



**PROMOTING VIOLENCE-FREE
LIVES FOR WOMEN FROM
POOR AND MARGINALIZED
COMMUNITIES IN INDIA:
AN ENDLINE EVALUATION**



ऑक्सफैम इंडिया
OXFAM
India

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Oxfam’s International NGOs Partnership Agreement Programme (IPAP) intervention addresses an issue which has been covertly and overtly present in our societies, supported ostensibly by elders and guardians. Women experiencing violence are often forced to remain silent and accept the violence as formal justice institutions (police, courts) have failed to respond to women survivors and more towards vulnerable communities. According to the National Family Health Survey (NFHS-3) conducted in 2005-06, “About 35 per cent of women age 15-49 in India have experienced physical or sexual violence. Thirty-seven per cent of ever-married women have experienced spousal physical or sexual violence and 16 per cent have experienced spousal emotional violence.”

In this context, the IPAP intervention was designed to target the issue more holistically. IPAP aims at “Reduction of the social acceptance of violence against women and bringing a positive change in the policy and programme environment that perpetuates its acceptance at an institutional and community level.” The programme endeavoured to focus on addressing violence against women (VAW) focusing on domestic violence as a key aspect of social exclusion and better implementation of the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act (PWDVA). The programme was implemented in the states of Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand to reinforce the PWDVA Act. As envisaged within the INGO Partnership Agreement Programme (IPAP), the project envisaged to impact at three levels: 1) focused outcomes at national and state level in policy implementation; 2) formal and non-formal institutional support mechanisms to survivors; and 3) broad-based community mobilization intervention.

In its terminal year of implementation, on behalf of OXFAM, Sambodhi Research and Communications conducted the end line evaluation of the

programme. The overarching objective of the evaluation was to measure the “change in patriarchal and other discriminatory social practices and belief systems that perpetuate all violence against women and enhance provision of appropriate support to women experiencing violence by state and non-state actors”. The evaluation used a quasi-experimental mix design reaching out to approximately 3,800 project and 1,900 control households using a structured questionnaire. It also entailed using vignettes, developing case studies with the women survivors, conducting in-depth interviews with service providers and consultative workshops with the CSO partners. The key findings of the evaluation are:

ATTITUDE TOWARDS VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND KNOWLEDGE OF LAWS RELATED TO VAW

- Approximately 60 per cent men and 61 per cent women from project areas against 55 per cent men and 50 per cent women believe that it is totally unjustified to beat wives. Comparison with the baseline also shows significant improvement. At the time of the baseline less than one-third of men and women believed this practice to be justified. An awareness index¹ of women and men on VAW was created using a set of indicators. About 8 per cent men in the project area and 5 per cent in the comparison area lie in the high awareness category while 46 per cent in the project and 43 per cent in the comparison area are in the moderate category. However, data on women across project and control areas does not show a significant difference.

¹ The indicators that were used to calculate the awareness index are: understanding about physical abuse, verbal abuse, preventing the woman from obtaining employment or education, forcing the woman to hand over her income, psychological abuse, holding the woman captive at home, embarrassing her in public, slander or insult and forcing a woman to have sex/rape.

- The knowledge of men and women about different provisions of law related to violence against women was also assessed. Thirty-seven per cent of the men had very low awareness about the laws related to VAW in the project area as compared to 39 per cent in the comparison areas. A comparatively high percentage of female respondents were not aware about the laws related to VAW both in the project (50 per cent) and comparison areas (54 per cent). The Men's awareness in project areas about the domestic violence act has increased from 24 per cent in baseline to 31 per cent in the end line while the same for women has increased from 26 per cent in baseline to 49 per cent in end line.

Experience of survivors: Findings from In-depth discussions with women survivors

- Physical abuse and verbal abuse are the most common forms of violence experienced by the survivors. Half of the survivors also report that they have experienced "Psychological Abuse/ Undermining self-esteem/Embarrass/ Offend in Public". Almost 78 per cent of the respondents reported that they approached their "own family" to seek help from abuse or violence. More than half (53 per cent) sought help from "NGO/Social Service Organization". 43 per cent also mentioned that they approached the "Support Centre". They also took help from Police, Lawyers, and Neighbours etc. The survivors were asked whether their violence stopped because of the intervening of the concerned persons they approached for help. Almost 78 per cent of them reported "yes".
- Survivors have utilized different sources of help for registering their cases. Majority of the survivors received help either from their parents or support centre counsellors and NGO staff members. Support centres definitely have played a significant role in registering of cases. The study findings suggest that police station-based counselling centres have led to better detection of cases of VAW.

Service Providers: Findings from In-depth discussions with police and WCD representatives

- The major concern expressed by the police officers was to identify the extent of domestic violence within the localities in their jurisdiction though they believe that in the last few years reporting on domestic violence has shown an increase.
- Police officials across all the states have observed significant change in people's perception towards domestic violence. They suggest that women have opened up and cases of violence are getting reported to the police more frequently. But still there is a lot of hesitation in reporting sexual abuse as a form of domestic violence.
- Police officials across all the states show high level of awareness on the provisions under the PWDVA. In states like Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat, officials have had good exposure to training programs conducted by various civil society organisation and state government. These trainings have helped them to deal with identification and responding more effectively to the cases of domestic violence. Police personnel believe that their engagement in domestic violence cases have improved in the last few years.
- It is encouraging to state that WCD officials exhibit good level and depth of awareness on various legislations and provisions under law. While they show high level of awareness, their engagement as protection officer is not always their priority. They suggest that being a protection officer is just a small part of their overall responsibility as a WCD official. They also suggest that they lack clarity on their role as a protection officer. As their responsibility with the WCD involves a lot of travel, the issue of their limited reach for survivors adds up to this.

COMMUNITY GROUPS

- IPAP programme was implemented on ground by a network of partner organizations/civil

society organizations (CSOs) who executed the implementation plan on the ground. They were also engaged in developing programme Pressure Groups/ Vigilance Committees in the programme communities. The groups are primarily engaged with the community for advocacy on domestic violence, identification and support to of victims and counselling.

- Approximately 60 per cent of the community group members had participated in the trainings conducted by Oxfam during the last three years. Almost 60 per cent of the members reported that they have more clarity on laws related to VAW now. 51 per cent had mentioned that they had become more aware regarding which officials to contact for VAW cases. 43 per cent reported that they now have more clarity on support services and facilities. 66 per cent of group members suggest that they had helped women experiencing violence in their locality.
- To measure this, community group members were asked to react to statements which were related to husband hitting or beating wife under different situations. Three fourth of the community group members suggest the actions suggested in the statements are totally unjustified. Around 57 per cent of the members had moderate level of awareness while 40 per cent had high level of awareness on VAW.

THE WAY FORWARD

- Over the last few years IPAP intervention has created an enabling implementation infrastructure for targeting VAW. All the CSOs working for IPAP programme show keen intent

on working on this issue in the time to come. They acknowledge the fact that while working with the IPAP programme their understanding of the issues and the process of positive intervention at the community, institution and policy levels have improved. While there is an intention and definitely a need for furthering this intervention, CSOs believe that they still require resource, both material and intellectual, in continuing with the same intensity.

- The institutionalization of the support centre model by the Government of Gujarat has come about due to several factors working concomitantly. In states like Andhra Pradesh, the scale up has been significantly affected by inconsistent support of the state machinery. The value add of the support centre model is beginning to be recognized only now. The intervention is at a tipping point and discontinuing the work would be premature as it would not be able to sustain on its own, at least with an effective intensity. It also means wastage of resources invested so far. It is strongly recommended that IPAP partners be offered financial support to run the support centres for at least another two years so as to build strong evidence for advocacy. This time period would also enable them to build networks with the state machinery for scale up.
- While the quality of counselling has definitely improved, it is still strongly felt that interventions like IPAP will be necessary to sustain the quality. To make the interventions move towards sustainability, NGO- GO partnership needs to be reinforced even further. This will further improve quality checks and help build community awareness.

BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

The aim of the DFID supported INGO Partnerships Agreement Programme (IPAP) is to “improve the status of the poorest and most marginalized in India”.

An analysis of development indices shows that nearly 70 per cent of the poorest and most marginalized in India are women. The Human Development Report (UNDP 2004) expressed concern about the status of women in India.² There is ample evidence that women from marginalized communities³ experience further exclusions across different aspects of social development.⁴

More directly, gender-based violence at different levels has contributed to women’s social exclusion and poverty. According to Nobel laureate Dr Amartya Sen, currently, 39.7 million women are ‘missing’ in India.⁵ Women experiencing violence are often forced to remain silent and accept the violence as formal justice institutions (police, courts) have failed to respond to women survivors and more towards vulnerable communities. Women from marginalized communities are even less likely to report violence or seek justice as they do not believe that they will get justice. This perception is borne out by reality as a National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights Study (2006)

² According to the UNDP report, women’s life expectancy at birth is 64.4 years; adult female literacy rate is 46.4 per cent; estimated earned income (PPP US \$) is 1,442; maternal mortality ratio is 540 per 100,000 live births; infant mortality rate is 67 per 1,000 live births and only 9.3 per cent seats in Parliament held by women.

³ Marginalized groups are those who face discrimination and / or exclusion at a community, state or institutional level on the basis of their social identity. This marginalisation may be on the basis of their ethnicity, religious, caste, socio-economic status, disability, gender or sexual orientation, or other, contextualised, basis.

⁴ The literacy rate is lower at just 23.8 per cent with higher drop out rate of 53.96 per cent among Dalit girls at the primary school level. Poverty and unemployment rates are higher for 94 per cent of those engaged in the unorganized, self-employed sector (farm/wage workers, domestic helpers, etc.).

⁵ Klasen and Wink, 2004. 2011 (940 girls per 1,000 boys)

showed that perpetrators were punished in only 1 per cent of cases. According to the National Family Health Survey (NFHS-3) conducted in 2005–06, “About 35 per cent of women aged 15–49 years in India have experienced physical or sexual violence. Thirty-seven per cent of ever-married women have experienced spousal physical or sexual violence and 16 per cent have experienced spousal emotional violence.”

Many a times, other institutions like counselling centres and short stay homes for women survivors are poorly resourced, inadequate for the population and often inaccessible. Support services offered by NGOs and other organizations are heavily burdened and few in number. Thus, there is a clear need not only to provide efficient and effective support mechanisms for women facing violence from all socio-economic backgrounds but also to create mechanisms at different levels for institutional accountability. Though there are some positive and progressive laws providing for time-bound justice for women, much needs to be done for effective implementation. There is a need to further engage government departments and the judiciary to ensure effective entitlements by poor and marginalized women.

Thus, within the framework of the IPAP project goal of “improving the status of the poorest and most marginalized in India” and based on the analysis given earlier, Oxfam decided to focus on addressing violence against women (VAW) focusing on domestic violence as a key aspect of social exclusion and better implementation of PWDVA.

The initiative aims to build upon the experience of work on ending violence against women undertaken by Oxfam and its partners in different parts of the country. As envisaged within IPAP, the project is envisaged to impact at three levels – 1) focused outcomes at national and state level in policy implementation; 2) formal and non-formal institutional support mechanisms

to survivors; and 3) broad-based community mobilization intervention for a fundamental shift in ideas, beliefs and practices of individuals and institutions that support and perpetuate violence against women.

The initiative covers the states of Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand to develop contextually relevant models of institutional accountability and community engagement for wider adoption across the country.

A broad-based campaign on generating public opinion to prevent violence against women was supported in nine states viz. West Bengal, Odisha, Jharkhand, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Rajasthan, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu.

The initiative aims to reduce the social acceptance of violence against women and bring a positive change in the policy and programme environment that perpetuates its acceptance at an institutional and community level. As envisaged within IPAP, the project is envisaged to impact at three levels – 1) focused outcomes at national and state level in policy implementation; 2) formal and non-formal institutional support mechanisms to survivors; and 3) broad-based community mobilization intervention for a fundamental shift in ideas, beliefs and practices of individuals and institutions that support and perpetuate violence against women.

The programme targeted all the actors that are involved in either perpetuating VAW or not fulfilling their mandate in prevention and relief, these being the individuals (perpetrators and survivors), families, communities, society and the state. Appropriate capacity building was done at all levels to work towards the larger goal of reducing social acceptance of VAW through addressing patriarchal and other interlinking discriminatory attitudes and practices based on caste, race and religion and bringing a positive change in the policy and programme environment that perpetuates its acceptance at an individual, community and institutional level. All this will ensure that

women from marginalized communities are able to overcome the multiple exclusions they face and are able to build an environment and support system that enables them to lead lives to their fullest potential.

1.2 ABOUT THE STUDY

The overarching objective of the study was to measure the *“change in patriarchal and other discriminatory social practices and belief systems that perpetuate all violence against women and enhance provision of appropriate support to women experiencing violence by state and non-state actors”* (Project Purpose).

The study also strived to establish whether the implementation has contributed to the project goal, that is *“Reduce the social acceptance of all violence against women and bring a positive change in the policy and programme environment that perpetuates its acceptance at an institutional and community level.”*

The study also tried to measure the following indicators:

- Understand if men and women aged 15-50 years in the programme districts are sensitized on VAW and have demonstrably increased their knowledge on laws related to violence against women and legal and other support services available for those experiencing violence
- Understand if communities in villages and towns in the programme districts have pressure groups and/or youth activists and/or committees on VAW that are equipped with a knowledge of the laws related to VAW and support services to help women experiencing violence in seeking appropriate services
- Understand whether government officials in the relevant departments (Police, PO under DV Act, Women & Child Development) are sensitized about the issue of VAW and have increased knowledge of the laws, rules and regulations related to VAW and support services

- Understand the functioning of district level support institutions established in collaboration with police departments in four states (Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Odisha and Gujarat)

1.3 APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

This study has received ethical clearance from Society for the Promotion of Ethical Clinical Trials - Scientific Review Board (SPECT - SRB) at the inception of the study.

A **quasi-experimental mix design approach** was adopted for the study. A judicious mix of **quantitative** and **qualitative** tools was used to carry out the study. The evaluation design cuts across the following stakeholder categories:

- Men and women from the general community in the sample area
- Women who have registered VAW cases in the sample area
- Police personnel in police stations located in the sample area
- District level officials in the WCD department in the sample area
- POs (district level) in the sample area
- Civil society network members
- Youth activists/pressure groups/volunteers in the sample area

The sample size achieved across project and comparison areas is mentioned below.

1.4 REPORT STRUCTURE

This report opens with an introduction of the intervention and a brief on the approach methodology used for the study. This forms Chapter 1 of the report.

The background characteristics of the target group segment documents participants' personal profile and family backgrounds. The information helped the research team to analyze and interpret the responses on the basis of different variables like educational status, the type of families and the composition and Socio-economic status of the family of respondents. This forms Chapter 2 of the report.

Chapter 3 provides an overview of the programme strategies. It also gives an analysis of programme results with respect to the key strategies.

Chapter 4 documents the key programme results across different stakeholders. This includes assessments of attitude towards violence against women and knowledge of laws related to violence against women. It also introduces and delineates an assessment of the experiences of survivors, service providers, police officers, WCD officials and community group members. Moreover, this chapter also reflects on the level of awareness of different categories of stakeholders about the laws on VAW and the provision and access to various support services for women experiencing violence.

TABLE 1: SAMPLE SIZE ACHIEVED ACROSS PROJECT AND COMPARISON AREAS

Sl. No	States	Sample Size for women	Sample Size for men	Sample Size for women	Sample Size for men
		PROJECT		COMPARISON	
1	Andhra Pradesh	398	390	187	195
2	Gujarat	344	344	165	165
3	Odisha	423	420	207	210
4	Uttar Pradesh	428	420	202	210
5	Uttarakhand	332	333	165	165
		1,925	1,907	926	945
	Total Sample		3,832		1,871

Chapter 5 provides documentation of findings against Relevance, Efficiency, Effectiveness, Results and Sustainability. The last chapter summarizes the conclusions while also describing the key recommendations.

1.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Following are the key limitations of the study:

1. ASSESSMENT OF THE COUNTERFACTUAL

While IPAP had conducted a baseline at the start of the intervention, the baseline design did not include a comparison group. Hence at the end term it was not possible to assess the counterfactual. While major findings from the baseline were available, raw data files were not available. Absence of raw data files limited the usage of statistical analysis.

2. AVAILABILITY OF MIS DATA

Some of the log-frame indicators are to be populated from the MIS. While in a majority of the cases the study got relevant inputs from the MIS, few of the indicators could not get populated because of non-availability of MIS data.

3. NUMBER OF CASES OF VAW

The actual number of cases with incidence of VAW is not accurately available. The last national level survey giving estimates of cases of domestic violence was NFHS-3 conducted

in 2005-06. Even regarding those estimates, many people are of the opinion that the number are highly under-reported since most women do not report such cases of violence by family. Unavailability of these figures was a limitation for the cost efficiency analysis.

4. QUANTIFYING THE COST AND BENEFITS

It is easier to quantify the direct costs associated with domestic violence. Direct costs include the costs of healthcare services, social and welfare services, counselling, police and criminal justice services, legal services, transportation costs and housing services used by victims of domestic violence. However, in addition to the direct costs, domestic violence imposes significant indirect economic costs on victims, businesses, the public sector and society as a whole. Indirect costs often relate to the impact of domestic violence on women's labour force participation and productivity and also long-term health consequence. In an effort to quantify these adverse health consequences, a 1993 World Bank study calculated that 9 million disability-adjusted life years, or DALYs, are lost worldwide each year due to rape and domestic violence. Additionally, domestic violence inflicts enormous pain and suffering on its victims – reducing their quality of life and leading to lower levels of overall satisfaction and happiness. It is difficult to monetize the pain and suffering costs associated with domestic violence.

PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter highlights the socio-economic profile of the respondents who were interviewed for the purpose of this study. The first section disaggregates the data based on the sex, age, caste, affluence and literacy levels of the respondents. The next section deals with the level of exposure of the respondents to mass media activities.

2.2 BACKGROUND CHARACTERISTICS OF MEN AND WOMEN

Overall, the profiles of men and women interviewed in the survey are similar. A total of 2,852 men (1,907 in project and 945 in comparison) and 2,851 women (1,925 in project and 926 in comparison) were interviewed during the study.

A majority (88 per cent) of them followed Hinduism in the project area compared to 91 per cent in comparison area. About 33 per cent of the respondents belonged to backward classes (OBC) in project against 36 per cent in comparison areas. At the time of the baseline also three-fourth of the respondents belonged to households of marginalized groups and a majority of the respondents followed Hinduism as a religious belief.

The break-up of the profile of men and women respondents based on their religion and caste is given in the Figures 1 and 2.

Across both baseline and end line, about half the households surveyed belonged to below poverty line. Percentage of male respondents reporting having BPL cards for project and comparison areas were 50 per cent and 45 per cent respectively at end line.

As evident from the Figure 4, close to half the respondents were in the age group of 31–40 years. Another one third of the respondents were in the age group of 41–50 years.

About 67 per cent of the respondents (including men and women) interviewed in the project areas and 67.6 per cent had ever attended school (75 per cent men and 59 per cent women). Those who had attended school, were also asked a question about their educational qualifications. Only 0.5 per cent had not completed any formal education. Further 22 per cent of the respondents had completed primary education. The per cent of respondents who had completed their education till standard 10th was 75 per cent while the ones who had completed 12th class was an

FIGURE 1: RELIGION OF MALE AND FEMALE RESPONDENTS (IN %)

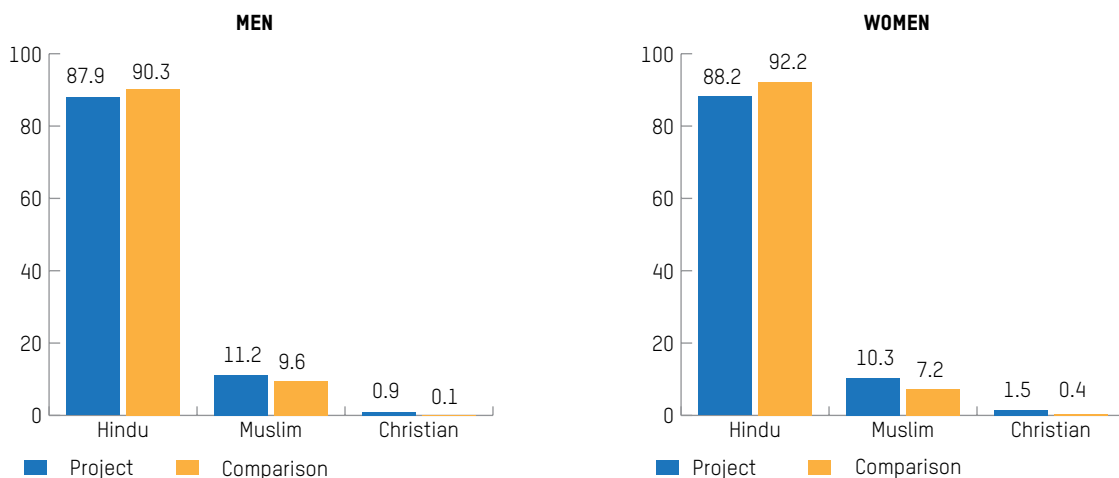


FIGURE 2: CASTE OF MALE AND FEMALE RESPONDENTS (IN %)

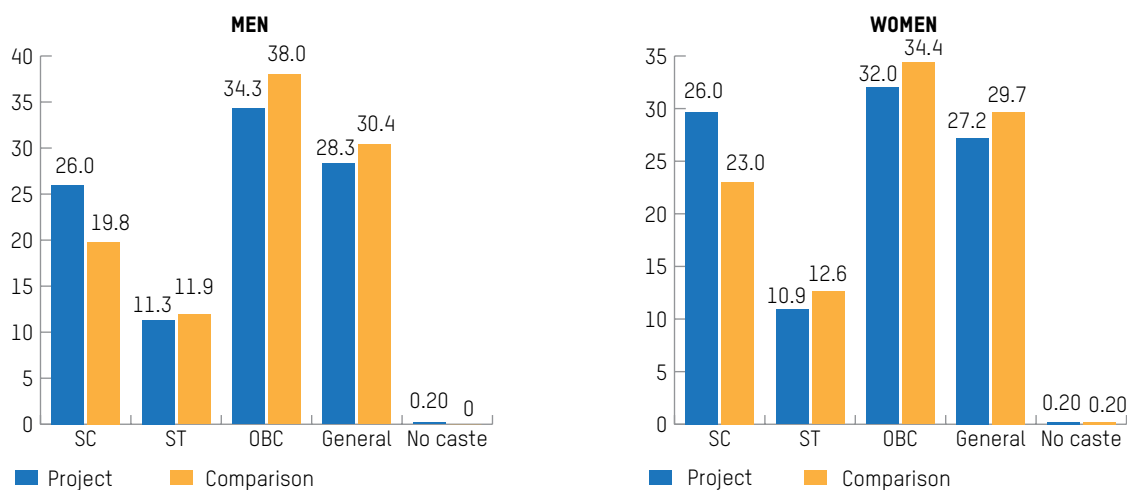


FIGURE 3: BPL CARDHOLDERS (IN %)

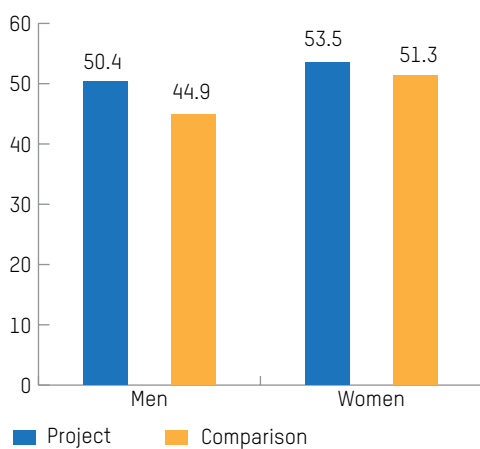
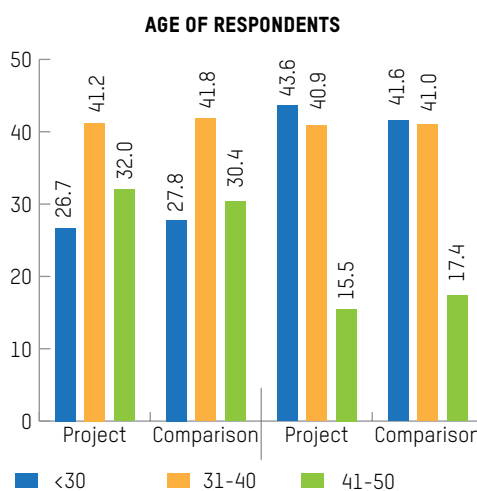


FIGURE 4: AGE OF RESPONDENTS (IN %)



additional 14 per cent. And 11 per cent of the respondents interviewed had studied above 12th standard.

The Figure 6 shows the marital status of men and women surveyed across the project and the sample areas. About 93.5 per cent of the female respondents were currently married while rest were separated, deserted, divorced or widowed. The marital status of men and women surveyed did not statistically differ much across project and comparison areas. Of the men, close to 97 per cent were currently married while a mere 3 per cent were divorced, deserted or separated.

Primary and secondary source of income of the respondents spouses were also analyzed. About 65 per cent of the male respondents in the project areas opined that their spouses were not involved in any kind of additional livelihood earning activities. About 15 per cent of the respondents in the project area confirmed that the women worked in family farms. About 25 per cent of the male respondents were engaged in farming activities on own land and 23 per cent were employed as wage labourers.

Female respondents whose spouses depended on family farm cultivation as main source of livelihood

FIGURE 5: MALE AND FEMALE RESPONDENTS EVER ATTENDED SCHOOL (IN %)

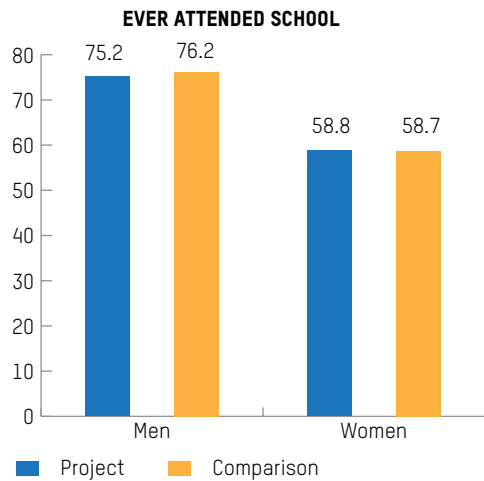
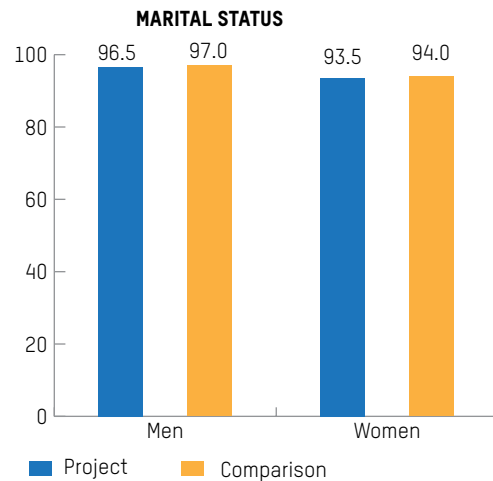


FIGURE 6: MARITAL STATUS OF MEN AND WOMEN (IN %)



were as high as 21 per cent while those depending on agriculture labour as their main source of income was close to 26 per cent. Findings of end line with regard to the spouse’s occupation elucidate a picture of economic dependency of the females in the programme area on their spouses.

2.3 EXPOSURE TO MASS MEDIA

At the baseline exposure to newspaper/magazine, radio and cinema was relatively higher among men as compared to women. At the end line survey also similar kind of trends were observed. The

proportion was almost similar between the project and comparison areas. Of course, television was the most mentioned source of media exposure in both project and comparison areas and it also increased from baseline to end line.

Across project and comparison areas, there was some difference in the number of people who do not read newspaper at all (43 per cent males and 78 per cent females in project as compared to 40 per cent males and 82 per cent females in comparison) area.

FIGURE 7: VIEWERSHIP OF TELEVISION (IN %)

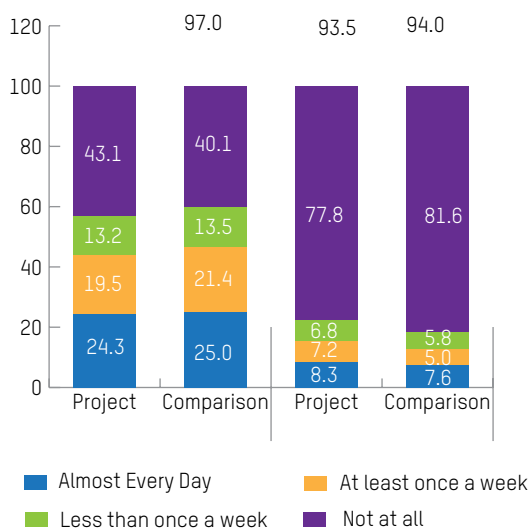
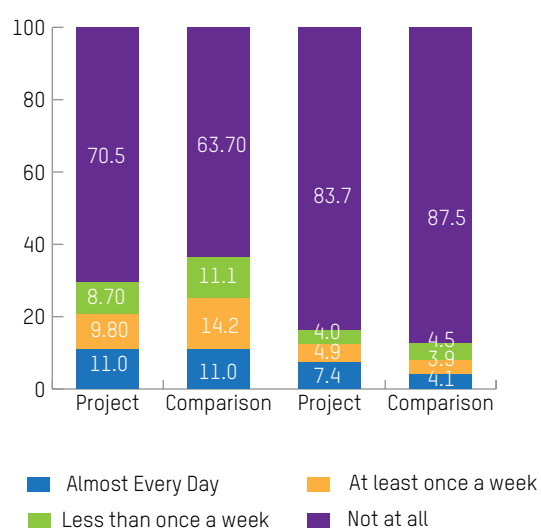


FIGURE 8: RADIO LISTENERSHIP (IN %)

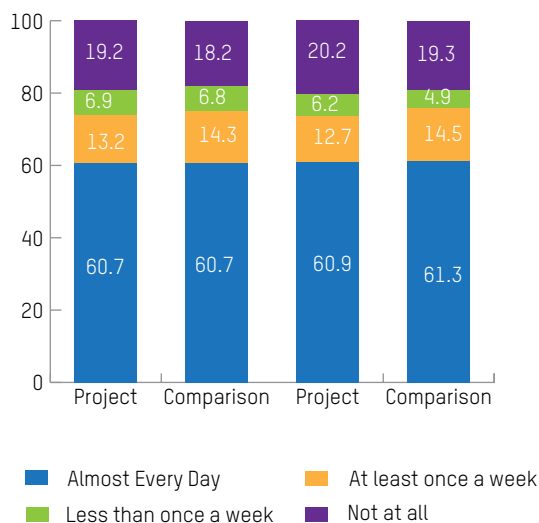


With regard to listening to radio, 71 per cent males in project and 64 per cent in comparison areas reported that they do not listen to the radio at all. About 84 per cent females in project and 88 per cent in comparison reported not listening to the radio at all.

There has been a significant change in the television penetration in the programme area from baseline to end line. In the endline, about 19 per cent male respondents and 20 per cent female respondents from the project areas did not watch TV at all. During baseline, the percentage of male and female respondents not watching TV at all was higher (36 per cent males and 45 per cent females).

These results are interesting as both the baseline and end line demographic analyses of the programme area validated the fact that television was a major means of creating awareness among both males and females. Of the states, Andhra Pradesh and Uttarakhand showed a significantly

FIGURE 9: EXPOSURE OF MEN AND WOMEN TO VARIOUS MEDIA ACTIVITY (IN %)



high penetration (more than 90 per cent) of television across both project and comparison areas and across both the genders as against the other states.

The end line findings reflected similar trends as that of baseline regarding exposure to newspaper/ magazine, radio and cinema being relatively higher among men than women. Television was found to be the most common source of media exposure and there was a significant change in its penetration from baseline to end line.



Photo Credit: Oxfam India's NGO partner

AN ANALYTICAL OVERVIEW OF THE IPAP'S PROGRAMME STRATEGIES

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The key strategies of the IPAP programme that have emerged from the evaluation are:

- Provision of support services to women facing violence
- Sensitizing service providers from the government and non-government sector to respond effectively to women facing violence
- Mobilizing the community (men, women, elders etc.) to create non-tolerance for VAW
- Nurturing where they exist or creating community level structures which serve as a support mechanism for women facing violence
- Lobbying and advocating with state governments for better implementation of laws and for better quality of support services

This chapter provides an analytical overview of IPAP's strategies over the project implementation period.

3.2 STRATEGY 1: PROVISION OF SUPPORT SERVICES FOR WOMEN FACING VIOLENCE

This strategy has been operationalized in various ways depending on feasibility, context and the partners' own strengths to carry forward the intervention. Thus it has taken the form of either women support centres (WSCs), helplines where crisis counseling and referral services are provided and the setting up of a network in Uttarakhand of like-minded and committed CSOs, NGOs and even individuals.

In some places, WSCs have been set up within police stations whereas in many other places they function outside the police station premises

but work in tandem with the police in facilitating police intervention where necessary. The key factor that has determined the location of the support centre is political will and support extended by the state machinery. Under IPAP, 18 WSCs have been set up across the five states of IPAP's operations.

In each of the five states, the support centres were started in very different contexts. In Andhra Pradesh, they grew organically out of several advocacy efforts of women led NGOs. The idea of starting WSCs became viable also because of sensitivity built by helpline services, police trainings and child line services which required liaison with the police department. In Gujarat, partners of OXFAM had been working with the formal state machinery for many years and conducting regular sensitisation programmes, providing counselling services for women facing violence in remote rural areas and engaging with the state for implementation of the PWDV Act. The IPAP intervention helped take forward many of these activities. In Uttarakhand, WSCs have been backstopped by a strong network of CSOs, NGOs and individuals all of whom came together under an umbrella network called SANJHA MANCH. The terrain in Uttarakhand makes it difficult for women to access police stations for help. In such a context, the WSC has to be more broad-based and made accessible through a system of local referrals and counsellors. In Odisha, the NGO partners had been engaged in advocacy with state agencies for improving state supported services for women facing violence. In the two tribal dominated IPAP supported districts of Odisha, traditional forums and tribal councils exert a great deal of influence on all community matters including cases of VAW. While setting up the WSCs, strengthening their linkage with formal legal institutions and services were the two key agenda items of the partners.

What is the value-add of locating a model wherein the support centre is located within the police station? Insights from the IPAP evaluation:

- A police station is a place where women arrive after trying other sources of support and help - mediation by family members or by caste elders or the panchayat. This makes police station a meaningful space for women where they can receive support and help. Many counsellors share the importance of making this space very supportive else women might even choose to end their lives.
- The expectation held by most women reaching the police is that there will be some hearing or resolution of their problem but more often than not, the case is handled just as insensitively as other forums (panchayats or caste elders). Locating a counselling cell in the police station therefore ensures that at least for those women reaching this forum, there is a supportive platform available.
- If there is an authority that mediates, then the registration of complaints by the police becomes accessible to women. Once the police become accessible, women start coming forward in larger numbers to seek help. And this in turn may serve as a deterrent to VAW.
- Placing a support centre in the police station also means trying to amend the way in which state endorses the norm that domestic violence is a private matter, outside the ambit of serious police work and justified under certain circumstances. It is about trying to bring normative change by influencing the police to register cases where they are needed and under the right section of the law.

Therefore what the evaluation found is that locating the support centre in a police station has a physical dimension but also a deeper systemic dimension. At a physical level it creates credibility for the service and also invokes fear in the perpetrator. At the same time, it facilitates access to other government departments and service providers when the counsellor introduces herself as a part of the police station she sits in. It provides legitimacy. It also ensures access to infrastructure such as a physical space and a police jeep along with a constable when retrieval of streedhan has to be undertaken. However, at a systemic level, the centre provides a critical link with the police wherever needed and creates a coordinated response for the woman. At the same time, when the police become aware of how they 'fit' into the process of resolving a case their own response to violence is much more meaningful. Police also become convinced of playing their role effectively when they see other services being accessed, regular follow-ups and a resolution to the case. This also becomes a way of sensitising them that VAW issues can be resolved successfully and their role matters. To make this happen, locating the centre in the police station is important; this linkage cannot be built as effectively sitting outside the police station.

3.3 STRATEGY 2: SENSITIZING THE SERVICE PROVIDERS FROM THE GOVERNMENT SECTOR TO RESPOND EFFECTIVELY TO WOMEN FACING VIOLENCE

Under IPAP, sensitization and capacity building of government service providers has taken place either directly through training of police personnel and protection officers or indirectly through

constant interactions between the counselors at the WSCs and police personnel. For example, in many of the WSCs a coordination meeting is held every three months with the police wherein the counsellors listen in on cases addressed during this period to the last three months. They discuss how cases were resolved during this period, issues faced by the police in dealing with cases relevant to women and where the matter could have been

handled differently. These sessions also become opportunities for the counsellors to sensitize the police on how to deal with women complainants on matters of domestic violence. They provide examples from their own cases to show how they have handled a similar case.

Documentation and regular follow-up of cases is another way in which the system is sensitized about how to be accountable for support services. In the words of the IPAP partners from Andhra Pradesh, *“Documentation, transparency and regular follow-ups are keys to the successful running of these centres. The police may ask for any kind of documentation at any point—therefore it is critical to maintain all case records up to date and with all details. Then they also become accountable for cooperating with the support cell. Or if there is any problem later and the woman changes her statement or goes back on what she says, the details of the case records are what can prove the process that has been followed—there is documentary proof on how the woman was counselled in each session.”* It is realized that documentation is what keeps the process transparent. The WSCs are also particular with the quality of documentation which entails every session to be recorded in registers, a safekeeping letter from the woman asking for the support she requires from the WSC and documentation of police procedures.

Regular follow-ups are also built to boost the credibility of the WSCs in the police system so that the police realize that WSCs are here to make a difference and offer genuine support—not just sort out the case and then forget about what has happened with the woman. Follow-ups are also recorded. Follow-ups ensure compliance of the decisions and this makes the process of the support centre very strong and believable.

3.4 STRATEGY 3: MOBILIZING THE COMMUNITY (MEN, WOMEN, ELDERS ETC.) TO CREATE NON-TOLERANCE FOR VAW

This strategy is not being implemented by all

partners. It includes activities such as conducting regular meetings in the community, holding sensitization programmes with women and men on what VAW is, its causes, consequences and sharing legal remedies available for women facing violence. Partners use 16 days of activism campaigns to create visibility for the issue in the community. In addition to this, mohalla meetings and house to house visits are also undertaken. Many of the partners in Odisha, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat and Uttarakhand who are undertaking community mobilization have worked through self-help groups and collectives of women who have been capacitated to address VAW in their localities. Many partners have also participated in the OXFAM supported WECAN campaign, which mobilizes change makers to take actions to reduce VAW and also motivate others. Given below is the kind of community mobilization undertaken by Shaheen, an NGO working with Muslim women in the old city areas of Hyderabad. This description typically explains what happens in most IPAP sites:

Shaheen staff working in the community undertake daily home visits and develop a monthly plan so that each house is visited at least twice a month; 4-5 houses are covered by each worker everyday (they have a team of 5-6 field workers) and they spend at least 45 minutes in each house. They take reading material along with them during these visits, such as small booklets in Urdu about VAW, about the DV Act and the organisation. The house to house visits are largely with women. But slowly men are also becoming a part of these discussions. The team also holds basti meetings where women from a few households congregate at a place and awareness generation on gender rights and VAW takes place.

3.5 STRATEGY 4: NURTURING OR CREATING COMMUNITY LEVEL STRUCTURES WHICH SERVE AS A SUPPORT MECHANISM FOR WOMEN FACING VIOLENCE

This is perhaps one of the most creative and vibrant elements of the IPAP programme. In many places partners have set up pressure groups,

collectives of women and youth to address VAW. These structures back stop the work of the women support centres, refer cases to them and also help in follow up at the local level. Three innovations worth mentioning in this context are the Nyaya Samiti set up by SAVRAJ, an NGO partner in Gujarat, the Mahila Panch, set up by ANANDI in Gujarat and the SAJHA MANCH, a network of organizations working on VAW in the hilly terrains of Uttarakhand.

REDS, an IPAP partner in AP, through various community level campaigns on VAW has succeeded in setting up vigilance committees which handle cases of VAW. These committees are composed of key stakeholders and meet once a month. These committees are operational in 20 villages and either resolve cases in the village itself or bring them to the support centre. In addition a mandal or block level federation has been set up with 13 NGOs, some of whom are service providers under the DV Act. Wall writings in villages on VAW and laws related to women have also been made a part of the 16 days of activism.

Both the Nyaya Samiti and the Mahila Panch play a very critical role in making and sustaining normative change on VAW. These are forums for dispute resolution run entirely by women and have supplanted traditional male dominated forums of mediation in villages and tribal areas. The Nyaya Samiti in Jasdand block has handled 322 cases in the last five years. The members feel that in the beginning they received more complaints of wife beating and physical abuse but in the last three years the Samiti has been receiving more cases of suspicion. The Samiti says this is because people have now become more aware of laws against domestic violence, especially physical violence. In the beginning street plays were held in villages close by to make people aware about what constitutes domestic violence—that it includes subtle forms of discrimination such as preventing women from stepping out of the house.

During SHG meetings also discussions are held regularly on what constitutes violence against women. The Samiti feels that these awareness drives and activities have made a difference to people's perceptions and tolerance to physical violence within marriage. The increasing influence of the Nyaya Samiti is evident from the fact that its members are also being invited to resolve property and land disputes. In matters where the police have to be approached, the Nyaya Samiti is seen as a competent body and asked to provide assistance.

The value-add of a separate forum such as the Mahila Panch in tribal pockets of Gujarat, lies in facilitating justice for women. Unlike traditional tribal forums, the Nyaya Samiti does not take any money for conducting the *Panch*. The process they follow is aimed at getting women justice that reinstates their rights and dignity in the family and community. They are impartial yet push hard for what the survivor wants. The Nyaya Samiti is different from the traditional *Panch* also in terms of its documentation. They make detailed notes of the history of abuse faced by the woman and the case proceedings. The agreement reached by both parties is written down and all members present at the arbitration sign on the decisions taken. Even if there are financial dealings such as compensation, the woman is given the money by placing it in a bank account in her name. The Nyaya Samiti members explain, *"When we first started being present in the Panch, we were not allowed to sit on the cot – men did not allow us to speak- they would say, what work do you have in our Panch? But since we were not taking any money and the word spread that this group works well, they now send cases to us. Even when there is severe violence and the case reaches the police station they say call the women's Panch."*

The Sajha Manch in Uttarakhand is a representative alliance of non-governmental organizations, voluntary organizations, women's groups and civil society members from six districts of the Kumaon region formed to promote violence free lives for women from poor and marginalized sections, as well as act as a pressure group for policy advocacy.

“Through advocacy we seek recognition as a women’s rights organisation, inclusion in committees like sexual harassment at the workplace and financial support for case work as a service provider.”

Renu Thakur, Director, Arpan, Pithoragarh

It has units at the district level. The loosely knit structure of the Sajha Manch (which is an activity based association of various units) consists of:

- 70 women grassroots leaders (those who had been in leadership roles even before the programme) have been trained to take a lead on issues of women’s rights and provide support to survivors. These women are active participants in events at the local and the state level. They have a proactive role in taking decisions and supporting women survivors in getting justice and advocating for women’s rights.
- ‘Reflect circles’ are formed at the village level wherein women get together to understand the issue of violence through song, dance, storytelling, sharing of experiences.
- ‘Jan Awaz Kendra’ is operational at the block level, three days a week to provide legal information to women.
- Existing block level platforms such as Sabla Sangathan/Mahila Adhikar Manch which bring together like minded individuals and women’s organizations.
- District level committees are formed on Violence Against Women.

Through these structures, the Sajha Manch undertakes the following:

- Raising awareness through rallies, plays, public meetings, distribution of IEC material.

- Networking with stakeholders like the media and the legal fraternity.
- Advocacy with relevant government departments for the proper implementation of PWDVA, improvement of shelter homes for women, etc.

Stakeholder involvement has been built in many ways including:

- At the district level, women lawyers have volunteered to help with cases. Earlier a fellowship was offered to attract lawyers.
- In certain cases the panchayat has been motivated to pay for the legal expenses of women survivors.
- SHGs have also been giving interest free loans to women survivors either to meet legal expenses or to establish themselves financially. In one case, the local traders association contributed money for the hospitalization and treatment of a woman survivor in New Delhi.
- Women survivors are honored publicly on days such as ‘Women’s Day’ to create a social environment of acceptability and respect for them.

3.6 STRATEGY 5: LOBBYING AND ADVOCATING WITH STATE GOVERNMENTS FOR BETTER IMPLEMENTATION OF LAWS AND FOR BETTER QUALITY OF SUPPORT CENTRES

This strategy has been operationalized using many of the mechanisms discussed earlier. In addition, in states such as Andhra Pradesh and Odisha, reviews and research studies of existing government services such as shelter homes and short stay homes, helplines, legal aid services etc. were undertaken with a specific agenda of pushing for better quality and quantity of support services. These study findings have been widely disseminated among state agencies as well as civil society.

3.7 CONCLUSIONS

The evaluation highlighted the multiple levels at which IPAP has tried to strengthen systems and services to improve the lives of women facing violence. While the overall strategy is well-rounded and tries to take care of all key stakeholders and institutions, the evaluation found that expecting the same partner to implement each of the strategies with equal finesse and energy is unrealistic. Some partners (for example, SAVRAJ, ARPAN, AWAG and ANANDI)

have managed to implement every strategy equally effectively but this is because their starting point has been community mobilization. In the case of some other, smaller organizations which have a more modest area of work, support centre based service provision has happened much more effectively than community mobilization. In fact it would appear that those organizations which have been doing community mobilization in a sustained manner have been more effective in taking up the support centre model than vice versa.



Photo Credit: Oxfam India

Oxfam India advocates for the rights of women in India

KEY PROGRAMME RESULTS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents and analyses the findings of key results of OXFAM's IPAP intervention. The findings have been drawn from in-depth discussions with key service providers, a household survey with the community and interactions with other stakeholders. Based on the key programmatic outcomes, the chapter is broadly divided into three sections namely a. Responsiveness of government service delivery, b. Sensitization of marginalized communities in the programme districts, and c. Analytical overview of We CAN.

4.2 RESPONSIVENESS OF GOVERNMENT SERVICE DELIVERY

While all those being victimized by a partner deserve effective advocacy, protection, and support, the overwhelming majority of domestic violence survivors are women battered by male partners. A very critical factor in provision of various services envisaged in policies/programs/schemes related to violence against women therefore entail the role of police and protection officials providing support, protection and information to these battered women. The evaluation measures the level of sensitization and knowledge of government officials in the relevant departments (Police, PO under the DV Act, Women & Child Development) about VAW and laws, rules and regulations related to VAW and support services.

Immediate family members, police officers and WCD officials are the most common sources of information for the survivors on various support services and government facilities available to the victims of domestic violence. Amongst these three groups, police and WCD officials are the key service providers. This section captures the perspective and experience of these two service provider categories on the following:

- Most common forms of violence against women and the reasons.
- Law enforcement requirements.
- Support services available under government programmes.
- Provisions of support under PWDA.
- Access of women survivors to various support services and support and rehabilitation centres.
- Sensitivity of the domestic violence cases; intricacies and concerns of the same over other normal cases.

Along with this it also tried to assess the knowledge levels of the stakeholders in PWDA.

The Superintendent of Police at the district level and various officials at the station and sub-station level were interviewed for the end line. Similarly, the district level officials of the Department of Women and Child Welfare and protection officers in the programme districts were interviewed at the end line. A total of 25 police officers and 25 protection officers including WCD officials were interviewed across the five states in the end line survey.

4.2.1 POLICE PERSONNEL-KEY FINDINGS AND OBSERVATIONS

EXPERIENCE, PRIORITIES AND CHALLENGES

All the police personnel interviewed believe that in cases of domestic violence their pre-requisite is to ensure easy and timely access of preventive and ameliorative services to women facing any kind of abuse. All of them realize that it requires several rounds of vigilance and case follow-ups. Following are the key observations made by the police personnel on types of domestic violence that get reported to them:

- Violence caused by spouse was reported to be the most common form of domestic violence

and rape and dowry were some of the reasons for the cases reported.

- Apart from dowry and rape, pre-marital love affairs, sexual abuse, extra marital affairs and mistrust on that ground, birth a girl child, husband's alcoholism and husband's unemployment came out as the other major causes of domestic violence.
- Family disputes and property offences were also reported as causes of domestic violence by many of the police officers interviewed.

They also suggest that abusers use physical and sexual violence, threats, emotional insults and economic deprivation as ways to dominate the women and get their way. Rendering timely protection to these survivors of abuse comes out as a critical law enforcement point.

For at least 15 of the 25 police personnel identifying the extent of domestic violence within the localities in their jurisdiction is the most difficult job. Though they believe that in the last few years reporting on domestic violence has shown an increase, this could mainly be attributed to the fact that it is still very common for abused women to refrain from reporting their woes to formal sources. Societal pressure and responsibilities compel women to stay in abusive relationships.

Most of the police personnel believed that there is strong need of data collection and communication systems linking police, prosecutors and courts for the purpose of identifying domestic violence against women; and this should be introduced at the earliest.

How has sensitivity towards the issue fared in the society?

Police officials across all the states have observed significant changes and perceptions in people's perception towards domestic violence. The key observations are:

- They suggest that women have opened up and cases of violence are getting reported to the

police more frequently. But still there is a lot of hesitation in reporting sexual abuse as a form of domestic violence. Officials specifically in Andhra Pradesh reported people's inhibition in reporting cases of sexual violence.

- They also suggest that women from rural areas and that too from poor families show more resistance and spirit of fighting back as compared to those in urban areas and from upper class and middle class families.

DEPENDENCE ON INFORMAL SYSTEMS OF JUSTICE

A majority (18/25) of the police personnel opined that informal systems of justices still holds prominence. In many cases public defamation of abusers, social boycott of perpetrators and spiritual guidance by religious leaders are the only punishment meted out to the culprit.

HOW SENSITIVE AND AWARE ARE THE OFFICIALS?

Most of the officials show a high level of awareness about the provisions under PWDVA. In states like Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat, officials have had good exposure to training programs conducted by various civil society organizations and the state government. These trainings have helped them to deal with identification and responding more effectively to cases of domestic violence.

Twenty out of 25 police personnel believe that their engagement in domestic violence cases has improved in the last few years. They suggest that the police were earlier contacted only in cases of emergencies and they used to have minimal interaction with civil society. Now, they suggest that their interface with the community as well as civil society has definitely improved. This has proved to be a significant learning for both for civil society and police officers.

A general perception is that there is high level of corruption and bribery prevalent in the police system and hence the officials find it very tricky to locate cases of domestic violence in their jurisdiction.

There were state specific variations noted with regard to the procedure followed for filing a DIR and state specific redressal mechanism for grievances of women facing any form of domestic violence. In Uttarakhand the police officials directly dealt with cases of domestic violence and DIRs were filed in the very initial stage of the cases while in Gujarat, Odisha and Andhra Pradesh the experiences stated that the women are first counselled and the protection officers, the support centres as well as the police try to resolve the case through counselling and discussion involving both the parties of domestic violence. It was observed in almost all the states that women police officials understood the sensitivity of the cases and dealt sympathetically with the survivors.

INSTITUTIONAL OUTCOMES

In Odisha and Andhra Pradesh, all the officials interviewed suggest that the presence of the support centres inside the police premises have proved to be a strong banking point of the programme model that in turn has helped capitalize greater outreach of the police at the community level. They suggest that a police station is a catchment point to access women facing abuse. It is a place where many women arrive after trying other sources of support and help—mediation by family members or by caste elders or the panchayat. Often it is the last resort. And therefore making this space a meaningful one for women where they can receive support and help is critical. Placing a support centre in the Police Station also means trying to amend the way the state endorses the norm that domestic violence is a private matter, outside the ambit of serious police work and justified under certain circumstances. It is about trying to bring normative change by influencing the police to register cases where needed and under right section of the law.

4.2.2 WCD OFFICIALS—KEY FINDINGS AND OBSERVATIONS

EXPERIENCE OF WCD OFFICIALS

All the WCD protection officials interviewed

The role of police officials has always been critical in obtaining justice for women having faced domestic violence. Bharati, a middle aged woman working as a housemaid in Hyderabad city came to seek support from a support centre while dealing with her reclusive husband who would beat her, verbally abuse her in an inebriated state and even when sober (Annexure II). The intervention by police officials and counsellors helped her husband understand that if he ever harassed her or tortured her in any way she had the right to seek police action and could also seek compensation and maintenance under the Domestic Violence Act. The fact that the support centre was supportive towards Bharati's case and the fear of police action made him realize he had to mend his ways. The case was resolved recently and very well reflects that support centres and a strengthened law enforcement in the form of police have acted as an important medium in resolving disputes.

In another case study of Sumana in Hyderabad her mother mentioned repeatedly that the support centre was where they could at least get a decent hearing for their problems and where they have seen some action to secure support for her daughter. She was very appreciative of the counsellor and showed the reports filed at the Police station as well as by the protection officer. According to her the support centre as well as the help provided by the police officials helped her regain confidence of within seeking justice.

strongly believe that they have a crucial role to play against VAW. They suggest that when they take notice of a case and act responsibly in registering a complaint, it sends a message that VAW will not be tolerated. As they are perceived as

representing the state, their active involvement reflects that the state does not tolerate the issue. The key observations are:

- WCD officials suggest that sexual harassment, dowry, polygamy and alcoholism are the pertinent causes of violence against women in the states of Andhra Pradesh and Odisha. They also said that rumours about love affairs of girls before their marriage, extra marital affairs and love affairs of adolescent girls were reported to be a major cause of domestic violence.
- Surprisingly many of the WCD officials stated that violence owing to love affairs and extra marital affairs has increased manifold in the past decade especially in Andhra Pradesh
- Beating, torturing, scolding, insulting, sexual abuse, suspecting character, repeated quarrels, mental harassment and rude behaviour of family members are the most common forms of domestic violence against women.

CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS

It is encouraging to state that most of the WCD officials (24/25) exhibit good level and depth of awareness on various legislations and provisions under law. While they show a high level of awareness, their engagement as protection officers is not always a priority. They suggest that being a protection officer is just a small part of their overall responsibility as a WCD official. They also suggest that they lack clarity on their role as a protection officer. As their responsibility with the WCD involves a lot of travel, the issue of their limited reach for survivors adds to this.

While they do believe that they can play a crucial role in women's empowerment in general and domestic violence against women in particular, they need more strong policy for this.

Most of them are of the opinion that convergence meetings between WCD protection officials, police officials and civil society members especially in case of Andhra Pradesh, Odisha and Gujarat

have been very effective in developing shared understanding and implementation plans for tackling the issue. These can be further strengthened.

4.2.3 COMMUNITY GROUPS -KEY FINDINGS AND OBSERVATIONS

The IPAP programme was implemented on ground by a network of partner organizations/civil society organizations (CSOs) who executed the implementation plan. They were also engaged in developing programme pressure groups/vigilance committees in the programme communities. These groups are expected to impart knowledge on laws related to VAW, provide support services, sensitize the community in general on violence against women and make the respondents aware about whom to contact for help. The groups are also expected to identify women experiencing violence, provide support to the survivors etc. For this, the community groups have been provided training by partner organizations.

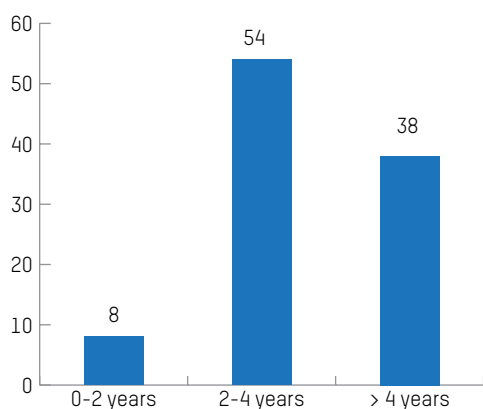
One of the key objectives of the evaluation was to "understand if communities in villages and towns in the programme districts have pressure groups and/or youth activists and/or committees on VAW that are equipped with the knowledge of laws related to VAW and support services to help women experiencing violence in seeking appropriate services." This section explains this objective.

Along with providing a description of the objective on the above mentioned objective, the section also tries to document the experiences and insights of the CSOs with respect to their learning from programme implementation.

Profile of Community Groups

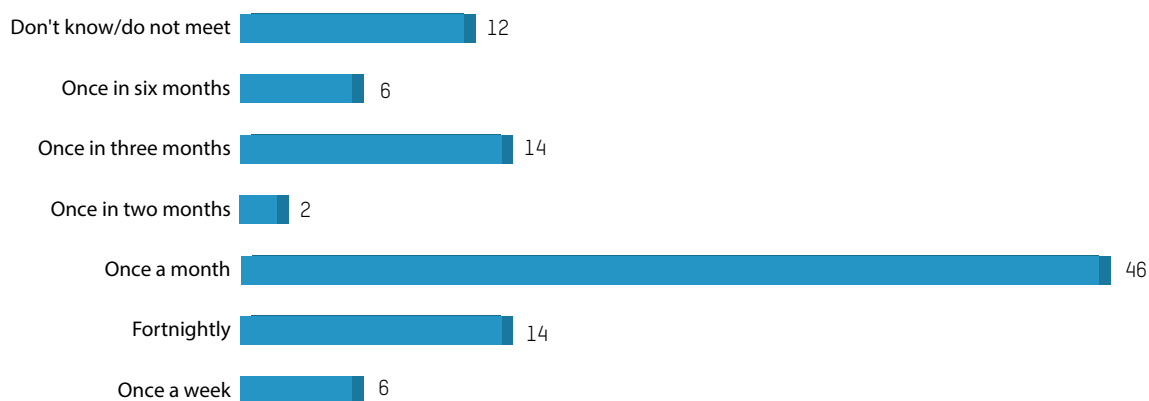
To understand the perspective of the community groups, the study interacted with 10 community groups/vigilance committees/pressure groups in each of the programme states. Hence a total of 50 community groups (that is 50 group

FIGURE 10: AGE OF THE GROUP (IN %)



representatives⁶, one from each group) were studied during the course of the assignment.

FIGURE 11: FREQUENCY OF MEETING (IN %)

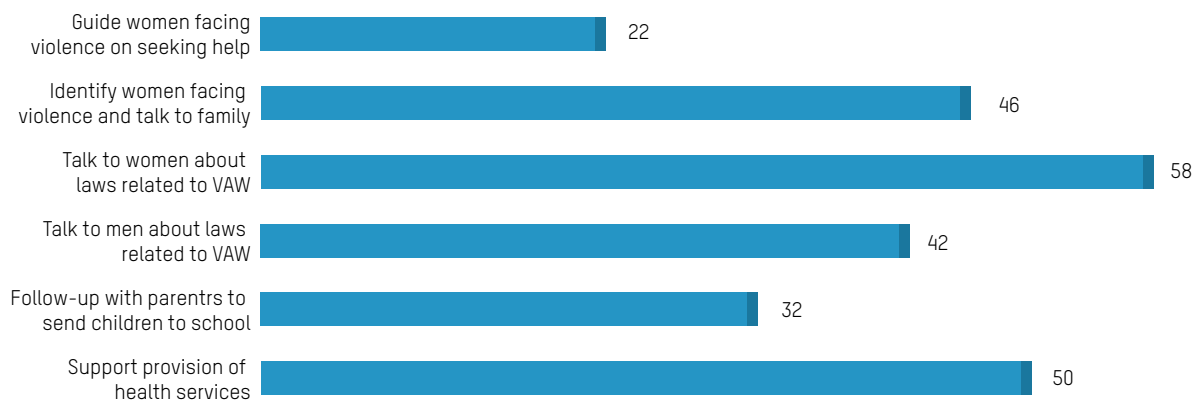


Around 54 per cent of the community groups/vigilance committees were formed between 2-4 years; 38 per cent of the groups are more than four years old.

Almost half of the groups (46 per cent) have the norm of meeting “once a month” and the group members subscribe to this. Fourteen per cent of the groups meet every fortnight. Figure 11 presents the profile of the groups with respect to frequency of meetings.

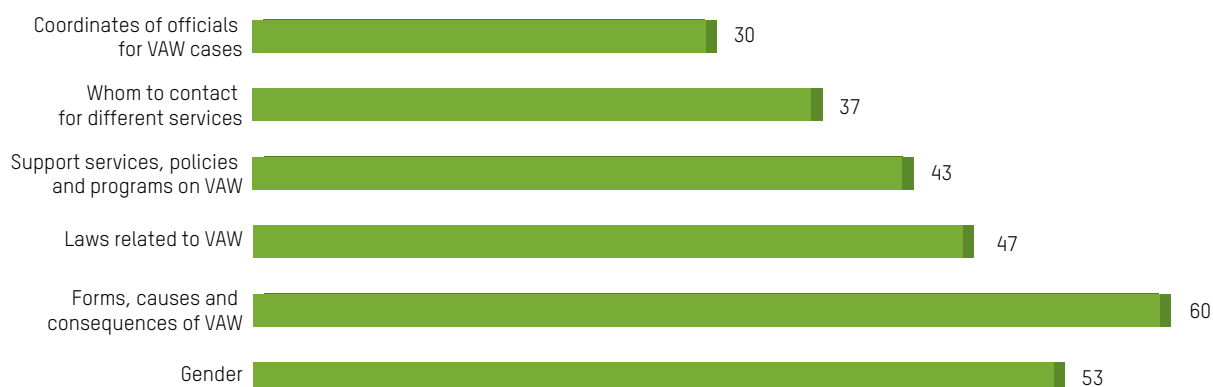
The groups are primarily engaged with the community for advocacy on domestic violence, identification of and support to victims and counselling. Fifty-eight per cent of the groups

FIGURE 12: AREAS OF SUPPORT OFFERED BY COMMUNITY GROUPS (IN %)



⁶ Most of the members interviewed were women (92 per cent), 80 per cent of them were Hindus (16 per cent Christians and 4 per cent Muslims). More than half (52 per cent) belonged to Scheduled Castes while just over one-fourth (28 per cent) belonged to the general category.

FIGURE 13: TOPICS DISCUSSED DURING TRAINING OF COMMUNITY GROUP MEMBERS (IN %)



reported engagement with women about laws related to violence against women, 46 per cent mentioned that they were also engaged in identifying women experiencing violence/abuse and had talked to their families. Half of them have also been engaged in provided support provisions of health services in the village. Engagement pattern of the community groups is given in Figure 14.

Trainings received by community group members

Approximately 60 per cent of the community group members had participated in the trainings conducted by Oxfam during the last three years. The top three topics which were covered in the trainings imparted by Oxfam were “Forms, causes and consequences of violence against women

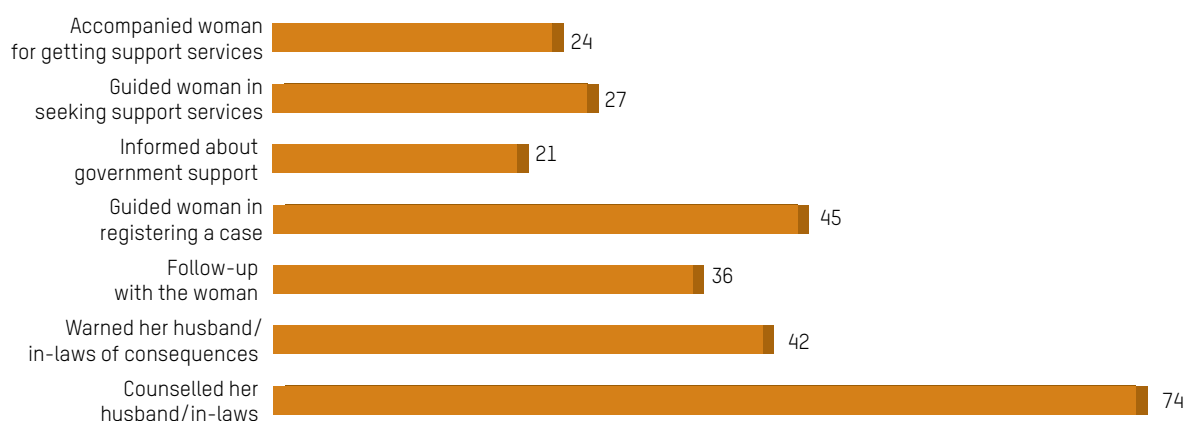
and girls (60 per cent)”, “Gender (53 per cent)” and “Laws related to violence against women (47 per cent)” see Figure 13.

Almost 60 per cent of the respondents reported that they have more clarity on laws related to VAW now. Fifty-one per cent had mentioned that they had become more aware regarding which officials to contact for VAW cases, 43 per cent reported that they now had more clarity on support services and facilities.

Role of community groups in VAW cases

In order to assess the role of community groups in VAW cases, community group members were asked whether they helped/guided any woman in their respective village/locality experiencing

FIGURE 14: PERCENTAGE OF COMMUNITY GROUPS REPORTING SUPPORT ON VAW CASES



violence in the last three years. Sixty-six per cent of them said that they had helped women in their locality.

Groups in Andhra Pradesh were found to be more active as all of them got engaged with women experiencing violence in the last three years. Forty per cent of the groups in Gujarat and Uttarakhand, 80 per cent in Uttar Pradesh & 70 per cent in Odisha were found to be active in supporting women experiencing violence in their area.

Counselling of husband/in laws is the most common form of support provided by these groups. Almost 74 per cent of the community group members reported that they had counselled her husband/in-laws to treat the woman with respect. Forty-five per cent mentioned that they had guided the woman in registering cases. (See Figure 14 for details).

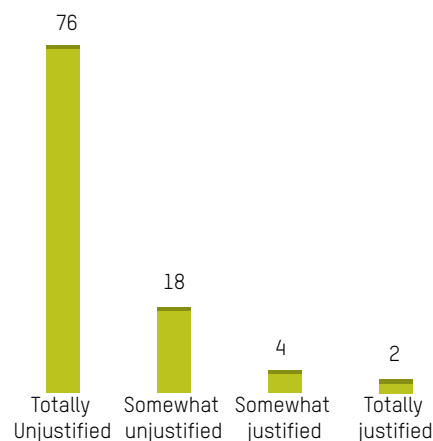
The groups reported that on an average they have helped 9-10 women experiencing violence in their localities. In at least 50 per cent of the instances, they believe, they were able to resolve the cases.

Attitude on VAW

Community groups are on the forefront of action. The programme has also invested in capacitating the community groups towards exhibiting a sensitive attitude towards VAW victims. Hence it becomes imperative to understand the present attitude of community group members towards the VAW as well as the victims of violence. To measure this, community group members were asked to react to statements which were related to a husband hitting or beating his wife under different situations. The Figure 15 summarizes the overall attitude of community group members on the statements⁷.

⁷ In your opinion, is a husband justified in hitting or beating his wife in the following situations?
 If she goes out without telling him?
 If she neglects the house or the children?
 If she argues with him?
 If she refuses to have sex with him?
 If she doesn't cook food properly?

FIGURE 15: PERCENTAGE OF COMMUNITY GROUP MEMBERS REACTING TO STATEMENTS ON HUSBAND HITTING WIFE

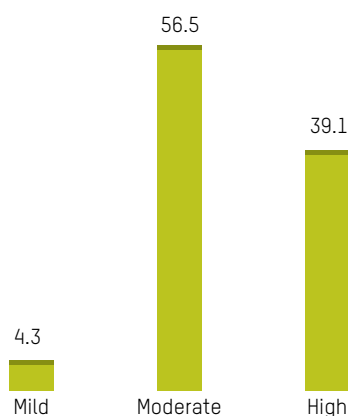


Three-fourth of the community group members suggest that the actions suggested in the statements are totally unjustified.

Understanding and awareness on VAW

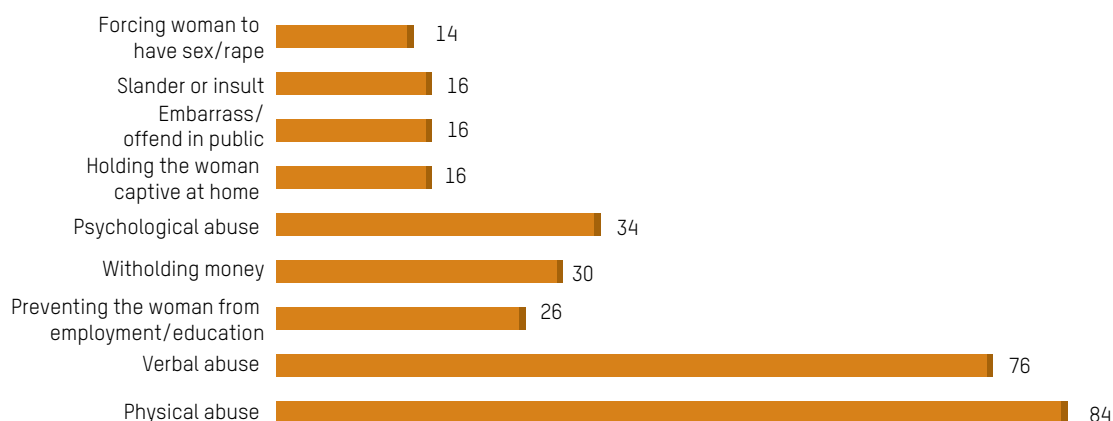
OXFAM and the CSO partners have worked very closely with community groups. It is also expected that the community groups have a fair understanding of the basic components of VAW. All the community groups were found to be aware about VAW but their level of awareness varies. Rating community groups on the basis of their level of awareness yields the following result:

FIGURE 16: PERCENTAGE OF COMMUNITY GROUP MEMBERS AWARE ABOUT VAW



If he suspects her of being unfaithful?
 If she shows disrespect for in-laws?

FIGURE 17: PERCENTAGE OF COMMUNITY GROUP MEMBERS AWARE ABOUT DIFFERENT FORMS OF VAW



Awareness of members on different legislations related to violence against women have been categorised as “Mild (aware about 1 topic)”, “Moderate (aware about 2-3 topics)”, “High (aware about more than 3 topics)”. Around 57 per cent of the members had moderate level of awareness while 40 per cent had high level of awareness. Physical abuse and verbal abuse are the most commonly identified characteristics of VAW. The group members also identified psychological abuse and withholding money as important characteristic of VAW. Awareness level about various components of VAW are given in Figure 17.

Approximately three-fourth of the members were aware about the different support services provided by the government for women facing violence (N=50). More than 90 per cent of the group members from Andhra Pradesh, Odisha and Uttarakhand were aware that government provides support services. Uttar Pradesh (70 per cent) and Gujarat (30 per cent) showed relatively low level of awareness on this front. The top three support services provided by the government are “Legal Aid (68 per cent)”, “Referral to Police (63 per cent)” and “Alternative Livelihood Options (39 per cent)”.

It is encouraging to note that 74 per cent of the members believe that they would continue their activities even without the support, guidance and training inputs of other NGOs (N=50). All the respondents in Andhra Pradesh and Odisha mentioned that they will continue their activities

irrespective of the support or help or any sort of guidance from any of the NGOs. In Uttar Pradesh, 50 per cent of the respondents reported the same. The corresponding figures for Gujarat and Uttarakhand stood at 60 per cent.

4.2.4 CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS-KEY FINDINGS AND OBSERVATIONS

This section provides a description of the engagement of CSOs in programme implementation along with their perspective on the violence against women as an issue. It also tries to analyse the opinion of CSOs on how they want to take this issue further. CSO implementing the programme have been engaged in counselling related to VAW. Most of them also provide for “shelter services”. During the course of evaluation, CSOs representatives were engaged in consultative workshops along with conducting in-depth discussions individually with 16 CSO representatives.

Exposure to VAW and the IPAP intervention

Data from them suggests that all the CSOs have staff/representatives who have been trained by OXFAM. The most common topics covered during the training programmes:

- Laws related to violence against women
- Support services offered by the government
- Inter-sectionality between gender and social exclusion

CSO representatives were also asked about how the trainings have contributed to their programs/ activities related to VAW. Approximately three-fourth (12 out of 16) of the CSO representatives believe that the trainings have led to more understanding on VAW and related legislations. More than half (9 out of 16) of them suggest that they have more clarity on support services and facilities and attribute this improvement to trainings provided by OXFAM. Four of 16 CSOs suggest that their advocacy activities have now improved. At least four of the CSOs suggested that because of their exposure to OXFAM's IPAP programme they have incorporated gender as a core issue of intervention in other programmes as well. They also suggest that they have increased their advocacy efforts owing to this exposure.

CSO representatives also showed significant awareness on different components of laws against VAW. The findings suggest that CSO representatives have good knowledge on VAW and the legislations around it. Most of them had a top of mind recall of laws against dowry, violence against women and rape. Most of them were also aware about the different support services envisaged in the programme and also available with the government. At least 12 of the 16 were aware of the provisions of short stay homes, counselling and medical support.

Perception of CSOs on the results of the programme

CSOs being on the forefront of the intervention believe that the programme has definitely contributed towards improvement in the status of women. At a broader level they believe that they see that various stakeholders are more aware about VAW and their attitude towards this issue has also changed over the last few years. While still largely being an implicit issue, people have started coming out in the open against VAW. Institutions like police and WCD show better understanding of VAW and related legislations.

CSOs' opinion on changes that they have observed owing to programme intervention can be categorized into the following groups:

- **Results on the formal system at the individual level**
 - Increase in registration of VAW cases in police stations
 - Capacity building of counsellors for case work in support centres
 - Improved case work (counselling/support)
- **Results on the formal system at the systemic level**
 - Effective gender sensitization training for different stakeholders
 - Research on domestic violence issue
 - Legislation: Issuance of high court orders to district courts for protection officers
 - Opening of support centres at police stations
 - Setting of monitoring systems
 - Campaign by police officials against witch hunting
 - Introduction of helpline numbers in school/ college textbooks (SCERT/UGC)
 - Enhancement of counsellors' salaries at protection officers' offices
- **Results on the informal system at the individual level**
 - Counselling of women survivors by other survivors
 - Acceptance of not to marry within "SATTA"
 - Negotiations regarding women issues with community/khap panchayats
 - Changes in attitude of family members
 - Case work with Nyaya Samiti
- **Results on the informal system at the systemic level**
 - Community sensitization ("SATTA" system in Gujarat)
 - Formation of vigilance committees/ community groups

- Change in attitude of media persons
- Participation of stakeholders like senior police officials/WCD officials with NGO partners to resolve issues
- Changes in attitude of local panchayats/religious groups

Programmatic strengths

Engagement with IPAP, for most of the CSOs, was a learning experience. While there were concerns on time available to implement the programme, CSO representatives, in general, had a very positive view about the programme design and the implementation plan. The most important facet of the programme was assigning pre-eminence to improving counselling and customizing it with respect to the demographic and social profile of the victim. The other virtues that the programme brought in with respect to design and implementation are:

- It stressed and facilitated convergence and sensitization of key stakeholders (police officials/health and legal department/shelter homes etc.)
- It prioritized the need for community ownership and hence facilitated networking between survivors. It was also able to win the trust of the survivor. It also led to establishing vigilance groups at the community level including devising mechanisms for their regular follow up
- It created a platform for networking with different NGOs working on same/similar issues

Sustainability of interventions-ideas and intent

CSOs engaged with OXFAM bring in a huge institutional learning experience on implementing similar programmes. In the context of the IPAP intervention, the study tried to elicit their opinion on the following:

- How were the implementation processes? What are the components that should have been dealt with differently?
- What do they perceive the results are?

- How do they think they can continue working on the issue after the programme wraps up?

Fourteen of the 16 CSO representatives suggested that their network will continue even after IPAP wraps up. The key observations on their opinion on continuity of work are as:

- Partners agreed that their work will continue but will get affected at different levels after discontinuation of Oxfam funding. They also said that they had been engaged with the issue before they got associated with IPAP hence they will continue their work. Moreover, IPAP did not engage project specific staff as the issue was quite mainstream within these CSOs
- A majority of the partners will not be able to sustain the support centres. Only the partners who have been able to operate the support centres within their infrastructure will be able to continue
- At the beginning of the project, it was assumed that all the support centres will be adopted by the government. Therefore, partners did not lay emphasis on the sustainability of these support centres until recently
- Individual case work/counselling will get affected because of discontinuation of counsellors due to lack of financial resources. As there is a need to scale up the efforts for increasing awareness, community mobilization will be affected due to shortage of financial resources
- In Andhra Pradesh, partners are trying to transfer their 'helpline' services to the government.
- Similarly, in Gujarat, the partners are working towards adoption of their support centres by the state government

Based on their experience of implementing the programme, CSOs have insights on how they would like to improve/strengthen programme implementation. The key takeaways are:

- **Community awareness:** The CSOs are interested in taking this forward through campaigns, role

plays etc. They also suggest to strengthening this component with the following additions:

- Extend and spread : Larger scale (campaigns should be designed for a duration of more than 16 days)
- Specific groups like Dalits and Tribals and Muslim women can be targeted during awareness
- Targeting youth in schools/colleges
- Community mobilization: community groups/vigilance committees and public hearings
 - Financial support to community groups
 - Increase in community mobilization
 - Community monitoring systems and social audit
 - Strategic involvement of men in vigilance groups/mahila groups
- Model of support centres: The CSOs suggest strengthening implementation by:
 - Provisions of support to children of women survivors
 - A panel including a lawyer and a doctor can be engaged on a regular basis rather than on a centralized basis
 - Approach should be shifted from that of an “implementer” to “facilitator”
 - Community based rehabilitation support to women survivors
- Advocacy and coordination with legal/medical systems/WCD officials: The CSOs suggest strengthening implementation by
 - Repeated liaisoning with police officials & training for gender sensitization
 - Approach of working with government officials
 - Operationalization and safety of government shelter homes

Some operational issues that the CSOs believe can be improved in similar interventions are:

- Research, documentation and knowledge management
 - Internal evaluations of NGO partners and documentation of all activities
 - Concurrent monitoring and process monitoring exercises.
 - Strengthening of communication channels: Sharing of important information from national level to state level
 - Networking of NGO partners at the inter-state level to discuss the success/failure of different models & strategies utilized (linkages at national level)
 - Common portal at the national level for sharing knowledge on relevant issues
- Capacity building
 - Recruitment and training of human resources for research and documentation

4.3 LEVEL OF AWARENESS OF MEN AND WOMEN AGED 15-50 YEARS

This section focuses on whether the project has resulted in a change in awareness among community members on VAW. More specifically, the evaluation examined:

- Change in knowledge about forms, causes and consequences of violence against women
- Change in awareness about laws related to VAW
- Change in attitudes towards acceptance of VAW
- Ability to identify and recognise domestic violence in one’s own life

This section is organized to reflect insights on each of these parameters, in the order mentioned earlier. This section essentially builds on the survey conducted with women and men across project and comparison areas. A total of 3832 respondents (1925 women and 1907 men) in the project area and 1871 respondents (926 women and 945 men) in the control area were surveyed.

4.3.1 CHANGE IN KNOWLEDGE ABOUT FORMS, CASUES AND CONSEQUENCES OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Men and women were asked to share what behaviours they thought constituted violence against women. The Table 2 shows the responses. The results point to the following:

- A fairly large number of men and women have identified physical and verbal abuse as forms of VAW in project areas.
- The understanding of what constitutes VAW is fairly similar among men and women in the project areas.
- Large proportions of men and women recognise more obvious behaviours such as beating, hitting or other forms of physical abuse as VAW. However, more subtle forms such as restricting mobility, taking away her income or withholding money and preventing her from taking up a job are recognized as VAW by far fewer people.
- Recognition of forced sex as a form of domestic violence is very low among men and women.
- Compared to men, a marginally larger proportion of women mentioned restriction on mobility and opportunities as a form of VAW.

There were two major observations where differences between project and comparison sites were concerned:

- The difference in knowledge of what constitutes VAW is not very significant between project and comparison sites, although there are some minor differences.
- A greater proportion of men from project sites have recognized different forms of verbal abuse as constituting VAW, than their counterparts in the comparison sites. However, among women the difference is minimal.

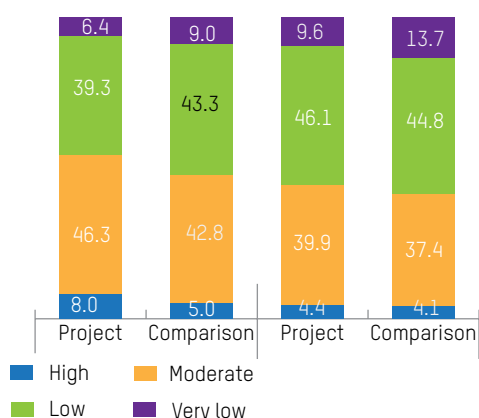
The responses given by individual respondents were converted into scores. The awareness index⁸ of women and men on VAW was created using a factor analysis. Based on the total scores of each respondent, the sample was categorized into four groups—those with a high, moderate, low and very low awareness of VAW. The proportions in each of these categories were found to be similar between the comparison and project

⁸The indicators that were used to calculate the awareness index are: understanding on physical abuse, verbal abuse, preventing the woman from obtaining employment or education, forcing the woman to hand over her income, psychological abuse, holding the woman captive at home, embarrass her in public, slander or insult and forcing woman to have sex/rape.

TABLE 2: RESPONSES OF MEN AND WOMEN IN PROJECT AND COMPARISON AREAS ON WHAT CONSTITUTES VAW

Understanding of VAW (in %)	Men		Women	
	Project	Comparison	Project	Comparison
Physical abuse / punching / kicking / beating	88.9	87.1	88.7	88.6
Verbal abuse / name calling / yelling	56.0	52.6	54.0	54.3
Psychological abuse / undermining self-esteem	22.1	21.7	20.8	20.1
Forcing the woman to hand over her income/ withholding money	19.7	21.3	12.1	11.7
Preventing the woman from obtaining employment or education	18.4	22.5	20.7	22.4
Embarrass / offend in public	17.5	13.7	16.1	17.6
Slander or insult	14.1	9.4	12.4	13.0
Forcing woman to have sex / rape	12.7	12.0	14.2	13.1
Holding woman captive at home /forbidding her to leave home	12.2	12.7	14.1	12.7

FIGURE 18: CATEGORIES OF AWARENESS ON VAW AMONG MEN AND WOMEN IN PROJECT AND COMPARISON AREAS (IN %)



sites. The Figure 18 shows that the sample in both sites is distributed along a normal distribution curve, with fewer respondents at either end of the curve and most of them clustered in the middle. However, among both men and women, those with a moderate understanding of the issue are higher in the project sites. Similarly, a slightly larger proportion of men and women from the comparison sites have very low levels of understanding about what constitutes VAW. The difference in awareness levels of men across project and comparison areas was found to be statistically significant at the 0.05 level. However the difference in awareness levels of women was not found to be significant.

Men and women were asked to share the causes for violence against women during the endline study. The Figure 19 shows the responses to this question, across project and comparison sites. The results point to the following:

- Dowry has emerged as the strongest reason among both men and women across both project and comparison sites.
- There is noticeable difference between men in both project and comparison sites and women in both sites, about the causes of violence. A much higher proportion of women (in both sites) mentioned the underlying case of VAW

- that VAW is caused because women are seen as less valuable than men in both sites. Interestingly, among women, more women from the project site (39.9 per cent) spelt this out as the reason than women in the comparison site (37.4 per cent).

- A much larger proportion of men (in both sites) mentioned that women themselves are to be blamed for the violence against them (“Women themselves make mistakes”) with the project site men fared poorer than their counterparts in the comparison site (41 per cent and 38.7 per cent). However far fewer proportions of women (from both sites) mentioned this as the cause of violence. And interestingly, here too, women from the project sites fared much better than women from the comparison sites (25.1 and 29.2 per cent respectively).
- Many more women seem to believe that domestic violence takes place because violence is a part of marriage, with those in the control site citing this more often than women from the comparison site.
- Many more women seem to think that men resort to violence to prove their masculinity. This notion is stronger among women from project sites.

These results suggest that women in project sites have a more gendered understanding of why violence occurs compared to men – they are less blaming of women and recognise this as a consequence of lower status (see Figures 19 and 20).

Male and female respondents from the project and comparison sites were asked to indicate what they think women facing domestic violence should do. The responses of men and women from project sites are given in Table 3.

The results point to the following:

- The family is the first preferred site of response to deal with domestic violence.

FIGURE 19: CAUSES OF VIOLENCE AGAINST MEN ACROSS PROJECT & COMPARISON AREAS (IN %)

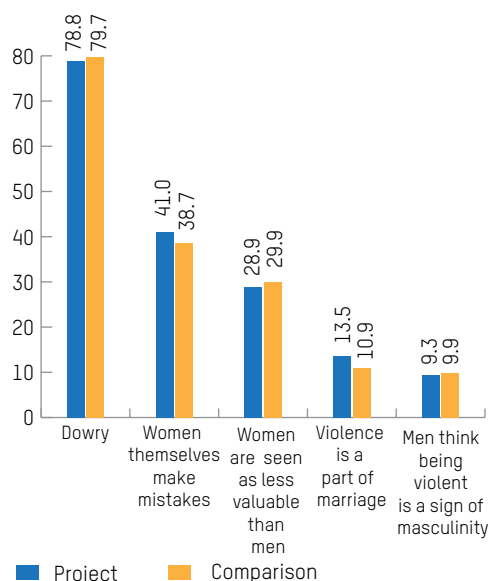
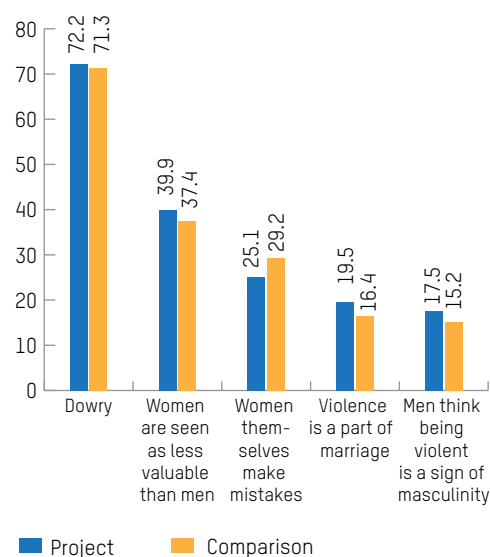


FIGURE 20: CAUSES OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACROSS PROJECT & COMPARISON AREAS (IN %)



- However, women reach out to friends more than relatives. This is true of women from both project and comparison sites.
- As far as external interventions are concerned, police intervention was mentioned by the largest number of respondents across all categories. However, women in project sites

cited this as an option marginally less than men in the same areas but more than women from comparison sites.

- More men and women from intervention sites cited approaching the protection officer and support centre than their counterparts from the comparison sites.

TABLE 3: WHAT SHOULD WOMEN DO?

	Men		Women	
	Project	Comparison	Project	Comparison
Talk to other members of her immediate family	68%	70%	64.1%	67.0%
Talk about it to relatives	46%	48%	32.6%	35.6%
Share with a friend	18%	15%	24.6%	28.0%
Keep quiet/not do anything	4%	5%	7.8%	9.1%
Approach the panchayat for help	23%	25%	21.8%	21.4%
Counsel her husband	27%	26%	24.9%	26.1%
Become more adjusting	7%	7%	8.4%	9.0%
Find out what angers her husband and avoid doing those things	4%	5%	6.6%	7.6%
Approach the police for help	45%	42%	38.4%	35.9%
Approach the protection officer for help	10%	7%	8.7%	5.8%
Approach the support centre for help	6%	3%	5.7%	4.2%

- Interestingly, lesser proportions of women from project sites endorsed adjusting with the situation or avoiding making mistakes or keeping quiet compared to women from the comparison sites.

These findings suggest that in the project and comparison areas, tolerating domestic violence is not endorsed by most people. However, in project areas awareness about legal interventionists (police and protection officers) as well as service of the support centre is known to a larger extent. The IPAP partners have created awareness about these options fairly well.

Female respondents in both sites were asked to disclose (under conditions of confidentiality) if they had ever experienced violence. Fifty-four per cent of the respondents from the project areas reported they had faced violence (physical/psychological/sexual) compared to 28 per cent in the baseline. This may be partly because of greater awareness about what constitutes violence. However, 57 per cent of respondents from the comparison sites also reported facing violence. Thus it would appear that either the overall occurrence of violence or its recognition is on the rise. However, the current evaluation is unable to confirm which of these possibilities may be true.

4.3.2 CHANGE IN AWARENESS ABOUT LAWS RELATED TO VAW

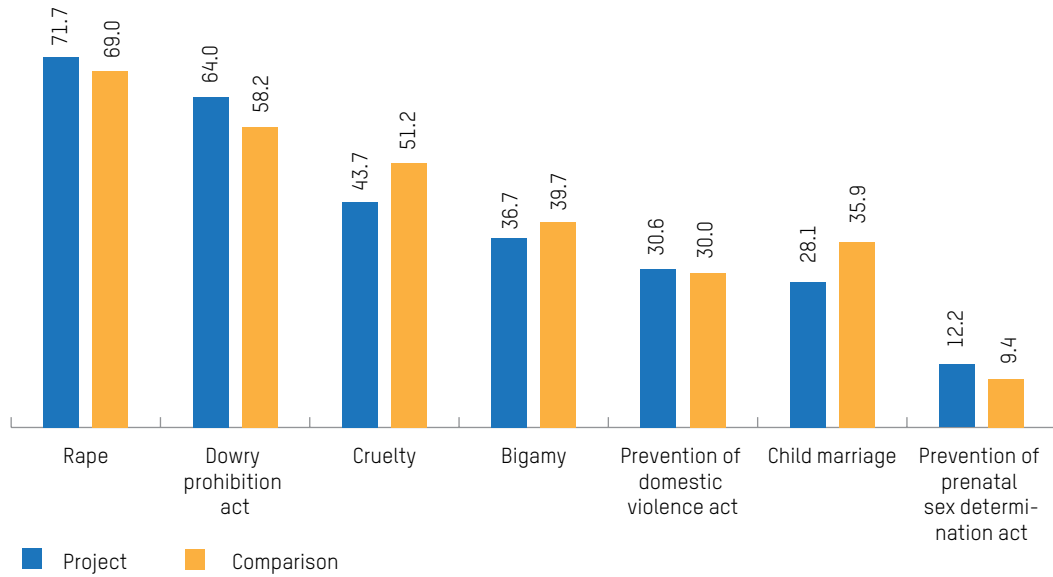
The knowledge of men and women about different legal provisions related to violence against women was also assessed. The Figure 21 and 22 show the change in awareness among women and men about laws related to VAW, from baseline to endline. The results point to very positive and interesting trends:

- There has been a significant shift in awareness about laws, particularly the cluster of legal remedies related to Domestic Violence.
- The percentage point change in awareness among women is higher compared to men. For example, among men the knowledge about the PWDV Act has grown by 13 per cent points and for women the same figure stands at 23 per cent. Similarly, 22 percentage point more men knew about the Dowry Prohibition Act as and 29 percentage point more women knew about this act as compared to awareness of men and women during baseline.
- On laws on other forms of violence (sex determination, child marriage and among women, rape), the awareness is lesser than on laws related to domestic violence.
- It is important to note that while there has been a growth in awareness about laws from baseline

TABLE 4: AWARENESS OF LAWS RELATED TO VAW

Laws related to VAW (%)	Men		Women	
	Baseline	Endline	Baseline	Endline
Cruelty	22.8	43.7	16.5	44.2
Rape	47.8	71.7	46.5	57.1
Bigamy	23.5	36.7	27.3	44.6
PWDV Act	23.6	30.6	26.5	49.4
Dowry Prohibition Act	42.2	64.0	35.7	64.3
PCPNDT	15.4	12.2	15.0	9.0
Child Marriage	20.1	28.1	21.6	16.9
Do not know any laws related to VAW	23.6	0.7	19.5	0.6

FIGURE 21: LEVEL OF AWARENESS AMONG MEN ON LEGISLATIONS (IN %)



to end-line, the overall rates of awareness are not very high. With the exception of the law on dowry and rape, less than 50 per cent of respondents were aware of laws pertaining to domestic violence.

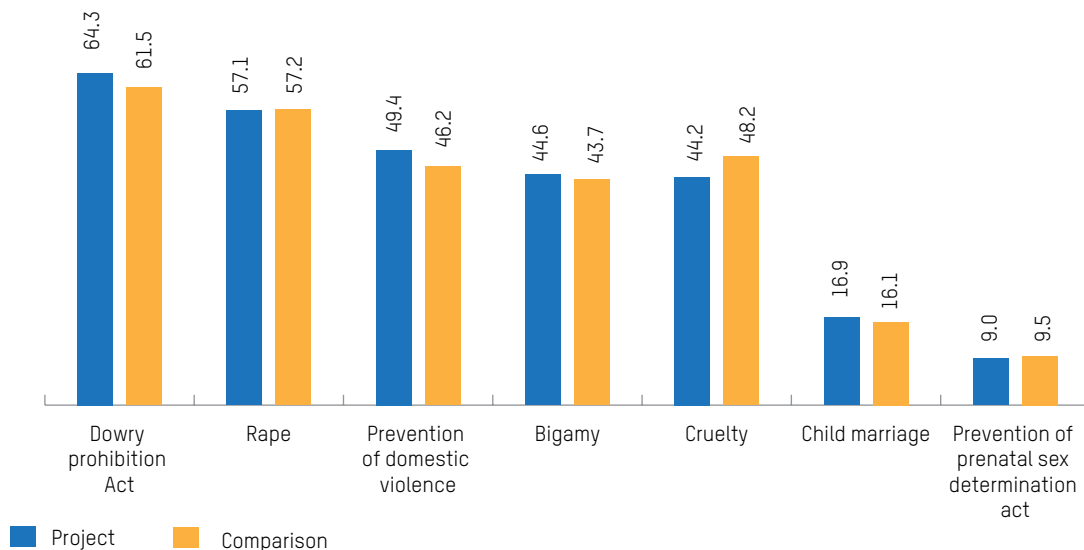
However, comparing the project and comparison sites highlights the fact that many more men in project areas are aware of laws on rape, dowry prohibition and PCPNDT. On The PWDV Act the awareness among men in project and comparison

areas is almost the same (30.6 and 30 per cent respectively).

Women in project sites showed marginally better awareness on laws related to violence than their counterparts in comparison sites, with the awareness on the PWDV Act showing the maximum difference (3.2 per cent).

To gain perspective of the overall level of awareness of men and women with respect to

FIGURE 22: LEVEL OF AWARENESS OF WOMEN ON LEGISLATIONS (IN %)



their knowledge about various legislations related to VAW in project and comparison area, an index⁹ of awareness on laws related to VAW was created using PCA.

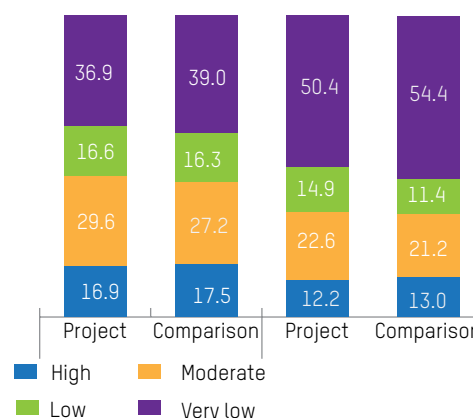
When the scores of all respondents are categorized into high, moderate, low and very low levels of awareness, the results show that the differences between men and women from project and comparison sites are not high. The difference in awareness on laws about VAW among men and women across project and comparison areas was not found to be statistically significant at 0.05 level (see Figure 23).

To understand more about the penetration of awareness generation activities of the NGOs in continuation with the respondent's knowledge on laws related to VAW, men and women were administered a set of questions pertaining to awareness generation activities. The results showed that 16 per cent of men and 18 per cent of women reported that they knew of awareness activities such as street plays or public meetings on VAW happening and taking part in them. In addition, 22 per cent male as well as female respondents from the project areas reported that they were approached by a community group member to talk to them about laws related to VAW. However, these proportions are quite low and could in part explain the overall low levels of awareness about legal remedies to VAW.

Men and women from the project areas reported that during the last three years, they had attended street plays or public meetings on VAW conducted by NGOs, four times and two times on an average respectively. These figures point to sporadic and very few interactions. However, it is important to recognise that a great deal of community mobilisation work also many times specifically targets vulnerable families and women. It is also

⁹ The indicators used for creating the index of awareness on different laws related to VAW were: knowledge of laws on cruelty, rape, bigamy, prevention of domestic violence, Dowry Prohibition Act, Prevention of Prenatal Sex Determination Act, child marriage, sexual harassment at workplace and outraging modesty.

FIGURE 23: COMPARISON OF CATEGORIES OF AWARENESS ON LAWS ABOUT VAW (IN %)



noteworthy that men and women from comparison sites have also been exposed to such activities twice during the last three years.

Marginally more women (24.1 per cent) than men (22.1 per cent) admitted that they knew of a vigilance/women's group in their village. Interestingly 27.7 per cent women said they knew of the support centre in their area whereas only 23.5 per cent men admitted to being aware of the same. Hence more women knew of this service than men. Many more women (51 per cent) also knew that counselling services were available at the centre compared to 45 per cent men.

4.4 CHANGES IN ATTITUDE TOWARDS VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

One of the key outcome indicators of the project was change in attitude of both men and women towards VAW. Men and women were asked to respond to a list of situations about whether it was justified for a husband to beat his wife under these situations. There is a wide difference in this regard between baseline to endline. The table 5 shows the change in attitudes among men and women about the acceptance of domestic violence under various circumstances. The results point to:

- Compared to the baseline, there is a definite improvement in the attitudes of men towards the acceptance of domestic violence. Fewer

TABLE 5: HOW JUSTIFIED IS A HUSBAND IN HITTING HIS WIFE?

Husband is justified in hitting his wife (measured in %):	Men		Women			
	Baseline	Endline	Baseline	Endline		
If she goes out without telling him?	29.3	28.1	1.2	26.4	28.8	-2.4
If she neglects the house or the children?	36.0	24.6	11.4	33.7	27.5	6.2
If she argues with him?	35.2	25.2	10	34.7	25.2	9.5
If she refuses to have sex with him?	21.4	9.8	11.6	21.8	8.7	13.1
If she doesn't cook food properly?	21	12.6	8.4	26	13.6	12.4
If he suspects her of being unfaithful?	28.8	19.1	9.7	24.5	18.8	5.7
If she shows disrespect for in-laws?	42.6	41	1.6	37.9	43.1	-5.2

men think it is acceptable to hit one's wife, no matter what the circumstances may be.

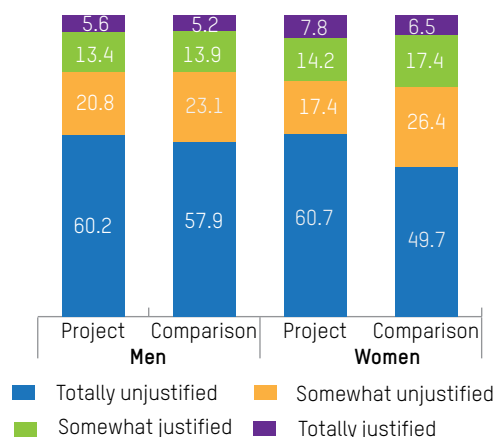
- Less women (between 13.1–9.5 per cent lesser) believe that refusal to have sex, not cooking properly and arguing with the husband can be an excuse for domestic violence.
- However, 2.4 per cent and 5.2 per cent more women believe that men can hit their wives if the women go out without telling them or disrespect their in-laws. However, among men also, this belief has shifted very little from the baseline to endline (1.2 and 1.6 per cent respectively).
- Where it has moved in a positive direction, the percentage point shifts in attitude between

baseline and endline among men and women in project sites is more or less similar.

When the data is examined in terms of what proportions of men and women from project and comparison sites believe that beating one's wife is unjustified, the picture becomes clearer.

In order to understand the attitude of men and women towards violence against women, a composite index was created in terms of subsidiary indicators or variables¹⁰. Based on their individual scores respondents were ranked and divided into four quintiles or groups. The Figure 24 shows that that there is a considerable difference in the beliefs of men and women from project and comparison areas regarding the justification of domestic violence.

FIGURE 24: ATTITUDE TOWARDS JUSTIFICATIONS FOR A HUSBAND'S BEATING/HITTING HIS WIFE (IN %)



In the endline, about 60 per cent men from project areas mentioned that it is totally unjustified to beat one's wife under any circumstance, against 58 per cent from comparison areas. Similarly, approximately 61 per cent women from project areas believe that it is totally unjustified for a husband to beat his wife under different circumstances. However, this figure stands at only

¹⁰ The indicators that were included to calculate the index on attitude of men and women towards violence against women are: husband is not justified in hitting or beating his wife if she goes out without telling him, is she neglects the house or children, if she argues with him, if she refuses to have sex with him, if she doesn't cook food properly, if she is suspected of being unfaithful, if she shows disrespect for in-laws.

50 per cent for women from comparison areas. The difference in attitude towards VAW for men across project and comparison areas was not found to be statistically significant at the 0.05 level. However the difference in women’s attitude was found to be statistically significant.

These findings suggest that there has been a definite attitudinal shift among men and women towards non-acceptance of domestic violence. However, close to 40 per cent of the sample is a little ambivalent about not accepting domestic violence under any circumstances.

Apart from asking questions on specific situations under which domestic violence is justified or unjustified, men and women were also asked to respond to vignettes or situations which assessed their tolerance about domestic violence perpetrated under different situations and their beliefs on whether women should seek help for such incidents.

In the vignettes, some hypothetical situations referring to incidents of domestic violence, reaction to the same, availing available support services and perceived believes about availing formal or legal support were presented to men and women. This methodology was adopted in addition to the structured questionnaire administered to the respondents. In order to access the knowledge, awareness, attitude and practice of the project population the awareness assessment questions were graded on a five point likert scale of “Totally acceptable”, “Somewhat acceptable”, “Neither acceptable nor unacceptable”, “Unacceptable” and “Totally unacceptable”.

The findings from the study are highlighted in the Table 6. The respondents were presented with five negative response seeking situations and two positive situations. Both men and women from the project areas responded with a slightly higher percentage of favourable responses to the hypothetical situations as compared to those from comparison areas.

TABLE 6: ATTITUDE OF RESPONDENTS ON ADVERSE SITUATIONS THAT A WOMEN SUFFERING FROM DOMESTIC VIOLENCE FACES

Situations	Men		Women	
	Project	Comparison	Project	Comparison
% of respondents who considered the situation unjustified				
Husband beating his wife if she goes out without informing	49.4	48.9	49.6	48.4
Woman refusing help from support centre after being beaten by husband for not cooking on time	35.5	32.7	40.7	37.4
Woman refusing to know legal provisions of DV	32.5*	26.7	40.6*	35.8
Mother advising daughter to tolerate husband’s beating	27.5	25.9	38.8	35.1
In-laws beating woman for giving birth to a girl	78.3*	75.0	73.9*	70.0
% of respondents who considered the situation justified				
Woman lodging FIR against in-laws	80.7	79.7	77.2	76.1
Woman seeking help from support centre against demand of in-laws for dowry	87.0*	81.7	80.3*	77.0

*Statistically significant at 0.05 level

The results to these situations show that:

- The view that men can resort to violence if the wife is doing her work properly or if she goes out without informing her husband was strongly rejected by men and women in both control and project sites. Also the differences in rates of disagreement to these notions are fairly even across both sites (e.g. 36 per cent of men in project areas and 33 per cent in comparison areas are of the view that a husband beating his wife because she was not able to cook on time is unjustified).
- The view that bearing too many daughters is a valid reason for being beaten has been endorsed by a fairly large number of respondents from both sites. Approximately 20-25 per cent of men and women believe excess of daughters justifies domestic violence.
- Seeking external help by lodging an FIR as also from the support centre was found acceptable by a very large number of men and women (81 per cent men and 77 per cent women in project areas feel that lodging FIR is justified).



Photo Credit: Late Rajendra Shaw

Women's meeting

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

5.1 OVERVIEW

The performance of the IPAP programme was analysed on the following criteria laid by Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development - Development Assistance for Cooperation (OECD-DAC) principles for the Evaluation of Development Assistance:

- Relevance
- Effectiveness
- Impact
- Efficiency
- Sustainability

This chapter presents analyses of the project performance against the criteria.

5.2 RELEVANCE

The overall strategy of the IPAP programme can be located within a context where family violence against women and girls is taking more brutal forms but normative sanctions (both formal and informal) are weak. Although legal mechanisms such as the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act (PWDVA) have been put in place, the mindset that normalizes domestic violence is shared by society at large as well as institutions that mirror social attitudes. Activists and researchers have long advocated for a combination of effective counseling services, an enabling environment in the community which supports women from breaking the silence around domestic violence and a sensitive justice system which censures any form and kind of violence (see for example NFHS -3, 2005; ICRW, 2000 and 2002). IPAP has followed this oft recommended strategy by: a) addressing the need for services required by individual women facing violence; b) fostering community structures that serve as a first site of response to domestic violence and; c) sensitizing law enforcement authorities to respond more effectively to family violence. The relevance of this three-pronged strategy also lies in a context where creation

of support services for women facing violence (therapeutic counseling, legal aid, shelter etc.) is not receiving adequate attention by the state and/or private donors.

- **Relevance of the support centre model to reduce domestic violence:** Existing redress mechanisms set up by the government are either inaccessible or unknown to most women in need of such services. The support centres set up under IPAP have tried to address this gap by helping women access free legal aid, remedies under existing laws (especially PWDVA), referral to shelter and short stay homes etc. The nature of counseling provided by these centres is focused on building the strength and confidence of the victim so that she can prevent further violence and assert her rights within the family. Women whose cases were studied closely as a part of the evaluation, all reported that the support centres have been instrumental in building their self-confidence and their awareness about legal options and remedies.
- **Relevance of sensitizing the law enforcement machinery:** Sensitization of the police either through formal training programmes or through constant interactions with the support centre staff and other senior staff of implementing partners has helped in building the image of police stations as a viable and relevant site to address domestic violence. For example, in Odisha and Andhra Pradesh, police officials reported that the presence of the support centres inside the police premises has proved to be an effective model that in turn helped the police to capitalize more on outreach at the community level.
- **Relevance of strengthening community structures:** The nurturing and growth of community level structures which respond on an immediate basis to instances of domestic

violence and even mediate in such cases is a very relevant model for shifting community norms about the normalcy of violence. The Mahila Samity at Jasdan, Saurashtra and the Women's Panch which is a part of the Lok Adhikar Kendra set up in Dahod and Panchmahals districts of Gujarat have earned enormous credibility in the community and are called to not just adjudicate on cases of domestic violence but have also begun handling property related matters and those which require interfacing with the police. They have reported that community members respect and fear these bodies. Compared to earlier, they have started receiving fewer complaints of physical abuse but more cases of verbal and psychological abuse.

5.3 EFFECTIVENESS

The evaluation has found that to a large extent all the outputs set out by the IPAP programme have

been met. The following are the key findings:

- Outputs pertaining to sensitization of government officials (including protection officers and the police), setting up of pilot support centres in the four states and capacity building among civil society members and community groups have been met successfully.
- Awareness among men and women on what constitutes violence against women has shown a marked increase compared to the baseline.
- Institutionalization of the support centre model within the state government has met with partial success. The state government of Gujarat has set up support centres in 26 districts and the state government of Odisha has issued a government order mandating the setting up of such centres. In UP, Uttarakhand and Andhra Pradesh the state governments are yet to initiate steps in this direction.

Output: Government officials in the relevant departments (police, under the DV act, Women and Child Development officers) are sensitized about the issue of VAW and have increased knowledge of the laws, rules and regulations related to VAW and support services and related budgetary allocation procedures to be followed for expenditure.

INDICATORS	STATUS
Percentage of protection officers under the DV act and Women & Child Development Officers (WCDOs) having adequate knowledge of laws related to VAW and support services envisaged therein and his/her role in facilitating the provision of support services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ More than 20 of the 25 officials for the Women and Child Development Department as well as protection officers were found to be aware about legislations related to violence against women. They also showed adequate awareness about their role in facilitating the provision of these services, for example, representing the survivor in shelter home, medical facilities etc. ✓ However, the WCDOs also reported that among the many responsibilities they handle, their role in addressing VAW does not receive adequate priority.
Percentage of police stations in the programme districts in which the station in-charge has knowledge of the PWDV Act, its applicability, provisions under the Act, relief and support services envisaged in the policies/programs/laws	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ All the 25 police officials interviewed had heard of the PWDV Act and were aware about its provisions. ✓ They were also aware about the support services included under the Act, for example, provision of shelter home, legal help.

INDICATORS	STATUS
<p>Per cent of civil society network members in the programme districts having at least one trained staff who has adequate and correct knowledge of the services and facilities envisaged in policies and programs related VAW for support service.</p> <p>Number of civil society group members trained in policy research, advocacy and intersectionality between gender and social exclusion who undertake advocacy and lobbying for achieving the goals</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 2879 civil society group members have been trained in policy research, advocacy and intersectionality between gender and social exclusion. ✓ Approximately 60 per cent of the members of civil society groups reported having participated in the trainings conducted by Oxfam during the last three years. ✓ Almost 60 per cent of them reported greater clarity on laws related to VAW as a result of the trainings. ✓ Half of them (51 per cent) have become more aware about which officials to contact to resolve cases of VAW. ✓ 43 per cent reported that they now have more clarity on support services and facilities. ✓ Three-fourth of the members were of the opinion that domestic violence is totally unjustified, no matter what the circumstances. ✓ Around 57 per cent of the members had moderate levels of awareness while 40 per cent had high levels of awareness on legislations pertaining to VAW.
<p>Output: District level support institutions established in collaboration with police department in four states (Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Odisha and Gujarat).</p>	
<p>Number of support institutions set up across 4 states in collaboration with the police department as models providing all encompassing support services to women survivors</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 18 support centre were set up across 4 states in collaboration with the police department as models providing all encompassing support services to women survivors.
<p>Output: Women experiencing violence especially those from marginalized communities in the programme districts increase their access to formal justice system and support services.</p>	
<p>Percentage of VAW related cases in which women have received support services through various government schemes and programmes in programme districts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The evaluation team sought feedback from a randomly chosen sample of 50 women about whether they had availed of any government facility or service through the support centre's intervention, during the last three years. Approximately 72 per cent of the women reported that they availed government facilities or services to deal with their case (80 per cent in Gujarat, 60 per cent each in Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh).

INDICATORS	STATUS
<p>Number of cases of women survivors who received support services through IPAP partner facilitation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Legal aid was the most common service availed with the help of the support centre. ✓ Psycho-social counselling was also solicited by a large proportion of the survivors. ✓ 39053 women survivors of violence received support services through IPAP partner facilitation.
<p>OUTPUT: Men and women aged 15-50 years in the programme districts are sensitized on VAW and have demonstrably increased their knowledge on laws related to violence against women and legal and other support services available for those experiencing violence</p>	
<p>Percentage of men and women aged 15-50 years who are aware of laws related to the PWDV Act</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Awareness about the PWDV Act among men has increased from 24 per cent in the baseline to 31 per cent in the end line. ✓ Awareness about the PWDV Act among women has increased from 26 per cent in the baseline to 49 per cent in the end line. ✓ Overall awareness about PWDV Act was higher among women than men in the intervention areas.
<p>Percentage of men and women aged 15-50 years who recognize VAW as a form of social injustice</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ There has been a considerable shift in attitudes of men and women towards the acceptance of violence. In the end line, about 60 per cent of the men mentioned that it is totally unjustified to beat one's wife. During baseline this figure stood at only 28 per cent. ✓ Similarly, about 61 per cent women from project areas felt that it is totally not justified for the husband to beat his wife under different circumstances. During baseline this figure stood at 32 per cent. ✓ There is a difference of five percentage points between men in control and intervention sites about the acceptance of domestic violence. And a difference of 11 percentage points between women on the same issue.
<p>Percentage of pressure groups in the district in which youth activists/ pressure groups/committees on VAW have knowledge of PWDV, 498A and support services related to VAW and whom to contact in their block/district to avail the benefit of laws and other support services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Approximately 57 per cent of community group members were found to have a moderate level of awareness about laws related to VAW, while 40 per cent showed a high level of awareness. ✓ Approximately three-fourth of the members (N=50) were aware of the different support services provided by the government for women facing violence. More than 90 per cent of the group members from Andhra Pradesh, Odisha and Uttarakhand were aware of government supported services. ✓ Community group members from Uttar Pradesh (70 per cent) and Gujarat (30 per cent) showed relatively low levels of awareness in this regard. ✓ 66 per cent of community group members reported that they had helped women experiencing violence in their locality.

5.4 IMPACT

INDICATOR	STATUS
Number of new support institutions replicated by state governments with budgetary allocations	✓ The Government of Gujarat has taken over the scaling up of support centres in the state and has passed a government resolution mandating the setting up of 26 support centres across Gujarat. Recruitment of staff is underway and the infrastructure required to set up support centres has been sanctioned
	✓ A government order has been issued by the state Government of Odisha mandating the setting up of the support centres in districts.

5.5 COST EFFICIENCY

The cost of running a support centre through IPAP has been calculated below. This major cost heads include the salaries of support centre workers and coordinator. The documentation cost and travel cost to follow-up the cases also forms a component of the overall management cost of a support centre. Thus, on an average, about Rs 504,000 is required annually to run a support centre.

Costs	No.	Per Unit Monthly Cost (in Rs)	Total Annual Cost (in Rs)
Salaries of support centre workers	2	10000	240000
Salary of coordinator	1	15000	180000
Documentation of cases	1	5000	60000
Travel costs for follow-up with women	1	2000	24000
Total cost			504000

The study also tried to calculate the amount of money saved per survivor, using the data from the quarterly report of Friends' Association for Rural Reconstruction (FARR) for 2012-13. According to the report, the total number of survivors approaching FARR in 2012-13 was 630. Based on the figures, the total amount of money saved per survivor is Rs 800.

However, these calculations do not account for the psychological cost or indirect costs incurred in

resolving one such case of VAW. So the interpretation of these findings should be done with caution.

5.6 SUSTAINABILITY

Given the strategy adopted by IPAP, sustainability has been conceptualized as institutionalization of support centres by state governments and building capacities of community members and civil society groups to address cases of VAW, either on their own or through referral to appropriate services. Strengthening existing, innovative, community level support structures such as women's mediation groups has been viewed as another step in building sustainability of IPAP interventions.

- *Sustainability of the support centre model:* It is creditworthy that in Gujarat the support centre model has become institutionalized. This has come about due to several factors working concomitantly. The joint advocacy efforts of IPAP partners and the OXFAM programme office, regular flow of information about the work of the centre with stakeholders in the government, consistent support by TISS, supportive police officials in the right places and the credibility of the IPAP partners within the system are some of the key factors that have enabled the replication and scale up of the support centre model. In Odisha, constant lobbying and advocacy with the state machinery along with a responsive police machinery has resulted in the generation of a government order for setting up support centres.

- At the same time, scale up and replication of the model by the state is not sufficient to make the model sustainable. Other key processes such as regular training and capacity building of counselors to adopt a women-centric approach to counselling (that builds the confidence and strength of survivors); close monitoring of cases to check on their outcomes; regular follow-up of women whose cases have been resolved; and regular reflection and analysis have to be also replicated for the support centres to work as effectively as they have been doing so far.
- In states like Andhra Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh, the scale up has been significantly affected by inconsistent support of the state machinery. Even starting the centres in these states took a much longer time than in other states. This has also meant that the time and space needed to demonstrate the success of this model has not been sufficient. The intervention is at a tipping point and discontinuing the work will be premature as it will not be able to sustain on its own, at least with an effective intensity. It also means wastage of resources invested so far. It is strongly recommended that IPAP partners in Andhra Pradesh and other states be offered financial support to run the support centres for at least another two years so as to build strong evidence for advocacy. This time period will also enable them to build networks with the state machinery for scale up.
- *Sustainability of IPAP through capacity building of community members and civil society groups.* IPAP partners have engaged in creating new and strengthening old community level groups and organizations to address VAW in their localities. They have been offered trainings on a range of issues around VAW, especially legislations for redress of domestic violence, appropriate government services and remedies and whom to approach in times of crises. These groups are expected to in turn impart knowledge on laws related to VAW, sensitize the community in general on violence against women, make other women aware about whom to contact for help,

identify and provide support to women facing violence.

The IPAP evaluation results have shown that much progress has been with regard to building awareness among community groups to stand up against violence in their localities and offer help. A majority of the community members (60 per cent) reported enhanced understanding on laws related to violence and 51 per cent reported greater knowledge of which officials to contact during crises. This awareness building has cascaded further into their communities. Approximately 58 per cent of the respondents from community groups reported that they have been sharing about laws related to violence against women with the women in their community. Forty-six per cent mentioned that they had identified women experiencing violence/abuse and had talked to their families. At least 50 per cent of them have also linked the survivors to health services. Overall 66 per cent of them reported helping victims of violence in their localities.

These results are encouraging as they suggest growing capacities among community members to address VAW in their localities. In the same vein, overall 74 per cent of the respondents shared that they will continue doing this work on their own, even if the IPAP project ended.

In addition to local groups, innovative broader community level structures have been nurtured by IPAP partners. These structures are playing a very critical role in helping shift community norms around the acceptance of domestic violence and the subordinate status of women. The Nyaya Samiti and Mahila Panch are examples of such forums where women have started defining justice based on human rights and are challenging the popular discourse about women in public spaces.

These developments and ongoing efforts at the community level are very sound strategies to sustain an environment of zero tolerance to violence, which IPAP envisages.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

OXFAM's IPAP intervention addresses an issue which has been covertly and overtly present in our societies, supported ostensibly by elders and guardians. Women experiencing violence are often forced to remain silent and accept the violence as formal justice institutions (police, courts) have failed to respond to women survivors and more towards vulnerable communities. According to the National Family Health Survey (NFHS-3) conducted in 2005-06, "About 35 per cent of women aged 15-49 years in India have experienced physical or sexual violence. Thirty-seven per cent of ever-married women have experienced spousal physical or sexual violence and 16 per cent have experienced spousal emotional violence."

In this context, IPAP's intervention was designed to target the issue more holistically. IPAP aims at "Reduction of the social acceptance of violence against women and bringing a positive change in the policy and programme environment that perpetuates its acceptance at an institutional and community level." The programme endeavoured to focus on addressing violence against women (VAW) focusing on domestic violence as a key aspect of social exclusion and better implementation of the Protection of Women against Domestic Violence Act (PWDVA). The programme was implemented in the states of Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand to reinforce PWDVA. As envisaged within international NGOs' Partnership Agreement Programme (IPAP), the project envisaged to impact at three levels: 1) focused outcomes at national and state level in policy implementation; 2) formal and non-formal institutional support mechanisms to survivors; and 3) a broad-based community mobilization intervention.

The overall goal of the programme is to "*Reduce the social acceptance of all violence against women and bring a positive change in the policy*

and programme environment that perpetuates its acceptance at an institutional and community level"

PROJECT PURPOSE

Change patriarchal and other discriminatory social practices and belief systems that perpetuate all violence against women and enhance provision of appropriate support to women experiencing violence by state and non-state actors.

PROJECT APPROACH

Oxfam's programme in India on ending violence against women follows a three-pronged approach:

- Build a strategic programme to improve access of women from marginalized communities to the formal justice system, which also generates best practices for wider use in advocacy with the State and civil society.
- Enhance advocacy efforts by civil society (with leadership from marginalized groups) for reform in State policies and practices on all violence against women.
- Develop a focused campaign to end all violence against women along with long-term development initiatives focused on mobilizing and empowering women and men to challenge discriminatory belief systems and practices.

PROJECT STRATEGIES

1. Improving women's access from marginalized communities to the formal justice system and support services for survivors of violence.
2. Advocacy for reform in State policies and practice.
3. Mobilizing and empowering women and men in communities to challenge discriminatory belief systems and practices.

As the programme completed four years in 2013, Oxfam India commissioned an independent evaluation of the IPAP programme. The purpose of the evaluation, inter alia, included:

- Understand whether Government officials in the relevant departments (police, protection officers under PWDVA, women and child development officers) are sensitized about the issue of VAW and have increased knowledge of the laws, rules and regulations related to VAW and support services and related budgetary allocation procedures to be followed for expenditure.
- Understand if men and women aged 15-50 years in the programme districts are sensitized on VAW and have demonstrably increased their knowledge on laws related to violence against women and legal and other support services available for those experiencing violence.
- Understand if communities in villages and towns in the programme districts have pressure groups and/or youth activists and/or committees on VAW that are equipped with the knowledge of laws related to VAW and support services to support women experiencing violence in seeking appropriate services.

KEY FINDINGS

Attitude towards violence against women and knowledge of laws related to VAW:

- Approximately 60 per cent men and 61 per cent women from the project areas against 55 per cent men and 50 per cent women from the comparison area believe that it is totally unjustified to beat the wife. Comparison with the baseline also shows significant improvement. At the time of the baseline less than one-third of the men and women believed this practice to be justified. Awareness index¹ of women and men

¹ The indicators that were used to calculate the awareness index are: understanding on physical abuse, verbal abuse, preventing the woman from obtaining employment or education, forcing the woman to hand over her income, psychological abuse, holding the woman captive at home, embarrass her in public, slander or insult and forcing the woman to have sex/rape.

on VAW was created using a set of indicators. About 8 per cent men in the project area and 5 per cent in the comparison area lie in the high awareness category while 46 per cent in the project and 43 per cent in the comparison area are in the moderate category. However, data on women across project and control areas does not show a significant difference.

- The knowledge of the men and women on different provisions of law related to violence against women was also assessed. Thirty-seven per cent of men had very low awareness about the laws related to VAW in the project area as compared to 39 per cent in the comparison area. A comparatively high percentage of female respondents were not aware about the laws related to VAW both in the project (50 per cent) and comparison areas (54 per cent). The awareness of men in project areas about the Domestic Violence Act has increased from 24 per cent in the baseline to 31 per cent in end line while the same for women has increased from 26 per cent in baseline to 49 per cent in end line.

Experience of survivors: Findings from in-depth discussions with women survivors:

- Physical and verbal abuse are the most common forms of violence experienced by the survivors. Half of the survivors also report that they have experienced “Psychological Abuse/Undermining self-esteem/Embarrass/Offend in Public”. Almost 78 per cent of the respondents reported that they approached their “own family” to seek help for abuse or violence. More than half (53 per cent) sought help from “NGO/Social Service Organization”. Forty-three per cent also mentioned that they approached the “Support Centre”. They also took help from the police, lawyers and neighbours etc. The survivors were asked whether their violence stopped because of the intervening of the concerned persons they approached for help. Almost 78 per cent of them reported “yes”.
- Survivors have utilized different sources of help for registering their cases. A majority of

the survivors received help either from their parents or support centre counselors and NGO staff members. Support centres definitely have played a significant role in registering of cases. The study findings suggest that police station-based counseling centres have led to better detection of cases of VAW.

Service Providers: Findings from in-depth discussions with police and WCD representatives:

- A major concern expressed by police officers was to identify the extent of domestic violence within the localities in their jurisdiction though they believe that in the last few years reporting on domestic violence has shown an increase.
- Police officials across all the states have observed significant change in people's perception towards domestic violence. They suggest that women have opened up and cases of violence are getting reported with the police more frequently. But still there is a lot of hesitation in reporting sexual abuse as a form of domestic violence.
- Police officials across all the states show high levels of awareness about the provisions under PWDVA. In states like Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat, officials have had good exposure to training programmes conducted by various civil society organizations (CSOs) and state governments. These trainings have helped them to deal with identification and responding more effectively to the cases of domestic violence. Police personnel believe that their engagement in domestic violence cases has improved in the last few years.
- It is encouraging to state that WCD officials exhibit good level and depth of awareness on various legislations and provisions under law. While they show high level of awareness, their engagement as protection officers is not always their priority. They suggest that being a protection officer is just a small part of their overall responsibility as a WCD official. They also suggest that they lack clarity on their role as a protection officer. As their responsibility with

the WCD involves a lot of travel, the issue of their limited reach for survivors adds to this.

COMMUNITY GROUPS

- The IPAP programme was implemented on the ground by a network of partner organizations/ CSOs. They were also engaged in developing programme based pressure groups/vigilance committees in the programme communities. The groups are primarily engaged with the community for advocacy on domestic violence, identification and support to victims and counseling.
- Approximately 60 per cent of the community group members had participated in the trainings conducted by Oxfam during the last three years. Almost 60 per cent of the members reported that they have more clarity on laws related to VAW now. Fifty-one per cent mentioned that they had become more aware regarding which officials to contact for VAW cases, 43 per cent reported that they now have more clarity on support services and facilities and 66 per cent of the group members suggest that they had helped women experiencing violence in their locality.
- To measure this, community group members were asked to react to statements which were related to a husband hitting or beating his wife under different situations. Three-fourth of the community group members suggest the actions suggested in the statements are totally unjustified. Around 57 per cent of the members had moderate level of awareness while 40 per cent had high level of awareness on VAW.

Recommendations by the Evaluation Team and Management Response:

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PARTNERS

- Over the last few years, IPAP interventions have created an enabling implementation infrastructure for targeting VAW. All the CSOs working for IPAP show keen intent on working on

this issue in the time to come. They acknowledge the fact that while working with IPAP their understanding of the issues and the process of positive intervention at the community, institution and policy levels has improved. While there is an intention and definitely a need for furthering these interventions, CSOs believe that they still require resources, both material and intellectual, for continuing with the same intensity.

- Partners need to further strengthen the collectives and networks that they are currently supporting by defining roles and responsibilities, and a clear capacity building plan for collectives. Further, a strategy for involvement of men should be well defined in future programmes.
- Given that VAW and women's access to justice are sensitive issues, organizational heads should either pay closer attention or build second line leadership for sustained intervention and advocacy.
- Collaboration, advocacy and lobbying with government should be treated as a parallel focus in future programmes in order to bring changes in the way in which state machinery treats women's political participation and VAW. Effective use of media, greater sharing of evidences from the field, and identifying opportunities for practical collaboration should be considered in future interventions.

Management Response: *Oxfam India has initiated a process of discussion with each of the partners to share the recommendation. Oxfam India will facilitate and provide technical support where needed in the process with the partners based on resource availability. Moreover with the partners who are being phased out after IPAP, Oxfam India has organized a series of donor interactions with the partners in Hyderabad and Ahmedabad.*

- The institutionalization of the support centre model by the Government of Gujarat has come about due to several factors working concomitantly. In states like Andhra Pradesh, the scale up has been significantly affected by inconsistent support of the state machinery. The value addition of the support centre model is beginning to be recognized only now. The intervention is at a tipping point and discontinuing the work will be premature as it will not be able to sustain on its own, at least with an effective intensity. It also means wastage of resources invested so far. It is strongly recommended that IPAP partners be offered financial support to run the support centres for at least another two years so as to build strong evidence for advocacy. This time period will also enable them to build networks with the state machinery for scaling up.

Management Response: *Oxfam India is taking steps in putting together a new strategy for the next five years. As part of the new strategy Oxfam India will also undertake an assessment of its funding scenarios and definitely be consider the recommendation.*

- While the quality of counseling has definitely improved, it is still strongly felt that interventions like IPAP will be necessary to sustain the quality. To make the interventions move towards sustainability, the NGO-GO partnership needs to be reinforced even further. This will further improve quality checks and help build community awareness.

Management Response: *Oxfam India appreciates this suggestion and in the future programming period will incorporate these suggestions. Oxfam India has also initiated the process of working more closely with its partner in addressing the quality issue to improve the programme at the grassroots.*

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ANNEXURE I: RANGE OF INNOVATIONS AND CRITICAL INTERVENTIONS

The focus of the study was on critical programme interventions and responses being implemented under the programme in the five states of Uttar Pradesh, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat and Uttarakhand under the OXFAM IPAP programme. The study, however, also points to the emergence of a variety of innovative, grassroots efforts to address domestic violence more proactively. This annexure briefly highlights some critical intervention strategies adopted by partner NGOs across states and also a few innovative experiments at the local level (Nyaya Samiti in Gujarat, Helpline number approach by BhumiKa, Andhra Pradesh, Sanjha Manch in Uttarakhand). This annexure also delineates the integration of the “WECAN” campaign best practices into the IPAP programme mandate and essentially delivering effective responses to domestic violence.

THE NYAYA SAMITI, A PLATFORM FOR GENDER JUSTICE, SET UP BY RURAL WOMEN

WHAT IT IS AND WHAT IT DOES

The Nyaya Samiti is an innovation in alternate dispute resolution that has emerged from women’s collectives mobilised by ANANDI, an NGO working in the Panchmahals district of Gujarat. Nyaya Samiti members are articulate and strong women leaders who have also been part of the local self governance structures as elected representatives. It consists of a group of about 10-12 women from the village collectives. The Nyaya Samiti operates in three blocks.

The Samiti works at the village level but also meets and discusses issues at a centre located in the block. This centre is called the Lok Adhikar Kendra (Centre for People’s Rights). What is today the Lok Adhikar Kendra began as the Panchayat Mahila Mahiti Kendra (Panchayat Women’s Information Centre) but evolved into a people’s centre

because the women felt that poverty affects everyone and there was a need to address broader issues of citizen entitlements for resource poor communities.

The Nyaya Samiti of 12 members functions as a specialised group of individuals working on violence against women. However, they share responsibilities and may not all always sit in the *panch*. In any given case, some of them may be part of the inquiry, some may go to the police and some may be part of the mediation. Samiti members support the village level collective in resolving the case by taking the lead. In this way, the village level collective is still the seat of ‘action’ but the specialised help needed in handling the case is provided by members of the Nyaya Samiti. Typically, when a woman brings her case to the Samiti she is first given adequate time and space to ventilate her feelings, explain her problem in detail and share everything related to the case. The woman is assured of help and not reprimanded or blamed for anything that may have happened. The opposite party is then summoned by sending it a letter and if they refuse to come Samiti members may visit the accused and find out why he has chosen not to respond. Depending on the issue, the Samiti may also threaten them with police action and court proceedings if they do not respond.

A woman may choose to approach the village level collective to address her problem or else she may approach an individual member of the Nyaya Samiti. This member may then lead the process at the village level and depending on the gravity of the problem may even involve more Samiti members from other villages to resolve the case. Although the process of resolving the case usually occurs in the village, sometimes, the members of the Nyaya Samiti may feel holding the case proceedings in that particular village may not be safe or viable. Hence they hold the *panch* at a third neutral place.

Usually the block level meetings of the Nyaya Samiti are held twice a week and the agenda is not limited to dealing with the case alone – they may also use this opportunity to pursue other matters such as old age pensions or other schemes. Or else they may pursue other matters related to the same case such as scholarship for the children of a woman whose case is going on. In this sense it does not work like a counselling centre.

GENESIS AND CONTEXT IN WHICH THE NYAYA SAMITI STARTED

The Nyaya Samiti began about 10 years ago. Traditionally village dispute resolutions in the areas where ANANDI works, are mediated through a *Panch*, composed essentially of a group of influential and/or elderly men. Women are not allowed to speak in such forums. However, these forums do not function very effectively. The *panch* often impose a fine of Rs 200 or 500 or even 5,000 and somehow resolves the case. They use the money they charge for themselves either to sponsor drinks or a feast. Neither the woman nor the man has any access to any of this money. Talking of the traditional *panch*, Nyaya Samiti members explained, “Even if the woman is not at fault and there are only men in the *Panch* they will not say a word to the man but look for mistakes in what the woman has done, even hit her. No one has the courage to tell the *panch* that they are wrong—people are afraid and the woman is the only one defending her case. She also does not have the courage and has to accept the blame even when she is innocent.”

The limitations of the traditional *panch* process, especially in addressing cases of violence against women prompted the women’s collectives to set up the Nyaya Samiti. Unlike traditional forums, the Nyaya Samiti does not take any money for conducting the *panch*. They only charge a registration fee of Rs 50. However, if there are court procedures then the Samiti may charge a fee for the leg work involved. Nyaya Samiti members have received para-legal trainings and have also been issued ID cards by ANANDI.

The Nyaya Samiti is different from the traditional *panch* also in terms of documentation. They make detailed notes of the history of abuse faced by the woman and the case proceedings. The agreement reached by both parties is written down and all members present at the arbitration sign on the decisions taken. All this is absent in the traditional *panch* proceedings. Even if there are financial dealings such as compensation, the woman is given the money by placing it in a bank account in her name. The Nyaya Samiti members explain, “When we first started being present in the *panch*, we were not allowed to sit on the cot – men did not allow us to speak- they would say, what work do you have in our *panch*? But since we were not taking any money and the word spread that this group works well, they now send cases to us. Even when there is severe violence and the case reaches the police station they say call the women’s *panch*.”

The value of a separate forum such as the Nyaya Samiti to address VAW

ANANDI has mobilised strong village level collectives which handle many issues related to entitlements and rights. The village collective also handle cases of violence against women. However, the need for a separate forum such as the Nyaya Samiti was felt for various reasons:

- No conflict of interest- A structure such as the Nyaya Samiti brings greater credibility to the arbitration process. Women from the village arbitrating on a case from their own village do not command as much credibility as women from other villages, with seemingly no interest or agendas of their own. It would imply that women from other villages with no kin relations or family obligations are able to judge the case more objectively and impartially. These qualities are essential in community level arbitration processes. The Nyaya Samiti members feel village level collectives “cannot give justice”, that is, they are not seen as totally impartial parties in cases involving women from their own village.

- A specialised group - A forum such as the Nyaya Samiti composed of women from different villages, with a good understanding of laws and police procedures, has wide acceptance.
- Commitment of time and effort – Village collectives are composed of members with varying levels of commitment and time availability. Many times, they are not able to give the kind of sustained time, effort and energy needed to resolve cases end to end. In the words of the Nyaya Samiti members, “Sometimes we have to handle the case at night, visit the police, we have to go to court, we don’t care if its day or night, the samiti is able to give time, the collective cannot give the total time needed to resolve the case.”
- Issues such as harassment by in-laws, physical violence, alcohol related violence etc. are resolved by the women’s collective in the village itself. Sometimes, if there is domestic violence by the in-laws because they claim the daughter-in-law is not doing her work properly, the village level collective gets involved. They explain to the in-laws not to torture the daughter-in-law but teach her what she has to do. But if the violence continues, the woman may be referred to the Lok Adhikar Kendra and the Nyaya Samiti may take up the matter and resolve the issue. An agreement is then written down and signed by the accused that if they continue harassing the woman then she will take legal recourse. The case is followed up to ensure the woman is fine and the accused are following the conditions laid down.

MECHANISM TO ENSURE COMPLIANCE

The Nyaya Samiti uses community pressure, the threat of police action, legal recourse and penalties to ensure compliance by the accused. For example, sometimes the conditions of reconciliation may include a compensation amount to be paid by the accused if he renegades or violates what has been agreed to. In spite of repeated patches if the conditions are broken then usually a one-time compensation is taken. But if the case is severe then a formal case is also filed under Section 125 for regular maintenance.

The Nyaya Samiti also uses the threat of the police and the court as a way to put pressure on the accused to adhere to the conditions set in the agreement. Sometimes, the police are told to inquire into the case of a woman whose Panch may have recently concluded, whenever they are passing by her village. This simple act of casually inquiring about the woman acts as a deterrent.

Sometimes the Nyaya Samiti plays a role in resolving the case even when it has reached the stage of becoming a court case. In one example the Nyaya Samiti sat in the court and conducted a *panch* on the behest of the judge and resolved the case, which was then written up as a formal agreement.

WHAT PRINCIPLES INFORM THE JUSTICE PROCESS FOLLOWED BY NYAYA SAMITI

1. ***Deep empathy; relating the issue to one’s own rights*** – Nyaya Samiti members shared that when they sit in on cases, they think back to their own lives. “A woman works hard all her life to build her home and now at this stage of her life she is left with nothing in her name, how can that be? She has the right to live like me. How can he (her husband) throw her out, how can he torture her? We should dissuade him from doing this. I live in my home and am able to live peacefully, when she has worked so hard to build this house she also has the right to live in peace. Everyone has the right to live in peace. What has happened that this right has been violated?” they say. Thus the Nyaya Samiti members relate the experience of violence to their own life and values. The high degree of empathy that results from this enables the members to focus on the women’s rights.
2. ***Linking violence against women with the use of power*** - The Nyaya Samiti members raise the issue of how even the oppressed become oppressors when they gain power. They use this argument when the elders sitting in the *Panch* proceedings are also aware of the injustice happening to the woman; they realize that women have the right to lead lives free of violence but this awareness does not seem

commensurate with their actions. The Nyaya Samiti appeals to the elders' sense of justice and maturity by advising them to treat the daughters-in-law as they would treat their own daughters. They remind them of their own younger days when they felt powerless. In doing this, they take the argument to a level of fairness and justice.

3. *Normative change is what will end violence against women-* The Nyaya Samiti utilizes the *panch* as a forum for influencing norms that victimize women and sometimes even men in roles and positions that lead to discrimination and violence. They try to locate the particular incident against the broader social context which exacerbates violence against women. For example, the Samiti handled a case where a woman who had been living at her natal home since the last eight months, approached them for help. Her husband told the Samiti that he didn't want to take her back and wanted a divorce. When the Samiti probed deeper they found that there were many misunderstandings between the couple. The wife felt cheated that she was left at home to handle all the farm related work and her husband was constantly away looking for work. The husband felt his wife was unreasonable and did not treat him well. The Samiti spent time talking to the man and woman separately and explained the responsibilities of marriage. Other older men in the village also talked to the man about not being over sensitive about his wife's behaviour. The Nyaya Samiti also found that both the girl and the boy had been married when they were very young, 15 and 16 respectively, as a result of which they were unable to cope with the demands of excessive work and responsibilities. A one to one session was held with the man and he broke down in front of the counsellor who spoke to him, talking about many fears and doubts he held about himself. This case was then used as an example by the Nyaya Samiti to hold a broader discussion especially with the men in the village, about the perils of early marriages.
4. *Ensuring women's concerns find adequate airing and are given importance in the process of resolving the case-* Many times the parents of the girl want to make money at the expense of their daughter's marriage. They accept a settlement amount of Rs 1 lakh and try to convince the daughter to divorce the husband. In many such cases the Nyaya Samiti first finds out what the woman really wants. If the woman/girl is actually not in favour of a divorce or is willing to return if the violence stops, they counsel the parents not to insist on a divorce. In one such case, the girl had complained about a specific action of her father-in-law which she found inappropriate. When the case was being arbitrated, this issue was often being overlooked by other men and elders in garnering a compromise. But the Nyaya Samiti kept bringing up this issue repeatedly to stress that this was a matter of importance for the girl and should be handled. Through their intervention, it was decided that the father-in-law would have to offer an apology letter to the girl and only then would she return to the marital family. This case was also used to raise the issue of what men should and can do to prevent such incidents from taking place in their own families.
5. *Objectivity and impartiality; finding a mutually acceptable solution* – The Nyaya Samiti adopts a pro-women approach by creating a safe space for women to share their experiences, state what they want, providing them moral support and building their courage, advocating for their legal rights etc. but at the same time functions impartially and with objectivity. This is evident in giving equal time to the man to share his point of view, state what he wants and articulate his side of the problem. When they feel the man will be able to confide better with another male (as compared to the women in the Nyaya Samiti) they request the help of one of their male colleagues at ANANDI. The Nyaya Samiti confronts the perpetrator and deals with him firmly but women are also counselled and advised about what they can do differently to

avoid conflict. According to Samiti members, "We listen to both sides- giving them both equal weightage." By doing this the forum emerges as an inclusive one with space for men and women to articulate their points of view. In the same vein the centre where the Nyaya Samiti meets from time to time and holds discussions is called the Lok Adhikaar Kendra as opposed to Mahila Adhikaar Kendra. When asked why they had named their centre so, Samiti members said that they want a better world for anyone who is marginalized. The Kendra also handles a variety of other issues such as entitlements for the poor. The Nyaya Samiti recognise that women are more marginalized and their approach is to privilege their voices, they are conscious that this cannot happen at the cost of silencing other voices which may also have equally legitimate experiences of discrimination.

6. *Solutions where women's rights are upheld in the family* – While the Nyaya Samiti does not actively promote reconciliation, they do acknowledge that a solution where the woman's rights are upheld by the family is an important marker of success. This highlights an important value that drives their work – that of equality. The Nyaya Samiti's work is about encouraging more equal, respectful relationships where women can live with dignity. Articulating this, Samiti members say a successful case is "When they respect our decision, when the woman's family does not break, runs well...After we send her back and when we go for follow up we ask her are they taking care of you? Keeping you well? And she says yes, we feel this is a successful case."

Reasons for community acceptance and credibility

- Because the Nyaya Samiti does not accept bribes, take money to resolve the case, spend money wastefully on a feast or on alcohol.
- Because of their clean track record and their knowledge about rights the police,

hospital and other agencies also do not take money for providing services.

- Because they are respected by the community for their awareness of laws regarding women, legal provisions and citizen rights.
- Samiti members have earned admiration for having asserted themselves, for their leadership qualities and for having had the courage to stake a claim in a forum where women are never allowed to sit, let alone arbitrate.
- A very significant factor for its credibility is the process of handling the case. Not only are both parties given space and time to share their points of view, the decision is one which is acceptable to all- even if this means the *panch* may have to be reconvened. Similarly, the way the woman's self-esteem and confidence is shaped by Samiti members ensures that she is able to protest against any further violations and assert herself. This acts as a deterrent for further violence.
- The follow-up process by Samiti members sends out a clear message that the outcome of the case does not end with the agreement. It shows they care about the woman, that she is not alone. This, along with the fear of police action makes the accused wary about defying the decision taken by the *Panch*.

INTERVENTION CONTEXT OF AWAG

The women's support Centre at Rapar started in 2010. However AWAG had been working here since 2004. It had set up an office and was running a centre from there. Rapar is a very backward district in terms of facilities and services. It is at the end of the Kutch region and the Rann starts from here- it is dry and arid most of the year. When AWAG started work here there was no proper connectivity and only one bus would ply everyday taking 7-8 hours from Ahmedabad.

They began work by mobilizing the women on health issues and whether the services of the ANM were reaching them or not. Domestic violence is a serious an issue to begin with, but health offered a soft entry point. The organisation found night blindness to be a common problem and there were many myths around it- such as it is a birth defect which one acquires in the womb. AWAG took up a survey of women in the area and also provided Vitamin A supplements. Many women found their situation improving in 10-15 days and thus they realized it is a diet linked disease. Soon after this they started awareness camps for women which were six days long. Forty women were selected from each village and in a way that all the different lanes in the village were represented. The training was held in the village and there were some rules the organisation followed in selecting the women- all castes and lanes would have to be represented; they would not take two women from the same family; the participant had to be willing to attend all six days. The curriculum of the course was such that it covered information and perspectives. On the first day most of the time was spent on introductions, songs and explaining the purpose of the training. On day 2, the training focussed on health—do women take care of their health? Information was shared about menstruation, pregnancy, nutrition and superstitions around food intake during pregnancy such as not eating curd or certain kinds of grains. Day 3 was spent on women's rights, laws and police procedures with regard to women for example, women cannot be arrested at night, cannot be called to the police station at night, have to be arrested only by women police constables etc.; laws about maintenance, cruelty etc. Day 4 is spent discussing the status of women- that you cannot be beaten and ill-treated simply because you are a daughter-in-law or wife. About the five kinds of structures that limit women—social, political, economic, religious and legal. They also discuss how to get out of these binding structures and achieve their rights. They are asked—are you part of these structures? If you use the sindoor, mangalsutra, bangles other signs of marriage, why do you. Do men follow any of

these symbols? Or ghunghat—why is it men never have to keep this? Or when widowed, men continue to wear what they like but women are expected to look colourless, not wear any bright clothes- why is this? Who has decided this should happen? All these discussions make her realize that she does not enjoy a status equal to men. When the women attend the workshop, they come in thinking my husband is supreme, he can beat me, but we tell them about their right to live a life free of violence. We tell them about 498A and maintenance laws, about the counselling centre, you have options it's not that you have to tolerate DV or that you should think of ending your lives. They are given the example that when her brother gets married, he separates and sets up his own home, then what is wrong if you want to live separately as a nuclear family? We tell the women that have you noticed that if the father beats the mother children also learn the same thing that women should tolerate? Many women also hold the notion that women are women's worst enemy so we also address this - that women can be friends. We also tell them about savings. In cities if the same work is done by outsiders they have to be paid but you are not. We ask them about the kind of work they do and when they make a list they realize how much they contribute to the family- basically it's about getting women to value their contribution. Therefore they should learn to give themselves importance and value. Once the training is over, on the last day, the women would ask the trainers to stay back and spend more time with them.

The trainers would end the entire programme by asking the women what issues were of particular interest to each of them. Then a Nari Samiti or collective would be formed and the trainers would ask them to think of what the samiti would do if a case of domestic violence took place or if a woman reports health issues? Would the woman react the same way that she has been doing all these years? Or would her reactions be different in any way? Thus a group of 15 women would be mobilized to form the samiti. They would assume the responsibility of tracking services and keep a watch on cases of

domestic violence. Two women would be identified as leaders and provided leadership training. The most significant result of all this mobilisation was that women at least had a space to share what was happening with them- suicide was not the only option available to them. Ninety-eight villages were thus covered gradually. Every three months a two-day leadership training programme was conducted wherein the leaders were taken on exposure visits to block offices to understand how the police, health system and courts functioned- what their entitlements were and what services are to be provided by the government.

These groups addressed many key issues in the village. For example, the ANM would typically visit the house of the village headman and not visit all the houses especially those in the poorer section of the village. She would often stay only in the health centre at the block. The leaders began tracking these services and confronted the ANM about her responsibilities- that she is meant to visit all houses in the village. They would also meet the Block Health Officer to provide feedback about the performance of the ANMs. Many of the ANMs also took a fee for conducting deliveries. Some people would sell their grains or even jewellery to pay for these services. The leaders informed the villagers in many places that this is a free government service; the ANM is a paid by the administration for this service and does not have to be given a fee by the villagers. These issues were taken to senior health officials in the district and the leaders ensured in future the ANM's were residing at the sub-centre and providing services to all the villagers. Even now, if any ANM claims a fee for conducting a delivery the matter is brought to the notice of the leader.

The leader and collective is also the first site of response for women facing domestic violence. Typically the leader is the first one to provide counselling to women in abusive relationships. She also deals with the perpetrators by counselling and talking to him/ them and dealing with the situation. She even uses the threat of police action and court proceedings where necessary. The might of the organisation is also invoked. And these cases are

shared with the counsellors located at the block or district office of AWAG. But if the case is very complicated or the perpetrators are not amenable to any reason or threat the leader brings the case to AWAG. Or else if the kinship ties or extended family are among the perpetrators, the leader may pass on the contact details of the organisation to the woman and follow up with AWAG about the progress of the case. This is because family ties limit the possibility of taking action and assuming objectivity in resolving a case.

THE PROCESS FOLLOWED WITH THE CLIENT IN THE SUPPORT CELL

The support centre seeks to build a space where women in violent relationships feel safe and secure about sharing what has happened with them, with no fear of ridicule, shame or reprisal. The woman is welcomed, offered water, a separate space to sit comfortably and share her story. The counsellor ensures she gets a chance to share what has happened in total privacy. Even if her parents or relatives have accompanied her they are requested to wait outside. This is done to ensure she has the chance to share her experience and her expectations without anyone's pressure to influence her; to understand what she really wants. The counsellor has a detailed discussion about her case, for example, how she was married, who were involved in finalizing the proposal, details about the husband's family etc. The woman is given time to express what she wants to do about her situation. The counsellor assures her that whatever she says is completely confidential and will not be shared with anyone. Many women are scared but the counsellor assures them that whatever the woman shares is between them and the husband will never know of it. She is also encouraged to narrate all details of her story. She is asked what she would like as a solution to her problem. The counsellor may then offer all the options available before her.

Many times the woman is unsure of what she wants or is dillydallying. Or she may require time to process the options placed before her by the

counsellor. She needs time to think and therefore the counsellor assures her of help but asks her to take time to think over what she wants and come back. They assess the situation and prepare the woman to deal with further abuse – what steps she can take to halt the beatings or harassment. They also strategize with the woman how to deal with her husband—what will bring him to the centre, who is he likely to listen to, who should also be contacted and involved in the case etc. The counsellor discusses whether it would be better for them to persuade the husband or is the woman better placed to bring him for counselling. The process of counselling is aimed at placing all options before the woman along with their consequences but the choice of which option to pick is entirely the woman's. Many times what the woman wants may be diametrically opposite to what the counsellor thinks is the best for her in the given situation. For example, she may insist on going back to her husband even when it is clear the husband is simply not interested in continuing the relationship. In such situations the counsellors make the woman aware of the consequences of her actions. Or when they feel the husband is agreeing only under pressure and her future may be threatened but the woman insists on going back to her marital family, the conditions of her return are stringently put down and elders from the community are asked to provide some kind of guarantee and assume responsibility for the woman. If her life is under threat the counsellors counsel her about the possible consequences and most often such cases end in a divorce. But if the woman feels she can stay for a while in her natal home and sort out the matter the husband is asked to pay for her maintenance.

According to the counsellors, "Strengthening the woman is most important so that she becomes independent in handling the case." To illustrate what she meant, the counsellor at Rapar, Naseem, shared the case of Sugra. She was the second wife to her husband and was unaware that he was already married when she married him. She realized this when she went to her marital home after the wedding. Her husband turned abusive

soon after marriage and would beat her. In the years following marriage, Sugra gave birth to two children but the abuse did not stop. She attended one of the six-day awareness camps conducted by AWAG and realized that many of the issues being discussed were actually what was happening with her. That all the problems being raised by the trainers were part of her own life. She decided to act on the violence in her life and with the support of AWAG counsellors she filed a case of cruelty (498A) against her husband as well as a case for maintenance. She moved to her natal home and started living with her brother. She would attend all meetings and trainings organized by AWAG. Sugra became the leader of her village collective. Sugra decided that she should claim some part of her dowry also for the sake of her children and her own future. She negotiated with the police on her own and convinced them to help her in retrieving her stree dhan. There was pressure on her to reconcile with her husband but she resisted this and refused to go back. When her case came up for hearing she spoke for herself and was so articulate that the judge could not believe she was illiterate.

Sugra now resolves cases of domestic violence and is very well versed in police matters. She knows how to hasten up the process of issuing warrants and accompanies women to the court for their hearings. Sugra's case is an ideal example of the kind of change the counsellors wish to see in women approaching the support centre – an example where a woman became aware that what she was facing was violence and not acceptable; where she found the courage to take a decision about what she wanted to do, learnt about her rights, sought legal redress, fought her case in court, negotiated with the police for the retrieval of her dowry and has now become a role model for others.

AWAG is a very old and established women's rights organisation which is known for a strong feminist perspective in the work it does. Its approach to capacitate women with the strength to prevent further violence and negotiate for the enforcement of their rights defines all their interventions on

VAW, including the IPAP project. Their counselling process is focussed on building the woman's confidence to resist further violence. The counsellors do this by expressing solidarity with the woman, allowing her to ventilate her feelings, assuring her support, not deriding or blaming her in any way, offering all options she can exercise and creating the time and space for her to take a decision at her pace and according to her comfort. The effort is to try and ensure that the decisions are taken from a point of strength and based on what the woman wants as opposed to the most convenient option or a solution which weakens her position in the family.

AWAG had been working on addressing VAW for more than two decades when IPAP came into the picture. IPAP enabled them to work with the system more closely and in a much more systematic way. AWAG had been training police officials in the districts they work in and had built a good working relationship with them. They have also been involved in working closely with the government in drafting and doing periodic reviews of the state women's policy.

STRENGTHENED SUPPORT SERVICES AND ADVOCACY CAMPAIGN OF "SHAHEEN" AND HELPLINE NUMBER APPROACH BY "BHUMIKA"

DISCUSSION WITH PARTNERS IN AP AROUND ACHIEVEMENT OF OUTCOMES

In AP the IPAP programme is implemented through a network of seven partners but funds are routed through five partners. These organizations have been working on VAW since many years. They examined each outcome of the IPAP log frame and shared about which of them were most relevant to the work they were doing.

- Government officials in the relevant departments (Police, POs under the DV Act, Women and Child Development officers) are sensitized about the issue of VAW and have more knowledge of the laws, rules and regulations related to VAW and support services and related budgetary

allocation procedures to be followed for expenditure.

This outcome is most relevant to all organizations that are part of IPAP.

The founder of Bhoomika, Ms Satyavathy shared that Bhoomika has been running a magazine on women's issues since 1993 and it was during the course of doing this that the need for legal aid and support for women emerged. Initially the head of the organisation, Ms Satyavathi provided individual help and offered referrals to lawyers and legal aid experts. However, in 1997, there was a high profile case of a lawyer who committed suicide because of sexual harassment by a senior lawyer. Bhoomika carried an article on this and the founder felt that if someone as accomplished and senior as a lady advocate could take this step in spite of her education and legal background, how could common women be expected to handle harassment and violations? She felt that if there is a helpline at least it would lead to women seeking help in times of a crisis and not taking drastic steps such as suicide. Thus the idea of a helpline was born. The founder checked but found that such services were not available in the city. The programme officer in OXFAM, Ms. Girija, asked Bhoomika to submit a proposal with this idea and in December 2005, a formal proposal was made to OXFAM. In 2006 the helpline began. It was initially popularized through stickers and distributing post cards. At the same time when women started calling in for help the organisation also realized that they needed to have all the requisite information to give so there was a concerted effort by Bhoomika staff to gather all relevant information on schemes, services, programmes, police help services, shelter homes, advocates and lawyers willing to help. As the compendium of services was being prepared the founder decided to personally check out the quality of some of the shelter homes being referred to. So she conducted a small review of her own and found the situation was very bad- the facilities were poor and these shelters were like prisons where the woman could not be expected to recover from the trauma she

had tried to come out of. So she brought out a detailed report on the status of shelters and this was widely disseminated. It was also submitted to the WCD department. As per the legal aid services to be made available by the state, women are supposed to receive free legal aid from the legal aid board. These services are however not easily accessible to women, both due to lack of competent advocates and lack of accessibility to them. These issues were also brought to the notice of the state service providers. Bhumika then undertook a study of legal aid services in Ranga Reddy and Warangal districts- these were studied to understand how effective free legal aid services were for women and whether they were being accessed regularly. The study found that many times the advocate appointed by the state could not be traced or was not sensitive enough to deal with cases of VAW. Therefore, Bhumika felt the need to also set up its own panel of advocates who could represent the women seeking help from the organisation, through their helpline. Swadhaar homes or shelters set up by the WCD of the state government were also studied in a small study conducted by Bhumika and the report submitted to the CSWB. This study looked at how many shelters are operational and the quality of their services. According to the founder, Ms. K Satyavathi many things like this have mushroomed around the helpline.

Their constant advocacy around the Domestic Violence Act also resulted in the Chief Justice of AP passing an order that protection officers should be given two home guards to help them discharge their functions effectively. They are meant to provide help in serving summons, provide safety during court visits etc. When the organisation checked with the protection officers, they found they also did not know much about the Act. Similarly, while the government authorities had appointed service providers, they did not know what their functions were or what they were supposed to do. The organisation realized that counsellors, service providers as well as protection officers needed training on the Act. At the level of courts also, there were several

problems in the actual implementation of the Act. A convergence meeting was held in March 2013 at the office of the AP Women's Commissioner, where a special committee to support women survivors was formed and the founder of Bhumika was appointed the convenor of this forum. Bhumika was also part of advocating for better terms of service for protection officers and managed to increase the salary band to Rs 19,000 per month. They have been in the forefront of training judges and police officials and four such trainings were organized under IPAP. They feel they have been using feedback from the callers on the help line to improve services to be provided by the state. For example, there is the Rakshak police (a patrol team) that is meant to provide safety but they don't know what to do. Similarly, railway police services also do not know how to handle issues related to women's safety on trains or those of girl children so Bhumika has also been engaged in training them and building their capacities. In the class 9 social studies book of the state syllabus. Bhumika's help line has been mentioned. They also brought out a book on services available to women in AP. It contains details of police services, relevant government departments, service providers, other support services for women facing violence etc. This was released by the women's commissioner and has been made available to all departments and offices of the government. Similarly, Bhumika is also called upon to train departments on sexual harassment guidelines. During the 16 days of activism in November efforts were made to contact and influence all government departments on how to integrate prevention and ameliorative services for women facing abuse.

Organizations such as REDS in Kadri, work closely with the police department. Through the child-line service the organisation has sensitized the police to issues of domestic violence and its impact on the mental and physical health of children. During public service campaigns conducted by the state departments, the organisation contributes IEC material. Similarly, during trainings provided to beneficiaries under the Indira Kraanti Patham, REDS

is called in to provide inputs on women's issues. Similarly, SWARD, an NGO based in East Godavari district shared that their work with the police began even before IPAP. But the clarity around how to work with the police emerged through IPAP. SWARD had been providing training inputs to the police on gender based violence and women's rights under the law. The first women's support centre was set up in 2004 and this was possible due to appropriate advocacy by SWARD, Bhumika and OXFAM, with the Police Commissioners in each district. It was due to the effectiveness of this centre that four more centres were started in 2009. SWARD pointed out that one training or sensitisation programme is not enough to sensitize the police. In the last nine years since the centre started eight different police commissioners have been appointed. Therefore training the senior officials once is not enough. The organisation holds regular meetings every two months with the commissioner to share about their work and cases resolved. These opportunities help them sensitize the police to issues. Convincing the police seniors in cities is relatively easier, according to the organizations. In districts police officials tend to be more wary and therefore difficult to convince. At the same time, the organisation organized trainings for police officials when the DV Act was passed. There were widespread myths about women misusing 498A which have also been addressed in trainings with the police. The baseline conducted at the time of setting up the support centre also became an opportunity to train and sensitize police officials as they were also interviewed to understand the kinds of services put in place for implementing the Act. All the partners felt that they had come a long way in terms of their relations with the WCD department and police. They are a phone call away today.

However, working with the police and state authorities has its own set of challenges:

- Working in a police station where the working environment is very insensitive – partners recalled how shocking it was for them to be assailed with the language used.

- Frequent transfers of senior officials which means the new officials have to be oriented once again. In rural areas, talking to the station in-charge may be sufficient but when working in urban centres, it becomes necessary to brief several officials at different levels and multiple times as transfers are frequent.
- Earlier the police would be wary of support centres—why are they needed? What can they do which we cannot? Are they here to do our work?
- There was a tendency among the police to first file an FIR and then send them to the counsellor. Also their approach would be typically to check with the woman what she had done to deserve her husband's wrath. They would then threaten the husband and advise them both to adjust with each other—especially the woman as she would stand to lose a great deal if she filed a police complaint. This was diametrically opposite to the support centre's strategy. Convincing the police about their approach has taken time.
- Working in a mainstream police station where corruption is a way of life and accepted culture—to maintain one's space and identity without falling into this culture and also keeping away from controversies and taking stands on this issue with regard to the police's behaviour.
- The fact that the support centre is not institutionalized means that the peaceful functioning of the centre is dependent on the motivation and interest of the officer in-charge. For example, when the centre was first started in Hyderabad, the then Executive Director, Mr Umamathi, was very helpful and encouraging. But the official who came subsequently was not as supportive and was very suspicious of the centre's activities. She even got the centre closed for a week and later, due to advocacy by Bhumika with other senior officials, she allowed the centre to be re-opened. Slowly she became very supportive as well. But all this took time and effort.

The partners pointed out that this has been a very long struggle.

The partner from Warangal pointed out that in their district the police tends to be busy with either politicians or due to confrontations with Naxalites. Therefore they are very busy handling law and order situations. Given this, they took a very long time to be convinced that setting up a support centre for women was a worth-while activity. There were also security concerns because a support centre would mean more people entering the police station in an area where police stations are under constant threat of attack by Naxalites. Therefore the police were worried about letting such a cell operate out of the police station. It took up to six months before the SP agreed. Achieving the space to open the centre was a big achievement. The founder of Bhumika, OXFAM, SWARD and other NGO partners came together to form an alliance for convincing the police. One of the main challenges in Warangal was also to make the police station a space where women could walk in comfortably. The kind of language used was so offensive to both the clients and counsellors that it was both embarrassing as well as created great discomfort. At the same time corruption was also very high. Unlike SWARD, in Warangal, the support centre is located in a general police station and not a women's police station.

- *Women experiencing violence especially those from marginalized communities in the programme districts increase their access to the formal justice system and support services.*

The advocacy done by the various IPAP partners has resulted in several measures set up the state authorities to ensure proper implementation of the law. Representation to the High Court by Bhumika led to them setting aside a day only for hearing cases of DV at the district level. Similarly, the partners have also advocated for setting up women's courts. SWARD shared that during the 16 days of activism (activities are supported through IPAP) they conduct campaigns on gender rights with youth from marginalized communities. Similarly, they have also formed district level

committees with service providers to offer coordinated services. Clients who comes to the support centre are encouraged to bring one more client with them. The partners feel that in recent years, more and more Muslim and SC women have been coming to the centre. SWARD for example has been using the DV Act a great deal for their Muslim clients. The DIR offers a viable alternative to criminal complaints. Organizations such as Bhumika have said that through IPAP they have also been accessing the governments free legal aid services as well as reactivated mediation centres which have been set up in AP. These have been revitalized by IPAP partners especially in Ranga Reddy district. Bhumika utilizes its helpline to provide information to its callers about free legal aid services. They are also told about the free legal aid clinics provided through the legal aid services authority. Contacts in the media have been used to popularize the Bhumika helpline services.

REDS shared that through various community level campaigns on VAW they have succeeded in setting up vigilance committees which handle cases of VAW. These committees are composed of key stakeholders and meet once a month. These committees are operational in 20 villages and either resolve cases in the village itself or bring them to the support centre. In addition a mandal or block level federation has been set up with 13 NGOs some of whom are service providers under the DV Act. Wall writings in villages on VAW and laws related to women have also been made a part of the 16 days of activism.

- According to the partners, the various advocacy efforts they have undertaken have built the responsiveness of the Women and Child Development Department. They call upon the IPAP partners if they need any information, help or referral services. In Kadri, constant advocacy with the police has also centred on trafficking due to domestic violence. REDS gathered evidence from women who have been trafficked to show that such households are vulnerable to trafficking. Therefore they pressed on state agencies for the proper rehabilitation and

support of trafficked women as well as support services for women in situations of DV. In Kadri the district commissioner has instituted a practice of holding coordination meetings every Tuesday where the support centre staff as well as other concerned government departments meet to discuss cases and bottlenecks if any. This practice has continued though the commissioner has changed. Interesting examples of change in the district administration's attitudes were given by partners:

- Earlier they had to resort to formal letters of invitation for inviting them to training programmes and meetings, now they participate even with a simple phone call.
- Now they are willing to provide their training halls if we want to address their staff. The commissioner said to REDS, why email approval I will give you a hard copy.

REDS conducted a workshop with 49 judges as a part of the gender sensitisation week. According to Bhanuja, the director of REDS, the judges had tears in their eyes when they heard testimonies of survivors of trafficking and domestic violence. They also called women who had gone through the court procedures to share their experiences and all these testimonies were an eye-opener for the judges. They said, this workshop opened our eyes to what women go through in the judicial process.

KEY LEARNINGS THROUGH IPAP

- Earlier the partners kept the police at a distance and dealt with them only when unavoidable. Now they feel that because of working with the police, they know how to work through the system and this has been the biggest learning for them. They shared that the partners had to maintain the line of difference very carefully. For example, when a police officer asks for a bribe to register the case, the counsellors cannot assume a confrontational stand against it even though they know about it. They have to keep the bribe issue aside and ensure the case is registered properly. Or knowing well that a certain police officer is not working properly

they cannot take a stand directly and complain. They have to negotiate with the system to make it work. The counsellors have been trained that their job is not to make the police station a corruption free zone or to keep tabs on the police. If this becomes the tone of their work, they will cease to get any support from the police. Their job is to ensure the police do their duty but without assuming a confrontational stand. That is to say that an activist kind of stand may not be most effective.

- The partners also shared that working closely with the women police staff also made them aware of the immense difficulties under which they work- absence of toilet facilities, poor working conditions and lack of clean drinking water were some of the issues the women officers have brought up time and again. This also led the partners to examine their own attitudes towards the police. And when they shared their problems with the counsellors and partners, the partners promised to advocate for better working conditions as well.
- Documentation, transparency and regular follow-up are key to the successful running of these centres. The police may ask for any kind of documentation at any point- therefore it is critical to maintain all case records up to date and with all details. Then they also become accountable for cooperating with the support cell. Or if there is any problem later and the woman changes her statement or goes back on what she says, the details of the case records are what can prove the process that has been followed—there is documentary proof on how the woman was counselled in each session. This documentation is what keeps the process transparent. It's the quality of documentation as well where the process in each session is recorded in registers, the woman submits a letter of what she wants from the support centre and the police procedures followed if any are also maintained as a running record. Similarly, regular follow-up also builds the credibility of the support centre in the police system that they are here to make a difference and offer

genuine support- not just sort out the case and then forget about what has happened with the woman. The follow-up is also recorded. Follow-up also ensures compliance of the decisions and this makes the process of the support centre very strong and believable.

- Awareness of gender issues, laws related to women and VAW is critical to run a centre like this. The counsellors should be well versed on how to do counselling, how to support the woman and not take decisions for her. So training and capacity building of the counsellors and other staff attached to such centres is very critical. The support centre staff was given a 20 day training at TISS on counselling techniques.
- Absolute role clarity around what the counsellors are supposed to do and the role of the cell. The partners felt that the counsellors need to understand very clearly that they are not the police and neither is the police supposed to counsel. Their job is to register complaints. Neither is the counsellor's job to check or keep tabs on the police. They are not a monitoring authority on whether the police is doing its work or not. Their role is to ensure the police cooperates in registering the complaint if the woman so desires and under the correct law section. They can question the police on matters but only relating to the cases being handled by them. Their style of questioning also has to be positive and not accusatory. The role of the police is to protect citizens and women are also citizens thus they need to be protected too. The purpose is not to 'tell' the police, make them feel they don't know anything, but help them appreciate a different point of view by dialoguing and sharing with them how they have solved the case and the status of the woman now. The way the cell staff maintains records also helps them to convince the police about alternative ways to understand and resolve cases.
- Counsellors should be aware that they are not here to do everything but reactivate other support services that are meant to provide help

to women facing abuse.

FUTURE AND SUSTAINABILITY OF THE SUPPORT CENTRES

The partners were very emphatic that the support centre needs some more time before it can be institutionalized within the government system. The work of the support centre is becoming visible slowly and it's only now that there is a some kind of a growing buzz about its work. Closing the centres now would be premature and lead to a wastage of resources invested so far.

The founder of Bhumika shared that they are trying to seek support from the legal services authority for the continuation of the support centres. They are also trying to tap into the Corporate Social Responsibility network of funders to continue support. Ms. Bhanuja from REDS in Kadri shared that the SP in her district has offered to allow them to sit every Saturday in the police station and would refer all cases that come during the week, on that day to them. SWARD Director shared that she is trying to get some support from the local police so that at least one of their counsellors can sit in the police station.

The partners were unsure how effectively the centres could run if left to the devices of the police alone. They shared that even if the support centres are institutionalized in future, NGOs will need to play some kind of a monitoring role.

WHAT IS THE VALUE-ADD OF LOCATING A MODEL WHEREIN THE SUPPORT CENTRE IS LOCATED WITHIN THE POLICE STATION? INSIGHTS FROM AP AND GUJARAT

The Police station is a catchment point to access women facing abuse. It is a place where many women arrive after trying other sources of support and help- mediation by family members or by caste elders or the panchayat. Often it is the last resort. And therefore making this space a meaningful one for women where they can receive support and help is critical. The support centre fulfils this role. Many counsellors have shared that if even this space is not supportive to women they might choose to end

their lives. The expectation of help by most women reaching the police is that there will be some hearing or resolution to their problem but more often than not, the case is handled just as insensitively as other forums (panchayats or caste elders). Locating a counselling cell in the police station therefore ensures that at least for those women reaching this forum, there is a supportive platform available. At the same time, the relations built with the police through regular interactions and dialogue enables registration of complaints, where necessary.

If there is an authority that mediates registration of complaints the police become accessible to women. Once the police become accessible women may start coming forward in larger numbers to seek help. And this in turn may serve as a deterrent to VAW. The fact that the police are taking notice of the case and acting responsibly in registering the complaint sends a message that VAW will not be tolerated. The role of the police is to hear the woman out and charge the perpetrator under the right law sections. When they don't do this they fuel violence against women because it creates a sense of impunity in the perpetrator. On the other hand, when the police hear her out, register her complaint, follow the procedure and take action as the police should, they send out the message that the police is with her, violence against women will not be tolerated. And these steps are important to stop abuse because they send out the message that the state does not condone abuse and violence against women of any kind, what has been committed is a crime and that it is worthy of police action.

Placing a support centre in the Police Station also means trying to amend the way the state endorses the norm that Domestic Violence is a private matter, outside the ambit of serious police work and justified under certain circumstances. It is about trying to bring normative change by influencing the police to register cases where they are needed and under the right law section.

When a woman goes to the police station she may not always want to register a case; she may only

want the violence to stop. However, the police are not equipped to make this happen. They do not know how to handle the case without registering a complaint because registering complaints is their job. Neither do they know how to counsel such women because that is not their job either. Neither are they well qualified to do their real job—that of registering complaints and cases because they either do not know all the proper legal entitlements and procedures many times or they do not want to jeopardise the family- their own biases decide whether a case should be registered or not. In such a situation how does the police station become a place where VAW can be addressed? This is where a mediating body such as the support centre becomes relevant. The message behind setting up such a centre is that police action if taken appropriately and meaningfully can become an effective redress mechanism for VAW, with a deterrent effect as well. If the police stop allowing their personal biases to creep in during the discharge of their duty- registering complaints- then the police can become an effective mechanism to deal with VAW. And this is what the centre does.

According to AWAG, the police are a significant but small link in the chain of services to address VAW. A woman facing abuse within the family or outside usually has multiple needs which cannot be met by the police- their role is to register the complaint and take the matter to the court but many services before and after that- psycho-social counselling, legal aid, shelter, livelihood, maintenance of the woman and her children, safety from further abuse, mental trauma and anxiety- all these cannot be handled by the police. So their role is to register the complaint and that link or piece of work is the only one that the police can be expected to do. The support centre tries to facilitate this piece but also looks into other things the woman might need. Thus they have a strong referral system with shelters, legal aid services, psychological support etc. When these other services are also addressed, police help becomes meaningful – police action cannot work in isolation either for redress or deterrence. Its only when it is one of the many things that women are offered to deal with

abuse, can police action counter violence and serve as a deterrent.

AWAG has been engaged in training police personnel for a very long time and especially in the districts they work in, practically all police officials have been covered. Given this, AWAG was also keen to see whether their training is translating into any sensitivity on the ground when the police deal with women. The support centres they felt would also enable them to assess the effectiveness of training and capacity building.

From the perpetrator's point of view, a woman facing violence is countering many things along with the physical or emotional abuse - she is mentally disturbed, worried about her children, may not have money, doesn't have any other place to go, is scared of social consequences etc. When police action happens in the absence of other things, it has an effect but a limited affect. But when it happens along with other things the perpetrator may find that the woman is addressing the issue as a whole. And when that happens, it serves as a deterrent in the true sense. The act of punishing the abuser is what the police can do on an immediate basis.

Therefore what the evaluation has found is that locating the support centre in the police station has a physical dimension but also a deeper systemic dimension. At a physical level it creates credibility for the service and also invokes fear in the perpetrator. At the same time, it facilitates access to other government departments and service providers when the counsellor introduces herself as a part of the Police Station she sits in. It provides legitimacy. It also ensures access to infrastructure such as a physical space and police jeep along with a constable when retrieval of stree dhan has to be undertaken. However, at a systemic level, the centre provides a critical link with the police wherever needed and creates a coordinated response for the woman. At the same time, when the police become aware of how they 'fit' into the process of resolving a case—their own response to violence is much more meaningful. The police also become convinced of playing their role effectively

when they see other services being accessed, regular follow-up and a resolution to the case. This also becomes a way of sensitizing them that VAW issues can be resolved successfully and their role matters. To make this happen, locating the centre in the police station is important; this linkage cannot be built as effectively sitting outside the police station.

WOMEN SUPPORT CENTRES

In Odisha, Oxfam India has promoted support centres for women based in the police station premises in the districts of Cuttack, Dhenkanal, Rayagada, Kalahandi, Kandhamal. In Uttar Pradesh there is only which is run in Azamgarh district. In Gujarat there are six and in AP there are five such centres. Known as Women Support Centres (WSC), they are run in collaboration with the State Home Department, NGO partners and Oxfam India. The centres in the past four years have supported approximately 22,000 cases of domestic violence. The centres are located within the Police Department premises and with the infrastructure support from the Department. The Centre has two trained social workers who provide counselling support and link the survivors with medical, legal, shelter homes and other allied support services. There is a state level collective that is active at the state level for constant feedback to the Department of Women and Child Development (WCD) on issues of violence against women and implementation loopholes in the various acts that are meant to protect women from violence.

SUPPORT CENTRES IN UTTAR PRADESH

The focus of the programme in Uttar Pradesh is on strengthening support centres run in Azamgarh, Banda, Chitrakoot and Lucknow by three partner organizations—Sri Ramanand Saraswati Pustakalya (SRSP), Vanangana and Humsafar respectively. These centres have an outreach of 19 blocks. Two models of the support centre are operational—one that runs on the organisational premises and the other that runs in the office of the Superintendent of Police (SP). These support centres play a vital

role in providing support to women survivors. The centres have also given special attention to women from excluded communities especially Dalit, Tribals, Muslims, women with disabilities who face greater challenges in accessing the formal system.

SANJHA MANCH, UTTARAKHAND

In Uttarakhand, the model that has been promoted by Oxfam India has been a state level network, Sanjha Manch, comprising of membership from 60 civil society organizations across the state covering six districts which works on the issues of women and violence. The network, which has both individual and civil society membership, is active in advocacy with the Department of Women and Child Development at the state level on issues related to violence against women and also undertaking cases of domestic violence through network members at the district levels. The civil societies meet once a month and develop a plan of action. Association for Rural Planning and Action (ARPAN) coordinates the Sanjha Manch collective in Uttarakhand. ARPAN with its base in district Pithoragrh is working at the village level with rural women, youth (boys and girls) and other stakeholders (Government, media, other agencies) to address the issue of violence against women. There are district level units which are either civil society organizations or individuals who take up cases of domestic violence in that district. The district level civil society organizations and ARPAN together raise state and district level advocacy issues.

The intervention has been successful in improving reporting of women under PWDVA and at the counselling centre of the organisation and increasing the number of women rights groups to raise collective voice against violence.

WECAN CAMPAIGN

WECAN has targeted educational institutes in the last three years of the campaign (the campaign wound up in 2012 December). They also decided to work with panchayats, but found it more difficult than working with schools as they had to negotiate with too many systems and processes

in the government to move ahead. But working with educational institutions was easier because there was a manageable structure and system. The campaign was anyways working with youth (in and out of schools) but the purpose of specifically working with schools was to create a culture where equality is actively practiced within school systems and to institutionalize the campaign messages. The objective was to make equality a value of the school system itself. Working with educational institutions also helped build visibility and they were easier to approach than state institutions such as the panchayat. In retrospect, working with schools has also ensured continuity.

In the last phase of the campaign, what was done in educational institutions was slightly different from what was tried in the past. Typically in the campaign change makers in schools and panchayats and even in the community were encouraged to take whatever actions were feasible- it was left up to the change makers to initiate whatever actions they wanted to and most of them reacted to the campaign based on what they were exposed to, what they knew. Change makers were guided to take actions on what was possible and they attempted what came to their mind as a feasible step at that point of time. So for example, change makers put up complaint boxes in schools to create a forum for students to voice their concerns and problems. But in the last phase, the change makers in schools were encouraged to get back to smaller groups in the school and discuss emerging problems and concerns and what could be done about them, sharing responsibilities about actions. For example in many places (especially in peri-urban areas and district towns) the issue of girls dropping out of school emerged. The group discussed what was behind this and found out from the girls that the real reasons were that boys would tease girls or sometimes simply clapping and drumming in buses which were also used by girls became a source of embarrassment and shame for the girls. When parents came to know of this, their first reaction was to insist that the girls stop attending school to prevent any untoward incident from happening. A related issue here was also the absence of forums

for parents (such as a PTA) to raise these kinds of concerns with the school authorities. The last phase of the campaign aimed at helping change makers identify such issues and act on them rather than random prevention measures. The aim was to examine problems arising out of inequality and look for collective ways to address these. Within the school system inequality for example may be operating in very insidious and invisible ways and affecting the system as a whole- how does one become sensitive to these issues? Keep one's eyes and ears open for ways in which equality as a value in schools is being violated on a day-to-day basis and how this can be addressed. The basic premise was to get change makers to think of ways in which equality, as a shared value, can be operationalized in schools. The campaign also gave schools a charter which can be put up on the school board. The campaign has enabled students to understand the process of how values have to be lived out on a day-to-day basis- how to keep one's eyes and ears open to issues of inequality in systems and address them.

However, there is very little in terms of evidence about what changes took place within the school system. A questionnaire was given to the change makers on what kinds of actions they have taken but these have been filled very sparsely and apart from this there has been no systematic monitoring or evaluation as this was not built into this phase of the campaign. The issue of very late disbursement of funds also meant that activities could not be carried out over a year long period as planned. They were implemented over a very short time period of three months. This also affected the effectiveness of the intervention.

The cluster model adopted by WECAN in the third phase was partially successful (under this model a cluster volunteer was placed in charge of a cluster of 30 change makers and was expected to hold 3-4 sessions with them over a year). Getting the same group together every time was a challenge. This model assumed a high level of motivation on the part of the group. When implementing this model, it was found that cluster volunteers rarely

used opportunities other than the formal group gatherings to keep the dialogue alive; for example using newspaper articles or incidents to hold informal discussions. Cluster members were not always cooperative and would not attend meetings in spite of repeated reminders. The model raised the question of how engagement needs to be built and sustained within the group. Typically, groups are sustained when the members feel they have something to gain from being a part of the group. This happens when there is new learning or when there is some activity of value and interest to the members; when people relate to the group identity, feel valued by being part of it or when they do something as part of the group that makes them feel good. This may have been missing from the mobilisation process. The implementers felt that discussions among change makers were being held at a broad level of discrimination and violence whereas rooting the issue to one's own family and surroundings became less frequent. Hence if there was a case of inter-caste marriage, the issue was discussed at the level of caste discrimination and how this was manifest in many ways but reflection on how these issues may be operating in one's own home and life was not as strong. After the campaign ended in 2012 December, each district formed its own district alliance. Whether they are still functioning is not known. At a lot of places Mumkin Manchs or platforms were created which were expected to carry on engagement with the issue but whether this is happening on a sustained basis is not known.

What the campaign has managed to leave behind is structures that can carry forward the momentum of the change makers. But how effective these forums have been and whether they have succeeded in sustaining themselves is not known. At places where the campaign was layered on to existing programmes such as SHG groups, there is evidence that along with their other SHG activities, the groups are continuing to carry forward the discussions on VAW and discrimination. But in other places where cluster volunteers are working, it is not known whether the campaign is working in the same way.

ANNEXURE II: CASE STUDIES

BHARATI: A CASE OF COUNSELLING CELLS AT THE SUPPORT CENTRE AND POLICE SUPPORT

Bharati is a middle aged woman working as a housemaid in Hyderabad city. She has three daughters. Bharati is married to a man who works at a hotel as a helper and cook. Both of them live in a small house located in a low income colony. Bharati is illiterate and works hard to run the home. Her mother-in-law and nephew also live with her. Her nephew is a college student and is a great source of support to her and her children.

Bharati came to the support centre because she wanted help in dealing with her reclusive husband. He would abandon the family for days at a time and never contributed to running the house. He was also irregular at his job and the entire burden of running the home fell on Bharati. He would beat her, verbally abuse her in an inebriated state and even when sober. He would pick up quarrels over trivial matters. Bharati's husband also suspected her when she went out to work and kept accusing her of having relationships with other men. He even accused her of having an affair with her nephew. Bharati says he would humiliate her often saying that she was like his chattel and speak to her in a very humiliating manner.

An elderly neighbour told Bharati about the support centre. She wanted legal help in ending the relationship as she was sick of the whole situation. She told the counsellors about the hotel where her husband worked and had kept tabs to find out whether he had been coming to work. The counsellors used a variety of strategies to address the issue. They called the husband for counselling and spoke to him at length about the consequences of his behaviour. They shared how disturbed Bharati was with his actions and also the affect on his children. Bharati was not ready to reconcile with him but her children were insistent that they live together (her daughters are young

teenagers) and for their sake she decided to give the marriage another chance. The counsellors also told the husband that if he ever harassed her or tortured her in any way she had the right to seek police action and could also seek compensation and maintenance under the Domestic Violence Act. The fact that the support centre was supportive towards Bharati's case and the fear of police action made him realize he had to mend his ways. The counsellors feel the hotel staff also responded positively and cooperated with them by keeping them informed about his whereabouts and ensuring he attended work regularly.

The counsellors are in constant touch with Bharati over the phone to ensure she is doing well. They have also kept tabs on the husband through his employer and have maintained subtle pressure through his workplace so that he does not abscond.

Bharati reports that her husband is now well behaved and does not fight with her. He provides for the family. But she is also very emphatic that she did not want to continue the relationship with him. It was only for the sake of the children that she changed her mind- they are very fond of their father and cajoled her that they would all like to live together. This case was resolved recently, about three months ago.

ZAHIRA: A CASE OF INSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL SUPPORT

Aamina Sheikh is a 24-year-old woman living in Dilsukhnagar, a middle class colony in Hyderabad. She lives alone but comes from a large family of three brothers and three sisters. Her father was a government employee and her mother a home maker. They are a well to do family but Aamina is having to eke out a hard life. She works part time in an event management company and does odd jobs to survive. She left schooling before she could attain matriculation. She speaks passable English and Hindi/Urdu fluently.

Aamina's brothers have been torturing her and her mother since she was very young. The reason she said was because she was the only one who challenged the brothers when they tried to control her and her mother. Aamina's father has a lot of property- two houses and a lot of land and according to her, the brothers wanted to maintain strict control over the mother and sisters so they would not ask for any share in it. The strict control her brothers enforced on her only made her more rebellious and she would be beaten regularly to put her down. The situation reached an unbearable state one day when she was almost killed and ran away from her home. She took refuge with a friend and her case came to the NGO, Shaheen, through a lawyer, who was known to her family.

Presented below is Aamina's account of her story. Like all narratives of violence, there was a great deal of back and forth when she narrated her story to me. And I had to keep going back and clarifying details to fill in gaps. Aamina broke down many times during the course of her interview. And it was imperative to motivate her as she went along, offering her support and encouragement for the battles she was fighting. We discussed options before her, the possibility of a better life and what she could do to deal with her current trauma. Thus the role of the interviewer was transgressed many times by me but I feel that not doing this would be far more unethical than maintaining objectivity and distance during the interview process.

THE NARRATIVE

HISTORY OF ABUSE AND TORTURE

Right from the time Aamina was 4-5 years old her brothers would beat and harass her. They would beat her mother and torture her along with Aamina. **"THEY WOULD BEAT ME A GREAT DEAL. AND MY MOTHER, DRAG HER BY HER PLAIT AND PUSH HER OUT OF THE DOOR. WHEN THEY WOULD BEAT ME MY MOTHER WOULD COVER ME WITH HER ARMS AND TRY TO SAVE ME. MY SISTERS WOULD SIT INSIDE BUT NEVER INTERFERE. MY FATHER WAS A GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEE - HE WAS IN THE HEALTH**

DEPARTMENT AND WOULD BE TRAVELLING MOST OF THE TIME. HE WOULD BE HOME 3-4 DAYS A MONTH SO THE BROTHERS WOULD RULE THE HOUSE. THEY FELT WOMEN ARE LIKE A PAIR OF SHOES ('PAIR KI JOOTI HOTI HAI'). AND WHEN THEY ILL-TREATED MY MOTHER I WOULD PROTEST AND CHALLENGE THEM SO THEY WOULD GET ANGRY AND BEAT ME- THAT WHY WAS I BEATEN OFTEN- FOR RAISING MY VOICE.

THEY TORTURED ME IN DIFFERENT WAYS. THEY WOULD NOT GIVE ME FOOD FOR DAYS. I REMEMBER A TIME WHEN THEY GAVE ME FOOD THAT WAS THREE DAYS OLD ON EID. AND ONCE WHEN I HAD TO BREAK MY ROZA WITH SALT (CRIES BITTERLY). THEY LOCKED ME UP IN THE ROOM AND WOULD GIVE ME NOTHING TO EAT. I WOULD CALL OUT OF THE WINDOW TO CHILDREN PASSING BY AND ASK THEM TO GET ME FOOD. THEY TOOK AWAY THE FAN FROM MY ROOM DURING THE SUMMER. AND ALSO TOOK AWAY LIGHT BULBS. IMAGINE IN THE SUMMERS WHEN IT IS SO HOT, YOU DON'T EVEN HAVE A FAN. IF I WAS WATCHING TV THEY WOULD SWITCH IT OFF. THE ELDER AND SECOND BROTHER USED TO BEAT ME INITIALLY AND THEN THE YOUNGEST ONE ALSO STARTED. THEY DIDN'T EVEN LET ME COMPLETE MY TENTH. I HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO EVEN COMPLETE MATRICULATION.

THEY DID NOT WANT ANY OF US SISTERS TO GET A HUSBANDS WHO WOULD CHALLENGE THEM OR ASSERT THEMSELVES. OR ELSE HE WOULD ASK, WHY ARE YOU TREATING MY WIFE LIKE THIS? SO THEY MARRIED MY ELDEST SISTER TO A BOY SAYING HE IS A TRAVEL AGENT. ACTUALLY HE WAS A COOK AND MY SISTER IS HIS SECOND WIFE. AFTER A FEW MONTHS WHEN SHE BECAME PREGNANT HE ABANDONED HER. WHEN SHE MARRIED HIM, HE TOLD HER I WAS ACTUALLY NOT INTERESTED IN MARRYING YOU, IT WAS BECAUSE YOUR BROTHER FORCED ME THAT I MARRIED YOU." Aamina later told us that this man also had HIV/AIDS and has passed it on to her sister. She now lives in a separate house that belongs to her father. "Can you not live with her?" I asked and she said that her eldest sister also panders to whatever her brothers want and so they keep her well. She cannot live like that. The second sister is married to a man much older than

her and the third to someone who sells flowers. **“THEY BASICALLY WANTED BROTHERS-IN-LAW WHO WOULD BE UNDER THEIR CONTROL AND NOT ANSWER BACK OR QUESTION THEM AND WHO WOULD NOT ASK FOR TOO MUCH DOWRY.”**

“What about your father? Why didn’t he stop them when they did this to you?” I asked.

“HE WAS NEVER AROUND MOST OF THE TIME TO KNOW WHAT WAS HAPPENING AND WHEN HE TRIED TO STOP THEM THEY WOULD ALSO ATTACK HIM. ONCE HE TOLD ME IF I INTERFERE, THEY WILL HIT ME ALSO. HE WAS AFRAID OF THEM. MY MOTHER IS FROM KARIMNAGAR AND ONCE WHEN WE WENT THERE THEY ILL-TREATED ME THERE ALSO. I WAS READY TO GO THERE TO THE POLICE STATION. BUT MY MOTHER SAID, IF YOU PUT YOUR FOOT INTO THE POLICE STATION I WILL STOP SUPPORTING YOU. BECAUSE IF YOU DO COMPLAIN AGAINST THEM THEY WILL STOP GIVING ME MONEY FOR MY MEDICINES-SHE IS AN ASTHAMATIC PATIENT. THEN I GAVE UP THE IDEA OF APPROACHING THE POLICE.”

One day the elder brother had beaten her up very badly and she was injured. She was sitting on the sofa and her other brother again dragged her by her feet and started beating her very badly (begins crying narrating this).

“ON DECEMBER 18TH OF 2010, IT WAS A VERY COLD WINTER NIGHT AND I WAS LYING ON A THIN PLASTIC SHEET IN THE ROOM- THEY WOULDN’T GIVE ME A PROPER MATTRESS TO SLEEP AND MY BROTHER WALKED IN AND TURNED ON THE FAN REGULATOR TO HIGH (SPEED). THE FAN STARTED ON FULL SPEED AND I WAS VERY COLD SO I GOT UP AND ASKED HIM TO TURN IT DOWN AS IT WAS FREEZING. HE GOT ANGRY AND STARTED BEATING ME MERCILESSLY. HE BEAT ME SO MUCH. ALMOST FOR TWO HOURS HE KEPT HITTING ME AND AFTER THAT HE DRAGGED ME TO THE KITCHEN TO KILL ME BY TURNING ON THE GAS AND FORCING ME TO STAY CLOSE TO IT. I RAN OUT AND PUSHED MY WAY OUT OF THE FRONT DOOR OF THE HOUSE AND AS SOON AS I DID THAT THEY PUSHED ME FROM BEHIND AND SHUT THE DOOR ON ME. I FELL DOWN THE STAIRS OUTSIDE THE FRONT DOOR AND

WAS BLEEDING LIKE ANYTHING. FORTUNATELY I HAD KEPT MY CELL PHONE IN THE POCKET OF MY DRESS SO I WAS WITH IT WHEN I CAME OUT. I IMMEDIATELY DIALLED THE POLICE NUMBER 100. AFTER A WHILE THE POLICE VAN ARRIVED AND FOUND ME HUDDLED NEAR THE STAIRS. THEY RANG THE BELL BUT NO ONE WOULD OPEN THE DOOR. THE GATE WAS ALSO LOCKED AND NO ONE COULD COME IN. FINALLY, THE POLICE HAD TO JUMP OVER THE GATE AND COME IN. MY BROTHERS FINALLY OPENED THE DOOR AND ALLOWED THE POLICE TO COME IN; THEY TOLD THE POLICE THEY HAD LOCKED ME OUT BECAUSE I HAD COME IN WITH MY BOYFRIENDS. THE POLICE SAID WHEN WE CAME IN WE COULD NOT EVEN GET IN HOW DO YOU EXPECT US TO BELIEVE THAT THIS GIRL CAME IN WITH HER BOY FRIENDS? AND THE FACT SHE IS BLEEDING SO MUCH AND IS GRIEVOUSLY HURT ALSO MEANS THERE IS SOMETHING WRONG HERE.”

The police threatened the brothers and said they would book a case against them for assaulting Aamina. They told her to come to the police station in the morning by 10.30 am and told her to go back into the house and not to be afraid. Aamina said she slept late as she was really tired and when she got up in the morning, it was past 10.30. In any case she went to the police station as told by the police and was shocked to find that they were very unsympathetic to her case. She later found that her brothers had paid the policemen Rs 5000 each and bought them over, so they refused to book a case against her brothers and sent her away. Aamina says she knew she could not now go back to her brothers’ home as she had approached the police and her brothers would never take her back. So she left for a friend’s house. Her friend was sympathetic and kept Aamina at her place.

THE TRAVAILS OF LIVING ALONE WITH NO JOB PROSPECTS

Once Aamina moved out of her home, the brothers filed a complaint against her with a lawyer. They alleged that she had run away with gold and other possessions from their house. This lawyer called her and asked her side of the story. When Aamina narrated what she had been going through, he

advised her to approach the lawyer at Shaheen. The lawyer at Shaheen has been guiding her on the legal entitlements due to her and has filed a case for maintenance under the Domestic Violence Act. This case has been filed against her brothers. Aamina has sought a lump sum settlement. Her case has been dragging in the court for two years and there is no end in sight. During one of the hearings, Aamina's father gave a statement in court (according to the lawyer) that she has many liaisons and affairs with many boy friends so she has been thrown out of the house by her brothers. The lawyer said she knows the girl and has run into her on several occasions but never found her with any man. She felt in the kind of conservative Muslim society they live in, no father can dream of alleging such things against his daughter and if he is doing this, it is a shocking matter and shows how cruel and inhuman her family is.

For the last two years Aamina has been staying with support from her friends. Currently, she is living at a friend's house in Ditsukhnagar. They have given her a small room above their house and she does odd jobs—largely in events agencies as a hostess. The counsellor later told us, this requires her to stand and welcome guests at events/functions. Men tend to make advances towards her, there is harassment and she feels very vulnerable. Even when she has tried to work in a mall, she finds it is difficult as there is a lot of sexual harassment and the fact that she is a single woman makes her easy prey for men.

Aamina said she tends to cook once a day on her small pertomax to save fuel. She has been borrowing money from friends and manages to make ends meet through the odd jobs she does. She has taken loans to the tune of Rs 37,500 and this has been the cause for a lot of tension. Aamina is struggling to make ends meet and survive while also fighting the case. She broke down many times during the course of the interview. She repeated many times that she has lost all hope in life and cannot go on. She said, **“THIS IS THE END OF MY LIFE AND MY STORY. IF I GET THE MAINTENANCE MONEY AT LEAST**

I CAN START MY OWN BUSINESS AND BECOME FINANCIALLY INDEPENDENT. I WOULD LIKE TO SET UP A SMALL GARMENTS SHOP IN SHILPARAMA (AN EXHIBITION PLACE). THERE IS SOMEONE I KNOW WHO IS WILLING TO ADVANCE CLOTHES TO ME IF I WANT TO START THIS.” Aamina feels she has good marketing skills and can market products quite effectively. But because she has no formal education, she cannot hope to get a full time, well paying decent job. Therefore starting something of her own is the best alternative for her. But her sense of hopelessness and despair are very strong. She feels totally alone and disgusted with her situation.

Although she has not spent time with any of the counsellors at Shaheen, discussing her problems specifically, they later shared that the founder of Shaheen Ms. Jameela has spent a lot of time counselling her, building her strength and encouraging her to study further through open school or join any of the vocational programmes run by Shaheen. One of the main problems is the financial implications of travelling every day for these classes which will place a lot of burden on her. So while she would like to pursue these options lack of finances for travel are a serious barrier.

SOCIAL ISOLATION AND INSECURITY

According to the counsellor, Aamina's case may not be typical but there are many women in such a situation where brothers and fathers control their lives with an iron hand. They have no resources and no options of breaking out of such a situation. They shared that Shaheen has at least helped this girl to find some kind of a footing. When she first came to Shaheen, she would often talk of suicide and ending her life. The counsellors feel that now she is at least able to find the strength to live and has gained enough courage to fight back. They also acknowledge that Aamina's situation is particularly difficult. **“FOR A WOMAN TO LIVE ALONE IS VERY, VERY DIFFICULT. ESPECIALLY IF SHE STAYS IN THE OLD CITY, SHE IS UNDER CONSTANT SCRUTINY. AND AAMINA'S PROBLEM WITH HER BROTHERS ALSO STARTED BECAUSE SHE WOULD WEAR JEANS AND**

TOPS. SHE WOULD ONLY WEAR A SCARF AND NOT A BURKHA. NOW YOU SEE SHE WEARS A BURKHA. THE ENVIRONMENT IN THE OLD CITY IS VERY UNSUPPORTIVE OF SUCH WOMEN. SHE LEFT THIS PLACE AND TOOK UP LODGINGS IN DILSUKHNAGAR ALSO BECAUSE IT IS MUCH SAFER FOR HER THERE... SHE CAN COME AND GO AS SHE WANTS....THERE IS MORE ANONYMITY. IF SHE LIVES HERE HER PEOPLE WILL ALWAYS KEEP WATCH ON HER, NEIGHBOURS AND PEOPLE LIVING AROUND WILL ALWAYS KEEP TABS AND MAKE HER LIFE MISERABLE."

Aamina's case is an extreme one maybe but it is indicative of the kind of abuse and violence women face. She is a very strong person and has managed to break out of her home but it has been at a very high cost to her. According to her, *"What I have now is that I am no longer hit and beaten. But apart from that every day is a struggle"* Explaining her situation she said, **"IF I PINCH MYSELF YOU CAN SEE ME PINCHING MYSELF AND EMPATHIZE WITH THE PAIN BUT YOU WILL NEVER KNOW WHAT THE PAIN IS LIKE."**

What is also amazing is that in spite of what she has gone through she has not been put off by men- as in she looks forward to a married life- to being "settled down with a husband". And the fact that she is unlikely to find anyone to 'take care of her' and provide her with a normal life, is a cause of great stress and mental distress for her.

SHAHEEN'S ROLE IN AAMINA'S BATTLES

Aamina comes across as a feisty fighter but she is battling so many odds right now that she is unable to deal with everything and feels overwhelmed. This was probably the reason she constantly kept saying she just could not carry on and wanted to give up. Shaheen has provided her legal aid and is also providing counselling services (building her confidence, trying to motivate her not to give up hope and keep finding ways of supporting herself) but this seems to be happening more at the level of the head of the organisation. Counselling has been crisis focussed and the case being so complex, no one else besides the lawyer has

gotten involved. The counsellors shared that counselling is done sometimes individually but also by those present- as in others also pitch in or are at least hearing in.

Aamina's lawyer has also been offering her support and counselling her. She has been motivating her and keeping up her spirits. She has shared her own story with Aamina so that it serves as an example. The lawyer incidentally is also in a difficult marriage—her husband's family has been very unsupportive, her husband does not have a job and she is involved in a bitter legal battle with them for a share in marital property. She went on to say that she too feels like 'giving it up all' sometimes! The entire story of Aamina and her lawyer makes one realize how much of a struggle the entire situation is. Probably the fact that there is a shared story of suffering also means that the lawyer relates closely to the women who visit Shaheen and they too draw comfort from her.

The reason the counsellors at Shaheen wanted the evaluation team to cover Aamina's case was because it showcased how a girl who was on the brink of ending her life had found the courage and motivation to fight back, and survive, due to the counselling provided by Shaheen.

ANALYSIS

Aamina's case brings out the multiple levels at which women in abusive situations require assistance and services. While Shaheen is providing psycho-social support and counselling, Aamina is very challenged by her situation. Shaheen is also challenged by the extent to which they can support her. The financial constraints faced by Aamina are far too serious for Shaheen to address. The lack of livelihood options hangs heavy on her. The Domestic Violence Act has been utilized to ask for maintenance from her brothers but the long drawn legal battle along with the struggle for daily survival makes the law of little use.

SAJIDA (ZEENAT): A CASE OF UNENDING STRUGGLE

BACKGROUND

Zeena is a 38-year-old woman living in Hyderabad. She belongs to a middle class family and has three children—two daughters followed by a son. Zeena is a home maker. She has completed her matriculation and is very articulate.

She has been visiting Shaheen's counselling centre for the last two years. She began narrating her story by saying that although the centre was trying to get her maintenance, it was of precious little use to her. She was very worried about the future of her daughters. Zeena explained that her daughters and she were involved in a bitter legal case against her husband because he had raped both minor girls over several months. She is frustrated and angry with the courts because in spite of it being an 'open and shut case' she is running from pillar to post for justice.

ZEENAT'S NARRATIVE

Zeena was working as a household help in a rich household where her husband was also working. He showed an interest in marrying her and proposed marriage. They were married when she was 17. He is also close in age to her. He was a photographer and used to work as a helper in the governor's house. They were living in the quarters allocated to service staff. They had three children—two daughters and a son. Zeena had a problem with asthma and would be given strong medicines that made her drowsy. She would fall into a deep sleep after medication and there were no sexual relations between husband and wife for a long time due to this. About two and a half years ago, her husband started raping her elder daughter who had just attained puberty. She was 12. Zeena says that every night her husband would stay away till late on the pretext of doing some work while she waited for him to join her. It would be really late and she would invariably consume her medicines and fall into a deep sleep which is when he would rape the daughter. This went on for 10 months and

her daughter did not tell her anything. She says during this time she also did not notice anything amiss except that her husband was avoiding all sexual contact with her and staying away. Zeena later shared that he was abusive towards her and often beat her after drinking alcohol.

Two and a half years ago Zeena had to be hospitalized because of a minor operation. But after a day or two she asked her husband to take her home because the children were by themselves and she was worried. But since her husband did not turn up on time in the morning, she decided to go home and check on the children. She spoke to the patient in the bed nearby and said she would be back soon. Her husband was at home at this time. When she reached home, Zeena found the bedroom was closed and on hearing her, the younger daughter rushed out of the bedroom without her salwar. She rushed into the other bedroom and looked very nervous. Zeena was puzzled and when she entered her bedroom she found her husband inside and the zip of his trouser was undone. Zeena says she knew something was very wrong but did not immediately react. She was not sure what to do. She waited till the evening when her husband left home and she was alone with her daughters.

"THEY WERE SITTING AND DOING THEIR HOMEWORK ON THE DINING TABLE AND I WENT UP TO THEM AND PLACED MY HAND ON MY ELDER DAUGHTERS HEAD – SHE IS AT AN AGE WHEN GIRLS SHOULD BE PLAYING- AND I SAID, PLEASE TELL ME WHAT HAPPENED WITH YOUR FATHER. MY DAUGHTER IMMEDIATELY SAID NOTHING HAPPENED, NOTHING HAPPENED AND THEN I ASKED HER TO SWEAR ON ME AND SAID IF YOU LIE, I WILL DIE. TELL ME WHAT HAPPENED, WHAT HAS YOUR FATHER BEEN DOING? MY DAUGHTER OF COURSE GOT WORRIED THAT SOMETHING WOULD HAPPEN TO ME IF SHE DID NOT TELL ME THE TRUTH. THE YOUNGER ONE THEN SAID YES, HE HAD BEEN DOING IT. I ASKED HER SINCE WHEN AND SHE SAID SINCE YOU WENT TO THE HOSPITAL." Zeena then also cajoled her elder daughter and asked her if her father had spared her she admitted that he had been raping her for 10 months. Zeena said she was shocked and horrified

that her daughter had kept this hidden for so long. And then it dawned on her why he was keeping away from her. She wept bitterly and did not confront her husband right away. The next morning she went to a friend's place nearby and shared what had happened. She said that she was also angry that her daughters had chosen not to share this experience with her. She left her children with her neighbours so their father would not have access to them and went to meet her parents because she did not know what to do.

Zeenat's parents live in Bangalore and lead a very modest life. When she shared what had happened to her daughters with them, they were livid. Her father came back with her and confronted her husband. "He was shocked at my husband's behaviour. Can a father really do this with his daughters? He asked". Zeenat's father scolded her husband soundly and used harsh words to express his unhappiness. Zeenat said her husband shed tears but didn't say anything else. Her husband left for his parents place. The intervening period was very difficult and Zeenat says she would keep crying. The husband's brothers advised him to refute the charges and pretend he had nothing or else he would be in for a lot of trouble. In the meantime as more people around came to know this had happened the religious clerics also got involved and pronounced that he would have to divorce his wife and they could no longer live under the same roof.

Zeenat decided to file a police complaint after a few weeks. She did this because her husband was living with his parents and denying all the charges levelled against him. She wanted him to feel remorse for what he had done. Zeenat is a strong woman and ensured her children were not traumatized by police questioning. She recalls how when she was talking to the police station in-charge, a male constable started quizzing her daughter about what happened. She immediately objected and the in-charge arranged for a female constable to question the girl and also a female writer to note the case.

Zeenat recounted how she took the children to the government hospital where the doctors conducted the two finger test on the elder daughter and found it was positive. Based on the statements of the girls and the medical reports, the father was arrested and stayed in jail for two months. After this he was let out on bail. His family is supporting him staunchly even though they know he is guilty. The charge-sheet has been filed but the case has not yet come up for hearing. While the circle inspector and senior officials were supportive verbally it really did not amount to much concrete help because they have been unable to speed up the trial. Zeenat feels cheated about this and says that while police officials show lip sympathy they have not pushed for the trial.

CIRCUMSTANCES AT PRESENT

Not only is the husband roaming around like a free man, he has also managed to remarry. He has however been suspended from his job. Zeenat has been allowed to retain the quarters which lie locked. Zeenat also chose to remarry so that her children have a roof over their head and their future is not disturbed. She is the second wife to a man who has grown up children and runs a hardware store. He was well aware of the entire case when he married her. She shared that he never objects to her frequent absence from home because of the court hearings. He invests in the daughters' education and never mistreats them in any way. However, what was really moving was when she shared about how the children feel a very strong sense of obligation and shame in front of their step father. She broke down when she spoke about how she has to coax them to eat comfortably in front of him because they feel very ashamed. Zeenat also spoke about how this marriage she has entered is out of sheer necessity for her children. She does not want them to go through any more hardships and will put up with whatever it takes to make the marriage work. Her husband is supportive and does not deny her money or anything she wants for herself or her children. But Zeenat alluded to her far from happy sexual life as she has to **"PUT UP WITH WHAT HE ASKS FOR BECAUSE I HAVE TO**

MANAGE THIS MARRIAGE SOMEHOW”. She spoke in veiled terms that her husband asks her to do things she does not enjoy (sexual acts) but for the sake of her children she is carrying on with the relationship.

INTERVENTION BY SHAHEEN

Zeenat approached Shaheen through a constable at the Collector’s office who referred her here saying they may be able to help her receive some kind of monetary compensation for the children. She has been given free legal aid by Shaheen and has filed for a lump sum maintenance/compensation for her children under the Domestic Violence Act. The advocate at Shaheen has been supportive and offers her encouragement, especially as the case has not even come up for hearing. Zeenat is a strong person but shared how broken she feels at times. She would ideally like to take her children, go away to her parents place and start life afresh, in an area where no one knows them. But the court case has tied her hands now and she rues the fact that her husband is roaming freely. What she wants now is only that he be punished and serve a strict prison sentence. Her desire for compensation for her children has waned- all she wants is for her daughters to come out of the trauma they have undergone. She says she tries to keep them busy with activities, school work and other things so they never find the time to recollect or ruminate over what happened. But of late, she finds her daughters feel very angry about what has happened and are fed up with constant visits to the court.

ZEENAT’S UNENDING STRUGGLE FOR JUSTICE

Zeenat’s struggle is far from over but what she has on her side is family support of some kind and the hope that her children will succeed in the future. However, the long drawn out case seems to have depleted her inner reserves of strength. She spoke of the hopelessness of the entire situation and her life. Her biggest worry at present is the distress being faced by her daughters. She says she is also tired of sharing her story with so many people

including newspapers and TV channels. Shaheen is supporting her legally and the advocate is hopeful that matters will get resolved soon but she also admitted that such cases take very long to come up for hearing and even when they do the trial drags on for years.

Zeenat’s story like Aamina’s shows how delays and long winded court cases can wear thin the resolve of even staunch survivors of violence. While civil society organizations and NGOs provide legal aid and crisis counselling services, they too operate in a context where judicial processes take very long and sentencing of the criminal happens several years after the violation has occurred. In the meantime, the survivor has to deal with many practical and emotional demands that leave her drained of energy and resolve.

Both cases that have been captured by the evaluation are extremely complex cases of severe violence and brutality. Shaheen is a very committed organisation but like an island of excellence in a social context where women have severe restrictions on mobility and opportunities.

SUMANA: A HELPLINE APPROACH

Sumana is a 26-year-old girl who lives in Karman Nagar Hyderabad. She is 7th pass and was married off at 18 to a man known to her family through a distant relative. The husband’s elder brother was known to the family. Sumana says he was fine till a year after marriage. And then he began harassing her for money. During this first year they lived with his elder brother and this family was quite loving towards her. But soon after the birth of her first child- a daughter- he began harassing her for dowry. He would often call her mother for money. Sumana shared that her husband was also a womanizer. According to her mother he did not even come and take her back for six months after the delivery and her parents had to take care of her. But once he took her back, he did not show any interest in taking care of her or the child. The mother says she went to drop her daughter and found he had not bought anything for her house.

She took the responsibility of buying the basic necessities and also purchased provisions. He would come home drunk and beat Sumana and abuse her. According to her mother in the years she lived with him, her daughter was always calling her for help. She sold all her jewellery to make ends meet. The son-in-law would call his MIL on some pretext or the other and ask for money. The first time he called her and told her Sumana had set fire to herself. She rushed to their house and found her daughter was fine. She had also dragged a few of her neighbours along due to the crisis and they beat up the SIL for creating trouble for the mother and daughter.

The second time around he called telling her Sumana had received an electric shock and she should come and take her away. Sumana's mother did not come to fetch her because she knew better from experience. The third time he called asking her to fetch Sumana because she had appendicitis and that she should bring Rs 20,000 and this time again the mother did not come. He was also abusive towards her as well and told her mother that even if Sumana has to prostitute herself she should and get the money he needs. If she has borne a daughter, she would have to deal with all this.

About a year ago, the husband asked Sumana to get Rs 1 Lakh from her parental home and tried to convince her mother that he would use this money to secure a flat. Sumana's mother was unable to muster up this amount. She refused as she was sure he would fritter away the money. Soon after she received a call from her daughter that he had poured kerosene and tried to set Sumana on fire. Sumana was brought back to her mother's house by her parents and has been with them since then. Her case was taken up by the local police station and in spite of repeated visits they did not do anything to arrest her husband or proceed with the matter. It was then that one of the elders in the neighbourhood suggested that Sumana approach the support centre for women.

When they approached the support centre the counsellor heard out her story and asked her

what she wanted to do. If she was interested in reconciliation the counsellors would call the husband and talk to him. They also told her she could seek maintenance from him using the DV Act. They contacted the police station where the case had been registered to get the details of the case. Sumana was clear that she did not want to have anything to do with her husband. She wanted a divorce. However she wanted him to pay a lump sum as compensation. With this money she wanted to start a small enterprise. The counsellor sent her to the relevant protection officer and liaised with her to ensure Sumana's case was taken up seriously. The protection officer has filed a report and the procedure to secure the money is underway. It is likely to take up to two months before she receives the money.

Sumana's mother mentioned repeatedly that the support centre was where they could at least get a decent hearing for their problems and where they have seen some action to secure support for her daughter. She was very appreciative of the counsellor and showed me the reports filed at the police station as well as by the protection officer. The police had filed a case under Section 498A but the complainant was not aware of this. The husband was arrested but is now out on bail. The counsellor shared that based on what Sumana wanted she would be referred for legal aid to initiate divorce proceedings. The support centre has a panel of lawyers who provide legal aid to clients. Sumana's mother shared at length about the harassment and verbal taunts she had to tolerate from her son-in-law. She felt the money Sumana would get would at least act as some kind of a buffer for her daughter and ensure some economic security. Sumana broke down many times during the course of the interview as she feels totally helpless. She is working as an attendant at a school nearby (where her daughter also studies) and earns about Rs 2000 a month. But she knows this is a very meagre amount to eke out a living. Right now, her parents are very supportive and she has a place to stay but feels guilty because she has other siblings they need to also think of. She would like to move out

and make a life of her own once she has some money. Sumana is also aware that with her poor educational status, it is going to be difficult for her to get a well paying job. This is the reason she wants her husband to pay up some compensation which can help her stabilise herself.

Sumana's mother has been a big source of support for her and this is something she recognized even as she lamented the delays in the justice system. Her mother is also strong and although poor she wants to ensure her daughter is compensated in some way.

SUVARANA: A HELPLINE APPROACH

Suvarana is a city bred, highly articulate and confident woman in her late 30s. She has completed a Master's course in nursing and runs her own nursing training institute. Suvarna has a 3 month old baby and a son who is a teenager. She lives in an upper middle class colony in Hyderabad city. Her husband is an IT professional and they fall in the high income bracket. Suvarna speaks fluent English and Telugu.

Suvarna has been married for just over a year now. She met her husband through acquaintances and married him shortly after meeting him. She says she was not aware of any problems with him when she married him. But after marriage she found that he would flare up for small reasons and was very fussy about details. He would fight over trivial matters and was unable to maintain normal social relationships. He had quit a good job with an IT company for no reason at all and did not share why he did this. She felt they were not getting along well at all and were having too many fights and quarrels. He has never hit or beaten her but verbally harasses her and picks fights over trivial matters. For example she shared that he resented the fact that she would have to meet too many people in the course of her work and pick fights over this. He would also accuse her of not treating him respectfully, which she felt was unfair. She felt he expected her to treat him with too much deference and regard, as if he were in some way

superior to her. Suvarna also shared that he was sexually not very active.

She came to know in due course that his mother is a schizophrenic who has been taking treatment for many years now. When she came to know of this she thought he also might be suffering from the same disease. But this has been ruled out. She felt he may be having personality issues and therefore she felt approaching the support cell may provide some answers. She felt that maybe she was too successful and that may have been rankling him.

Their case was brought by her to the cell about a couple of months ago. She came to know of the cell on her own, as her training institute is close by. Her expectations from the support centre were that the counsellors would be able to ascertain the problems her husband seemed to be having with her and help the marriage settle down. The husband had attended a couple of sessions and she felt he was slowly settling down. The counsellors shared that the husband was very cooperative and agreed readily to attend the counselling session. What he shared had cast a different light on the whole case. He felt that she very dominating and tried to control everything and everyone around her. He felt she had married him for social respectability and not for emotional reasons. This was Suvarna's second marriage – her first had ended in a divorce. And therefore she was under pressure to remarry for social conformity. He felt under-valued in the relationship. He felt she did not show much respect and regard towards him. Suvarna is from an economically much higher status than her husband and he felt this was constantly made apparent in the ways she treated him. He felt she did not really need him. The counsellors gave him an equal hearing, as much as they had offered Suvarna. They said they would also counsel her about her behaviour but also asked the husband to be more open minded towards her as she has to meet and interact with several people in the course of her work. The issue of expecting too much deference in the relationship was also addressed by them. Since he has shared all the details of the

case and their frank discussion they felt he has become a little better in his interactions with his wife. But they said they now would also counsel Suvarna in terms of how she is approaching the relationship. But they feel confident that this is a case where a serious mismatch of expectations is creating problems and misunderstandings.

SUSHEELA BEHN: A STORY OF NEGOTIATING ABUSE AND SURVIVING AGAINST ODDS

BACKGROUND

Susheela behn is approximately 40-years-old. She is a home maker at present. She lives close to Patan town in Gujarat. She has two sons and a daughter. Her father now lives alone. Her mother and brothers are no more (saying this Susheela broke down the counsellors immediately consoled her. One of them went out and brought her water to drink. They cajoled her not to talk for some time and calm herself. And one of the counsellors explained to the interviewer that Susheela is very disturbed by the death of her mother).

Susheela is the youngest of three sisters; all of them are now married. She has studied up to class X but did not clear her final exams. She was married at 17 to a man who was seven years older than her. She did not know him and the marriage was fixed by a relative. Her marital family consisted of two brothers-in-law, two sisters-in-law and her husband's parents. Susheela's husband was a daily labourer who took on whatever work came his way. Her husband had failed his XII exams.

HISTORY OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, SEPARATION AND RECONILATION

According to Susheela bhen, the initial years of marriage were good. But after the birth of her first child, a son, Susheela started facing domestic violence. In her words, "when he (her husband) would come home from work her in-laws would carry tales about her to her husband. They would blame her for not doing her domestic duties. They would instigate the husband against Susheela behn. The mother-in-law would often taunt and

harass her about her work. Susheela says that when they fought her husband would not 'call her near him' for two to three days and neither would she call him to her. Then things would settle down and she would go 'near him'. Maybe Susheela was alluding to sexual relations but she chose not to elaborate. He would beat her on and off and she kept quiet about it. Even when she was facing severe domestic violence her parents did not intervene in any way.

After four years of physical violence and the constant fights arising out of these conflicts, she says she could bear it no more and left for her natal home. However, her husband did not visit her or try to fetch her back. And on the odd occasions he did come to her natal home he fought and left.

Susheela shared that after four years of living apart from her husband she decided to go back to her marital home. The reason was that Susheela behn's father-in-law wanted her husband to divorce Susheela and remarry but since her husband was not getting any proposals, he decided to reconcile with Susheela and she also decided to go back to him. Susheela gave birth to a daughter soon after and the violence re-started. This time Susheela left for her natal home and stayed apart for three years. Her husband came to fetch her after three years and she thought he had turned a new leaf. In reality, he came to fetch only her daughter. Susheela refused to part with her and said if he wanted to take his daughter he would also have to accept Susheela back in his life. Hence she moved back with her husband. Her older son was living with his paternal grandparents all this while. After she went back for the second time, Susheela had a son.

Susheela shared that although her husband did not really abuse her, the violence by her in-laws continued unabated. Her father-in-law and mother-in-law would taunt her constantly about what she had brought from her father's house and coax her to get out of the house. Susheela says she was so fed up with this constant mental harassment that she decided to end her life. She poured kerosene on herself and tried to set herself on fire. (When she

remembered what she went through she started crying again and the interview was halted for a brief while. She was given the option of terminating the interview at this point but Susheela composed herself after a while and continued).

Susheela says she was treated in hospital for burns for three months and her husband took care of her treatment. But when she started recovering, she was unable to live in the marital house as it was made of asbestos sheets which became very hot during the day and worsened her burns. Her husband asked her to return to her natal home as she would be able to recover faster. But when she did spend some time and recovered sufficiently, he refused to take her back because her burns had left deep scars on her face. He would also often scold her for taking such a drastic step, even saying that he did not want her now because of her burn injuries. The in-laws did not give her enough food, would beat her and constantly shame her about the suicide attempt. So she decided to return to her natal home. But her father was quite aged and living alone at that point. Although she went there for a while Susheela felt she could not live with her father as he was incapable of taking care of his own self, let alone handle her responsibility. Her children were with her husband. Given the circumstances, Susheela decided to return to her marital home as her children were living there. However, her husband refused to take her back. She felt very worried because she had no source of support and her three children were away from her, hence she approached the all women's police station. However, they were unable to provide any help. They told her they could not do anything. She wanted the police to call the husband, threaten him, take a written undertaking and reconcile them as a couple. She felt that if her husband was not willing to reconcile, she would take maintenance and manage with this amount at her natal home, as her father was incapable of taking care of her. She also wanted a case to be filed against her husband for all the violence he had committed.

THE WOMEN'S SUPPORT CENTRE AT AWAG STEPPED IN WHEN THE POLICE GAVE UP

"They did nothing" Susheela says. Instead of addressing the problem, the all women's police sent her to the support centre. This happened three years ago. The counsellor at the centre heard the case in detail and called her husband. She explained to him that their children were grown up and that they themselves had reached a marriageable age. He should not harass Susheela but make full efforts to live together. Susheela said that although her husband agreed to what the counsellor was saying, her father-in-law refused to take her back in the marital family. Therefore, they began living separately. However, her father-in-law and mother-in-law kept insisting that her husband separate from Susheela and under their constant pressure he threw her out of the house. Susheela returned to her natal home. She says her father advised her to file a case for maintenance but the counsellor explained that Susheela's father asked the centre to handle her matter and provide a viable solution to the case. He was afraid that given his failing health, he would not be able to shoulder her responsibility in any way. Therefore he wanted Susheela's husband to provide maintenance money or else take her back but keep her separately, away from her in-laws. The counsellors called the husband and asked him to let them know what he wanted to do. Susheela's husband said that he would stay with Susheela. The counsellor felt he had begun to repent for what he had done and realized that soon his own son would also be married and this kind of behaviour may be a matter of shame. Susheela returned to his home and they began living separately. After a couple of months the counsellors visited her to find out how she is being taken care of. They found that while her husband no longer physically abused her he did not treat her well. He would constantly taunt her that she had attempted suicide because of which he had to incur a great deal of financial losses. Susheela decided to return to her natal home for the time being. She wanted him to understand the pain of living alone and this she felt was the way

he should be punished. In the meantime, Susheela filed a case for maintenance with the support of the counsellors. Her husband had to run from pillar to post handling this legal matter and at the end of two years he decided to reconcile with her, promising to take up a separate residence and treat her well. Now he has stopped taking alcohol and works regularly. We follow up regularly. He has also realized that she is alone; there is someone to take care of her. The counsellor shared that when she visited Susheela Behn's home for a follow up visit last month, she was not sure how her husband would behave with her. But he treated her very well, brought a chair for her to sit and talked at length to her. Her husband shared that when Susheela Behn decided to approach the police he was not really too worried about what would happen. But when he was called by the support centre counsellors he realized she was not alone; he slowly understood women have rights and that when Susheela Behn does not drink and beat him how can he? He invited the counsellor to come again.

Susheela also shared that he was treating her reasonable well. Although she did admit that there were occasional fights and skirmishes. "Minor things keep happening" is what she said. Her daughter who was also present during the interview said that although her father does not beat her mother he tends to be very sharp with the children sometimes and keeps tabs on her. She expressed dislike for her father and said none of the three children relate to him emotionally.

CONCLUSION

Susheela Behn's case can be seen as a successful one at one level because she has gained back her family and is living with her husband in relative peace. However, minor skirmishes continue and the relationship is not completely cordial. Susheela Behn's daughter and sons do not have any emotional bonding with the father and during the interview her daughter's sense of contempt and dislike for her father were palpable. They support Susheela Behn and take her side whenever there

is any conflict. Thus the situation is far from ideal. A combination of fear of reprisal, some element of self-realization and lack of broader support for his behaviour is what seems to be keeping the husband in check.

Susheela Behn's decision of going back to her husband again and again seems to have been driven by strong practical constraints. The lack of support systems at her natal and marital home is obvious, and ultimately drove her to take the extreme step of attempting suicide.

Susheela Behn broke down frequently during the interview and her sense of helplessness emerged strongly throughout. The support centre counsellors played a key role in building her self-esteem and confidence. Her decision the last time around to let her husband learn his lesson by living alone and suffering the pains of a lonely life seem to have stemmed from a position of strength about her own position in the situation. The counsellors shared that when she first came for the counselling sessions they had to spend a lot of time allaying her doubts and fears about her future, building her sense of self worth and making her feel supported. The burns had also left her scarred and she presented a frightening picture. Overcoming the sense of shame and despair arising from her suicide attempt has been a very long process for Susheela Behn.

GEETA: DEALING WITH AN INTER-CASTE MARRIAGE

BACKGROUND

Geeta is a young woman of 28, whose young face and small stature belies the intense struggle she went through to stay married to the man of her choice. Geeta hails from a wealthy family that belongs to the Darbar community, a very powerful landed caste in Gujarat. She is the only daughter and has led a pampered life to date. Geeta completed her matriculation and discontinued studies thereafter as is the norm in her community. Geeta stayed at home and was helping out with small chores.

Her neighbour Ramesh belongs to Scheduled Caste of Vagela Bharwadi. They maintain cattle and are much lower in social status than Darbars. Ramesh and Geeta fell in love and wanted to get married but the fact their castes were different was a significant barrier. Geeta's father was dead against their marriage and refused to grant permission.

GEETA AND RAMESH MAKE A CHOICE

Ramesh and Geeta decided to marry nevertheless and ran away from home. After spending a few days away from home when they returned home, Geeta's father took Geeta away to their house and locked her up. He refused to recognise the marriage and told her she had to divorce Ramesh. Geeta's mother was a bystander in all this although she tacitly supported Geeta. Ramesh's parents were supportive of the marriage but greatly feared Geeta's father's wrath and power. The entire time she was locked up at her parents' place Geeta kept trying to convince her father that he should let her go, she was an adult. But Geeta's father was adamant and kept her under lock and key.

Ramesh at his end was under intense family pressure to divorce Geeta and re-marry. By divorce the implication was not a legal divorce but through community mediation, wherein the elders debate the issue, draw up a divorce settlement and both parties affirm to it placing their signatures on the divorce papers. This is also recognized in the local court as a legal divorce as it takes place through an alternate dispute resolution (ADR).

Ramesh's parents were scared for his life as the Darbar community is known to take revenge in surreptitious ways. They were worried that Ramesh might be bumped off in a road accident that may be engineered by Geeta's father. Therefore they were urging Ramesh to agree to a mediation session that could end in divorce. A few months passed in this manner and Geeta decided she needed to seek external help in resolving the matter. One day when her father was away Geeta slipped out

of her home and came to the all women's police station in Rajkot town. They in turn referred her to the women's support centre operating from their premises.

THE ROLE OF THE SUPPORT CENTRE

The counsellor at the centre calmed down Geeta and heard her out completely. Geeta was weeping when she arrived and trembling with fear about what would happen if her father found out. The counsellor assured her that since she was an adult (over 18) her father could not legally prevent her from leaving home or marrying anyone she wanted, if he too was an adult. The counsellor also placed all legal options before her and asked her to think through what she wanted to do.

Geeta returned home but kept in touch with the counsellor over phone. Whenever she could, Geeta called the counsellor who kept building her strength and advised her to think through what she wanted to do. If Geeta wanted to get out of her parents home and live with Ramesh, the counsellor said she could help her by helping Geeta stay at a safe shelter home until matters were resolved satisfactorily. The counsellor shared that during this period, Geeta would keep crying during her intermittent phone calls as she was really worried about what her father would do to both her and Ramesh. She also knew that his family was constantly pressurizing him to take a divorce and re-marry.

Two months later Geeta decided to move to the safe home that the counsellor that assured her, she would take Geeta to. She managed to slip out of the house when her father was away and reached the women's support centre. The counsellor took her to the shelter home and ensured she was safely placed there. She then contacted Geeta's father and told him about the whole incident. He was very angry and told the counsellor that as far he was concerned Geeta was dead henceforth. But the counsellor needed some documents from him to be submitted to the shelter home and asked him to drop the same with her.

The counsellor also called the in-laws and they shared their fears about reprisal from Geeta's father. They were open to accepting Geeta but the fear of incurring the wrath of the Darbar community was daunting for them. They had to live in the same area and building such powerful enemies would make life very difficult for them.

As the case was proceeding, elders and opinion makers from the Darbara community often visited the centre and threatened the counsellor but she did not relent because she knew both Geeta and Ramesh were adults and that Geeta was very clear she wanted to go back to Ramesh. Therefore, she decided to let matters cool down. In the meantime, she spoke to Ramesh and asked him what his stand was on the whole matter. He said he wanted to get back with Geeta but was afraid of her father. The counsellor confronted him asking him when he was courting Geeta was he not scared of her father? Why did he choose to run away and marry her when he was not willing to face the consequences of his actions? She asked him how could he take cover under the excuse that he was afraid when Geeta was willing to spend the rest of her life with him? She advised Ramesh that as they were adults he could approach the police if there were any threats from Geeta's family. There were photographs to prove the two were married, hence Geeta's father could not take them to court easily either. Ramesh and his family were slowly convinced by the counsellor that they should take Geeta back with them and not be so afraid. She had left her father's home for good and legally her father could not do anything. By this time the entire community on both sides knew of the matter, much time had elapsed and hence Geeta's father was unlikely to attempt anything that might be risky. He knew that Geeta would never come back to his house.

Once she was sure the case was going to be resolved soon, the counsellor then again approached Geeta's father and asked him to send the documents needed to retrieve Geeta from the shelter. Geeta's father relented and brought her birth certificate and other proof.

The counsellor also felt that Geeta's position should not be compromised or made vulnerable in the process. Hence she insisted that they marry in court. In this way, if Ramesh would ever harass Geeta in future or deny that he married her, there would be legal proof and this would enable her to stake claim to his property and finances, if needed.

Geeta was taken back to her marital home by Ramesh and his parents and a ceremony conducted there as is done with a new bride. Geeta narrated her entire story calmly and said that if she was laughing and talking normally now it was only because of the counsellor at the support centre. "Earlier I wouldn't even be able to sit in one place. I would stand and keep crying. I talk of this *behn* everyday at home. I got my life back because of her," she said. Geeta is pregnant and her sister-in-law had brought her for the interview. Geeta looked happy and very cheerful as she spoke to the counsellor and gave the interview.

She did not want the interview to be recorded but shared every detail openly. The counsellor follows up the case regularly to ensure Geeta is fine.

SEJAL: JOURNEY FROM A VICTIM TO A SURVIVOR, ROLE OF WOMEN'S SUPPORT CENTRE AT PATAN

BACKGROUND

Sejal is in her mid-thirties. She lives with her son in her marital home, in Ahmedabad. Her marital family is a large one consisting of her in-laws, brother-in-law and his wife.

Sejal grew up in a village near Patan and belongs to the Rajput community. She has studied up to class VI and then stopped because she became busy with farming work in the village. The other more important reason was that the village school is up to class VI and the community is suspicious of sending girls out to study. They fear that sending the girls out of the village may lead to a scandal, they may elope with someone and therefore girls in her village normally do not study beyond class VI. She has two elder brothers. Sejal was 15 when

she was married and during the intervening years she was busy with home work.

Sejal did not have any specific expectations from her married life or her husband. She would wonder what kind of a family she would marry into and what kind of man her husband would turn out to be but apart from that she did not have any specific expectations from her marriage. The only expectation she had was that he should have a good and steady job.

MARITAL HISTORY

Sejal was married through a relative of her father-in-laws who knew her family. Her husband is a year older to her and had studied up to class X. She was married through the cultural practice of Atta Satta—that is where a brother and sister from one family wed another pair of brother and sister. According to most counsellors and social activists working in the area, this is a very harmful practice because any discord in one couple affects the other with both marriages breaking down in course of time. Sejal began living with her husband in her marital home three years after she was married. This is a common practice in the area, wherein the daughter is married off but continues to stay with her natal family. She visits the marital family during occasions like festivals. Through a ceremony called Aanu the girl's parents send the daughter to the marital family. The time period during which she stays in the natal family is used to gather her dowry as it may not be possible for the parents to provide all the dowry at one go during the wedding.

Sejal shared that her husband and in-laws treated her well during the initial years of marriage. However after four years of marriage, after she had a child (a boy) her husband developed a relationship with another girl in the city. She shared that his behaviour towards her changed. He would stay away from home frequently at night and he stopped making sexual advances towards her. She became suspicious and confronted him about whether he was having an affair. But he refused to admit to the affair saying he was staying over

at his friend's home sometimes. Sejal however decided to find out on her own and checked with his friend about whether he was indeed spending time at his place. She found out that he was staying over at his girl friend's home regularly. Sejal called her brother to help him and they both tracked Sejal's husband down to his girl friend's house. The brother confronted her husband but he beat Sejal's brother instead and there was a fight. Sejal's brother took her back to her natal home. This conflict caused a breakdown in her brother's marriage also and her sister-in-law returned to her natal home.

SEJAL SEEKS POLICE INTERVENTION

Sejal approached the counselling centre located at the police station, for help. Sejal wanted a reconciliation to be affected through the police. She wanted to go back to her marital home along with her son. The police inspector in-charge called her husband and held a joint meeting between him and Sejal. Out of fear of police action, Sejal's husband refused to admit to his affair and said he wanted to take her back with him. The PSI advised Sejal not to suspect her husband and assured her that he would use the fear of police action to threaten her husband. He told Sejal that she should return to her husband's home and also stressed that since her marriage had taken place under the Atta Satta tradition, her brother's marriage was also in danger of breaking up if she did not reconcile. The PSI asked both parties to bring elders from each side of the family so that the reconciliation process could be negotiated. A written agreement was also drawn up. Sejal returned to her marital home.

SEJAL'S HUSBAND ATTEMPTS TO END HER LIFE

Sejal's husband was fine with her for a few days but soon afterwards told her that he had prayed to a well-known goddess in their area that if the two of them got together, he would visit her shrine. So he took her on a motorbike to the temple and bought sweets to be offered to the goddess. Once they had completed the prayers, he suggested

that they eat the sweets at a secluded spot close by and spend some time together as there would be no privacy at home. He began taking her deep into the wilderness near the temple. Although Sejal suggested they sit somewhere close by, he insisted they go far away until they reached a deserted and lonely spot.

On reaching this place, which was about 5-6 kms from the temple, Sejal's husband told her that she should eat all the sweets she wished to and have water as well because these were her last few moments. Sejal says she was shocked. Her husband told her that he had agreed to a reconciliation because of the fear of police action. But he did not want to live with her and so planned to kill her. He attacked her with a blade and slashed her wrists and neck. He also tried to strangle her. A woman passing in a field near by heard and saw the scuffle in the bushes and ran for help to the village nearby. Sejal's husband realized he had been spotted and would get into serious trouble. So he threatened Sejal to tell the villagers that this was an accident and she had sustained injuries because they had fallen from the motorbike into the bramble bushes in the field.

The villagers rushed to the spot and took the two of them to a doctor nearby. Sejal's husband told the doctor that they had met with an accident and sought his help to treat Sejal. Once she had received first aid he took her back to where his parents were living. After two-three days she left for her natal home. Sejal said she did not share anything of what had happened with her in-laws as her husband had threatened her. But when she reached her natal home she told them the entire story. Sejal's parents decided to approach the same Police Inspector who had negotiated the reconciliation, for help. But the personnel at the Police station did not respond to her complaint, saying that beyond what they had done, they could do nothing. At this point, a watchman working in the police station told Sejal about the counselling support centre run by AWAG. Sejal approached them for help.

SEJAL APPROACHES THE WOMEN'S SUPPORT CENTRE RUN BY AWAG

Sejal said that her expectation at this point was to seek some options and solutions to the problem. She did not want to reconcile with her husband but wanted to file a complaint. However, she and her family members were not sure how to go about it. Once the entire case was shared with the counsellors they took her to the relevant police station (in the jurisdiction which could record the case) and also got her to secure a medical certificate about her injuries from a government hospital. The PSI at the concerned police station was very helpful and promised to help Sejal in filing a case under 498A, but told the counsellors that they would have to visit the scene of crime and look for evidence.

The PSI, PSO, head constable and Sejal, her parents and counsellors went to the spot where this happened. It took a long time (3-4 hours) to locate the exact spot. They found the sweets, water and also blood stains. They took photographs of the evidence. The police also referred her case to the hospital for further treatment.

Sejal filed a case of maintenance against her husband. She has been accorded an amount of Rs 2,500 since the last six months. It has been three years since all this happened and she was living at her natal home all this while.

SEJAL FIGHTS BACK FROM A POSITION OF STRENGTH AS COMMUNITY INTERVENES

However, three months ago she visited her marital family as her father-in-law had fallen seriously ill and was counting his last days. Sejal visited him for a brief while and soon after, he passed away. When this happened, the elders from the Rajput community rebuked her husband and said that unless he agreed to take back Sejal and his son into the family, they would not participate in any of their family activities and functions (this is an extreme form of shaming in the Rajput community wherein the family is socially boycotted). In fact the dead body of the father-in-law was kept waiting

for the funeral rites as the elders refused to be part of the ceremonies unless Sejal's husband agreed to change his behaviour towards Sejal. The elders and relatives on her husband's side of the family used this occasion to speak to Sejal about reconciling with her husband. In her community of Rajputs, men and women are not allowed to re-marry. They pressed on her that her husband had changed and he would not misbehave with her in any way. Her husband also apologized to her. The elders also assured her that if he ever renegades on his promise and ill treats her in any way they would intervene. Observing all these developments, Sejal decided to reconcile and return to her husband's home. Using this opportunity Sejal also insisted that her husband should break all relations with his girl friend and that he should take care of Sejal and her son. The elders got him to agree to all the conditions placed before him. A written agreement to this effect was drawn up and submitted to the court. According to this agreement, if he breaks any of the conditions laid down, the elders will ex-communicate/abolish his family from the community. This is a matter of great shame for any family within their community. This happened three months ago and she has been living with him since then.

SEJAL'S TRANSFORMATION AS SHE PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

Both her cases- those of maintenance and 498A- are ongoing. Sejal has decided to watch the situation for 4-5 months and will then decide on whether or not to withdraw the legal cases. Sejal says her husband now takes good care of her- he assures her that he will work regularly; that they should not let what happened come between them and should lead a happy life; this way her brother and sister-in-law can also begin living together. He also admits that her death is destined and that he should not have thought that he could determine her death.

When Sejal was asked whether her husband had really transformed or was being careful because of fear, she said that so far her husband was being

good with her but she was not sure of the future. She felt that his behaviour may have changed because of the two court cases she is pursuing against him. If she decides to withdraw the cases she is not sure if his behaviour will continue to remain as nice. She felt that maybe his altered behaviour is a ruse to get her to withdraw the cases. However, she felt that she would wait and watch and would definitely not withdraw the cases. This was the reason she also insisted that she would wait for at least six months before thinking about the continuation or withdrawal of the cases.

Sejal says she now feels strong enough to pursue whatever options needs to be taken to manage the situation. Talking about his altered behaviour Sejal shared, "If I ask him to sit he sits and if I ask him to stand he stands now." But Sejal is not sure of the real causes behind the change in her husband. The counsellor shared that when Sejal had called her a couple of days ago, she shared that her husband has also started helping out with the household chores and tells her he genuinely repents his actions. He says that the three years she lived away from him, he truly missed her and rued over his behaviour.

Sejal says she is very happy with the manner in which her case has been dealt with. Her husband also shared that earlier he did not believe or understand the kind of support she was receiving from the counselling centre. But now he truly appreciates the role of the counsellors. He is willing to accompany her to the counselling centre and encourages her to go alone also.

Sejal says she has gained enormous strength though the entire process of handling the case and due to her interactions with the counsellors. She is sure that she will not tolerate any more violence of any kind. The counsellors also shared that when the entire reconciliation process was negotiated by the elders, Sejal made her own decision about what she wanted out of this reconciliation and informed them only later after the decisions had been taken and drawn up in written form. About

six months ago, her in-laws had tried to persuade her to withdraw the cases and come back to live with her husband. Sejal sought the opinion of the counsellors and they, along with other women present in the centre at that time, had advised her not to do this. They told her that she should first place her conditions before the marital family and only if she felt they would be accepted, should she go back to her husband. She was also asked to think deeply about the situation and to go back only when the cases are going on, not to withdraw the cases.

Sejal said she decided to go back to her husband because she realized that three lives would be affected by her decision (her brother, sister-in-law and husband). If she did not go back to the marital home her brother's marriage would also suffer as her sister-in-law would also be forced to suffer the same fate. Remarriage is also not an option in her community. Hence she felt reconciling may be the best option. She also felt her husband was serious about making the relationship work. Now she hopes her life will be good and steady. If there is any problem in future she will definitely approach the centre. The counsellor shared that when Sejal called her, she said the counsellor was like a sister to her and that she was able to take decisions with her help. The counsellors feel she has become emboldened enough to take decisions on what she wants and think about possible options for the future. Giving an example, Sejal says that when her husband lured her into the bushes to kill her, she never suspected his motives. But now that she knows what he is capable of, she will be very careful and can anticipate the motives behind his actions. "If he has two hands then so do I and I can protect myself now," she says. She says that the courage and confidence she has gained has been only because of the counsellors at the support centre.

CONCLUSION:

Sejal is a very articulate and confident woman. She did not show any signs of emotional distress during the interview and shared the entire story in a calm and collected manner. She seems to hail from an

economically sound family and has good natal support. In fact her father sat through till the end of the interview and said that the two counsellors at the centre were like his two other daughters. He was deeply appreciative of the efforts put in by the counsellors in handling the case.

Sejal's case yet again raises the question of real time options before women faced by domestic violence. Sejal's decision to go back has been largely practical and while she has returned from a position of great strength and on her own terms, she is plagued by uncertainty about her husband's real motives. Therefore the peace while it lasts is a tentative one. The counsellors also recognized in the discussions that women very often seek to return to the marital family because living alone, with or without the natal family is not an easy option, especially because very often children are involved. The social repercussions of being a single parent are daunting.

That Sejal was able to manage the reconciliation on her own, thinking through the options placed by the counsellors, is a marker of great strength and agency. What also emerged was her confidence in dealing with the consequences of her actions (such as withdrawing the cases) which is also based on the assurance that the counsellors would support her in future also.

RENU: FIGHT FOR JUSTICE WITH THE SUPPORT OF NYAYA SAMITI

BACKGROUND

Renu is a 22-year-old, married, young woman, who is currently living at her natal home. She is illiterate and grew up in a family of three sisters and four brothers. Except for one of the brothers, none of the other siblings were sent to school. Instead they became engaged in agricultural labour from a very young age. Renu's father is disabled and could not manage the family farmland alone. Therefore the children pitched in and never got a chance to study.

Renu was married young at the age of 15 to a

man named Sunil who worked as a labourer in the diamond business. She knew her husband before marriage and they were engaged for about a year before they were married. They met on and off during this period. Renu shared that although her husband and she liked each other, her in-laws were not very happy with the alliance. Therefore, soon after marriage they began harassing her mentally and physically (beating her). She had to get up very early in the morning and they would taunt her often for not working enough. She tolerated the violence meted out by them because her husband was treating her well. But this changed after the birth of a child. Thereafter he also started abusing her physically.

MARITAL VIOLENCE AND THE ROLE OF THE NYAYA SAMITI

Renu went to her natal home during her pregnancy and delivered the child there. But Sunil never came to fetch her. She called him again and again over the phone, asking him to fetch her; even threatening him that she would initiate legal proceedings against him. But her husband never responded. Vasant behn, a field worker of the NGO SAVRAJ, came to know about Renu's case through a common relative. She advised Renu to take the case to the Nyaya Samiti.

Renu approached the Nyaya Samiti and shared in detail what had happened to her. She said she wanted to live with her husband but apart from her in-laws because in her view they were instigating her husband to misbehave with her. The Nyaya Samiti called Sunil the following week and quizzed him about his behaviour. Sunil did not argue much but told the Samiti that he wanted to live with Renu. He also agreed to stay separate from his parents and brother.

Sunil took Renu back and they began staying in a rented house close to his parents' home. But Sunil did not provide anything to Renu for running the house. She realized that he had agreed to what the Samiti said out of fear of police action. In reality, he did not want to live with her. Sunil would not

give any money to Renu for household expenses including money to buy milk for the child. Renu would seek help from neighbours and manage somehow but her mother-in-law would try to even stop this. Sunil would take his meals at his mother's house and stay over often.

FOLLOW-UP AND FURTHER INTERVENTIONS BY THE NYAYA SAMITI USING THE DV ACT

After about two and a half months of living like this, Renu called the Nyaya Samiti to help her because she was facing a lot of problems. Two members of the Samiti visited her home and confronted her husband. He did not deny his behaviour but promised them that he would start taking care of Renu and the child henceforth. But Renu found nothing changed very much and she had to take up daily labour to feed her child. However, Sunil would arrive at her work site and take away her earnings. He would fight and beat her as well as harass her child. Her husband and sister-in-law eventually also took away her child and would bring him to her only to feed the baby.

This went on for a month. Renu was worried about the future of her child and decided she needed to do something. She felt she could not bear this situation any longer and called an elderly worker, Anubhai, who works in SAVRAJ and asked him to intervene by helping her file a case for maintenance.

Renu then left for her natal home asking her in-laws to come back and fetch her in 10 days time. The Nyaya Samiti (in her natal village) advised her to wait for 10 days till her in-laws came to fetch her before filing the case. But Renu's in-laws did not come to fetch her and she filed a case in Jasdhan court under the DV Act for custody of the child and maintenance. Three months after filing the case the court awarded her maintenance of Rs 5000 in three months after filing the case and compensation of Rs 99,000 (although only Rs 50,000 has been paid).

This prompted Renu's husband and her in-laws to come to her natal house, to fetch her. But they

brought along with them influential people from the caste panchayat to pressurise Renu to take back the case and reconcile. At this point she sought the opinion of the Nyaya Samiti on what she should do. They advised her not to return without finalising matters before the court. Their view was that if she went back without any legal backing, her in-laws would start harassing her again.

Anubhai and Nyaya Samiti told the influential members brought by Sunil to leave and not interfere in the matter. However, they came to the Samiti 3-4 times and used threats as well as pressure tactics to reconcile Renu's matter. The Nyaya Samiti advised Renu that she would not be entitled to the maintenance and compensation if she reconciled and withdrew the case. Renu also took a firm decision and told all those who had come from her husband's side that she would reconcile and return only if the compensation amount of Rs 50,000 was given to her. When her case came for hearing in the court, she said the same thing. She also added that although she wanted to go back, she would do so only if she received the regular maintenance amount, her jewellery or streedhan and the compensation money. When the judge asked her what she would do with this money, she said that she would place this money as a fixed amount and use it for her child's education. The judge immediately agreed and passed the order.

The husband got ready to pay Rs 50,000 of the compensation money but said he did not have the jewellery. Renu however told the judge that she was not sure of this assertion. Sunil and his parents probably had the jewellery. The judge then intervened and said he would give the husband's side two years to replace all her jewellery. And he brought about a reconciliation of the case. He felt that with these conditions in place Renu would be able to lead a normal life. He did not force her but the reality was also that Renu wanted to go back. The judge advised her that as she wanted to go back, the money would anyways become a shared asset and hence they should live together even though the amount was half of what had been decided by the court.

RECONCILIATION LED TO MORE ABUSE

Thus through mediation by the court, Renu returned to her marital home. But the marital family began insisting that she return the Rs 50,000 they had paid as compensation and place this money in her husband's name. She also realized that they wanted to use this money as collateral to raise a loan. Renu then again called Anubhai at SAVRAJ and sought his advice. Based on his feedback, she decided not to sign on any papers as she was sure Sunil and his parents would try and trick her into parting with the money given to her. This became the cause for resumption of violence once again- Renu shared that her in-laws would not give her food and keep her confined to her room. Renu said her sister-in-law became jealous of her as she had received this compensation and wanted some money for herself. Hence she instigated Renu's husband that Renu kept chatting on the mobile phone the entire time he was away at work and that she was calling Anubhai frequently so maybe they had an affair going on. Renu's husband was physically and sexually abusive with Renu. He forced anal sex on her. And after about three months of this torture she returned to her natal home as the violence became unbearable. From her natal home Renu filed a case under 498A as she had been severely beaten. The husband was arrested but let out on bail. This case has now come up for hearing.

The legal counsellor on the case shared that Renu still feels her husband is innocent and it is the sister-in-law who has been instigating him and her mother-in-law to harass her. Renu suspects that Sunil and his sister-in-law are probably having an affair. But she still feels she would like to go back to him and live with him in a village far away from the marital home. Renu was emphatic that she wants to live with him but it is the sister-in-law who is the real problem. She keeps tabs on Renu and uses this information to instigate her husband.

RENU'S CURRENT STATE OF MIND

Renu says she felt very good about the process followed by the Nyaya Samiti. She managed to get

the compensation and maintenance as well as half of her jewellery, which she feels is very good. Her expectations were fulfilled. Renu said that she also realized the DV Act had so many facilities and remedies, after the Nyaya Samiti explained these details to her. They kept up her confidence, kept encouraging her and advised her not to return to Sunil without taking the compensation and not to reconcile without getting what she wanted.

Renu said she has gained a lot of strength through the last three years of interactions with the Nyaya Samiti. She now feels she can live alone and bring up her child by herself. Although she also admitted that ideally she would like to live with her husband. Her worries are centred on her child. She feels although she can manage right now, she is concerned about how to take care of his future. In case they cannot live together, Renu would like to take the remaining money of the compensation from Sunil and stay at her natal home. She does not want to remarry even though remarriage is widely accepted in her community. When asked what she would do if Sunil calls her to go back, Renu said she would live with him but not in the same village as his parents. She also added that she would not go back “just like that”. That is she would weigh all her options before taking this decision.

Two other women from her village have also approached Renu asking her to help with their marital problems. She said she has referred them to the Nyaya Samiti and told them she would accompany them to the Samiti if needed.

CONCLUSION

Renu’s case is heart rending – she has been through a great deal in her young life and is single handedly bringing up her young son. The fact that she is illiterate limits her livelihood options. Although her parents have been supportive, they themselves are not very well off. However Renu has shown remarkable spirit and strength in fighting back. When she first came to the Nyaya Samiti, she was a very emaciated version of herself. According to the counsellor, she has really changed during

the last three years and gained both physical and mental strength. The fact that she now refers cases to the Samiti and is also willing to support women in difficult situations suggests renewed self-confidence. Renu has also managed to secure benefits under the DV Act and with legal support from the NGO SAVARAJ, has managed to utilise the remedies well.

What strikes a discordant note in the case is her strong belief that it is her sister-in-law who is essentially to blame for her situation whereas her husband is innocent. Renu still believes that if she were to set up a household far away from her marital family, Sunil and she can be happy. At the same time, the actual reasons for domestic violence could not be brought into the open in spite of repeated probing during the interview. Apart from sharing that the in-laws did not like her and so wanted to get rid of her, Renu and the counsellor did not share any further details about the cause of such severe violence and abuse.

The Nyaya Samiti and SAVARAJ have played a very positive and constructive role in bringing the case to the current stage. They provided critical advice at every juncture and also used the law effectively to resolve Renu’s problem.

SHABANA: CONFRONTING VIOLENCE ON MANY FRONTS, REBUILDING HERSELF AS AN ACTIVIST

BACKGROUND

Shabana is a 30-year-old woman who lives in a camp set up at Halol for the survivors of the Gujarat communal riots of 2002. She has a daughter aged 8 and is closely associated with ANANDI, an NGO working with tribals and marginalized populations in Dahod and Panchmahal districts in Gujarat.

Shabana is a very articulate and well informed person. She has studied up till class X although she could not complete her matriculation. She became associated with ANANDI when they started working with young girls and women affected by riots who are currently living in government

resettlement camps. She was part of a community based organisation (CBO) and ANANDI enabled them to intensify their work in the community through a fellowship sponsored by the Himalaya Foundation. She worked with women and children in the camps, building their awareness on health, violence against women and girls and the value of savings. She says through the fellowship programme she gained a great deal of confidence to talk openly with people. During her work with the CBO Shabana attended an intensive capacity building programme held by an NGO named Jan Vikas. During this training she was able to deepen her understanding of women's empowerment, status of women, savings and credit as well as legal provisions for women and children. Shabana was engaged in this kind of awareness generation work for four years before she got married.

SHABANA'S MARRIAGE AND THE CONTEXT OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Shabana's was a love marriage. She shared that their CBO ran a sewing centre for women. She and a few members of the CBO visited an exhibition in Surat in order to sell some of the clothes prepared by the women and stayed there for 10 days. During this period she met and fell in love with Mustafa, the driver of the vehicle that was being used to cart the clothes to and from the exhibition grounds. They were friends for about a year and a half during which time they would often speak on the phone and keep in touch. But Shabana was unaware of the fact that Mustafa was already married and had grown children. Her family came to know that Mustafa was married and opposed their relationship. But, Mustafa, convinced her that he was living apart from his first wife and would divorce her soon. Therefore they eloped to Baroda and got married through the court (Shabana broke down while sharing this. She was offered the option of closing the interview at this point but chose to continue). Mustafa is 11 years older than Shabana.

Mustafa took her to his uncle's house after the wedding where she came to know that not only

was he married, he also had three children aged 11, 10 and 8 years. Shabana was shocked and told him she did not want to live with him and would go back to her natal home. Mustafa retorted that he would hang himself if she left him as he had left home for her sake. Shabana asserted she had done the same but also realized that realistically she could not go back to her natal home now. She had eloped and married Mustafa against her parents' wishes and therefore could not hope for much support from them. Hence, she decided to make do with the situation and started living with Mustafa. He continued to work as a driver while Shabana became a home maker.

Soon thereafter, Shabana came to know that his first wife had filed a case against him in the Police station. Disturbed as she was with what had happened, she nevertheless felt the right thing to do was for Mustafa to start living with his first wife and children. Hence, she encouraged him to bring his wife back and told him he should start living with her, although separately. She also decided not to have any children because she felt very guilty about having put the first wife through the trauma of marrying Mustafa (Shabana again broke down recounting how painful this entire phase had been). Shabana said she kept convincing Mustafa to spend time with his first wife and children and so he landed up dividing his time between both households.

Shabana became pregnant three years after marriage. It was an unplanned pregnancy and she did not want to continue with it but her relatives and other elders advised her to carry the pregnancy to full term as a child would be a source of support for her in the future, especially if it turned out to be a boy. Therefore she decided to go ahead with the pregnancy and have the baby. When she was in her 5th month, the couple visited her elder sister who had lost her husband recently. Mustafa told Shabana to stay with her elder sister for a few days as she was weak and unable to do much work. He left her there saying he would come back to fetch her but he never returned. Shabana had a daughter but he did not come back

to even see her. Shabana says she guessed he had returned to his first wife (Shabana kept crying while talking and was told many times to take it easy and even halt the interview but she said she would continue). Shabana stayed with her elder sister for a while and then felt she did not want to become a burden for her. Hence she took up a job as a sweeper in a company. This enabled her to take up a separate residence. She managed this way for about one and a half to two years.

Shabana then explored the option of working from home because companies would not allow their workers to bring little children to work and she could not leave her daughter at home. For the next year and a half she managed to earn a decent amount by doing piece work and stitching bags for companies. Throughout this period, from the time she got married to this point of time Shabana was out of touch with ANANDI. Mustafa would visit her now and then for a few hours but was not abusive in any way. He would give her Rs.1500 during each visit.

SHABANA AND HER DAUGHTER SHAHEEN'S FIGHT FOR JUSTICE

Shabana came in contact with ANANDI about two and a half years ago because of a very unfortunate incident that occurred with her daughter, Shaheen. When Shabana was living in Baska, a town about 5 km from Godhra, her 5-year-old daughter Shaheen was raped by her friend's father when she had gone to play at her house. Shabana did not realize what had happened with Shaheen until she complained of severe pain in her genitals in the evening. Shabana found that her daughter's private parts were swollen and she was hurting severely. She took Shaheen to a doctor close by who examined her and told Shabana that Shaheen's injuries were probably the result of severe sexual assault. Shabana thought of seeking her husband's help and tried calling him through her cell phone. But every time he would cut the phone. She then tried calling him from a pay phone but he disconnected the phone on hearing her voice. Shabana informed a friend of his who tried calling him and telling

him about what had happened but Mustafa was unresponsive.

Shabana returned home late at night dejected by her husband's behaviour. The next day the community members mobilised around Shabana and told her to immediately get a medical check up for the child from the government hospital. With the medical report, she then approached the police to file a case. At the police station the child reported clearly that her friend's father had inserted something like a finger into her genitals. But the police was not willing to file a case under rape because there was no clear penetration or other forensic evidence. By this time ANANDI was contacted by the community members at Baska, because they knew them from their work in the resettlement colony in the past. The activists from ANANDI reached the hospital in the evening and checked what law sections had been charged by the police.

ANANDI's staff and the community mobilised around Shabana and provided her support in dealing with the police and the media which had got a whiff of the incident. The issue became more complex because the rapist was a Hindu and Shabana was a Muslim. ANANDI had to ensure the whole matter did not assume a religious colour. Seema, the counsellor from ANANDI as well as other staff worked very closely with Shabana and Shaheen to build their confidence to deal with the situation and also maintained pressure on the police to file the case under the right law section of rape. They mobilized public opinion in the community and also held a protest rally forcing the police to acknowledge that Shaheen had indeed been raped and that the police should charge the accused with rape.

Shaheen had suffered severe injuries to her private parts and was referred to Baroda for further treatment. Shabana handled her daughter's treatment whereas Seema and other activists from ANANDI dealt with the police. But Shabana was constantly kept abreast of what processes were happening at the legal end. Seema shared that the community rallied in a big way around Shabana and

helped her with the treatment- they hired a van to carry the girl to Baroda and helped out financially with Shaheen's treatment by pooling in money.

Shaheen had to be questioned carefully so that the right law section could be applied and so that the case could stand scrutiny in court. Seema worked closely with the police and Shaheen to ensure she did not get scared or intimidated by the inquiry process. Seema recalled how they spent time playing with the girl and used dolls to question Shaheen about what the rapist had done. Shaheen play acted the entire situation pulling down the dolls underwear and showing what the rapist had done. This evidence then was used to press charges of rape against the accused. Similarly, when the police visited the hospital to take Shabana's and Shaheen's statements, someone from ANANDI was always by their side. In fact they would call the police before hand and check if they would be visiting the hospital to gather statements.

The community was also very forthcoming and stood by Shabana in every way during this entire period. To prevent re-traumatisation of both mother and daughter, the community members made them move to a house in Halol, close by.

Seema and other activists at ANANDI have been constantly following up on the legal end of the case. They also ensured that Shabana's statements during every hearing were consistent and similar. This has meant regularly going over Shabana's statements and reminding her about all the details so there are no contradictions in court that can be used by the offender's lawyer to subvert the matter. ANANDI has also worked closely with the witnesses to ensure their statements remain the same and what they say cannot be twisted to compromise the case. Seema coached the witnesses also and has kept a vigil to ensure that ANANDI and Shabana were in the know how if anyone was offering them money to turn hostile in court. However, to the credit of their own commitment and the work done by ANANDI, none of the witnesses have turned hostile in

spite of being offered money. Shabana feels that this is because they fear god and decided that money may come and go but what had happened with Shaheen was way too serious to be settled by taking a bribe. Some of the women who came forward as witnesses were advised by their husbands to stick to the truth. Shabana feels that the community of Muslims in Baska is surrounded by Hindus and people from North India who live on rent. In this context people from her community feared that what had happened with Shaheen may also happen with another girl if they do not react and keep quiet. Shabana was also approached indirectly to accept money and turn hostile in court. But she refused to do this.

Seema and Shabana have both been very careful about not allowing this experience to scar Shaheen. They never discuss the case in front of her or bring up the matter in any way. Shaheen is never brought to court during the hearings. Someone at ANANDI's office takes care of her when Shabana has to attend court. Even if she has to be brought to court for any legal procedure, they ensure she never sees the accused.

SHABANA'S TRANSFORMATION INTO AN ADVOCATE FOR WOMEN'S RIGHTS

The most significant transformation in Shabana through this entire experience has been that she has now become a keen activist on the issue of addressing violence against women and girls. She feels she has got the strength to fight back and will support anyone else facing such a situation. There have been two recent cases of child rape in the area and she has been involved with both of them. In the first instance a young Nepali girl of five was raped brutally by a neighbour (also from Nepal). The girl died due to grievous injuries and the accused has been awarded the death sentence. In this case ANANDI's activists, including Shabana attended the court hearings on a regular basis and supported the girl's parents emotionally through the case. Shabana also participated in public protests and rallies held to pressurise the state machinery to act promptly in this case. Shabana

says she got involved in this case on her own because she could well relate to what the girl's parents were going through. She was grateful that Shaheen was at least alive.

In yet another case, ANANDI and Shabana were called by the local police to help in recording the statement of a young girl of 4 who is a pavement dweller and had been raped and thrown on the road.

Shabana shared that she has also learnt more about courts and the legal process through her experience. She said that many times, even in matters of maintenance or cruelty or 498A people do not pursue cases in court because it is cumbersome. The police on their part shy away from registering a complaint and there is enormous pressure on the woman from her elders, family and even the police to somehow compromise and settle down with her husband. The Police also dissuade the woman from filing a complaint against the husband. But Shabana feels that if there is someone to support and guide such women, they gain the strength to pursue the matter. Shabana now also sits at the women's counselling centre run by ANANDI and accompanies those women to court who have filed criminal complaints against their husband (under Section 498A). Shabana shared that many times such women are very scared about what will happen to their case, whether the prosecution lawyer will be present on time or the case will get re-scheduled; and they feel very scared to speak up in front of the judge. Shabana says that in the beginning she too was very scared about what to speak in front of the judge, how to speak but now, with experience (attending court and answering questions posed by the lawyers) she does not feel scared and also advises other women not be afraid. She tells them to speak the truth; and if they don't understand the question properly they should ask the lawyer or judge to repeat the question. Now she can answer the prosecutor fearlessly and asks him to repeat anything that is tricky or unclear to her.

Shabana says ANANDI is the reason she has

gained so much courage. Seema, the counsellor, would accompany her during each court hearing and encourage her to speak fearlessly and would coach her to not get intimidated by the lawyers. She would assure her that ANANDI's activists would always support her. "Before every court hearing I would visit ANANDI's office and go over what I had said the last time around. Seema behn would ask me questions and I would answer and she would tell me talk to the lawyer the same way you speak to me. In this way she built my courage," Shabana recounts. Seema added that during one of the cross examinations, the lawyer asked her whether the rape incident with Shaheen happened in front of Shabana and she retorted that had this happened in front of her, the accused would have been dead long ago- that is she would have killed him right then and there. The judge rebuked the lawyer to refrain from asking such irrelevant and insensitive questions. Seema shared this example to show how confident and strong Shabana had grown.

Shabana says she feels good that she is independent. She runs a sewing centre and earns a little from it. At the same time, she also works thrice a week with the women's counselling and support centre run by ANANDI. She counsels women and even accompanies them to the police station if needed. If there is any domestic violence and the woman wants to file a case, she facilitates the process. Shabana has also slowly started counselling women in abusive relationships, although the counsellor from ANANDI back stops her work.

Shabana's aspiration for her daughter is that she should study hard and become successful in life. Shaheen wants to be a doctor and Shabana says she will support her in realising her dreams. Her husband Mustafa has never come back to inquire about the case in the last two and a half years. When asked what she would do if Mustafa asks her to come back to him, Shabana was very clear that she would never agree. "He was never around when we needed him. Now why should we bother? We don't need him," she answered in a tremulous voice, on the verge of tears.

Mustafa has eloped a third time with another woman. Shabana came to know of this through his friend who also added that the girl's family is out to kill Mustafa for having run away with the girl. He appealed to Shabana to help Mustafa as he was on the run. Shabana told his friend that if indeed this happened, that Mustafa was caught and killed by the girl's family, she would definitely visit his grave to break her bangles (culturally women break bangles after their husband's death to signify giving up all symbols of being married).

CONCLUSIONS

Shabana's story is one of great courage and forbearance. She was also able to put aside her own hurt and sense of betrayal and encourage Mustafa to reach out to his first wife. Her transformation into an activist working on VAW is a remarkable shift in her story. However, her story also reflects the paradox of how seemingly aware and conscientised activists can also fall prey to exploitative relationships. That something like this could happen to her has been difficult for Shabana to accept. And this may have been the reason why Shabana kept breaking down several times during the course of the interview. Although she would collect herself and continue, her frequent crying spells highlighted how much she regretted what has happened in her life. That she chose to seek her reclusive husband's support when Shaheen was assaulted also brings to light the value women place on marital relations.

Two aspects stand out in Shabana's case- the support extended to her by her community members as well as ANANDI's role. The community stood by Shabana during the crisis with Shaheen and offered a great deal of moral and financial support. ANANDI has been instrumental in seeing the case through. From ensuring the charge of rape was applied to the case to engaging themselves in every aspect of the case ANANDI has taken a very proactive and engaged stance in dealing with the case. The discussions with Seema behn, the counsellor also brought forth the many small and large struggles involved in such cases. According

to the senior leadership at ANANDI this case has highlighted how much effort has to be placed in preparing witnesses so that a water tight case can be built. Seemingly small steps such as going over the statements every time and ensuring the same facts are repeated every time, rehearsing with the petitioner and witnesses what they had said earlier and what has to be said before the judge, in what way and using what language- all these can make or break a case. ANANDI has taken care of every small detail to ensure Shaheen's case stands judicial scrutiny. The added complexity of the issue was that the accused is a Hindu and the victim is a Muslim, which can polarize opinions and hijack the real issue. ANANDI as well as Shabana have been very conscious of veering clear of these minefields by focussing on ensuring that justice is done and gathering credible evidence that supports the truth. They did not allow the Hindu-Muslim angle to dominate any forum, discussion or meeting.

However, although the organisation and Shabana have consciously avoided such a polarization, it seems that community support was also more forthcoming due to collective outrage experienced by community members on account of their religious status.

P. GOURISWARY: WOMAN-CENTRIC STRATEGY FOR COUNSELLING, AIMED AT BUILDING THE WOMAN'S NOTION OF THE SELF

BACKGROUND

P. Gouriswary is a 16-year-old girl from Raygada who had been subjected to mental and physical torture by her mother P. Simanchalam and her neighbour B. Rabi for a consistently long period till she came to the support centre at Rygada.

P. Simanchalam, who hailed from Chintal Patna sahi of Raygada Sadar block belonging to a low socio-economic group, earned a living by collecting and selling discarded vegetables from the wholesale market. She also worked as a sweeper to earn

some money to support her family. They belong to the Christian community and the family earned a decent living till P. Simanchalam's husband passed away. The family consisted of P. Simanchalam, her husband, her daughter P. Gouriswary and her son P. Mahesh. After her husband's sudden demise due to TB, P. Simanchalam found herself in a helpless condition and she started worrying about her children's future. P. Gouriswary's future and her marriage became her headache and she started to looking for grooms to settle down her daughter. By that time, P. Gouriswary had not even finished her schooling and her mother already had started weaving plans for an early marriage for her. P. Simanchalam found her neighbour B. Rabi suitable for her daughter, though B. Rabi hardly had a decent earning and was engaged in petty labour work at a near by fast food centre. He was illiterate and he did not have much scope of ever engaging in any stable livelihood earning options. P. Simanchalam approached B. Rabi with the prospect of marrying her daughter and B. Rabi was an eager candidate in the very first attempt. Both of them started making plans of fixing up a meeting between B. Rabi and P. Gouriswary. The day P. Gouriswary came back home from her matriculation exams she was told by her mother that her marriage was fixed to B. Rabi. Gouriswary was dumbfounded as she was hardly a grown up child to understand the concept of marriage. Also she wanted to read and establish herself as a self-reliant person. Given her father's early death she understood the necessity of being self-reliant and educated. She tried to convince her mother about her interest in studying but she was beaten up. Thereafter regular visits of B. Rabi to her residence became a very common affair. As she was not interested in marrying, the frequent visits and meetings with Rabi were very tormenting to her. She would try out opportunities to stay away from home as long as Rabi would be around her house. But things started taking an uglier turn after almost a year's period. Rabi not only started frequenting more often, P. Gouriswary's mother also would create situations so that Rabi could visit their house while she was not around. Rabi started looking for opportunities to be closer to Gouriswary

and this made things difficult for her. She could not avoid Rabi any further as her mother invited Rabi to come and live at her place. Rabi started staying in their house and while P. Gouriswary, her mother and brother slept on the floor, Rabi started to sleeping on the cot in the same house. On Christmas Rabi even tried to take advantage of the absence of other family members and tried to establish physical contact with P. Gouriswary. P. Gouriswary under tremendous mental torture escaped from her own house and put up at her neighbour's house. On return to her house the next day she was beaten up by her mother for not accepting the matrimony solicitation by Rabi. Things started becoming uglier; P. Gouriswary's mother would plot situations to forcibly marry off her daughter. She even went to the fast food owner's shop where Rabi worked and made plans with him to take her daughter and Rabi to Shirdi to marry them off as soon as possible.

P. Gouriswary was taken to Shirdi by her mother along with B. Rabi, the fast food centre owner and her brother. She was daily forced to go shop with Rabi, have photographs taken together and her mother was consistently after her to marry Rabi. She was beaten up vigorously by her mother as her mother wanted her to go out for movies with Rabi. On many occasions she complied as she did not know what was to be done as she was a very young girl at that age and her mother was her entire world. She used to comply whatever her mother used to say but after a few days of stay at Shirdi she knew that she could not take it anymore. So on 11th of May 2013 she took a brave decision and she boarded a train to her maternal uncle's place in Andhra Pradesh. She boarded the train alone and reached her uncle's house. She was relieved to be welcome by her uncle who told her that he would help her out in all possible ways. Her uncle took her to her native place Raged but she did not put up at her mother's place but rather for four days she put up at her relative's. A neighbour of her relatives told them about the support centre at Raged and she told them that support centre would be the best place to give them the kind of

help that they required. Her uncle took Gouriswary to the support centre and since the day she visited the support centre her situation started improving. She was not only supported mentally by the counsellor but she was also made aware about what a strong decision she has taken to further pursue her studies and not marry before she is an adult. She felt a relief the day the counsellor called up her mother and B. Rabi and counselled them for hours about the wrong decisions they had been taking. She was even threatened by the counsellor that unless her mother refrained from forcing P. Gouriswary from marrying till she attains adult age, there could be legal proceedings against P. Simanchalam. This made a drastic change in the way P. Simanchalam had been thinking so far and she suddenly realized that education is the best possible future option for her daughter.

CONCLUSIONS

According to the counsellors at Raygada, this is among the most successful cases that they have handled. The case proves that cases of complex nature can also be resolved through counselling if the counsellors understand the finer nuances of the cases of domestic violence. The skill levels and perspective of the counsellors providing support services to women facing violence is a critical factor.

The skill levels and perspective of the counsellors determines the processes adopted in counselling and the nature of support provided to women. The training and skills of the counsellors at Raygada, for example, enabled them to provide a strong therapeutic angle to the IPAP programme interventions. The existence of community-level and Police station-based counselling centres have led to better detection of cases of VAW as came out from the discussions with P. Gouriswary. The family counselling and legal guidance has been the support that the victim received in time and as per P. Gouriswary, thanks to the timely and motherly help rendered by everyone, chiefly Padma Madam at the Raygada support centre, now she is able to not only live peacefully with her mother

and brother, she is no longer harassed by B.Rabi for marriage and she also is pursuing her higher studies as well as earning Rs 1500 every month working as a salesperson in a nearby cloth store.

NILIMA SAHOO: THE STORY OF THE PLIGHT OF A WOMAN GIVING BIRTH TO A GIRL

BACKGROUND

According to the counsellors at support centre Dhenkanal, Nilima Sahoo belongs to a middle class family in Sadeibarni village, Dhenkanal. Her father was a priest and earned a meagre income. His earnings were not even enough to support his family and hence when he got a proposal for matrimony for his daughter from Trinath Sahoo of Odapada village, his happiness knew no limits. He did not consider the fact that his daughter was hardly 14 years old and it could have negative repercussions on her health. Nilima was married at a young age of 14. She not only had an early marriage, she got pregnant early on and had two successive abortions. She was blamed by her in-laws and husband for the death of her unborn male child. In the third attempt under pressure from her in-laws, she conceived a girl child. This further added to her plight. She was regularly beaten up by her in laws and her husband for bearing a girl child. These beatings up became a regular phenomenon and their intensity stronger with passage of time. Her husband did not engage in any consistent source of livelihood earning option and also used to drink and come home and beat up Nilima. Nilima tolerated the regular beating for two years and put up at her in-laws. Her in-laws also could not tolerate the regular domestic violence mitigated upon Nilima and they told their son and daughter-in-law to live separately. Nilima moved with her husband and started staying separately and the intensity of domestic violence increased further. When she bore a male child, her hopes of getting relief from the regular beatings were high. But there was no change after bearing the male child. In the meanwhile, Nilima decided to move with her parents. Her parents would try to interfere if Trinath beat her at home. Initially

Trinath would reduce the beatings, but when these incidents became more frequent Trinath beat up Nilima's parents if they tried to interrupt and stop him from beating Nilima. For Nilima, this was unimaginable and she could not bear the pain of seeing her parents getting beaten up by her husband. She requested her parents to lend her money and help her build a separate house of her own. With her determination she managed to build her family a house and move out of her paternal place after two years of living with them. Nilima's husband was not only an alcoholic but he also refused to give her any money for household expenses. He frequently took loans for purchasing liquor. Nilima had to look after the family and repay his debts from her meagre earnings of Rs 800 a month. She could not bear the torture any more when she came to learn that her husband has been seeing another woman even though he was still married to her. Nilima was battered by not only the physical and mental torture, the constant and regular beatings, she was also heartbroken by the infidelity. She decided to end her life and commit suicide. She would have finished her life had she not been saved by her uncle. Nilima was guided by her uncle to visit the nearest support centre. When she approached the centre for help, she was unwell, very weak, and depressed. She was given free legal aid for securing maintenance for herself and her children. A case was registered and her husband called up for counselling several times at the support centre. Nilima has been fighting since then, fighting a battle for her rights, a battle for her settlements, a battle for a good future for her children. Though the counselling sessions have contributed to creating a strong support system for Nilima, the battered victim still awaits the system of justice to give justice to her, her innocent son and daughter.

CONCLUSIONS

This case highlights the importance of working within the prevailing social context when attempting to change gender equations and curbing violence. It was important to work with the entire family and her husband to strengthen

Nilima's support system. The fact that the Indian justice system has been a major factor in not only delaying the process of quick justice for Nilima, it could also sabotage the courage of women like Nilima.

KAVITA: THE STORY OF ABUSE AND DESERTION BY SPOUSE IN UTTAR PRADESH

Kavita was married to Kapil (a government servant) six years back. Within 15 days of marriage, she understood that her husband was a drunkard. He did not give her money and also did not take care of any of her responsibilities. As some more days passed, her in-laws also started torturing her for dowry. When the torture became unbearable, she went back to her parental home. She stayed there for one and a half years with a hope that her in-laws and her husband will come to take her back. Meanwhile she also got a job in a private school. It helped her in sustaining her livelihood. After the mediation done by her parents, she went to her husband's home again but her problems were not resolved. Finally, she left her husband's home and approached Humsafar support centre for help. Humsafar provided her all support and tried to talk to her husband but her husband was not ready to change his behaviour. Humsafar then referred the case to their legal experts seeking legal help. Kavita started working again in the same school and is now taking care of her child. Humsafar's lawyer is looking after her case. Her complaint has been registered under PWDVA.

MAMTA: FIGHT FOR LIFE

At the age of seeing dreams and aspirations Mamta got married in 2008 with an army personal in Uttarakhand. Her struggle started at the beginning of her married life. Her in-laws and husband's behaviour has been very oppressive. Soon she became pregnant and then her husband and in-laws forced her for sex determination test. When she refused they took her forcibly to a clinic and forced her to undergo for test. Finally she relented and the result showed that she was carrying a baby girl. They forced her for abortion but she

was not ready for this. During the 6th month of her pregnancy when she was cooking food her husband poured kerosene oil on her. She started screaming and somehow managed to save her life. But she got 50 per cent burns. She came back to her maternal home where for almost six months she was under treatment. One day she met with Sajha Manch lawyer member Niraml Chowdery. He referred her to ARPAN for help. Now ARPAN is providing support for her legal fight. Her mother has been a major moral support for her.

During 16 days of activism campaign on declining sex ration & PWDVA Mamta's case was taken up with the concerned authorities & consequently a case was registered against the clinic under pre-conception and pre-natal diagnostic test act where she'd gone for sex determination. A complaint has been filed with his husband's regiment against him for consideration and action. The consistent support, counselling and proper medical treatment gave the strength and courage to Mamta to stand for her rights.

SITA: HOPE- LIVING A NEW LIFE

Sita was staying with her parents in the remote village of Dwalisera in Uttarakhand. She, a student of class 9 was only 16-years-old when this incident took place and changed her life. One day, in 2004, when Sita was visiting her aunt in a nearby village, one of her distant relatives, Pratap, raped her. Sita tried to save herself but could not. She

fell unconscious. When she regained conscious, Pratap convinced her that he will marry her. Sita was only 16-years-old and therefore she could not think about it much and believed Pratap.

Since then Pratap kept on fulfilling his physical desires with Sita repeating the same promise of marrying her. In 2008, Pratap got an offer from ITBP and he left but said that he will come back and marry Sita. He also asked Sita not to disclose their relationship to anyone. In 2009, Sita got pregnant and Pratap asked her to abort the foetus. By this time Sita started understanding the intentions of Pratap and therefore she started mounting pressure on him. As a result, in a simple ceremony in a temple, Pratap married Sita on 3rd December 2010. He took her to a room in a very remote village Jauljivi and left. Quite disturbed and insecure Sita visited her in-laws' home but was banished and could not even enter the house.

It was in 2011 when Sita approached the ARPAN office. She has been under counselling ever since as the main objective is now to bring her out of the trauma and guilt she is experiencing. Her parents and villagers have also come up in her support with the organization and as a result she registered her case under PWDVA. Her counselling and case is still in the process but the regular interaction with ARPAN team members has helped her to regain her confidence and a hope to live her life with rights and dignity.

ANNEXURE III: SAMPLE DISTRIBUTION

SAMPLE DISTRIBUTION

The key objective of the evaluation is to measure and compare changes on increased knowledge on laws related to violence against women and legal and other support services available for those experiencing violence in men and women aged 15-50 years. To measure changes, which could have occurred due to intervention, sample size should be statistically adequate to identify and measure those changes. The sample size decision for detecting changes from baseline depends on the power that is efficiency to detect and measure change, besides depending on the level of statistical significance.

In tune with the requirement of state level disaggregation of data, the sample size at the state level has been calculated, which has been later aggregated to provide a programme level scenario.

	States	Ever-married women who have ever experienced spousal violence (per cent)	Project			Comparison		
			Sample Size for State (Women)	Sample Size for State (Men)	PSUs	Sample Size for State Women	Sample Size for State Men	PSUs
1	Odisha	39.8	413	413	28	207	207	14
2	Andhra Pradesh	37.1	397	397	26	199	199	13
3	Gujarat	30.2	343	343	23	172	172	11
4	Uttar Pradesh	42.4	426	426	28	213	213	14
5	Uttarakhand	29.6	330	330	22	165	165	11
		35.82	1909	1909	127	956	956	63
	Total		3818			1912		

SAMPLE DISTRIBUTION

STAGE I: SELECTION OF DISTRICTS

The study required a multi-stage sampling design. So for every state being covered, it was ensured that at least one district covered by each NGO in a state is selected to ensure representation.

Random selection of districts at the state level was done from the list of project villages provided for each NGO. All the project districts for a particular NGO in a state had an equal probability of getting selected. If an NGO was working in three or more districts then two districts were randomly selected. If the NGO was working in less than three districts than one district was randomly selected. Thus, 15 districts were selected across all the programme states. The distribution of the same has been represented in the following table.

State	NGO	DISTRICT
Andhra Pradesh	Shaheen	Hyderabad
Andhra Pradesh	SVAS	East Godavari
Gujarat	Anandi	Dahod
Gujarat	Awag	Kutch
Gujarat	CSJ	Sabarkantha
Gujarat	CSJ	Banaskantha
Gujarat	Savraj	Rajkot
Gujarat	SKVAW	Amareli
Odisha	ISD	Rayagada
Odisha	ISD	Kalahandi
Odisha	ISWO	Dhenkanal
Uttar Pradesh	Humsafar	Lucknow
Uttar Pradesh	SRSP	Azamgarh
Uttar Pradesh	Vanagana	Banda
Uttarakhand	Arpan	Pithoragarh

STAGE II: SELECTION OF SUB-DISTRICTS

Two blocks in each sampled district were randomly selected. If the district had only one project block then that block was selected.

STAGE III: SELECTION OF VILLAGES

For the study the PSU (Primary Sampling Unit) is essentially the village. The PSU for the purpose has been randomly selected from the list of PSUs within a selected sub-district level unit (block/tehsil). The number of PSUs to be selected from each block was calculated in proportion to the number of project villages in the block.

State	NGO	District	Block	Project Villages	Selected Villages
Gujarat	Anandi	Dahod	Devgadh Baria	15	4
Gujarat	Awag	Kutchh	Rapar	42	11
Gujarat	CSJ	Banaskantha	Dantiwada	3	1
Gujarat	CSJ	Banaskantha	Danta	3	1
Gujarat	CSJ	Sabarkantha	Idar	6	2
Gujarat	CSJ	Sabarkantha	Himmatnagar	2	1
Gujarat	Savraj	Rajkot	Jasdan	5	1
Gujarat	SKVAW	Amareli	Amareli	5	1
Gujarat	SKVAW	Amareli	Khabha	6	1
				87	23

STAGE IV: SELECTION OF RESPONDENTS

The supervisors were instructed to prepare a Village Representation Map sketching out the settlement pattern of all the socio-economic sections of the society in the village. A mapping of the different hamlets in the village was done as these hamlets might be inhabited by community members belonging to specific caste, religion etc.

The Village Settlement Representation shows the distribution of settlements or group of hamlets in the village. Such a representation helps in understanding the spread of population and outlines the demographic distribution in the area. It helps in ensuring that the respondents are selected across the different hamlets in the village thus ensuring complete representation of respondents across the village.

STAGE V: SELECTION OF RESPONDENTS

After selecting the villages from each district, the next task is to select the requisite number of target respondents across categories men and women of age 15-50 years. On an average 30 households were covered in every village using the right hand thumb rule.

The selection of men and women respondents was done through PPS. The total number of households in the villages was noted in each hamlet. Based on the number, this number of men and women respondents was distributed proportionately in each hamlet. An illustrative example for distributing the number of respondents in different hamlets is explained below:

SAMPLE DISTRIBUTION IN A SELECTED VILLAGE

Name of hamlet in village	Total households in hamlet	Number of selected households in hamlet	Number of men interviews conducted in hamlet	Number of women interviews conducted in hamlet
A	100	$=(100/300)*30=10$	5	5
B	50	$=(50/300)*30=5$	2	3
C	50	$=(50/300)*30=5$	3	2
D	30	$=(30/300)*30=3$	2	1
E	70	$=(70/300)*30=7$	3	4
Total	300	30	15	15

The total number of interviews in each hamlet was further divided into half to include male and female respondents. Taking this example, out of the 10 interviews to be conducted in hamlet A, five would be conducted with male respondents while other five would be conducted with female respondents.

After allocating the number of interviews to be conducted for each target category in every hamlet, the sampling interval would be calculated by dividing the total number of households in a hamlet by the number of interviews to be conducted in the respective hamlet. For example, if a particular hamlet has 50 households and we have to conduct five interviews with households in that hamlet, then the sampling interval would be 10 (50 HH/five interviews in that hamlet). Thus, the target respondent would be selected after every 10th household. Similar method of selecting households across the different target categories for each hamlet would be adopted for each village.

A PRIORI MATCHING FOR SELECTION OF COMPARISON VILLAGES

A priori matching was used to select comparison villages which have similar profiles as compared to treatment villages. While selecting comparison villages, it was important to point out that selection of villages should be done to reduce the margin of error as ideally the comparison and project village have to be exactly similar in terms of geographic, demography and socio-economic profile. It was assumed that all the changes that are happening in comparison villages would also be occurring in project villages as well. The key indicators to be considered for a priori matching were socio-economic characteristics like caste (SC/ST), literacy rate, male-female population etc. The source of information for a priori matching was Census of India, 2011.

SAMPLE SELECTION FOR OTHER INTERVIEWS

The list of survivors of VAW and other stakeholders like police officers, protection officers, WCD officials etc. were obtained from the NGO partners in the five project states. That acted as the sampling frame for randomly selecting respondents for in-depth interviews.





ऑक्सफैम इंडिया
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