

# PUNE NGO INITIATIVE IMPRESSES CENTRE

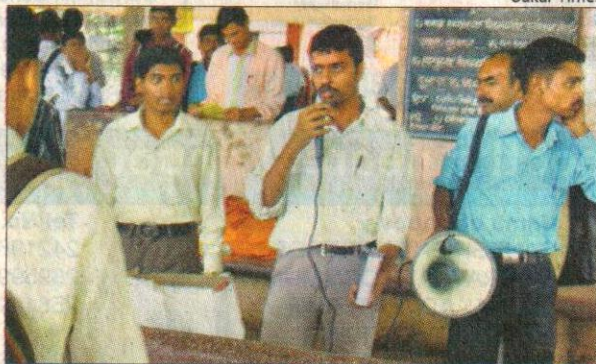
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**Pune:** Yuva Maitri - a programme meant for engaging young men on gender issues, started in Pune by social organisation Men Against Violence and Abuse (MAVA) has been listed by Government of India in its 2011 list of Best Governance Practices in the country.

"Yuva Maitri, a gender sensitisation programme in Maharashtra uses innovative youth-friendly communication tools to promote a healthy dialogue amongst young men on sexuality, masculinity, patriarchy and related issues," stated the Governance Knowledge Centre (GKC) website, promoted by department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances, Government of India.

MAVA has been working to build a movement that



Sakal Times

**CAMPAIGN:** MAVA communicator Amol Kale protesting on violence against girls and appealing to students to join in his campaign at Saswad ST stand.

explores the role of men as partners and key stakeholders in addressing gender inequality.

It launched an initiative 'Yuva Maitri' to engage young men from rural colleges in Pune on gender related issues. "These students were trained under a 'Personal change' plan for a year with guidance from gender experts and sexologists and

the usage of innovative tools like interactive workshops, awareness songs and wall newspapers," the GKC site stated.

Many of these students went on to become 'trained communicators' and spread MAVA's message of gender equality among their peers.

The initiative has gradually spread to Mumbai, Satara, Kolhapur and Jalgaon.

To date, Yuva Maitri has reached more than 20,000 young men and 5,000 young women encouraging them to break gender stereotypes.

"I feel that many interventions of similar kind need to be undertaken at a wider level: By universities in other states across the country through the National Service Scheme (NSS) programme run in colleges," MAVA honorary secretary Harish Sadani told 'Sakal Times'. He also said that government educational bodies like NCERT can help MAVA in reaching out to many adolescent young boys in schools by providing them 'comprehensive, integrated sexuality' education by youth bodies and other voluntary agencies which can organise periodic interactive sessions for the youths in communities where they work.