

Case Story of Ramesh Kumar

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When I graduated in 2003, in MA Social Work, I had little idea about gender equality, VAW, Sexuality, masculinity, etc. I had no real knowledge about these issues. Because of this, I did not understand that physical, psychological, emotional violence are a part of VAW.

In November 2003, in Social Work Department, Dr. Sanjay, Associate Professor, organized a workshop. The main aim of the workshop was to give an introduction to the work of MASVAW (Men's Action for Stopping Violence Against Women) and to explain why it was important to work with men on this issue. This was the first association with MASVAW and also a chance to develop an understanding on this issue. I learnt about the various forms of violence and how it impacts men and women.

I joined MASVAW campaign and understood about the issues and also started helping with household chores. I started helping in cooking, cleaning, taking care of my child, etc. In the beginning my parents and sisters criticized me for supporting in the housework and said that this is a woman's task and you must not do it. Yet in spite of this, I continued to do this work. I kept discussing this issue with my mother and sisters. Although my wife was happy when I supported her in her work, but due to the constant criticism by my family, she also asked me not to help her out.

I continued the work and slowly the criticism stopped and now even my mother has accepted my doing the chores.

Now when I bathe my daughter, wash clothes or help my wife in her chores, it is no longer criticized. After several discussions with my siblings upon the criticisms, and after explaining the purpose behind my actions, they also realized that if men help, the burden will become less on women and work will be done quicker.

I gave examples to explain my point. When my younger sister Babita got married and went to her in-laws place, the burden of work on her became so huge that she kept suffering. When I explained my purpose through Babita's example, they understood what I was saying. They understood that if men support in housework then there is a positive change.