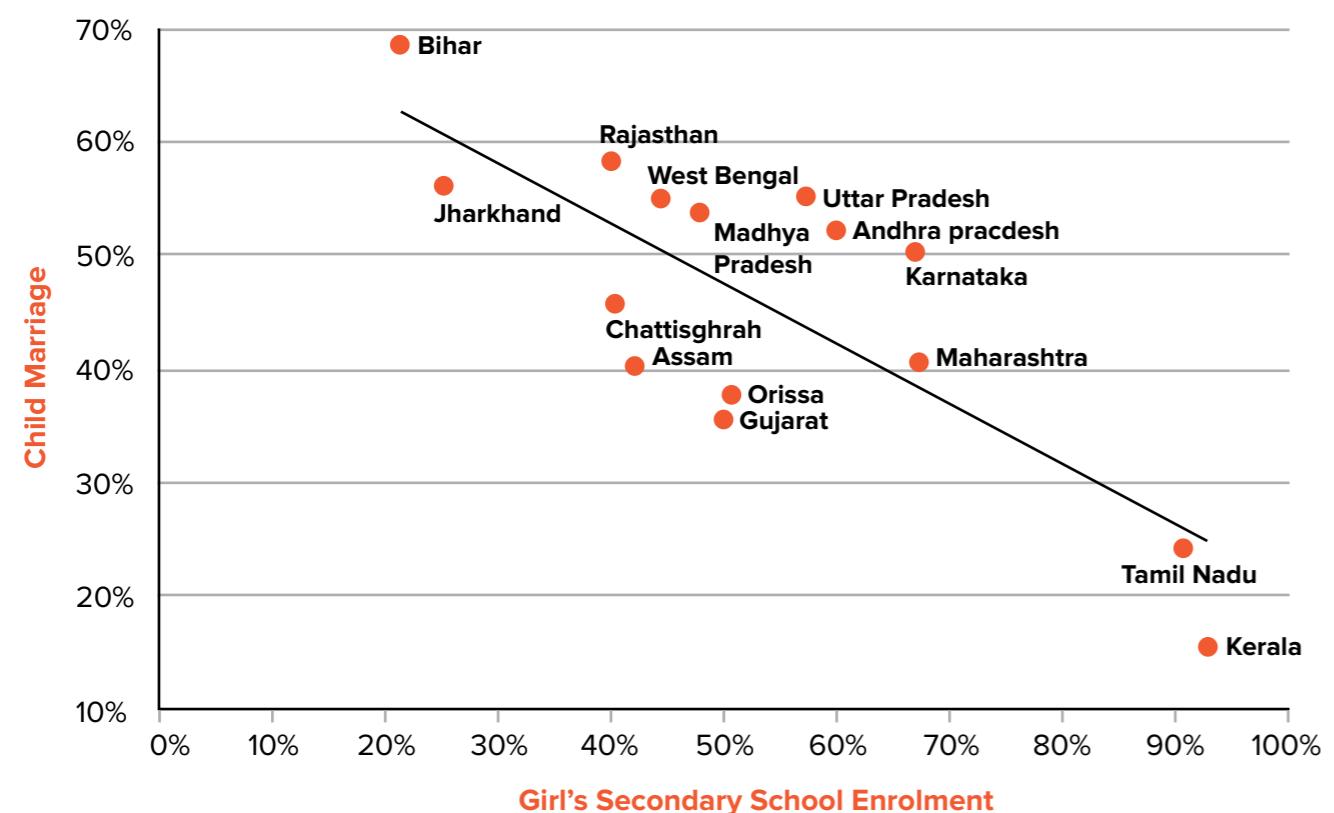
Sonykutty George began by citing the Census 2011 data, which showed more than 20 per cent of girls in Karnataka as married before the legal minimum age of 18 years, with the rate being alarmingly high in north Karnataka. Listing the various reasons for the high prevalence of child marriage in the region, Mr George said,

“Between 60 to 70 per cent of girls in north Karnataka marry before the age of 18 years. Gender and social norms, poverty, financial

constraints, difficulty in accessing education, castes and vested interest groups, political patronage of the practice and inadequate law enforcement are all drivers of this practice.”



Mr George drew attention to the inverse relationship between the age at marriage and education, especially secondary school completion. He presented data (figure below) that showed the decreasing rates of child marriages with the increasing secondary school enrolment of girls in different states in India.



Source: Presentation 'Underage marriage and education'. SONYKUTTY GEORGE, June 2015.

Mr George stressed on the need for a multipronged agenda that simultaneously works with girls, families and communities, along with an emphasis on economic incentives, policy and legal frameworks, and law enforcement. It is important to disincentivise the practice and incentivise the change.

“Efforts should be focused on empowering the girls and providing them with access to safe and affordable secondary education, engaging with boys, influencing public opinion and stricter enforcement of laws against child marriage.”

- SONYKUTTY GEORGE

Advocacy for effective social policies, influencing public opinion through media and strengthening the implementation of existing government schemes are also necessary to empower adolescent girls and reduce child marriage.

Mr George detailed the various measures required to strengthen access to safe and secondary education for adolescent girls. Dropouts during the transition from primary to secondary school must be identified and enrolled by engaging with other agencies, such as the Gram Panchayat. Infrastructure and teaching methods must be improved to retain children.

“Make schools safe physical and emotional spaces. Review facilities and processes accordingly.”

- SONYKUTTY GEORGE

School management committees must engage actively with parents to dissuade them from marrying off their children. Transportation must be safe and affordable; bicycle schemes should be stringently invigilated to ensure that it is the beneficiaries who use them. Curriculum, content and processes must be designed to empower students.

Raghavendra Bhatt elaborated on the innovative strategies employed by UNICEF in north Karnataka to prevent child marriage and boost girls' school attendance. In one school, a policeman, the teachers and members of the Balika Sangha worked together to promote attendance. Mr Bhatt shared an example of a case where UNICEF prevented child marriage in Raichur district in north Karnataka.

“A case was filed against the Coordinator for having violated the right of a child from a minority community to marry. The High Court ruled that the law against child marriage cut across communities and norms.”

- Raghavendra Bhatt

To encourage acceptance of their work against child marriage in the Muslim community, the authorities have partnered with religious leaders who make announcements in the masjid. Girls from Lambani Tandas in Raichur and Koppal are actively encouraged to come to school as part of an endeavour to create child labour and child marriage free communities. A book titled *Namma Hone* (Our Responsibility) was published as part of the effort. Lives are also being transformed through livelihood programmes.

In conclusion Mr George said that strategies have to be multipronged and adapted to the types and stages of prevalence of child marriage.

“Efforts should focus on broad based social policy, media and advocacy initiatives if the practice is common and entrenched as a social norm. In communities where the transition has begun, focus should be on broadening education, training and livelihood opportunities,

empowering adolescents and changing gender norms and dis-incentivising child marriage, to amplify and accelerate the transition. In spaces where child marriage is a deviation, targeted interventions with ‘closed communities’ and governance approaches that include stricter enforcement of laws is what is required.”

- SONYKUTTY GEORGE

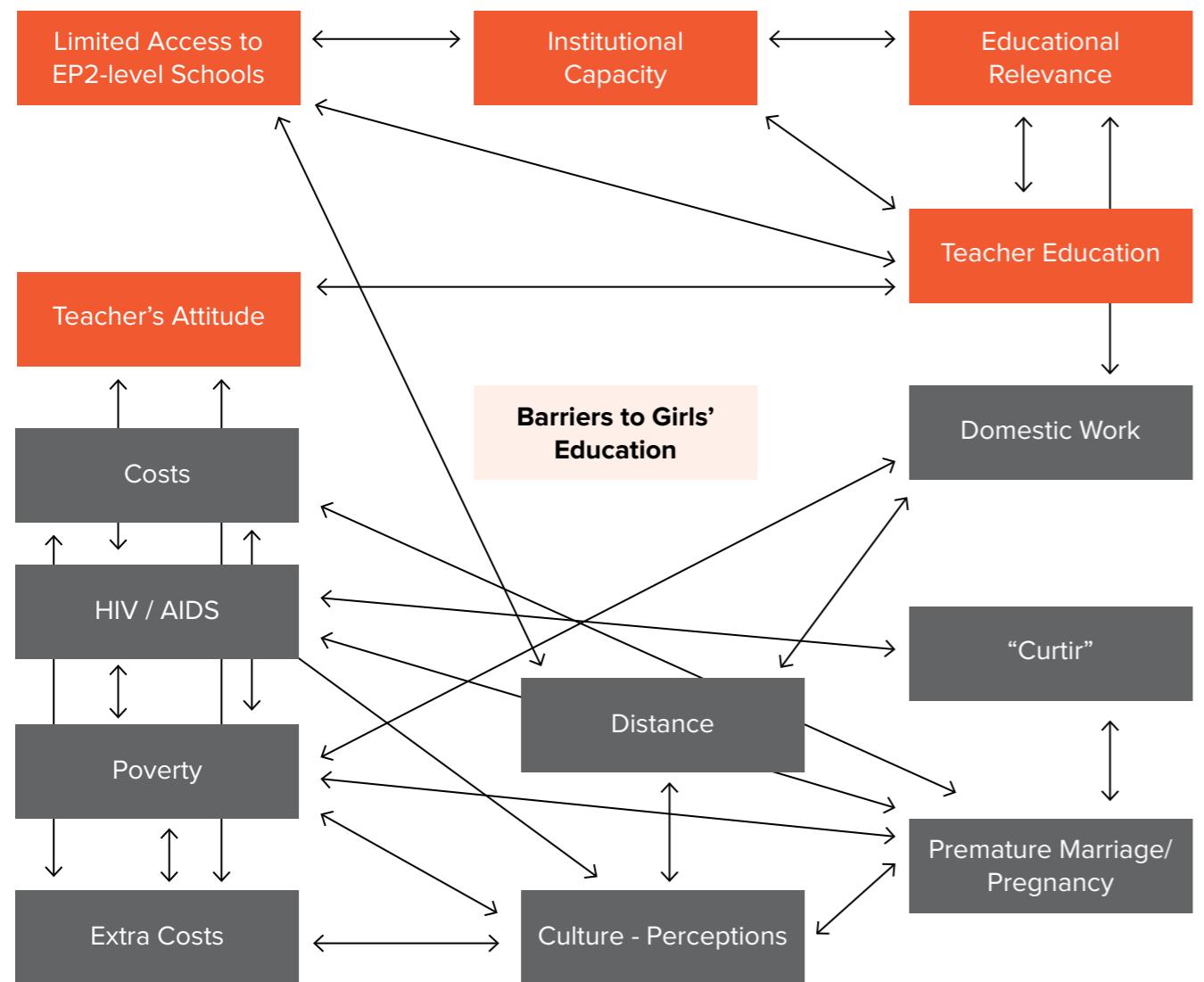
Rishikesh Shanker focused on the school level barriers to girls' education. He began by presenting sobering statistics from an analysis of the DISE 2013-14 data that showed a 40 per cent drop out rate of girls in secondary school. Only 48 per cent of all students in secondary schools in Karnataka are girls. The net enrolment ratio of girls was 55 per cent. Out of a total of 1.1 lakh teachers in Karnataka, only 40 per cent were female. Less than 35 per cent of teachers were graduates.

Policy, school and household level barriers limit girls' education. Mr Shanker quoted a UNICEF 2014 study on girls' education and gender equality to elaborate on these.

“Barriers to girls' education range from ‘supply-side constraints to negative social norms’. Adolescent girls face additional ‘economic and social demands’ impacting their education negatively. Issues related to ‘power relations between males and females in schools and society at large’ play a vital role in determining the barriers.”

- RISHIKESH SHANKER

The barriers to girls' education may be classified in a framework based on where they emerge – in the household, school and social systems (figure below).



Source: Adapted from a 2005 Mozambique report on barriers to girls education. Presentation 'School level barriers to girls' education'. Rishikesh Shanker, June 2015.

“School level barriers interact with social norms, cultural environment and economic constraints to present a formidable barrier to girls in completing school.”

- Rishikesh Shanker

Mr Shanker concluded his presentation with an example of a school in Malnad illustrating how the school level environment mitigates the impact of other barriers. This school is located 25 kilometres off the national highway. Most of the girls walk the distance; some boys cycle. The school caters to three feeder

schools, one of which is six kilometres away, with no public transport connectivity. None of the eight members of staff is formally qualified to teach science. Yet, every single Class 7 girl from the feeder schools joins this school. Fifty six per cent of the student body is made up of girls. Every student passes Class 10 and every single girl goes on to higher secondary school! Here is a school that children love and thrive at despite the many factors going against it. The difference: It strives to remain child-focused and student friendly.



Gurumurthy Kasinathan in conclusion noted the wide variation in development progress between north and northeast Karnataka as compared to south Karnataka.

“ The gender data from the Karnataka Human Development Report, 2005, suggests that Karnataka is like two states – north and northeast Karnataka appear to be an entirely different state from south Karnataka. The human development parameters in the latter region are very close to Tamil Nadu and Kerala, which rank highest on the Human Development

Index for the country. North Karnataka, on the other hand, is worse than Bihar -15 per cent of teacher positions in Yadgir are vacant, whereas the vacancy rate for the entire state is five per cent.”

- Gurumurthy Kasinathan

He said that public benefits must reach all the districts proportionately to achieve equal progress in development throughout the state. Mr Kasinathan encouraged the participants to ensure that Karnataka's schools are the best in the country.

PHOTO GALLERY – Second Panel



SESSIONS

Day Two – Sunday, 21 June 2015



PANEL ON WHAT HAS WORKED TO KEEP GIRLS IN SCHOOL: Evidence And Practices

The morning session of the second day focused on evidence from successful interventions to keep girls in school. Practice examples included programmes to improve school infrastructure and systems, working with adolescent girls to prevent child marriage and involving the youth to address community gender norms. Satyashree Goswami from the National Foundation of India chaired the session.

SESSION PARTICIPANTS

Chair:

Satyashree Goswami, Project Director - Youth Innovation Fund, National Foundation of India

Panelists:

- Anil Joshi, North Karnataka Regional In-charge, Agastya International Foundation
- Indira Pancholi, President, Mahila Jan Adhikar Samiti
- Shweta Bankar, Technical Specialist, Men and Masculinity, International Centre for Research on Women University

KEY DISCUSSION POINTS

- Structural interventions that challenge the traditional institutions of patriarchy and question beliefs with regard to gender and social relations are key to address practices such as child marriage
- Child friendly pedagogic practices can make the learning experience fun, useful and accessible to children
- Fostering sensitivity and a rights based

approach among school teachers can influence enrolment and retention of girls

- Inculcating a sense of entitlement of their rights among girls and nurturing their aspirations encourage them to stay in school
- Breaking gender stereotypes, making girls visible and their voices heard can significantly impact girls'

Satyashree Goswami started the session with the screening of the short film 'Yuva' that showed how a group of girls from rural Jharkhand in India went to Spain to compete in an international football competition. She used it as an example to tell the adolescent girls in the conference that they too can achieve such successes. The film received enthusiastic applause. Like many of our girls at Samata, the young women in the film played – in this case, literally – on an incredibly unequal playing field. But they played all the way to a stunning end, despite stiff opposition from the very people obligated to safeguard their rights.

Anil Joshi presented on *Improving School Infrastructure and Systems to Support Girls' Education* drawing from Agastya International Foundation's experiences of working with the government to improve science education in rural government schools.

Mr Joshi spoke about the foundation's child friendly pedagogic practices that guided children to make their own science models, to observe the scientific phenomena and connect it to their daily life situation, and share their learning with their peers by becoming young instructors. The sharing and learning network for teachers and innovative delivery models had helped the foundation to scale up to 16 states across the country.

The innovative learning methodology and leadership development initiatives, such as the young instructor leader programme, had showed positive impacts on children including girls. Sharing his observations from the different Agastya facilities in north Karnataka, Mr Joshi said,

"Opportunities to participate and experience in Agastya's programmes have shown to improve confidence in girls. They are more self-assured while speaking with teachers and families. They become more participative in class and begin to take leadership. Importantly, we have noticed a reduction in drop out rate and delay in marriages as girls continue in school and begin to aspire for higher studies."

Models and materials created at the Foundation were on display at the venue, demonstrating just how interactive and engaging learning can be.

Indira Pancholi drew from long experience of Mahila Jan Adhikar Samiti (MJAS) to describe how *Working with Adolescent Girls to Prevent Child Marriage* calls for striking at the root causes embedded in our social and gender structures and institutions. In Rajasthan, where her organisation is active, communities have always exploited women's labour and reproductive capacities to the fullest, she said. The rise of trends that challenge these traditional beliefs and practices have caused the old institutions to exert stronger, almost inescapable, social and moral pressure on community members with the temerity to defy them.

"How do we fight back? – Give boys and girls equal opportunities to dream new dreams and nurture new aspirations. This is what will end child marriage and increase demand for education among girls."

- Indira Pancholi

MJAS works mainly with women, boys and girls 10–20 years old, in central Rajasthan. Here, ideas of progress are intrinsically linked with perpetuating the family lineage, and it is common practice to exploit women's labour and reproductive capacities to the full. Consequently, the discourse about rights for all, particularly women, challenges deeply entrenched perceptions. Community institutions such as the Jati Panchayats respond by strengthening practices such as child marriage, atta-satta (bride exchange), and nata (traditional remarriage practices) by exerting moral pressure that is difficult to defy at the individual level.

Ms Pancholi said that although women and girls are particularly vulnerable, the issue must be addressed as a larger social problem that calls for empowerment and enabling access to rights.

"Interventions against child marriage in such a context must strike at the institutional and structural levels, foster new aspirations among the youth, and equip them with the skills and opportunities to fulfill these aspirations."

- Indira Pancholi

MJAS engages with families and schools through forums for discussion and dialogue. It capacitates women to act as change agents who advocate for education and against child marriage. Initiatives to inculcate a sense of entitlement to girls' rights as individuals and citizens and accustom the community to seeing girls in public spaces and hearing their opinions have had a significant impact on girls' attendance in school. It fosters sensitivity and a rights-based approach among schoolteachers, as they play a vital role in influencing enrolment and retention.

Breaking gender stereotypes and nurturing new aspirations is an important part of the organisation's work.

Ms Pancholi concluded by stating the importance of open dialogue that will help us critically reflect on our own biases and be welcoming of different points of view to bring about change.

"In the end, change will come through discussion and dialogue, by being open to differing points of view and understanding that we are service providers whose role is to understand and guide our young people to acquire the right to choose. This process calls for examining our own mental blocks, particularly with regard to gender and sexuality."

- Indira Pancholi

Shweta Bankar spoke next about *Involving the Youth to Address Community Gender Norms*. The International Centre for Research on Women (ICRW) used Parivartan, a programme for girls, to alter social norms mainly through sports and films. The programme worked with girls from 12 to 16 years from a very conservative migrant slum in Mumbai. The slum was ranked as the worst ward in Mumbai city and had a Human Development Index of 0.05. About 35 per cent of children from this slum did not attend school.

ICRW's formative research revealed strong norms against girls leaving home alone, whether to play, visit relatives or go to the market. The response to requests to send their daughters out to play was discouraging. Community responded by saying that sports are for boys; people will laugh if we send our daughters out; or that you will corrupt our girls. The first step was to tackling these attitudes lay in identifying the community's norms.

"Community norms were found to relate broadly to notions of space: a woman's place is in the home; public space is the domain of men. Closely tied with this was the perception of education for girls – they must eventually take care of the

house, so why waste time and money on school, or expose them to the unsavoury influence of boys?"

- Shweta Bankar

To challenge the traditional scripts for girls and break down the gender stereotypes, the team identified parents of athletes to form a 'reference group' to address the barriers for girls' participation in sports. They identified and involved influential community leaders, other NGOs/CBOs and educational institutions to gather greater credibility. They engaged men and boys to collectively reflect on norms and make them gender equitable and create a safe space in the community through community mobilisation.

Qualitative research highlighted the perceptions about girls' safety in the presence of the community's own boys and men.

"The fear that the girls would be stared at and 'teased' highlighted the need for dialogue with parents, men and boys in the community."

- Shweta Bankar

ICRW partnered with The Independent Television Service [ITVS] on its Global Project for Women and Girls, an on-going programme that uses films as a medium to foster dialogue within communities. Mentors from a previous Parivartan programme were trained to facilitate the discussions and relate the films to community issues.

"ICRW used films in many ways to engage the youth – to collaborate with partners with a presence in the area, identify community norms, involve community institutions and identify a medium of high interest to the target group and promote dialogue and reflection among stakeholders."

- Shweta Bankar

The audience was mobilised through the CBOs, who helped the team convince individual community members of the benefits of the initiative. Films were selected from the ITVS bank and linked with community concerns,

such as education for girls, child marriage, sports for girls, violence against women, and substance abuse.

“The response was positive, with several young men admitting during the reflective process that they had been part of groups that had harassed girls. Several girls came forward to talk about how such behaviour constrained their mobility and goals.”

- Shweta Bankar

Every session ended with a commitment from the group. When ITVS organised a competition, a group of boys came together with a facilitator to participate. They developed a film script from a number of proposals, based on the theme of creating a safe space for women. The proposal won first place.

“Over time, the community has come to understand that the project fulfils a need in the area. They now organise street plays, rallies, community walks and other activities of their own initiative. The ICRW team no longer has to coax people out of their homes.”

- Shweta Bankar

Film has worked as an attractive medium to involve the youth in addressing community gender norms.

In conclusion, Ms Goswami recalled how society lays the burden of family honour upon the conduct of its daughters, where any wrongdoing, real or perceived, is seen to bring disrepute upon the family, and can well get a girl killed by her own kin. She made a passionate call to demolish the infrastructure of honour placed of girls/women and make boys/men equally responsible.

Ms Goswami said that while adolescence provides the natural impetus for human beings to be attracted sexually to each other, parents, teachers and other social “gate-keepers” ask adolescent girls to remain a virgin till she is married) while the boys are left to explore

what they can. In India, control of sexuality of girl and women is primarily for protection of property and preservation of social order.

“When power over women’s fertility ceases to be a matter of familial and societal control, then the violation of the womb will stop and girls will not be stopped from going to study. The manifestation of this control begins when boys/men involve in eve-teasing; physical and/or sexual harassment of women and even sometimes rape. This has to stop and it would only stop when boys and men also take responsibility not just towards their reproductive and sexual behaviour but understand that women have the right to “consent” and “choice”. ”

- Satyasree Goswami

Ms Goswami ended by reminding the audience that boys and men are equally victims of this societal system as many times their agency is controlled but also because they lose out on having educated peers, mothers, sisters, wives, and daughters.





PHOTO GALLERY – Third Panel



PANEL ON DEVELOPING A COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGY FOR ADOLESCENT GIRLS' EDUCATION

Gurumurthy Kasinathan, Director, IT for Change chaired the session and started it by calling for convergence between the different government departments working on the issue of adolescent girls:

"The issue of adolescent girl education pertains to multiple departments – Education, Women and Child Welfare, Labour, Rural Development and Panchayati Raj. Convergence between departments is the need of the hour."

SESSION PARTICIPANTS

Chair:
Gurumurthy Kasinathan, Director, IT for Change

Panelists:

- Ishita Chaudhry, Founder, The YP Foundation
- Sreeparna Ghosh, Assistant Professor, School of Development, Azim Premji University
- Enakshi Ganguly Thukral, Co-founder, HAQ: Centre for Child Rights

Ishita Chaudhry started her recommendations on *Involving the Youth to Address Community Gender Norms* by elaborating on the central principles that any policy framework must keep in mind to ensure young people's meaningful participation – rights based participation, community focused programme delivery and connecting knowledge to advocacy.

- *Rights-based participation* – It always remains critical for adolescent girls whose lives policies are hoping to reach out to, to be a part of both conceptualization, development, programme implementation and monitoring. This continues to be critical to also make girls identify that programmes are genuinely committed to empowering them and are interested in listening to their voices. By increasing pressure on teachers or district level officials to engage with young people does not result in the meaningful participation of young people.
- *Community focused programme delivery* – Whilst programmes are targeted in ensuring girls are retained within secondary schools, majority of the backlash stems from norms that conflate and exist in out-of-school settings. It remains central for sensitization programmes, even if they are targeted for school-going adolescents, to take place outside of the school so girls can be involved in addressing community norms that both empower and restrict their rights and personal freedoms in their surroundings.
- *Connecting knowledge to advocacy* – Girls do not experience rights-violations in isolation, it is important to ensure a central safe space for them to access unbiased knowledge and information on their Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights is established and functional at village level. This also promotes convergence between different government departments, linking education and health programmes and

strengthens community buy-in on the need to both challenge and advance gender norms.

Ms Chaudhry shared the work of YP Foundation's 'Know Your Body, Know Your Rights' programme in Uttar Pradesh and NCR, which attempts to challenge gender norms through discussions with girls and families and challenging stereotypes. Critical community discussions focused on challenging the notions below:

- Girls should not talk about their bodies and their rights
- Girls should not be empowered to speak up as they create trouble
- Increasing tolerance for diversity
- A good marriage is the only way to secure a girl's future

Challenging gendered roles for young people formed a key part of the programme.

"Challenge gendered roles and responsibilities allocated to young people, for example, shifting the burden of household responsibilities from young girls to young people. Additionally, challenging masculine stereotypes that often promote violence within the home on young women and girls, such as boys being encouraged to play the role of 'protectors' and being made responsible for protecting concepts of 'honor' instead of rights for young women and girls."

- Ishita Chaudhry

Ms Chaudhry elaborated on the policy recommendations on involving young people to address these norms.

1. **Engage trained young people to support teachers and health workers** at village level to ensure information on gender and sexuality is reaching young people. Young people trained by civil society groups as peer educators, young girls trained in government as community leaders, Kishori and Sakhi groups, Meena programmes etc should be linked with teachers, ANMs,

Anganwadi and ASHA workers to assist in reaching out to their peers.

- a. Adolescent girls are far more likely to speak to young women closer to their own age to discuss challenges and share experiences and trained youth are excellent at bridging gaps.
 - b. They assist in reducing the workload on teachers and health workers in reaching out to and mobilizing young people and in reducing the stigma faced by frontline health workers and district officials.
 - c. Examples of successful engagement of young people with health workers/teachers is well documented by different CSO initiatives such as Chetna's Mamta Taruni programme in Gujarat, Sahayog's Youth For Change programme in Uttar Pradesh, The YP Foundation's Shareer Apna, Adhikaar Apne Programme in Uttar Pradesh and MAMTA's experiences in implementing Comprehensive Sexuality Education programmes with adolescent girls in Rajasthan amongst others.
2. **Create meaningful engagement by strengthening young girl's participation in M&E:** It is important for young people to be involved in activities that are not just separate/with youth but also engage them with key gatekeepers and stakeholders at village and district level.
 - a. This can be done structurally by conducting regular panchayat meetings where young people, where especially the participation of young girls is encouraged and they are given voice to share their experiences.
 - b. Ensuring that young girls, and young people are part of creating programme indicators/logframes, field-testing phases and in both evaluating and testing programme assumptions in Theory of Change tools that are developed. An assumption is that young people do not have the skills to be able to provide technical input and this is not true, if questions are adapted to local language.

3. Establish district level dialogues between adolescent girls/young people and Block Level Officers and District Officials:

Sharing platforms between young people and local stakeholders, government officials is a key strategy in challenging the social stigma and norms that drive community thinking that often keeps girls outside of school. In The YP Foundation's experiences, District Level Dialogues experience a measure of success in increasing the community's awareness of young people's challenges and legitimizing the experiences of girls.

- a. The role of local media in reporting from such dialogues is also important. They additionally can report key data to support the same. Most importantly, these knowledge sharing platforms are not seen as attacking government officials and girls are able to legitimize often SRH issues that are seen as 'western imports' by talking about their local, lived and daily realities. Additionally, local data is rarely contextualized to young people's experiences and the latter plays a key role in the same.

4. Contextualise key messages to local languages available in mixed media: Girls often do not have independent access to/ usage of mobile phones, however with high levels of mobile penetration, more and more young people are regularly accessing and sharing videos/pictures that should ideally be used to deliver key messaging on these issues. In communities where levels of formal education are low, radio plays a key role in reaching out to girls who are also restricted by both a lack of mobility and agency.

- a. Using local media more effectively to disseminate simple messages about local policies that young people are entitled to and can participate in is important to ensure that young people can take full advantage of the same.

5. Learn and recognise the successful and positive work that BEO's and CEOs are doing:

Primarily knowledge sharing initiatives tend to critique and highlight gaps in existing implementation, the responsibility of which is often either allocated to local level implementers who are already struggling with limited resources, bad pay, community norms, weak infrastructure and high workloads. Instead, looking at rewarding innovation and highlighting success stories has a higher success rate in enabling and establishing new positive norms instead of changing existing negative ones.

6. Revive and allocate budgets for existing programmes that promote youth participation and leadership, especially amongst and for young girls:

The positive success stories of Bal Grams, Kishori Manch, Meena and other SHG programmes should be revived so girls can voice their challenges more clearly. These platforms play a key role in establishing regular community youth voices and successively strengthen local resolve and empower young people to challenge local practices that are

- a. As part of the same, promoting sports programmes for girls is key in addressing two central barriers to girls enrolling and staying in secondary schooling. The first is mobility, as girls are given limited opportunities to participate in public spaces. The second is gender inequality, as sports is often seen as a priority for young boys and notions of masculinity and femininity are centrally tied to certain kinds of activities – girls can be seen as washing clothes in public, a very physical exercise but not playing a sport. This gets challenged.

Sreeparna Ghosh spoke next on *School Interventions to Retain Girl Students*.

“Karnataka has made great improvements in the primary school education sector. At the secondary school level, however, progress has been less marked, possibly due to vulnerabilities specific to north and northeast areas.”

- Sreeparna Ghosh

Ms Ghosh conceptualised the measures and interventions in girls' schooling as four intersecting circles. Demand side problems that relate to demand for schooling and social norms about the value of education for girls, which in turn have a bearing on parental willingness to send their daughters to schools. Supply side factors that pertain to ease of access to school, adequacy of infrastructure, and out of pocket expenses for schooling. Preventive efforts, include measures to track the transition rate and vulnerability surveys of children at highest risk of dropping out such as those with a poor academic performance record. Such efforts begin prior to a child dropping out. Restorative efforts, on the other hand, are measures that are implemented after a child has dropped out, such as opportunities for children, especially girls who have married and had children, to come back to school.

“As socio-economic circumstances are unlikely to change in the medium term, the situation calls for a multi-framework approach.”

- Sreeparna Ghosh

Problems related to migration or livelihoods, for example, require a long-term, sustainable solution with focused development strategies. At the same time, we need to build a flexible and innovative curriculum, such as Agastya's curriculum for science education, which is interactive, practical, and incorporates real life experiences. Such an approach helps prevent dropout by making learning exciting for children. With regard to the bureaucracy and teacher education, there must be greater enforcement of regulations pertaining to teacher qualifications. Furthermore, parents must be systematically convinced

that education will lead to better livelihood outcomes for their daughters.

Enakshi Ganguly Thukral started her presentation on policy recommendations on *Community Interventions to Retain Girls in Secondary School* with stories about two girls Manjula and Ishita. Manjula's parents are daily wage labourers who own one cent of land 24 kilometres from Dharwad. Manjula, was awarded a gold medal for her performance in second PUC, and was appearing for the Law entrance exam at Dharwad University. A few years ago, Manjula presented a report on the status of children in India at the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child in Geneva. Ishita Chaudhry, a speaker at the conference, was 17 when she began organising young people into a Parliament and conducting peer education training that was subsequently turned into a programme.

“Girls like Manjula and Ishita exemplify the transformative power that education has when it is supported by families, communities, teachers and the public at large.”

- Enakshi Ganguly Thukral

Creating adolescent girls' groups in schools and using them as peer educators and support groups for other girls has proved successful in Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal. It also elicits support from teachers and the school administration. Another strategy is to offer support, such as bicycles. Finally, the community must be mobilised to hold the government and system accountable. She concluded her presentation by reaffirming the need for convergence between different government programmes on adolescent girls for better outcomes.

“There must be convergence between the education system and the Integrated Child Protection Services programme of the Government of India under which every village must appoint a Child Protection Committee with Gram Panchayat members, teachers and others.”

- Enakshi Ganguly Thukral

PHOTO GALLERY – Fourth Panel



CLOSING SPEECHES

Basavaraj Horatti, former Minister of Education, Karnataka and Member of Legislative Council and Jagadish Shettar, Leader of Opposition in Karnataka State Legislative Assembly spoke at the closing ceremony.

In his speech, Basavaraj Horatti stressing on the importance of girls' education shared a personal story of how education helped him become a minister while his sister, who was married while still at school, continued to stay at home and feel that she could not realise her aspirations.

KEY DISCUSSION POINTS

- Girls education continue to face barriers from social and cultural norms and practices such as child marriage
- Effectiveness of government programmes on girls' education reduced due to low value for girls and girls' education within the communities
- Creating the right environment for girls to realise their aspirations is key to achieving social change
- Promote the idea of equality between men and women in the society to realise the goal of girls' education
- Improving the rates of girls' education require a multipronged approach that addresses traditional practices along with providing adequate facilities and better quality of school education
- Compulsory age of education under RTE needs to be raised to 18 years so that it also covers secondary school
- Teachers recruitments and appointments within the state needs to be better managed
- The relative backwardness of north Karnataka in girls education warrants special focus and initiatives for this region

“In the past, parents wanted to finish their responsibility by getting their daughters married young. Although the situation has now seen changes, the system continues in the villages. The tradition of child marriage is still prevalent in Bijapur, Bagalkot, Raichur, Gulbarga, and Koppal. As soon as the girl reaches class 7 or 8, they are married. Even though there is much encouragement and facilities for education from the government, there is a problem in the society that says that girls are to be married young.”

- Basavaraj Horatti, former Minister of Education and Member of Legislative Council

He said that parents did not value girls' education enough so much so that even girls who are regular to school are made to dropout, as they do not see any value in educating them further. At the same time, even if boys are irregular and miss school, parents make sure that their sons write the exams and graduate from school.

“One good mother is worth a hundred school teachers...that is what we say. I told someone to send their daughter to complete PUC but they said that they want to get her married...if the lady of the house is not educated, how will she educate her children? If a girl who should go to PUC sits at home then how are we going to realise the essence of this saying?”

- Basavaraj Horatti, former Minister of Education and Member of Legislative Council

Horatti stressed on the need to create an enabling environment for girls to realise their educational aspirations.

“There are many different government schemes for girls' education. We have to create an environment where we make it compulsory that girls are educated till class 10 and encourage them to go on to study further. So many girls want to become IAS, IPS officers and it is possible. We have to make sure that there is an environment for them to realise their aspirations.”

- Basavaraj Horatti, former Minister of Education and Member of Legislative Council

Speaking on other issues on state's education system, he noted that teacher vacancies in schools remained unfilled since 2007. The lack of clarity in the recruitment and appointments of teachers resulted in certain schools having more numbers of teachers and others not having enough. He also promised to raise the issue, in the Assembly, of increasing the age of compulsory education upto 18 years. He acknowledged the prevalence of child marriage and gender gaps in North Karnataka and extended full support to Samata's efforts in reducing the discrimination against girls and promoting their education.

“Whatever suggestion you have, do give them to us and we will also put our efforts to make sure that girls' are educated. Let the government also take note of the recommendations from this conference and implement what is best for girls' education.”

- Basavaraj Horatti, former Minister of Education and Member of Legislative Council

Jagadish Shettar, Leader of the Opposition in Karnataka Assembly started by making a persuasive point about the importance of rethinking perceptions on women and their rights.

“From yesterday, we have been talking about women's issues. Everything begins from what we think about women and their rights. We talk about equal rights for women, are struggling for it but still there is a huge gap. In the 12th century, the saint Basavanna was talking about equal rights for women and equality for men and women and fought for it. Basavanna had created a platform for women, such as Akka Mahadevi, but these days, we have come to a situation wherein we have to reserve positions for women.”

- Jagadish Shettar, Leader of the Opposition, Karnataka state Legislative Assembly

Shettar said that women have to challenge notions about their inability to claim positions of power on their own abilities and talents. He noted the importance of promoting the idea of equality of men and women as a starting point.

“Only when every individual begins to think that women and men are equal, there will be a chance of improvement...In the cities, nowadays, they encourage girls to get educated in whatever field they want...but in villages, they will ask 'What is the use of educating girls? They will have to finally sit at home...what will she do after getting a degree? What job will she get?' They discourage girls from studying...this thought process should change in these communities for societal level change to happen.”

- Jagadish Shettar, Leader of the Opposition, Karnataka state Legislative Assembly

According to him a societal change required tackling traditional practices, such as child marriage, that reduced girls' opportunities and wounded their aspirations.

“When we think of improving the system, we have to think in such a way that...because of child marriage, girls are married early and they lose the opportunity to access education...unless and until we tackle this problem, other components of the system will not improve.”

- Jagadish Shettar, Leader of the Opposition, Karnataka state Legislative Assembly

Shettar said that improving girls' education required a multipronged approach that effectively addressed harmful social practices along with provision of facilities, such as bicycles, separate toilets for girls that encouraged girls to attend school and delivering better quality of education to make schools more attractive for girls to attend. He solicited from KHPT, data comparing the situation of girls' education in North, North-East and South Karnataka and assured those present that he would present the same for discussions in the Assembly.

Gurumurthy Kasinathan thanked the speakers for their considered responses to the issue of adolescent girls' education and reiterated the importance of convergence between different government programmes to effectively address them.



PHOTO GALLERY – Closing Ceremony



RECOMMENDATIONS ON GIRLS' EDUCATION

Education is a critical empowerment tool that enables women and girls to realise their rights and aspirations and challenge gender inequality and exclusion. Educated girls and women have better control over their life choices, are more productive at work and are better paid. They are likely to marry at a later age, have fewer and healthier children and more economically secure families. Yet, girls all over the world continue to face formidable barriers to staying in school.

The state conference 'Keeping Girls in Secondary Schools: Successes and Challenges', organised by Karnataka Health Promotion Trust, brought together policymakers, civil society members and adolescent girls to propose measures to improve adolescent girls' secondary school attendance and completion.

The conference noted that adolescent girls' development is priority area cutting across sectors. As such, efforts to combat child labour and marriage should combine with measures to improve water, sanitation and hygiene practices in schools, reaching out-of-school girls and better delivery of education and health services.

Interventions to **improve adolescent girls' education** must be guided by policies, implemented at the school and community levels, and enforced by law.

1. Design a multilevel and multi-stakeholder response

Several factors in and out of school prevent girls from completing school. Hence, comprehensive interventions require galvanising support from various actors involving girls, families, school

administrators and teachers, village community and institutions and local government. Likewise, a multilevel framework that integrates gender perspective into school plans and teacher training, promotes the girls' right to education within the community, creates targeted responses to low enrolment of girls' and incentivise education for girls from poor, rural, disadvantaged communities need to be put in place.

2. Implement norm change interventions

Expansion of education opportunities for girls must invest in and include interventions that facilitate the creation of new gender norms towards increasing equality and agency for girls. Gender norms embedded in social structures manifest within households and families, communities, schools and the wider society to maintain the discriminatory social order often producing inequitable outcomes for girls and women. Activities should aim at individual and household level change, engaging communities, engendering schools, and working with boys and men to reducing violence against women to increase the value of the girl child and remove the restrictions on girls' education.

3. Create girl friendly and safe schools

Learning environment influences the academic performance and well being of the children in school. This is especially the case for girls, who often face violence from boys and men on their way to and at times, within school thereby negatively impacting their school experience and increasing their chances of drop out. Hence, facilities, teacher-student and student-student

interactions within schools need to cater to girls' specific needs including separate toilets, water availability, empathetic teachers, violence redressal mechanisms and supportive peer groups.

4. Provide gender and comprehensive sexuality education in schools

Comprehensive sexuality education that recognises human rights and gender equality and provides the essential life skills to help children make responsible choices about their social and sexual relationships will enable both girls and boys to understand and question social norms and practices. It gives them a better understanding of their adulthood, improves their sexual and reproductive health and enables them to take advantage of educational opportunities that can improve their wellbeing. Hence, school based programmes from primary to secondary that have gender and human rights at their core need to be developed to address adolescent girls' vulnerabilities.

5. Increase the compulsory age of education under the Right to Education (RTE) Act

Policy frameworks need to be strengthened by legislative reform that enhance girls' access to and retention in school such as raising the age at first marriage, sanctions against the withdrawal of girls from school and increasing the compulsory age of education. In India, the RTE Act 2009 makes free and compulsory education a fundamental right only to children in the age group of six to fourteen years i.e. for the first eight years of schooling. The 2001 Census of India puts the total number of children between 14 to 18 years, the adolescents, at 88.5 million. Given that the provision of secondary education in India is not legally mandated, it leaves this large group unsupported by law to access their right to education. Hence, the RTE Act needs to be amended to mandate state obligation to develop free and accessible

secondary education for all children. In addition, monitor the implementation of RTE guidelines stipulating a student teacher ratio of 30:1 to fill vacancies for teaching positions and increasing the ratio of female teachers in schools.

6. Improve convergence, coordination and linkage between various sectoral programmes

Multi-sectoral programmes become key as problems to girls' education lie both within and outside of the education system. Therefore, there needs to be improved collaboration between the Departments of Education, Women and Child Development, Backward Classes and Minorities, Social Welfare and Rural Development and Panchayathi Raj. Lack of convergence means that different departments run parallel programmes that address the same issues or that some schools receive funds to create adequate facilities while others remain persistently uncovered by any of the departmental programmes. There is a need to streamline the process for better synchronisation of different departmental programmes at the field level. This can not only avoid duplication of initiatives and investments but also allow for pooling and better utilisation of resources for improved impact.

7. Allocate higher capital investment in education to northern Karnataka

The Karnataka Human Development Index (HDI) 2005 show wide regional imbalances between southern and northern regions of the state. The general living standard of the poor was found to be low in northern Karnataka. The regions lagged behind in rural housing, sanitation, female literacy, malnutrition, anemia and development of scheduled caste and tribes (SC/ST). Some of the lowest HDI and gender development index (GDI) are in north Karnataka districts such as Bijapur with a HDI of 0.589 and Bagalkot with a

GDI of 0.571. Disparities in human and gender development negatively impact girls' education. Hence, there is a need to allocate higher investments to the region to mitigate the impact of deprivations arising out of a comparatively higher socio-economic backwardness of the region.

8. Build partnerships with non-governmental organisations working on adolescent girls' issues

The primary responsibility for financing of education lies with the state. However, partnerships with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) can help the government to address the prohibitive indirect costs, such as family reliance on daughters for their labour contribution or for child care, that prevent girls from staying out of school. In education, NGOs can assist the government to map who is not in school, provide gender training for teachers, build capacities of School Development Management Committees (SDMC), create safe school plans and influence and empower communities to tackle barriers that keep girls from school. Systematically mapping factors of adolescent girls' vulnerability to school drop out can help design better tracking systems to prioritise and monitor vulnerable girls.

9. Revitalise existing platforms for children's participation in governance

A 2007 order of the Karnataka State Government mandated the constitution of *Makkala Grama Sabha* (MGS) and *Makkala Panchayats* (Children's Village Committees (CVC)) to conduct an annual meeting of children from the age group of 5 to 15 years in all *Gram Panchayats*. Modify the processes of MGS and CVCs to mandate proportionate participation of girls, include children up to 18 years and out of school children in the village so that girls' realities inform the decisions of these meetings. Activate the committees formed under the Integrated Child Protection Scheme

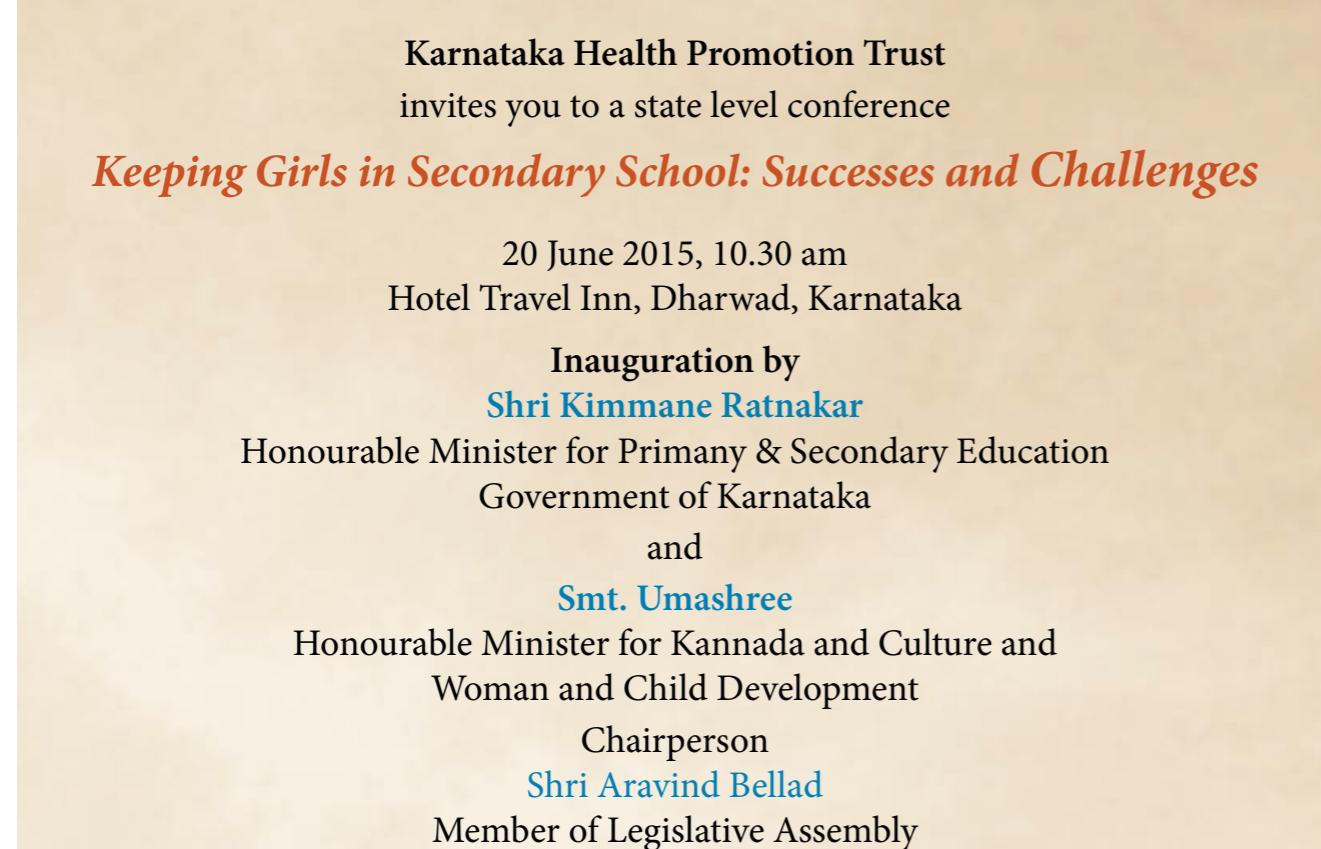
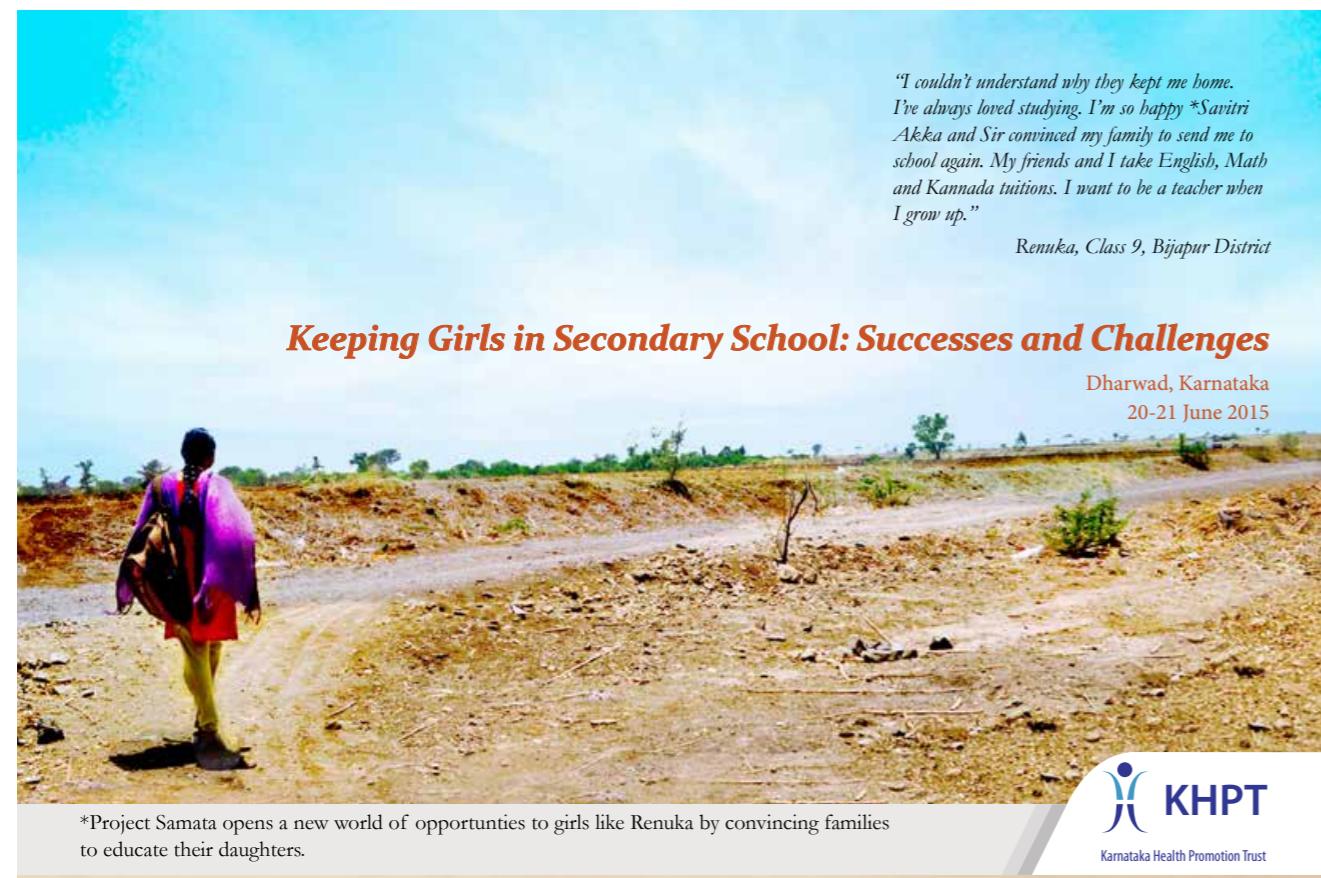
(ICPS) of the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD). Strengthen girls' participation in these committees so as to gather timely information of potential child safety issues such as early marriage, unsafe school experiences or trafficking.

10. Revive and invest in successful programmes such as *Kishori Sanghas* or *Meena*

The state should continue to invest in programmes that have proven successful in the past in empowering adolescent girls. Few of them including the Kishori programme, from Mahila Samakhya, to bring adolescent girls, between 11 to 18 years, back into mainstream education and enhance their life skills, and Meena clubs that promote active participation of girls in school activities and bring back out of school children, are particularly significant in the context of adolescent girls' education.



ANNEX A: Conference Invitation



Chief Guests

- Sri Basavaraja Horatti**
Former Minister of Education & Member of Legislative Council
- Sri Vinay Kulkarni**
Member of Legislative Assembly
- Sri Prasad Abbayya**
Member of Legislative Assembly
- Sri Veeranna Mattikatte**
Member of Legislative Council
- Sri Shrinivasa Mane**
Member of Legislative Council
- Sri Nagaraja Chabbi**
Member of Legislative Council

Karnataka Health Promotion Trust
invites you to the closing ceremony of the state level conference

Keeping Girls in Secondary School: Successes and Challenges

21 June 2015, 4 pm
at Hotel Travel Inn, Dharwad, Karnataka

Chief Guests
Shri Dinesh Gundu Rao
Honourable Minister
for Food and Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs, Karnataka
and
Shri Jagadish Shettar
Leader of the Opposition, Karnataka Legislative Assembly
Chairperson
Shri Prahlad Venkatesh Joshi
Member of Lok Sabha

ANNEX B: Speaker Bios

KNOW YOUR SPEAKERS

Day 1



ENAKSHI GANGULY THUKRAL

Enakshi Ganguly Thukral is the co-founder of HAQ: Centre for Child Rights. She has worked in the field of human rights since 1988 and has been involved in research, advocacy and training on wide-ranging socio-legal issues over the years. Her work on the rights of displaced persons, particularly those displaced by dams, is well recognised.

Ms Thukral is President of the Society for Rural and Tribal Initiatives (SRUTI), Delhi, and on the board of National Centre for Advocacy Studies, Pune. She is a member of the Editorial Board of Children, Youth and Environments, a journal on research, policy and applications published by the University of Colorado. She has trained NGOs, government schoolteachers, the police and judiciary on the rights of children, and advocates for the reform of laws and policies concerning children.

Ms Thukral's publications include books, reports and articles. She was awarded the Ashoka Fellowship in recognition of HAQ's work on children and profiled in WOMANKIND: Faces of Change Around the World by Donna Neenzahl and Nance Ackerman (Raincoast Books, Vancouver).

20 June 2015



K. G. SANTHYA

K. G. Santhya has functioned as Associate II at the Population Council, New Delhi, since 2012. She conducts research on strategies to improve adolescent girls' reproductive and sexual health, development, gender-based violence, and maternal health. She is also involved in building the capacities of researchers and programme implementers.

Ms Santhya has extensive experience designing and conducting qualitative and quantitative studies on the rights of youth, gender equity, reproductive health, and gender-based violence. She serves on the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population Panel on Reproductive Health and is an elected member of the Asian Population Association Council. She has published book chapters, international peer-reviewed journal articles, and study reports on education, health, and the reproductive rights of girls.

She holds a PhD in Population Studies from Flinders University in Adelaide, Australia, and MA degrees in Economics from the University of Kerala, and Population Studies from the International Institute for Population Sciences in Mumbai.



Dr CHANDRASHEKHAR H. B.

Dr Chandrashekhar H. B. is the State Access Coordinator of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan Mission. With a track record spanning 26 years, Dr Chandrashekhar began his career as a lecturer in Education, and subsequently worked as Assistant Director of the Policy Planning Unit; State Gender Coordinator, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, among others.

In the course of his work, Dr Chandrashekhar has trained girls in self defence, conceptualised and supported programmes to enhance reading habits among children, coordinated programmes on menstrual hygiene and management, and organised residential programmes for girls on life skills, gender equality, management of physiological and psychological changes during adolescence, hiv, child abuse, child trafficking, child rights.

Dr Chandrashekhar possesses a doctorate in Education, and Master's degrees in Educational Planning and Research, and Sociology.

KNOW YOUR SPEAKERS

Day 1



GURUMURTHY KASINATHAN

Gurumurthy Kasinathan is the Founder-Director of IT for Change (ITfC), Bangalore, where he works on programming, research and advocacy in education, public software and Internet governance. Mr Kasinathan leads ITfC's programmes in schools, using ICTs to pilot new models of teacher education, including Teachers Communities of Practice (CoP) and Open Educational Resources (OER) programmes on adopting and promoting public software in the public sector. He is a member of teacher education committees at the state and national levels, as well as networks of educationists and FOSS communities in India. As visiting faculty at the Tata Institute for Social Sciences, Hyderabad, Shri Kasinathan teaches a course on Education Leadership and Management in the postgraduate programme in Elementary Education.

He is the Founder and Secretary of the Centre for Leadership and Management in Public Services, which works on issues of individual and institutional capacity building in government and NGOs. He is also on the governing board of Hengasaru Hakkina Sangha, an NGO working on legal rights for women.



ARUNIMA BOSE

A Project Associate at Nirantar since 2013, Arunima Bose has worked extensively on 'Landscape Analysis of Early and Child Marriage in India,' a research study conducted across seven states to understand the perspectives, interventions and strategies pertaining to child marriage.

Ms Bose has a Masters degree in Sociology.



PRARTHANA KUMARI

Prarthana has recently joined Nirantar, where she works with adolescent girls from urban resettlement colonies in Delhi. She was previously with UNICEF as a State Programme Officer, Monitoring and Evaluation in Jharkhand and worked closely with Jharkhand Education Project Council. She was also associated with the Bodh Shiksha Samiti and coordinated KGBV project in both Alwar and Jaipur districts.



SONYKUTTY GEORGE

Sonykutty George is a Child Protection Specialist at UNICEF's Hyderabad office. Prior to this, he worked as a Child Protection Specialist at UNICEF's Delhi office for five years. Over the years, he has worked extensively on child protection issues, child labour, child marriage, the juvenile justice system and children in difficult circumstances. He was part of the Drafting Committee of the juvenile justice central model rules and the Integrated Child Protection Scheme for the Government of India. He is linked to the country's major child rights initiatives through various networks and alliances.

Before joining UNICEF, Mr George worked with Plan International, Bangalore, and was the Director of the Child Rights Resource Centre, Bangalore. At CRY, where he worked for a decade, he was primarily responsible for the organisation's policy research and advocacy functions.

Mr George has a Masters degree in Social Work (Rural and Urban Community Development) from Rajagiri College of Social Sciences, Kerala.



RISHIKESH SHANKER

Rishikesh is an Assistant Professor at Azim Premji University, where he leads the Hub for Education, Law & Policy (hELP) at the School of Policy and Governance.

A historian by training, he has been immersed in the education sector for over 15 years, initially experimenting on and researching history pedagogy in schools, and later as a full-fledged educational researcher of the public education system. He has spent the past decade at Azim Premji Foundation researching teacher education institutions, teacher capacity development, teaching and designing institutional assessments, activity based learning methodologies, education leadership and management, and other educational issues.

Over the past three years, Shri Shanker's focus has been primarily on the Right to Education Act 2009 (RTE), and its implications on the ground. The Hub under his leadership has initiated the RTE awareness project and litigation efforts with regard to RTE.

KNOW YOUR SPEAKERS

Day 2



SATYASREE GOSWAMI

Sathyasree Goswami is the Project Director of Youth Innovation Fund, a grant-making organisation that supports and facilitates innovative interventions on reproductive and sexual health for Indian youth. She has been working in the field of sexuality as an implementer and a trainer for the past seven years. Ms Goswami is the founder of Rural Volunteers Centre, an NGO in Assam; Payana, a community NGO of sexual minorities in Bangalore; and promoter of Foresee, a social entrepreneurial initiative, also in Bangalore.



ANIL JOSHI

Mr Anil Joshi is the Project Manager, North Karnataka District Operations at the Agastya International Foundation. In this capacity, he has focused on nurturing curiosity, creativity and confidence in government school students in 12 districts through activity- and project based pedagogic methods.

A mechanical engineer by training, Shri Joshi began his career in the area of renewable energy, installing solar, hydro and pico energy systems across the country. His interest in education was sparked in 2004, when he joined Rishi Gurukulum, a residential school near Bangalore as Academic Resource Person. Here he was involved in education experiments to create a joyful learning environment using the Vedic method of Rapid Comprehension and Review Tech. The experience inspired him to pursue a B.Ed. degree.

Mr Joshi's work with rural youth spans close to a decade. In 2009, he joined Vigyan Ashram near Pune as Programme Officer for Energy and Environment. Here, he prepared instructional manuals and conducted training workshops for government school students, rural youth and self-help groups, developed curriculum and technical reference books for vocational and school based training programmes, and developed self-reliant business models for local village youth.



INDIRA PANCHOLI

Indira Pancholi has worked with rural and urban women, children and youth, Panchayats and other local self-governments for over 20 years. Her experience encompasses grassroots action, training women leaders, documenting the experiences of women, knowledge management, and research in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Orissa, Karnataka, Maharashtra, and Tamil Nadu. She has networked for social issues, engaging with the media, officials and political leaders in advocacy programmes in the process. Her areas of specialisation include gender, development and governance, addressing violence against women, livelihoods, and child and adolescent rights.

Ms Pancholi is currently conducting a study on 'Assessing young, resource poor women's livelihood aspirations and opportunities in Delhi' and designing modules to train elected women representatives in Panchayats in Rajasthan. She is also an advisory committee member of a national study on witch hunting practices in India, and an advisor to the Child Rights Project for the CRY supported project of Mahila Jan Adhikar Samiti in Rajasthan.

Ms Pancholi has published extensively on learning curriculum and leadership education, particularly for women. She possesses a Master's degree in Philosophy.



SHWETA BANKAR

Shweta Bankar is a Technical Specialist-I for the STRIVE-PARIVARTAN project with International Centre for Research on Women (ICRW), Mumbai. The project engages adolescent girls through sports to support their right to education and their position in the family and society. Ms Bankar's role involves implementing the project's research and programme activities. Prior to ICRW, Ms Bankar acted as a consultant at the corporate social responsibility cell of the Karve Institute of Social Science, Pune, whose clients included Indian Oil, Godrej, Kirloskar Brothers Limited, Mahindra and Tvs Harita.

Ms Bankar's areas of interest include HIV and gender, community development, child development and education, issues around adolescence, project design and implementation, training and social mobilisation. She has presented several papers on women and gender issues.

Ms Bankar holds a Master's degree in Clinical Psychology from S.D.D.T. University, Pune.

21 June 2015

KNOW YOUR SPEAKERS

Day 2



MOHAN H. L

Mohan H. L has spent over two decades in the government and NGO sectors, particularly in the areas of education, health, rural development, decentralisation and adolescent education. He has worked extensively with development departments at the government and grassroots level, using information and communications technology to empower communities.

Mr Mohan has consulted on development projects in India and elsewhere with UNFPA, UNESCO and UNICEF. He has developed, implemented and managed several projects and campaigns, and leads the University of Manitoba's programme, communication and community intervention initiatives.

Mr Mohan possesses a Master's degree in Rural and Urban Community Development from the School of Social Work, Roshni Nilaya, Mangalore.



ISHITA CHAUDHRY

Ishita Chaudhry is an Ashoka Fellow and the Founder and Managing Trustee of The YP Foundation (TYPF), a youth-led and -run non-profit that advances the health and human rights of adolescents and young people in India. Ishita served as TYPF's Executive Director from 2002 – 2014. She is a Founding Member of the international alliance RESURJ (Realizing Sexual and Reproductive Justice) and a member of the High Level Task Force on ICPD+20.

Ms Chaudhry has served on Technical Resource Committees for the Ministry of Family Health and Welfare and NACO in India and worked closely with youth organisations, UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA and the Government of India on the ICPD+20 Review and the Post 2015 process both in-country and at the Commission on Population and Development at the United Nations. She has also been a member of UNESCO's Global Advisory Group for Sexuality Education and is currently a member of the Advisory Board of Reproductive Health Matters (Hindi Edition) in India with CREA.



SREEPARNA GHOSH

Sreeparna Ghosh is a cultural anthropologist with an interest in gender studies, family, law and health. Trained in Cultural Anthropology and Demography with a focus on South Asia and Medical Anthropology, she has worked both in pure and applied research settings. She has been involved in research projects exploring thalassemia in West Bengal, and HIV/AIDS and domestic violence in Bombay. Her interest in gender inequities spans a multiplicity of domains, including law, health and development. She is particularly interested in gendered violence and all its manifestations – symbolic, institutional, structural and personal.

Ms Ghosh recently worked as an applied social scientist for the Government Social Research Service within the British Civil Service, as well as an applied researcher at the University of East Anglia, where she explored the higher education experience of students in the UK.

Ms Ghosh is fluent in Bengali and Hindi, can speak passable Marathi and a smattering of Spanish. In her spare time she enjoys reading fiction, taking long walks in one of the many parks that Bangalore is blessed with, experimenting with fusion cuisine, and baking.

ANNEX C: Photo Exhibits

SAMATA

Keeping Girls in Secondary School

ಹುಡಗಿಯರು ತಮ್ಮ ಅನುಭವಗಳನ್ನು ಪ್ರತಿಕೂಲಿಸಿದೆ ಹಂತಕೆಳೆಲ್ಲಾಲು ಮತ್ತು ಇಕ್ಕೆ. ಅತ್ಯಾರ್ಥ ಮತ್ತು ನಾಯಕತ್ವ ಗುಣಗಳನ್ನು ಬೆಳೆಸಿಕೊಳ್ಳಲು ಸಾಧ್ಯವಾಗುವ ಅಧಿಕೇಶನಗಳನ್ನು ಅಯೋಚಿಸುವುದು.

“ಇಲ್ಲಿನ ಹುಡಗಿಯರು 7ನೇ ಶರತ್ತಿ ಮಹಡಿ ನಂತರ ಗಂಡನ ಮನಗೆ ಕಳಿಸಲುಪಡ್ಡಿದ್ದು. ಇದು ಏಕೆ ಹಿಗೆ ಎಂದು ನಾವು ಅಲೋಚಿಸಿದ್ದು. ದಾಲ್ಲಿ ವಿವಾಹವನ್ನು ವಿಜಾವಿಂಡಿತವಾಗಿ ತಡೆಯುವುದೇ ಇದಕ್ಕೆ ಉತ್ತಮ ವಾರವೆಂದು ನಾವು ಅರಿತ್ತೇವೆ! ಹುಡಗಿಯರು ಮತ್ತು ಪುಷ್ಟಿಗರು ಸರ್-ಸಮಾಜದು. ಪುಷ್ಟಿಗರು ಶೈಕ್ಷಣಿಕನ್ನು ಮುಂದರಿರಿಸಬಹುದಾದರೆ, ಹುಡಗಿಯರಿಗೆ ಏಕೆ ಸಾಧ್ಯವಲ್ಲಿ”

ಪರಿವರ್ತನಾ ಪ್ರಕ್ರಿಯೆಗೆ ಸ್ಥಾಪಿಸಿದ್ದ ಹುಡಗಿಯರು, ವಿಜಯಪುರ ಜಿಲ್ಲೆ ಪರಿವರ್ತನಾ ಪ್ರಕ್ರಿಯೆಯನ್ನು ಒಳಗೊಂಡಿರುತ್ತಾರೆ. ಅತ್ಯಾರ್ಥ ಮತ್ತು ನಾಯಕತ್ವದ ಕಾರ್ಯಕ್ರಮಗಳು ಹುಡಗಿಯರು ತಮ್ಮ ಸ್ನಾತಕೀಯದಲ್ಲಿ ಬಳಸಿಕೊಂಡಿರುತ್ತಾರೆ. ಸಾಮಾಜಿಕಗಳನ್ನು ಬೆಳೆಸಿಕೊಳ್ಳಲು ಮತ್ತು ತಾವೆಲ್ಲಾ ಒಂದೇ ಎಂಬ ವರ್ತಮಾನದ ಘಾವಸೆಯನ್ನು ಬೆಳೆಸಿಕೊಂಡಿರುತ್ತಾರೆ. ತಮ್ಮ ಸಮುದಾಯಗಳಲ್ಲಿನ ಹಿಡಿತರಿಂದ ಹುಡಗಿಯರ ಸಮಸ್ಯೆಗಳ ವಿಬಿದು ಬಗ್ಗಟಿನಿಂದ ಹೊರಾಡಲು ಆಗಕ್ಕೂರುವ ಎಲ್ಲಾ ಶೈಕ್ಷಣಿಕನ್ನು ಅವರಾಗಿ ಬೆಳೆಸುತ್ತಾರೆ.

Conducting sessions where girls reflect on their experiences and build solidarity, confidence and leadership.

“Girls here were sent to their husbands’ homes after Standard VII. We thought that was how it was supposed to be. Learning that child marriage must be stopped has been the best lesson! Girls and boys are equal. If boys can get ahead with education, so can girls!”

Girls from Parivartan Plus group, Bijapur District

The Parivartan Plus and leadership programmes equip girls with skills that strengthen their self-esteem, builds their confidence and leadership abilities and fosters a sense of solidarity and agency that enables them to act collectively on the issues of adolescent girls in their communities.

A photograph showing a group of Indian women, including a young girl in a white school uniform, looking at a document together. They appear to be discussing it, possibly receiving academic support or career counseling. The setting is outdoors, with a stone wall in the background.

SAMATA

Keeping Girls in Secondary School

ಪುಡಿಗಿಯರ ಶಿಕ್ಷಣದ ಮಹತ್ವವನ್ನು ಅರಿತುಕೊಳ್ಳಲು ಮತ್ತು ಆ ಕುರತು ಕ್ರಮಗಳಿಗೆ ಮುಂದಾಗಲು ಸಮುದಾಯದ ವ್ಯವಸ್ಥೆಗಳಿಗೆ ನೀರಿರಾಗಿಸುವುದು.

“ಅನ್ವಯಭಾಬಾಲು ನಮ್ಮ ಉರಿಯ ಹಾಗಿಯೆಂಬ ಮದುವೆಯನ್ನು ನೀಲಿಸಲು ಬಹಳವು ಪ್ರಯತ್ನಿಸ್ತಿದ್ದಾರು. ಆಕೆಯು ನನ್ನ ಬಳ ಬಂದು ಈ ವಿಷಯ ತಿಳಿದಾಗ ಪಾಲಕರೆಂದಿಗೆ ಕರಿಂ ಮಾತುಗಳ್ಯೇ ಪ್ರಯತ್ನಿಸಿದೆ. ಅವರ ಮಗಳು ಇನ್ನು ಖುಳಿದಿರುತ್ತಿರು ಸಹ ಆಗಿರುತ್ತಿಂದ್ದು. ಆಕೆ ತಾಯಿನಕ್ಕೆ ಮತ್ತು ಸುಖಿಯವನ್ನು ಬೆಳ್ಳಿಸುವುದಕ್ಕೆ ಸಂಘರ್ಷವಾಗಿ ಇವು ಸಿದ್ಧಾಗಿರಲಿಲ್ಲ. ನಿಮ್ಮ ಮಗಳ ಬೆಳ್ಳೇ ರೀತಿ ಬದಲಕೆರಂದೋ ಅಥವಾ ಸಾಯಬೇಕಂತಿರೋ ಅಂತ ಪಾಲಕರನ್ನು ನೀರಿರಾಗಿಯೇ ಕೇಳಿದೆ. ಆಗ ಅವರ ಮದುವೆಯನ್ನು ರದ್ದುಮಾಡಿದ್ದರು.”

— ಗ್ರಾಮ ಪಂಚಾಯತಿ ಅಧ್ಯಕ್ಷರು, ವಿಜಯಪುರ ಜಿಲ್ಲೆ

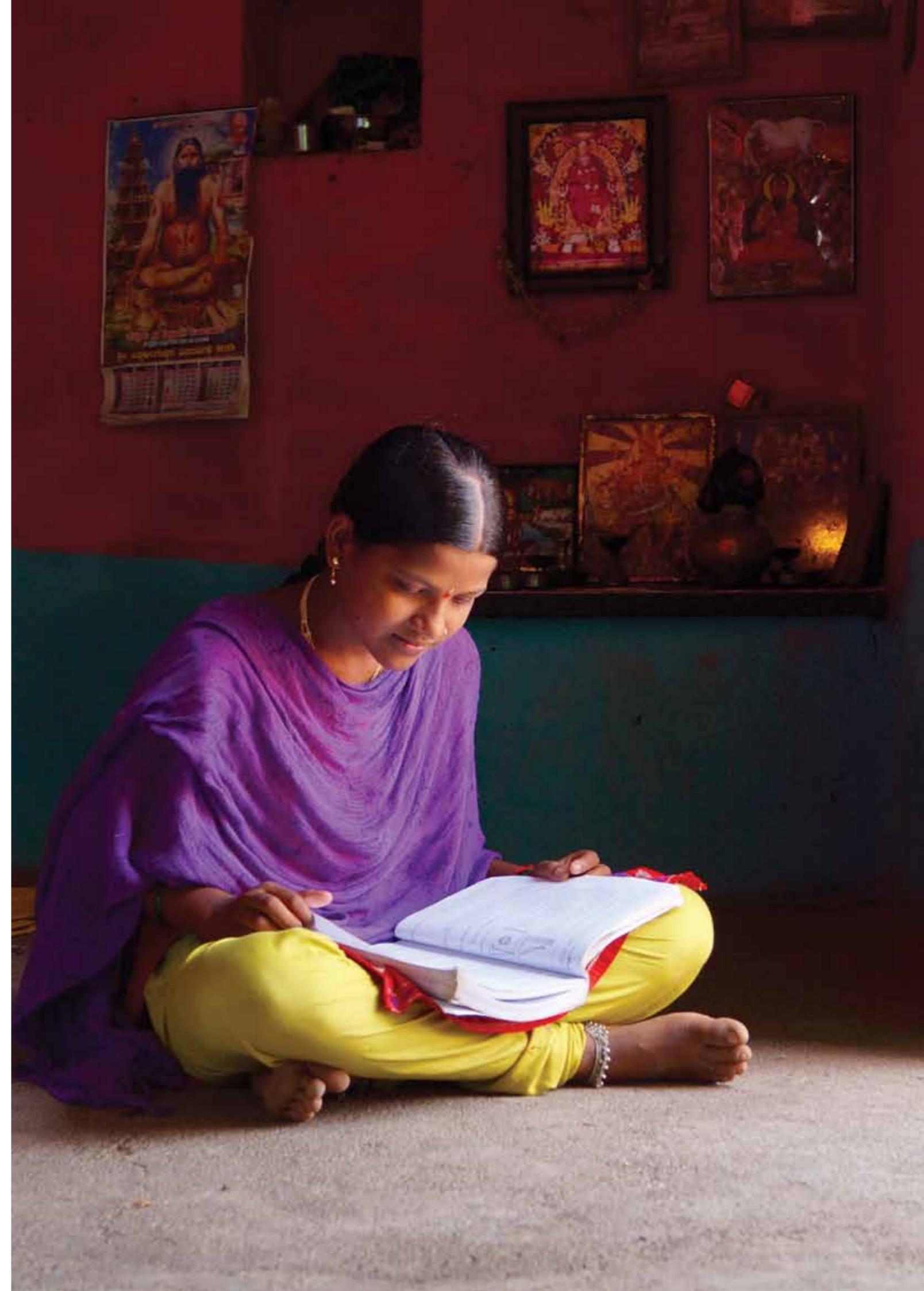
ಸಮಾಜ ಯೋಜನೆಯ ಸ್ಥಾಯಿ ಅಭಿಭಾಬ, ಸರ್ಕಾರ, ಸಮುದಾಯದ ಮುಖಿಯರು, ಯುವಕ ಸಂಘಗಳು, ಸಮುದಾಯಾರ್ಥಿ ಮತ್ತು ಸ್ಥಾಯಿ ಸೇವಾ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆಗಳಿಂದಿಗೆ ಶೀಕ್ಷಣಿಕ ವಿವಾಹ, ಅವಕ್ಷೇತ್ರ ವಂಷಿನಲ್ಲಿ ಗಾಂಧಿರಾರ್ಥ ಮತ್ತು ಅಯ್ಯಿಸ್ತರ್ಪಿಸಿದ್ದ ದುರ್ಭಾಷಣಾಮಾರ್ಗ ಬಗ್ಗೆ ಮಾತಕತೆ ನೆಡುತ್ತದೆ. ಇದರಿಂದ ಮಹಡಿಗಿರು ಶೌಢಿಕೀಯವನ್ನು ಮಾರ್ಗಾಗ್ನಿಸಲು ನೀರಿರಾಗಿ ದೊಂಬಿಟ್ಕು ವ್ಯವಸ್ಥೆಗಳನ್ನು ಮಾಡುತ್ತಾಕಲು ಮತ್ತು ಪೂರಕ ವಾಳವರೆಗಳನ್ನು ನಿರ್ಮಿಸಲು ಸಾಹಿತ್ಯವಾಗಿಸುತ್ತದೆ.

Supporting community structures to understand the importance of education for girls and act on it.

“Annapurna had tried hard to stop the marriage of a girl in our village. When she approached me, I spoke to the parents very strongly. Their daughter had not even attained puberty. She was completely unprepared for motherhood and raising a family. I asked them if they wanted a good life for their child or wanted to see her dead. They called off the wedding.”

— Gram Panchayat President, Bijapur district

Samata dialogues with local government, community leaders, youth groups, CBOs and NGOs on secondary education for adolescent girls, the hazards of early marriage, teen pregnancy and early childbearing. This helps create support systems and an enabling environment for girls to complete secondary school.



ANNEX D: Conference Schedule



20 June 2015

Session 1

11.30 am to 1.30 pm

Panel discussion: Keeping girls in secondary schools – an overview

Chair: Enakshi Ganguly Thukral
Co-founder, HAQ: Centre for Child Rights

- Keynote address: Global scenario of girls' education – Evidence on why girls are not in school
K.G. Santhya
Associate II, Population Council
- Presentation: Girls' education in Karnataka – Successes and challenges
Dr H.B. Chandrashekhar
Asst. Programme Officer, SSA, Karnataka
- Comments by the Chair
- Short film: On Our Own Two Feet

Session 2

2.30 pm to 5.30 pm

Panel discussion: Structural barriers to girls' education

Chair: Gurumurthy Kasinathan
Director, IT for Change

- Presentation 1: The impact of discriminatory gender and social norms on adolescent girls' education
Purnima Gupta, Senior Fellow and Arunima Bose, Project Associate
Nirantar
- Presentation 2: Early marriage of girls as a barrier to their education
Sony Kutty George
Child Protection Specialist, UNICEF, Hyderabad
- Tea break
- Presentation3: School level barriers to girls' education
Rishikesh Shanker
Leader, Hub for Education, Law and Policy, AzimPremji University
- Comments by the Chair

Keeping Girls in Secondary School: Successes and Challenges

Dharwad, Karnataka

20–21 June 2015



Karnataka Health Promotion Trust

21 June 2015

Session 1

10.00 am to 1.00 pm

Panel discussion: What has worked to keep girls in school – evidence and practices

Chair: Satyashree Goswami
Project Director, Youth Innovation Fund, National Foundation for India

- Presentation: Improving school infrastructure and systems
Anil Joshi
Regional In-charge, North Karnataka, Agastya International Foundation
- Presentation: Working with adolescent girls to address child marriage
Indira Pancholi
President, Mahila Jan Adhikar Samiti
- Presentation: Involving the youth to address community gender norms
Shweta Bankar
Technical Specialist, Men and Masculinity, International Centre for Research on Women
- Comments by the Chair

Session 2

2.00 pm to 3.30 pm

Panel discussion: Developing a comprehensive strategy for adolescent girls' education

Chair: Commissioner, Department of Education, Government of Karnataka
Co-Chair: H.L.Mohan
Director, Community Mobilisation and Communications, KHPT

- Policy recommendations: Community interventions to retain girls in secondary school
Enakshi Ganguly Thukral
Co-founder, HAQ: Centre for Child Rights
- Policy recommendations: Involving the youth to address community gender norms
Ishita Chaudhry
Founder, The YP Foundation
- Policy recommendations: School interventions to retain girl students
Sreeparna Ghosh
Asst. Professor, School of Development, Azim Premji University
- Comments by the Chair





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