



Munnade Social Organisation

Pantharapalya, Nayandahalli, Bangalore 560039

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Introduction:

Munnade Social Organisation, established in 2011, is dedicated for the welfare of women garment workers and improving their living and working conditions. Based in Bengaluru, the organisation was founded by a group of ex-women garment workers, who understand the sector well and are deeply sensitive to the issues affecting women working in the garment sector.

Apart from directly supporting women garment workers through forming Self-Help Groups, training on various laws relating to labours, capacity building, counselling and legal assistance, Munnade supports their children's day-care and education and helps them to access various welfare schemes through the Workers Welfare Board, Department of Women and Child Development and Department of Backward Class and Minorities among others as a representative-body. Munnade advocates Garment Workers' needs with the state government.

During the year April 2021 to March 2022, Munnade focused on garment women workers' welfare and the aim was to improve their family conditions and other social situations. The previous year's initiatives were improved upon and the year witnessed plenty of empowerment activities.

Munnade's Presence: Munnade works with women garment workers in four districts of Karnataka- Bengaluru Rural and Urban, Tumkur and Bellary.

Activities:

1. Self-help groups:

Munnade Social Organization continued to strengthen the Self-Help Groups through technical inputs. The Self-Help Groups are carrying out saving and thrift activities efficiently. Each group has about 15 to 20 members and there are at present 40 functioning SHGs. Munnade is helping the members to maintain the groups and their accounts. The groups have borrowed loans from their savings and have used them for the education of children, health issues, house leasing, repaying their high-interest loans, releasing their mortgaged gold ornaments etc. Because of such support received through the SHGs, the workers are free from everyday financial tensions and are able to learn and address the issues faced by them at the workplace.



2. Training to women garment workers:

Munnade in order to empower the women garment workers conducted various training. The topics include Labour laws and recent labour law reforms, Gender and gender discrimination, Prevention of sexual harassment at the workplace act, Reproductive health issues, Domestic violence act, Leadership, Various government entitlements and ways to access them, PF, ESI, Gratuity and Maternity benefit laws, Alternative livelihood options and ways to tap financial resources and etc. 480 women workers have gained knowledge about various laws and ways to access their benefits.



3. Handhold support meetings for worker leaders:

Munnade has recognized around 30 garment workers as worker leaders in its target areas. These worker leaders act as a bridge between needy workers and Munnade. Their key responsibilities are connecting workers who are suffering from various issues to Munnade, organising workers for Munnade's events, coordinating various events, informing issues workers and helping their co-workers to get justice. Munnade regularly conducts meetings for these worker leaders in order to update their knowledge, strategies and discuss workers' issues.



4. Accessing Welfare Schemes:

Munnade helps communities, especially garment workers and their family members to get welfare schemes provided by the government. It includes ration card, aadhar card, manaswini, widow/old age and disability pensions, subsidies, relief schemes, ayushman health card, scholarships for their children and etc. Through this initiative, Munnade has supported 512 workers and their family members to tap government entitlements and benefits.

5. Accessing Welfare Provisions meant for Workers:

Munnade Social Organisation helps workers, especially garment workers access welfare schemes such as ESI and Provident Fund. Munnade keeps conducting meetings to encourage workers to follow up to obtain the benefits. In this financial year Munnade helped 89 to access these welfare provisions.

6. Counselling:

Munnade Social Organisation has continued to counsel women, especially garment workers to help them to cope with family and domestic issues. Munnade's counselors helped in counseling about 160 workers. The counseling service was available every week at Munnade's office. The specific issues helped with include obtaining welfare benefits such as PF and ESI and educational scholarships for children. They were helped to deal with family issues.



7. Area Meetings:

Meeting workers in their residential areas and discussing various issues they are facing is another strategy of Munna de to reach more workers. These sensitization activities take place in the evening, Sundays or public holidays. Munnade has conducted 34 area meetings in this financial year and 510 workers have benefitted from this.



8. Health Card Camps:

Munnade in collaboration with the local Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) unit, conducted two health card camps on 26th December 2021 in Chokkasandra. Through these camps Munnade supported 210 garment and other low-wage workers and their family members to get/renew Ayushman health cards which provides expenses coverage up to Rs. 5 Lakh.

9. International Women's Day celebration:

Munnade celebrated International Women's Day on 27th March 2022 in Chokkasandra's Sri Mahimappa Educational School premises. Akkai Padmashali, Women and transgender rights activist and politician, Ishrath Nisar, President, Sumitra Acharya, Treasurer, Pavana Lingaih, advocate and Munnade's board member, and Muniswamappa, the founder and director of Sri Mahimappa Educational Trust were the guest for the event. Around 400 women workers have participated in the event.



10. Network meeting to discuss Government entitlement:

Munnade in collaboration with the Centre For Research and Advocacy (CFAR) has organised a network meeting in the Nagarabhavi BBMP office on 21/09/2021 to discuss about available government entitlements, ways to tap them and solutions if any technical or other issues arise. These meetings helped to find solutions for various issues. Staff from various NGOs or women groups such as Radio Activa – Community Radio Station, Jana Sahas, JMS, Construction workers etc along with Munnade and CFAR participated in the meeting.



11. Cash support to Covid-19 infected workers:

Munnade provided cash support to 06 garment workers who were suffering from Covid-19. Munnade given Rs.1000-Rs.1500 for these workers to buy needy items. These workers are either belong to single-headed families or lost job during lockdowns. Though the support was small, the impact was huge.

12. Distribution of Sanitary Pads:

One of the key issues garment workers and their children faced apart from food during this crisis is Sanitary items and especially sanitary pads. Munnade understood the need and distributed the sanitary pads to 110 women garment workers and their daughters continuously for five months.



13. Ration and Pulse Kit Distribution:

Munnade through various individual donors' support, donated pulses kits to 503 workers worth Rs. 3,01,000 and 250 ration kits worth Rs.2,50,000 for 250 workers. The key objective of this activity is to improve the nutrition level of the workers whose health condition was bad due to covid-19. This support helped 503 workers and their family members.



14. Fees Support:

Munnade has supported 360 students (Garment workers' children) to continue their education by providing fees. Some individual donations, Samvada, and Infosys' Samarpan have supported us to help these students. Priority was given to women who belong to single-head families, widows, and other low-wage workers.

15. Care and Support Centre

Munnade Social Organization to ensure the protection, education, holistic development, and participation of garment workers' children, especially girls, aged 6 to 16 years has set up a care and support centre in Avalahalli, Bengaluru through Knowledge Lens Pvt Ltd. 42 children are getting these benefits.

For the holistic development of children, Munnade regularly conducted workshops and other activities on life skills, gender sensitization, environment education and civic education. It includes songs, story-telling, games, drawing, etc

We enhanced the nutrition level of children by providing nutritious food which includes milk, boiled eggs, cereals and pulses. Every day the children will get avail for this. It is improving the immunity power of the kids and greatly helps their mental and physical growth.

CSC program widely intervenes in many aspects. It's an integrated approach which aims in bringing holistic development of women workers' children by enhancing their knowledge.

The teachers are supporting the children to complete their homework and strive to reduce the learning gap which is increased due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The teachers have identified a few students who were struggling with their educational, emotional, psychological and domestic issues. The teachers and project coordinator have given basic counselling to them. Some students who needed further support have also been referred to internees of Banjara Academy who have specialized knowledge in counselling children. Frequent follow-ups have also been done to check the progress.

The three long years of the pandemic have adversely impacted the physical and mental growth of the children. In order to check the health status of these children, Munnade has organized a Health check-up camp on the 26th of January 2022 in the SPG School premises. All 42 children and their parents participated in the event. Dr Nithyanand KS, a former ESI administrator and renowned paediatrician has led this health check-up camp and Dr Architha also supported this health check-up camp. Height, weight, anaemic, heartbeat and others have been checked. Medicines along with protein and vitamin supplements were provided to children who were in need.

Munnade organized parent meetings as and when required along with other compulsory quarterly meetings with parents to discuss the children's progress and involve them in decisions pertaining to academics.



