

The Help desk, therefore, not only provides an emotional pillar and recognition to community members but has also been at the forefront of any crisis management that needs to be done and is always alert for rescue. Apart from managing and attending crises, the main work that the Help desks take up is ensuring proper Identification Documentation for sex workers in order to ensure that they are eligible for the Government Schemes and benefits for low-income groups.

Many community members received their first-ever Aadhar cards, PAN Cards, and/or Ration Cards due to the help of the Help desk. They were also helped in submitting their applications to various schemes of the Government, including a Housing scheme for which seven community members had even gotten selected.

జాతీయ బాలికల దినోత్సవం సందర్భంగా అమ్మ సర్వీస్ అండ్ డెవలప్మెంట్ సొసైటీ ఆధ్వర్యంలో ఆటల పోటీలు

ప్రాజెక్టు చైర్మన్ శివ లక్ష్మి

కంచెపల్లె జనవరి 25 (సత్యాగ్రహం) : జాతీయ బాలికా దినోత్సవం సందర్భంగా అమ్మ సర్వీస్ అండ్ డెవలప్మెంట్ సొసైటీ ఆధ్వర్యంలో మీ అండ్ మై వరల్డ్ సకారంతో బాలికలకు ఆట పోటీలు నిర్వహించడం జరిగింది. ఈ సందర్భంగా అమ్మ సర్వీస్ అండ్ డెవలప్మెంట్ సొసైటీ ప్రాజెక్ట్ చైర్మన్ శివలక్ష్మి మాట్లాడుతూ సమాజంలో బాలికలను గౌరవప్రదంగా చూడాలని సమాజం చూసే చూపు మార్పుకొని వారి భవిష్యత్తు గురించి అందరూ ఆదరణ చూపాలని ఆడపిల్లలు ఉన్న తల్లిదండ్రుల చాలా జాగ్రత్తగా వారికి సమాజంలో ఉన్న విలువల నేర్పించి సరియైన ప్రత్యేకమైన శైలిలో వారి భవిష్యత్తు తీర్చిదిద్దాలని వివరించడం జరిగింది మీ అండ్ మై వరల్డ్ ద్వారా ఏమండలాలలో అమ్మ సర్వీస్ అండ్ డెవలప్మెంట్ సొసైటీ మహిళల అభ్యున్నతికి కృషి చేస్తూ వారి పిల్లలకు కూడా భవిష్యత్తులో మంచి గా ఉండటానికి వారికి అండగా ఉంటున్నామని చెప్పడం జరిగింది. ఈ సమావేశంలో యస్. వాణి, మేరీ, నాగమణి, ఇతర సభ్యులు పాల్గొనడం జరిగింది.

“Organization of events and sport competitions on the occasion of ‘National Girl Child Day’ by Amma Service and Society.”

Hidden Sex Workers & Their Contribution

In the areas that we especially work in, there are a lot of sex workers who are hidden and do not reveal the nature of the work they do or their identities. This is because they are also labourers and have entered into sex work only because they aren't able to make enough money by labour work.

The hidden nature of the sex workers is especially difficult to work with because they do not wish to

attend large meetings and wish to be addressed only in small gatherings. They are not extroverted and do not wish to freely associate with the CBO or its meetings and work.

However, just because they are not able to associate with the CBO does not mean the Help desk cannot help them or do not need their support. Hence, CBO leaders and Office bearers begin to build friendships and close personal relationships with these people, as much as they can, in order to build an effective communication network available to them for help and assistance in social welfare and healthcare, and available to us to gather momentum.

Hidden sex workers are being provided access to the opportunity to claim human rights and Government schemes that are applicable to them, including basic Identity documentation such as Aadhar, Ration, and PAN Cards in order to be eligible for certain benefits and be able to open Bank accounts. Their contribution to networking and communication, and hence, the outreach of the Help desk has been immense. It is difficult to identify hidden sex workers, but those in the community can secretly reach out to the hidden sex workers and help them whilst also gathering support for the Help desk.

Therefore, the contribution of hidden sex workers, although does not surface, is what keeps the running and reach of the Help desk authentic, smooth and beneficial.

Skill Development by the Helpdesk

This district has been extremely active in its skill development programs and opportunities. Ever since the pandemic began, the brutal decline in sex work opportunities and overhead expenses took a huge toll on the livelihoods and mental health of sex workers. The community, although very proud and unapologetic of the work they have to do to sustain themselves and their families, were looking to expand their money-making techniques and sources of income. The fear of crises similar to the pandemic putting them out of work became all the more real and fear-inducing.

Therefore, the leaders of the Help desk organized skill development workshops and mass-teaching programs in order to provide more job opportunities to sex workers and increase their confidence levels. For example, 30 community members were gathered, their timings synchronized and a tailoring workshop was organized. Certain donors were consulted and asked for help in securing orders for the products stitched or made by the sex workers who learned the skills of stitching and tailoring. Some deals have also been secured with partner customers in neighbouring districts (community wedding contracts, etc.) who will bring in clothing & tailoring orders for sex workers, who have been attempting at perfecting their skills in tailoring.

Challenges Faced by the Help desk

One of the biggest challenges that remain in the Krishna district is the difficulty in outreach due to uncompromising media persons. While office bearers have tried to establish connections with the media, and have invited them on various occasions, the ratio of attention or coverage given to the Help desk is less due to the stigma of it being a sex worker collective.

Additionally, instead of depicting sex workers as criminals that are caught by the police in raids, sex worker collectives want the media to report positive news about them. For example, in the Krishna district, a lot of important social work is being done by the collectives. A lot of assistance and help, ranging from responding to the basic needs of women living in poverty to responding to bigger crises, is provided by the help desks of these collectives. Instead of highlighting these things and appreciating these collectives, the media pays more attention to film actors turned politicians who would plant a tree and make a token appearance.

Another challenge is the harassment and bullying by the higher-ranked officers and bureaucrats who are not only nosy and want to know everything about the work that the Help desk is carrying out but also always address it with suspicion and doubt, and obstruct the work unnecessarily. For example, when Sivalakshmi, an office-bearer in the Krishna District, was conducting

some surveys and collecting certain data of sex workers, she was confronted by some bureaucrats, who interrogated and cornered her by asking her various details.

సెక్స్ వర్కర్ల పిల్లలు పై వివక్ష చూపకూడదు, తల్లి పేరు

మీద కుల ధృవీకరణ పత్రం ఇవ్వాలి

అమ్మ సర్వీస్ అండ్ డెవలప్మెంట్ సొసైటీ ప్రెసిడెంట్ శివలక్ష్మి

కంచికపర్ల మార్కెట్ 3 (సత్యాగ్రహం) : ఇంటర్నేషనల్ సెక్స్ వర్కర్స్ రైట్స్ డే సందర్భంగా అమ్మ సర్వీస్ అండ్ డెవలప్మెంట్ సొసైటీ కార్యాలయంలో సెక్స్ వర్కర్ల పై ఉన్న చిన్న చూపు వివక్షతను గురించి వివరించడం అవగాహన కల్పించడం కార్యక్రమం నిర్వహించడం జరిగింది. ఈ సందర్భంగా అమ్మ సర్వీస్ అండ్ డెవలప్మెంట్ సొసైటీ ప్రెసిడెంట్ శివలక్ష్మి మాట్లాడుతూ సెక్స్ వర్కర్ల పై ఉన్న చిన్న చూపు వివక్షతను గురించి వివరిస్తూ, సమాజంలో నిరాదరణకు గురవుతున్న సెక్స్ వర్కర్ల హక్కుల పరిరక్షణ గురించి వివరించడం జరిగింది. సమాజంలో సెక్స్ వర్కర్ల పై బలవంతపు రైడ్ రెస్ట్రాంట్ రిహాబిలిటేట్ మోడల్ అంతం చేయాలని కోరారు. సెక్స్ వర్కర్ల కు చైతన్యం మరియు వలస హక్కు ఉండాలి. సెక్స్ వర్కర్ల పై శారీరక శిక్ష మానసిక గృహ రాష్ట్ర మరియు సామాజిక హింసను ఆపండి. సెక్స్ వర్కర్ల పిల్లలు పై వివక్ష చూపకూడదు మరియు తల్లి పేరు మీద కుల ధృవీకరణ పత్రం ఇవ్వాలి. సీవియర్స్ నుండి మమ్మల్ని రక్షించండి సెక్స్ వర్కర్ల పై బలవంతపు రైడ్ రెస్ట్రాంట్ రిహాబిలిటేట్ మోడల్ ను అంతం చేయండి. కళంకం మరియు వివక్ష లేకుండా ఆలోచ్య సంరక్షణ పొందాలని మేము కోరుతున్నాము. సెక్స్ వర్కర్ల పై జాతీయ మానవ హక్కుల కమిషన్ సలహా అని రాష్ట్రంలో వర్తించాలని మేము కోరుతున్నాము అని అమ్మ సర్వీస్ అండ్ డెవలప్మెంట్ సొసైటీ చైర్మన్ శివలక్ష్మి తెలియజేశారు.

A newspaper article about the problems, stigma and discrimination faced by sex workers and their children was published.

When the details of sex workers and survey data, as a matter of data protection and privacy, remained undisclosed by Sivalakshmi, the bureaucrats took her to the Zilla Parishad's office and threatened her. However, Sivalakshmi stood firm and said that they would not reveal the data/identity, and showed documents and proof that she was indeed affiliated to the National Network. She explained that her work was at a registered community organisation, and also showed the certificate of registration as evidence. After verifying all of this, the bureaucrats congratulated her for her good work.

Therefore, the interference of the bureaucrats and the cooperation of media are two things the Help desk is working on as they go hand in hand. If the media advertises the work of the Help desk and increases their reach and appeal, bureaucrats will know about the work of the Help desk beforehand and may not harass the workers.

Achievements

On World AIDS Day, as the Help desk members celebrated the occasion and took the opportunity to invite people and spread awareness, they received a lot

of recognition from the media, and their names and work flashed in the newspapers and e-magazines the next day. 'Amma Service Society' was highlighted and its work was appreciated to the extent that this recognition fuelled the spirit of the workers of the Help desk and motivated them a lot.

The biggest achievement of the Help desk which usually goes unaddressed is that Sivalakshmi, a married woman and mother of two children, was unafraid of her picture being in the newspaper. She was unafraid of her name being associated with sex workers on a public platform. This is because of the confidence in the 'sex worker' identity that the Help desk has induced, which is a huge moral achievement.

Another achievement of the Help desk is that it is being led by Sivalakshmi. She is an unapologetic sex worker who has battled severe mental health problems that followed a narrow escape from an acid attack. Sivalakshmi lost confidence in herself and her body after the acid attack and didn't know if she could continue sex work, the only work she knew and could earn money from. However, she battled her troubles and fought against all odds, while losing the support of many family members and loved ones, to establish the Help desk, a community of sex workers, and fight unanimously for their rights and welfare.