

Directors' Message

Dear Friends,

Once again, Samvada, the DEEDS newsletter, reaches you with stories of our tireless work, the challenges we face and the triumphs of grassroots women who are standing up for their rights. At DEEDS (Development Education Service), our focus remains steadfast on making the law work for women level. We are working to ensure that more and more women at the grassroots level have access to the knowledge and rights guaranteed to them by our constitution empowering them to life free from violence and inequality.

The escalating reports of violence against women young and old, across all walks of life continue to deeply concern us. Despite women's undeniable contributions to society, they are still denied equal opportunities. Why is this so? We believe that equality begins at home, where girls and boys must be treated equally. It is only when society recognizes the value of women's opinions, dreams, and decisions that true progress can be made.

In our efforts to address this, DEEDS has launched a paralegal program to combat gender discrimination and violence against women in Karnataka. Over the past year (2022-23), we have trained 145 dedicated individuals both women and men from Uttara Kannada, Dharwad, Bellary and Bagalkot districts as Paralegal Facilitators (PLFs). Through their work, we've reached over 15,625 individuals, spreading awareness about gender equality, women's rights, domestic violence and Child Marriage and POCSO.

I am proud to share that among these trained facilitators, 58 have been appointed as Paralegal Volunteers (PLVs) by the District Legal Services Authority. Several have been recognized for their exemplary work, both at the district and state levels. Our impact has been tangible, increased awareness and a willingness to act on cases of gender discrimination, domestic violence, child marriage and more. This past year alone, PLFs helped resolve 48 cases of domestic violence, prevented 29 child marriages and contributed to the resolution of several POCSO and property disputes.

Looking forward, we plan to expand our gender and legal awareness programs to Dakshina Kannada, Uttara Kannada, Dharwad, Bellary, Bagalkote and Gadag Districts over the next three years (2023-26). With the support of our district PLF Collectives, District Legal Services Authorities, local NGOs and other partners, we aim to train another 150 paralegal facilitators and reach 9,000 more people. These programs will ensure that legal and gender rights awareness continues to spread, laying a foundation for a more equitable future. I invite each of you to join us in this vital work. Your encouragement, support and cooperation will help make our communities safer, more just, and more equal not just for us, but for the generations to come.

Merlyn Martis

Paralegal Training for KTC Students

Karnataka Theological College, Mangaluru, requested an internship program for their second-year students and in response, we organized a 10-day paralegal training course for them from October 9 to 19, 2023. During this training, the students gained hands-on experience in various areas such as social movements, the impact on women's issues, underlying causes, gender equality, the Prevention of Domestic Violence Act, the POCSO Act, the Prevention of Sexual Harassment at Workplaces Act, and the Right to Information.



As part of the program, the students participated in exposure visits to key institutions, including a police station, District Child Protection Unit, Sakhi One-Stop Center, and the District Legal Services Authority-court, providing them with valuable practical insights.

A Seminar on Uniform Civil Code and Gender Justice

On August 5, 2023, DEEDS, in collaboration with the Coastal Writers and Readers Association and the Forum Against Atrocities on Women, organized a seminar titled “Uniform Civil Code: Gender Justice or Uniformity?” at CODP,



Mangaluru. The seminar sought to address the ongoing discussions surrounding the proposed Uniform Civil Code (UCC) and its implications on women’s rights, raising critical questions about whether the priority should be uniformity in law or gender justice within communities. Ms. Akhila Vidyasadrau a prominent activist and advocate from Bengaluru, served as the seminar’s Resource Person. In her address, she emphasized that, before discussing the UCC, women must first embrace the mindset that men and women are inherently equal. She delved into the challenges women face in achieving true equality, regardless of legal changes.

Mr. Dinesh Hegde Ulepadu, a lawyer and thinker from Mangaluru, presented an insightful perspective on the administrative and legal background of the UCC. He explored how uniformity in civil laws might affect different communities and the potential

administrative challenges in implementing such a code. Ms. U.T. Farzana Ashraf, editor of *Prajavani* in Bengaluru, brought the dimension of pluralism into the conversation, stressing that the strength of India’s diversity must be considered when discussing a Uniform Civil Code. She raised questions about how pluralism and women’s rights can coexist within the framework of the UCC. Ms. Merlyn Martis, Director of DEEDS and Chairperson of the seminar, underscored the importance of eliminating gender discrimination, not only within the law but also within religious and cultural practices. She highlighted that gender justice must be prioritized over legal uniformity to address the specific needs of women in different communities.

The program began with a warm welcome and introductory remarks by Ms. Jyothi Chelyaru, President of the Coastal Writers and Readers Association. Ms. Manjula Sunil of the Forum against Atrocities on Women Concluded the seminar with a heartfelt vote of thanks, acknowledging the contributions of the speakers and attendees. The seminar also included a powerful rendition of the Constitution’s Preamble, performed by Shubha and Lagma, setting the tone for the discussions on justice and equality. Ms. Chitra Falguni expertly moderated the seminar, ensuring a balanced and engaging dialogue throughout the event. The seminar left participants with thought-provoking questions about the true goals of the UCC and the ongoing struggle for gender justice within India’s diverse cultural and legal landscapes. It provided a platform for varied perspectives and encouraged further reflection and discourse on this critical issue.

Orientation on Paralegal Facilitators Program

A total of 148 potential Paralegal Facilitators (PLFs) were identified from ASHA workers, Anganwadi workers, NRLM, and self-help group members across five districts. PLF orientation sessions were conducted in these districts namely Uttara Kannada, Gadag, Dharwad, Bellary and Bagalkot to introduce new participants to the Paralegal Facilitator program, outlining the course structure and responsibilities. All 148 participants enrolled in the program after being briefed on the process of becoming PLFs.

In Uttara Kannada District, the orientation took place on September 9, 2023, at KDCC Hall, Karwar, with 34 participants. Ms. Renuka Raikar, secretary of the District Legal Services Authority, attended the session to learn more about the paralegal

program and shared information about the services offered by the Legal Services Authority.

In Gadag District, the orientation was held on September 13, 2023, at Maratha Vidhyavardhaka Sangha, Gadag, with 28 participated. In Bellary District, the orientation took place on September 23, 2023, at the Family Planning Association India Hall, with 37 participants. In Bagalkot District, the orientation was held on September 17, 2023, at Akshay Hotel Hall, Bagalkot, with 29 participants. In Dharwad District, the orientation was conducted on September 25, 2023, at the Dharwad District Legal Services Authority Hall, with 20 participants.

These sessions successfully introduced participants to the PLF program and prepared them for their roles in supporting legal awareness and services at the grassroots level.

Training of Trainers for Individuals Training PLFs.

In preparation for district-level PLF training, 24 Master Trainers (MTs) Presented their sessions Continuously through online meetings following their Training of Trainers (TOT). Each MT confidently delivered their sessions using various participatory facilitation methodologies.

On September 30 and October 1, 2023, a two-day gender trainer training program was conducted at the SKDRDP Jnana Vikasa Training Centre in Hubli. Twenty-four participants from five districts, Uttara Kannada (4), Dharwad (5), Bagalkot (6),



Bellary (4), and Gadag (5) participated and emerged as resource persons specializing in various gender-related topics. The trainers effectively conducted sessions using a range of methods to ensure participant engagement and understanding.

Justice systems for women : Legal Consultation Program with Duty Bearers

To sensitize duty bearers on handling women's cases, district-level legal consultations were organized. These consultations aimed to bring



together duty bearers, stakeholders, NGOs, and other systems that support women, offering insights into handling women's legal issues.

Dakshina Kannada District: The Legal Consultation program was held on September 12, 2023, at CODP Hall. Honorable Member Secretary Mrs. Shobha B.G from the Dakshina Kannada, District Legal Service Authority participated, alongside Sub-Inspector Ms. Shrikala from Pandeshwara Women's Police Station, Ms. Shwetha from Women and Child Development, Ms. Priya, Administrative Officer from Sakhi One-Stop Centre, and Mr. Kumar from the Child Protection Unit. Each representative shared information about the services and facilities provided by their respective departments. About 29 members attended this session.

Gadag District: On September 13, 2023, a Legal Consultation program was organized at the Gadag District Legal Service Authority Hall. The session



was graced by Honorable Member Secretaries. Mr. K. Guru Prasad and Mrs. G.S. Gowri, panel advocate from the District Legal Service Authority. Mr. Pradeep Bise, Sub-Inspector from the Women's Police Station, and Ms. Savitha Horti from the Child Protection Unit also participated. A total of 29 participants, including members from the Senior Citizens Department, Sakhi One-Stop Centre, Swadhara Kendra, PLVs, and PLF from various taluks such as Mundaragi, Rona, Gajendra Gada, and Shirahatti attended.

Bagalkot District: The Legal Consultation program in Bagalkot was held on September 16, 2023 at Akshaya International Hotel Hall. Shakamma Jamakatty, Administrative Officer and H.G. Vishal, Advocate from the Sakhi One-Stop Centre, shared information about the five services available for women. BM Peerzade, Child Development Project Officer, provided insights on facilities available for children. A total of 17



participants, including representatives from Santwana Kendra, PLVs and District paralegal facilitators, attended the session.

Dharwad District: A Legal Consultation program was organized on September 26, 2023, at the District Legal Services Authority Hall in Dharwad. Chief guests were Mr Parasurama Doddamani, Honorable Senior Civil Judge and Member Secretary of the District Legal Services Authority, Ms. Madhumathi Hubli, Women's Protection Officer from Dharwad, Mr. Prakash Kodliwada, Coordinator from the Child Protection Unit and Ms. Sarala Manakwad, Administrator of



Sakhi One-Stop Centre, KIMS Hubli Participated and shared the services and schemes. A total of 28 duty bearers participated, including representatives from Swadhara Centre, Santwana Centre staff, DLB DLF Karnataka Mahila Samakhya staff, PLV, PLF of the Dharwad District.

Bellary District: A Legal Consultation program was organized on 22nd September 2023 at the Family Planning Association hall in Bellary District. Mr. Rajesh Hosamani was the guest at the program. The program was attended by Honourable Senior Civil Judge and Member Secretary of the District Legal



Services Authority, Ms Vijayalakshmi; the Child Welfare Committee, In-charge of the District

Department of Women and Child Development Bellary, Mr Manjunath D.G, Coordinator of the Child Protection Unit, Ms Pushpa K., Administrator of Sakhi's One-Stop Centre; and Local NGO staff. A total of participated in the program.

Uttara Kannada Districts: A Legal Consultation program was organized on 29th September 2023 at the KDDC Hall in Uttara Kannada District. The



guests at the event included Ms. Padma Tandel, Panel Advocate for the District Legal Services Authority and Mr. Arun Naik, Women Protection Officer and Child Development Project Officer of Karwar. Ms. Manjula Patil, a Women Police Constable from the Women's Station, and the Administrative Officer of the Sakhi One-Stop Centre in Karwar. A total of 28 participants, including members from the PLF Collective, representatives from N.R.L.M, PLVs PLF Participated in the program.

These consultation programs have played a vital role in enhancing the knowledge and awareness of individuals and duty bearers involved in addressing gender issues and providing legal support to women.

Karnataka State Paralegal Facilitators Collective Meet



Two meetings were held, both online and physical. The first online meeting was conducted on August 30, 2023, with an average of six district

representatives attending. The second meeting was a physical gathering on October 2, 2023, at SKDRDP in Rayapur, Dharwad, where about 27 PLFs from six district executive committees were present. During this meeting, PLFs reported on their activities, discussed cases, and shared their findings, success stories and challenges. They decided to work closely with the DLSA and to include transgender individuals in the paralegal program. Advocacy work with various departments in the districts and follow-up actions were discussed for implementation.

Printers : Pixels Designers, Kudroli, Mangalore



DEEDS SAMVAADA - A NEWS LETTER BY DEEDS, MANGALORE

Add : **DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION SERVICE (DEEDS)**

Ananda Apartments, Kadri, Mangalore, D.K. - 575 002. Ph.: 0824-2217022, 4281037

E-mail : deeds82@rediffmail.com

Website : www.deedsmangaluru.in