

## Kanya Ratna Utsav in Ahmednagar, Maharashtra

### Background

Kanya Ratna Utsav celebrates the value of the Girl Child by promoting Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) through various awareness generation activities. The programme aimed to promote community participation in behavioural change. 141 Programmes were conducted across Ahmednagar District in 14 Blocks at the Gram Panchayat/Village level. One unique aspect of this activity was that the communities themselves entirely funded it. Initially, Zilla Parishad CEO of Ahmednagar motivated Lady Supervisors during a District level meeting to organize an event in their respective areas. The Lady Supervisors subsequently coordinated with their local Panchayat members, ASHAs, AWWs and Government Officials to collaboratively mobilize people for an event in favour of Kanya Ratna Utsav.

### Intervention

Activities undertaken revolved around morning rallies and street plays in addition to Poshan Aahar and cultural programmes that spread awareness about empowering the Girl Child. Moreover, rangoli, essay and drawing competitions were organized for adolescent girls alongside games, for which prizes were distributed to winners. Expert lectures on 'Save the Girl Child' and 'Educate the Girl Child' from domains like medicine, law, etc. were followed by panel discussions, reviews and guidance sessions. Furthermore, couples with one or two daughters were felicitated, and local people voluntarily contributed to a fund that was deposited for girls.

Awareness about the Kanya Ratna Utsav was pioneered and spearheaded by Panchayat Members, ICDS Supervisors, ASHAs, AWWs and Government Officials through the distribution of pamphlets, setting up of banners and displays on flex boards for all the 141 programmes of Kanya Ratna Utsav across the District.

### Impact

The primary outcome of this event was changing behaviours, as it has helped in addressing the stigma associated with the birth of a girl child. This initiative enabled the community to realize the importance of girls and women and their role in the social and economic development of society. It became a people's movement in the district that challenges age-old traditions of de-valuing the Girl Child. An amount of INR 37,60,105 of voluntary contribution was collected for Kanya Ratna Utsav. This amount was deposited in banks and post offices in the District for 3882 girls. Increasing the participation of the male population in the District is, however, challenging. By increasing the frequency of this activity, it would be possible to increase awareness.

*Source: Ministry of Women and Child Development, Innovations under Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, January 2019*