

Forum To Engage Men (FEM)

Working with Boys and Men for Gender Equality

Facilitation Offices

CHSJ

3C, H Block, Saket, New Delhi,
India

Phone : +91-11-40517478;
26511425.

Email : satish@chsj.org

AAKAR

A-19, Gulmohar park, New Delhi,
India

Phone : +91-11-26515161,
41640681.

Email : rahulroy63@gmail.com

EKTA

Bethel Nagar, Bible Bhawan Street
Ponmeni, By- pass Road
Madurai 625010

Ph. 91-452-2381309

Email: bimla_ekta@yahoo.com

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Forum To Engage Men (FEM): Working with Boys and Men for Gender Equality

The Context

For all of us who have been working in different ways on issues of gender equality the one problem that constantly confronts us is of masculinities and the stiff resistance it offers to any change towards building an equitable and non-violent world. We know from our experience that efforts at dismantling the patriarchal world order will have to challenge the complex web of masculinities, which distributes patriarchal privileges to men. We also know that masculinity affects as well as reveals itself through the functioning of large social structures of governments, finance, religion as also institutions like schools, families, work sites and collectives. It is deeply implicated in the everyday lives and practices of boys/men and thereby affects girls/women too. And arguably masculinity is most visible and virulent in situations of various forms of violence - domestic or those that take place in the public sphere. Besides women who are subjected to certain specific forms of gender based violence, other boys and men too suffer and become targets of this expression of masculinity.

From our diverse efforts and work with communities we have learnt that it is difficult to challenge and change ideas of masculinities but not impossible. We have always had men from different social settings as allies in the work on gender equality. Many of us within this proposed network are men who have been deeply influenced by the ideas of the women's movement and believe that as men we have a lot to gain from posing challenges to forms of power systems that provide us with privileges but in doing so also deprive us of the benefits that would accrue from a more equal world. In more recent times we have also learnt from the activism and politics of the gay/queer

movements the important ways in which concepts as well as practices of masculinities are challenged by non heterosexual expressions of sexuality and why most forms of masculinities display a pathological hatred as well as fear of all other forms of sexual expression but heterosexuality.

We are a diverse group of individuals and organisations that share a vision of working with boys and men on issues of gender equality and violence. Professionally as well as personally we have come to a point where we feel that it is critical to intervene in the area of masculinities. We need to go beyond the most obvious and visible signs and symbols of masculinities to discover knowledge as well as ideas on how boys and men can become part of movements that carry messages and actions towards gender equality. If men can be part of so many fronts on which inequalities of different kinds are being challenged then there is no reason why they cannot be part of the ongoing struggle to partner with boys and men against violence and gender inequalities. When we talk to men and boys individually we often hear stories of the hierarchies that exist within the system of masculinities, we hear stories of violence, coercion and subjugation. We also hear stories of tenderness, yearnings and unhappiness. The challenge that lies in front of us is to make these voices audible and create the belief that change is possible. We have to demonstrate that the path towards equality and non-violence is the only way out of the coercive nature of masculinities.

We understand masculinities as a gender system that distributes patriarchal privileges to boys and men in a hierarchical order.

- It disprivileges girls and women as a group and utilises gender based violence to perpetuate gender inequalities and keep in place gendered orders.
- It is a policing system that ensures a hierarchical distribution of privileges based on class, caste, sexual orientation, cultural difference, physical appearance, etc.
- The fact that certain forms of masculinities tend to dominate by subjugating other forms can be clearly seen in the context of caste conflicts or in the marginalizing of men who may not be heterosexual.
- It is these inherent contradictions and conflicts within different forms of masculinities that, we understand, can provide the motivation for boys and men to stop being participant to practices that are based on violence and defence of inequities.
- We would like to contribute to efforts at involving boys and men in the struggle for gender equality by creating a platform that will enable all of us to discover strength in numbers and ideas.

We Propose

Many of us have been thinking, working and acting in our separate spheres on the issue of masculinities. We now feel that it is the time we come together to create a platform that can be a support base for our work, ideas, learning's; and make more public the discussion on masculinities and of boys and men in support of gender equality and non violence.

- We are proposing a process by which organisations, institutions and individuals in India who share the common concern of working with boys and men on issues of gender equality and non-violence have collaborated.
- This is not an organisation but a process that will be constantly evolved. The shape this process can take will be determined by the active participation and responsibility sharing of those who want to join the process.

- The guiding principles of the process are inclusiveness, diversity, co-operation and democratic functioning.
- The process will facilitate learning and sharing, resource and technical support, forging more partnerships and taking these ideas into the public domain.
- We expect this process to be a catalyst for independent initiatives in different parts of the country.

Who Can Join

Since this is not being proposed as an organisation, all those who agree with the principles expressed in this brochure can join this process:

- Organisations, institutions and individuals who adhere by the principles of gender equality and non violence and are willing to take a public stand on these principles may join this process.
- Our aim is to forge partnerships with diverse actors in the field of social activism. We look forward to collaborating with social justice movements.
- We are also interested in working with similar efforts or networks in the south Asian region as well as other parts of the world.

Processes carried out

- Contact with groups, organisations, movements and individuals with a proposal to join this process is ongoing.
- Four regional facilitation meetings successfully held in various locations (Assam, Chattisgarh, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Orissa, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu) throughout India to provide an opportunity for people to join this process through discussions. Several workshops were held on understanding masculinities and developing interventions on gender issues with boys and men in different settings.

- A national meeting was held to review the process and develop a future strategy to consolidate learning's from the regional discussions and plan for further regional and local level processes.

Immediate Plans

- Efforts are ongoing to collaborate with various social justice movements at the local and national level.
- Forging partnership with academic institutions, media, etc. to ensure sustained efforts on the overall issue of violence against women.

Regional Coordination

North region - (Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana & Delhi)
Ravi, MASVAW, UK (ravijeena@gmail.com)
Dr. Sanjay, MASVAW, UP
(sanjaysinghdr@sify.com)

South region - (Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Tamilnadu & Kerala)
Bimala Chandrasekar, Ekta
(bimla_ekta@yahoo.com)
Santosh Kanipayur, Kerala
(santhosh.kanipayur@gmail.com)

East region - (Orissa, Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Chattisgarh)
Dr Abhijit Das, CHSJ (abhijitdas@chsj.org)

West and Central region - (Gujarat, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Goa)
Anand Pawar, SAMYAK
(samyak.pune@gmail.com)
Mohan Hirabai Hiralal, Vriksha Mitra
(mohanhh@gmail.com)

- Promoting research in Universities and colleges on the issue of masculinities.
- Developing, Sharing and Learning from good practices on working with boys and men to prevent gender based violence.
- Developing a local resource pool of experts on Gender and Masculinities.
- Resource mobilisation.

We invite you to join us in this movement for social change as:

- Become a partner
- Be part of the campaign
- Involve boys and men for gender equality

Poonam Kathuria, SWATI (pswati@sify.com)

North-East region
Ashis Dey, Gharoa (ashishdey@gmail.com)

Facilitation Offices

CHSJ
3C, H Block, Saket, New Delhi, India.
Phone: +91-11-40517478; 26511425.
Email: satish@chsj.org

AAKAR
A-19, Gulmohar Park, New Delhi, India.
Phone: +91-11-26515161, 41640681.
Email: rahulroy63@gmail.com

EKTA
Bethel Nagar, Bible Bhawan Street
Ponmeni, By- pass Road
Madurai 625010
Ph. 91-452-2381309
Email: bimla_ekta@yahoo.com

Campaign in Uttarakhand on Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005

Background

The enforcement of the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 (referred as PWDVA, hereafter) was a matter of great joy for the citizen's in favour of justice and equality. The Act draws its rationale from Article 15(3) of the Constitution of India that allows the State to take special measures for women to remedy historical disadvantages and equalize relationships within the home. Recognising the fact that women are disproportionately affected by domestic violence because of their socially ordained position of inequality vis-à-vis men, the PWDVA guarantees substantive justice to women within international framework of human rights.

However, the benefits ensured within the Act remained unmet to a great extent due to administrative apathy and lack of awareness among people. Civil societies, NGOs and other concerned groups and individuals across the nation have been partnering to attend this problem. One outcome of such partnerships has been the 'Jaago Re' campaign in Uttarakhand. MASVAW Uttarakhand, with support from Oxfam India and under the secretariat of CARE (Center for Advancement of Rural Empowerment) organised this campaign to ensure better implementation of the Act in Uttarakhand. The two broad objectives of the campaign are-

- To increase awareness about the PWDVA, 2005, its significance, the accessibility mechanism and other issues related to its success;
- To increase government's accountability for effective implementation of the PWDVA, 2005.

Methodology

The campaign was initiated extensively in all

the six districts of Kumaon region with a strong strategic linkage with Garhwal. Around 200 villages were covered under the campaign by the 19 member networks and organizations viz. Saajha Manch, Mahila Samakhya, Men's Action for Stopping Violence Against Women (MASVAW), Mahila Adhikar Manch, Sabla Sangathan etc.

An RTI was filed by the group as a first action to acquire accurate information of the State's status with regard to the implementation of the Act. The reply from the Department of Women and Child Welfare, Government of Uttarakhand clearly indicated that the state had barely got off the block. According to the data cited, 232 cases were filed in 11 districts in Uttarakhand. Out of these 185 cases were filed in Dehradun of which only 40 cases had reached logical conclusions. The rest 10 districts had registered a total of 47 cases, of which only 8 had been resolved. Keeping in mind this information, the campaign was launched on 25th November 2008, with a broad vision to have an effective 16 Days of Activism Campaign.

Strategies

- Awareness/sensitisation on the Act, various issues of VAW and responsibilities of various government departments with regard to the same.
- Partnerships with civil societies, NGOs, cultural groups, Government authorities, different media and responsible individuals.
- Support to survivors and others for taking action in situations of violence;
- Dialogues with government and non-government actors on different aspects of the Act and its implementation/non-implementation.

Activities

- **District dialogues** with the district magistrates, police, bar associations, protection officers along with other active citizens, members of organizations, academicians, media persons, SHG members, workers' groups, women's groups etc. explaining various segments of the Act and its implementation, the hindrances and possibilities and so on.
- **Padyatras (rally)** in villages/towns for motivating people to break the silence around domestic violence and supporting survivors of violence to come forward and take action.
- **Community meetings** on issues of VAW, the PWDVA and other related issues.
- **Wall writings/paintings**, distribution of leaflets, posters etc. on VAW, the PWDVA and so on.
- **Street plays, puppet shows, film shows** focusing on various aspects of VAW and the PWDVA.
- **Work with school students and NCC cadets** for awareness building and sensitisation.

Key Achievements

- Increasing number of cases being filed with more number of women reporting abuses.
- The issue has become much more alive; demands for more work are being made from different NGOs and individuals including Panchayat members.
- Increasing participation of women in different activities of the Campaign.
- Media and police are also identifying and sharing many cases with Protection Officers.
- In some areas Health department has started giving information to ASHA/Anganwadi workers on the Act and other related issues.
- In Champavat district, the CMO has issued a circular to all the medical officers ordering them to provide treatment to the survivors

free of cost and inform police and other relevant groups immediately.

- In many districts, the magistrate who is officially the chief of the monitoring committee as provisioned under the Act, were not aware of any such committee. No district reported of any committee action. Hence, the district dialogues resulted in district officials taking up these matters with a serious note. In Champavat, a district committee was immediately called upon by the magistrate, which marked a success of the same.
- The combination of Government and civil society activities and interventions, the media coverage via providing them relevant stories, interviews and editorial pronouncements contributed to a heightened awareness of the issues related to violence and the importance of the Act.
- Relationships and network with state ministries and organizations from other states have been developed.
- Bar associations started giving information to people in counseling meetings.

Challenges

Some major challenges identified during and after the campaign are as follows-

- An acute need for budgetary allocation and infrastructure development.
- No systematic approach developed so far by the government in Uttarakhand to implement the PWDVA. This increases complexity in handling some of the tasks.
- Lack of interest among most of the people sitting in State administration.
- The issue of domestic violence has remained as a personal problem to many, thus affecting people's participation.
- Patriarchy is still dominant at all levels of the society.
- Common people lack in information/actual information about the Act.

Sustainability

The campaign has been getting recognition from various sections of people. Especially the participation of women in increasing number is seen as a major step towards sustainability.

'Jaago Re' is now being taken forward by most of the women's movements in Uttarakhand.

The platform of dialogue generated between the organizations and State actors is taking a shape of link between the government and the people.

It makes way for constant review of the Act and its work and makes the implementing authorities more accountable for further progress.

Review meetings are conducted with Campaign Coordinators and representatives of different partner organizations. These are primarily intended with identifying the hindrances and possibilities of the Campaign and coming out with new options wherever necessary.

16-Days Activism Campaign on PWDVA in Maharashtra

The 16-days activism refers to the large campaign on the PWDVA (Protection of Women from Domestic Violence) 2005, aimed at ensuring effective work of the Act in dealing with the issue of domestic violence. In Maharashtra the campaign was planned in a meeting of FEM (Forum to Engage Men) members in the State in September 2008 following a consultation facilitated by FEM in Pune in August 2008. The primary objective of the campaign in Maharashtra was to reach out to men for wide spread awareness about the PWDVA 2005.

Methodology

A core group was formed to coordinate the campaign and ensure its wider outreach and connect with various ongoing social movements. Thereafter a five-days training on gender, men, masculinities and PWDVA was organised in Maharashtra. Some Audio Visual materials were developed with the aim to engage men and boys.

Some key milestones:

- 16 Days of Activism campaign from 25 Nov to 10 December 2008 with an aim to reach out to men and youth in Maharashtra;
- Campaign review meeting in Nagpur in January 2009 which came out with a two point agenda being developed; it focused on 1st - Personal change and 2nd - Reaching out to more men in Maharashtra;
- Review meeting planned in Beed in June 2009.

The campaign is active in 11 districts (in western Maharashtra, Marathwada, Vidarbha and Konkan regions of Maharashtra) including Pune, Satara, Nagpur, Ratnagiri, Beed,

Parabhani, Osmanabad, Amarawati, Chandrapur, Solapur and Gadchiroli. Various activities to reach out to men to address issues linked with PWDVA, 2005 are being carried out in more than 500 villages and towns of Maharashtra by over 20 participating organisations.

Following are some of the activities:

- Public meetings in villages to address men and raise some important discussions on the notions of masculinities.
- Dialogues with Protection Officers appointed under the PWDVA, 2005.
- Awareness/sensitisation activities through street plays, rallies, road shows, lectures, small meetings with men and other cultural activities.
- Dissemination of communication materials to different stakeholders and common people.
- Programmes with schools and colleges on awareness/sensitisation.
- Screening of documentary films and discussions.
- Display of women painters' painting in public spaces and road shows
- Seminars and policy dialogue with concerned government offices including district and block level Women and Child Development (WCD) departments.

Campaign materials developed:

Poster 1 - Addressing issues of Violence against women and delivering a message that says 'Life free of violence is women's Human Right.'

Poster 2 - Description of PWDVA in simple and effective language.

Sticker 1 and 2: Messages about PWDVA to raise awareness among the community members.

Handbill: Background of 16-days activism, Violence Against Women and messages to address men and masculinity as integral component to prevent gender based violence.

FEM has played active role in initiating the process, while SAMYAK actively facilitated the process and coordinated orientation and training programme with the partners, and was involved in development and dissemination of communication materials. The entire process is being facilitated with the help of Swissaid India. MASUM and Nari Samata Manch were the two organisations that were involved actively in training programme and development of communication materials.

Challenges

- **Low response from Protection Officers-** The protection officers, being from the Revenue Department were already busy with other jobs and it was tough to get time with them. Furthermore, the fact that they all

were males and were not well-informed about the Act and its importance also limited their cooperation in the whole process.

- **Low participation of men in community programmes-** The participation of men other than Dalit men was very low in different programmes undertaken in communities.
- There was also the need for adequate training and sensitisation of male facilitators on issues of masculinity and gender equality.

Achievements

- Out reach to more than 100 villages;
- Various audio visual materials have been developed and distributed to different stakeholders and general public as well;
- Wide awareness developed on the PWDVA.

Sustainability

FEM partners in Maharashtra have taken the responsibility both collectively as well as individually to take the issue forward.

MASVAW Intervention with Media

Men's Action for Stopping Violence against Women (MASVAW) was initiated in the year 2002 as a statewide movement in Uttar Pradesh as a campaign with men and boys to promote gender equality, and advocate for equal rights and a violence free world for women. The men involved in this campaign were mostly the youth who since then have been tirelessly working to achieve gender equality and promote volunteerism in order to sensitize people on the overall issue of violence against women.

In the year 2005, a massive campaign titled, "Chuppi Todo Hinsa Roko" (Break Silence Stop Violence) against violence was launched in 20 districts of Uttar Pradesh as a part of 16 days of activism campaign. This campaign was prepared 6 months in advance and a reputed newspaper published the status of women in 10 districts of the state with a strong proof of data. This data was widely used as a foundation in this campaign to make people aware of the gruesome facts on the status of women and through this campaign MASVAW widely made it accepted among people, human rights activists, and other women's movements that this issue is not restricted to women, but is an issue of men too. Men too, often seen as perpetrators of VAW have an inevitable role to play in the prevention of gender based violence.

Activities with the Media

During the campaign, media was actively involved and its role discussed that media is an important and active pillar highlighting the abuse and violence against women. Media has an inevitable role to play in re-imposing gender equality and highlighting various issues of violence against women and other men. The role of media was very prominent in Uttar Pradesh and it was found that five leading Hindi dailies were widely circulated and read in

various interior villages of the region. Every newspaper has two pages allocated for each district which highlights the various local issues in the region. Every district has its own 'Editorial Desk' which works on identifying and reporting the important issues that needs to be prioritized and given a wider coverage on the two designated pages. The process of reporting is generally entrusted with the 2, 3 reporters at the Block level who mostly are the agents selling news papers. Most of the reporters write articles are report without monetary rewards. They mostly earn their living by getting commission from selling of news papers and through the commissions earned by getting advertisements. No expenditure is incurred on such reporters by the organization and it's on their news that the Block Level Editors edit the news and send it for further publication. Major portion of the article gets cut at this level and hence, the actual picture in terms of plight of women's condition is unseen and remains far from the reality.

Few members of MASVAW were professionally involved with the media, and it is they who identified the need of working with this class. It was the MASVAW group which saw media as an important class/ group and worked to strengthen it from a gender sensitive perspective. Most of the published articles, while reporting on violence against women lacked a sensitive approach and thus the need were felt by the MASVAW to engage media in its initiatives so as to ensure a sensitive approach while addressing issues of grave concern on VAW. Looking at the wider coverage, reach and readership MASVAW identified and called for Media, as one of its strategic partners in achieving gender equality and preventing gender based violence. Raising the potential of media as a powerful stakeholder was one of the major concerns of MASVAW.

Strategies/ Activities

In the year 2005, a 3 day workshop on 'Gender and Media' was organized in Lucknow with more than 30 media persons from more than 10 districts of the state. In implementing the strategies for the media, a resource pool of experienced media persons was constituted in the workshop. It was unanimously decided in the meeting that the perspective building of the media on gender issues needed to be done and also while reporting cases; the overall aspect of human rights had to be kept in mind.

Experienced and gender sensitive media persons, and academicians were identified and promoted as the resource persons to carry the work forward. In the workshop, experienced people from media and the activist women from women's movement were also involved as the resource persons. The workshop was participatory in nature with sessions on group discussions, films, role play, and practice exercises. To raise the analytical skills and to look at the aspect of reporting, several newspaper cutting (with articles on the social issues, especially on violence against women) from leading and local dailies were used in the workshop. Participants at the workshop took an oath that while reporting an incident, they will analyse their articles and not make it sensational and would also ensure that, re-traumatization of the survivor of violence doesn't happen. The participants also agreed in principle to follow the principles of human rights while reporting in the newspapers and would also advocate for providing relief and justice to the survivors of violence.

At the closure of the workshop, the 'personal change plan' was framed for the participants to look at the change from the personal as well as professional/ public front. The participants from the respective districts took a responsibility to have another meetings/ workshops at the district level with the local reporters and sensitise them on the overall

issue of fair and sensitive reporting on violence against women. These meetings were continuously held in the respective 10 districts with more than 30-40 Journalists and local reporters. As a follow-up, the MASVAW secretariat also facilitated in calling and arranging resource persons.

In the second year of its intervention with media, workshops were held with a new batch of media persons. The strategy of decentralization was adopted by MASVAW and the workshops were held in 3- 4 regions where journalists and reporters from 4- 5 districts are invited as participants for 2 to 3 days workshop. As a strategy, the districts covered by MASVAW in its campaign ensure that media persons in the region are associated with the campaign and enhance their skills through sensitization workshops.

Achievements

This campaign with media persons was successful in achieving its objective to a certain extent. The region in which, MASVAW has initiated this campaign rigorously, clearly depicts the sensitive reporting and a wider coverage to the issues of violence against women with sensitivity. Newspaper articles and reports in the local dailies are much more refined now. There has been an effective and sensitive reporting mechanism at the local level. There are a few reporters who used to send a one- time article or report from the local level, but after attending MASVAW workshop they haven't stopped since then and are actively engaged in fair reporting of the cases of violence against women. They are also participating in the follow-up of articles related to violence against women in other newspapers and ensure that the speedy judicial probe begins in such cases. There has been remarkable change in the attitudes of the media persons. One's who just thought of themselves as newspaper agents or as

advertisement seekers, now think of themselves as human rights activists who have this responsibility of protecting and advocating human rights. Gradually there are a lot of media persons who have been actively involved in annual campaigns of MASVAW. They are now actively advocating for gender equality and protection of human rights in the respective areas. There have been few reporters and journalists who have benefited individually and professionally from the campaign. In a two way process of benefiting each other, on the one hand MASVAW campaign has assisted media persons in achieving the responsibilities/appointments at the district level as a 'Desk Editors'; and on the other the campaign got a wider acceptability and presence among media.

Challenges

There are some challenges which confront the media now a day. Due to the growing professionalism, newspapers face commercial competition from each other. Also, newspapers are dominated by an ideology and so, at times trainings/ skill building workshops/ campaigns help in getting a wider circulation of the newspapers but expecting a positive change under the influence of the west remains a distant reality to achieve. Few of the newspapers refuse to publish an article/ report an incident under political pressure from the local political parties and this tends to bring a setback/ frustration to the individual reporter. Reporters who don't have a formal appointment with the newspapers are available as participants for the workshops but the one's who have a formal job find it difficult while seeking permission from their seniors to be part of such workshops designed for them. Senior editors have still not been able to recognize the positive affects of such workshops conducted by MASVAW or perhaps they don't want to bring a positive change in the existing structure. At the initiation of the campaign it was well thought that the '*Patrakar Sangh*' (Reporters Collective

/ Press Club) at various levels has enough resources and that might be used for raising the capacities of individual reporters in enhancement of their skills. But this hardly happens and also restricts the scope of learning for an individual reporter. There is a domination of one or the other political party on all the newspapers and so, MASVAW members from media tried to have a positive dialogue with them and bring a change in the overall outlook. But, this couldn't happen as of now. Newspaper owners haven't been interested in instructing their editors and reporters on the overall issue of violence against women and on sensitive reporting. Media has few sensitive men who can be used as a resource to sensitise other young entrants to the field of print media. Even continuous follow-ups are a big challenge confronting MASVAW activities.

Future Course Of Action

Despite of several challenges confronting MASVAW regularly, efforts haven't been withdrawn. Reporters associated to MASVAW independently registered a newspaper titled, "*Lok Abhyuday*" and publish it monthly for circulation. Since this is an initiative of the MASVAW movement its coverage and circulation is limited and the reporters are none other than the sensitised media persons from MASVAW.

Every year, new media persons are trained by the experienced MASVAW members on issues of reporting on violence against women. Due weightage is given on the enhancement of skills of the new entrants to the print media. Also, the students from the Journalism and Mass Communication Institute are placed in MASVAW Secretariat for two days each in a week. They assist in publication of "*Lok Abhyuday*", the monthly newspaper. As a result of MASVAW interventions and its positive change, various private institutes demand a session on the issues of Gender Equality, Preventing Gender

Based Violence, and Human Rights from the MASVAW Secretariat. Few senior media persons are also on the Advisory Board of MASVAW. The collective efforts from sensitised media persons and other members associated with MASVAW ensure that the work with common people and institutions keep going. The wholehearted

effort from MASVAW indeed shows a 'ray of hope' and there is no doubt that we will soon be having gender sensitive media persons who will ensure speedy trials and justice for the survivors of violence, follow-ups and put concrete efforts to bring violence against women to an end.

Working with Youth in Mahatma Gandhi Kashi Vidyapeeth Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh

Background

The work with youth in the Mahatma Gandhi Kashi Vidyapeeth was initiated by Dr. Sanjay, Reader, Department of Social Work who is also an active member of MASVAW (Men's Action for Stopping Violence Against Women) since 2003.

The work of involving youth and students in stopping violence against women in the university began with a poster making competition and a seminar on gender equality. The response of the students to the programme prompted Dr. Sanjay to further increase his efforts of involving youth, especially boys on the issue of stopping violence against women.

Interventions

In the university following the poster competition and seminar a programme titled- '*Kaisa ho Campus Apna?*' was initiated in the University. The students of the Fine Arts Department painted posters depicting the role of men and boys in achieving gender equality. The posters were developed to build the sensitivities in the mindset of youth, men and boys, on the overall issue of violence against women. The posters also motivated them to be the 'agents of change'. Similarly, *Nukkad Natakas* (street plays) were presented and performed on achieving gender equality, and sensitizing youths on the issues of gender based violence.

Apart from the students of his department, Dr. Sanjay is constantly in touch with the students from the departments of Law, Education, and Fine Arts. He conducts weekly and fortnightly Focussed Group Discussions (FGDs) on gender sensitisation, violence against women, masculinity, sexuality and their linkages with Gender Based Violence apart from Drug Addiction, Alcoholism, Domestic Violence, etc.

These activities have been happening on a regular basis for now over a year.

Programmes that Dr. Sanjay organises regularly in the university and the community in Varanasi every year are:

- Poster competitions and exhibitions on the theme of engaging men and youth to achieve gender equality and in creating a safe and supportive environment for women
- Training programme on masculinity and its interlinkages with violence against women using films
- Gender sensitisation trainings programmes with Media persons, Master of Social Work students, Law students, etc.

Apart from his interaction with the students and community in Varanasi, Dr. Sanjay has started raising the issue of Gender related concerns in Master of Social Work curriculum of different Universities and in the due course because of his persistent efforts a major course on '*Gender, School and Society*' was launched in Faculty of Education, Benaras Hindu University, Varanasi. Moreover, number of Ph-D and Master level dissertations is now being undertaken on gender related issues. This has induced a lot of *research work* on the issues of masculinities and on engaging men and boys to achieve gender equality.

Dr. Sanjay in the past couple of years has also singularly tried to push the issue of involving boys and men in stopping violence against women with other university and colleges. Owing to his functioning as a teacher in the university, he often has to visit other colleges for conducting examinations or other such matters. In every occasion he tries to look for

possible people who could carry forward the work with the students and teachers.

Challenges

The ongoing efforts have introduced a remarkable change at various levels; however, there are a lot of challenges that have appeared time and again and act as hindrance to the over-all efforts.

1. Administrative challenges

He got a show cause notice from the University authorities. He was even stopped to carry on these activities in the campus and demands from his fellow colleagues grew to put these efforts focussed on ending violence against women to an end. It is quite evident that the overall structured academic syllabi and the formal course curriculum restricts the scope of creativity. He has initiated gender sensitization concerns through NSS, as its Programme Co-ordinator and has organised Gender Trainings in 10 days camps of the NSS. He goes on further to say that, he has called for other feminist teachers/ academicians to talk on these issues and address the issue of violence against women by incorporating their views and ideas in order to share and learn from their experiences but hasn't got a favourable response.

2. Personal Challenges

Being a male it's difficult to address such issues aimed at addressing root causes of violence against women in a traditional setting. At times, people doubt his intentions and character, as to why being a male, he is keen to work on the issue of sensitising youth and men on gender based violence. People think that Dr. Sanjay wants to be surrounded by girls and women and therefore he works on this issue. This was very shocking for him and he had to give extra effort to bring other men and boys to his viewpoint.

3. Issues of Volunteers

There are students who leave after completion of their two years course and then he has to initiate on a new note to recruit new volunteers. This consumes a lot of time and energy. On the other hand, there are few students who see this as a way to come around girls, and so, they come and participate in these programmes.

4. Ideological challenges

A person has to face a lot of ideological challenges in this battle to achieve Gender Equality and sensitise and engage men and youth. Being a man it was initially difficult for Dr. Sanjay, yet because of his efforts has seen a ray of hope in these youth.

Conclusion

As a result of his persistent efforts, cases of eve teasing/ molestation on the campus have reduced because of the wholehearted efforts of the sensitised youth. The Youth have been sensitised and their attitudes have changed a lot. He holds lot of discussion on issues of sexuality, violence and gender equality with his students which even help them in their future while working in various development sector organisations on gender issues. The students keep sharing with him, that they have never seen a single teacher who has given them time and such learning. This inspires Dr. Sanjay to work with more commitment. An environment created by engaging men and boys at any of the levels acts as a tool to combat gender based violence and this is quite evident from the experiences shared by Dr. Sanjay. He wishes to have a meeting of the ex-students of the department and see, the changes in their personal lives and how they are dealing with their responsibilities in their respective family settings with a view to have a proper monitoring of his initiatives.

Working with school and college youth by engaging them in the overall process of achieving gender equality

A case of school intervention in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, India

Background/ Context

Men's Action for Stopping Violence Against Women (MASVAW) has been working relentlessly to achieve gender equality with the active involvement of men and boys at the local/ community level in various parts of Uttar Pradesh. MASVAW has over the years been working in 35 districts of the state. One of the integral components of MASVAW is working with youth in schools and colleges of its intervention areas. In due course MASVAW has initiated a lot of action aimed at ending GBV.

An incident of molestation, rape and brutality on a schoolgirl named Payal prompted MASVAW to start an intervention programme with youth in schools. She was coming out of a coaching institute when she was abducted, raped and brutally killed by a man within 50 meters from her residence. The culprit after mercilessly burning her dead body, left from the site. In the overall incidence, everyone was keen to know the response of the school authorities where Payal was a student. The school's (both students and authorities) response was horrible on the over-all incidence that triggered massive unrest among the public and MASVAW. The school authorities weren't worried and not even concerned at the fall out of the incident. This insensitive reaction and response from people on such an act of violence led to MASVAW's school intervention programme. The programme titled '*Parivartan programme for Youth*' was initiated with 15 schools in Lucknow.

Activities/ Methodology

The work with students in schools started with first convincing the teachers and the students about the existence of violence as they were

reluctant to accept the fact that violence existed in their environment as well. MASVAW then developed a curriculum for working with the schools and started working with 5 schools initially. MASVAW negotiated with the school authorities for conducting classes with the students from standard 9 onwards as this would be the group of students to leave school and go to colleges and universities.

They created a '*Media Clipping Chart*' on the incidents depicting violence on women, ranging from domestic violence, dowry- deaths, molestation, etc. This led the school's youth to think on, how to stop such incidents, and who is exactly responsible? Can they as a group do something about such incidents happening daily around them? MASVAW team is now working with Jubilee hall, a hostel for class XII students who are on the verge of going for their further studies to schools and colleges.

As a strategy, MASVAW also included teachers in the over-all efforts to achieve gender equality. This was done with an aim to have few *teachers as role models* who would in turn take the work further. There were instances where few people and teachers discouraged MASVAW's initiatives/ intentions by saying such activity were of very little use to these teachers. Regular meetings with teachers on Gender Issues were conducted. MASVAW believes that teachers as role models have a larger role to play in conducting of workshops with the youth in schools/ colleges.

Working with school youth was important because there were many such incidents in which girls had reported abuse by teachers and other male students. This led MASVAW to feel

the need to make a friendly and sensitive environment in school/ college campuses through a sensitive approach.

Observation/ Changes/ Outcomes/ Impact

After 2006, due to MASVAW's constant effort, positive response's from Boys and Youth is being observed in the locality. There were certain 'so-called' bad image boys who came to MASVAW and talked and recognized its efforts; and are now working with MASVAW as volunteers. These boys have formed a group called "Changers" with a belief in; first change self and then change others. The group aims to stop the incidence of abuse, violence against girls in schools, and colleges, etc. Apart from these positive outcomes MASVAW's efforts have shown a sensitive campus through Road SHOWS in these schools, groups. MASVAW identified boys, who would stand in front of girl's schools after school hours and abuse girls. MASVAW then, *through its posters, on stopping violence against women* tried to target these group of boys. Regular exhibitions through road shows were initiated, and one such exhibition was showed at the railway station in Lucknow. MASVAW kept suggestion boxes on prominent locations in the district asking for people and youth's suggestions and comments on the campaigns/ activities. MASVAW developed an *Inland letter* saying, *"Yes, I am concerned about rising incidents of Violence against women and girls"*. As learning experience, MASVAW advocates that *the sooner the better*

to start with young boys and girls in achieving gender equality. It's comparatively easier to sensitize these young minds. To carry on with another activity towards Children's rights, MASVAW organized a peaceful march on NITHARI CASE (Case of child sexual abuse at a village called Nithari in Noida, UP) with more than 100 youth. MASVAW believes, if youth get a proper space and context, they can do a lot of activities towards eliminating GBV and creating a supportive environment for themselves.

Conclusion

Working with youth is an integral aspect of minimizing the incidents of violence against women. Regular campaigns, Road Shows, Media Clippings, and other sensitization programme have been found to be effective in dealing with cases of abuse. As a strategy, teacher's role is very crucial in sensitizing the young minds. Community mobilization and community driven initiatives have a wider outreach and acceptance among local people. Regular follow-ups with youth, teachers and various groups is a must to keep a record of activities and its impact on people. Also, these acts assist in rapport- building and in keeping long terms goals of achieving gender equality alive. Having collaborative efforts with Law Colleges, Media Schools, Fine Arts Departments of various Universities and colleges would assist in further replication of MASVAW goals, and more so in involving men and youth to end a culture of existing gender discrimination.

HUMSAFAR - A Support Center for Women in Crisis

Background

Information culled from the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) and other sources indicate that Uttar Pradesh ranks first in the ratings of recorded crimes against women in India. Among the survivors very few have been able to seek help for the violence. Those who try with legal means are also left with uncertainties or even more harassment.

In such a situation, HUMSAFAR, a support centre for women in crisis was started in Lucknow in 2003. Managed by a group of volunteer individuals and organizations, the primary concern of Humsafar has been to work for justice, empowerment, rehabilitation and protection of women survivors of gender based violence, along with raising social awareness regarding gender based violence. HUMSAFAR works in very close collaboration with MASVAW who provide them with inputs in forming the community response groups. The community response groups comprises of men and youth from the community who respond to VAW cases. They also provide the social support group for the survivors. This group also acts a pressure group within the community that makes the community realize the need to respond to VAW cases.

Methodology/Main Activities

Humsafar has been providing the following services in gender based violence/discrimination-

- **Casework**
 - Providing information on VAW
 - Counseling
 - Social mediation and negotiation with family
 - Police report/ facilitate filing of FIR
 - Medical support for treatment and certification

- Legal support through legal clinic
- Rescue
- Protection/shelter in emergency
- Supporting in economic rehabilitation
- Being independent witnesses for women exercising their choices in marriage/partnerships

- **PEACE-** (Public Education Advocacy through Community Extension)
 - Public education campaign -developing neighborhood watch committees in communities.
 - Working with educational institutions - schools, colleges and universities.
 - Identifying volunteers for Citizen Support Group.
 - Mobilising public opinion on Cases of VAW.
- **Friend Support group-** Volunteers from students and other youths, professionals from various disciplines, housewives and others are brought together in a group called '*MITRAMANDALI*' to ensure support to women facing violence.
- **Networking-** with organisations, partners of national networks etc.

Key Achievements

Humsafar has attended around 484 registered cases till now while telephone counselling has been provided to many more. It has helped many victims of rape, other sexual abuses, domestic violence, marital disturbances and other severe forms of human rights violation through rehabilitation, legal support and protected many others from further violence. Many challenging cases of domestic violence, police harassment, special marriage etc. have been dealt with successfully.

HUMSAFAR has also been actively part of campaigns on prevention of domestic violence in partnership with many civil society groups, trade unions etc. It has been working closely with MASVAW (Men's Action for Stopping Violence Against Women) and international network AMAN, Global Voices for Peace in Homes for promoting women's human rights. HUMSAFAR partnered with networks and women's organizations across the state to carry out an intensive campaign "Ab To Jaago" on the implementation of the new law on Domestic Violence. It has also been conducting various sessions on VAW and PWDVA with govt. and private hospitals in the state.

Main Challenges

- i) Distance- Sometimes the locations of the cases are too far or remote for the centre to ensure rapid intervention and support. Since they don't have their response centres in those areas, the responses for the cases are delayed.
- ii) Timing- The time frame for HUMSAFAR's crisis intervention is usually not fixed; sometimes they need to visit the spots or meet the victims at night. In such situations it becomes very difficult for the centre to respond and therefore they have started developing the youth response group in the communities.

Sustainability

Along with providing immediate services to the victims the Centre keeps constant watch on the situations. Network and collaboration are

maintained with other relevant movements, organisations, voluntary groups and individuals to develop a culture against violence and discriminations against women. The activities and strategies are discussed with the partners and others and reviewed for greater effectiveness. Some of HUMSAFAR's plans for near future include:

- Networking with some govt. women's associations Railway board etc.
- Liaison with Media.
- Building up strong network in rural areas/ outskirts.
- Organising self defense trainings for girls and women in educational institutions.
- Formation of more male youth groups in communities for working at night with survivors.

Conclusion

In a state of wide spread and unattended VAW, HUMSAFAR has remained as a major hope for many in Uttar Pradesh. Its support for women in crisis could be continued more meaningfully through establishing more sub-centers in different corners of the state. A wider and stronger collaboration and coordination with various other movements/organisations is also expected to yield better work and coverage. Besides, extensive utilisation of media, especially for ensuring accountability of government agencies and creating public opinion is a must.

AB TO JAAGO

Campaign on the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005

Background

The issue of domestic violence in India has remained a major threat to women's security and wellbeing at home. It was the enforcement of the PWDVA in 2005 that brought much hope for those who have been dreaming of finding a practical solution to the problem. However, like many other laws in our country the success of PWDVA has also been hampered due to limited public opinion and awareness about it. The status of the Act remained far from being effective in a place like Uttar Pradesh where domestic violence against women has been a wide spread phenomenon. Civil societies, NGOs and other groups have been making constant efforts to meet this challenge through promoting awareness about the Act and dealing with different aspects of its implementation. 'Ab To Jaago' campaign has been one such huge effort and refers to the sixteen days of extensive activism organised in U.P. under the partnership of organizations and networks across the state for better work of the PWDVA, 2005. The Campaign was launched with the following broad objectives-

- create awareness about PWDVA, 2005 at a larger level;
- facilitate dialogue on PWDVA, 2005 at the district level; and
- make the government accountable for implementing this Act.

Methodology

Strategies- The campaign was planned to create an extent of awareness, sensitivity and discussion at different levels that combines people's participation and government's accountability for effective implementation of the Act. Accordingly, people from different sections of the society were targeted through

mass media and other forms of communication. Apart from conducting awareness and sensitisation programmes for people at all levels, dialogues were conducted with citizen's groups, bureaucrats, police, public prosecutors, protection officers, media people and others to discuss different functional aspects of the Act including the factors behind its implementation/non-implementation.

Partnership with different groups and organizations and potential individuals have been emphasized to increase coverage and ensure a coordinated and sustained effort.

Activities- Carried out extensively in 41 districts of U.P. the Campaign saw a large variety of activities which are summarized below-

- **Dialogues** with teachers, students, media persons, police, women and others focusing on importance of the law and factors determining its implementation.
- **Lawyers' meeting-** Meetings were held with lawyers including retired and working judges, activists and others to discuss the legal issues surrounding proper implementation of the Act, especially role of advocates and other legal experts in ensuring proper usage of the Act. The issues of infrastructural limitations, role of Protection Officers, myths and misconceptions about the DV Act were also discussed.
- **Doctors' Dialogue-** Dialogues with doctors and medical students were held to discuss the Act while focusing on domestic violence as a major health issue.

- Rallies, candle march, street plays, puppet shows were held in the target areas.
- Community meetings were held in rural and urban communities.
- Wall writing/painting, distribution of pamphlets and posters on VAW and materials on PWDVA to people at different places including zoo going crowds, theatre crowds, crowd at market places and so on
- Poster competitions, speech competitions among students.
- Theatre/Film festivals displaying different aspects of VAW and related issues.
- Talk show on FM Rainbow - A talk show on All India Radio was organized with Risha Sayeed, a feminist lawyer, highlighting different aspects of the law for listeners. Several people phoned in with questions and received explanations on the Act including myths about the same. Some women and men also phoned in and discussed their own problems.
- Press Conferences with reporters from major news papers focusing on various features of the Act and issues of domestic violence.
- Signature campaign for supporting the Act.

Achievements

- Out reach to 41 districts of Uttar Pradesh and exposure to the existing situations.
- Relationship with many organizations, networks, movements, social activists and so on working on the issue of VAW at different levels.
- The issue of domestic violence has been established at different levels and the Act has got publicised much at grass root level. Many new organisations and cultural groups have been involved with the issue of domestic violence and many more are seeking training materials on the campaign.
- Communication and coordination developed with district administrations, different government departments, PRIs etc. An

increased cooperation and contribution from these departments is also seen in the post-campaign period.

- The platform to work on issues of VAW has been developed in schools, colleges and universities.
- The district dialogues have resulted in good understanding of the Act among various government actors; it also helped in rapid and proper treatment of the cases.
- Many cases have come out during the campaign; the channels/ mechanisms for reporting the cases have been developed at different levels.
- Some of the campaign activities have been added to different national and international movements.

Challenges

- Due to limited monetary resources the campaign had to limit its plans in many situations.
- Sometimes it was not easy to receive cooperation from government officers. Moreover the administrative complexities also caused delay in performing some of the campaign activities.
- Many of the government actors like Protection officers, police and many service providers at district level didn't have adequate orientation about the Act and their own role in its implementation.
- In some areas it was difficult to get active participation of media due to absence of good relationship.
- In a few areas where participation of women and women's groups was very less men's effort seemed to be inadequate in meeting the campaign objectives.
- Protection officers were already busy with some other job and could not give much time.

Sustainability

The partnerships developed and sustained through the campaign have been contributing in

different ways towards a more active and wider treatment of the campaign objectives. Because of the establishment of the issue of VAW in many new areas and the awareness on the PWDVA, many new organisations have added activities on the same line with their regular programmes.

The initiatives taken involving teachers, students and authorities in schools and colleges/universities have contributed to a

culture where the issues are being discussed and treated with actions.

The relationships and communication channels developed with different government departments and officials are also expected to facilitate effective handling of the issues in future. Efforts are also taken to maintain regular involvement of media in reporting and attending cases of violence as well as sustaining other campaign objectives.

Involving Men in the Campaign to Stop the Declining Sex Ratio in Orissa, India

Background

Bhavani Nayak has been working on issues of gender inequality in and around Bhubaneswar (Orissa). He has been associated with MASVAW since November 2008. His efforts in the past led him to think that Gender equality can only be achieved once boys and men are engaged in the over-all effort to end GBV. Orissa has seen a sharp decline in the sex ratio in the city and adjoining areas, though the tribal population in these areas used to have a comparatively better sex ratio. This led Bhavani and his team to think of working out a strategy to deal with the declining sex ratio. They realised that it was essential to involve men in the process, so that the men also took the responsibility of changing the skewed sex ratio.

At the Institute for Social development, he started his work with women issues since the Orissa Cyclone in 1999. The networks he and his organisation are associated now is Swadhikaar Forum which is a forum comprising of organisations that run shelter and short stay homes for women and children. There are a total of 42 NGOs who run short stay and shelter homes. They work on Legal aid training, research and documentation of the activities focussed on ending discrimination against women.

The existing culture and tradition in the local communities itself posed a challenge for Bhavani in his work. Earlier, when Bhavani and his team tried getting in touch with government officials on the alarming issue of declining sex ratio, they were hardly given a chance to talk. It is only when they got dumps of foetuses in Bhubaneswar that the government acknowledged the issue following which the monitoring part of the overall issue was given to Institute for Social Development.

Challenges

The hostile attitude of the government officials posed a lot of problems for the Institute for Social Development. They had to mobilise a lot of resources on their own. Even advocating for such a cause wasn't easy alone and so they formed a network called Swadhikar Forum. Keeping to the objective within a large network is a constant challenge that they face regularly.

Methodology

After tying up with MASVAW, a campaign titled, "*Naye Mard ki nayi Soch*" was launched from November 2008 in Bhubaneswar and adjoining areas on the issue of involving men in reversing the declining sex- ratio. They organised a capacity building programme with various stakeholders. A one-day orientation meet was held in Bhubaneswar. The meet saw people discussing challenges faced by men at the local level, like low literacy, judiciary and police's poor response, gender related policy and programme of the government not being implemented properly. The over- all data showed the alarming decline in the sex- ratio, because of the above stated social indicators. This led the forum to think that it were mostly men who need to be sensitised in this over- all process of ending son- preference, sex selective abortions, etc.

Strategies

The teachers of the schools/ colleges were trained and asked to work with students and communities. It was felt that the teachers had the potential to influence people that the root cause for such practices was the unequal gender balance and hence it was this relationship that needs to be balanced. Building the capacities for peer monitoring and also

involving non- NGO stakeholders was done as strategy to put a further check on the disturbing trends. Corporate houses have also been approached for fund raisings in order to sustain the campaign and ensure its outreach. Also, regular follow- ups with various stakeholders like lawyers, doctors, youth clubs, etc. were done to monitor the campaign in a holistic way. Swadhikaar Forum is working tirelessly in 10 worst- affected districts of Orissa, in terms of declining sex- ratio on this over- all campaign. They have divided the communities in two belts namely, the tribal belt and the coastal belt, to ensure proper monitoring and sustainability of the campaign. These areas have been identified on the basis of

number of reported cases of female foeticide.

Sustainability

To take care of the sustainability part as a future plan, they are now insisting on Alliance building, regular media interactions, funds raising efforts by involving corporate sectors, review of its activities, etc. Various non- government organisations are being approached as a strategy to form effective state- wide networks to ensure a better outreach and long term sustainability of the programme interventions.

A similar campaign has also been initiated in Rajasthan and Western Uttar Pradesh.

Efforts towards addressing the root causes of Declining Sex Ratio and developing a strategy to address the same in Western Uttar Pradesh - MASVAW

Background

Saharanpur District of western Uttar Pradesh is one of the districts with low sex ratio in the state. Chilkana is a small town of that district which borders with Haryana and has a population of around 20, 000 with roughly 50% each of Hindus and Muslims. The decline in the sex ratio is evident all across the Saharanpur district of Western Uttar Pradesh. Although the reasons are more or less the same, yet the interventions designed and aimed at preventing people from adopting such practices were not enough.

The Need was felt by MASVAW in the region that change can be brought into the attitudes and practices when there are concrete efforts with the various organisations working in the region on the issue of local social concerns. Hence, in the year 2008, MASVAW called for a planning meeting. Five organisations from Saharanpur and adjoining areas got together and discussed on building a strategy on developing a campaign to sensitize various stakeholders on the issue of Declining Sex Ratio. Addressing the root causes of the decline in sex ratio was discussed at length in the meeting and it was felt that it was essential to involve men in the process so that they also take the responsibility of prevention of maternal mortality, child nutrition, etc by being active partners and not being the protectors. Thereafter the campaign '*Naye Mard ki Nayi Soch*', was initiated by MASVAW.

Methodology

MASVAW's efforts derive its strength from its members who are group of young men and youth who work tirelessly at the community level, and facilitate range of activities, like

- Spreading awareness through posters depicting root causes of DSR,
- Community mobilization at the village and the block level, involving doctors, lawyers,
- Organizing *nukkad sabhas* with village men, Sarpanchs, youth, etc,

The local men and youth are being mobilised to work within areas of domination of both the communities at various levels, village, blocks, etc. It was felt that the learning starts from home and hence, parents have a positive role to play in the overall process of socialization. Some of the organisations partnering with MASVAW in its efforts are Samajik Ekta Manch, Jan Jagriti Sansthan Baliya Kheri Block, Ghaar Chhetra Majdoor Morcha Muzaffarabad Block, Dalit Alpasankhyak Vikas Sansthan Muzaffarabad Block, Astitva, and Achal from the district level. Few educational institution's hostels in the district which accommodates students from diverse backgrounds have also been involved in the campaign.

Following various ongoing meetings in every village of the block targeting Sarpanchs, Teachers, Lawyers, Doctors, Village men, Students, and Youth, etc MASVAW organised a **District Level Meeting in Saharanpur** where 70 -80 men from 20- 22 villages participated. The meet saw people discussing challenges faced by men at the local level, like poor literacy, hostile attitude of men, poor response from the police and various programme and policies of the government not being implemented properly. The people could connect to the issues discussed in the meet and in unison, agreed all these factors to be detrimental for their development. This led the forum that is

based on the idea that it is mostly men who need to be sensitised in this over- all process of ending son- preference, sex selective abortions, and such social evils

Strategies

Building the capacities for peer monitoring and also involving non- NGO stakeholders was taken as a strategy to put a further check on the disturbing trends of the declining sex ratio. The importance of girls is being felt at the community level with the serious decline in the sex ratio in the adjoining districts of Haryana. MASVAW District Forum as its strategy aims to organize *nukkad nataks* on the Declining sex ratio campaign with the artists (who are mostly men/ youth) from the Samajik Ekta Manch. Further strategies on working with media and involving them in the process of brining an end to the DSR is being adopted as future objectives of the MASVAW team.

Challenges

The existing rigid socio-cultural tradition in the local communities initially posed a challenge for MASVAW team in its work. Earlier, when MASVAW team tried getting in touch with people from both, the Hindu and the Muslim communities on the issue of declining sex ratio, they were hardly paid any heed. Despite the initial non-cooperation and doubt of the people, the honest and continuous efforts of this team laid a foundation for a fruitful discussion at the community level in all the villages of the respective five blocks, Sarsawa, Gangoh, Baliya Kheri, Rampur, and Muzaffarabad. The preference for son was overtly evident in the patriarchal mindsets of both the communities across Chilkana. The team through its

approaches agreed that the elders were the staunchest subjects and were more resistant to new ideas and approaches than the younger subjects. The question that still remains is reaching out to the root causes of declining sex ratio and putting an end to it.

Sustainability

The MASVAW team has approached corporate houses for funds in order to sustain the campaign and ensure its outreach. Regular follow- ups with various stakeholders like lawyers, doctors, youth clubs, etc. is undertaken to monitor the campaign in a holistic way. To take care of the sustainability part as a future plan, the team now insists on alliance building, regular media interactions and coverage in the local media, funds raising efforts by involving corporate sectors, review of its activities, etc. Various non- government organisations of the region are being approached as a strategy to form effective local networks to ensure a better outreach and long term sustainability of the intervention programme aimed at bringing a healthy environment where, women and girls are seen and treated to be equal in every sense.

The MASVAW members feel that within three months they have observed a positive change; however, it would be too soon to say more in terms of figures. But, there is no doubt that the team is putting in its honest efforts to engage boys and men in his activities designed in consultation with MASVAW to address the declining sex ratio campaign in the region. Since the campaign has started from January 2009, the effects of the interventions are yet to be realised and experienced in the local community.

Case study on WE (Women Empowerment), a voluntary group working with media institute on women empowerment issues

Background

'WE' (Women Empowerment) was established as a support group to assist different groups working for women empowerment. It is a relatively informal organisation with members from different professions and disciplines. Later WE started working with men and as a part of this it has been making efforts to involve people from various sections such as journalists, lawyers and activists in an effort to address the root causes of violence against women.

Activities

While working in the field of gender equality and Violence Against Women, *WE* felt an acute need to influence the thoughts of common men. The initiative was materialised through a workshop at the Department of Mass Communication and Journalism in Kushabhau Thakre Jansanchar Evam Patrakarita Vishvavidyalaya, Raipur. While conducting these workshops for sensitising students and teachers they tried to focus on the issue of gender equality in the context of religion, economic condition, social structure and other important aspects of people's lives. For making this approach more effective they developed a curriculum known as '*VACGESR*' (Value Addition Curriculum on Gender Equality And Social Responsibility) to be studied in colleges and universities. It was designed and tested involving various professionals, teachers and others. Teachers were trained on this

curriculum before starting the course in Raipur Media University. The curriculum has now been started informally in some other universities across Chattisgarh as well.

The responses, especially from teachers had not been satisfactory in the beginning. The efforts were not reaching out to students as per the expectation. However, it was inspiring to see some responses from the student community. Around twenty students came out as a group through this training. There are about 12 students in Raipur who are actively engaged in raising women's issues along with publishing investigative reports on various issues involving VAW. The core group named WE is constantly engaged in organising training for teachers, youths and others to make a sustained effort. The teachers are being regularly contacted and called for in all the meetings at various forums for rapport building and involving academicians in our initiatives.

Challenges

- i) Cooperation from teachers has been very poor. While some colleges (running self paid courses) affiliated with the host (initiator) university are teaching the course, teachers from other colleges don't respond well because there is no compensation attached.
- ii) Students who get motivated and try to initiate activities often fail to meet the resource need; resources in the form of films etc. are urgently sought by them.

Involving Men as Allies in Violence against Women: Are We Pursuing a Mirage?

POONAM KATHURIA¹

Most studies on violence against women indicate that perpetrators of violence are almost exclusively men. The violence continues because it is acceptable. The need to build a culture that does not accept Violence against Women seems imminent. Also imminent is the need to involve men in building this culture. While it is possible to view men as potential allies, in ending violence against women, by changing their personal behavior and or intervening to confront the problematic behavior of other men, we need to examine such an approach in terms of its potentials and limits.

With this objective, a community based study was conducted in 35 villages spread over four districts. In a random sample, 506 rural married women were interviewed to understand their individual perspective on the issue of violence. The data gathered from women was supplemented with Focus Group Discussions (FGD) with rural men from the same communities. The aim was to elicit information on factors that determine male behavior in committing violence against women and can become the basis for devising a long term campaign strategy for involving men in combating violence against women. Twenty two FGDs were carried out with 410 men from seven social groups selected on the basis of their level of representation in the population.

As per the study Men are aware of VAW as an issue and could describe the forms of violence

in great detail, including its emotional and mental dimensions. However men do not always perceive violence as unjust unless it is extreme

in nature or culturally unacceptable (sexual demands by father-in-law). All men in the study justified violence Against women for a reason. The reasons could range from not giving a glass of water to refusal of sex. It is very clear from the discussions with men that they oscillate between an awareness of the injustice being done to women and a mindset that is shaped by a culture that legitimizes this power as their 'natural right' and privilege. They tend to condemn violence only in culturally acceptable frameworks. They also tend to appreciate women who suffer in silence as compared to those who protest.

It was a group of lower caste men lower caste men who acknowledge their frustration as a cause for violence. Women become targets of male frustration because they do not retaliate. Another group of backward caste men said that women have to suffer because of superstition, because of lack of education and because they have endurance (because they do not complaint).

The solution offered for ending VAW was once again telling of the male mindset. Counseling the 'man' was the most common solution. None of the groups talk of changing the cultural norms that perpetuate the violence. The men tended to move from denial of the issue of VAW to saying it is a non issue to being help less as it is the society that is to blame.

¹ Poonam Kathuria is director of Society for Womens Action and Training Initiatives-SWATI

The men are not in favor of doing away with the role divide. Are threatened -if this role divide particularly in the economic sphere is challenged. When it comes to issues of power and control the men were again not so willing .

Male violence against women is as old as patriarchy itself. The roots of this exploitative ideology are so deep that it seems in the natural scheme of things, that men have power over women, to exploit them and their potential, in a manner that adds to their material, physical and social well being and worth. The equation between men and woman is one of power in which male violence against women perpetuates and is tolerated by women because of the unequal power relation between the two. **Calling upon men to be allies in combating violence against women is essentially an appeal to men's sense of justice and egalitarianism. It does not really challenge and change the power equation. On the contrary by inviting the patriarch to become a patron, it actually further strengthens the unequal power relation .**

The question than is, why do, we, men and women want to pursue such an approach. I say that it is for two reasons. a) The success of the male involvement approach is linked to our belief in changing the world, of the human ability to transform one's reality and the world around us. b) It is important to us as human beings, and as women to think of (most) men as allies so as to keep our faith and hope in this synergistic relationship alive.

Note: This study was conducted in 2004 by Saurashtra-kachchh group of Agencies on Violence Against Women and is part of a larger research on prevalence of violence against women in 4 districts of Gujarat state in India.

For more information regarding the study contact: Poonam Kathuria, email: pswati@sify.com

The faith is not misplaced. But can work only under conditions when it is matched with other contributory factors of equality and mutuality between men and women. In the context of the men in this study, men feel unsupported in their role as providers, of their roles outside the home and a woman feels unsupported in her role within. Both feel isolated and alone. While one (women) feels dependent and helpless the other (men) feels the pressure to perform to live up to the expectations of masculinity/maleness.

Both men and women have to understand the working of this phenomena and its impact on the self and their relationship. On the other hand women, have to also to be equipped to challenge and act on their mindset defined by the same socio-cultural norms as for men. Empowering women through education, exposure and an ability to deal with the external world is the way to equip women .

But last but not the least changing the power equation between men and woman is the deciding factor to Combating Violence against Women. In a vast majority of the Indian social context this means working on two core issues of son preference and women's right to inheritance in the natal as well as the marital home. Unless this is done women will continue to be treated as the 'other', the outsider, the inferior and a man's property and their fore, vulnerable to abuse.

Developing communication materials on Men, masculinities and risk taking in the context of HIV/AIDS:

A strategy to address issues of men and risk taking with college-going young men in Pune colleges, India

Background

With an estimated 5.7 million people living with HIV/AIDS, India has the highest HIV/AIDS prevalence in the world, according to UNAIDS.² Among 15-49 year olds, an estimated 5.2 million are living with the disease, according to India's National AIDS Control Organisation (NACO)³, which is an increase by 35% since 2000. It has been relatively stable for the past two years, increasing by 2% between 2003 and 2005. NFHS-III (National Family Health Survey III, 2005-2006) reports increasing prevalence of HIV by the age groups of young men. It shows urgent need to work with the age group of 15 to 24 to address various causes exposing them to vulnerabilities to HIV/AIDS.

It was noticed over these years of our interaction with youth on the issues of men and masculinities that no effective communication materials are available to address issues of gender construction of men and masculinities and it's inter linkages with different kind of risks that they take. During our interaction with the college youths from July 2008, it was collectively decided to have communication materials that could appeal young men both in content and design. Following two types of materials were conceptualised:

- A. A poster
- B. Three monthly newsletters

Process of material development

A. Poster:

i. Listing of key risks -

Key words for the poster were listed in a collective group work with college youth during one of the workshops. Young men listed various risks that they take. Speeding the bike, teasing/proposing girls and betting for that, spending money for friends, do or die for your love, drinking beer at one run, finishing a packet of cigarette in one sitting, bullying college professors are some of the risks that young men listed in this workshop. The most common risks were ranked and decided to be included in poster in the form of messages.

ii. Text and design -

Text and visuals messages were planned during a group work session with the young men and a rough draft sketch of poster was prepared. Two of the young men volunteers worked on this rough draft in Corel Draw and designed it.

² UNAIDS, *2006 Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic*, May 2006.

³ NACO, *HIV/AIDS Epidemiological Surveillance & Estimation Report for the Year 2005*, April 2006.

iii. **Pretesting of the poster -**

Pretesting of the poster was done randomly with youth when visited informally at different point of time. Poster was pretested to understand its comprehension, visuals and relevance of key message of the poster. Few changes in design were made whereas text remained the same.

iv. **Production -**

Poster design was finalised by a professional designer and changes were made on the basis of results of pretesting. 500 copies of the poster were printed.

v. **Dissemination -**

Various strategies were adapted for dissemination of this poster. Poster was published by a group of young men in one of the colleges participating in this programme.

Posters were widely disseminated in colleges like Marathwada Mitra Mandal's College of Commerce, Modern College, S. P. College, Bharati Vidyapeeth, Karve Institute, S. V. Union's College of Commerce (Evening) and Shahu college. Places for dissemination were plotted with the youth. Youth gathering and hangout places were identified along with the formal spaces like notice boards and student's boards and boy's common rooms.

Poster also was disseminated through poster exhibition along with other posters from 'Alochana', a resource centre on women in Pune.

Other special disseminations:

FEM national meeting: FEM (Forum to Engage Men) national meeting was held in Lucknow on 23 and 24 March 2009. FEM is

a national alliance of civil society groups, media, academicians, national and international aid agencies in India and individuals. National meeting was attended by over 40 participants across the states of India. Poster has been specially disseminated in this meeting that has reached to organisations in 12 states of India.

Global Symposium on Working with Men and Boys: SAMYAK attended a global symposium on working with men and boys for gender equality held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil from March 30 to April 3, 2009. Poster was disseminated in Global Village, a space at the symposium for dissemination of educational materials from all over the world. Poster was very well received and appreciated by the global community working with men and boys and has reached to 80 countries through this event.



Youth disseminating poster in FEM national meeting



Michael Kauffman screening the poster

B. Newsletters

i. Why newsletters?

Newsletter was used as the medium to reinforce some of the key messages of the workshops on gender and HIV /AIDS with the participants of the workshop and to reach out to larger youth audiences in various colleges through the participants. It also provided space for youth to write about their experiences of workshops and learning.

ii. Planning process -

Newsletters were planned during the workshops with the young men. An editorial committee of five members, with four

youth representatives was set up to oversee the planning, production and dissemination of newsletters. A broader outline of the content was designed along with men and responsibilities were taken for the sections of each newsletter.

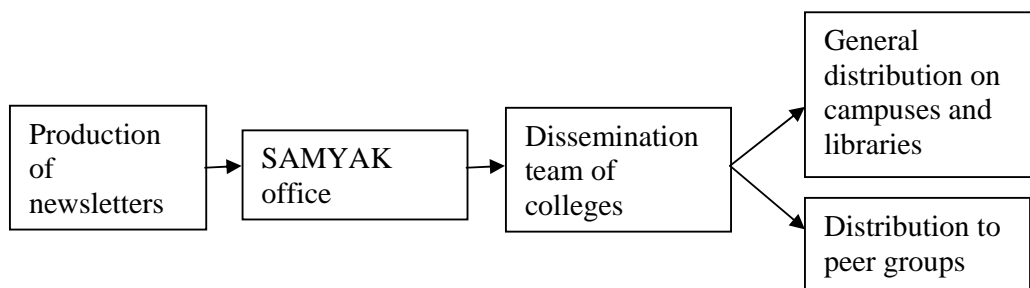
iii. Production of newsletters -

Process involved was collecting draft of materials, review of materials, editorial changes, design and printing. Editorial committee met only once to review the materials received. Various designs were tested for the title of the newsletter. Name of the newsletter was decided as U-We (*Yuvi*=Youth) that talks about togetherness and also depicts its relevance with youth.



iv. Dissemination of newsletters -

Dissemination plan was discussed in groups and finalised as follows:



Dissemination of newsletter was done at two levels. A wide dissemination was done to the general students especially young boys and

other strategy used was distribution of newsletters to specific peer groups and keeping copies in libraries.

We also tried to keep few copies in the canteens and hang-out places but this strategy did not work and few copies of first newsletter were wasted.

Readability of the newsletter was not monitored or evaluated. We tried to get informal feedback from some of the young men, which show that comprehension of text information was good but a suggestion was made regarding more use of pictures or line drawings.

a) Newsletter 1 -Content

- Risk perception of young men and its linkage with risk of HIV infection
- Introduction to the project
- What is gender? What is masculinity? (What is Boy and What is Girl, Kamala Bhasin)
- Why work with young boys on issues of masculinities and HIV/AIDS? Gender-based violence
- Few definitions to understand gender.

b) Newsletter 2 - Content

- Why men should join processes for gender equality, what we can do?

- Issues of sexual health: question-answers
- Poster addressing notion of masculinities and risk taking
- Pictures of film festival and other events.

Learnings

1. Involvement of youth at all stages of development of materials helps increase the effectiveness of materials and acceptance of messages by youth.
2. Through the process of development of materials young men involved also gone through the process of perspective development.
3. Youth friendly design has increased effectiveness of the poster.
4. Readability of newsletter need to be assessed and number of pages needs to be reduced. Format of newsletter also can be changed.
5. Dissemination strategies worked well as those were planned with the youth.
6. E-based communication materials might increase access of materials by the college youth.

Aakar is a registered Trust with its office in New Delhi. The Trust was set up in 1992 to produce documentaries and videos on developmental themes but has since expanded its area of interest to research, activism and interventions in the area of culture and knowledge production.

The principle areas of interest of those who are part of Aakar are: gender, masculinities, labour, conflict and religion. Aakar functions as a collective with people who constitute the group working in different areas of interest.

Aakar's interventions in the area of masculinities started in 1997 when it conceived and organised a South Asian video project under which four films on masculinities were produced in Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan. The project was supported by Save The Children (UK) and UNICEF. The films produced under this project kick started a discussion on masculinities in the region and have been used extensively by civil society groups, researchers, academic institutions. These films continue to be used even after almost a decade of being produced by activists all over the region and in other parts of the globe.

From 2000 onwards Aakar has been conducting workshops with groups in different parts of South Asia to generate a better understanding of masculinities and design interventions on gender with men.

In 2002 Aakar initiated a major university based programme to facilitate more research on the theme of masculinities. UNIFEM supported a travelling seminar on masculinities that visited

six universities across India. The second round of the series was extended to South Asia and the seminar series was held at ten universities in Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal and India. The series has now travelled to 16 universities across South Asia. It has collaborated with more than 40 departments (and several women's groups), approximately 4000 students and faculty have attended the two day seminars and more than 120 presenters have travelled with the seminar. The series was conceived with the idea that over a period of time with some amount of perseverance we will be able to create a body of knowledge and more importantly set up a structure for it to be disseminated and thereby contribute to creating a public discourse around masculinities. The seminar constitutes of twelve presentations made over two days. These presentations are a mix of academic papers, personal and activist narratives and films. A volume with papers from the seminars is to be published by Routledge.

Aakar has produced several documentaries on the theme of gender and masculinities. These have been screened extensively in South Asia and internationally. They have won several awards at film festivals. When Four Friends Meet, Majma (Performance), The City Beautiful have been widely distributed and used by activists, academics and researchers.

Aakar continues to work towards generating a public discourse on masculinities through innovative projects.

We believe that the culture of violence that masculinities injects in our body social can be best addressed by a cultural response.

For more information: www.southasianmasculinities.org

