

Social Mobilisation for Rights of Adolescent Girls

Focusing on Gender Equity and Education

Annual Report for the year January – December 2020

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The imposition of a lockdown across the State following the outbreak of COVID-19 hindered the effective implementation of the project and quite a few of the proposed activities either had to be postponed or were implemented in part. The organisers could not conduct physical meetings every time owing to the lockdown and the risk of infection. They oriented community groups on a one-to-one basis on the use of social media. The Gram Panchayat, KBS members and the CRPF were given detailed information on the concept of social media tools, installation of Digital Apps and their applications in one-to-many communication. Most of them opined that the tools had been very instrumental in enabling them to interact with and learn mutually from each other. It was also a new experience for them.

It was possible to train only 50% of the targeted SMC members. Training sessions were organised for 123 SMC members across 3 mandals. The MVF Project Coordinator oriented 52 government school teachers on gender related issues during a session held in Suryapet, upon invitation from the Education Department. Two mandal level training sessions were held for 36 CRPF members in addition.

The volunteers took up a headcount exercise in February in all UPS and ZPHS, through which they followed up 825 children that had been absent for more than 5 days. All children that were enrolled in Class 10 and Intermediate II Year were promoted, as it had not been possible to conduct the exams on account of the lockdown. The organisers counseled them and followed up 2014 of them to Junior College, 216 to technical courses and 23 to paramedical courses.

The organisers convened 145 School Gender Committee meetings during the year with a turnout of 2538. They also held 954 physical and 27 Zoom meetings with 11728 and 284 girls respectively. Exposure visits were planned for members of 65 KBS but could be arranged for members of only 40 KBS due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Three mandal level training sessions were held for 162 KBS members in Suryapet district.

Rallies and elocution, essay writing, sport and quiz competitions on occasions such as National Day of the Girl Child, Republic Day, International Women's Day, International Day of the Girl Child and Children's Day. Book reading sessions featured in 8 villages of Shankarpally mandal and 15 villages of Vikarabad mandal.

The organisers took part in 273 Gram Panchayat review meetings and Grama Sabhas and discussed children's issues with the participants. The organisers also held 6 meetings with Gram Panchayat members. Coordination with the KBS and strengthening them was one of the key agenda points. Their response was quite positive with 62 members participating in KBS meetings. The organisers also participated in 436 Village SHG federation meetings upon invitation and discussed issues of children, especially the girl child, with them.

A district level SMC body was formed in Rangareddy district with 12 members. Mandal level SMC bodies were also formed in 4 mandals. Organisers from Atmakur, Maddirala and Nutankal mandals played a key role in the formation of 206 VCPCs in Suryapet district. The organisers held 4 district level SMC meetings with 65 members, 194 school/village level meetings with 1719 members and 9 mandal level meetings with 162 members.

The organisers engaged on a regular basis with the CRPF and involved them at all stages of the campaign. they convened 5 district and mandal level meetings each with 81 and 84 members respectively. They also drew the attention of the mandal officials to the need for activating VCPCs across Suryapet district. Mothers' Associations were formed at the district level in Rangareddy and Vikarabad and at the mandal level in all 3 mandals of Suryapet district.

A range of non-planned activities was implemented during the second quarter in response to COVID-19, primary among which was a survey of migrant families and their access to entitlements. The organisers lobbied with the Gram Panchayat to facilitate the provision of rations and other necessities to 4878 families with 1164 children. They also identified 779 migrant families that had returned from destination points following the imposition of lockdown and enrolled 610 children from these families in local schools.

Organising KBS and community groups against the backdrop of the pandemic was a major challenge to programme implementation during the reporting period. It was noted that some parents had planned to get their daughters married underage. The lockdown restrictions hindered effective outreach activity and only one half (55) of the 109 potential marriages that were identified could be prevented.

One of the significant positive developments of the reporting period was KBS members' association with WhatsApp groups. The organisers formed 14 cluster level WhatsApp groups with 423 girls from 103 villages. Participation in Zoom meetings helped the girls share valuable information mutually and interact on a wide range of social issues.

Facilitating all children's access to online classes was one of the focal areas of intervention during the last quarter of the year (September on). Online classes commenced in September. Many children missed out on the classes, as they had no smartphones or television connections/subscriptions. The organisers motivated parents to buy 108 phones for the children and also linked 165 children to their neighbours for television classes. The SMC, the CRPF, the Mothers' Association and the KBS contributed invaluable to this effort. KBS members and SMC members actively coordinated the conduct of online classes and clarified children's doubts. The organisers identified children that were forced to drop out of private school because they could not pay their fees and shifted 300 of them to government schools and KGBVs.

The SMC, the CRPF, Mothers' Associations and the KBS submitted petitions to the DSE and elected representatives and officials at the district and mandal levels demanding reopening of schools, provision of uniform and textbooks to children, issuance of dry rations to all children and prevention of child marriage. They also mobilised 411 signatures demanding streamlined implementation of the RTE Act and amendment of the RTE Act to bring all children aged 3-18 years under its jurisdiction

A FIELD INTERVENTIONS

1 RESOURCE KBS EXCHANGE VISITS

Peer Group Exposure Visits for KBS and School Gender Committees

One of the key activities taken up during the year was the facilitation of exposure visits for members of the KBS to Model Centres with a view to strengthening them. It was also proposed to use these visits as a means to enable mutual experience sharing between the Sanghas. The details of visits are provided as Annexure.

The visitors were very happy at having an opportunity to learn from their peers. The use of charts was particularly effective in sending across the message to them. They resolved to transform their villages into resource institutions. KBS leaders from Yedavelli and Chilpakuntla are mobilising girls for meetings on their own and are informing them in advance of the schedule. The girls' mobility has improved and they are showing greater interest in combined studies and games. Their parents are more cooperative and do not hesitate to send their daughters to others' homes. The girls have become more expressive and articulate.

Girls from the hosting villages are happy about their presentation skills. Earlier, KBS meetings were being held in the school in Miriyala on Sundays, which was also the market day. The girls were hesitant. However, their turnout has improved by 50% after they were counseled by the organiser.

Periodical Reading Sessions for KBS

Members from 8 villages of Shankarpally and 15 villages of Vikarabad participated in book reading sessions. They read books on a wide range of topics including gender, good habits, our environment, adolescence, life skills and human rights among others. The organisers distributed books to the girls whenever they assembled for a meeting. They read the books in groups of 2-3 girls each and later made presentations on the content of the books that they had read. This initiative has helped broaden the horizon of their thought and has also enabled information sharing while also improving their general knowledge and understanding of important issues. They had not been keen on reading earlier but have developed this habit now.

2 SOCIAL MOBILISATION AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Meetings with Gram Panchayat members at the Panchayat level

The organisers were invited to Gram Panchayat review meetings and Grama Sabhas, during which they discussed a wide range of children's issues including the functioning of the KBS and WhatsApp groups. The details of their participation in these meetings are as below:

Mandal	Meetings
Atmakur	129
Maddirala	57
Nutankal	56
Shankarpally	12
Vikarabad	19
Total	273

The outcomes of the meetings are as under:

- The Sarpanch of Maddirala identified 60 children that had been commuting by auto rickshaw to work and personally motivated their parents, following which 30 children stopped working
- Upon being informed that children were not able to access online classes on television, the Sarpanch of Kukkudam took steps to activate the channels
- The woman Sarpanch of Kotalaguda prevented two potential cases of child marriage
- Gram Panchayat members from Nemmikal prevented a potential case of child marriage

- The Sarpanch of Dontanpally is a member of the KBS in WhatsApp group
- Sarpanchs in Parveda, Dontanpally and Dhobipet instructed teachers to undertake community outreach activity and motivate children
- The woman Sarpanch of Dontanpally warned a teacher of the local school after being informed that the latter had appointed a volunteer to discharge his duties by proxy, following which the teacher has mended his ways
- The Sarpanch of Kondakal instructed the school teachers to clean the school premises after school reopened
- The Sarpanch of Proddutur arranged 33 CC cameras in the village after receiving information that some locals had been causing trouble by trespassing in the school

Sarpanchs of 62 Panchayats participated in KBS meetings, the details of which are as follows:

Mandal	Sarpanchs
Atmakur	21
Maddirala	9
Nutankal	13
Shankarpally	7
Vikarabad	12
Total	62

One mandal level Zoom meeting each was held in Rangareddy and Vikarabad districts each with the participation of 8 and 11 members respectively. Organisers from Maddirala mandal also convened 6 Gram Panchayat meetings in Maddirala with 65 members.

Organisers from Shankarpally shared information on problems faced by children in school and the status of school dropout. KBS members were invited to narrate their experiences. The organisers are being given 15-20 minutes during the Sabhas for their presentation. During the Grama Sabha in Dontanpally, the organiser informed that one of the two teachers posted in the local PS was highly irregular and occupied himself with his phone while in class. The Gender Committee had informed the organiser of this. The Sarpanch subsequently visited the school and assessed the standards of education.

A Gram Panchayat meeting was held in Parveda on 26th January to coincide with the Republic Day celebrations. Members of the KBS unfurled the National Flag in the presence of the Sarpanch, the MPTC and the SMC members, who gave away games material to them. They also motivated them to study at least up to the undergraduate level.

Organisers from Vikarabad mandal discussed higher education of girls, child marriage, gender equality, school dropout and registration of births and marriages. The Sarpanch of Siddulur identified a room that the KBS members could use for their meetings. The Sarpanch of Pulsumamidi has been reviewing girl children's issues and also passed a resolution during a review meeting. He has been visiting the school once in 15-20 days. The Sarpanch of Madanpally mobilised Rs 1 lakh through donors to get the school playground levelled. Gram Panchayat members from Erravally followed up a girl to school. The Gram Panchayat body facilitated public transport for school-going children in Pulumaddi, Erravally and Pulsumamidi.

The team from Atmakur was invited by Panchayat Secretaries to attend review meetings organised by the Gram Panchayat. The organisers discussed child marriage, school dropout, seasonal work, domestic abuse and exploitation. They invited 2 boys and girls each from 16 villages of the mandal to represent their issues. This exercise has helped enhance the visibility of the KBS. The organisers also highlighted the need to form CMPCs at the village level. Upon coming to know that 18 children from Nimmikal were employed in NREGS job works, the organiser informed the Sarpanch. He took steps to withdraw the children from work. The Deputy Sarpanch, the ICPS team, the head teacher and the SMC chairperson also contributed to this effort. Responding to complaints of liquor and *Gutkha*, the Gram Panchayat banned them in 8 villages of the mandal. Resolutions were passed by the respective Sarpanchs of these villages to this effect.

Meetings with Village Federation of SHGs

The organisers took part in monthly VO meetings and facilitated discussions on issues such as gender discrimination, the status of women/girl children in the leaders' families, online classes, seasonal work, migration, girl child education, work division at home and the adverse effects of child marriage. The organisers were given the opportunity to speak first so that the leaders' schedule was not interrupted.

Some of the members expressed during the course of the meetings that they were working women and that they felt insecure about their daughters. They were also unsure how their daughters were using their phones. These were some reasons why they were keen on marrying off their underage daughters. The organisers told them that though they were wrong in doubting their daughters, they were not fully wrong. The only solution was to demand reopening of schools. being in school would ensure the girls' safety. VO leaders subsequently spoke to teachers and asked them to motivate their children. They could teach the children by rotation in groups of 10. children each. This would help them reach all children. VO leaders from Nassimpeta in Atmakur (S) mandal requested the Sarpanch to act on an incident of eve teasing. VO leaders across the project area demanded reopening of schools.

The details of meetings in which the organisers participated are as below:

Mandal	Meetings
Shankarpally	41
Vikarabad	27
Atmakur	202
Nutankal	102
Maddirala	64
Total	436

Organisers in Shankarpally pointed out to the members that the origin of gender based discrimination was very early and commenced at the stage of pregnancy. It is unfortunate that women are equally involved in taking such decisions. Some of the members disagreed with this initially but accepted it later on. Some of the leaders, who had 3 or more daughters, had not been educating one or more of them. A few of them shared stories of domestic violence. An SMC chairperson from Mahalingapuram, who was associated with the VO, informed that she had given birth to a third girl and that her husband and his family had not visited her and her daughter for more than five months. In another case from Pilligundla, the parents-in-law and husband of one of the participants had not cared for her even when she was pregnant.

Organisers in Vikarabad mandal called upon the women to prioritise their daughters' education and to not overburden them with work during the exam season. They ought to educate the girls at least up to the undergraduate level. The women reviewed changes in gender practices at home and informed that they had been sitting together for meals and had been taking joint family decisions on key issues. They had the full support of men folk in their homes. The leaders have been maintaining regular contact with the organisers and referred some cases of child marriage and dropout to them. Around a dozen VO leaders from the mandal have been visiting schools on a periodical basis.

During the course of discussions on online classes, some of the members expressed that they were working women and that they felt insecure about their daughters. They were also unsure how their daughters were using their phones. These were some reasons why they were keen on marrying off their underage daughters. The organisers told them that though they were wrong in doubting their daughters, they were not fully wrong. The only solution was to demand reopening of schools. being in school would ensure the girls' safety. VO leaders subsequently spoke to teachers and asked them to motivate their children. They could teach the children by rotation in groups of 10. children each. This would help them reach all children. VO leaders from Nassimpeta in Atmakur (S) mandal requested the Sarpanch to act on an incident of eve teasing. VO leaders across the project area demanded reopening of schools.

The organisers also participated in a mandal level SHG meeting held on 24th February that was held under the aegis of the *One Billion Rising* network. They addressed the members on the issues of higher education and child marriage.

SMC meetings at school level on girls' issues from a gender perspective

It had not been possible to convene SMC meetings at the school level because schools had been closed down on account of the lockdown. Both physical and Zoom meetings were held with the members to discuss online classes, dry rations, school enrolment, issuance of uniform and textbooks, and school sanitisation. The details of meetings held are as under:

District (Zoom)	Meetings	Members
Suryapet	2	28
Rangareddy	1	12
Vikarabad	1	25
Total	4	65

Mandal	Village	Members	Zoom (Mandal)	Members
Atmakur	84	677	1	24
Maddirala	44	447	1	7
Nutankal	39	275	1	11
Shankarpally	11	180	2	30
Vikarabad	16	140	4	90
Total	194	1719	9	162

The agenda of the meetings included school monitoring, roles and responsibilities of the members, coordination with the Gender Committee, follow up of dropouts and Class 10 children, basic infrastructure, dry rations, midday meals, Hall Tickets for irregular children, child marriage, girl children's problems, and gender equality.

One of the key issues discussed during the meetings was gender equality and role division at the domestic level with emphasis on girls' access to education, sitting and eating together and decision making. It was noted that there were notable differences between families headed by educated and uneducated parents. This had also had an impact on children's status in the family. The participants were informed that there was close correlation between gender equity and retention. Understanding this would help them appreciate their role better. Other points that they had to focus on were girls' leadership roles in school and their participation in classroom activities. They were also asked to keep close contact with Gender Committees and work in coordination with the Committee and the KBS to strengthen them.

SMC members in all schools of Shankarpally have been participating in Gender Committee meetings. Children from HS Proddutur informed during a meeting that the head teacher had not issued textbooks to them. The members spoke to him, after which he handed over the responsibility of distributing the books to a girl student from Class 9. The computer instructor, who was not serious in her duties, was replaced. The head teacher of HS Kothapally had not issued the Hall Ticket to a student from Class 10, who had been away from school for 3 months on account of ill health. Her father resigned himself to the situation. The SMC chairperson came to know of this during a meeting and he spoke to the head teacher along with the mobiliser. The girl was promoted and is enrolled in the Intermediate section now.

Children from HS Mahalingapuram had not been given games material and the drum that was supposed to be used during the assembly hour were not being played. The newly appointed Physical Education Teacher was not serious about it. The SMC chairperson questioned him, after which the drum was brought out. Some girls have evinced interest in playing the drum and some have already begun to practice it. The SMC of HS Ravulapally facilitated the conduct of an essay writing competition on gender discrimination for girls on the occasion of Girl Child Day. He also evaluated some of the essays personally.

A mandal level SMC with 15 members was formed in Shankarpally on 12th February. Subsequent to the conduct of the formative meeting, the organisers took 4 of the key functionaries on an exposure visit to PS Urella and HS Gundala of neighbouring Chevella mandal, where the SMCs were quite active. They had contributed to school development and TLM. The quality of education was good and they had also increase the pupil strength of the local school. The SMC in Gundala had facilitated private transport for some children.

A mandal level meet was held with 11 SMC chairpersons in Shankarpally. The meeting was facilitated by Narasimhulu and Nagamani from MVF. The chairpersons reviewed the status of functioning of their respective schools after the introductory session. Key issues flagged by them included poor quality of education, late-coming by some teachers, improper implementation of the midday meal scheme, unwillingness by head teachers to involve SMC chairpersons in deciding on school fund utilisation and poor maintenance of bathrooms and toilets.

Some of the observations made by the chairpersons were as follows:

- Teachers from PS Mahalingapuram were late and had not responded to the chairperson even over phone.
- The compound wall of ZPHS Mahalingapuram needed repairs
- Teachers from ZPHS Kondakal had been conducting tuitions after 430 p.m.
- The SMC chairpersons of ZPHS Proddutur and PS Parveda got the issue of water shortage resolved in their respective schools
- Some children from ZPHS Ravulapally, who had not been partaking of the midday meal earlier, have changed their attitudes after being counseled by the SMC members
- The Model School had been facing shortage of teachers.
- Teachers from UPS Ervaguda were always late to school earlier but have turned over a new leaf now
- Math and Science teachers were appointed in Parveda because the head teacher, who was in charge of these subjects, was tied up by administrative duties. Two additional classrooms were also sanctioned for the school.
- An electricity bill of Rs 7000 was due from ZPHS (G) Shankarpally. – Rs 7000 due towards electricity charges – quality of education good
- Some boys from ZPHS (B) Shankarpally had been consuming banned substance and some of them even behaved with their teachers in an unruly fashion
- One lady teacher from PS Mahalingapuram had ben reporting daily to school at 1130 a.m.

Summing up the presentations, organiser Nagamani appreciated the part played by the SMC in strengthening schools and also observed that the school is like family. she informed that Gender Committees had been formed in all schools of the mandal. The SMC must work hand in hand with them. Model Centres had been set up in some villages and girls had been assembling there on Sundays. Some girls had drawn Village Maps.

Organiser Narsimhulu lauded the SMC chairperson from Proddutur for his initiative. He had asked the school teachers not to send any child outside school and to contact him first if there were any need to do so. The chairperson from Parveda had told the teachers that it was not sufficient to merely to teach children and that it was important to ensure that the children could read and write properly. The chairperson from Kondakal had signed a blank cheque. This was not the right thing to do. In another instance, the authorities of the Girls' HS in Shankarpally had accepted donations in cash. Schools ought to shun this practice. They could accept donations only in kind.

Narsimhulu proudly declared that 12 chairpersons from the mandal were very active and were ever eager to do something or the other for their schools. It was necessary to focus on strengthening HS. He noted with regret that some HS teachers had been sending older children outside the school to fetch something or the other for them. They had to quit doing so and had to be friendly towards children. He opined that the best way to test children's learning abilities was to ask them to write on common things that they saw around them such as a tree or their school kitchen. This would bring out their real command over the subject.

In the concluding session of the meeting, the Mandal SMC Convenor called upon the participants to regularly visit schools and gather everyone's feedback on school functioning. They ought to focus on the quality of education and not blindly sign on cheques presented to them by head teachers. They needed to know how the school fund was utilised. It was also necessary for them to inspect children's notebooks. They needed to have a never-say-die attitude and earn everyone's goodwill. Finally, they ought to be prepared to encounter any problem issue.

SMC meetings were being held infrequently in HS Siddulur, Vikarabad. The toilets were in poor condition and the incidence of seasonal dropout was quite high. The implementation of the midday meal was also substandard. Some girls had not even been eating their lunch for fear that they would have to use the toilet. There was also acute shortage of water. The members were asked not to burden girls with domestic chores and were also urged to support the Gender Committees.

Anusha from Madgul Chittampally belonged to an immigrant family. She dropped out of school barely a fortnight after she enrolled, as she was subject to eve teasing by a local boy. The issue was discussed with the head teacher and the SMC, who warned the youth. SMC members from Gottimukkula are also very active and visit the school once a fortnight. The English Vidya Volunteer from the school in Zaidpally never went to his class and entrusted the head teacher with this responsibility instead. He changed his ways after the SMC reprimanded him. The SMC got a playground sanctioned through the Gram Panchayat in Madanpally. A local had encroached the playground earlier. The SMC followed up 2 and 3 dropouts to the PS and HS respectively.

Some youth had been littering the premises of HS and PS Nutankal with liquor bottles and community members had been defecating in the open. The teachers and the SMC complained to the police in this regard. The issue has been resolved. The SMC identified donors for sports uniforms that were distributed to 178 children from the schools in Yenkepally and Nutankal and in KGBV Thallasingaram. The Joint Collector gave away the uniforms.

The newly elected SMC chairperson of HS Nimmikal requested the organiser to introduce her to the Gender Committee. She attended one of their meetings and spoke to them at length on the process of formation of the Committee, the frequency and agenda of their meetings and the challenges that they had faced. She was astounded to learn that the incidence of dropout and irregularity from her locality was quite high. She also tasted the midday meal and expressed dissatisfaction with its quality. She referred the issue to the head teacher.

A district body of the SMC was formed in Rangareddy district with 12 members. Mandal bodies of the SMC were also formed in all 3 mandals of Suryapet district with one Convenor and Secretary each and 2 male and female Co-Convenors each in addition to 10 Executive Members.

CRPF Meetings

The details of district and mandal level CRPF meetings held are as below:

District	CRPF	
	Zoom Meetings	Members
Suryapet	1	24
Rangareddy	3	27
Vikarabad	1	30
Total	5	81

Mandal	Meetings	Members
Atmakur	1	28
Maddirala	1	14
Vikarabad	3	42
Total	5	84

As many as 160 people from Nemmikal in Atmakur (S) mandal were diagnosed with COVID infection. Sanitisation of public places and supply of provisions to the needy through the Gram Panchayat were discussed during the meetings. Other issues discussed included child labour, child marriage, malnutrition, dry rations, reopening of schools, risk of girl child abuse and security for the girl child. Every section of society was asked to own up the responsibility in this regard. The CRPF and the Mothers' Association petitioned to mandal officials in this connection. A group of 6 girls from Nutankal mandal went to the District Collector's office along with the organisers and the CRPF and sought action on issues of girl child abuse.

Activating VCPCs

Village level CPCs in villages of Suryapet mandal were highly inactive. The organisers spoke to the mandal officials and urged them to reactivate these VCPCs in and build their capacities to uphold children's rights. VCPC meetings were convened in 6 villages of Vikarabad to plan awareness drives against child marriage and child labour. Members from Erravally demanded the reopening of school and also proposed to conduct a rally with civil society organisations and NGOs.

Mothers' Associations

District Mothers' Associations were formed in Rangareddy on 8th September with 13 members and in Vikarabad on 4th September with 15 members. Mandal bodies of the Mothers' Association were formed in Atmakur, Maddirala and Nutankal mandals with 14, 12 and 9 members respectively. These members were entrusted with the task of resolving girl child issues and campaigning against gender based discrimination. Another key objective of forming the mandal bodies was to give them visibility. The organisers also facilitated the formation of 3 village level Associations in Maddirala mandal. Members of the Association have now emerged as stronger individuals and are more proactive. KBS members are referring issues of concern to the Association. Unresolved issues are being referred to the district body of the Association. Mandal bodies are already functional in Shankarpally and Vikarabad with 15 and 16 members respectively.

A mandal level meet of the Association held on 15th December in Shankarpally was attended by 17 members. They reviewed the problems associated with online education. They called upon the SMC to coordinate with school teachers and ensure the conduct of physical classes for at least Classes 9 and 10. Members of the Association also undertook door-to-door visits and extended support to adolescent girls. They also motivated the parents of these girls send them to school at any cost.

3 ACCESS TO EDUCATION

Tracking of school and college children's attendance and follow up

The organisers took up a headcount exercise during February in all upper primary and ZP High Schools in the project area to track children's presence in schools and verified this against entries in school attendance registers. They later met the absentees and counseled them.

The details of five-day absentees identified and contacted are as under:

Mandal	Five-day absentees	
	B	G
Shankarpally	184	93
Vikarabad	132	117
Atmakur	98	69
Nutankal	36	34
Maddirala	27	35
Total	477	348

There was all-round reduction in the incidence of five-day absenteeism across schools of the project area, which is attributable largely to strengthened Gender Committees, who have been identifying and following up absentees regularly. The members are one of the important contact points. Head teachers, the SMC and the CRPF also supported efforts to reach the children. Teachers from schools of Maddirala mandal have been maintaining telephonic contact with their students' parents.

Teachers have played an equally key role in reaching these children. There had been resistance from some of them in the past, but they have understood the significance of the tracking exercise and have begun to cooperate. There has been no discrepancy between absentees identified through the headcount and entries in the registers. They are also maintaining close relations with SMC chairpersons.

The names of 4 children that had shifted from HS Reddigudem in Maddirala mandal to private school had not been struck off the register. The teachers did this knowing very well that it was not right on their part. They would stand to lose their posts in otherwise case. The organisers pointed this out to them and asked them to strike the children's names off the registers.

Tirupati Mahesh – a Class 7 student from Kandhagatla was a very good student but his parents, who were always embroiled in fights and arguments, took him out of school and put him in charge of grazing the family goats. The organiser and the head teacher motivated the couple along with the Deputy Sarpanch and the CRPF and brought him back to school.

Mangalapalli Maharshi – a Class 10 student of ZPHS Yerrapahad dropped out of school for a silly reason. His father was very keen on his education but was short tempered. He once lost his cool and hit the boy, who stopped going to school. The class teacher tried to reach the man, but he was inaccessible. The teacher counseled both Maharshi and his father at length, after which the boy resumed his schooling.

The organiser noted that 4 children from HS Patha Suryapet in Atmakur were absent during the afternoon but this had not been reflected in the school records. The teachers had manipulated the midday meal list. When questioned, the head teacher grumbled that the organiser always complained but eventually marked the children as absent. Guguloth Neeraja from Class 8 and her brother Nitin from Class 6 were left to fend for themselves after their parents migrated from Peepya Naik Thanda in Atmakur to another village in quest of work. The girl began to graze goats while the boy attended school. The Deputy Sarpanch and the organiser followed up Neeraja to school.

The Gender Committee informed the organiser that they had identified three boys from Yenkepally – Nutankal belonging to the same family. Their parents had migrated and they were regular to school in the couple's absence. However, their mother didn't let them attend school for six days upon her return home in February. she sent them to work, as they were being offered Rs 200 each a day. The teacher in charge of the Gender Committee and the organiser jointly counseled the parents and the children's paternal grandmother, who had been acting as their guardian. The mother was reluctant at first but later consented to send them back to school.

Online classes follow up

Schools and colleges remained closed during the entire duration of the new academic year. The organisers followed up the participation of children in online classes that commenced in government schools from September on upon instructions from the Education Department.

Meetings were held with the Gram Panchayat, teachers and the SMC to discuss the conduct of classes. They were asked to ensure the availability of smartphones and televisions with recharge. Steps would also be taken to make sure that children could access television channels. Teachers were asked to maintain class wise lists of children and share the schedule of the classes with them. Special drives were launched to this end. The teachers' mobile phone numbers and the timetable were shared with parents on a door-to-door basis. Once they had identified children without smartphones and televisions, the organisers spoke to local satellite television operators. Some of them had cut off connections due to non-payment. Operators in some cases refused to provide connections due to the COVID situation. They were told that it was a mandate of the government. It was also their social responsibility to restore connections. Sarpanchs and ward members were involved where necessary.

Organisers from Shankarpally mandal spoke to school teachers and asked them to publicise the conduct of online classes. Teachers were encouraged to conduct physical classes for Classes 9 and 10 wherever possible. Teachers from Proddutur wrote down the timetable on a sheet of paper and shared it with all children. They visited one street of the village each day along with the organisers and the SMC to interact with the children and verify if they had been doing their home assignments. They asked the children to approach them whenever they had doubts to clarify. Wherever children had no access to smartphones or televisions or had no power supply at home, they were linked to their neighbours in small groups of 5-6. KBS members and graduates in some villages assisted younger children in their classes. A KBS girl from Proddutur owned up the responsibility for coaching 12 children and seated them together.

A number of parents were against the conduct of online classes, as they felt their children were unable to learn anything when classes were being held physically and the situation would be worse in the case of online classes. Parents from Kompally – Vikarabad mandal responded positively to a suggestion from the organiser and seated 10 children in a group. They later informed the organiser that the children felt a lot safer and were very comfortable in the company of their peers. This had also given them an incentive to study well. School teachers from Pulusumamidi in Vikarabad mandal have taken up community outreach activity and visit absentees at their home. The children have also begun to approach them whenever they have doubts to be clarified. As many as 10 children from the Urdu medium school in Ralla Chittampally come to school because they have no access to online classes.

The parents of 10 children from Mylardevarampally and Narayanpur villages in Vikarabad mandal bought phones for their children in accordance with the organisers' suggestions. The local MP had given away televisions to all Gram Panchayats of Vikarabad. The organisers spoke to the Sarpanchs of 4 Panchayats and convinced them to place the televisions in the local schools so children could benefit from them.

Public announcements were made in villages of Suryapet district to inform community in this regard. Schools were sanitised in arrangement with the Gram Panchayat. Some schools printed pamphlets inviting children to enrol in their institutions. Timetables were printed on flexi banners and pamphlets and shared with community. A number of parents made arrangements to buy phones for their children by borrowing or selling off what little they had. The organisers convinced the brothers of Seelam Rama Devi – a Class 10 student from Atmakur, to spend Rs 7500 each and buy her a smartphone. Their mother was a drunkard and brothers had never cared for her in the past.

Organisers from Shankarpally linked children from 6 families that had no smartphone or television facility to their neighbours for online classes. They involved the SMC in this effort. They also spoke to 3 teachers and asked them to spend time for the children and clarify their doubts. Teachers from Maharajpet go into the village twice a week by rotation to clarify children's doubts. Similarly, 4 village regularly attend school. Teachers from Proddutur go daily to the children's homes by rotation. Groups of 2-3 children each have been formed and they watch television together in school. The Sarpanch has paid the fees of 9 children enrolled in private college. One Maheshwari from the village was linked to a fellow student, as she had no phone. They sit together with a common friend for the classes.

One phone is being shared between one boy and two girls in Miyakhangadda. One girl from Mokila Thanda, who had been staying in a hostel, was linked to Basata Foundation NGO for a phone. Teachers from Mahalingapuram regularly go to the village by rotation. This inspired 3 children to turn up at school every day. Upon being informed that 3 sisters from Laxmareddyguda had no phones, the Sarpanch spoke to their father and counseled him to let them permit the use of his phone. The organisers have had problems convincing teachers and children in Tangaturu, where two people succumbed to Corona. Efforts are on to motivate them.

The details of children that were provided phones and linked to neighbours for television classes through the organisers' efforts are as follows:

Mandal	Phones
Atmakur	21
Maddirala	31
Nutankal	46
Shankarpally	5
Vikarabad	5
Total	108

Mandal	Television classes
Atmakur	75
Maddirala	50
Nutankal	40
Total	165

Shifting children from private to government school

Managements of many private schools from the project area had cut links to online classes because children had not paid their fees. Consequentially, the children could not access classes and were put to loss. These children eventually dropped out of private schools. The organisers interacted with the children's parents and offered to shift the children to government school. where they wouldn't have to

pay fees of any kind. Teachers would be regularly available and would prioritise their children's education. Some girls evinced interest in joining KGBV. Organisers from Mylardevarampally enrolled 3 girl dropouts in KGBV after a fortnight's effort. The girls had been enrolled in a day school earlier and had been expecting schools to reopen sooner or later. The organisers followed up 4 girls from Vikarabad to KGBV Shankarpally, as no seats were available in the local KGBV.

The details of children followed up from private to government school are as below:

Mandal	Classes 1-5		Classes 6-10		KGBV
	B	G	B	G	
Atmakur	23	19	39	31	31
Maddirala	15	8	22	11	7
Nutankal	19	16	20	19	13
Vikarabad	0	0	0	0	7
Total	57	43	81	61	58

Institutional follow up

One mandal level meeting each was held in Shankarpally and Vikarabad mandals with 15 and 16 members respectively to discuss shifting of children aged 5 years and above to PS. They also met the head teachers of Primary, Upper Primary and High Schools to discuss the follow up of children to higher classes (5th to 6th, 7th to 8th and 10th to Intermediate). Some head teachers replied that no classes were being held and that there was no use enrolling them. The organisers told them that this was likely to lead to a gap in their education and that this would put them at risk of dropping out and joining the labour force. Giving them textbooks could help them keep in touch with education. The children's parents echoed this view. The organisers coordinated with the head teachers of both schools and got the children shifted to higher classes. The organisers followed up 8 children from Dannaram to Pulsumamidi. They had been going to Vikarabad by bus earlier but had dropped out because public transport was unavailable.

Tracking of adolescent children's education by the CRPF at the village level

The organisers and the CRPF continuously kept in touch with children, disregarding the lockdown. The restriction of public movement did not hinder them from reaching the children. Where it was not possible for them to physically contact the children, they established telephonic communication through their mobile phones. They created WhatsApp groups for the purpose. Where children had no access to smartphones at home, they used their friends'/ neighbours' phones. Virtual meetings helped the organisers update the MVF head office on developments in the field.

Organisers from Shankarpally promoted the concept of reading and encouraged children to borrow library books and circulated them among each other. WhatsApp groups were created in Atmakur mandal to enable online teaching with available human resources, viz. teachers. Children were also asked to watch digital videos being telecast by the State government on specified TV channels.

The organisers also attempted to reach children and engage them with the help of local teachers. The teachers posted question papers (mostly objective/multiple choice questions) that the children could answer. Though this did not have the same effect as conventional teaching, the children at least had access to education. This also helped prevent them from getting absorbed into the labour force and being deprived of their basic rights. In addition, the organisers gathered information from children on the availability of cell phones that they could access for virtual (Zoom) meetings

Hundreds of migrant families had returned to their native villages after the lockdown had come into effect. The organisers undertook a survey to identify such families. They later met these families along with the CRPF and asked them if they proposed to migrate again. Most of them were unwilling to migrate. The organisers noted during their visits to the villages that a number of children from these families were idle and wandering around aimlessly. Their parents were out at work and they had none to care for them. The organisers spoke to their parents and motivated them to enrol the children in local school during September.

Most of the parents informed that their children had no Caste, Income or Transfer Certificates. The organisers spoke to the Sarpanchs of the Panchayats and head teachers of the local schools and asked them to enrol the children without placing demands on any kind of documentation. They would produce their Certificates at a later stage. Children from Classes 9 and 10 that had Aadhaar Cards produced them. Some head teachers were skeptical and replied that the families were most likely to return to their destination sites after the lockdown was lifted. The organisers convinced them that the children would attend school for the rest of the current academic year and that they should not be any issues enrolling them. They also arranged free textbooks and uniform for the children. Wherever possible, they got the children's Study Conduct Certificates from schools in their destination points through WhatsApp.

The details of migrant families and children enrolled in different classes are as under:

Mandal	Families	Identified		Enrolled	
		B	G	B	G
Atmakur	179	182	187	173	172
Maddirala	436	262	241	36	55
Nutankal	144	67	80	67	80
Shankarpally	11	8	9	8	9
Vikarabad	9	6	4	6	4
Total	779	525	521	290	320

Mandal	Classes 1-5		Classes 6-10		Intermediate		Graduation	
	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G
Atmakur	66	51	82	91	20	23	5	7
Maddirala	7	9	18	26	11	20	0	0
Nutankal	22	23	29	39	16	18	0	0
Shankarpally	5	6	3	3	0	0	0	0
Vikarabad	5	2	0	0	1	2	0	0
Total	105	91	132	159	48	63	5	7

Follow up of Class 10th and Inter students to take Board exams

The organisers compiled lists of all children that were due to appear for the Class 10 Board/ Intermediate exams during the month of March. They also gathered information from schools on children that were absent or had dropped out. They later met each single child in order to ensure that they gave the exams without fail. The lockdown forced the State government to postpone the exams 3-4 times. Children and parents alike were not just anxious but tense about the conduct of the exams. The organisers kept in constant touch with them and updated them as to the schedule of the exams. Where they could not personally contact the children, they reached them either over phone or through their peers and community support groups.

Follow up of 10th Class pass outs for higher education

There was no clarity on higher education courses such as Polytechnic, vocational training, etc. Career counseling sessions were being held for children from Class 10 in schools earlier, but this did not happen in the current academic year on account of the lockdown. Head teachers would assemble children en masse in their schools, give them their Marks Memoranda and counsel them on the post-matriculation academic, technical and other opportunities available to them. Both teachers and the organisers counseled the children on a one-to-one basis this year. The children took their certificates online. Children, who were very enthusiastic about their higher education earlier, were caught in a quandary. Most admissions were taking place online. Some children were unfamiliar with the process.

Nearly one half of all children from the project area in Suryapet district were unwilling to join the Intermediate course on account of the high fees and the risk of infection. Their parents were also skeptical of the resumption of classes. The inability to pay fees also made most of them consider either the enrolment of children in government institutions or their engagement in work. Some parents informed that the management of Bhavita Junior College in Atmakur (S) had initially collected Rs

1000 as admission fee from them and had demanded Rs 5000 later towards tuition fees. The organisers told the management that they could collect the tuition fee once physical classes resumed.

Children desirous of enrolling in Srinidhi Junior College, Suryapet were asked to pay Rs 1000 towards admission and were asked to pay Rs 10000 later. The organiser spoke to 5 of the girls and got them enrolled in Government Junior College, Nemmikal. The management demanded money for issuance of Transfer Certificates, but the organiser spoke to them and managed to get the Certificates issued to the children. The organiser also got a dropout from Gattikallu enrolled in Junior College after a gap of one year.

Organisers from Shankarpally and Vikarabad mandals gathered village wise details of children that had enrolled in government and private educational institutions. Some parents were disinterested in sending their children to college, primarily due to the high fees and the unavailability of public transport. The organisers motivated them, employing the services of other school-going children where needed. They offered to admit girls in KGBV if required.

Meetings were held at the village level to identify children that were unwilling to enrol in Junior College. Parents of girls were particularly unready to enrol them in private college, as they felt it wasn't worth spending money when classes were not being held physically. The organisers gave them the option of enrolling the girls in Model School- or KGBV- Junior Colleges. The head teacher of the High School in Janwada applied online for the admission of two girls from Miyakhangadda that had been studying in his school. He also issued books to them the next day. CRPF members from Parveda offered to provide a smartphone to a girl whose father was unwilling to let her have one. They spoke to him at length and convinced him to change his opinion that she would misuse it. He finally bought her a phone. Organisers from Parveda managed to enrol one girl in Chaitanya Junior College without having to pay any fee. The organiser from Dannaram village of Vikarabad mandal enrolled 18 girls in other KGBVs, as seats were unavailable in the local KGBV. The Child Line team was involved in the process.

The details of children that were enrolled in Class 10 during academic 2019-20 and their follow up to various educational institutions in academic 2020-21 are as follows:

Mandal	B	G
Atmakur	282	264
Maddirala	133	113
Nutankal	177	165
Shankarpally	317	309
Vikarabad	302	310
Total	1211	1161

Mandal	Govt. Jr College		Pvt Jr College		Technical Courses		Paramedical Courses		Total	
	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G
Atmakur	120	112	147	112	11	17	0	13	278	254
Maddirala	17	21	106	69	8	13	2	5	133	108
Nutankal	21	18	138	139	18	5	0	3	177	165
Shankarpally	24	38	232	236	45	29	0	0	301	303
Vikarabad	64	106	165	129	43	27	0	0	272	262
Total	246	295	788	685	125	91	2	21	1161	1092

Mobilise dropout girls to be mainstreamed through Open School

The below table provides details of children that had registered for this year's Class 10 and Intermediate exams through Open stream:

Mandal	Open 10th		Open Inter	
	B	G	B	G
Atmakur	3	4	1	1
Maddirala	1	0	0	0
Nutankal	1	1	1	3
Shankarpally	0	1	0	0
Total	5	6	2	4

4 Empowerment and Leadership of Adolescent Girls and Boys in Schools

Meetings with Gender Committees in schools/colleges

The details of Gender Committee meetings held mandal wise are as follows:

Mandal	Meetings	B	G
Shankarpally	15	150	150
Vikarabad	20	194	194
Atmakur	53	436	436
Nutankal	27	200	211
Maddirala	30	280	287
Total	145	1260	1278

The meetings were devoted to discussions on dropout, reasons for absenteeism/dropout and the problems faced by children at home – especially girls.

The Gender Committee of HS Madgul Chittampally – Vikarabad mandal informed the organiser that some children that reported early at school for special classes had been wasting their time chitchatting. The organiser spoke to the teachers, who informed them that some of the children were reckless and that some others had been having night birthday parties in the school premises. They advised the children against doing so. A new Committee was formed in HS Zaidpally and the members were oriented on the roles and responsibilities of the Committee. Girls and boys from Pulumaddi are playing together due to the efforts of the Gender Committee. The Committee in Madanpally motivated one dropout to return to school.

Some outsider youth from Isthapuram had been passing on letters to Class 10 girl students through their classmates. The Gender Committee in charge counseled both the couriers and the children. The situation has improved. combined games are being held in ZPHS Kotapahad, where the PET was very conservative earlier. He changed his attitude after he was placed in charge of the Committee.

The Gender Committee of Thallasingaram – Nutankal informed the organiser that two boys from the school had proposed to two girls from their class and this had disturbed the girls mentally. The girls also informed this to the in charge teacher. She, along with the head teacher and the organiser counseled the boys. They tried to justify themselves and came up with lame excuses. They were told that there was no point lying to themselves. There was a time for everything in life but it was important for them to focus on their education. They have stopped speaking to the girls. The Committee of HS Nutankal also reported and resolved a similar case involving a Class 9 boy.

Elocution, essay writing, sports and games in public functions

Essay writing competitions on forms of social discrimination against girls were held for 102 KBS members from 5 villages of Shankarpally on 24th January to mark National Day of the Girl Child. The organisers later participated in a meeting held by the ICDS and local NGO SOS in Maharajpet. The Sarpanch shared his experiences with MVF, the KBS and the Model Centre. He promised to work for gender equity.

An elocution competition on girls' role in society was held on 24th January in Gottimukkula of Vikarabad mandal with 2 boys and 6 girls participating. An essay writing competition on the same topic that was held in Pulsumamidi was attended by 15 girls. As many as 15 girls from Pulumaddi,

Alampally and Kothagadi took part in an elocution competition on gender discrimination and steps to do away with it. Donors sponsored English dictionaries for winners of an elocution competition in Mylardevarampally.

Essay writing competitions on forms of discrimination against girls in different community spaces were held in 20 schools and 2 colleges of Atmakur on 24th January with 374 girls participating. The girls also took part in elocution competitions. Dictionaries and General Knowledge books were gifted to the winners. The competitions were followed by a mandal level rally with the participation of 112 members including the MPP, the Tehsildar, the MPDO, the SI, the PHC Medical Officer, the CDPO and local teachers. Cultural events also featured. Prizes were distributed to the winners.

Essay writing competitions were also held in 11 villages of Maddirala with 150 children and in 12 schools of Nutankal with 198 children. Mandal level meetings in these mandals had a participation of 81 and 85 members respectively. Dignitaries that turned up in Maddirala included the MPP and the MPDO. The MPP, the ZPTC, the Tehsildar, the MPDO and the ICDS Supervisor were present in the mandal level meeting and a rally in Nutankal.

More than 30 KBS members from Parveda participated in the Republic Day celebrations. The organisers allotted separate benches for the members in Proddutur. Games events such as volleyball, kho kho and kabaddi were organised for 131 KBS members in 4 villages of the mandal. The National Flag was unfurled by girl youth in SC Colony – Vikarabad on Republic Day, in the presence of the local teachers. They were actively supported by boys. A Class 6 girl hoisted the Flag in Mylardevarampally.

International Women's Day was observed in 7 villages of Vikarabad. The Sarpanchs of Zaidpally and Athvelly felicitated 13 and 10 active women respectively. The MPDO and the CDPO felicitated 20 supportive mothers during an event in Maddirala on 8th March. The Sarpanch honoured 14 mothers from Nutankal for their contributions, on 7th March. A huge meeting was held with 167 members including the MPP, the Tehsildar, the SI and the MPDO. Games such as kabaddi, musical chairs, *Kolattam*, leapfrog, etc. were held for 86 participated women and girls. A mandal meeting held in Atmakur was attended by 150 people. The organisers also conducted public meetings in 4 villages with a turnout of 598. They felicitated 72 women, including proactive government school teachers, on the occasion. The MPP, the DM&HO, the CDPO and representatives of the ICPS and Childline were present.

Rallies, meetings and essay writing and elocution competition were held on 11th October in villages on the project area to mark International Day of the Girl Child. The topic for the essay writing and elocution competitions was *New Challenges faced by girls against the backdrop of COVID*. Members that participated in the meetings and rallies included women Sarpanchs, VO leaders, Anganwadi Teachers, ASHAs, women's SHGs, the CRPF, Mothers' Associations, Child Line team members and field staff of local NGOs. Games featured in all 3 mandals of Suryapet district. Corona norms were adhered to in the conduct of the event.

The details of meetings and competitions held on the occasion are as under:

Mandal	Meetings	Members	Essay writing	Elocution	Games
Atmakur	1	55	20	10	0
Maddirala	1	25	0	5	0
Nutankal	1	31	0	9	0
Shankarpally	5	60	0	0	35
Vikarabad	3	40	0	0	0
Total	11	211	20	24	35

Girls from Dontanpally and Proddutur formed 2 teams each and participated in quiz competitions. They also sang inspirational songs. Members of the Mothers' Association narrated their personal her experiences and offered all possible support to the girls. They called upon the latter to assert themselves and to plan well for their future. Activities such as indoor games, role play, dance, whistle and informal games featured in Mahalingapuram and Parveda villages of Shankarpally. A lady teacher addressed girls and involved them in games in Ravulapally village of the mandal. The

Sarpanch and the Panchayat Secretary of Kamareddyguda in Vikarabad mandal spoke on the importance of the occasion. Girls took part in a book reading session and later spoke on the various forms of gender based discrimination. They took a pledge to oppose child marriage and to study at least up to the undergraduate level. They requested the Sarpanch for sports material. A book reading session was held in Pathur village of the mandal.

A campaign poster demanding amendment of the RTE Act to bring under its ambit all children aged 3-18 years was released in all 3 mandals of Suryapet district on 14th November. Elocution competitions were held in Atmakur, Maddirala and Nutankal mandals. Sarpanchs, ward members and the CRPF addressed children on the importance of the occasion and on child rights at the village level. Children's Day was observed in Mylardevarampally village of Vikarabad mandal with the participation of 70 people. The Sarpanch spoke on the significance of Children's Day. Some children present sang songs on children's issues.

The table below provides details of rallies held on the occasion of Children's Day:

Mandal	Rallies	Participants
Atmakur	4	160
Maddirala	2	45
Nutankal	4	92
Vikarabad	1	70
Total	11	367

5 Empowerment and Leadership of Adolescent Girls in the Community

Village level KBS Meetings

Issues discussed during KBS meetings included feedback on exposure visits for the KBS members, planning orientation sessions, gender equality/discrimination, violence and abuse, dropout, promoting girl child education, use of library facilities by children, book/newspaper reading, child marriage, reopening of school and college, online classes, new challenges faced by the girls at home due to Covid-19, seasonal work and to plan International Day of the Girl Child celebrations.

The details of meetings held and participants are as follows:

Mandal	Physical meetings	Members	Zoom meetings	Members
Shankarpally	68	1099	1	25
Vikarabad	89	1034	4	83
Atmakur	336	4226	11	105
Maddirala	238	2764	4	29
Nutankal	223	2605	7	42
Total	954	11728	27	284

Subsequent to their return from the exposure visits, most of the girls resolved to replicate the effort in their own villages and– strengthen their own committees based on their what they had observed, Additional visits were also planned.

Only local children had been attended the meetings earlier, but newer members have joined the Sanghas now. Turnout has, however, gone down. The girls informed during the meeting that they had not been able to devote time to classes. Some of them had no mobile phones. Their eyes had been affected due to constant exposure and some of them had been suffering from ill health due to heavy work. The parents of some of them had not been caring for their health. Loss of incomes to their families meant they had no money to meet their basic needs, including the purchase of napkins. They had limited access to nutritious food. They had free time on Sundays earlier, but the situation had changed after the imposition of lockdown.

Some members informed during the meetings that they had questioned their parents' decision to not let them attend meetings while their brothers had all the freedom they needed. Yet others expressed that their fathers and brothers were largely against educating them. However, their mothers had a

positive opinion of the KBS intervention. Many of them had changed their attitude and had consented to send their daughters to the meetings. Quite a few mothers are attending meetings in Atmakur (S).

A joint meeting was held with 8 boys and 18 girls from Class 10 in Proddutur to discuss their higher education. They were not keen on continuing their studies. The children were counseled to enrol in Intermediate. They were encouraged to borrow books and read them whenever they had some spare time. It was decided that the KBS would encourage children from one village per cluster to borrow and read library books. Sarpanchs came forward to support this agenda. Responding to a demand from girls in Pilligundla, an amount of Rs 5000 was raised from donors for the purchase of sports material.

The Sarpanch of Gottimukkula – Vikarabad mandal offered all support to girls from his Panchayat and offered to resolve any issue that they brought to his notice. He would be accessible to them at any point in time. He also gave them some space in the Gram Panchayat office. They have been making use of this facility to play games. Ashwini from Madgul Chittampally was not confident of clearing her Intermediate First Year exams and did not pay the exam fees. Her friends told her they would boycott her if she didn't pay her fees. She did accordingly and passed them. Sunita – a former KBS member from Madanpally had passed her Intermediate exams from a KGBV. She participated in a meeting and shared her experiences. She had dropped out of school but her family had supported her all along and she had tasted success as a result. Members from Erravally motivated a dropout to return to school.

KBS members from 4 villages of Atmakur and 2 each in Nutankal and Maddirala hoisted the National flag on 26th January with support from Sarpanchs and SMC chairpersons. BS members from Nimmikal cut a cake on 1st January. Members of the KBS in 4 villages of Atmakur mandal, 3 of Vikarabad mandal, 2 each of Maddirala and Nutankal mandals and 1 village of Shankarpally mandal hoisted the National Flag on the occasion of Independence Day.

The details of child marriages identified and prevented are as under:

Mandal	Identified	Prevented
Shankarpally	22	16
Vikarabad	32	8
Atmakur	34	21
Nutankal	14	6
Maddirala	7	4
Total	109	55

Formation of WhatsApp groups with KBS members

Many girls were not able to attend physical meetings on account of the lockdown. WhatsApp groups were formed with these girls with the primary objective of facilitating a common platform for mutual interaction. Associating with the group helped them mutually share information on education and other areas of common interest. The group also served as a means of problem resolution and helped educate the girls on the use of social media tools. The gap between parents and school has narrowed now. Parents have understood the importance of the KBS. The girls now have an opportunity for self-expression, social interaction and redressing grievances. There is also a newfound sense of self-confidence. Their leadership skills have also been honed.

The details of WhatsApp groups formed are as below:

Mandal	Clusters	Villages	Girls
Atmakur	4	28	105
Maddirala	1	7	29
Nutankal	2	14	42
Shankarpally	4	25	164
Vikarabad	3	29	83
Total	14	103	423

7 Boys' and Girls' Convention at the district level

Campaign on accessing entitlements of children

The following are the details of campaign activities taken up by the organisers in the context of securing entitlements for children:

Petitions

Mandal(s)	Petitioner(s)	Recipient(s)	Issue(s)
Atmakur Maddirala Nutankal	SMC, CRPF and Mothers' Associations	MLAs, District Collector, DEO, MEOs	School reopening, dry rations
	SMC	MEOs	Textbooks, Worksheets, dry rations
	CRPF and Mothers' Associations	Tehsildars, SIs, MPDOs and MEOs	Child Marriage
Shankarpally	KBS, CRPF and SMC	Sarpanchs of 4 villages	School reopening, dry rations
	CRPF, SMC, Mothers' Associations, MVF	DSE, District Collector, DEO, RDO, MPP, Tehsildar MPDO	School reopening, dry rations
	CRPF, SMC, Mothers' Associations, MVF	Municipal Chairperson	Details of migrant families, nutrition and water facilities for them, follow up of children by teachers
Vikarabad	CRPF, SMC, Mothers' Associations, MVF	Municipal Chairperson	School reopening, dry rations
	CRPF, SMC, Mothers' Associations	Zilla Parishad chairperson, MLA, District Collector, DPO, MPP	Dry rations, textbooks, follow up of child marriage by Sarpanchs, school painting
	CRPF	Zilla Parishad chairperson	Dry rations, textbooks, teachers' availability in school
	CRPF, SMC, Mothers' Associations	RDO	School reopening, dry rations

Signature Campaign

Mandal	Groups	Signatures	Issue(s)
Shankarpally	CRPF	100	Amendment of the RTE Act to bring all children aged 3-18 years under its ambit, and the CMPA
	Mothers' Association	50	
Vikarabad	Gram Panchayat	21	
	CRPF	150	
	Mothers' Association	90	
Total		411	

B TRAINING & CAPACITY BUILDING

SMC Training

A mandal level training session was held for the SMC in Vikarabad on 11th March with 23 male and 14 female members. Project Coordinator Bhaskar and MVF Training Coordinator Dhanunjay provided the resource on the occasion. The members reviewed the school situation and problems being faced in their respective schools with focus on the status of girls from HS sections, the quality of education, the midday meal scheme and the problems faced by girls. They also spoke on the steps they had taken to address these issues. Unavailability of public transport in 3-4 villages and the shortage of toilets and water as the primary impediments to girls' education. They could not afford to travel by auto rickshaws. Other issues that were highlighted included gender inequality, use of abusive/improper language with girls, indifferent attitude of teachers and passing rude/vulgar comments against girls.

The speakers called upon the participants to prioritise such issues and address them with the help of the Sarpanch, the KBS and the Gender Committee. It was the responsibility of the SMC to ensure that girls were treated equally with boys everywhere. There must be no cultural stereotyping in school textbooks and syllabi. Both girls and boys must have equal playing and decision making powers. The SMC must take a stand in this regard.

An orientation session was held in Mandal Resource Centre – Atmakur on 15th March for 32 male and 23 female SMC members. Chief Coordinator of MVF Raju and Project Coordinator Bhaskar facilitated the proceedings. Reviewing their activities, they spoke on the agenda of their meetings, the outcomes of their school visits and the problems that they faced. The resource persons addressed them on their roles and responsibilities, gender equality and discrimination, the ill effects of child marriage, key provisions of the CMPA, the POCSO Act and the RTE Act, the checklist to be used during school visits, basic infrastructure, monitoring teacher and child attendance, school grant utilisation, gender equality, negotiating with teachers for children's rights and harmonious relations/coordination with parents and teachers. A mandal SMC with 6 members was formed at the end of the meeting. The members resolved to assemble once a month without fail

SMC chairperson from PS Bopparam Chakkala Veerabhadraiah did not believe that it was practically possible to achieve gender equality and that it was mere wishful thinking. However, he changed his opinion after some of his fellow chairpersons/members shared their personal experiences. he is now an avid champion of the cause of gender equality.

Prior to the conduct of the workshop, the chairpersons hardly ever visited school of their own volition. They have now begun to take active part in school monitoring/administration. During his first ever visit to HS Gattikallu, the chairperson sought information on funding details. Upon being informed that an amount of Rs 2400 was available in the fund, he discussed plans to utilise the said amount. Boys and girls from HS Kotapahad and HS Thummala Penpahad are being seated together for online classes after the chairpersons insisted on this. The chairpersons of 4 schools asked the teachers to conduct school meetings with parents even if there was not much response from the latter. Turnout of parents has gone up from 8 to approximately 15 on an average now.

The head teacher of HS Yepuru initially refused to provide information to the SMC chairperson on school fund usage. The chairperson spoke to the MEO in this regard and he assured her that he would do the needed. The MEO visited the school a few days later and interacted with the head teacher. The latter invited the chairperson to visit the school and sign the receipt for uniforms to be issued to the children.

A training session held for SMC chairpersons in Nutankal on 12th March was attended by 22 male and 9 female members. The participants also included MEO Ramulu Naik, 7 CRPs and 2 head teachers. MVF Coordinators Dhanunjay and Bhaskar, who were the resource persons, set the objectives for the training and informed them that they would be given inputs on the RTE Act and gender equality. Following a round of formal introduction, the participants reviewed their activities and shared details of their meetings and the outcomes of their school visits. Most schools lacked drinking water and running water in toilets. The quality of teaching was also substandard. Very few teachers had been

focusing on gender issues. Head teachers of HS Yenkepally and HS Nutankal were not serious about SMC meetings. The speakers dwelt in brief on the provisions of the RTE Act. They informed that the school and the family were an integral part of society. Girls were particularly affected when it came to unavailability of toilets. The SMC had to prioritise this issue and focus on gender issues. The MEO, who spoke next, called upon girls to study well and scale heights in life. He added that education added respect. Denouncing the custom of child marriage, he exhorted parents not to marry off girls underage.

A joint SMC meeting of PS Nutankal and HS Nutankal was held in late March to discuss the frequency of SMC meetings. Meetings had not been taking place in the HS as prescribed. The head teacher had also not been cooperating with the teachers. Both the chairpersons asked him why he had been so neglectful of his duties. The chairperson of the HS later spoke to the Gender Committee members on the problems that they had been facing. They told him that they had no water in the toilets. The chairperson promptly called up the Sarpanch and requested him to look into the issue. Water is now being fetched for the toilets in buckets from the public tap nearby.

During an SMC meeting that was held in UPS Yedavelli after a long gap, the Science teacher informed the SMC chairperson that the head teacher was not cooperating with the teachers. He was in charge of Mathematics but had not been teaching the children. The teacher in charge of the Gender Committee was very cooperative. The chairperson asked the head teacher to mend her ways. The vice-chairperson of HS Thallasingaram personally verified if Hall Tickets had been issued to all children from Class 10. He also rang up all the children's parents and sought their feedback about the conduct of online classes. The SMC of HS Lingampally got an electrical motor, which was burnt down, repaired.

School Teachers – Gender Issues and Guiding Children

The Education Department conducted a training programme for 52 government school teachers from across Suryapet district on Empowerment of the Girl child, as part of a pilot programme by the State government. The programme was held on 3rd February. Upon a request from the Department, MVF deputed Project Coordinator Bhaskar to handle a session on various aspects of gender, violence and safety of the girl child.

Sharing MVF's experiences with gender issues and resolution of issues such as violence and abuse in schools, the resource person spoke on the following topics:

- Gender vs sex
- Importance of training school children on gender issues
- Importance of School Gender Committees, roles and responsibilities of the members and the role of the teacher in organising these Committees
- Attitudes of male teachers towards girl children and their impact on children's learning
- Gender gaps in school curriculum

At the end of the session, he urged the members present to strategise the organisation of Gender Committees in their respective schools.

CRPF

A training session was held for 25 CRPF members on 4th February in Vikarabad. Resource support was provided by Prakash and Narsimha. The members reviewed the status of child rights in their respective villages with focus on problems faced by children. They also discussed the outcomes of their hostel visits. One member from Arkathala informed that a teacher of the HS had been showing nudes to children from Class 6. Other issues that they focused on included gender inequality and children's learning outcomes.

The participants were given inputs on identifying children's issues, gender, coordination with the KBS and collaborating with the SMC. They were familiarised with the concept of the Gender Committee. Other areas that the resource persons touched upon were identifying hidden abuse, manifestations of gender discrimination, and role division at home. The participants were exhorted to transform their

homes into gender neutral zones and to work hand in hand with other stakeholders such as the SMC, the KBS and the Gender Committee.

CRPF members from 6 villages of Vikarabad mandal have already been addressing girl child issues – on a priority basis. Ananta Rao from Madgul Chittampally encourages his niece to participate in all KBS meetings. In one incident, a 16-year old boy had gone to the house of a 14-year old girl from the village had gone to her house at 3 a.m. one day and had pulled her by the hand. Ananta Rao came to know of this and took the issue to the notice of the police. The officials asked the children’s parents to sort out the issue between themselves, as both the girl and boy were underage. The both of them have stopped meeting each other.

A mandal level training session was held for 11 CRPF members in Shankarpally on 8th February. They reviewed the stats of child rights in their respective villages with focus on the quality of education, dropout, implementation of the midday meal scheme and problems faced by children. The resource persons addressed them on discrimination against girls in society. The illustrated through examples the different forms in which gender bias is practiced against girls and women. They also spoke on the strategies that could be employed to achieve gender equality in home and in public spaces including the school. They dwelt in fair detail on the link between child marriage and child rights. They urged the participants to strengthen relations with the KBS and utilise their services where necessary.

KBS Leaders

Mandal level training sessions were conducted for 162 KBS leaders from Suryapet district during November. The details of the sessions are as under:

Mandal	Date	Members	Resource Persons
Atmakur	8 Nov.	60	MVF, police personnel
Maddirala	7 Nov.	55	MV F, Cluster Resource Person, head teacher
Nutankal	5 Nov.	47	MVF, Child Line team, school teacher
Total		162	

The members reviewed their initiatives within the family and the impact of the same, the problems associated with online classes, the status of child marriage and the problems being faced by them. They also spoke on the different forms of discrimination against them and on how they coped with their problems. They were later given inputs on the use of social media tools such as Google Meet, WhatsApp, etc. The organisers involved them in group work to illustrate the use of these tools. A presentation was also made on the provisions of the Child Marriage Prevention Act and the Child Line facility.

ANNEXURE ONE

COVID-19 INTERVENTION

The sudden imposition of lockdown in the last week of March 2020 following the onset of COVID-19 threw the lives of one and all into disarray. Practically the whole world came to a standstill. Migrant families and the poor were particularly affected, as they had no alternative sources of livelihood and their savings were next to nil. Absence of public transport meant that migrants could not return home. Hundreds of them wallowed in hunger, deprived of their basic rights. They could not meet their daily needs. Some of them left on foot for their hometowns, walking hundreds of kilometres. The State government had made provisions for rations to be issued to the needy, but a number of families could not access them for various reasons. Many children ended up malnourished, as they could not avail themselves of the midday meal provided to them through schools. Older children, who had their own issues, were more vulnerable. Girls were either overburdened with domestic chores, employed as agricultural labourers or married off. Boys, on the other hand, worked in farms or in small mechanics' sheds/garages.

Survey of access to entitlements

Many poor families could not access the Public Distribution System due to such factors as the absence of their names from local records or the non-acceptance of thumb impressions by biometric devices. Quite a few of them did not have their Ration Cards with them.

The organisers gathered information relating to families that could not avail themselves of rations and other entitlements. Notwithstanding restrictions on their movements, they either met these families personally or reached them through support groups such as KBS, the CRPF and youth. They gathered details of the family members, their nativity and the duration for which they had not got their rations. These details were shared with elected representatives and officials such as Sarpanches, ward members, Municipal Chairpersons, Tehsildars, Revenue Inspectors in charge of civil supplies, CDPOs Anganwadi Teachers and officials of the Health and Police departments. The PD – Women Development & Child Welfare and the District Collector were also contacted.

While the overall response was encouraging, there were some minor hiccups. Organiser from Atmakur Lalita informed the Tehsildar that nearly 3600 people had not received any relief material and proceeded to share the details with him but he expressed his helplessness. She made it a public issue and also sent a WhatsApp message to the District Collector. The media gave wide coverage to the issue. It was around this time that the Hon'ble High Court of Telangana delivered a judgement instructing the government to extend relief to all needy families without excuse. The organisers coordinated with the authorities to ensure that the families got their rations, ICDS supplies and other benefits.

The table below provides details of the families benefitted through this intervention:

Mandal	Migrant families that could not access benefits	Non-migrant families that didn't receive benefits	Families receiving benefits	Children aged 0-5 from families that received benefits	Children aged 6-18 from families that received benefits	Pregnant/Nursing women
Shankarpally	20	22	42	20	54	2
Vikarabad	20	221	241	0	23	0
Atmakur	264	3336	3600	24	369	0
Nutankal	144	370	514	24	145	89
Maddirala	436	45	481	0	503	18
Total	884	3994	4878	68	1094	109

Child Labour

It was observed that children had suffered a lot due to COVID-19 and some of them were even subjected to violence. Quite a few of them were employed in agricultural farms. The team from Nutankal noted that children were being sent to work in left cotton farms during June. Some children's

parents had engaged them in NREGS works that had been sanctioned to them. The organisers spoke to the Sarpanch and the Field Assistant and told them that this was against the law. Girls from Pedanemila were being sent to pluck lemons and boys were being put to work in cotton farms. There were also reports of children working in villages of Shankarpally mandal. Two boys from Parveda cluster had been going to a civil construction site. Some children from Siddulur cluster in Vikarabad mandal informed that their parents had left them free for one month but had later forced them to assist in their farm work.

The organisers referred these issues to the Tehsildar, ICDS officials, Sarpanchs and ward members. They also submitted petitions to them along with the CRPF. In many cases children were withdrawn from work and there are still hard cases which need some more efforts to free them from work.

Child Marriage/Missing girls

The parents of some older girls felt insecure about their daughters and felt that it would be better to get them married off because they were uncertain about the reopening of schools in the near future. Stray incidents of girls' elopement were a key influencing factor in this regard. The organisers managed to lay off some of the marriages but a few parents were cautious and performed the weddings away from home and public attention. The team from Nutankal received news from the KBS that a girl from Yedavelli was due to be married. They contacted the Tehsildar and the CDPO and counseled the girl and her parents along with them, the Anganwadi Worker and the CRPF.

In another instance in Pedanemila, the organiser could not make it to the venue. She, therefore, rang up 1098 and informed them about the incident. A team of officials went to the girl's house, where her grandparents denied any plans of marriage. The neighbours asked the officials how they could expect that weddings could be performed in a crisis situation like this. The officials trusted them and returned. However, the girl was married after 4 days in a far-off place. The girl had earlier been mainstreamed to Class 9 by the MVF team but had dropped out. The organisers counseled her during the follow up exercise and sent her to KGBV.

One girl from Ravulapally – Shankarpally mandal went missing one day. Her parents traced her four days later – she had left home with a youth. After she returned home, the village elders advised her father to get her married to the youth, as this could save the family embarrassment. He was, however, unwilling. The team from Atmakur mandal successfully prevented the potential marriage of a girl from Class 10, with the support of the Sarpanch and the CDPO. A girl from Gattikallu cluster in Atmakur mandal had gone to the Class 10 exam venue and went absconding with a youth right on the first day. She was traced and brought back within a day. She refused to appear for the remaining examinations. The organisers counseled her at length, after which she consented to write the remaining papers.

The incidence of such incidents being high, the organisers put in special efforts to prevent their recurrence. They spread across the message that child marriage was a criminal act and that it was also necessary to observe children thoroughly. They contacted local leaders and sought their intervention. They were requested to take all possible steps to curb child marriage, ensure that adolescent girls did not yield to temptation or take hasty decisions, keep children away from work and prevent child abuse/trafficking. The Municipal chairman, ICDS personnel, Sarpanches and ward members understood the gravity of the situation and cooperated. They used means such as *Dappu*, pamphlets and social media platforms to communicate to parents. They also discussed these issues during their periodical meetings:

Review Meeting

An online (Zoom) meeting was held on 24th June to review the progress of activities during the period April – June. The entire project staff and the Project Coordinator participated along with Dr Shantha Sinha, National Convenor of MVF R Venkat Reddy and Chief Coordinator of MVF Y Rajendra Prasad.

Rajendra Prasad regretted the inability to organise training programmes for the KBS members as planned. He suggested the conduct of virtual meetings with the girls and sharing of information through digital mode. He informed that colleges had been inviting applications for admissions. Those

interested could apply. Venkat Reddy recommended reaching younger children through adolescent children. This would engage the former productively.

Dr Shantha Sinha appreciated the role of the project team in initiating a debate in gender at the community level. At the same time, she exhorted them to be extra vigilant put in all possible efforts, in view of the pandemic, that vulnerable children were not sucked into the labour force, undoing the efforts of more than 3 decades. They could also take a cue from MVF resource persons in the project area of ASPIRE – Odisha and engage children in some form of academic activity or the other. She wished them all the best.

Online meetings

Online (Zoom) meetings were held in Shankarpally and Vikarabad mandals with community support groups as below to discuss relief activities against the backdrop of COVID-19:

Mandal	Date	Group	Members
Shankarpally	17 th June	KBS leaders	13
	20 th June	Sarpanchs	7
Vikarabad	18 th June	Sarpanchs	7
	29 th June	KBS members	40

Discussions were held with Sarpanchs on the impact of the lockdown on the status of children's nutrition and education. Some Sarpanchs demanded the reopening of schools, claiming that there was pressure on children to work. Girls were vulnerable to abuse and at risk of being married underage. The Sarpanchs were requested to prevent this from happening. They could reactivate libraries for children's benefit. Some of them promised to donate to libraries. It was also planned to petition for provision of the midday meal to children, reopening of schools or children's monitoring by teachers and textbooks for children to the Zilla Parishad chairperson, the MLA, the District Collector, the DEO and Mandal Parishad Presidents.

Other issues

During the initial days of lockdown, no problems were reported. In fact, parents were reported to have taken proactive decisions to safeguard their families. One lorry driver from Nutankal stayed away from work, as the occurrence of any untoward incident would put his family into turmoil. Another father employed in a petrol pump took a similar decision. Such gestures made children, especially girls, very happy. However, this did not last long. According to organiser Dhanamma, parents started becoming intolerant of their girls' movements.

One Sunanda (name changed) frequently went to meet a close friend of hers and got acquainted with a youth named Suresh (name changed). Though there was no relation between them and they had spoken to each other only coincidentally, some trouble mongers saw them speaking to each other and resorted to character assassination. As soon as the rumour about them being in love reached her parents, they not only stopped her from going out but also spoke insultingly to her. Sensitive as she was, she attempted suicide by poisoning. Luckily, she came out of the situation after being promptly attended to. Her parents repented their hasty behaviour.

Children also often began quarrelling with each other, vying for access to television in the absence of an alternative. Though this was not usually a major issue, the fact that they were largely idle led to frequent tiffs. Girls complained that they were overburdened with domestic chores. The Sarpanch of Mukundapuram received a complaint from a ward member that the mother of one girl from his ward had pledged her daughter's services against a certain sum of money that she had borrowed. A case was filed against the mother, who claimed that the girl was studying in Hyderabad. A case was lodged in the police station and she was freed from work.

In a gruesome incident in Thummala Penpahad cluster of Atmakur mandal, a pastor was alleged to have been harassing and inflicting violence on his two adolescent daughters. His acts were so embarrassing to be even spoken of. The girls contemplated suicide and actually attempted it once but were counseled by the organiser. The issue was also discussed during a KBS meeting and it was resolved to act against their father.

ANNEXURE TWO**KBS EXPOSURE VISITS****Mandal****Atmakur**

Date	From	To	Members	Details
2 nd Feb.	Kandhagatla	Nimmikal	16	<p>As many as 30 girls from Nimmikal turned up for the meeting. They spoke on the formation of the KBS, its benefits, redressing school issues, frequency of their meetings and agenda, book reading, games and newspaper reading. They also spoke on how they had been identifying and resolving issues of concern and their status at home, in school and in the community. They informed that there had been a distinct change in gender roles and that gender equality had been achieved in most homes. They had also learnt to question and to assert their rights.</p> <p>The visiting girls informed that they had issues with mobility. This could be attributed mainly to an auto rickshaw accident in which a girl had succumbed. They had been trying to convince their parents to be more considerate of their needs.</p>
9 th Feb.	Midthanpally	Pedanemila	15	<p>The meeting was attended by 20 local girls in addition to the visitors. The latter spoke on the importance of the KBS and on the manner in which they had been identifying and addressing gender issues at the family, school and community levels. They also spoke on the problems that they had encountered, the way in which they had convinced their parents, the problems that they had faced in socialisation between boys and girls, and changes that they had experienced at the family level. They also spoke on their failures and challenges. Their self-confidence had also gone up and the gender gap in school and at the family had been bridged. Child marriage was one very challenging area. They had involved key community stakeholders and had addressed the issue to an extent.</p>
16 th Feb.	Isthalapuram	Nimmikal	9	<p>Participants at the meeting included 18 30 girls from Nimmikal. They spoke on the formation of the KBS, its benefits, redressing school issues, frequency of their meetings and agenda, book reading, games and newspaper reading. They also spoke on how they had been identifying and resolving issues of concern and their status at</p>

				<p>home, in school and in the community. They informed that there had been a distinct change in gender roles and that gender equality had been achieved in most homes. They had also learnt to question and to assert their rights.</p> <p>The girls also informed that they had prevented 2 cases of child marriage by contacting 1098. They had been given inputs on the key aspects of the CMPA, the POCSO Act and the RTE Act. They had received the cooperation of the SHE Team and the Sarpanch. Their parents had begun to cooperate with and trust them. The girls' mobility had increased. They have now begun going to the SC Colony and meeting their friends there, something unheard of in the past. They had also been celebrating each other's birthdays in school,</p> <p>The visiting girls informed that they had prevented some cases of child marriage and had been updating the Sarpanch on school related issues. Parents had begun sending them to distant places.</p>
1 st March	Isthalapuram	Nimmikal	7	<p>Participants at the meeting included 15 girls from Nimmikal. They spoke on the formation of the KBS, its benefits, redressing school issues, frequency of their meetings and agenda, book reading, games and newspaper reading. They also spoke on how they had been identifying and resolving issues of concern and their status at home, in school and in the community. They informed that there had been a distinct change in gender roles and that gender equality had been achieved in most homes. They had also learnt to question and to assert their rights.</p> <p>The girls also informed that they had prevented 2 cases of child marriage by contacting 1098. They had been given inputs on the key aspects of the CMPA, the POCSO Act and the RTE Act. They had received the cooperation of the SHE Team and the Sarpanch. Their parents had begun to cooperate with and trust them. The girls' mobility had increased. They have now begun going to the SC Colony and meeting their friends there, something unheard of in the past. They had also been celebrating each other's birthdays in school,</p>

23 rd Feb.	Vijayanagaram X Roads	Nimmikal	7	<p>Participants at the meeting included 27 girls from Nimmikal. They displayed charts on the formation of the KBS, its benefits, redressing school issues, frequency of their meetings and agenda, book reading, games and newspaper reading. They also spoke on how they had been identifying and resolving issues of concern and their status at home, in school and in the community. They informed that there had been a distinct change in gender roles and that gender equality had been achieved in most homes. They had also learnt to question and to assert their rights.</p> <p>The girls also informed that they had prevented 2 cases of child marriage by contacting 1098. They had been given inputs on the key aspects of the CMPA, the POCSO Act and the RTE Act. They had received the cooperation of the SHE Team and the Sarpanch. Their parents had begun to cooperate with and trust them. The girls' mobility had increased. They have now begun going to the SC Colony and meeting their friends there, something unheard of in the past. They had also been celebrating each other's birthdays in school,</p>
23 rd Feb.	Patha Suryapet	Nimmikal	12	<p>Participants at the meeting included 27 girls from Nimmikal. They displayed charts on the formation of the KBS, its benefits, redressing school issues, frequency of their meetings and agenda, book reading, games and newspaper reading. They also spoke on how they had been identifying and resolving issues of concern and their status at home, in school and in the community. They informed that there had been a distinct change in gender roles and that gender equality had been achieved in most homes. They had also learnt to question and to assert their rights.</p> <p>The girls also informed that they had prevented 2 cases of child marriage by contacting 1098. They had been given inputs on the key aspects of the CMPA, the POCSO Act and the RTE Act. They had received the cooperation of the SHE Team and the Sarpanch. Their parents had begun to cooperate with and trust them. The girls' mobility had increased. They have now begun going</p>

				to the SC Colony and meeting their friends there, something unheard of in the past. They had also been celebrating each other's birthdays in school,
23 rd Feb.	Kothagudem	Mukundapuram	15	Participants of the meeting included 23 KBS members from Mukundapuram. They used charts to illustrate the concept of gender, define the term Adolescent Girl, the process of forming a KBS, its uses and gender issues. They spoke on the manner in which they had identified and resolved gender issues and the challenges they had faced. Their parents had supported them all through. Their mobility had improved. Their village had been recognised for their contributions to gender equality and this had attracted visitors from 7 States

Mandal Maddirala

Date	From	To	Members	Details
23 rd Feb.	Maddirala	Mukundapuram	12	Participants of the meeting included 23 KBS members from Mukundapuram. They used charts to illustrate the concept of gender, define the term Adolescent Girl, the process of forming a KBS, its uses and gender issues. They spoke on the manner in which they had identified and resolved gender issues and the challenges they had faced. Their parents had supported them all through. Their mobility had improved. Their village had been recognised for their contributions to gender equality and this had attracted visitors from 7 States.
16 th Feb.	Chandupatla	Mukundapuram	19	Participants of the meeting included 15 KBS members from Mukundapuram. They used charts to illustrate the concept of gender, define the term Adolescent Girl, the process of forming a KBS, its uses and gender issues. They spoke on the manner in which they had identified and resolved gender issues and the challenges they had faced. Their parents had supported them all through. Their mobility had improved. Their village had been recognised for their contributions to gender equality and this had attracted visitors from 7 States.
9 th Feb.	Kukkudam	Mukundapuram	18	Participants of the meeting included 15 KBS members from Mukundapuram. They used charts to illustrate the concept of gender, define the term Adolescent Girl, the process of forming

				<p>a KBS, its uses and gender issues. One of the members spoke on key provisions of the Juvenile Justice Act, the RTE Act, the POCSO Act and the CMPA,</p> <p>The girls also dwelt in brief on the manner in which they had identified and resolved gender issues and the challenges faced. Their parents had supported them all through. Their mobility had improved. Their village had been recognised for their contributions to gender equality and this had attracted visitors from 7 States.</p>
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Mandal Nutankal

Date	From	To	Members	Details
16 th Feb.	Yedavelli Miryala	Thalasingaram	22 13	<p>The visitors were joined by 32 girls from Thalasingaram. They spoke on the frequency and agenda of their meetings, their issues and how they had resolved them, petitions to Sarpanchs and head teachers, formation of the Committees, problems at home and how they had resolved them. They had convinced their non-cooperative parents to let them pursue their education. They had begun to go to their friends' homes more frequently for combined studies. There had also been a distinct transformation in gender roles and work division in their homes. They had been reading library books and participating in a wide variety of games. They had also learnt to question gender inequality within the family.</p> <p>The visitors were happy to learn that the girls from Thalasingaram had interacted with the Sarpanch, which they had not done so far. They promised to do so after their return home. They also asked the girls what steps they had taken to prevent child marriage.</p>
23 rd Feb.	Chilpakuntla	Thalasingaram	17	<p>The participants included 24 girls from Thalasingaram. They used charts to explain their activities. They spoke on the frequency and agenda of their meetings, their issues and how they had resolved them, petitions to Sarpanchs and head teachers, formation of the Committees, problems at home and how they had resolved them. They had convinced their non-cooperative parents to let them pursue</p>

				<p>their education. They had begun to go to their friends' homes more frequently for combined studies. There had also been a distinct transformation in gender roles and work division in their homes. They had been reading library books and participating in a wide variety of games. They had also learnt to question gender inequality within the family.</p> <p>The visitors also shared their personal experiences. Some of them had been traveling up to Nutankal by cycle to attend school. They had addressed some cases of eve teasing with the support of the Sarpanch, the SMC and the CRPF and had also stopped 2 cases of child marriage. In addition, they had also counseled two girls to pursue education. one of them had gone missing from home for a week and had just returned.</p>
23 rd Feb.	Machanpally	Nimmikal	13	<p>As many as 27 local girls attended the meeting. They used charts to explain the KBS intervention. They spoke on the formation of the KBS, its benefits, redressing school issues, frequency of their meetings and agenda, book reading, games and newspaper reading. They also spoke on how they had been identifying and resolving issues of concern and their status at home, in school and in the community.</p> <p>They informed that there had been a distinct change in gender roles and that gender equality had been achieved in most homes. They had also learnt to question and to assert their rights. the ANM and the Anganwadi Teacher, who were present, informed that they counseled the girls on various aspects of health and nutrition respectively.</p>

Mandal: Shankarpally

Date	From	To	Members	Details
16 th Feb.	Gopularam, Dontanpally	Maharajpet	8 6	KBS members from Maharajpet displayed the Village Maps that they had drawn. The Maps contained information on employees, child population, the status of child marriage and girl child dropout, using charts. They also spoke on the frequency with which they had been convened their meetings, their agenda and their interaction with the Sarpanch and the SMC.

				<p>They made a brief presentation on the problems faced by them, restrictions on their mobility and their education and employment opportunities. They had not been visiting the SC Colony earlier, but this practice had changed.</p>
16 th Feb.	Mahalingapuram	Parveda	10	<p>KBS members from Parveda displayed the Village Maps that they had drawn. The Maps contained information on employees, child population, the status of child marriage and girl child dropout, using charts. They also spoke on the frequency with which they had been convened their meetings, their agenda and their interaction with the Sarpanch and the SMC.</p> <p>They made a brief presentation on the problems faced by them, restrictions on their mobility and their education and employment opportunities. They had not been visiting some parts of the village earlier but this practice had changed.</p> <p>The visitors also interacted with a VO leader and members of the Mandal Mothers' Association on girl child issues and their coordination with the KBS.</p>
16 th Feb.	Chandippa	Ravulapally	12	<p>KBS members from Ravulapally displayed the Village Maps that they had drawn. The Maps contained information on employees, child population, the status of child marriage and girl child dropout, using charts. They also spoke on the frequency with which they had been convened their meetings, their agenda and their interaction with the Sarpanch and the SMC.</p> <p>They made a brief presentation on the problems faced by them, restrictions on their mobility and their education and employment opportunities. They had not been visiting some parts of the village earlier, but this practice had changed.</p>
1 st March	Kothapally	Proddutur	11	<p>KBS members from Proddutur displayed the Village Maps that they had drawn. The Maps contained information on employees, child population, the status of child marriage and girl child dropout, using charts. They also spoke on the frequency with which they had been convened their meetings, their agenda and their interaction with the Sarpanch and the SMC.</p> <p>They made a brief presentation on the problems faced by them, restrictions on their mobility and their education and</p>

				<p>employment opportunities. They had not been visiting some parts of the village earlier but this practice had changed.</p> <p>The visitors also interacted with a VO leader and members of the Mandal Mothers' Association on girl child issues and their coordination with the KBS.</p>
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There has been improved turnout of girls in meetings and at the Centres. Interestingly, there is increased presence of older girls. Visitors from Gopularam, Mahalingapuram and Dontanpally replicated the Village Mapping exercise in their respective villages upon their return home. Girls from Dontanpally and Mahalingapuram spoke to the Sarpanchs of their villages and requested them for some space in the Gram Panchayat building. Both of them responded positively. Girls studying at the Class 10 and Intermediate level in Chandippa are regular participants in KBS meetings now.

A new Model Centre was set up in Kothapally, where the girls had been assembling in the Grama Sangham office earlier. They expressed happiness at having their own space. KBS members from the villages that had been visited are more self-confident now and also take pride in their presentation abilities. The KBS has also earned the acceptance and cooperation of Sarpanchs and other key villagers.

Mandal Vikarabad

Date	From	To	Members	Details
9 th Feb.	Alampally	Madgul Chittampally	9	<p>One girl each from Chittampally made a presentation on different aspects of the functioning of the KBS, using charts. The girls informed that they had not been going to the SC Colony earlier but have begun to do so now. They explained the Village Map that they had drawn and also described a sketch that featured an adolescent girl shedding tears. The presenter explained the girls' emotions.</p> <p>In all, 15 girls from the village were present. Half a dozen boys from the village, who had also assembled there, informed that they had begun to socialise with the girls after the formation of the KBS. The ASHA, who was also present, appreciated the girls and expressed solidarity with their agenda.</p> <p>The visitors expressed that the idea of using charts was an ingenious one that was very effective.</p>
23 rd Feb.	Kompally	Madanpally	10	<p>Girls from Madanpally described the Village Mapping process using charts and also spoke on the problems associated with child marriage. Whenever they had an issue to deal with, they discussed the in detail and referred them to the best person/ institution that could resolve it. They had been following up on children's education and had been following up</p>

				absentees and out-of-school children to school.
13 th Jan.	Gottimukkula	Siddulur	10	<p>One girl each from the village made a presentation on different aspects of the functioning of the KBS. The girls informed that they had not been going to the SC Colony earlier but have begun to do so now. They explained the Village Map that they had drawn and also described a sketch that featured an adolescent girl shedding tears. The presenter explained the girls' emotions.</p> <p>In all, 15 girls from the village were present. They informed that there had been polarisation on caste grounds in the village in the past but the situation had changed. The Sarpanch had provided a room in the village for their use.</p> <p>The Sarpanch, the Secretary, the ANM and the Anganwadi Teacher were also present at the venue of the meeting. They spoke on the status of education, awareness among community on child marriage and girls' higher education. The ANM had played a vital role in preventing 4 child marriages. The girls had been supporting the education of some orphaned girls.</p> <p>The visitors from Gottimukkula informed that their Sarpanch had also given them a room and was a regular at their meetings.</p>
.22 nd Feb.	Pulsumamidi	Siddulur	8	<p>Girls from Siddulur described the Village Mapping process and also spoke on the problems of child marriage. Whenever they had an issue to deal with, they discussed the in detail and referred them to the best person/ institution that could resolve it. They had followed up one girl that had dropped out of Junior College. her elder sister, who had been married young, had joined hands with them.</p>
9 th Feb.	Pulmaddi	Madanpally	13	<p>Girls from Madanpally informed that they had been assembling once a month and had engaged themselves in book reading sessions and discussions on newspaper clippings. They had identified and followed up some cases of child marriage and girl child dropout. They were regular participants in Gram Panchayat review meetings and VO meetings. VO leaders also attended their meetings. The local SMC chairperson arranged lunch for both the local girls and the visitors.</p>

ANNEXURE THREE

STORIES FROM THE FIELD

The organisers had been following up the case of Uma Rani – a differently abled girl from Proddutur in Shankarpally mandal, for nearly 8 years. She had cleared the Class 10 exams and was a very bright student. They spoke to her parents and offered to get her admitted in hostel. However, this was not to be, as the lockdown was imposed. They refused later to send her to hostel. Her father was a drunkard. The ward member was involved in the matter and he agreed to send her if any of her friends agreed to enrol in hostel along with her. He avoided the organiser for 3 days and the latter spoke sternly to Uma Rani. Her father finally got agreed to get her admitted but went absconding again. The girl's mother asked the organiser to take the girl to hostel, promising to convince her husband., At the other end, the warden of the hostel was unwilling to take her in, as she couldn't look after herself. She was all but immobile. The organiser asked the warden to enrol her first, assuring him that the issue would be taken care of later. In the meantime, Uma Rani was dissuaded by some of our neighbours and she told the organiser that she did not want to send her daughter to hostel. She was counseled once again and she consented. However, hardly a fortnight had passed when she informed the organiser that she had got a match for her daughter, who she wished to get married to a differently abled man. The organiser brought along some Gram Panchayat members and some CRPF members and persuaded her against spoiling her daughter's life.

*

Two youth aged 19 and 20 came to the school playground in ZPHS Maddirala one day around 9 .a m. Some of the girls asked them why they were there. They casually remarked that they were there to flirt. When one of the girls took the issue seriously, the youth dared her to call up the head teacher and gave her his phone. He was incidentally a tractor driver with a local leader. The organiser suggested the conduct of an SMC meeting to discuss the issue. The head teacher informed the MVF team and summoned the girl's parents to an SMC meeting. They were joined by 50 parents and the guilty youth. The girls narrated the entire incident before the youth arrived. They denied the occurrence of the incident. The head teacher took them to task and told them that they would be in trouble if they went overboard with their behaviour. One of the SMC members literally slapped the youth, after which their parents realised the seriousness of the issue and fell at the Sarpanch's feet. He told them that it was important for them to ensure that their children behaved properly. They gave a written declaration to this effect and the issue was resolved. The organiser spoke in brief on the POCSO and Juvenile Justice Acts.

*

Radhika – a Class 9 student from Mahalingapuram in Shankarpally mandal was due to get married to her maternal uncle Hanumanthu. She did not want to marry him because he was not only poor but also did not have proper employment. He owned a small hut in which she her parents and her aunts lived. Subsequent to her participation in a KBS meeting, she sent a text message and a Voice message to the organiser, telling that she didn't want to marry her uncle. Her mother and her aunts had been pressurising her. The organiser called up the Sarpanch and informed him of the matter. In the meantime, the Anganwadi Teacher saw that the house was fully lit up and decorated for the wedding. She overheard the family's discussion. The organiser called up Child Line. The Child Line team, the SHE Team, the organiser and the Sarpanch went in a team to Radhika's home and counseled both the bride and the groom. The latter declared in writing that he wouldn't marry her until she crossed the age of 18 years. The Sarpanch offered to meet the entire cost of her education.

*

The issue of girls' elopement was brought up for discussion in villages of Shankarpally mandal following an incident in Dontanpally. Nandini – a 17-year old from the village had fallen in love in love with a youth. Her younger sister informed this to the organiser. Nandini's parents had fixed her wedding with the youth. His parents were expected in the village the next day. She went missing the same day. The Sarpanch tracked her and filed a case against the youth, who already had two cases against him. He and the organiser counseled Nandini against keeping his company. The police also came to know of this and warned her that socialising with him was not good for her. Priyanka – a 15-year old girl from the same village wanted to marry her cousin, but her parents planned to get her

married to another man. She left home and went to her cousin's home. The organiser spoke to her mother, who was in the fields, and convinced her to drop the proposal.

*

Uma- a Class 10 student of ZPHS Kotapahad had dropped out of school after being stalked by a boy. She had been maintaining a distance from him but he had touched her on the shoulder lightly in a freak incident. Some of her classmate had seen this and had reported the issue to one of their teachers. The teachers spoke to her father, following which her grandmother asked her to stay away from school. Upon coming to know of this during a Gender Committee meeting, the SMC chairperson spoke to the girl along with the organiser. Uma, who was present at the next Committee, demanded to know why the teacher had targeted her when she had been innocent. She approached the head teacher. The teacher Nagamani apologised to Uma, The girl's parents filed a case under the POCSO Act and the youth was put behind bars.

*

Nandini – a 17-year old girl from Mahalingapuram in Shankarpally mandal was engaged to be married to a local youth. She was enrolled in Intermediate First Year and had been facing problems because had no phone. The youth bought her a phone. She was always busy with her classes and spoke to her friends regularly over phone and he found it difficult to maintain contact with her. He raised a ruckus and asked her if her education and friends were more important to her than he was. Irked, he called off the engagement. He blamed her family for this decision. Nandini's mother had abandoned both her daughters and had remarried. Her father was mentally unstable. Upon coming to know of this from an old woman in the neighbourhood, the organiser spoke to the youth along with some caste elders. They told him that it was against the law to perform the marriage of girls below the age of 18. Nandini's parents eventually dropped plans for her wedding.

*

As many as 4 cases of girl child abuse had been recorded in Suryapet district within a period of just one month. Community groups from all 3 mandals of the project area petitioned to the SP, seeking his intervention. They had earlier tried to contact the SI, but he did not respond. The CRPF and the Mothers' Association later approached the SP along with the organisers. He sought suggestions from them. They opined that a cultural awareness campaign could be taken up by the police department and they could also ensure convictions under the POCSO Act. The police department subsequently held cultural performances in Thallasingaram, Mukundapuram and Nassimpeta villages on a pilot basis. This activity was replicated in 6 mandals outside the MVF project area.

*

A 16-year old girl from Annaram village of Vikarabad mandal, who had cleared her Intermediate First Year, left home one day unannounced. This issue came to light during the conduct of a survey in the village. The parents had not taken any action for two days until then. The organiser suggested contacting the police, who traced the girl's whereabouts within a day's time. She had accompanied a local youth to his village. The police didn't lodge a case, as she was legally a minor. The village elders were also supportive of the girl's parents. She, however, wanted to get married to the youth. The Sarpanch dissuaded her and told her that education had to be her priority until she turned 18 and that she could take her own decisions then. She agreed to resume her studies.

*

Anganwadi Teacher Gowri from Guguloth Thanda – Maddirala had an affair with her cousin Srinivas. Her two sons had been studying in a hostel. Srinivas had two daughters. His wife Parvati fought with him over his relation with Gowri. She left him and went to her mother's home. The VO leaders informed this to the organiser during a meeting. Gowri, at the other end, left her husband and stopped attending to her duties. Her father-in-law, who was a ward member, a VO leader from the village and the ICDS Supervisor went to her home in a group and counseled her. Her father-in-law told her that her job would be at stake if she persisted in such irregularity. She resumed her duties. At the other end, Gowri's sister-in-law convinced Parvati, who was a good friend of hers, to return to her village. Parvathi's children are back to school.

The parents of 3 girls aged 10, 12 and 14 years respectively from Atmakur were always involved in fights with each other, due to which the children's education was disrupted. Their father had an affair with a woman from Suryapet. Upon coming to know of this, his wife picked up an altercation with the woman and approached the police in Suryapet. The officials asked her to go to the Police Station in Atmakur and submit proofs of her family members. She prepared herself for this but was restrained by the local VO leaders. They counseled her along with the Sarpanch. The children resumed their schooling, but the problem resurfaced not before long. The mother left home, taking along her youngest daughter. The other girls met the Sarpanch and told him that they wanted their sister back with them. The Sarpanch and the VO leaders counseled the parents a second time and the matter has been put to rest for now.

*

A woman and her husband from SC Colony – Thallasingaram in Nutankal had affairs with two different people. The husband began to ignore the family and the wife stopped working altogether, which created problems for their children. At the other end, the man with whom the wife had an affair also quit working. The issue came up for discussion during a KBS meeting. The members informed the organiser that the second man's wife had been sending her daughter to work in order to support the family. She herself got accustomed to alcohol. She began to send her sons, who were studying in Classes 7 and 10, to Maddirala to fetch rice from the PDS outlet. The VO members counseled her to stop drinking at least for her children's sake. She did not listen to them initially but consented after they met her on 7-8 occasions. She reduced her intake of alcohol after some of the locals arranged rice for her locally.

*

The father of 12-year old Manisha and 13-year old Mahesh from Mukundapuram in Maddirala was a heavy drinker. He had an affair with another woman and he often beat his wife, who was a VO leader. The organiser came to know of this during a meeting. The Village Bookkeeper went to the woman's house, accompanied by 5 VO leaders and the organiser. When spoken to, the man replied that he was 50 years old but his wife did not care for him. He alleged that his wife didn't cook for him. The woman came up with a different version and told them that he did not like it when she even asked him where he had gone. The man was in a drunken state and the Bookkeeper and the organiser met him later. They warned him that action would be initiated against him under the Domestic Violence Act. The situation has improved now.

*

A Gram Panchayat meeting was held in Mahalingapuram on 29th January to discuss teacher absenteeism. One of the teachers had been absent for the last one week and had signed against her name in the attendance register when she next reported. The SMC chairperson, who noticed this, took some pictures. One of the school teachers informed this to the news media. The issue became public, following which an SMC meeting was held with the participation of the Sarpanch to discuss the issue. A letter that was addressed to the DEO and was signed jointly by the Sarpanch and the SMC chairperson. The teacher was asked to mend her ways, failing which the letter would be submitted to the DEO. She admitted her mistake and promised to be serious about her duties.

*

A couple of Class 7 boys from Atmakur Model School proposed to heir juniors from Class 6. Some of their fellow students poked fun at them. This issue surfaced during a Gender Committee meeting. the members also informed that some Class 10 children had been taking selfies in the school premises. Some boys and girls had been going to the nearby temple during the short break. The teacher in charge of the Gender Committee assembled them together and counseled them. She also spoke in brief on the provisions of the POCSO Act. she consciously included one of the erring boys in the Committee, following which the situation improved.

*

Children from Class 10 in HS Atmakur were getting late to home, as the Study Hour extended to late in the evening until 630 p.m. The Gender Committee spoke to the head teachers and requested them to let the children leave earlier at 530 p.m. Some of the teachers had been closing the doors while

class was in session because they did not want the children to be disturbed. The classrooms were, however, congested and this inconvenienced the children. In addition, whenever a teacher was absent, one of their colleagues would abruptly engage the children without notice, getting them to lose concentration. All these issues were resolved through a meeting of the Committee.

*

Two children from Class 8 in HS Nassimpeta – Atmakur mandal were highly irregular to their classes. They had to walk 4kilometres to school and this sometimes wearied them, due to which they bunked their classes. They had got accustomed to smoking and consumption of tobacco. They also stole a mobile phone on one occasion. The organiser met them along with the Sarpanch and the ward member and spoke to them. The Sarpanch counseled them on the importance of education. it would help them gain not just employment but social respect as well. The CRP also spoke to their parents. the teachers promised stationery for the children and they returned to school.

*

The Gender Committee of HS Mahalingapuram drew the attention of the organiser to the condition of a Class 9 girl with complaints of epilepsy. She often experienced giddiness and had seizures. On one such occasion, she shouted out aloud and both her classmates and her teacher grew pensive. She felt guilty about it and dropped out once for 2 weeks. Her teachers were also inconsiderate of her. The organiser took up the issue with the head teacher, who asked her colleagues not to behave in this manner. The girl has returned to school.

*

Children from Atmakur informed that their teachers were very strict and did not tolerate irregularity or late coming. They severely punished children that did not wear the school uniform or shoes or did not finish their home assignments. However, one or more of them was always on leave, inconveniencing them. The Sarpanch, who had himself been a teacher in the past, questioned the head teacher sternly. The latter vented his anger at a girl that been absent for one whole fortnight due to health issues. He had not permitted her to resume her schooling after she returned. He spoke rudely to her parents, who called up the organiser. She got the Sarpanch to speak to the DEO, who instructed the head teacher to take her in.

*

Lingamma – a Class 10 student from Nassimpeta in Atmakur (S) mandal had migrated to Hyderabad along with her parents. They had put her and her brother, who was studying in Class 7, in a private school though they had no home or land of their own. Her mother was a maidservant and her father a construction worker. Lingamma was keen on studying after her return home and asked her mother for a phone so that she could attend online classes. Her mother told her that she could not afford one but Lingamma was adamant and asked her why she was so bent on spoiling her future. Her mother finally gave in and borrowed some money to buy smartphones for both her children.

*

Gundepally Karthik – a Class 10 student from Settigudem in Atmakur dropped out of school for 56 days. He began to grow long hair for no specific reason and also did not talk to anyone. When the organiser probed him, he informed that He had fallen for a girl three years ago and he had avowed that he would cut his hair only after he had spoken to her. He was also unwilling to give the annual exams. The organiser advised him that silly issues such as these must not impede his progress. He got his hair cut after a couple of days and wrote the exams.

*

Radha Priya – a Class 9 student from Tangaturu – Shankarpally had dropped out for 2-3 weeks. The SMC chairperson identified her case and informed this to the organiser. The both of them went to the girl's house along with the Anganwadi Teacher and counseled her alcoholic father. He was not in favour of the girl's schooling because he felt that she was too old to attend school. The team told him that age was no barrier to education and that she was a good student. She finally returned to school. the team from Ervaguda followed up Manideep from Class 8 and Charan from Class 7 in a similar manner.

The SMC chairperson and the Sarpanch mobilised funds worth Rs 15 lakhs from the Asst. Commissioner – GST, Hyderabad to meet the costs of tiles for walls, flooring, construction of toilets and bathrooms, provision of water pipeline, supply of purified water and a napkin making machine in Ramulu Thanda, Thetakunda Thanda – Kasigudem and Thetakunda Thanda – Kotapahad in Nutankal mandal. Minister Jagadishwar Reddy and the Commissioner – GST were present at the launch ceremony in addition to the Principal Secretary – Education., the DEO, the Tehsildar and the MPDO.

*

The Sarpanch of Gottimukkula had offered to solve any problem being faced by the girls and that all they had to do was to write the details on a small piece of paper. One Class 9 student from the village wrote to him that her alcoholic father often shouted at her in a drunken stupor without regard for her dignity. The Sarpanch had received nearly 60 complaints on alcoholism, school problems, domestic violence, etc. He passed a resolution during a Grama Sabha to the effect that liquor would be no longer sold in the village. Another girl informed that a teacher had been touching her indiscriminately. He cautioned the teacher against such behaviour. He also participated in a KBS meeting.

*

The parents of Swathi – a Class 10 student from Chilpakuntla in Nutankal had no television connection and also did not own a smartphone. This had greatly inconvenienced her and her younger brother – a student of Class 9. The children asked them for smartphones, but the couple did not appreciate their importance. They felt, on the other hand, that having phones would distract them. Swathi shared this during a KBS meeting. The organiser personally met her parents at home and counseled them at length on the necessity of phones for their children. They were both convinced and sold off 3 sheep to buy phones for the children and get a television connection at home.

*

Bhargavi from Madanpally in Vikarabad mandal began to live with her grandparents after her father died and her mother left her for another man. She was admitted in the Government Junior College, but her grandparents withdrew her from college and put her to work. Members of the local KBS identified her case and spoke to the organiser. They jointly counseled the grandparents, who tried to avoid them. They had been planning to marry off Bhargavi. Upon coming to know of this, the organiser gathered proof of the girl's age and counseled the couple against proceeding with their plans. Bhargavi had been sent to another village in the meantime. They managed to track down her whereabouts and personally followed her up to College.

*

Sravani – a Class 10 pass out from Gubbadi Fatehpur in Shankarpally mandal fell prey to the evil designs of her mother's fellow worker. Her mother worked in a company located nearby. One day, he approached the girl with some money, telling her that her mother was ill and that she wanted to see the girl. Sravani believed him and went with him. He and his friends forcibly married her to him against her wishes. She was with them for one whole week. The organiser came to know of this through one of her neighbours and informed this to Sravani's mother, who filed a case against him.

*

KBS leader from Thallasingaram in Nutankal mandal Yamini was keen on enrolling in Sakshisri Junior College but couldn't afford the fee of Rs 16000. The management was unwilling to negotiate. Yamini informed this to the organiser, who accompanied her and her father to the college. She asked the Principal to consider reducing the fee, but he informed that he had to pay his lecturers even if physical classes were not being held. A fee Rs 9000 was finalised and it was also agreed upon that it would be paid in instalments.

*

Sreeja and Swathi – both students of Class 10 from Girls' HS, Shankarpally were highly irregular. They would leave home for school but roam around aimlessly. Even when they went to school, they would drop out in the afternoon session. When questioned, they came up with lame excuses. The

organiser and some women told them that were in an important phase of life and that they had to behave in a very responsible manner, failing which they would have to face the consequences. They mended their ways.

*

Members of the KBS from Kothapally in Shankarpally mandal informed the organiser that Jyothi – a Class 9 student was engaged to be married and that her parents proposed to shift to another village. The organiser called up Child Line. The SHE Team, the mandal officials and the organisers counseled Jyothi's parents and convinced them to call off the wedding. They also gave a written declaration to this effect. They came to know only later that the proposed groom was already married. They heaved a sigh of relief.

*

The head teacher of UPS Nassimpeta, who had taken over charge two years ago, had never shared details of the school grant. Subsequent to their participation in the orientation session, the SMC members sought details. They were informed that an amount of Rs 50000 was available. The members also went around the classrooms and tested some of the children at random in order to assess them for their learning levels. They noted that the children were not up to the mark. They pointed this out to the head teacher and asked him to be serious about his duties.

*

An SMC chairperson from Jigini Thanda in Atmakur (S) mandal distrusted his daughter's movements and did not buy her a phone because he suspected that she would misuse it. His wife, however, had a different pinion of the girl. She and her mother shared this information with the organiser during a meeting. The organiser discussed the issue with the chairperson during an SMC meeting and advised him to treat his daughter in a friendly manner and to let her have her freedom. He has changed his attitude and is now supportive of her. He has also bought her a phone.

*

R Anushka and Madhavi – sisters from Isthapuram had problems taking notes from online classes on television. Their parents were too poor to buy them a phone. The children could not manage their homework and their teachers eventually informed their parents of this. They managed with the television for as long as they could, but they finally had to force their parents. The girls were enrolled in Class 10 and Intermediate (First Year) respectively. realising the importance of a phone, they sold some goats and bought a phone for them.

*

The father of Reshma – a migrant girl from Maddirala and a student of Class 8, was a drunkard. Having employed as a watchman while in Hyderabad, he didn't have enough savings and could afford neither a smartphone nor a television. Reshma was, however, a bright student. Her mother requested the organiser to help her. She was linked to a self-help group run by Bala Vikasa NGO, from who she got a loan of 10,000 to purchase a phone for the girl.

*

Seshu Kumari – a 15-year old girl from Beerelli befriended a youth on Facebook. Her parents took her to task upon learning of this. She missed a series of KBS meetings. The organiser came to know of this and inquired into the issue. Both Seshu Kumari and her mother were invited to a VO meeting. The woman was told that there was nothing wrong in the girl's socialising as long as she did not cross the limits of decency. Seshu Kumari's mother has now changed her attitude.

*

Praveen Kumar from Kotalaguda, Vikarabad injured his leg in an accident and was not in a position to give the exams. His parents were also skeptical. The organiser motivated him and encouraged him to appear for them without fail. They asked his parents to send him to the examination venue at least by auto rickshaw. His father wasn't ready initially but gave in ultimately and the boy appeared for the Class 10 exams.

An overweight girl from Maharajpet was mocked at by the head teacher for her size. The latter once sighted her speaking to a boy and she took this opportunity to make fun of the girl. The girl's mother came to know of this through the girl's fellow members of the Gender Committee meeting. She mobilised nearly 30 parents and they took the head teacher to task. She was forced to apologise to the girl and her parents.