



# Annual Report -2022-23



## Introduction

DEEDS, an NGO with 41 fruitful years of experience, since inception has focused on empowering marginalized women through legal education and enforcement of their rights. DEEDS feels happy to present its annual report to its stake holders. The DEEDS team is led by Merlyn Martis who is a lawyer and the Director of DEEDS, The team operates in six districts of Karnataka and works to bring in a change in the society with its commitment by working in various fields of women's education and Rights. DEEDS has adapted its vision, missions, and strategies for the effectiveness, transparency, and accountability of the work carried out and thereby increase its accountability to its stakeholders. Aligning with their tagline "Making the law work for Women."

In the concluding year of the 3-year project, DEEDS addressed gender-based discrimination and violence against women by Promoting a Para Legal Force initiative in Karnataka. The DEEDS project has achieved remarkable outcomes, and about 145 Paralegal Facilitators (PLFs) continue to work as PLFs in four selected districts. The Trained PLFs have conducted over 300 grassroots programs, reaching about 15,625 individuals. Additionally 12,300 students received information on gender and POCSO through educational institutions. Moreover, Jathas, Door to door campaign and distribution of take-home materials have reached more than about 20,000 households in the project areas. The Awareness on gender and women laws has increased by 60% among 89.53% of participating women, and 56% of grassroots women showed preparedness to act on violence related issues. (Domestic Violence, Child Marriage and POCSO).

The DEEDS team has resolved 48 domestic abuse cases, prevented 29 child marriages, and has been successful in securing convictions in 4 POCSO cases, and has addressed 3 property disputes through free legal aid. It has made a difference in the lives of aggrieved women. Over 150 transformative change stories are collected reflecting shifts in attitudes and legal actions. The project has also made significant progress with about 60% reduction in violence against women in target families. DEEDS collaborates with various organizations, including Sakhi, Santawana, Women's Police Station, and DLSA, to handle cases of Domestic Violence and combat this violence towards women.

The dedication of DEEDS was recognized as 58 PLFs were selected as Paralegal Volunteers (PLV's) for 2022-2023 by the different District Legal Service Authorities (DLSA). Four PLV's received accolades as the best in their districts and are recommended for recognition at the state level. This recognition solidifies the credibility of DEEDS within the justice delivery system. The organization's network aids survivors and identifies gaps in the system, exposing system flaws and advancing their goal of prioritizing women's interests within the Legal Aid Policy.

### Highlights of the year 2022-2023

#### Activities under the Paralegal Project:

##### Activity 1: Trainers of Trainers for those persons Training the paralegals

In Karwar Uttara Kannada, 16 and 13 PLFs participated in Gender and Legal training and are aware of Gender and Women's related laws. In Bagalkote district, in the first phase, 26 PLFs participated in the training on gender and 24 of them conducted grassroots programs. The second phase training was done in two parts to include anganwady and ASHA workers (covid worriers) (15+12) PLFs and 20 PLFs conducted grassroots program, and in the third phase 19 PLFs completed the course and all conducted grassroots programs. In Bellary District, 38 PLFs completed the three phases of the course and all of them conducted grassroots programs. We are also happy to report that the additional grassroots programs were conducted by 26.92% of the PLFs in Bagalkote and 81.5% of the PLFs in

Bellary on gender, child marriage, POCSO to Self Help Groups, NGO beneficiaries, Adolescent groups and students. Totally they were able to reach a target population of over 1000. About 19.23% in Bagalkote and 47.36% in Bellary have handled cases related to child marriage and domestic violence.



District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) has arranged for exposure of PLFs to the court and provided experts and panel lawyers as resource persons. PLFs have further extended awareness programs to new groups in their surroundings and they reached 2887 people. The PLFs have handled nearly 40 women's violence cases and guided them to avail various redressal and counselling systems like Santvana, Sakhi, and legal services authority. The PLFs participated in the sharing meets. They shared their experiences and reactions of people when conducting the awareness programs. PLFs also shared the changes people have made and responded to violence issues. 56 PLFs got refresher program on sexuality and related laws and their amendments and they conducted awareness campaign and reached grassroots including men who were difficult to reach.



The PLF's were recognized as resource persons by other NGOs and Government departments and are invited to conduct sessions by them. The PLF's are using technology for meetings, District wise WhatsApp groups for sharing information, google meets, webinars and use of GPS and google camera to monitor grassroots programs are used. The Paralegal Facilitators are nominated as members of different district committees by duty bearers, giving space for further intervention into the system.

## Some stories of change by PLFs:

- *Mr. Modin Valikar from Bagalkote was invited as a resource person by Shree K Shetra Dharmasthala Rural Development Project in their De Addiction Camp for men where he gave information on effects and laws related to domestic violence, POCSO to 40 male participants.*
- *Rekha Kotekal has handled the Veena Mahesharas domestic violence case. Veena's husband has married another woman and transferred her property to his name. Help was given to lodge a complaint to the Police. Police conducted an enquiry with him and ordered him to give her monthly compensation which he is complying with.*
- *Mallamma from Bellary has conducted awareness programs phase wise to 30 adolescent girls group organized by Sabala, NGO of Bellary.*
- *Aruna Jyothi PLF, Anganwady Teacher from Bellary knew that Geetha studying in 10<sup>th</sup> standard, was forcefully married during her SSLC exam, PLF Aruna along with the local women and police visited her house and rescued her. Later the marriage was stopped and the girl attended her exams and completed her schooling.*
- *Experience of change as narrated by the survivor - "I am Sushma from Allipura, Bellary districts. I am married and a mother of two children, a girl and a boy. My husband was a drunkard who physically and mentally abused me. I was thrown out of the house. I was living at my mother's house. Parvin Banu, a PLF conducted a grassroots program on gender and women's laws in my village, I learned more about women's laws. They distributed handbills about domestic violence and POCSO. Following the grassroots program, I educated my mother, sent photos of handbills to my husband, and informed him that I would file a complaint against him. He was frightened and called to apologize to me, we moved within two months and are living together. We are now happy".*

## Activity 2: Information and Awareness Raising Activities by Paralegals



In Bagalkote 17 PLFs have conducted 26 GRPs on women laws which reached to 542 people. 19 PLFs have conducted 33 GRPs on handling women rights issues which reached to 733 people. In Bellary 32 PLFs have conducted 60 GRPs on handling women rights issues which reached to 1484 people. In Karwar- Uttara Kannada 14 PLFs have conducted 27 GRPs on Gender which reached to 670 people, 13 PLFs have conducted 26 GRPs on women laws which reached to 634 people. 12 PLFs have

conducted 23 GRPs on handling women rights issues which reached to 575 people. About 57 PLFs,

185 grassroots participants attended the Conventions held at Bellary and Bagalkote and shared their stories of change. Member Secretaries of District Legal Services Authority (DLSA), Deputy Director of Women and Child Development Department attended the Convention. They appreciated the DEEDS strategies of empowering women and found the need for a joint venture so that problems will be solved. PLFs from Uttara Kannada, Dharwad,



Bellary and Bagalkote districts have conducted awareness campaigns on gender, domestic violence, POCSO and child marriage.



48 Jatha Programs reached 2195 women and 52 door-to-door campaign programs reached 2600 households in their community. About 71 PLFs from seven districts (Gadag, Chitradurga, DK, UK, Bellary, Bagalkote and Dharwad) conducted 357 GRP on gender, domestic violence, child marriage, and POCSO and reached 6075 women and 10914 high school boys and girls. About 14 PLFs were trained on gender and women's laws in Chitradurga districts. Among them six PLFs conducted eight grassroots programs on gender

and reached 145 women and men in their respective villages. Refresher training was conducted in Koppala on POCSO and Domestic Violence.

About 51 Grassroots program participants shared the changes they made in their families, handled issues like domestic violence, sexual harassment. Grassroots program beneficiaries, NGO representatives, Paralegal Facilitators shared the knowledge they gained from the paralegal program, the changes they made in their life/family and surroundings and cases of ABUSE they handled. They shared and distributed information and handbills to nearby families.

### Activity 3: District Network Building process at PLF Districts and state

#### District PLFs Collectives:

Districts PLFs collectives were formed in Bagalkot and Karwar in Uttara Kannada districts. Regular



physical and online meetings were conducted in 7 district collectives, with 8 meetings and 12 PLFs attended consistently. PLFs discussed POCSO, domestic violence, and property rights cases and referred to DLSA, Sakhi, and Santhwana. District Collectives have handled nearly 35 domestic abuse and property cases that

includes women and children. These cases were referred to Santvana, Sakhi, the Police Helpline 112, and the District Legal Services authorities.

### State PLFs Collective:

The state PLFs collective conducted seven Google meetings and three physical meetings at CODP, Mangaluru. Seven district's members of the PLFs collectives committee and state PLFs committee members (35 PLFs on June 17 &18, 2022, 20 PLFs on November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022, and 20 PLFs on March 24 &25, 2022, were present.



A new committee was formed, and action plans for grassroots awareness programs in schools and to self-help groups, Jatha and door-to-door campaigns, and organizing legal consultation programs were planned. Ms. Vani Periodi the gender specialist from Mangalore, led an input session on our current situation and challenges for the grassroots today, Anitha Ravi Shankar a Professor in Mangalore University, Deralakatte gave

insights on the importance of research in field work, and Kavyashree a Prof. in St Agnes, PG department, Mangalore gave an insight on mental health and women. Three PLFs from three collectives gave inputs on government schemes, gender, and protection of women from domestic violence in three Google meetings. Santhani (Dharwad), Suma, (Chitradurga), and Fakhiramma, (Gadag) were the resource person.

### State Level Seminar:

On February 22 and 23, 2023, in collaboration with DEEDS, the State Legal Services Authority, and the State Paralegal Facilitators Collective, a one-day seminar on the role and challenges of paralegal

volunteers was conducted in Bangalore. In addition to it, Dr. Prof. Sarasu Ether Thomas, Coordinator Women and Legal, National Law School of India University, Bengaluru, spoke on the challenges faced by paralegal volunteers, Jai Shankar, Member Secretary, Karnataka State Legal Services Authority, Bengaluru, and Vignesh Kumar, PRO, Karnataka State Legal Services Authority, Bengaluru also gave presentations. PLV.



The State body has assured timely help to the district

collectives. Building on this contact, the training of Paralegal Volunteers who were recruited from the public by DLSA was planned and conducted during the project extension period (April, May and

June). District wise reports of PLFs' activities were shared, and they visited Karnataka High Court and Vidhana Souda the State assembly buildings. Representatives from six districts (Dakshina Kannada, Uttara Kannada, Dharwad, Bellary, Bagalkot, Gadag), paralegal volunteers from Christa-Jayanthi law school, and representatives from NGOs were present.

### Legal Consultation Programs:

Legal consultation programs were held in seven districts (Gadag (33), Chitradurga (25), Dakshina Kannada (28), Uttara Kannada (25), Dharwad (30), Bagalkot (20), and Bellary (32) with a total of 195 participants from various departments and duty bearers. Representatives from the District Legal Service Authority, Santwana, Sakhi, Swadar, the women's police station, and Mahila Samakya participated.



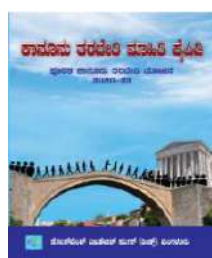
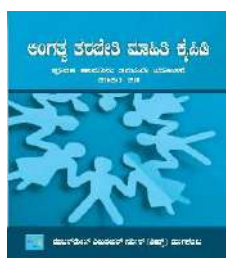
The challenges faced by PLFs and PLVs were brought to the attention of the district authorities in the legal consultation programs conducted in 7 districts. All duty bearers got an opportunity to listen to one another on pertinent points like duplication of efforts, delay in handling cases, insensitive and lack of transparency in handling matters. Inputs

on laws provided by the lawyers kept the members updated. This opportunity of bringing all duty bearers under one network has enhanced the connectivity between different services. They shared their challenges working for women with the Member Secretary DLSA in each district. Member secretary inaugurated and appreciated the consultation programs in their respective DLSAs.

### External Members of Complaints Committees

Ms Harini from PLF from Dakshina Kannada was selected as a member of the task force of the Sakhi one-stop centre and a member of the POSH districts local committee she is the gender convener of the Indian Community Activist Network at the national level. Sureka, and Asha Bekal PLFs from Dakshina Kannada have been appointed as resource persons by the Karnataka Health Promotion Trust (KHPT) in Bangalore. Ms Hemalatha PLFs from Uttara Kannada is the president of the local committee under POSH Act. Ms Geetha PLFs from Uttara Kannada is a member of the internal committee of District Health Department under the POSH Act.

### Activity: 4 Provision of information by the Resource Center



This year two training manuals were prepared. First manual on Gender, and a second one on laws for Women based on the specific requirements of individual districts. The contents of the Legal Manual were Domestic Violence Prohibition Act, POCSO (Protection of Children from Sexual Offences) Sexual Harassment at Workplace Act (POSH) and Rules of the Marriages and its Registration and Property Act. Grassroots

Manual were compiled in this manual. About 50 copies of Gender and 75 copies of Legal manual were printed and distributed to PLFs and resource persons and consortium partners.

### Take-Home Materials



Wall hanging on domestic violence and Child marriage, Handbills on Gender, POCSO, Domestic violence, document based evidence, Women Rights, District helpline and contacts of duty bearers are printed for large scale distributed to grassroots participants and each grassroots participant is given charge of further distribution in their area Phase wise first on gender equality, second Phase POCSO and Domestic Violence, third phase on the Importance of documents for six districts, and walls hanging on child marriage for five districts. About



20,000 households received information through Jatha, Door to Door Campaign, and Grassroots Programs, and 12300 high school students received information on gender, and POCSO directly from PLFs. About 13,000 walls hanging on child marriage, 13000 wall-hangings on Domestic Violence were printed and distributed. In the first phase, 25000 handbills on Gender equality were printed. In Second Phase 30,000 handbills on POCSO, 30,000 on Domestic Violence were printed. In the Third Phase, 10,000 copies of Handbills on the Importance of Documents, 5000 on Women Rights were printed and distributed to Uttara Kannada New PLFs, Bellary, Dharwad, Bagalkot, Gadag, Koppala and Chitradurga, Dakshina Kannada districts PLFs for conducting the grassroots programs.



About 310 copies of the 6<sup>th</sup> issues of Samvada containing activities of DEEDS and PLFs success stories, activities report is prepared in 12 pages and printed. It has helped to build a network with District/State PLF Collectives. About 200 E-copies were emailed and sent through WhatsApp to the Project district DLSA's, Women and Child Department, local NGOs etc.

### Samvada -06 edition

### Media Coverage

The Media coverage received for the paralegal program has helped to increase the visibility to the issues of gender discrimination & increase in violence against women prevalent in Uttara Kannada, Dharwad, Bellary and Bagalkot (Udupi Bulletin and AJ 24X7 NEWS TV, Kannada local news and many other channels have started media coverage of our programs and also started panel discussions on the issues around violence against women.

### Activity 5: Provision of Legal Aid

Total 41 cases were received by DEEDS in the time between April 2022 to March 2023. In all the 41 cases, a legal opinion was provided to the clients. In 7 cases, the legal opinion was provided to the survivors through phone. Out of these cases, 21 cases are pending for disposal before the different courts. In all the cases, legal opinion is given and necessary legal actions have been taken. In all 41 cases Legal opinion have been provided. Out of these 12 cases referred to DLSA for free legal aid.



In 9 cases panel advocates have been provided to the survivors. Two cases are in pre-litigation stage. One case was settled in Lok Adalat. 8 cases are with private advocates which are pending before different court of Dakshina Kannada District.



There are seven old case pending before different courts of Mangalore. One case referred to Sakhi Centre for counselling and 5 cases Settled at Police Station. In one case financial support has been extended since she is physically disabled to take care of herself and her children and in one case financial support has been given to a student of

SSLC. On 15-12-2022 DEEDS organized Legal get together for Survivors of Violence. Total 10 women survivors participated in the program and visited Pilikula Nisargadhama and Science Centre as an exposure visit.

### Activity 6: Refining DEEDS Strategy

#### Building the team and capacity Building Program

Mrs. Saritha was appointed as the office secretary from May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2022. With this the full team is functioning now. Regular meetings, several capacity building programs were organised to the team to upgrade skills and remain relevant to the challenges faced by NGOs.

#### Webinars and different courses are attended by the team.

Director, participated in FAVOURD K-organized organizational development courses and the NCP Navajivan course grant making forum on fund raising. Program Manager and Legal Coordinator had completed 2 months online Certificate Course on Women and Land rights at Gujarat which was hosted by WGWLO (Working Group for Women and Land Ownership) which is a Gujarat based Non-Profit Organization. The course was on property rights and land ownership of women. The legal coordinator was invited to be part of the national workshop on alternate lawyering organised by Center for Social Justice at Chennai. The finance team attended a two day training on FCRA and compliances organised by FMSF, Delhi. These activities have helped to widen the perspective of the staff members and thereby developed their capacity.

#### Exposure visits:



The DEEDS project staff went on an exposure visit to NGOs using law as a tool for empowerment. They Visited the Human Development and Resource Center, AWAZ, Center for Social Justice and Jan Vikas from Gujarath, interacted with the team members from these organisations to learn the different strategies used by them. The team met Albertina D'almeida who initiated a movement on women and violence in Goa and had discussion

with ARZ (Anyay Rahit Zindagi) Foundation and Presentation Convent on different strategies of working on reducing violence faced by women in sex work.

### **Compliance**

FCRA quarterly and annual returns, and 12A, 80G, Society renewal has been completed as per the schedule.

### **Meeting with MISEREOR**

On December 3rd, 2022, the Director and Program Manager attended the MISEREOR Karnataka Project Partners meeting, where partners shared their project activities and strategies, which was a valuable learning experience. MISEREOR officers shared history and activities, as well as program instructions.

### **Executive Committee and Board Compliances**



Two Executive and a General Body Meeting was conducted. The meeting resolved to appoint Mr. Daya Sharan Shetty of P.M Hegde and Company Chartered Accountants, Mangalore as the statutory auditors for the years 2022-2023, as well as to appoint new executive committee members. A Future proposal was discussed.

### **Website and social media updated**

Website has been updated with slides photos and new videos, photos and Facebook updated with recent activities of training, grassroots program and State and district collective meeting photos, convention program on a weekly basis. About 1021 are following Facebook.

### **DEEDS Updating Strategies**



Ms Marita from Mumbai, facilitated the second Strategy workshop, which took place on September 26th and 27th, 2022. The Strategy Document for the years 2022-2025 is being finalised.

### **Student Internship**

During this year MSW students Shalika, Mary and Sharanya from Roshani Social Work College, Mangaluru, Mamatha and Swathi from Srimathi Rukmini Shetty Memorial National Government College, Barkur, Sriya, Nambratha, Pearl, Chaitra and Cezarinha from St Aloysius Bachelor's in Psychology did their internship from DEEDS to learn from its activities.

## Fund Raising Program:

Sent three Proposal to Kaagapay, WFA-II, Legal, one proposal is rejected and two are awaiting in the pipeline. International membership Namathi Legal Empower. (AWID) is obtained. Renewal of India Donate membership. Small donations from Give India was received.

## Resource persons to Programs



Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals Limited (MRPL) has invited DEEDS to conduct gender sensitization for their entire staff. Five trainings were conducted and 312 staff took part. Women Study Centre of Mangalore University has invited DEEDS to conduct gender sensitization programs for about 65 college students of Mangalore University.

## External Member of Complaints Committee

DEEDS member has served as the external member for the Internal Committees under Prevention of Sexual Harassment Law (POSH) at KIOCL, MRPL and gender committees of Government, private and corporate entities. DEEDS members are in the District committees on gender and law like POSH, Santhwan (women's help line), helpline Sakhi Mangaluru and University's women study Centre advisory committee as experts.

## Other programs:

### 1. Small grant from Women Fund Asia to develop women leaders for Strengthening Feminist Movements

Women Fund Asia has granted funds to develop women leaders in a campaign in Ullal and Vamanjoor areas in DK on gender and violence issues was successfully completed one year project on December 2022.



DEEDS organised the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women on November 24th in collaboration with NGO and departments. From 9.30 a.m. to 11.00 a.m., campaign programmes were held in Ullal, Thokottu, Konaje, Kotekar, Someshwara, Beeri, Mudipu, Belma, and Asaigolli. They raised awareness by singing awareness songs, participating in Street Play, and distributing handbills to 400

households. The convention was held at Gatti Samaja Hall in Thokottu following the campaign programmes at 12.00pm. The programme was inaugurated by Papa Boovi, Deputive Director, Women and Child Development Department, and Prof Sabiha Bhomi Gowda delivered the keynote address. Dr Kishore Kumar M, Districts Health and Family Department, Dakshina Kannada, Dr Irine Veigas Prof. Yenepoya Social Work Collage, Deralkatte, Ms Jyothi, Administrator Sakhi one stop centre, Dakshina Kannada, Rev Fr Vincent Dsouza, Director CODP, Mangaluru, and Ms Hilda Rayappan, Director Prajna Counselling Centre, Mangalore were present. About 500 from self-help groups' members, Social work college students and NGO staffs were participated. Follow up project is sanctioned for another year. This is a one year project starting from Jan 2023 to December 2023. The selection of women leaders and orientation is in process.



## 2. Sun support Program

During this year, five students were helped to get financial support for higher education from Sun support trust, Mumbai.

## Conclusion

We are happy to state that DEEDS has completed all major activities as planned. We thank all stakeholders especially MISEREOR for trusting us and cooperating with us to help the women through our project. We further thank our board members for their guidance, the team members for their commitment and hard work and all the stake holders.