



Swathi Mahila Sangha



Annual Report 2023-2024

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1. Letter from the Governing Board of Swathi Mahila Sangha

Dear Readers,

From a core team of 13 members in December 2003 to more than 30000 members in 2024, Swathi Mahila Sangha has come a long way. At the time of inception, our founding members had but one goal – to improve the lives of women in sex work and to meet their needs.

Twenty one years later, we can look back with satisfaction in this journey that consisted of intense sensitization and field based interventions. With the support of knowledge partners, funders, institutions, it has been possible for us to achieve a multi-dimensional positive and sustainable change in the lives of thousands of women in sex work. We continue to **cross milestones in areas of health care, rights and justice, and improving access to sustainable income earning capacities**. On behalf of all those lives we have touched, directly and indirectly, **we thank our donors, supporters and well-wishers for your continued support and trust.**

During 2023-2024, while we continued to work through our various projects and programs, we addressed key concerns related to the community – that of concerns related to health care and livelihood.

Free self-testing kits for cervical cancer – ensuring privacy and confidentiality – PRESCRIP-TEC

Despite facing a high risk of sexually transmitted infections due to their exposure to multiple partners, and which in turn increases their risk of developing cervical cancer, due to various reasons, women in sex work hesitate to go in for testing.

During 2023-2024, Swathi Mahila Sangha made significant progress in this direction. With support from St John's Medical College and Research Hospital, it provided **HPV self-test kits to 158 women absolutely free of cost**. The Hospital diagnosed the vaginal samples absolutely free of charge and diagnosed about **35% to have symptoms of cervical cancer**. Since then, the women have been referred for advanced diagnosis and are taking treatment accordingly.

With support from partners, we are also distributing seed fund to members for setting up enterprises. Our Entrepreneurship training programs, which got a good response from members, is also helping them to reduce their dependency on earnings through sex work.

In the coming year and in the future, we aim to strengthen existing interventions in health care and livelihood.

We once again thank all our partners, donors and institutions, whose support is instrumental in making a positive difference in the lives of women in sex work. Due to this support, Swathi Mahila Sangha has set benchmarks in the sector of community development and well-being. It has enabled thousands of women to create space for themselves in society and live life with dignity and contentment.

Thank you,

Saraswathi

President

PART A

A.1 Swathi Mahila Sangha - how the movement evolved over the years

In 2003, Bangalore lacked comprehensive programs for marginalized women like Women in Sex Work (WSW). While a few NGOs offered basic HIV/STI prevention, deeper issues were overlooked. Inspired by movements in Bangladesh and Sonagachi, a group of Bangalore sex workers, led by Helen, Puspallatha, Geeta, and Zarina, formed Swathi Mahila Sangha (SMS) with Samraksha's support on December 15, 2003. SMS was later formally registered under the Karnataka Societies Act.

From a core team of 13 members in December 2003 to more than 30000 members in 2024, Swathi Mahila Sangha, which is legally registered under the Karnataka Societies Act has come a long way. From the time when it focused primarily on sensitizing women in sex work about STI/STD and HIV related interventions, it has evolved to a movement in accordance to its vision of *‘responding effectively to the needs of every woman.’*

Although there are many collectives of women in sex work in India, and each of them significant in their own way, irrespective of size or mandate, possibly among them Swathi Mahila Sangha has grown over the years to be among the largest collective of women in sex work. Its range of comprehensive interventions provide empowers its members through knowledge and field based services.

Over the years, while many national and international donors have collaborated with Swathi Mahila Sangha to implement many projects, it has successfully taken steps towards financial sustainability.

A.2 Key milestones

- **Coming out of grant dependency approach and initiating interventions for sustainable revenue generation and internal resource mobilization**

Over the years, Swathi Mahila Sangha reduced its dependency on grants for funding its various interventions and programs, and initiated various social businesses and models to generate revenues internally. At present, about 50% to 60% of its projects are being funded through internal resource mobilization or revenue generation models. As a result, many of its critical programs can continue to be implemented even in case of any reduction or stopping of grants.

- **Strengthening the foundation**

With the support of Swasti, a leading public health organization in India which is into empowering vulnerable communities for public health, and Karnataka Health Promotion Trust, the first decade of the Swathi Mahila Sangha primarily witnessed the close mentoring of the founders and developing a team of first line leadership. Based on the needs of women in sex work, several first time initiatives were designed. These took into account their need related to justice, legal rights, health and nutrition, savings and credit and many others. Among the key projects implemented as a partner, along with Swasti and KHPT was Project Pragathi, which was implemented for about 8 years.

- **Development of strong second line leadership and emergence of the third line leadership**

The second decade saw the strengthening of a strong second line leadership which consisted of more than 100 leaders. Through various capacity holding programs and working closely alongside the leaders, they began to eventually take on more responsibilities and managed critical responsibilities in a competent manner. Right from addressing cases where women had undergone violence to interacting with the police and judiciary, or working with various Government Departments to access social entitlements, the second line leadership strengthened the foundation established by the founding members.

At present, the third line leadership is emerging where members are harnessing the rich experience and knowledge of the leaders and combining it with their own enthusiasm to work for the welfare of the women in sex work. On the whole, the emerging leadership is managing responsibilities related to:

- Advocacy related work
- Partners engagement
- Violence redressal
- Social entitlement

The new line of leadership is more educated, and balancing both field based work and networking with key stakeholders with confidence and preparedness. On the other hand, the founders and the first line leadership are more accepting of the new blood in the ranks, giving up their initial sense of possessiveness and sense of insecurity.

- **Best practices – first time ever interventions that have proved to be milestones in improving the lives and livelihoods of SMS members**

Recognizing that SMS cannot survive solely on funding from donors or donations, or from donations from individual members, it initiated various initiatives which were successful in generating internal resources.

- **Establishing social businesses that have helped SMS towards financial independence**

Initiating Swathi Savi, a nutritional supplement which is distributed free to all PLHIV members of SMS. After being marketed to various other customers, its profit is invested back in the business.

Swathi Jyothi, which is an initiative providing various financial services to the community including savings, taking credit at easy terms of interest.

- **Collaborating with health care institutions to provide and work on Non-HIV prevention programs**

Although the members are at high risk to contract STD/STI and HIV, many are also having various NCD (Non-communicable diseases) such as hypertension and diabetes. They are also at risk cervical cancer given their exposure to unsafe sexual health practices and multiple partners.

However, due to neglect, financial constraints and ignorance, and lack of self-care, the members did not undergo health check up or consultation. As a result, get detected after the condition worsened. In this situation, Taking cognizance of this issue, SMS began to collaborate with medical care institutions and also generate internal funds for non-HIV related medical illnesses.

- **Collaborating with various organizations and working with domain expert professionals for improved and efficient service delivery**

With the community and professionals working together, bringing together their respective unique skills, knowledge and expertise, the overall implementation of various programs and projects was much more effective. By working closely together, the synergy between the two became stronger. Not only was there cross learning but also a sharing of ideas in order to work with a common goal.

A.3 Genesis of Swathi Mahila Sangha

After the first cases of HIV were diagnosed in 1986 in Chennai among female sex workers by microbiologist Dr Suniti Solomon and Dr. Sellappan Nirmala, the country went into a state of panic. As HIV infection rates continued to rise, the Government initiated various schemes and policies related to screening, treatment and creating awareness among the public.

In order to curb the emerging HIV infection, a few Non-Government Organizations initiated activities in the field which mainly focused awareness on HIV and STI prevention strategies, educating the women in sex work on various modes of transmission, referrals for STI treatments and condom promotion.

However, these programmes lacked community participation and did not have the required connect with women in sex work and their collectives. Additionally, given the stigmatizing and discriminating attitudes of society, women in sex work faced different forms of abuse, violence and neglect. They, and their children, faced the brunt of their inability to improve their overall well-being, livelihoods and access to justice.

It was against this backdrop that Swathi Mahila Sangha came into existence. Inspired from the movements in Bangladesh and Sonagachi, where well-established interventions protected the sexual and human rights of women in sex work, Swathi Mahila began work with just 13 members as a community based organization. Its core mandate to improve the overall well-being of women in sex work.

A.4 Core values

- Democratic systems
- Confidentiality
- Equity and equality
- Not supporting any forms of exploitation or trafficking
- Transparency
- Accountability

Democratic Systems: Democracy refers to by, for and of the people. SMS involves the formation of a central board constituting of key leaders who are elected through elections. The elected leaders usually belong to the same community as key population with the view that they would understand the requisites of the community in a wider aspect.

Confidentiality: As SMS constitutes the membership of WSW, information related to personal details is kept highly confidential.

Accountability and Transparency: Income invested and generated through SMS is accountable and maintained up to date by proper audit. The audit reports are accessible to all making the SMS financial system highly transparent.

Equity and Equality: SMS ensures to follow the principle of Equity and Equality through which the affected and most vulnerable get the maximum support and aid.

A.5 Vision

Vibrant and sustainable Swathi Mahila Sangha improving women's lives by responding effectively to the needs of every woman.

A.6 Mission

Providing high-quality services and facilities in accordance with the requirements of Swathi women with self-fund and capacitated human resources.

A.7 Journey of SMS till date



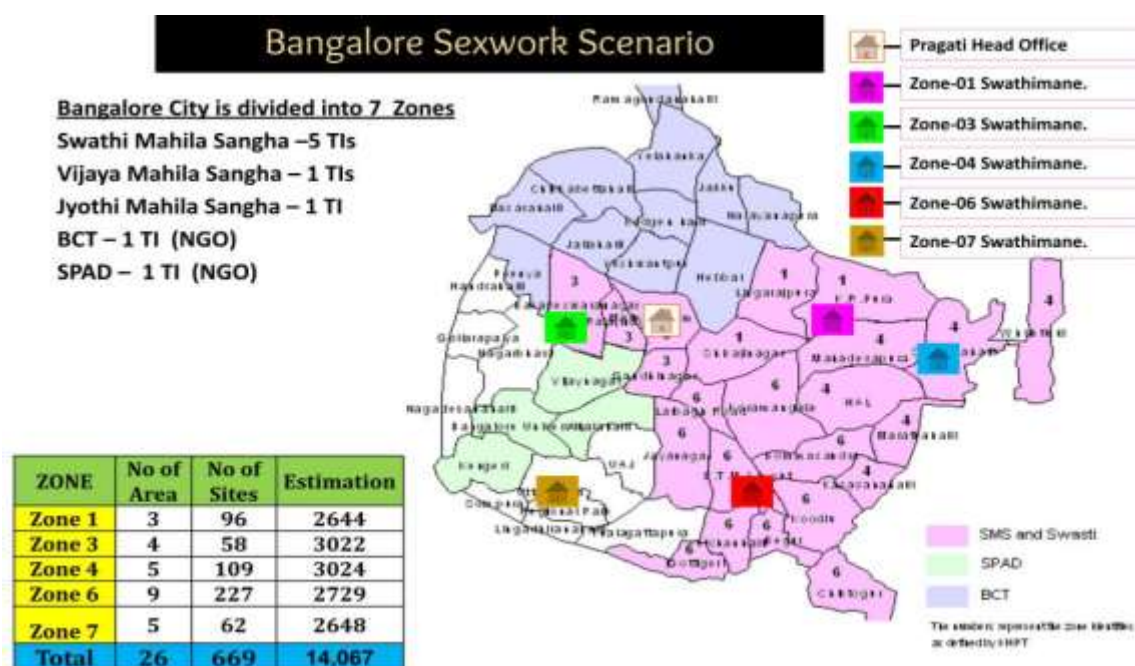
2022-2023

- Started working on cervical cancer – PRESCRIP-TEC

2023-2024

- Started implementation of the GFATM – KP project and SP project in 5 states as a sub-recipient (SR)

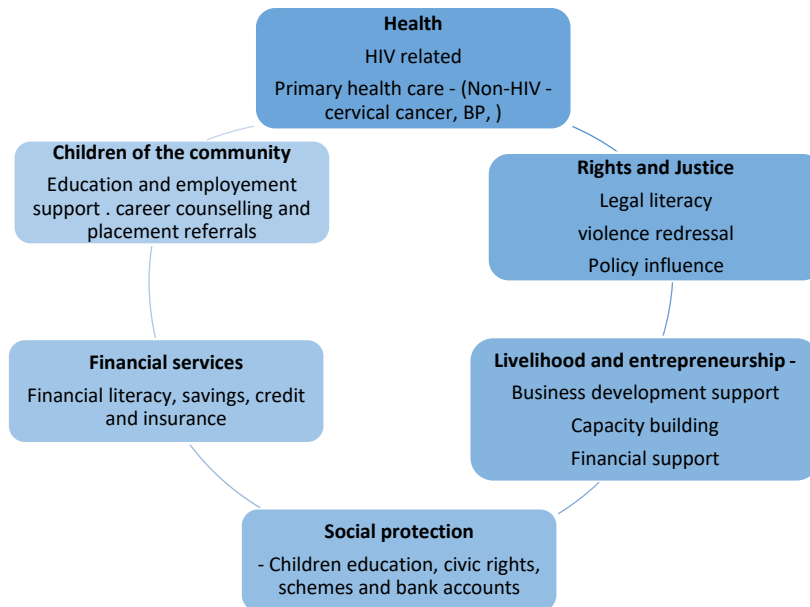
A.8 Target intervention zones of SMS (Zone 1, 3,4 6 and 7)



Sl No	Zone 1	Zone 3	Zone 4	Zone 6	Zone 7
1	Lingarajpuram	Basaveshwaranagar	Marathahalli	Gottigere	Yalachenahalli
2	K R Puram	Rajajinagar	HAL	Lalbagh	Thalagattapura
3	Shivajinagar	Malleshwaram	Sonnenahalli	Beguru	Jayanagar
4		Yashwanthpura	Whitefield	Hongasandra	Uttarahalli
5			Kasavanahalli	Chikkathoguru	Lingaderanahalli
6				Kudlu	
7				Koramangala	
8				Chandapura	
9				Anekal	
				Bommasandra	
				Bommanahalli	

Zone	Number of areas	Number of sites	Estimation
Zone 1	03	67	2698
Zone 3	04	76	3844
Zone 4	05	66	3819
Zone 6	11	171	3286
Zone 7	05	123	3067
Total FSWs covered	28	503	16714

A.9 Thematic areas of work at a glance



A. 10 Risk and vulnerability diagram



A.11 Organogram



A.12 Board Members

Sl No	Name	Designation
1	Saraswathi S	President
2	Deepa R Rao	Vice President
3	Gangamma	Secretary
4	Kavitha	Treasurer
5	Pushpalatha R	Director
6	Swarna M	Director
7	Lakshmi R	Director
8	Yashodamma	Director
9	Renuka	Director
10	Manjula	Director
11	Nandini	Director

Part B

Projects and programs at a glance (2023-2024)

Sl No	Core area	Name of project	Year of starting	Funded by / partnership/ collaboration
1	Health	Target intervention HIV Prevention	April 2005	KSAPS (Karnataka State AIDS Prevention Society)
		Invest for Wellness - Primary Health Care Program for Women in Sex Work and Their Family Members	2017	Self-funded
		PRESCRIP – TEC project	2022-2023	Department of Gynecologic Oncology, St John's Hospital and Medical College, Bangalore
		Swathi Spoorthi	2009	Self-funded
		Swathi Chethana	2007	Self-funded
2	Livelihood and entrepreneurship support	Livelihood initiatives for women in sex work	2022-2023	Friends of Women's World Banking, India and Give Foundation
3	Rights and justice	GFATM- CBO Strengthening and legal literacy project (KP – Dey Population)	January 2023	NNSW (National Network of Sex Workers) and TAARAS
4	Social protection	GFATM C19 RM SP	February 2023	Swathi Mahila Sangha
5	Financial Services	Swathi Jyothi	2007	

Health

1. Target intervention - HIV Prevention Programme

Supported by: **KSAPS (Karnataka State AIDS Prevention Society)**

Started in: **April 2005**

Objective: To support women in sex work to access essential health care facilities, especially in diagnostics and treatment related to HIV/syphilis/STI

Key Activities

- HIV testing and counselling/and conducting syphilis test
- Regular monthly health check up
- Counselling and referrals to advanced diagnosis and treatment, depending upon the case
- Networking regularly with Department of Health and Family Welfare/ Primary Health Centres and ICTC

SI No	Indicators	Total
1	Contract Population	14343
2	New HRG Registration	3083
3	Clinical Service	59366
4	HIV Test	27458
5	HIV Positive	39
6	Syphilis Test	27471
7	Distribution of condoms	1048957
8	Outreach	100%

Summary of impact

Women in sex work are vulnerable to sexually transmitted infection and disorders, and HIV due to exposure to multiple sexual partners and lack of awareness about protection measures. As a result, they are in need of regular testing for syphilis and HIV, and treatment depending upon the case.

- More than **50000** benefitted from clinical services
- More than **27000** women went in for HIV testing and syphilis testing.
- The **39 FSW** who tested **HIV Positive** are now getting the required treatment and support.
- Distribution of more than **1 lakhs free condoms** to promote safe sexual behaviour.

2. Invest for Wellness - primary health care program for women in sex work and their family members

Supported by: **Self-funded program**

Started in: **2017**

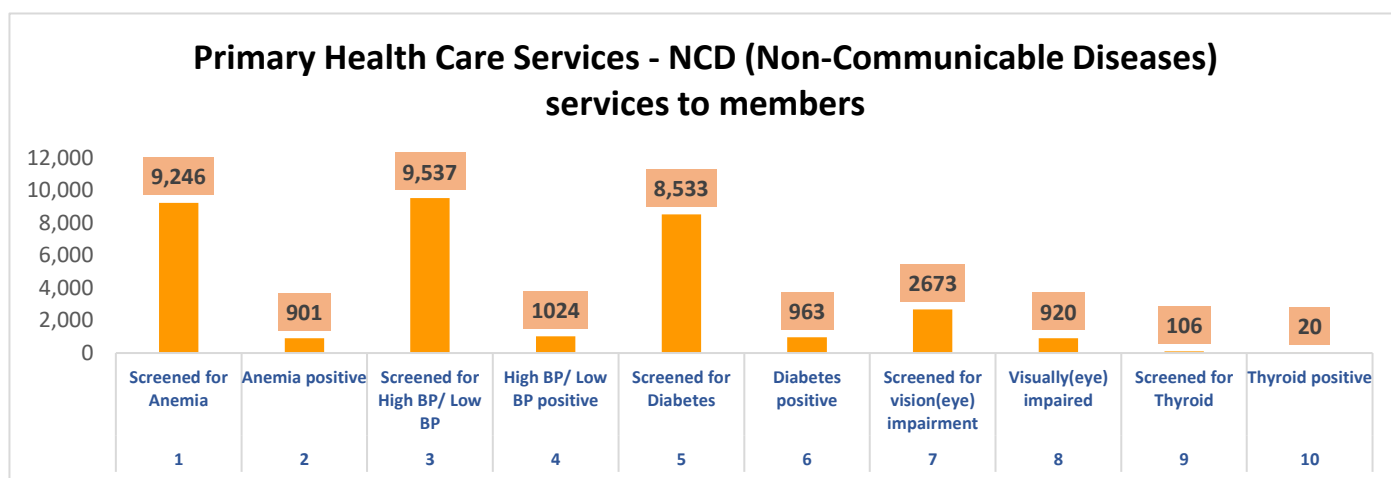
Objective: Ensure timely diagnosis or screening for illnesses/ diseases among members by motivating them to visit Primary Health Care centres

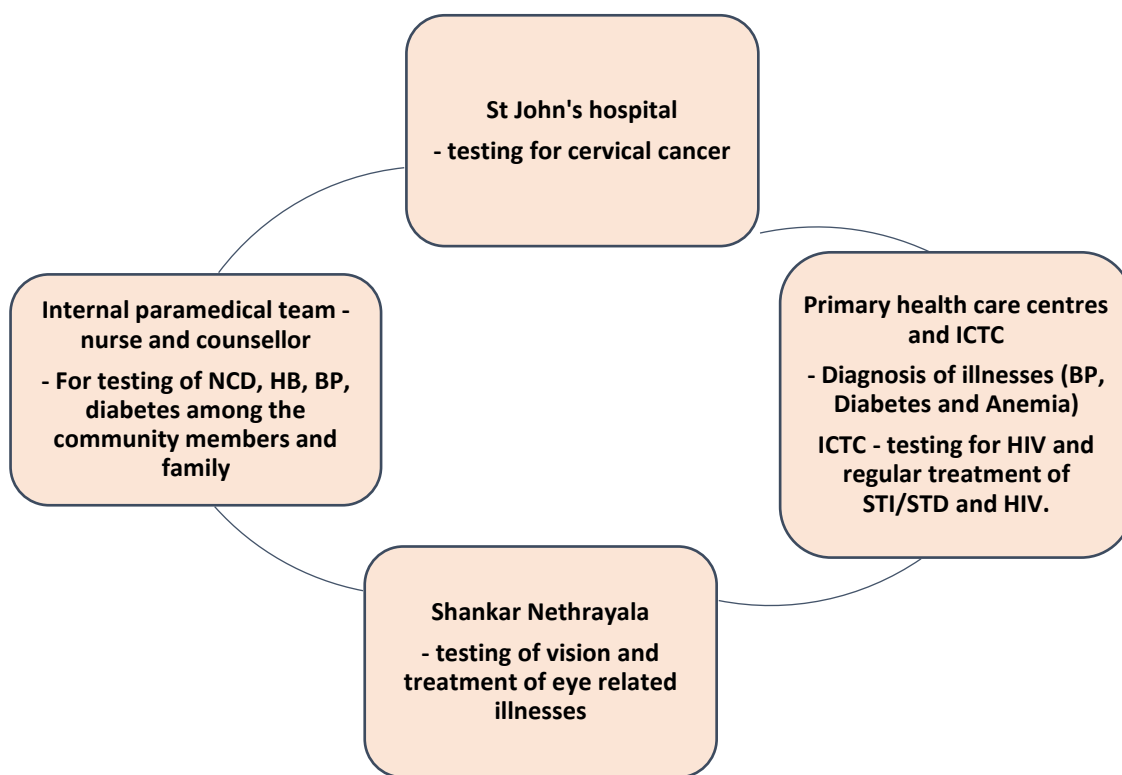
Key activities

For various reasons, women in sex work tend to neglect their health care. The reasons include lack of awareness about the importance of timely diagnosis, financial constraints or self-medication, or reluctance to go in for diagnosis due to various apprehensions. As a result, diseases tend to worsen over a period of time.

Swathi Mahila Sangha regularly sensitized its members on the importance of timely check up and motivated them to visit the primary health care centres. As a result, many members have benefitted from timely treatment. During 2023-2024, members were screened and treated for various ailments such as anemia, blood pressure, diabetes, vision impairment and thyroid. Additionally, they also got tested for vision and cancer related ailments. This was possible due to the networking with St Johns, ICTC and Shankar Nethralaya. SMS also has an internal paramedical team consisting of a nurse and counsellor for testing for various types of non-communicable diseases.

The unique aspect of this program is that SMS motivates not just its members but also their family members to go in for testing and treatment.





Summary of impact

- During 2023-2024, Swathi Mahila Sangha **mobilized about 3000 women** in sex work and their family members and referred them to get a health check-up at the Primary Health Care Centre or at the designated hospital depending upon the need.
- SMS facilitated the process for **about 1000 women and their family members** to get health check-up, diagnosis and treatment at the designated primary health care centres of hospital. Regular follow up and counselling was also done for the members.
- For the very first time, **500 women came to know that they had blood pressure and diabetes.**
- Although the FSW and their family members can go on their own to health care centres to get a check-up, they often neglect or delay in going in for a check-up. As a result of field based interaction and motivation, many women and their family members went in for a timely check-up at the designated diagnostic services and health care services.

3. PRESCRIP-TEC project

Supported by/in partnership with: Department of Gynecologic Oncology, St John's Hospital and Medical College, Bangalore

Started in: 2022-2023

About PRESCRIP-TEC project

PRESCRIP-TEC is increasing the adoption of cervical cancer screening within marginalized communities in Bangalore. The beneficiaries of the project are Bangalore's women in sex work. PRESCRIP-TEC is an innovative cervical cancer screening test, with follow-up and direct treatment as needed. This initiative has been made possible with the help of the Manipal Academy of Higher Education (leading the PRESCRIP-TEC consortium in India) and St. John's Medical College, an implementing partner. Swathi Mahila Sangha is a collaborating partner, which is mobilizing women in sex work and motivating them to getting screened for cervical cancer.

What is unique about the PRESCRIP-TEC project

The testing of cervical cancer requires a vaginal sample which is usually done in a clinic by a doctor or a para-medical staff member. This often deters women, especially those in sex work, from going in for testing. In this context, women in sex work are even more vulnerable in particular to cervical cancer, given their exposure to multiple sexual partners. They may not be having safe sexual practices with them as a result of which they are vulnerable to STI/STD and HIV. They also face a high risk to syphilis and cervical cancer. Under this project, women in sex work are given a unique self-sampling kit through which women can collect their own swab in the privacy and comfort of their respective homes and give it for testing.

Based upon those women meeting the required criteria, Swathi Mahila Sangha, in partnership with St John's Hospital, distributed self-testing kits for cervical cancer (each kit or self-swab costs Rs. 2200/-) to 158 women free of cost. St John's hospital checked the vaginal sample collected during the self-swab or self-testing free of cost, and in utmost privacy and confidentiality, it notified SMS of 56 women who tested positive. These women are in the process of going in for further diagnostics, after which, depending upon the results, will go in for treatment.

Summary of impact

- a. Till date, screening has been done to 500 plus MSM, TG and FSW women and for 1,000 women the study has been done.
- b. About 30% cases (150) have been found to be positive and after second level screening, about 56 women have been given treatment.

4. Swathi Spoorthi

Launched in 2009, the objective of Swathi Spoorthi is to improve the quality of life of HIV Positive women in sex work and their families through a collective and cooperative approach. During 2023-2024, **20 women have submitted their applications to Rajiv Gandhi housing schemes.**

5. Swathi Chethana

Launched in 2007, the objective of Swathi Chethana was to make women who consume alcohol, especially during work, more independent on both social and economic fronts. The WSW's should be able to stress on condom usage, negotiate payment from clients and be able to protect themselves from violence and harassment.

During 2023-2024, 32 women have undergone alcohol de-addiction treatment and till date more than 1900 women have benefitted from this program.

Testimonials

Name: Devamma

Age: 31

Swathi Mahila Sangha conducts health camp on a regular basis for their members. It also refers them to Primary Health Care Centres so that they and their family members can benefit from timely diagnosis and treatment.

During one such health check up camp, Devamma, a member from Swathi Mahila Sangha, got herself tested on the advice of the staff members. She was tested for uterine cancer and was found to be positive. The doctor said that there was slight infection and that she can wait for 6 months and get tested again. When Devamma got herself checked again, she tested negative for uterine cancer.

“Women like me who are sex workers need to get tested for any diseases. These kind of health camps help us to find out if we have any problems. Usually, women care about the health of other family members but not their own health. If women come to know that they have symptoms of cancer they can get treated properly. Else, if they come to know about their condition in the 3rd or 4th stage of cancer, they cannot be cured. I am happy that such health checkups are being conducted by Swathi Mahila Sangha. They should be done once in 3 months. Women can get tested and can get proper treatment accordingly.”, says Devamma.

How Devamma benefitted after becoming a member of Swathi Mahila Sangha

Prior to becoming a member of SMS, Devamma would not go for any health check-ups. After she became a member in SMS, she was sensitized about the importance of timely diagnosis of STI/STD, HIV and other non-communicable diseases as well. Even though women in sex work try to maintain safe sexual practices, they may get infected. After becoming a member, she realized the importance of regular testing. She felt happy that there are people who really care for them, get their check-ups done and give proper treatment or refer them elsewhere.

Secondly, many women in sex work were not aware about proper money management practices. After becoming a member of SMS, like many others, Devamma too learnt the importance of regular savings, especially in recurring deposits. Devamma feels that becoming a member of Swathi Mahila Sangha has been of great help to women in sex work in many ways.



Health camp conducted for health check up.

Name: Padma

Age:

A member of SMS since the past 5-6 years, Padma said that she benefitted from various health care services such as check-ups, tests for blood pressure, diabetes, HIV, STD and cervical cancer. She said that by providing loans and organizing various skills development programs to members, they are able to get the means to improve their lives. In her own case, Padma was given a loan and provided ration kits which not only saved money but also led to food security during times of need.

Prior to becoming a member of SMS, Padma did not go for health check-ups, and did not do any tests for HIV and STD. This was primarily because women in sex work do not feel comfortable opening up about their health issues. When Padma became a member of SMS, the staff told her about the importance of good health and to get monthly health check-ups done. Padma had white discharge and got herself tested for cancer. The Doctor said that her results indicated that she was normal. This came as a big relief to her.

Name: Manusri

Age:

Manusri is a HIV Positive patient. She got infected as she could not engage in safe sexual practices and had severe white discharge. She also had loss of weight. Given the risks involved, her friend who is a SMS member recommended her to go to SMS as they would help her get her health check-up done and give the necessary treatment. Accordingly, when Padma tested positive for HIV, she was counselled and given the required treatment.

Livelihood and entrepreneurship support

1. Livelihood initiatives for women in sex work

Supported by: Friends of Women's World Banking, India and Give Foundation

Started in: 2022-2023

Objective: To empower women in sex work interested in starting their own enterprise and/or to expand their existing business through training and seed money support

About 163 SMS members attended the Entrepreneur Awareness Program and Entrepreneur Development Program. About 80 members got seed fund support over two phases of a total amount of Rs. 675000/-. The women utilized the training and the seed money to set up their enterprises. Since they started their business, there have been several positive changes in their lives. Earlier, if they had any health issues or any problem, they had no other choice but to depend upon their earnings from sex work. However, due to various reasons, they will not be able to depend forever on such earnings. Now, they are managing their shops in their free time and utilizing that money for essential expenses or for savings.

The entrepreneurship skills of women are being honed based on their potential. They are getting the identity of entrepreneurs, which is increasing their sense of self-worth.

As the businesses are supplementing the income of women in sex work, they are prioritizing its spend on health related expenses, education of children and personal expenses related to functions or household items purchase. Savings has also increased.



SI No	Number of women who attended the program	Number of women who got seed money support	Total seed fund amount given
Give Foundation	163	130 (including phase 1 and 2)	675000
FWWB	120		
Total	283	130	675000

SI No	Indicators	Total
1	Entrepreneur Awareness Program (Training)	108
s2	Entrepreneur Development Program (Training)	55
3	Phase 01 - Seed Fund Support	30
4	Phase 01 - Seed Fund Amount	300000
5	Phase 02 - Seed Fund Support	50
6	Phase 02 - Seed Fund Amount	375000
7	Total Seed fund support	80
	Total Seed fund amount	675000

Summary of impact

- 108 women trained on EAP and their knowledge related to different enterprises and livelihood opportunities was further enhanced
- 55 women trained on EDP and their skills related to their business enterprises were improved
- 30 women trained in in-depth guidance on various aspects of business development, legal compliance procedures, and market expansion.
- 30 enterprises scaled up for generating improved source of income for beneficiaries
- 50 small enterprises scaled up for generating improved source of income for beneficiaries
- 80 enterprises set up & successfully running
- As a result of the training and the seed money support, many members have set up or expanded their micro enterprises and reported that their overall income has increased by about 20% to 30%.
- **The money earned is of great help to the members as they using it to meet health related expenses and on the education of their children.**
- **The money earned after setting up various enterprises is helped the members to reduce their dependency on sex work related earnings.**

Areas of training

EDP (Entrepreneur Development Program) - Trade Wise – with support from Give Foundation Grant		
Nature of the Training	Zone	No of Women
Aari Work	Zone - 4	7
	Zone - 3	6
	Zone - 7	3
Total		16
Beauty Parlor	Zone - 6	5
	Zone - 4	1
Total		6
Bridal Makeup	Zone - 3	4
Total		4
Computer class	Zone - 6	1
Total		1
Facial training	Zone - 4	1
Total		1
Packing and Marketing	Zone - 7	1
	Zone - 4	2
Total		3
Tailoring training	Zone - 4	4
	Zone - 3	2
	Zone - 6	11
	Zone - 7	7
Total		24
Grand Total		55

Women Entrepreneur Development Activities – FWWB (Friends of Women World Banking) Grant				
Sl No	Indicators	Zone 06	Zone 07	Total
1	Entrepreneur Awareness Program (Training)	50	30	80
2	Entrepreneur Development Program - Skill Training	10	30	40
	Total			120
FWWB Grant - EDP (Entrepreneur Development Program) - Trade Wise Training				
Nature of the Training		Zone	No of Women	
Aari Work		Zone - 6	6	
		Zone - 7	10	
Total			16	
Beauty Parlor		Zone - 6	4	
		Zone - 7	15	
Total			19	
Bridal Makeup		Zone - 7	5	
Total			5	
Grand Total			40	

Case studies

Case study 1



Title: - “ Having my own beauty parlour is my dream”-Bhuvana

Bhuvana is 30 years old living in Rajaji nagar in Bengaluru with one child. Her husband passed away many years back making her solely responsible for taking care of her family’s needs. She has been associated with the community organization that Swasti engages with-Swathi Mahila Sangha since last two years. To support her needs and requirements, since the last one and half year, she has been offering beauty services at her home to other women in her neighborhood through learning some basic beauty skills.

Aligning with Give Foundation’s goal of building entrepreneurial skills, she was identified and mobilized for the enterprise awareness training and was oriented on the potential of different livelihood opportunities and skills that she would prefer to be trained on. Since she had some basic knowledge and experience on beauty related skills, she was further shortlisted for EDP training and trained on latest make up and bridal make up skills from a professional trainer. She was also trained in different areas of beauty services. Bhuvana earlier used to do only normal make-ups, after the training with all the above-mentioned latest skills and bridal make up training, she has become proficient and confident to practice that they can do bridal make up independently.

The project and its detailed training had made a positive impact not only on the make-up skills of Bhuvana but also contributed towards realization of her dream of opening a beauty parlour. She got a seed fund of Rs 6,000, which will be utilized by her towards buying makeup equipment.

Case study 2

Title: - “Scale up their business with all the legal compliance” - Meenakshi

Member Background: - Chaithra is 36 years old living in Yalachenahalli Kanakapura road in Bangalore with three children and her husband. Her husband also has a coconut shop nearby her home, both husband and wife taking care of her family needs. She has been associated with the Swathi Mahila Sangha community organization from the last 15 years and taken Health, Various capacity



building training and social protection schemes regularly facilitated for marginalized members / communities. To support her family needs and requirements, since last 11 years she has been a fruit and vegetable shop in her neighborhood market so that she can take care of her and her family’s needs. She wanted to scale up their business to the next level and needed support for legal compliance and marketing support.

Support from Give Foundation: - Chaithra attended Give Foundation's goal of building entrepreneurial skills, she was identified and mobilized for the entrepreneur awareness training and was oriented on the potential of different livelihood opportunities and skills that she would prefer to be trained on. Since she has some basic knowledge and experience on fruits and vegetable marketing skills. Actually she wanted to learn tailoring and add on her business activities, she was further shortlisted for Entrepreneurs Development Program / training and trained on the latest basic skill of tailoring, after that she can start stitching cloth and her passive incomes started.

Change and Transformation: - The project and its detailed training had made a positive impact not only on the tailoring skills of Chaitra but also contributed towards realization of her dream of scale up her business activities, in project support she got the 7500, seed fund and utilized for buying the raw material and scale up their business, also as per requirements we supporting to apply required legal compliance to her business - Udyam Aadhar & Shop registration / establishment.

2. Swathi Savi

Started in 2007, Project Pragathi, of which SMS was one of the tripartite partner, took up the responsibility of preparation and distribution of Swathi Savi, a nutritional supplement in powder form. The produced supplement was distributed or sold to PLHIV either directly through the Pragati project or through the network for positive persons during 2023-2024. About 12 metric tonnes of Swathi Savi have been sold to factories and NGOs. Swathi Savi is also given free of cost to PLHIVs of SMS

Rights and Justice

1. GFATM - CBO Strengthening and legal literacy project - (KP - Key Population)

The GFATM – CBO strengthening and legal literacy project is a milestone in the history of Swathi Mahila Sangha for it is one of the two sub-recipients chosen by the NNSW (National Network of Sex Workers) and TAARAS network. Accordingly, Swathi Mahila Sangha has been chosen to implement this project in 5 Indian states of Karnataka, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. Its mandate includes enlisting 62 CBOs and conduct sessions on legal literacy, organize District Level advocacy meetings and strengthen CBOs by empowering them to work with local stakeholders including DLSA, police department, DAPCU and SACS.

The CBOs (Community based organizations) consists primarily of collectives of women in sex work across these states. Given that women in sex work face different forms of violence and violation of their rights, empowering the CBOs across the states will support them to facilitate the process of justice and legal protection for their respective members.

Started in: **January 2023**

Goals and Objectives:

Goal: Increase the capacity of sex workers of all genders and their CBOs towards building sustainable community mechanisms for resilience and right to life with dignity.

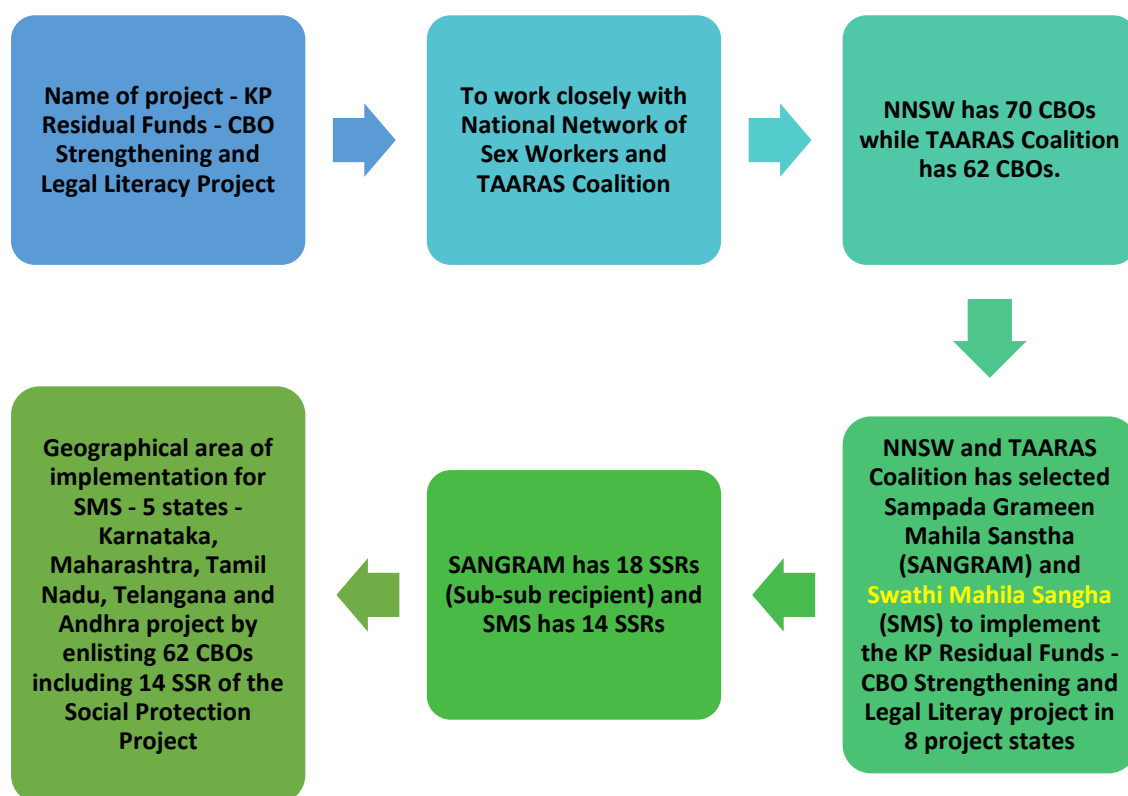
Objective 1: Strengthen institutional capacity and sustainability of 132 community-based organizations (CBOs) serving female, male and transgender sex workers in the areas of governance structure, statutory compliances, financial systems, resource mobilization, stakeholder engagement and community monitoring

Objective 2: Increase understanding of available social protection, legal provisions and rights among sex workers (female, male and transgender) associated with the 132 CBOs to enable access to schemes, entitlements and available mechanisms for prevention and redressal of discrimination, stigma and violence.

Key focus areas

- i. CBOs organizational development
- ii. Empowering the Board to conduct regular activities such as conducting Board meetings as per the protocol
- iii. Ensuring proper documents and approvals are in place
- iv. Conducting elections of the Board
- v. Strengthening interventions to facilitate the process of legal support

Implementation model of the project



Key Activities

- Setting up of Help Desk Coordinators across 48 Community Based organizations
- Visit by program officers to 5 states to provide support in areas of Resource mobilization, Statutory completion, Annual report, Audit report, Governance and leadership
- Visited 48 CBOs across 5 states and provided support in areas of Resource mobilization, Statutory completion, Annual report, Audit report, Governance and leadership

S #	Name of the state	No of CBOs visited
1	Andhra Pradesh	13
2	Telangana	7
3	Tamil Nadu	12
4	Karnataka	8
5	Maharashtra	8

- Trained HDCs conducted 1115 individual sessions and 279 group sessions across 5 states reaching out to 11659 community members
- Identified 139 violence/harassment cases and supported the community members in mitigating these cases through the project's redressal grievance mechanism.
- Conducted District Level Advocacy meetings in 21 districts across 5 states in Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Maharashtra in which 1378 participants included police officials, DLSA advocates, community members, and CBO leaders participated. They engaged in discussions concerning community-level issues, Supreme Court judgments, and the support needed from the police department and DLSA. The majority of officials pledged their support to assist our community members in creating an enabling environment.
- State level inductions across 5 states were completed for the 48 recruited HDCs (help desk coordinators) during which they were oriented about the project deliverables, their roles and responsibilities and the overall impact of the project
- HDCs and Program officers - Legal literacy visited DLSA in 56 districts across 5 states along with the CO leaders to introduce the C19 RM SP project and explain about the legal related services to be delivered under this project.
- Supported CBOs in various ways to mobilize resource in cash and kind through proposal making to various grants making organization

S #	Name of the state	Resource mobilized as cash	Resource mobilized as kind	Total resource mobilized
1	Andhra Pradesh	1,50,900	2,74,360	4,25,260
2	Telangana	59500	61000	1,20,500
3	Tamil Nadu	38500	2,65,900	3,04,400
4	Karnataka	6,22,450	2,43,875	8,66,325
5	Maharashtra	30,570	1,28,000	1,58,570
	Total	9,01,920	9,73,135	18,75,055

Legal Literacy - State wise data given below:

SN	State	1-1	1-G	# of Participants	Total # of Sessions this Month (March)	Total # of Participants this Month (March)	Total Sessions from Start to March	Total participants from Start to March
1	Andhra Pradesh	289	109	236	398	525	2358	3641
2	Telangana	77	95	192	172	269	972	1785
3	Tamil Nadu	365	14	29	379	394	2639	2761
4	Karnataka	220	06	12	226	232	1642	1834
5	Maharashtra	164	55	113	219	277	1245	1638
	Total	1115	279	582	1394	1697	8856	11659



Summary of impact

- (i) Good stakeholder engagement
- (ii) District Legal Service Authority, in each of the district, earlier we used to do advocacy meeting. As a result, women in those districts understood various laws and rights which was of help to them.
- (iii) Cases of harassment against women has reduced.

Additionally, under this program, we also created awareness about the District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) and the availability of free legal services, promoting legal awareness in the community. Currently, 26 members from Nisarga Society have volunteered with DLSA to assist community members in need of crisis-related support. So far, we have supported 119 individuals facing crisis, including domestic violence, family disputes, issues with local goons in the community and around, client related crises, and legal challenges, and referred them to DLSA for further assistance

Top right: Meeting with the Police Department



2. GFATM C19 RM SP – (Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria – COVID-19 response mechanism)

GFATM is a private-public partnership that provides funding for the three diseases of AIDS, TB and Malaria. In 2020, the GF established c19RM to support countries to fight COVID-19.

Started in: February 2023

Project Goal:

- Increase access to the uptake of social protection and HIV services for Key and vulnerable populations in the 14 intervention states across India

Objectives:

- Increase access to social protection and HIV services among Key and Vulnerable populations in multiple states across India (social protection includes - ID Cards / Certificates, DBT enabled Bank / Post Office accounts)
- C19 RM Social Protection Grant aims to increase access to and uptake of social protection and HIV services for key and vulnerable populations in the 14 intervention states across India.

Activities since onboarding by Taaras Coalition for implementing the C 19 R M project

- PR SAATHI visited SMS for 3 days and CAT (Full form) was completed successfully
- All SSR contracts were made on 16 April 2023
- Onboarding of SR and SSR staff members completed between February 2023 to April 2023
- Induction training for SR and SSR staff was successfully completed in 2 batches by June 2024
- Training of trainers for Master Trainers completed in 2 batches by PR at Hyderabad
- Selection of 1120 CFs (Community Facilitators) is completed and 1023 CFs undergone industry training in 27 batches.
- Against target 92.5% applied, 81.8% benefits received. Conversion rate is 88.4%.
- During this year, 905 members benefitted from various social protection schemes while 1080 members got Identity Cards

Case studies

Case study 1

- Beneficiary Name: Mrs. Jyothi
- SP Service: E-Shrama-card

Mrs. Jyothi, a 39-year-old woman, resides in Bengaluru urban district, with her two children and her permanent partner. Unfortunately, her husband passed away due to health issues, leaving her with an unstable income from labor work in building construction. Struggling to manage household expenses and her children's education, Mrs. Shabana found herself in challenging circumstances, leading her to become a sex worker.

Despite being illiterate, Mrs. Jyothi, a registered CO (Community Organization) member, lacked awareness of government benefits and social protection services. Her precarious situation caught the attention of one of the Community Facilitators (CF) at the CO branch office. The Community Facilitator assisted Mrs. Jyothi in obtaining essential IDs and certificates. During a visit to the CO branch office seeking help, The Community Facilitator connected with Mrs. Jyothi. The CF enlightened her about the GFATM C-19 RM SP Project and the services it provided. In turn, The Community Facilitator shared details about her work in the unorganized sector. Recognizing the challenges faced by workers like Mrs. Shabana, Mrs. Amrutha N explained the benefits of the Eshram Card, including:

- A pension of Rs. 3000/- per month after the age of 60.
- Death insurance of Rs. 2 lakhs and financial aid of Rs. 1 lakh in the case of partial disability.
- Spouses of deceased workers in the unorganized sector with an e-Shram Card are entitled to all benefits.
- Beneficiaries receive a 12-digit UAN (Universal Account Number) valid throughout India.

Upon obtaining Mrs. Jyothi, The Community Facilitator assisted her in filling the Common Registration Form (CRF) and accompanied her to the Government Common Facilitation Centre (CFC) to apply for the E-Shrama Card. The application process was successfully completed on November-23, and Mrs. Jyothi received her E-Shrama-card within the week. Overjoyed with the support received from The Community Facilitator and the CO, Mrs. Jyothi expressed her gratitude for the assistance and the program.

Case study 2

- Beneficiary name: Geeta

Geeta, a 49-year-old woman residing with her permanent partner at Bengaluru urban area along with her two children. Unfortunately, her husband passed away due to health issues, leaving her as the sole provider. Geeta earns an unstable income through labor work in building construction, facing numerous challenges in running the household and ensuring her children's education. Under unavoidable circumstances, she turned to sex work for additional income. Being illiterate, she lacked awareness of government benefits and social protection services. As a registered CO member, she sought assistance from the CO, who helped her obtain important IDs, a bank account, and certificates. Since Geeta had no family support and an uncertain future, she visited the CO branch office for help, where she met The Community Facilitator (CF). CF informed her about the GFATM C-19 RM SP Project and the services it offers. Krishnamma shared her situation, mentioning her lack of insurance coverage due to her job in the unorganized sector.

CF explained the benefits of the Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY) and accompanied Geeta to the State Bank of India, where they successfully filled out the PMSBY application in January 2024. Geeta was enrolled in the scheme and received her certificate within the week. She expressed gratitude for the support received from CF and CO, thanking them for their assistance in improving her life.

Photo gallery



Training for Community Facilitators for the GFATM – Social Protection for key population



Review meetings of GFATM – SP Grant



Annual General Body Meeting of Swathi Mahila Sangha at Priyadarshini Party Hall, Ramamurthy Nagar, Bangalore



Financial Services

1. Swathi Jyothi

Swathi Jyothi Women Souharda Multipurpose Cooperative Society (Micro Finance Institute) was established in 2007 by and for the people in sex work for providing financial security in support with Swathi Mahila Sangha. The products offered include Saving Bank Account – Swathi Sarala, Recurring Deposit – Swathi RD, Term Group Loan – Swathi Swabhimana, fixed deposits and different types of loans.

Additionally, it also offers credit and insurance related services which have benefitted over 7,100 women in sex work. Financial Literacy and Financial Management programmes are organized for members so that they are able to make the choices that meet their financial goals. All these services have aided in the journey of financial empowerment for the members of SMS.

Plans for the future

With the support of various donors and partners, Swathi Mahila Sangha is meeting the critical needs of its members (women in sex work) and with each passing year, it is reaching out to an increasing number of women. In this context, health care and livelihood continue to be priority. In the future, SMS will reach out to more members for testing and treatment of cervical cancer, to which they are vulnerable to.

While at the individual level, it is reaching out to members and their families, SMS is also strengthening the foundation of larger level impact as a sub-recipient of the GFATM – C 19 RM (KP and SP) project. This has provided the platform for making an impact beyond the boundaries of Karnataka. In the future, while continuing to make an impact for its members, SMS plans to strengthen its presence at a pan India by working with collectives of women in sex work, both within Karnataka and outside.

In the future, SMS aims to play a more active role in facilitating the process of building the capacities of such collectives as it will help to improve the lives and livelihoods of their respective members.

It also aims to support members in improving the educational status of their children, and in particular the girl child. Improved educational status will have a positive impact on various aspects of their lives, and improve their overall socio-economic status.

Acknowledgement

Swathi Mahila Sangha is grateful to all its partners and donors who have played an instrumental role in its development and progress. It is being supported by various institutional advisors and partners to implement various projects and programs. It wishes to acknowledge their valuable support and guidance.

SI #	Name of the Partner	Type of partnership (Individual, Institution, Govt)	Area of Partnership (Tech, Service Provider, Advisor, etc..)	Partnership start date
1	Swasti	Institution	Tech, Service Provider, Advisor	2005
2	Vrutti	Institution	Tech, Service Provider, Advisor	2005
3	CMS	Institution	Tech, Service Provider, Advisor	2005
4	ART Center,ICTC	Govt	Service Provider	2005
5	District legal service authority	Govt	Service Provider	2005
6	Karnataka Health Promotion Trust	Govt	Service Provider	2005
7	NIMHANS	Institution	Service Provider	2005
8	Victoria Hospital	Govt	Service Provider	2005
9	Women and Child Development	Govt	Service Provider	2005
10	NWEE	Institution	Service Provider	2006
11	BBMP	Govt	Service Provider	2006
12	C-Far	Institution	Service Provider	2006
13	FPA	Institution	Service Provider	2007
14	FWWB	Institution	Service Provider,	2010
15	KSAPS	Govt	Service Provider	2012
16	Dapcu	Govt	Service Provider	2012
17	TAARAS	Institution	Service provider	2017
18	Shankar Eye Hospital	Institution	Service Provider	2017
19	ADSS	Institution	Service Provider	2018
20	SAATHI	Institution	Service Provider	2020

21	Aster	Institution	Service Provider	2021
22	St John hospital	Institution	Service Provider	2022
23	SAATHII	Institution	Service Provider	2023

Project Staff

Name	Designation	Name	Designation	Name	Designation
Gangamma	Project Director	Radha	Janani	Vasanth	Janani
Malles	Project Manager	Shobha	Janani	Lakshmi D	Janani
Sannarajappa	Counselor	Priya	Janani	Nethravathi	Janani
Chandrashekaraiiah K N	Counselor	Lalitha	Janani	Mangamma	Janani
Manoj B R	M&E	K T Lakshamma	Janani	Prema	Janani
Govindaraju BT	Janani	Munirathna.J	Projector Director	Vanitha	Janani
Jamela Begum	Janani	Nagendra	Programme Manager	Lakshmi C	Janani
Sowmya	Janani	Karthick	Counselor	Gowri S	Janani
Syeda(Salma)	Janani	Sumitha M R	Counselor	Lakshminarasamma	Project Director
Suvarna K T	Janani	Suma Nuchhinnavara	Counselor	Sheshadri G S	Program Manager
Priya S	Janani	Lakshamma N M	Janani	Shruthi R	M&E
Anusha M	Janani	Vimalamma	Janani	Rathna J	Counselor
Subhashini	Janani	Sheela	Janani	Sowndarya G	Counselor
Parvathi	Janani	Thiveni	Janani	Geetha.H.K	Janani
Pushpalatha R	Project Director	Latha B	Janani	Radhamani	Janani
Venkatesh	Project Manager	Manjula	Janani	Shobharathna	Janani
Namratha D R	M&E	Nanda R	Janani	Lakshmi	Janani
Abdul	Counselor	Savitha	Janani	Shahina Banu	Janani
Shruthi AN	Counselor	lakshmi	Janani	Umamani	Janani
Shwetha	Counselor	Sowmaya	Janani	Gowri	Janani
Netravathi	Janani	Swarna M	Project Director	Rathnamma C	Janani
Sudha G	Janani	Balaji B N	Project Manager	Ashwini A	Janani

Sowbhagya	Janani	Meera	M&E	Sangeetha S K	Janani
Veena	Janani	Rajashree B Alagur	Counselor		
Hema.K	Janani	Anil	Counselor		

GFATM- KP

Hareesh BS	Project Oversight
K.Jeyaganesh	Program Specialist - CBO strengthening
Nirmala.S	M& E officer
Priya babu	Program officer - CBO strengthening
Parinaidu Parisarla	Program officer - CBO strengthening
Shivaraga	Program officer - CBO strengthening
Suresh K	Program officer - CBO strengthening
Shaikh khajabi A.Rahim	Program officer - CBO strengthening
Manjushree	Admin and Finance Officer
Mohan	Program officer - CBO strengthening

GFATM- SP (Social Protection)

Pushpalatha R	Honorarium for Project oversight
Selvi Shanmugam	Network coordinator honorarium
Shankarappa J V	Program Specialist
Suresh Garagatti	M&E Manager
Sanjay Baccha	Programme and Advocacy Officers
Subash	Programme and Advocacy Officers
Ratnagiri	Programme and Advocacy Officers
Satyanarayana	Programme and Advocacy Officers
Sathya KP	Finance Officer
Maheshwara M	Finance Manager
Nethravathi G S	Admin officer
Raghavendra Nayak	Verification Coordinator
Shashi Rekha P	Verification Coordinator
Balumahendran Agaramuthu	Verification Coordinator
Shreya Tanaji Ghadge	Verification Coordinator
Dattatreya Kamathi	Verification Coordinator
Basavaraj Medar	Verification Coordinator
Alangaram Sebastian	Verification Coordinator
Syam Kumar P	Verification Coordinator
Umamaheshware Rao	Verification Coordinator
Ainutal Jalendar	Verification Coordinator
Nagesh Kumar	Programme and Advocacy Officers

Galla Buji Babu	Verification Coordinator
SK Rahamath	Verification Coordinator
Deepak A	Verification Coordinator
Suman	Verification Coordinator

PART C

Audited financial statements

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

To the Members of Swathi Mahila Sangha

Opinion

We have audited the accompanying financial statements of **Swathi Mahila Sangha** ("the Society"), which comprise the Balance Sheet as at 31st March 2024, Income and Expenditure account and Receipts and Payments account for the year ended on that date and a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information (hereinafter referred to as the financial statements).

In our opinion and to the best of our information and according to the explanations given to us, the aforesaid financial statements give a true and fair view in conformity with the accounting principles generally accepted in India, including the Accounting Standards prescribed The Institute of Chartered Accountants of India, of the state of affairs of the Society as at 31st March 2024, the excess of expenditure over income and receipts and payments for the year ended on that date.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit of the financial statements in accordance with the Standards on Auditing (SAs) issued by The Institute of Chartered Accountants of India. Our responsibilities under those Standards are further described in the *Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of Financial Statements* section of our report. We are independent of the Society in accordance with the Codes of Ethics issued by the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements and the ICAI's Code of Ethics. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion on the financial statements.

Managements Responsibility for the Financial Statements

The Society's Board of Directors are responsible for the preparation of these financial statements that give a true and fair view of the financial position and financial performance and receipts and payments in accordance with the accounting principles generally accepted in India, including the Accounting Standards issued by The Institute of Chartered Accountants of India. This responsibility also includes maintenance of adequate accounting records for safeguarding the assets of the Society and for preventing and detecting frauds and other irregularities; selection and application of appropriate accounting policies; making judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent; and design, implementation and maintenance of adequate internal financial controls, that were operating effectively for ensuring the accuracy and completeness of the accounting records, relevant to the preparation and presentation of



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the financial statements that give a true and fair view and are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, management is responsible for assessing the Society's ability to continue as going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate the Society or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

The Society's Board of Directors are also responsible for overseeing the Society's financial reporting process.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with SAs will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

As part of an audit in accordance with SAs, we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omission, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal financial controls relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Society's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by management.



- Conclude on the appropriateness of management's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Society's ability to continue as going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Society to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

Materiality is the magnitude of misstatements in the financial statements that, individually or in aggregate, makes it probable that the economic decisions of a reasonably knowledgeable user of the financial statements may be influenced. We consider quantitative materiality and qualitative factors in (i) planning the scope of our audit work and in evaluating the results of our work; and (ii) to evaluate the effect of any identified misstatements in the financial statements.

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

We also provide those charged with governance with a statement that we have complied with relevant ethical requirements regarding independence, and to communicate with them all relationships and other matters that may reasonably be thought to bear on our independence, and where applicable, related safeguards.

For R V K S And Associates
Chartered Accountants
FRN: 008572S



Subbanarasimha H L

Partner

M. No.: 238159

UDIN: 84838159BkANAV2863



Place: Bengaluru
Date: 30-Sep-2024