

# Empowerment Through Learning Lifeskills

Leverage work on sexual and reproductive health of adolescent girls through capacity building of village health workers for enhanced access to public health care for young girls  
Process Report : January - December 2010



Sakhi WOMEN'S RESOURCE CENTRE  
Thiruvananthapuram





Published by:  
Sakhi Women's Resource Centre  
T.C 27/1872 Convent road  
Vanchiyoor, Thiruvananthapuram 695 035  
Phone: 0471 2462251  
Fax: 0471 2574939  
Email: [sakhikerala@gmail.com](mailto:sakhikerala@gmail.com)  
Website: [www.sakhikerala.org](http://www.sakhikerala.org)

with the support of:  
Ford Foundation

June 2011

## Introduction

Adolescents today are affected by a whole range of conflicting changes that are threatening their well being and even survival. Some of the major conflicts affecting adolescents as a group are sexual and reproductive health problems, violence and abuse, psychological, economic and social problems. Even though adolescents form one quarter of the population in India, their needs and issue are little understood and poorly served. Besides lack of proper life skill education and increasing sexual violence, some of the problems faced by the young people in Kerala are high educated unemployment, high rate of substance abuse and high rate of suicides.

Since the beginning of its formation, Sakhi was involved with young people and their life skill education. In the last few years, many issues faced by young people in Kerala came to our attention and we wanted to do a systematic interaction as a pilot project in 10 panchayats which can then be taken up all over the state



# About Sakhi

## Women's Resource Centre

Sakhi is a feminist organization and a resource center on women based in Trivandrum, Kerala India. It was established in 1996 with the intention of information dissemination, capacity building and leadership development of women, networking of grassroots groups, policy advocacy and campaigning on women's issues. Sakhi is the only feminist resource center doing such activities in Kerala

In the last 13 years of its work, the organization has expanded its horizons and has evolved various methodologies and areas of intervention.

In the area of information gathering and dissemination, Sakhi has a library and documentation center with over 8000 books and many documents, journals and publications. Besides, Sakhi conducts capacity building programmes, workshops and seminars on Gender, masculinities, development, reproductive health, sexuality, gender budgeting, gender planning and auditing and life skill education for adolescents. Sakhi has published training manuals on each of this in local language and has trained many trainers too.

Another area of intervention is Gender and Governance. Since the beginning, Sakhi has been associated with decentralization process in Kerala and has worked with Local Governments. Gender mainstreaming in local governance was the focus and we have undertaken number of studies and

action research programmes. A continuous programme was the Capacity building of elected women and networking them. A Manual, handbook and training manual on Gender Planning, budgeting and auditing was prepared and about 120 state level master trainers were trained on Gender budgeting. We have developed the methodology for the study of status of women and helped about 50 local governments to conduct the study as a preparation for data based Gender planning and budgeting

Violence intervention is a key area of our intervention. We work to support women to protect their human rights and fight all forms of violence against women, whether it be at home, in the workplace or in the public domain. In this connection campaigns are conducted every year and women who experience violence are supported with legal aid, counseling etc

Research leading to action and policy process is another area of our work. We collaborate with other organizations and institutions to conduct research. We have conducted studies for the Department of health on 'Violence against women as a public health issue', on 'Gender ad governance' with Royal Tropical Institute Amsterdam, Decentralization and women's health in association with CHANGE, USA and Achutha Menon Center for health sciences, Trivandrum etc  
More on Sakhi on our website  
**[www.sakhikerala.org](http://www.sakhikerala.org)**

## The Present Programme: Adolescents programme through Local governments

Sakhi had also been working with local governments (Panchayaths) since 1996 when the Kerala government started the decentralization programme. As part of decentralization of Governance the local governments are given powers, finances and functionaries to plan and implement local specific development programmes which emerge from the people's councils (Gram Sabha). We found work with local governments and equipping them with capacity to undertake programmes for women and children are very important, as these category of people require services which are in proximity to them

Sakhi has been working with adolescents at various levels. Our focus was with marginalized communities like fishing communities, children from extremely rural areas and of urban slums. We used to have ongoing programmes like teen clubs, occasional one day classes, training of trainers, Summer camps etc.

From January 2010, Sakhi started a new phase in our work with adolescent girls and decided to work through 10 Panchayats in Trivandrum District. Since our strategy has been to work through local level governments, in this programme too, we chose to build the capacity of local level government functionaries - ASHA (Accredited Social Health Activist) Anganwadi workers, ICDS Supervisors (Integrated Child Development Scheme), Local NGO's and peer educators. This will ensure that the programme will continue even if Sakhi withdraws and that the programme can be integrated with the local level planning of the Panchayats. Moreover we were actively pursuing building up of resource teams of women in each local government, so that a team of capacitated women are available as resource persons for various programmes as well as a pool of women candidates for the election to the local bodies. These women

were seen as our facilitators for the adolescent programme

We have envisaged the programme in 3 phases. In the first phase of one year, we will work in the existing 10 Panchayaths where Sakhi is already working and in the second year and third year of the project, we will move to another 10 Panchayaths each. The programme is aimed to focus 30 to 40 adolescent girls in selected 38 groups/centers of the 10 Panchayats of Trivandrum district. The training would begin with a two-day camp in each Panchayat and there after one day sessions every month. In each class different subjects will be handled like personality development, communication, women leadership, social analysis, physical and mental health, re-productive health and rights, women rights and law, career guidance, counseling etc. Classes will be conducted in participatory manner by using local resources. The training will focus specially to identify and develop various skills of children. Sakhi will distribute certificates to the children who finish the course successfully.

Following is a documentation of the process of work undertaken in the first phase of the project, where the programme was carried out in the 10 Panchayaths

- ▶ All the 10 Village Panchayats are remote villages which include tribal settlement and coastal villages. 20 to 45 km away from Trivandrum City.
- ▶ Vellarada, Amboory, and Kuttichal Village Panchayats are situated near to the Western Ghats and are near to the neighbouring State of Tamilnadu.
- ▶ Karumkulam, Pulluvila, and Kadinamkulam are coastal Panchayats situated near the Arabian Sea.
- ▶ Majority of the population in all the 10 Panchayats mostly depend upon agriculture, fisheries and other allied activities for their lively hood.
- ▶ Most of the families are socially, educationally and economically backward.
- ▶ Majority of the people belong to different backward communities, including the dalit (Scheduled Castes), and tribal (Scheduled Tribes).

# Background information

## of the selected 10 Village Panchayats in the first phase (2010 March-2011 April)

- ▶ Higher Education facilities are rare.
- ▶ Lot of exploitation and ignorance exist among the people.
- ▶ Alcoholic consumption among men, broken families, atrocities against women, child sex abuse, and early marriage exist.
- ▶ There are many dropouts in the poor and women headed families.

## About the Adolescent Groups and the process of selection

- ▶ Orientation given to ASHA workers, Kudumbasree, Anganawadi workers and Panchayat leaders for the selection of adolescent girls from the Panchayat areas.
- ▶ Identified 1075 adolescent girls between age- group of 12 to 14 yrs studying in 7th, 8th and 9th classes. Since the 10th and higher classes students are busy with



studies, tuitions, and exams, we did not include them in the regular sessions. But some of them still came, in spite of parents

not agreeing  
 ▶ All children are from the families with poor economic background.

Details of the Panchayats, and selected centers, number of children and facilitators

Sl.No.	Name of Panchayat & Area	Population	No. of Wards	No. of Selected Centres	No. of Girls	No. of Facilitators
1	Kuttichal	29000 (25 Tribal Settlements and SC Colonies)	13	4	122	12
2	Kallikkad	17174 (2 Tribal Settlements 5 Sc Colonies)	13	4	102	12
3	Amboori	21208 (11 Tribal Settlements 2 SC Colonies)	14	3	70	8
4	Vellarada	74000 (1 Tribal 8 SC Colonies)	23	4	121	12
5	Kunnathukal	37429	20	4	126	12
6	Chenkai	41282	20	3	108	12
7	Maranalloor	48232	20	4	112	10
8	Kalliyoor	36836	20	4	109	12
9	Karimkulam	29562 (Fishing Community )	17	3	75	8
10	Kadinamkulam	(Fishing Community)		3	61	8
				Total	1006	106

# Activities Conducted

5.1. Meeting with Panchayat Authorities, Parents, Primary health care centers, Accredited Social health activists (ASHA) workers, Kudumbasree members, Anganwadi workers and CBOs

• Since Sakhi had decided to conduct the programmes with adolescents in collaboration with Local governments(Panchayaths) and taking the support of grassroots level government functionaries, initial meetings were conducted with them to make them aware of the programmes and to seek their support. There was a lot of interest and support to the programme. From the Panchayat committee, the chairperson of the social welfare standing committee and the member in charge of 'Jagratha Samithi'(Vigilance Cell) were entrusted to give all support to the programme. Their help to conduct various group meetings was remarkable. The authorities of the Primary Health centers (PHC's) were kind enough to render the service of ASHA workers. Kudumbasree which is the self help groups coordinating programme also evinced keen interest and their elected leaders were also active supporters (3 meetings each in 10

Panchayats- a total of 30 meetings)

• Central level parents' meetings were conducted in all ten Panchayats to convince them of the relevance of Adolescence life skill education programme and to ensure their co-operation. The high level of participation and expectations from parents revealed that this training would be very relevant and essential. They also shared their views and ideas and pointed out that this should be conducted for boys too at the earliest. Age limit from 12 to 14 should be extended to 16 or 17 and so that more girls could get the benefit of this programme.

## 5.2. Orientation and selection of local facilitators

Local facilitators were selected from ASHA workers, Community based organizations (CBO's) and Anganwadi workers and from the resource teams of Sakhi.

Prior to selection of local facilitators, an orientation programme was conducted explaining about the adolescents, their issues, need for the life skill education etc This was a one day programme in each of the 10 panchayats. Out of the 280 local government



functionaries who participated, 112 women who showed keen interest in the process were selected .

### 5.3. 2 days TOT for local facilitators.

The selected facilitators were given training for three days at each panchayat

Topics included gender, sexuality, masculinity, re-productive health, Sexual health, Psychology and counseling skills were included in the training. The importance of participation, group discussions, activities, and games were highlighted. Skills of process reporting and review process were also part of the training

With the active participation of these selected facilitators, the objective, methodology and content of one year certificate course for the young girls was also developed in the workshop. It enhanced the feeling of the ownership of the programme and integrated locally relevant experiences and issues into the programme content and methodology. They were each given a kit consisting of training materials like black board, chalk, white paper, sketch pens, chart papers, cello tape, scissors etc. Each had an attendance register, minutes book, files etc

### 5.4. One day orientation for adolescent girls

In each of the villages, one day seminars of adolescent girls were conducted. This was meant to be an orientation program for them. The programmes conducted in different villages started with a small inaugural function in which reputed women activists, panchayath presidents, political leaders took part as chief guests. The meetings were also enriched with many women kudumbasree workers, parents, and health workers. This way, community support to the programme was ensured. In the inaugural address chief guests said that the adolescents training programme is a noble venture and is relevant in this time. They also pointed out that this

would be a model project for the government and educational department. The society could not pay much attention to the issues faced by the adolescent female group and this is an opportunity to address their problems. The findings and suggestions, which derived from this workshop, must be given priority in the Panchayath level project planning and implementation. They also suggested that the discussions should be carried to CDS, Primary health centers and also in the schools. Group discussions, brainstorming and experience sharing were the main attractions in this orientation programme. It was really an eye opener to both the participants and to the organizers as the girls brought forward many issues which they face in their day today life: and they were hopeful that the one year training programme would strengthen their ability, skills, and values.

### Issues brought out in the group sessions by the children

1. Unnecessary comments and exhibitionism from boys and men (eve teasing)
2. Disturbances on the road especially from motor cycle riders
3. Torturing girls in the name of ragging e.g. cutting of hair etc. (Undencode)
4. Discrimination in the classroom from teachers and suppression from boys; various types of Sexual harassment in the classroom (Maranalloor).For example, the girls were asked to bend in front of the teachers so that they could look in to the body through blouse, lifting dress with stick, pinching hands and thereby their breast, purposely touch in the private parts of their body etc. Girls, who do not co-operate with male teachers for sexual activities, are often punished and were given low marks.
5. In schools, boys take video and photos of girls with mobile phone even when they go to toilets. Boys draw bad and nude pictures in the classrooms and inside the toilets of girls.
6. Some boys collect the details of girls by using younger children by giving them gifts



and sweets.

7. Some boys who bring alcohol in classroom in water bottle create problems to girls. During youth festival, boys use alcohol and disturb girls. They creep in to the dressing rooms of girls and take photos
8. In buses boys take pictures of girls with mobile phone. Some male passengers, who are drunk, sit near girls and disturb them. Most of the time girls don't get their reservation seats in buses.
9. Discrimination exists in houses too.
10. Adolescent girls are often tensed and confused because of the lack of knowledge about their body and reproductive health system.
11. Incest: Their own fathers often sexually misuse girls. Some of the experience shared by the participants are follows:
  - ▶ A handicapped girl is abused by her father at home (Kalliyoor)
  - ▶ A girl who study in eighth standard was brought by her father from school to home and his friend misused her with the permission of father.(Kalliyoor)
  - ▶ A seventeen-year-old girl got pregnancy from her father. (Kunnathukal)
  - ▶ Her own father sexually abused a plus one girl. (Amboory)
  - ▶ Girl committed suicide because of the torture from her stepfather.(Amboory)  
A girl got pregnant from her stepfather. (Kunnathukal)
  - ▶ A girl became pregnant from her grant

father. (Maranalloor)

- ▶ Sexual abuse from own brother. (Maranalloor)
- ▶ A pastor who came home for prayer service tortured a girl (Kalliyoor)

Several such incidents were reported by the children in the group discussion

12. Some other problems highlighted in the group discussion in connection with their family are as follows

- Quarrel between father and mother in the family
- Un necessary touches in sexual organs by her own brother
- Illegal relationships of parents with opposite sex.
- Problems created by alcohol consumption.
- Taking photos with mobile phone when girls get sleep and while taking bath

A bench mark survey was conducted to collect primary information about the children and to assess their expectations and needs. (A brief report of the survey is attached as Appendix1)

**The children demanded the following**

1. Awareness classes should be given to parents also. (At least once in three months)
2. Cycling training. This would improve the

Sl.No.	Date	Place and Venue	No. of Participants
1	07.04.2010	Co-operative Bank Hall, Amboori	70
2	13.04.2010	Panchayat Hall, Kallikkad	102
3	15.04.2010	Govt. UPS Vellarada	121
4	17.04.2010	Cultural Centre, Kuttichal	122
5	19.04.2010	St. Dorothei LPS, Maryapuram	108
6	20.04.2010	Panchayat Conference Hall, Kalliyoor	109
7	21.04.2010	Govt. UPS Kunnathukal	126
8	24.04.2010	DVM NHSS Maranalloor	112
9	28.04.2010	Community Hall, Karimkulam	44
10	30.04.2010	Govt. UPS Kadinamkulam	61
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>1075</b>

A brief glance at the venue and number of participants in the orientation programmes in various Panchayats –

- confidence and mobility of girls.
- 3. Training on Yoga, Martial arts like kalarippayattu that would improve their physical and mental health.
- 4. In order to bring out the cultural and literature skills, trainings on Sinkarimelam,(traditional drums) music, folklore arts, dance would be conducted.
- 5. It is proposed to have facilities in the centers for practicing various sports and games.
- 6. This trained group must be sustained as a forum to address the issues of girl children in the society.

The local facilitators helped to mobilize the

children and the response boosted their self confidence. The programme also helped them to get an understanding of issues which they will have to address and also the informal and participatory styles of interaction with children.

### 5.5. Two day camp for the adolescent girls

The camp was the initial 2 day programme for the selected children. This was meant to create interest among children and to give them a taste of what is to come. This camp highlighted topics like personality development, communication skill, and





leadership which helped the participants to break the culture of silence, and identify their potentialities. The camp opened a variety of opportunities to develop their creativity, and friendship through games, group activities, role plays, and folk songs.

The co-operation of local Panchayaths and PHC officials, gave more popularity to the programme. In some of the panchayats like Amboory, Karumkulam CBOs had taken leadership to organize the programme. This

programme lightened the minds of children to participate actively for the upcoming adolescent life skill education programme.

The camp was held during school holidays and the facilitators were able to mobilize the children. Out of the total of 1015 children who participated a selection was made, considering age, interest, accessibility to the centers where the activity to be conducted etc. Some children opted out due to certain inconveniences or due to distance from home

A brief glance at the 2 day camp for adolescents at various venues

Sl.No.	Date	Place and Venue	No. of Participants
1	May 3, 4 2010	Co-operative Bank Hall, Amboori	55
2	May 5, 6 2010	ACL Hall, Vellarada	85
3	May 5, 6 2010	Govt. UPS Karakonam	111
4	May 7, 8 2010	Mylakkara UPS, Kallikad	66
5	May 10, 11 2010	Cultural Centre Kuttichal	108
6	May 14, 15 2010	PHC Auditorium, Kalliyoor	109
7	May 20, 21 2010	Govt. UPS Kandala	126
8	May 24, 25 2010	St.Dorothei LPS Maryapuram	98
9	May 26, 27 2010	Govt. UPS Kadinamkulam	80
10	May 28, 29 2010	Madona Centre, Karimkulam	52
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>1015</b>

## 5.6 Reworked Objectives of the programme

Through the initial interactions with children and facilitators, we reworked the objectives of the programme

1. Build self confidence, dignity, courage and purpose in life
2. Enhance their personality development: develop leadership capabilities, help the growth of values of life
3. Encourage reading habits and creativity
4. Help the growth of social awareness and general knowledge
5. Create environmental awareness and alternate life styles
6. Health education and ensure healthcare
7. Develop cultural and physical abilities
8. Create forums for children to express their skills and abilities
9. Develop self defense skills and encourage the growth of abilities to respond to social evils

## 5.7 Regular Monthly Sessions

10 monthly sessions for each group was conducted during this period in all the 10 Panchayats. In each Panchayat 3-4 centers functioned with 25-30 children in each group and 10-12 facilitators. Mostly the activities were held at the anganwadi, the Panchayat office or halls of the church etc.

The children who regularly attended the programme were given photo identity cards and a notebook and writing materials. Apart from the group dynamics and group building exercises, the Topics were in the following sequence

1. Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA): This was to understand their own village, through using some of the tools like survey, FGD's, transect walk etc. Children met senior women in the village(elders) and collected stories and myths in the village.

2. Women in History. Eminent women in Indian history were introduced to the girls through pictures and brief write ups (Annie Besant, Pandita Rambai, Vijayalkshmi Pandit, Medha Patkar, Captain Lakshmi , Mayilmma (Plachimada struggle),C.K Janu etc.

3. Gender: Role plays and exercises using statements etc were used

4. Re-productive Health. Mostly Doctors or public health nurses interacted with children and explained about their bodies, changes etc. In some places body mapping was done as an exercise

5. Influence of Media: Children from the different centers were brought together for this session. A media expert helped the





children to understand how news is collected, the structure of the newspaper etc. He helped them to compare two or three newspapers and divided them into groups to bring out a newspaper. The children on their own could understand the impact of print and visual media on their lives

6. Misuse of ICT –mobile misuse; Children and Law. Since this is a grave issue in the state, several issues of misuse come in the newspapers. They were given such paper

clippings and asked to read and discuss the issue in the groups and later, it was elaborated. A small hand book prepared by Sakhi was given for further reading

7. Environment and alternate life styles. Two methods were followed. There was initially an exposure to the issues affecting them by children themselves and they explaining them in cards, followed by input sessions. The issues of waste, use of plastics, different types of pollution etc were highlighted. This was followed up by visits to forests or sanctuaries, to the coastal area and in some places to the farms of organic farmers for a direct firsthand experience. Children also analyzed their own plot of land to find out how much of plastic is there, whether they can plant any trees etc.

8. Onam and Independent day-celebrations, rally etc. IN August, Onam and independent day came together and in the festive mood, children also celebrated. They collected old sayings about Onam the myth behind it, planned the celebration and divided responsibility to invite dignitaries etc. They had the usual flower rangoli, onam feast and cultural programmes. Some places, they conducted rallies too





9. Campaign on Violence against women and girls. In December, the groups joined the 16 days campaign on Violence against women and girls .The activities are poster exhibition, rallies, public meetings as well as interacting with the communities around them like distributing notices etc. Various types of violence faced by girls were discussed

10. Institutional visits (Police station, Panchayat office, primary health centers/ hospitals) This is what children appreciated most. The authorities like CI of police also were very cooperative and it was the first time that children enter these institutions.

Skills like Self Defense, cycling, breathing and relaxing exercises were also taught to the children.

The methodologies adopted were group activities, debates, creative activities, quiz, field visits, role plays, debates, experience sharing, folk songs, exposure trips, poster exhibition, and games. All the sessions were conducted in a participatory manner and this helped the children to analyze and go deep into the subjects. These sessions also helped them to analyze themselves, identify their skills and reduce their limitations.

Majority of the participants were regular in attendance and enthusiastic in Participation. Sessions were organised with the leadership of children which gradually brought leadership quality among themselves. Special focus was given to improve and develop their personality and communication skills

A news letter was prepared by girls, in connection with the session on Media which was a new experience to them





The training session gave an opportunity to open a platform for the girls to share their personal problems and the problems of their friends before a wider circle. Participants at kuttichal, Vellarada, Kalliyoor, karimkulam Panchayats took initiative to learn cycling. Each session included cultural activities, study class, sports, and games which could develop their self confidence and integral growth to a great extent.



### 5.8. Monthly meeting of facilitators

Each meeting consists of discussion about activities conducted in the previous month and preparation of next month's activities. This capacitated the facilitators to incorporate new ideas and strategies to handle the sessions effectively. Sharing of experiences





and learning various topics were also included in monthly meetings.

### 5.9 Regional meeting of facilitators

Regional level meetings conducted for the facilitators once in three months to give them refresher training and help them to update their knowledge and skills,

learn new games, folk songs etc. Three month's planning is also done during these meetings.

These meetings also gave opportunity for the facilitators to know more about each other and the activities of each region.





## Special Events

### 6.1. Police Station Visit

The police station visit organised in connection with the topic 'Children and law' was a unique experience. The visit helped the girls to know more about the law and order functions of police station and its formalities and facilities.

Police officers clarified the questions asked by students. The Children also

under stood how to approach the police stations with a case and its formalities.

The visit also helped the students to reduce their fear about police station.

Many of them have got the inspiration to become an ideal police officer and to do good for the society. This programme also created a kind of awareness among public about adolescent life skill training programme and the importance of these topics to be handled among adolescent girls. This was an eye opener to the police officers too because they felt the need of these topic to be spread in different schools and colleges.



## 6.2. Environment Study trip

This was conducted to analyse the environmental issues faced by each Panchayat. Students got an opportunity to visit a few areas with ecological importance which created a real experience in ecological awareness.

Certain decisions were taken by the children to protect nature by avoiding plastic, saving electricity, water etc. The process was supported by the Panchayat authorities.

Some leaders and parents also accompanied their children for field visit. This created more confidence

and recognition to the facilitators. The trip substantially enhanced the co-operation and leadership among the girls.

Coastal Environmental sessions





### 6.3. Onam celebrations

'Onam' the harvest festival of Kerala was celebrated in all Panchayats with a fairly good participation of children. It was an opportunity for the children to express their talents and skills like speech, Dance, Drama, songs, drawing etc. The children themselves took leadership to organise the programme. It was an eye opener

to Panchayat authorities that the girl children should be organized in such a way.

### 6.4. Anti-Violence Campaign

A lot of programmes were organized in Panchayats as a part of the 16 days long international campaign on violence against women and girl children from 25th November to 10th December. Poster campaign, public





rallies, and corner meeting, conducted with large participation had provided adequate chances for girl children to address the public with strong words about sex abuse and atrocities against girls. Panchayat, police, authorities, PHC, and CBOs came together in one platform was a remarkable factor. Even

the experiences were also shared by them in public. The campaign created new insights to the newly elected Panchayat Members and to the public about the rights and problems of adolescent girls.



# Closing ceremony and Evaluation

After a year of interaction, the regular sessions had to be closed and the programme had to move to another 10 panchayats. In the existing 10 locations, the closing ceremony was conducted in a fitting manner during May 2011 with a prominent personality from the area as the chief guest for distributing the certificates and in the presence of Panchayat members, ICDS supervisors etc. Representatives of the adolescents spoke in the meeting and requested for follow up programmes as well as similar programmes for other children in the area.

The children evaluated the programme orally and in writing. Many were in tears as they felt very sad that the programme is going to end. It is this expression of grief that moved the Panchayat members in 5 panchayats to take up the challenge to carry on the programme and immediately discuss among themselves and announce a follow up programme with budget allocation. The doctors from PHC's said that they will try to make the hospitals based teen clubs to be made more efficient. In some Panchayats, the circle Inspector of

police who was present expressed happiness about the visit of the children to the police station which helped to create a positive interface with the community. They were inspired by this programme and it motivated them to move beyond teaching traffic rules to more need based interactive programmes for children

The Panchayat leaders appreciated the effort which included children, local facilitators and the Panchayat and thus ensuring the sustainability of the programme and developing of local level leadership

The written evaluation clearly illustrates the changes which the children are experiencing like the increase in self confidence, the recognition of their abilities and skills, the



development of reading habits, awareness of reproductive health issues, knowledge of modern technologies and the potentials



## 7.1. Outcomes –Quantitative

The goal was to have the programme in 10 Panchayaths and in 35 centers

- ▶ We started with 38 centers and ended with 35 centers .Three centers had to be closed as there were only 10-15 children and attendance varied

- ▶ Initially 114 local facilitators were selected and by the final phase 89 continued. These women will be the resource groups for the panchayts and the ICDS programme and if sufficient support is given by the authorities, the programme can be continued/expanded
- ▶ Initially 1075 girls registered and 870 continued till the end.
- ▶ Three Panchayats have included the programme in their next proposal for grant and three others will do soon
- ▶ From the first orientation itself the parents

## 7.2 Outcomes: Impact of Life skill Training-an over view assessment

*(Based on survey conducted)*

Condition of Girls Before attending the Adolescent Life Skill Education Program	Situation After the Life Skill Education Program
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Children were not very aware of gender inequality, discrimination, dowry problems re-productive health, etc.</li> <li>▶ They had low self Confidence, self esteem, communication and leadership skills</li> <li>▶ Were not able to address and discuss social issues in common platforms</li> <li>▶ Were not aware of self defense in their living situations.</li> <li>▶ Children were shy and timid</li> <li>▶ Media awareness was very low and children were not aware of how news is collected for a newspaper and the entire process of publication of the newspapers</li> <li>▶ Ignorance about environment, law, rights and duties.</li> <li>▶ Lack of self confidence and self identity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Got awareness on gender equality, discrimination, dowry, reproductive health etc.</li> <li>▶ Their self confidence, self esteem, communication and leadership skills improved.</li> <li>▶ Able to address and discuss social issues in common platforms.</li> <li>▶ Got awareness of self defense in their living situations.</li> <li>▶ Girls could overcome their problem of shyness</li> <li>▶ They have got opportunity to know about media and prepare newsletter</li> <li>▶ They are more aware of Environment, law, rights and duties.</li> <li>▶ Participation in variety of activities conducted in the camp was a new experience for them. The entire process instilled elf confidence and self identity</li> </ul>

# Feedback from Parents'

- welcomed the programme and gave all kinds of support.
- ▶ Even then, 10% of parents could not send their children because of tuition and other matters.
- ▶ Parents suggested the extension of age limit 12 to 14 in to 12 to 17.
- ▶ Parents expressed the qualitative change in their girl children that they could become bold, have a positive thinking, their behavior improved, they developed self reliance and were supportive to family, knowledge of rights and duties increased etc.
- ▶ Parents were happy that their children got opportunity to develop and express their skills like public speaking, communication, leadership, and even management
- ▶ Parents suggested this training programme to be continued for one more year to sustain the process.
- ▶ They also suggested that boys should also be included in the programme and also expand to more places.
- ▶ Counseling facilities should be conducted as follow up
- ▶ It is a positive indication that children are ready to share the social issues and women's issues at home

# Goals Achieved

- ▶ Currently we have 89 strong facilitators from ASHA workers, Anganwadi teachers, women leaders form community to work with youth
- ▶ During campaign period these facilitators organized the parents of the adolescent groups and networked with locally available governmental and non-governmental institutions.
- ▶ The adolescent team along with the facilitators prepared and submitted their needs and rights to be addressed in the newly elected Local Self Bodies. (Avakasha patrika-declaration of Rights)
- ▶ In all Panchayats, a group of adolescent leaders had formed a committee. These leaders had been asked to use creative strategies to address rights, needs and skills of young people. If a problem arises the group is able to bring the issue to the concerned authorities.
- The Local Panchayat has put forward discussions to pilot and upscale the adolescent project in a systematic and efficient way through ICDS

# Follow Up

- ▶ Five Panchayats (Kunnathukal, Vellarada, Kuttichal, Maranalloor and Kalliyoor) have decided to allocate money to have a follow up programme They have earmarked amounts varying Rs.35,000/ to Rs40,000/ for a programme covering 100 students in 4 centers and the local facilitators called 'Sakhi team' is entrusted with the task of conducting these follow programmes
- ▶ Once in four months these groups will be followed up with celebrations, classes, field visits, camps and campaigns.
- ▶ The Facilitators will be strengthened and sustained as a women support group in Panchayat level. This team will facilitate the Jagratha Samithi's and also assist in the follow up of the adolescent activities.

# Evaluation

- ▶ A bench mark survey was conducted in the beginning among the children. An end survey also is carried out to assess the changes
- ▶ A comprehensive evaluation is conducted by external evaluators and separate report is enclosed

# Appendix 1

## Background Information about the children-Collated from the Benchmark Survey

The study was done among 920 children who participated in the initial orientation programme.

### Age group

The selection of children was from 7th, 8th and 9th classes (age group of 12-14). This is the starting period of teenage where bodily and psychological changes starts and the age group who are easily influenced by the changes happening around them and easily succumb to peer pressure. This is the time when they start to search for their identity. So this is a crucial time when they need support and help for positive changes to happen. Yet due to local demands and due to the summer holiday, few children from other classes also participated. Yet majority (71.1%) was with the prescribed age group. 17.8% were between 9-11 age group and rest were from 15 and above age group.

### Schooling

83.1% of children study in government (public) schools and only 16.9% are in private schools. Of this 89.2% study in mixed schools. This finding is revealing as this is unlike the general trend of increasing privatization of education in Kerala. It is because these children are from economically backward sessions from rural areas

### Family situation

84.9% of children live with their parents, 10.2% comes from single parent families, 4% stay with their relatives and another 4% stay in hostels. Those who stay in hostels are from the coastal and tribal areas, who through various government schemes or through NGOs or church are in the hostels to have access to education

#### Rank in the family

48.1%	First child
42.9%	Second child
7.8%	Third child
1%	Fourth child

Given the declining fertility rate in Kerala, this is not surprising. 3.8% are the single child in their family.

### Education of parents

Education Level	Mother %	Father %
Degree and above	5.2	4.5
Pre degree	7.9	6.4
SSLC(10th Pass)	45.7	43.9
Below 10th	30.7	38
Illiterate	.9%	.9%
Technical education	1.7	2.4

This projects the interesting scenario of formal education in Kerala. Women are equally or better educated than men and illiterate parents were less than 1%. They probably were from the tribal and fishing areas

### Occupation of the parents

The data reveals the economic backwardness of the families.

70.4% fathers were daily wage workers (Coolie), 11.2% are working in the Middle east countries; 7.8% are casual workers and 25% are unemployed! Only 5.9% of men have government jobs.

73.2% of mothers are housewives. 10.9% are engaged in coolie work, 4.1% in private jobs, 1% in the middle east and only 7.6% have a government job.

### Housing

90% of children live in their own homes 92.6% have also toilet facilities. This is clearly an outcome of the decentralization programme in Kerala, where through transfer of powers and money, the local governments are empowered to undertake local development programmes. Housing and sanitation were the focus of this programme and several schemes are there to support the poor to have their own houses and toilets. Even then 7.6% do not have toilets. When adolescent girls have to use open spaces for their needs, this can lead to several issues of concern.

95.8% of children do not have a PC at home and 97.9% were of the firm opinion that

children of their age group need not have mobile phones

### Gender

93.8% of the children were of the opinion that boys and girls should have equal opportunity for education. 89.4% opined that girls and boys have equal status in the family. Since this is a simple survey, no correlation was made to assess the sibling pattern in the family. 10.7% said that inequality exists in families 58.6% said that in our society male female difference and inequality are visible.

### Marriage

Most of them were aware of the legal age of marriage and 58% opined that 18-22 is the ideal age of marriage for girls and 63% said that 23-27 is the age group for boys. 2.7% said that girls can marry before the age of 18

### Dowry

79.7% of the girls said that they will have to give dowry at the time of marriage. Only 12% said that it is not at all right to give dowry. If the groom do not demand it and the if parents are willing to give, there is no problem, according to 49%. Only 29% said that giving dowry is punishable.

Majority feels that is their right to demand gold and money at the time of marriage

### Awareness about changes in the adolescent age group

Very few of the children were (14%) were willing to even respond to questions related to bodily changes during adolescence. The changes mentioned by them were increase in height (7.5%), increase in weight (14.9%) breast growth (5%) menstruation (6%). None answered questions regarding bodily changes in boys. This shows the sense of shame, lack of awareness and fear of expressing matters related to body changes.

### Friendship

64% of girls said that they have boys as friends. 21% do not like to have boys as friends and 6% even said that this is wrong. 6% said that even if they like to have boys as friends their families will not approve of it. When asked about the mental and psychological

changes during adolescence, the following were the answers

Attraction to opposite sex	25%
Sudden reaction to issues	38.6%
Responsible in their actions	30%
Mature decision	43%
Give much importance to friendship	48%

### Reproductive health

56% of the girls are already menstruating; 40% of them had received some kind of information regarding this. 27.8% received such information from their mothers, 10.7% from friends, 3% from magazines and books. Still 16% had no information at all. This requires serious consideration. 43.4% use sanitary pads and rest use old clothes. 44.6% said there is facility in schools to change the pads. 11.3% had no such facility. This points to the need of campaigns for girl friendly toilets in all schools

More than half (54.4%) of children have received some kind of information about reproductive health from their mothers. 12.6% had not received any information. 33% have not even responded to this question, pointing again to the issue of shame. There is a great need to give scientific and systematic information on reproductive and sexual health and rights. 67.7% said they like to know more about this subject. 32.3% do not wish to have such information. 33.6% felt that mother is the best person to give such information. Others preferred teachers (4.7%) sakh staff (9.7%) doctor (6.3%) etc

97.7% said that sexual relations before marriage is completely wrong. Even if someone lovingly forces them, they will not yield to such pressures

It is of concern that 55% of children have experienced various types of sexual abuse and harassment. 32.8% have heard abusive words/had to witness obscene scenes; 14.3% experienced physical abuse (caressing, forcing to touch genitals etc) 2.3% were kissed without their permission.

The increasing rates of child sexual abuse is alarming and more public awareness needs to be created

Those who sexually abused were neighbours

(18.3%) immediate relatives (3.2%) other relatives (8%) teachers (1.8%). In a reply to a question of with whom will you share if such abuse happens, they responded by saying that mother (63.5%), friends (18.3%) Sister (9.5%) teacher (2%) and 2% will not tell anybody. The skills to support children who are abused needs to be widely shared. Sessions with parents are an urgent necessity. School PTA's should include more such topics.

### Substance abuse

Many of the children's family members use tobacco, liquor or such substances.

use of pan masala	21.2%
Smoking	55%
Alcohol use	53%

### Mental Transition

64% of the children expressed that they were experiencing mental tension. This is related

to exams, quarrel with friends, dissatisfaction etc 52% said they loose self control easily and get angry. 44% like to sit alone. 44.7% opined that their problem is lack of concentration and getting distracted. 96% have close friends and 99% like to help others. 59% suffer from inferiority complex and feels that others make fun of them

### Environmental awareness

Most children have very good environmental awareness. According to them, important issues are waste management (33.2%) deforestation (28.6%) destruction of water resources (21.6%) Water pollution (14.5%) some pointed to pollution by plastics, pesticides etc

The survey revealed the awareness levels of children and the areas which need attention in the coming one year

## Appendix 2

### Report of the evaluation by the children

This is a summary of the written evaluation by the adolescents who regularly attended the programme in the 35 centers.

The following are the achievements and learning's mentioned by them

#### 1. Enhanced self confidence through

- ▶ The removal of fear and shame
- ▶ Gained courage; learned to speak up loudly and assertively
- ▶ Increased self confidence
- ▶ Gained more attention
- ▶ Recognition of our abilities and limitations
- ▶ Confidence to travel alone

#### 2. Ability to respond

- ▶ Gained the ability to respond to social problems; attempting to make friends

- aware of what is right and proper
- ▶ Able to respond to issues while travelling in public transport; able to complain to the conductor confidently; able to demand reserved seats in buses
- ▶ Able to complain against the discrimination and harassment by some teachers to authorities
- ▶ While learning cycling, boys tried to chase us away but we insisted that the ground belongs to us too and continued to learn there
- ▶ Courage to participate in debates

#### 3. On Gender

- ▶ Understood the notions of gender equity: able to respond to discrimination at home
- ▶ Developed the attitude that there is nothing wrong in boys and girls mingling and to develop healthy and responsible friendship
- ▶ Able to discuss about gender equality to friends; able to understand the discrimination faced by women in the society

- ▶ When my mother was beaten by my father, I protested saying it is male domination and tried to educate my brother too
- ▶ All the girls could learn cycling
- ▶ Establish our right to the play ground
- ▶ Demand reservation seats in the Public transport

#### 4. Reading Habits

- ▶ Our reading habits increased and we started to use the school and village libraries
- ▶ I became very aware of the need to read and increase my knowledge
- ▶ I understood that reading habit will increase general knowledge and self confidence
- ▶ Books became my close friend
- ▶ Joined the library near my home
- ▶ I started to read newspaper daily

#### 5. Communication skills

- ▶ Learned Public speaking
- ▶ Now I know how to talk to adults
- ▶ Learned to be a good listener
- ▶ Developed skills to resolve conflicts without fighting

#### 6. Personality development

- ▶ Able to be aware of the problems in my personality (Anger, finding fault with others, not appreciating another person, not obeying anyone..)
- ▶ Able to recognize and appreciate another person and behave with maturity
- ▶ Developed self confidence and knowledge of my abilities
- ▶ Now I have an aim in life
- ▶ I am able to take creative initiatives
- ▶ I have now a desire to improve my abilities to become a good individual
- ▶ I can speak with confidence now in front of a crowd

#### 7. Environmental awareness

- ▶ Decided to minimize the use of plastics
- ▶ Will support persons who works against pollution of rivers and other water bodies and against sand mining
- ▶ Started to plant saplings
- ▶ Will not use paper carelessly so as not to destroy environment
- ▶ Made friends aware that sand mining and quarrying are destroying the earth we are living

- ▶ Understood the importance of agriculture in our lives and need for organic farming practices; need to respect farmers; need to protect the earth for future generations

#### 8. Local knowledge systems

- ▶ Able to know more the issues in our village and locality
- ▶ Understood about local leadership
- ▶ Understood the resources and facilities of the panchayats
- ▶ Understood the role of the ward member

#### 9. General knowledge

- ▶ Through the quiz programmes, enhanced our general knowledge
- ▶ Learned about internet, use and misuse of mobile phones
- ▶ Learned about the great women in history and their contribution
- ▶ Learned about various media and ethics of media; learned how a newspaper is produced
- ▶ Debates also help to acquire more knowledge
- ▶ Through reading newspapers, started to write down issues in a diary

#### 10. Legal awareness

- ▶ The Police station visit helped to cast away the fear of Police and Police station
- ▶ Learnt how to complain when a problem happens, to whom and how
- ▶ I want to become a police officer
- ▶ My desire is to be a lawyer, so that I can of help to people
- ▶ I understood if laws are violated, one can approach the courts
- ▶ Understood the rules while traveling
- ▶ Developed interest to know more about women protection laws and other laws

#### 11. Reproductive health

- ▶ Understood the changes happening in the body and also about menstruation. Body mapping was a very good exercise
- ▶ Learned about child birth and matters to be careful
- ▶ More conscious of menstrual hygiene now.
- ▶ Understood the importance of nutritious food and try to eat accordingly
- ▶ I realized why body cramps and pain happen during menstruation and stopped

taking tablets and not miss class now

### **12.Misuse of Information technology**

- ▶ Decided not to respond to missed calls
- ▶ Careful about sending SMS
- ▶ Will not use someone else's mobile
- ▶ Will be careful about chatting
- ▶ I will communicate these things to my friends
- ▶ Understood about the number of incidents which harmed girls in different parts of Kerala because of mobile misuse

### **13.Leadership Skills**

- ▶ Now I give leadership to the teen club by the Panchayat
- ▶ I was selected to be a member of the Youth festival committee in the school
- ▶ I competed for leadership in the Sunday class
- ▶ I have the courage now to be a class leader
- ▶ I am very punctual now
- ▶ When I was waiting for bus in the bus stop, a girl fainted and I took her to the hospital and then to her home. I told a friend to inform my parents. When my father scolded me, my mother said that she learns this in the Sakhi class
- ▶ I am not afraid to take responsibilities
- ▶ I desire to work like Mayilamma (leader of Plachimada struggle) to protect the environment
- ▶ I feel I can become a good leader one day

### **14. Ability to overcome mental pressure**

- ▶ I used to get easily angry. Now I am able to control myself
- ▶ I used to fight with my mother. Now I listen to what she says and if I don't like, I just move away from there
- ▶ I am able to focus on my studies
- ▶ Less laziness to go to school
- ▶ If other children fight or cry, I seek the reason and help them
- ▶ Able to survive tensions during exams

### **15.Opportunities to express my abilities**

- ▶ Participated in school youth festival
- ▶ Was active in the Onam celebration, study tours etc and got opportunity speak and to act
- ▶ Prepared scrap books and various paper crafts

- ▶ Got opportunity to participate in the various cultural activities

### **16.Methods to enhance mental and physical capabilities**

- ▶ Learnt self defense techniques
- ▶ Participated in sports activities
- ▶ Learned cycling
- ▶ Through reading lessened mental pressures

### **17.Any other achievements**

- ▶ Folk songs, games, theatre, making of newspaper, study tours... all this helped very much to increase our knowledge and self confidence

### **18. Suggestions for more subjects to be included**

- ▶ Learning Yoga/Karate/Dance/musical instruments
- ▶ Must conduct a cultural festival/Sports
- ▶ Study tour
- ▶ Want to learn traffic rules, cycling
- ▶ Assistance in school projects
- ▶ Swimming
- ▶ Visit to institutions in the Panchayat
- ▶ Classes using multimedia

### **19.How was the programme conducted by Sakhi different from other programme you have attended?**

- ▶ It was a very participatory programme
- ▶ We were not taught but you were helping us to learn
- ▶ Through Singing, games, group activities, sports etc, the sessions were interesting, thought provoking and made us happy
- ▶ In the classes conducted in schools and in the church, we are just taught by big people
- ▶ We got opportunities to express our multiple talents at the same time (lean to speak, sing, leadership, to act, to lead discussions etc
- ▶ Help to develop determination
- ▶ Created platforms to express our talents
- ▶ In other programmes we will not get so much encouragement and support
- ▶ Topics like 'missing girls' are very important for us to know but nobody inform us of such things
- ▶ The topics were of current relevance
- ▶ Because the group had only girls everything

can be openly discussed

- ▶ This was not just a programme but a collective experience and group building

In general, the response of the children was very positive. They shared much valuable experience which informed us that the objective of the programme is achieved. The

course has achieved what it sets to achieve as is clear from the enhanced participation of the children in the other activities in the school and community. If we travel along with the same group for some more time, this new learning's will take deep roots. They demand follow up and we hope the panchayats will rise up to these expectations

# External Evaluation Report

**Bimla Chandrasekhar, Remadevi**

## **1. Introduction:**

SAKHI women's resource centre was established in the year 1996 with the vision of a society based on equality, equity and peace. It aims at information dissemination, capacity building and leadership development of women, networking of grassroot groups, policy advocacy and campaigning on women's issues. In the last 15 years of its work, the organization has expanded its horizons and has evolved various methodologies and areas of intervention.

Sakhi has been working with local governments (Panchayaths) since 1996 when the Kerala government started the decentralization programme. From 2002 onwards Sakhi also has been working with adolescents at various levels like organizing teen clubs, conducting one day classes in schools, thematic trainings and summer camps etc. During such interactions issues like lack of education on sexual and reproductive health, increase in sexual abuse and suicide among the adolescents were shared by the participants.

Sakhi has also prepared and published a training manual on Life skill education for adolescents called 'Viriyunna mukualngal' (Blooming buds) and already the second edition of this manual is out. Three booklets- two on body awareness for boys and girls and one on Child sexual abuse -also is published.

Based on the above experience with the adolescents, the organization developed a specific project 'Sexual and Reproductive Health of Adolescent Girls'. The project aims to work with local governments (Panchayats) and build the capacity of local level government functionaries like the Anganwadi Teachers, Accredited social Health Activist (ASHA) and ICDS supervisors and also CBOs so that a resource team (Facilitators) shall be in

place to sustain this initiative in future. This project is funded by The Ford Foundation and is planned as a three year programme, to be implemented in a phased manner in 30 panchayats of Trivandrum district. In the third phase of the project there is also a plan to conduct pre-marital course for young men and women. This project was initiated in January 2010

In the first year, the programme was piloted in 10 panchayats. At the end of the first year, an evaluation was initiated to assess the effectiveness of the programme intervention and also to plan for the next phase. Ms Bimla Chandrasekar<sup>1</sup> and Ms Rema Devi<sup>2</sup> were invited to undertake this process.

## **2. Evaluation Process: (1st April-3rd April, 2011)**

A meeting was held on 1st April, 2011 at SAKHI office to brief the evaluation team on the purpose of this evaluation, provide details on the project implementation process and finalize the field visit schedule.

### **Meeting with the Sakhi Team:**

The following members were present in the Meeting:

Ms Mercy – Coordinator, SAKHI

Ms Geetha- Project coordinator

Ms Beena- Project Staff

Ms Sreekala- Project Staff

Ms Anna- A volunteer with SAKHI from Sweden

Ms Rema Devi- Asst Director, Mahila Samakhya (Evaluation team)

Ms Bimla- Director, EKTA Resource Centre for Women, Madurai (evaluation team)

On 3rd April the evaluation team also had a meeting with Aleyamma Vijayan, the former coordinator who initiated the programme

The Sakhi Team explained about the project implementation process, detailing on the

profile of selected panchayats, process of selecting the facilitators and the adolescent target group and the course content etc. It was stated that in January 2010, Sakhi started the first phase of work with adolescent girls in 10 Panchayaths where it has good rapport through its previous work of two years. Sakhi plans to move in to the rest 20 Panchayats in the second and third year.

Apart from the above briefing, a process document was also given for reference to the evaluators.

## **2.1 Methodologies of the evaluation:**

The evaluation team used field visits, Focused Group Discussions, Debates, visioning exercises and individual interviews for eliciting information from the adolescent girls, facilitators and the parents.

### **With Adolescent Girls:**

Focused Group Discussions were held with the adolescent girls to understand their perception about the programme and their participation in the discussion. This was followed by plenary presentation to assess their articulation and presentation skills. Thematic debate was held to understand their internalisation of learning and at the end reflective Sessions were facilitated to understand the application of the learning at the level of self, family and society

### **With Facilitators:**

Focused Group Discussions were held to understand their perception about the programme and also their involvement, the methods used by them etc. It was also discussed about the changes in the girls in their personality and approach towards family members and in the society. The facilitators also explained the programme's influence in their own life.

### **With Parents:**

Individual interviews were held with the parents to understand their views on the programme.

## **3.0 Observation Of The Evaluators From The Discussion with The Staff Team:**

### **3.1 Profile of the Panchayats:**

The selected 10 Village Panchayats are located in remote villages which include tribal settlement and coastal villages, 20 to 48 km away from Trivandrum City. Agriculture, fisheries and other allied activities are the main occupation of families. Most of the families are socially, educationally and economically backward. Profiles of these Panchayats were collected by the staff during the initial visits, to get an idea of the Panchayats. Some of the prevalent social problems identified in these Panchayaths were alcohol consumption among men, broken families, atrocities against women, child sex abuse, and early marriages.

### **3.2 Orientation and selection of local facilitators:**

After initial discussion, an one day orientation programme was conducted for ASHA workers, Kudumbasree, Anganawadi workers and Panchayat leaders in all these villages(10), explaining about the adolescents, their issues, need for the life skill education etc. Out of the 180 local government functionaries who participated, 114 women who showed keen interest in the process were selected as facilitators.

The selected facilitators were given training for three days at each panchayat on topics like gender, sexuality, masculinity, reproductive and sexual health, psychology and counseling. They were exposed to participatory methodologies like group discussions and simulation games. Each one of them received a resource kit with reference materials and also teaching aids. From among the 114 selected facilitators 89 continued till the end.

### **3.3 Selection and orientation of Adolescent girls:**

The selected and trained facilitators conducted parents meetings in villages and explained about this programme. They were motivated to send the children to this programme on a regular basis

One day orientation was conducted for the adolescent girls. Reputed women activists, panchayath presidents, political leaders were invited as resource persons, who shared

their experiences of struggle and success. Following this, group discussions were held and the girls were encouraged to share their experiences. A bench mark survey was done to get a background of the girls and to identify their expectations of the programme. The girls brought forward many issues which they face in their day today life.( eve-teasing ,sexual harassment in buses, discriminatory treatment at home and also public etc) . They also expressed the need to have mobility training (cycling), yoga and cultural activities. They had also asked for periodic awareness classes for parents.

1075 adolescent girls between age- group of 12 to 14 yrs studying in 7th, 8th and 9th classes were initially identified. Despite the reluctance of parents, a few 10th class students also joined. For various reasons (tuitions, removal of higher class students by the facilitators) some dropped out and 870 girls continued till the end.

This was followed by 2 day camps in which topics like personality development,

communication skill, and leadership were given priority. This helped the participants to break the culture of silence, and identify their potentialities.

### 3.4 Regular monthly sessions

After this in each panchayat regular monthly sessions were held. There were 3-4 centers in each panchayath. There were 25-30 children in each centre and 10-12 facilitators. A total of 38 centers were started and in the end 35 centers continued to function. Because sufficient numbers of children were not present in three centers they were merged with others. Mostly the activities were held at the anganwadi, the Panchayat office or schools. The children who regularly attended the programme were given photo identity cards and a notebook and writing materials. Regular attendance was taken and minutes were written by children in turn.

There were ten monthly sessions for each group during the period. The topics and methods used were as follows:

Topics	Methodologies adopted
Personality development	Creative group activities
Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) Women in History	Survey, FGD's, transect walk etc. Secondary data collection and discussions
Understanding Gender	Group discussion, debate and role plays
Re-productive Health	Interactions with doctors and public health nurses. Body mapping exercise
Influence of Media	Interaction with media experts, discussion on use and misuse of ICT and preparation of a News paper
Environment	Discussions, reflective sessions and field exposure
Onam and Independent day feast celebrations, rally etc	Collection of old sayings about Onam, organizing onam cultural programme and rally
Violence against women and girls	Participation in the International Campaign -16 day camapaign against gender based violence (From 25th Nov to 10th Dec)
Women and Law Learning skills like self defense, cycling and Yoga	Visits to Police station and interaction with police officers Instructions and practice

### **3.5 Monthly meeting of facilitators:**

The facilitators met regularly on a monthly basis to share experiences and plan for the next month activities. This capacitated the facilitators to incorporate new ideas and strategies to handle the sessions effectively. Apart from this, regional meetings were also organised on a quarterly basis to facilitate interaction and learning among the facilitators.

### **4.0 Observation Of The Evaluators From The Discussion With The Adolescent Girls:**

Three meetings were held with the adolescent girls in three locations as per the plan. A total of 63 girls participated in these meetings. The main focus of these discussions were to understand the learning and application of those learning in the lives of these adolescents. The team also assessed the effectiveness of the methodologies adopted in disseminating the knowledge. These meetings were followed by meetings with the facilitators and informal meetings with the parents.

After the introductory session, the adolescent girls were divided into smaller groups to discuss, write down and present their views about the programme. They were encouraged to share their individual experiences – their knowledge and attitudinal changes and how these changes made impact in their lives. (Give individual experiences of application of the learning at home, with friends and at the community; their understanding level of concepts, contents, changes in the self etc).

In two places debate was held on two different topics a) use and misuse of cellphone and b) the impact of socialization of male and female in society.

They were asked to share about their future ambition and finally there was a feedback of the process.

### **4.1 The views and learning shared in the groups:**

The participants were eager to share about the programme and their participation. They gave details about the sessions. It was shared that most of them were regular in attendance.

Special focus was given in the programme to improve and develop their personality and communication skills. The sessions were conducted in a participatory manner and this helped them to analyze and get involved in the subjects. The sessions also helped them to analyze themselves, identify their skills and reduce their limitations. They have gained knowledge about reproductive health and rights, communication skills and there were also opportunities to share their personal problems and to get counseling.

They felt excited while narrating their visit to the police station and the environmental study trip. The police station visit organised in connection with the topic 'Children and law'. Many of them have got the inspiration to become an ideal police officer and to do good for the society. During this visit one girl asked the police 'if police stations have rifle for safety, then all women in Kerala should be given a rifle each for their safety'.

Practical learning of cycling and self defense techniques, sports, and games helped them to gain self confidence.

They shared about an exciting new experience of preparing a news letter in connection with the session on Media. Participation in 'Onam', the harvest festival organised at the panchayat level was an opportunity for them to express their talents and skills like .Speech, Dance, Drama, songs, drawing etc.

Apart from this, they also were part of the 16 day campaign against gender violence conducted at the panchayat level. They participated in poster campaign, public rallies, and corner meetings aiming at creating awareness about the wide spread violence faced by women and girls. The campaign also created new insights to the newly elected Panchayat Members and to the public about the rights and problems of adolescent girls. This experience and exposure helped the adolescent girls to reflect on the sessions on the rights of women and girls.

### **4.2 Application of the learnings:**

In this regard a few girls shared their own experience of questioning the power

relationship and distribution of food in the family (why are you giving more food to my brother?) With the understanding of child rights, they were able to raise questions in their own families.

It was shared that some of them have questioned the gender discrimination at home and in the public places (restriction on girl's mobility at home and saying 'stop' to unwanted touch in the public transport).

They were able to place their issue and demands before the Panchayats and pressurize them to take appropriate actions.

Visits to local ecologically important places has created awareness and the girls have taken pledge to protect nature by avoiding plastic, saving electricity, water etc. They have planted trees in the schools and their home and resist use of plastic.

Few expressed their desire to become journalist so that they can write about the social injustices meted out to women and girls.

### **4.3 Use of Methodologies**

It was observed that various methodologies were used in the implementation of the programme. Methodologies such as group discussions, debates, creative activities, quiz, field visit, experience sharing, folk songs, and games were highly appreciated by the adolescent girls.

### **4.5 Debates:**

In two places debates were held. In the debate on the use and misuse of cell phone, the argument was very interesting. The team supporting the use of cellphone went on to explain the need and uses of cell phone as a means of communication, particularly in emergency situation. The opposing team spoke about the careless use of the cellphone which is causing more harm than serving the above stated purpose. Instances like taking photos of girls by boys when they are sleeping or taking bath etc and unnecessary sms were seen as real problems. At the end the common agreement that yes cell phone is a useful means of communication but is not a necessity for the adolescent boys and girls. Many of them shared how they are managing

without a cell phone and slowly convincing other parents not to give cell phone to their children.

The second debate was held on the impact of socialization on male and female in the society. The process generated heated discussion. The debate started with the statement that boys are preferred over girls as the boys are good at sports, they work and support the family and above all male support for women is very essential in the society. It was stressed that the male members also take responsibility of the parents in their old age. The opposition team put forth their views by saying that women are also equally good in sports but they are not given opportunity to participate, in reality the old parents are mostly taken care of by the daughters and the women are also earning for the family, however the society does not recognise their economic and other contribution. The freedom to move around was also discussed in detail. It was shared that boys and men have the freedom to go as and when they wish to but women are either not allowed or have to be escorted by male members.

It was agreed that the gender stereotype creates more problem for girls and women as they constantly fear assault on them. The aggressive behaviour of boys and men are seen as normal behaviour and girls and women are socialized to accept it as their fate. The examples of eve teasing, wife beating and alcoholism in men were shared.

At the end it was stated that women and men are biologically different and this difference is converted in to inequality through the socialization process. Therefore there is a need to create awareness so that girls and boys are treated equally in families and also at the society and given equal opportunities to develop their full potential.

The girls participated actively in both the debates and were able to communicate their views. They have been speaking about male privilege and gender based violence. This awareness need to be further strengthened by helping them to understand the socialization process as a means to sustain patriarchal control over women's labour, decision making, mobility, reproduction and sexuality.

#### **4.6 On Aspirations:**

In the present context, when there is a mad rush for professional courses like medicine and engineering, it was a real pleasure to see girls aspiring for different career options. Most of them wanted to be teachers, journalists, lawyers, social activists, nurses and a few expressed their desire to become IAS officer, doctors, and engineers. They seemed to know about different vocational options and have a clear goal suited to their capacity and aptitude. During the group discussions, the adolescent girls were asked to give a name to their group. They were very progressive in their choice of names. All of them had chosen names that symbolize growth, progress and change in society.

#### **5.0 Observation Of The Evaluators From The Discussion With The Facilitators:**

- ▶ A total of 25 facilitators participated in the meetings held after the meeting with the adolescent girls in all the three locations.
- ▶ They were very happy to have participated in this programme. They were confident and felt good about their contribution to this process.
- ▶ They valued their strong relationship with the adolescent girls and their families. They shared that they have gained deeper insight in to social problems like gender based violence and discrimination and seemed to be motivated to be part of the solution to such problems.
- ▶ Through this programme, they also have acquired better planning and organizing skills. They feel good about their ability to network with different institutions.
- ▶ They value the recognition and respect from the local people and the local administrators. They feel proud about the improved performance of the girls in the schools and in the families.
- ▶ However, they expressed the need to have periodic training to update the knowledge and skills particularly on counseling.

#### **6.0 Observation Of The Evaluators From The Discussion With The Parents Of Adolescent Girls:**

- ▶ The parents expressed their happiness

about the positive change in their daughters.

- ▶ They admired their daughters' skills in public speaking, leadership, and event management.
- ▶ The girls have become assertive yet share household responsibilities and also respect elders.
- ▶ They suggested continuation of the programme to sustain the learning process. They felt programme should be extended to more panchayats and to girls in the age group of 14 to 17. They were emphatic about the need to impart such programmes to adolescent boys

#### **7.0 Overall Observations And Recommendations:**

The interactions at the office and the field locations and the process document helped the evaluators to understand the programme holistically. The goal was to have the programme in 10 Panchayaths and in 34 centers which has been successfully implemented. The content design also is exhaustive and provides ample opportunities for exploration of self, understanding of the society and the rights of the women and children from a human rights framework.

To quote Kamla Bhasin from our daughters "the adolescent girl still remains a young plant that gets neither light nor water. She remains the flower that could have blossomed but didn't.....". There fore the need to have such intervention goes beyond doubt. This need is well articulated and implemented by a team of committed staff. With declining sex ratio and many different forms of discrimination faced by women in our society this programme really creates a model for holistic empowerment among the adolescent girls. Good rapport at the community level which is a prerequisite to any community level intervention has been effectively established. The adolescent girls show interest to learn and share. They value this learning as a process of empowerment and would like to continue the interaction

#### **7.1 Recommendations:**

The programme has provided the much needed creative space for exploring self, to

recognize and value individual skills which made them feel more confident. It has enhanced their participation in decision making at home and in schools. They have started questioning the gender based discrimination at home and outside. The enthusiasm, hope and the spark that has been created in the minds of the young ones need to be sustained with continuation of this programme. The dedicated staff team of Sakhi needs to be recognised for their hard work and positive contribution to make this process a meaningful one that has emerged as a replicable model.

The Content designed for the programme is exhaustive and covers most issues. However proactively it has to be constantly updated with the changing scenario at the State and National level due the visible impact of the globalization process in day to day lives of people. The rise in consumeristic culture and the crucial role played by media to perpetuate this culture need to be understood. A session on the process of Globalization may be added along with the topic on environment which could be substantiated with sharing on the people's struggle in Kerala and other parts like the Coca Cola etc. This would help them to visualise the impact of this process on day to day life of common people.

The participatory methodologies like the group discussions, quiz, exposure visits and interaction with experts have not only been greatly valued by both the participants and the facilitators but also have yielded the desired outcome. Therefore it is recommended to maximise the use of such methodologies, structured exercises and exposure trips.

Although majority of the girls were from the specified age group, there were some younger ones in these groups. Their interest to be part of such processes is appreciated; however a sub group may be formed to take care of their learning. A homogeneous group is advisable as it promotes greater degree of debate and discussion.

The session on gender has created awareness and the young girls are able to identify issues like discrimination on the basis of gender both at the domestic as well as the public sphere. Case stories may be collected for sharing and interactive sessions held to give them more insight into the strategies to address such

discriminations that are violative of their rights. May be interactive sessions with some survivors of such incidents could be thought of.

The session on gender may include more exercises to help understand the impact of gender division of roles on both boys and girls. Effective strategies may be developed to engage men and boys as program co-beneficiaries and as important agents of solutions. If they are seen as part of the problem, they should be included as part of the solution also. The understanding the value of negotiation and non aggressive behaviour has to be stressed.

Counseling is a key area of support to the adolescents. Girls are often victimised even when their rights are violated. A common example of this could be an instance when a girl reports about eve-teasing or sexual advance made by a male, the immediate question is raised about her dress or other attributes to draw male attention etc. Fearing this adverse consequence, many a time girls do not speak out about such experiences. Therefore, both individual and group counselling may be strengthened for both the facilitators and the adolescent girls. The facilitators may be given updated trainings/ refresher courses in counseling skills from a rights perspective. This could enhance their understanding of gender discrimination as violation of the rights of the adolescent girls. The manifesto developed in two panchayats (women and children focus) shows the enthusiasm to practice their learning and emerge as future leaders. This healthy sign need to be appreciated by providing space for participation in the Gram Sabhas, Children's meets and other appropriate decision making forums.

Facilitate more community level interactions and mobilize communities, families, men and boys to support adolescent girls. Encourage and support religious and community leaders and head teachers to foster healthier, more supportive communities where girls can create and execute their own solutions. Recognise such good practices in public events.

Educate girls on their rights and equip them to educate leaders about their lives and to press for the enforcement of laws and policies that protect and enhance their rights. Engage

girls in creating and executing programs and services that improve their own lives and those of their families and communities.

Some of the senior adolescent girls can be taken as peer educator/ motivator for the next phase. They could be actively associated in the continuation process in their own areas and also as and when time permits, selected ones may be involved in peer learning process in the rest 20 panchayats.

The pilot phase was implemented where

SAKHI has worked consistently with the panchayats and the familiarity has also contributed to the success. However, the next phase with not so familiar panchayats may bring different dynamics.

### **Impact and sustainability of the Programme:**

Five Panchayats have already included this programme in their next proposal for grant and others have agreed to think about it

## **Appendix 1**

The Evaluation Schedule:

No.	Date	Meeting with	Venue	Aim
1	1/4/2011	Discussion with project staff	Sakhi Office	To understand details about the project
2	2/4/2011	Discussion with adolescent girls	Action Council Vellarada	to understand the learnings of participating girls
3	2/4/2011	Facilitators meeting	Action Council Vellarada	To understand how they facilitate the groups
4	2/4/2011	Adolescent group	Panchayat Office, Kunnathukal	to understand the learnings of participating girls
5	2/4/2011	Facilitators meeting Kunnathukal	Panchayat Office, the groups	To understand how they facilitate the groups
6	3/4/2011	Discussion with project staff	Office of Sakhi	Discussion about field level observations
7	3/4/2011	Adolescent group	Madona Hall, Pulluvila	to understand the learnings of participating girls
8	3/4/2011	Facilitators meeting	Madona Hall, Pulluvila	To understand how they facilitate the groups
9	3/4/2011	Team Members	Sakhi Office	To Discuss about reporting process.

## Appendix 2

List of Participants:

### Kunnattukal panchayat

List of Participants		List of Facilitators
1. Harishree.V.R	16. Aneesh K P	Komalavalli
2. Madhurima	17. Drashy G	Vijayakumari P
3. Rakhi R K	18.Aparna P S	Sreelatha Devi C
4. Akhila S B	19. Athira V A	Saramma
5. Ancy S S	20. Blessy S S	Sujatha
6. Annu L M	21. Reshma S S	Kumari
7. Asna P J	22. Akhila A	Saramma Issac
8. Athira S	23. Anjumol C M	Sheela
9. Aswathy A G	24. Linda C G	Nissy
10. Athira Mahesh M S	25. Sreelekshmi J M	Thankom
11. Athira T	26. Greeshma J G	
12. Jaisha J M	27. Anjana P J	
13. Punnu P S	28. Nisha Viji	
14. Suma F S	29. Bhavana K K	
15. Ancy S S	30. Karthika M S	

Sakhi team who participated in the process –Mercy Alexander, Geetha J, Sreekala T S, Beenamol S G  
Evaluators - Ms Bimla Chandrashekhar ( Ekta) & Ms Rema Devi L (Kerala Mahila Samakhya Society)

### Vellarada Panchayat

List of Participants		List of Facilitators
1. Arathy A S	14. Aryakrishnan B R	Binsy T
2. Jasmin N J	16. Athira V	Geetha V
3. Midhuja Sumdhan	17. Been S	Ambily A
4. Sona M J	18. Reena M J	
5. Sorya B S	19. Sheeba B	
6. Arathy V S	20. A Mattilda	
7. Haripriya V R	21. S Jameela	
8. Shamna E S	22. Sarsamma Thomas	
9. Sreevidya K P	23. Usha Kumary J	
10. Rakhi S L	24. Haidi	
11. Monisha R V	25. Sheela	
12. Viji B	26. Dali Fransis	
13. Anchu . S	27. Sabeena	

Sakhi team who participated in the process –Mercy Alexander, Geetha J, Sreekala T S  
Evaluators - Ms Bimla Chandrashekhar ( Ekta) & Ms Rema Devi L (Kerala Mahila Samakhya Society)

## Karimkulam Panchayat

List of Participants		List of Facilitators
1. Chrishtu May B	10. Freeda R	Janet Nicholas
2. Sibitha S S	11. Vlji	Mary Kunju
3. Jubirna Jose	12. Reshma L	Sherly Andrews
4. Mereena	13. Jiji Raj L	Selvarani P
5. Siji Raj L	14. Shybi M	
6. Raji S	15. Virejina mary C	
7. Joby J	16. Liva L S	
8. Harsha Johnson	17. Aleena C	
9. Nainu D		

Sakhi team who participated in the process –Mercy Alexander, Geetha J,

Evaluators - Ms Bimla Chandrashekhar ( Ekta) & Ms Rema Devi L (Kerala Mahila Samakhya Society)

*Sakhi team in this Programme*

Mercy Alexander

Geetha J.

Sreekala T.S.

Beenamol S.G.



**Sakhi**

**Women's Resource Centre**

T.C 27/1872 Convent road  
Vanchiyoor, Thiruvananthapuram 695 035  
Phone: 0471 2462251  
Fax: 0471 2574939  
Email: [sakhikerala@gmail.com](mailto:sakhikerala@gmail.com)  
[www.sakhikerala.org](http://www.sakhikerala.org)