

Uttara Karnataka Mahila Okkoota : CBOs collectivizing for a greater voice and visibility

Five Community based organization (CBOs) of women in sex work in North Karnataka have recently formed a federation, Uttara Karnataka Mahila Okkoota, in order to strengthen their representation and advocacy at the state and national level.

The five organization, Rakshane Mahila Okkoota (from Gadag), Spandane Mahila Okkoota (from Haveri), Mahila Kranthi (Uttara Kannada), Sneha Mahila Sangha (from Koppal) and Beladingalu Mahila Okkoota (from Raichur) have been registered and working for over two years in their respective districts. The women felt that after understanding the power of collectives in managing issues and problems at the district and taluka levels, they should now look at forming a collective of the different CBOs, which will be a united voice at the state and national levels also. The newly fomed collective is a group which will give greater backing for its members as they try to articulate the concerns specific to their areas and their lives in various other forums.

The women are conscious that the key to the success of this federation lies in mutual respect and giving space for everybody to express their views. They are keen to ensure processes of transparent communication, appropriate representation and recording of deliberations and actions, and believe that among themselves, they will be able to handle any conflict or issue, based on consensus and collective action.