

# Snehitha Extension Centres

How nice it would be if the services of the Snehitha Gender Help Desk reach out to the real needy and address their issues, that too on a regular basis, absolutely free of cost. Well, Kudumbashree Kannur District Mission of Kerala worked on that concept and they really worked that out. They are reaching out to the real needy people and are addressing their issues and are bringing them to better lives. The Snehitha Extension Centres was launched to extend the services to more number of people by reaching out to them. Let us see what Kudumbashree Kannur District Mission had done to make it happen.

## **Snehitha Gender Help Desk**

Snehitha is a 24 hours working gender help desk. It is a district level centre to support and guide the women who are in need /distress. This provides short stay and counseling facilities to the needy. Kudumbashree established three Snehitha Gender Help Desks in Thiruvananthapuram, Ernakulam and Malappuram districts of Kerala on September 2013. Now, Snehitha has been opened in all the districts across the state.

“Snehitha” simply means a ‘Female Friend’. The main aim of Snehitha is to provide all services under one roof for women and children one who need care and protection. Snehitha provides immediate help, shelter, counseling, motivation and legal assistance to the victim of violence. Snehitha provide short term shelter, with a view to protect and rehabilitate those women and children who are facing social, economic, and emotional problems due to family problems, mental strains, social exclusion, exploitation or other causes or are being forced into prostitution, widows, persecuted women and destitute women who had thrown out of from their families. It works to avail support and help to the shield less women in society. The main aim of the center is to provide help and support to those women and children who are in distress and provide voice for their issues and concerns, also to prevent, protect and prevail over domestic violence through advocacy, empowerment and social change.

Snehitha is providing shelter to many women and children who have no one to protect and are living in insecure circumstances and who were rescued from the verge of committing suicide. The Snehitha Gender Help Desk is working on the principle of convergence, which is followed by a close interface and collaboration with different government, non- governmental organizations working in the relevant and related field. Snehitha also looks to enhance the socio-economic status of young, underprivileged women by empowering them with self-confidence and the required skills to enable them to become independent and contribute to family and society. Snehitha helps its beneficiaries in getting livelihood support and assistance for opportunities. Snehitha also coordinates various outreach activities in schools and other institutions.

Kudumbashree with its strong networking structure can ensure the proper and timely implementation of the law and can protect the interest of the affected by working in collaboration with the service providers. Snehitha gender help desks were started in all 14 districts of Kerala since October 2017. Snehitha consist 11 staffs and all of them are women. There are 2 counselors, 5 service providers, 1 office assistant, 2 securities and one care taker in Snehitha.

### **Snehitha Extension Centres**

Snehitha Gender Help Desk had been imparting their services in various ways since its inception in the district on 2017. The Snehitha Gender Help Desk in Kannur is extending services in counselling, tele counselling, short stay, legal aid, awareness classes on constitutional rights, gender equality and motivational classes, workshops as well. Within 2 years, 931 cases were reported at Snehitha Gender Help Desk and short stay was arranged for 106 women in connection with the case and short stay was arranged for 108 women as guests.

Different services extended by Snehitha Gender Help Desk throughout the district are:

- Snehitha at Police Station
- Legal Clinic
- Snehitha at School

- Snehitha at BUDS
- CARE (Counselling for Acquiring Resilience and Enhancement)
- Sakheya- Snehitha at SC Hostel
- Snehitha Outreach Centre at Thalassery Special Sub Jail
- Easy Exam

**Snehitha at Police Station:** Snehitha Counselling Centre was opened at Kannur Town Police Station, one of the child friendly police stations in Kerala, on 28 July 2018. The Snehitha Counselling Centre at Kannur Town Police Station functions from 10 AM to 1 PM on all Saturdays. Counselling services are being extended through Snehitha Counselling Centres to those who come to the Kannur Town Police Station for mediation.

**Legal Clinic:** Legal Clinic was started at Snehitha Centre with an aim to extend legal aid to those who need legal help. The Legal Clinic is functioning at Snehitha associating with Kannur Taluk Legal Services Authority. Free Service of an advocate is ensured at the Legal Clinic from 2 PM to 5 M on every Saturdays. Follow up activities are ongoing associating with Kannur Taluk Legal Services Authority for the 60 cases which came to the Legal Clinic within last one year.

**Snehitha at School:** Snehitha at School was launched with an aim to extend the services of Snehitha Gender Help Desk directly to the schools. Through Snehitha at School, the needed counselling for the students, motivational classes etc are being extended for the students. Through Snehitha at School, the issues of the students were able to be identified and addressed and extended them needed guidance. The services of Snehitha at School is being extended in 7 schools in Kannur district viz., St. Cornelius Higher Secondary School, Kolayad, Kannur, Higher Secondary School, Kudiyanmala, Kannur, Kottayam rajas High School, Paathiriyaad, Kannur, Higher Secondary School, Chapparapadavu, Kannur, Higher Secondary School, Kolavallloor, Kannur, Higher Secondary School, Azhikode, Kannur and Government Town Higher Secondary School, Kannur.

**Snehitha at BUDS:** For extending the services of Snehitha Gender Help Desk to BUDS Schools and BUDS Rehabilitation Centres, Snehitha Outreach Centres are being set up in the BUDS Schools in the district. The Snehitha at BUDS are being set up for addressing the mental problems of the parents of the BUDS students and extend them needed guidelines.

**CARE (Counselling for Acquiring Resilience and Enhancement):**CARE (Counselling for Acquiring Resilience and Enhancement) Programme was launched in the district to extended the services of Snehitha to the centres of DDUGKY programme. DDUGKY (Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana) Programme is the youth employment scheme of Government of India, being implemented in Kerala through Kudumbashree, which gives skill training to the rural youth between the age of 18-35 and ensure them jobs. To reduce the stress and anxiety of the DDUGKY students and solve their problems, monthly sitting is being extended for the students at the respective training centres where the students study.

**Sakheya- Snehitha at SC Hostel:**Counselling services of Snehitha Gender Help Desk is made available to the students staying in the Government Premetric Hostels of Scheduled Caste Development Department in Kannur District.The inauguration of the programme was held at Government Premetric Hostel, Thaliparamba, Kannur on 6 July 2019. The programme which extends counselling services of Snehitha to the students at SC hostel is named as 'Sakheya', which itself means 'a friend'. The counsellors of Snehitha Gender Help Desk visit the premetric hostels two days a month and arrange sittings. The programme aims at extending mental support to the students staying at premetric hostels thereby helping them to achieve success in their lives by making right decisions, as they are staying away from their families for academic purposes. During the sittings at SC hostels, personality development classes are alsoorganized. For women and child related issues, Snehitha Gender Help Desk can be contacted through the toll free number 18004250717. It is for the first time that Kudumbashree Mission is launching such a programme in the state.

**Snehitha Outreach Centre at Thalassery Special Sub Jail:** Snehitha Outreach Centre was opened at Thalassery Special Sub Jail for extending counselling and for arranging recreation programme. Snehitha Counselling Centre was opened to lead the inmates of the Sub Jail to lead

a normal social life after their punishment by equipping them for a social life by giving them extensive training and counselling. The programme conceptualized in correctional setting is named as 'Paksham'. The word 'Paksham' means wings. The programme envisages that the jail inmates who complete their punishment and come out of the jail would conceive the life with new hope and view point.

**Easy Exam:** The Easy Exam Programme was launched as part of Snehitha at School programme, which extend awareness class and counselling for the students who face 10<sup>th</sup> Standard examinations. The programme aimed at addressing the issues of students including tension, fear of examinations etc and motivate them to face the examinations with confidence and positivity. The programme was inaugurated at St. Cornelius Higher Secondary School, Kolayad, Kannur.

### **Scope**

Kudumbashree Kannur District Mission had identified the need of extending the services of Snehitha Gender Help Desk to more sectors and slowly they have started extending the services to address the issues of people from various sectors including men as well. The Snehitha Gender Help Desk of Kannur had succeeded in reaching out to the real needy and address their issues, that too on a regular basis, absolutely free of cost. This model of extending gender services to various sectors of the society could be replicated by other districts as well.