

Getting Out Of The Devadasi System

Children GOOD

terre des hommes
stops child exploitation



WHAT IS CHILDREN GOOD?

Getting Out of the Devadasi System (GOOD) is an initiative by Terre des Hommes Netherlands to end the exploitation faced by young girls in the Devadasi system prevalent in North Karnataka, India. Apart from providing support services, the project also empowers the girls to be agents of change in their development process.

WHAT IS THE DEVADASI SYSTEM?

In Ancient India, the Devadasi system was a practice where young women were dedicated as performing artists as a form of worship.

With time, exploitation seeped into the system and lower caste Devadasi communities became the victims of it. Dedication as a Devadasi soon meant a life of sex work and this continues to be the situation of women from lower caste Devadasi communities. Devadasis face abuse, violence and are discriminated against. Their children are also vulnerable to exploitation.

HOW DOES GOOD OPERATE?

The project focuses on a holistic approach working with all relevant stakeholders such as Children, Families and Communities, Community Based Organisations, the Government, Law Enforcement agencies and Media Houses to empower children, sensitise communities & authorities, apart from strengthening child protection mechanisms.



A Kishori Club Meeting



School Support



Job Oriented Vocational Training



Advocacy through Photography

Adolescent girls, both victims of and vulnerable to the system are identified grouped into Kishori Clubs where they are sensitised on child rights and child protection laws, trained in advocacy, life skills and child led research so as a means to empower them to be 'agents of change' in solving their community issues.

Apart from the above, the girls are provided with education support, enrolled in job oriented vocational training and dedications are prevented in coordination with the Police Department.



A research conducted by Karnataka State Women's University in 2017 reveals that there are more than **80,000 Devadasi** women in North Karnataka of which 20% are less than 18 years old.



PROJECT DISTRICTS IN NORTH KARNATAKA

In order to address the issue in North Karnataka, the project operates in 81 villages from five districts of the region, - **Ballari, Koppal, Belagavi, Bagalkot and Vijayapura** and is implemented in partnership with community based organisations consisting of Devadasi women working to fight against the system.

KEY PROJECT FIGURES

2020-'21

2,719

girls from the community reached out to

484

girls received educational services

6,283

community members sensitised

200

Kishori club leaders trained on child-led research

107

temple priests sensitised

263

girls given vocational training

62 dedications as Devadasis prevented

309 government and law enforcement officials sensitised

CASE STORY

Building a Swacchh Community

In the village of Sivapur, children of Devadasis have come together and named themselves as the Dr. B.R Ambedkar Kishori Group.

"In our village, there were no toilets and people used to defecate in the open. This caused a lot of hygiene and health related issues which became worse during the pandemic.

As a Kishori group, we decided to address this issue. TdH NL had installed a notice board in our village and on that we wrote about the need for toilets in our village.

In the next 15 days, the Government began constructing public toilets. The construction process is going on and we as a group are so happy that we could bring about a change for our village people.

The village members are also very happy and proud of us. They talk to us with more love and respect."

" We have now become brave and confident. We can and we will bring change. "



Terre des Hommes Netherlands (TdH NL) prevents child exploitation removes children from exploitative situations, and ensures that children can develop in a safe environment. In India, our work spans across vulnerable regions in states of Jharkhand, Bihar, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Tamil Nadu.



India Programme Office

No.28/2 Hutchins Road,
St. Thomas Town,
Bangalore - 560083
+91 91640 0000

www.tdh.nl