

# Gender Awareness and Sensitivity Applications



• TRAINING RESOURCE PACK •



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**UNNATI**  
Organisation for Development Education

## **UNNATI 2009**

**First edition: 500 copies**

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### **PUBLISHER**

UNNATI Organisation for Development Education  
G 1/200, Azad Society, Ahmedabad 380 015. Gujarat, India.  
Phone: +91-79-26746145, 26733296. Fax: +91-79-26743752  
Email: sie@unnati.org Website: www.unnati.org

**Compiled by:** Geeta Sharma and Deepa Sonpal

**Design and Art Direction:** Tarun Deep Girdher

**Illustrations:** Ranjit Balmuchu, Tarun Deep Girdher

**Cover:** Ranjit Balmuchu, Tarun Deep Girdher

**Layout and Production:** Ramesh Patel, Tarun Deep Girdher

**Printed at:** Bansidhar Offset, Celler-2, Sheel Complex, Mithakhali Six Roads, Navrangpura, Ahmedabad 380 009. Phone: 9825353967

**Disclaimer:** This 'Gender Awareness and Sensitivity Applications' is designed primarily to support development trainers to facilitate gender awareness and sensitivity training for development practitioners. Due care has been taken to simplify the language and the presentation to make the Training Resource Pack reader friendly. All case studies, characters and examples in the pack are fictitious and any resemblance to real life is coincidental. They have been drawn upon only to highlight the significance of an issue or clarify a concept. Users are encouraged to use the Resource Pack as an aid to supplement their existing understanding of and familiarity with gender and participatory training principles and, if required, supplement this with more information from experts and reference material. This is not a legal document and shall not be used for any commercial purpose.

Several activities included in this Resource Pack have been widely used by us and other organisations. It is difficult to trace the original source of many of them. We do not claim a copyright to these activities. Our effort has been to present them in a user-friendly format, based on our understanding of their use.

# Preface

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Since its inception in 1990, UNNATI has been committed to addressing gender inequalities and working towards women's empowerment. Over the years, several efforts have been made to (i) promote a gender just and equitable environment within organisations, (ii) incorporate gender issues in programme planning and monitoring, and (iii) support the development of gender sensitive policies. The concept of 'gender and gender mainstreaming' has been evolving and there is a need to continually and persuasively work on it. Although the concept of gender has been well grounded in the development agenda, there is a capacity gap in institutionalising gender mainstreaming among various types of development organisations.

Based on the evolving understanding of gender and our own experience, a Training Resource Pack has been conceived, of which this first module on 'Gender Awareness and Sensitivity Applications' has been compiled. It is hoped that this compilation would enable development trainers to create awareness and sensitivity and assist both men and women practitioners to explore ways of applying their learning on gender to their personal and professional lives. The module has evolved through consultative processes with partners and is based on our hands-on experience of conducting gender trainings locally, nationally and internationally.

'Gender Awareness and Sensitivity Applications' contains a set of activities under 11 thematic sessions that can be used to facilitate awareness of and reflection on personal gender biases, beliefs and attitudes. It has been designed for development practitioners who have prior orientation and experience of using participatory methods and techniques with a basic understanding of gender.

Users of this Resource Pack are encouraged to share their experiences for collectively building knowledge on techniques and methods of enhancing gender awareness and sensitivity. It may be used freely with innovation by the users.

Binoy Acharya, Director  
UNNATI, 2009

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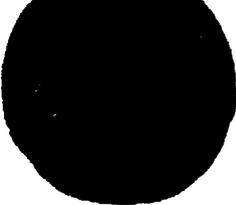
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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The compilation of this Resource Pack has been supported by several colleagues and friends — people who have the expertise in and a vast experience of working on gender issues and facilitating training on gender and participatory techniques. We would particularly like to thank Neharika Vohra, Professor, Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad, and Malika Singh (Training Specialist), Reach India, for their constructive and critical comments and suggestions as well as for their prompt and timely support; Dr. Ginny Shrivastava, Coordinating Director, ASTHA, and Sushila Prajapati, Programme Officer, Action Aid, Gujarat, for helping develop the session on the issues of single women; Swapni Shah and Kirit Parmar, our colleagues, for giving valid and specific comments from a user perspective and Bhanumathy Vasudevan, Mayyam, Bangalore, for sharing her experience of gender training and providing ideas on making the activities relevant for rural and urban audiences.

We sincerely appreciate all the team members in UNNATI who provided support for all kinds of crucial tasks of photocopying, accessing reference material, serving refreshments during the production process and for other administrative support, especially Kamlesh Rathod, Laxmansinh B Rathod, Laxmansinh S Rathod, Bhavansinh Rathod, Karansinh Rathod, Sardarsinh Rathod, Renisen Rebello and Binu George. Thanks also to the accounts team — Preyas Mewada, Dharmishtha Halpathy and Bipin Tripathy — for managing the financial aspects.

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# Introduction

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The 'Gender Awareness and Sensitivity Applications' is an effort to share and disseminate our learning on gender training, based on several experiences with a wide range of participants, within the country and from neighbouring countries. These include men and women from development organisations, community-based groups and the government. The participants' responses, queries and experiential accounts have contributed immensely to the evolution of many of the activities included in this Resource Pack.

## **WHY GENDER TRAINING?**

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Gender Training became popular in the '80s as a tool to create gender awareness and sensitise individuals and organisations. Beginning with the '70s, different schools of thought evolved regarding women's development. The initial focus was on integrating women in existing development processes. This approach, popularly known as the Women in Development (WID), did not address the root causes of discrimination that were responsible for women's low participation in their societies. The emphasis instead was on achieving equitable integration of women in economic development. Donor agencies thus directed funds specifically to projects designed to improve women's economic standard of living. The Women and Development (WAD) approach that evolved in subsequent years was based on the argument that women are already integrated into the development process in an exploitative way; that women would never get their equal share of development benefits unless patriarchy and global inequality are addressed. According to this perspective, women were not a neglected resource but overburdened and undervalued. It highlighted the need for a redistribution of the benefits and burdens of development between men and women. The focus on women's empowerment and equity emerged around the '80s by the proponents of the Gender and Development (GAD) approach. It was during this period that women began to openly question the historical explanation and justification of

women's subordination and their problems on biological grounds. This led to the development of the understanding that women's problems are linked to the discrimination based on gender, i.e. the social roles and relationships of men and women and the forces that contribute to the perpetuation and change in these relations.

Gender training and gender analysis thus began to be used as tools for promoting gender focused development. Development organisations began using it extensively as a means to enhance the awareness of gender issues at personal, community and organisational levels and to equip the practitioners with requisite skills for using the understanding of gender in all programmatic and organisational aspects. Through reflections on attitudes, perceptions and beliefs, gender training seeks to enable women and men to plan and implement gender just and gender equitable projects and formulate appropriate organisational policies and systems.

## **GENDER TRAINING: UNNATI'S EXPERIENCE**

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UNNATI has, since its inception in 1990, included gender awareness as an integral component of its perspective building programmes on development issues. In addition to promoting gender awareness and sensitivity within the organisation and our programmes, we have engaged with civil society groups, NGOs and the government. Our effort has been to promote gender sensitisation, help formulate gender policies, conduct gender analysis and audits, develop a resource pool of gender trainers to assist in perspective building at the grassroot and integration of gender concerns in ongoing programmes. The process of gender training has been a joint learning process for the participants and us, as facilitators. Besides creating awareness and building skills, it has helped us build an understanding of how gender permeates and operates in the larger scenario and its complexities in specific situations. Gender training is certainly not an end in itself; it is only one among several tools that can facilitate the process of gender mainstreaming.

## **GENDER TRAINING: UNIQUENESS AND CHALLENGES**

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Gender training is different from several other trainings that we have conducted – by way of the reactions and responses it evokes from men and women, the dynamics during these trainings, the processes it employs and its impact on the trainees. It takes the participants into a reflective mode; it serves as a ground for examining one's own beliefs and values and touches both the personal and professional lives. It operates not only at the cognitive level but also at the affective level. Because of its capacity to bring in the participants' personal lives into its ambit, it has the possibilities of ruffling them and initiating a process for reflection beyond the workshop. It is a challenge for the facilitator to strike a balance between the cognitive and affective components, the personal and the professional and to address the anxieties it can create among the participants about the possibilities for change. It is advisable that the trainer team consists of a woman and a man. Experience suggests that often both men and women participants may find it easier to accept the point of view put forward and the behavioural changes suggested by a male trainer. Since gender linked cultural practices and beliefs have emanated from a patriarchal society/male-dominant principle, the attempts made by a male trainer to suggest attitude and behavioural changes in this set of practices hold a higher value.

Usually, for strengthening any programme component, one-time training on a specific aspect is not seen as adequate for action; this also holds true for gender trainings. Secondly, trainings can only provide space for sensitisation. However, using this sensitisation to change mindsets and view things from a different perspective and to modify behaviour remains a challenge. This requires stepping beyond the training and adopting a process of engendering organisations. The acceptance level of organisations for effecting a change in their style, practices and focus of functioning is likely to vary. The leadership in the organisation has a vital role to play in this as this may call for changes in the policy, practices and work culture.

## **GENDER AWARENESS AND SENSITIVITY APPLICATIONS – WHAT, WHY AND FOR WHOM:**

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‘Gender Awareness and Sensitivity Applications’ is the first in a series of modules that have been envisaged for the Training Resource Pack. This Resource Pack is a combined effort of the gender resource within the organisation as well as external resource persons and our partner organisations.

Several manuals have been developed for gender training that focus on gender awareness and gender-based planning. This module seeks to address the gaps that we have noticed vis-a-vis available materials on gender training. It also aims to consolidate our experience of facilitating gender and participatory training and the understanding of gender that has evolved through the programmes that we implement. In addition to developing a general awareness and sensitivity on gender concepts, the Resource Pack also focuses on violence against women and vulnerability of specific groups like single women and women with disabilities. A session on History of Women’s Movement has been added to highlight the different phases of women’s and men’s struggles for women’s rights and the evolution of perspectives on women’s development. An understanding of this aspect is essential for development practitioners to appreciate the role and contribution of women in the realisation of their rights so that they seek their active participation in development processes.

The Resource Pack will be useful for staff of NGOs who have a basic understanding of gender and experience of facilitating participatory training and workshops on development themes. Interpersonal and facilitation skills and respect for diversity in people and cultures would be an added asset.

'Gender Awareness and Sensitivity Applications' contains a compilation of activities, handouts and background reading material. Based on the assumption that the users of this Resource Pack would be familiar with participatory methodologies, illustrations have not been used for the process of the activities; instead, the concepts included in the reading material have been illustrated to simplify them through visuals. A Select Bibliography on the themes covered has also been included. Films are a popular and effective medium to communicate messages, especially on issues that may be difficult to communicate through other mediums. A list with a summary of relevant films is provided at the end for reference.

Most of the activities that have been included in this Resource Pack have been used by us in the trainings we have conducted on our own or with other gender trainers. Some of them have been adapted from other available resources on gender training. All the activities mentioned herein employ a participatory, experiential methodology based on the principles of adult learning. The focus is on drawing upon the participants' reflections and experiences and encouraging them to engage in individual and collective pursuits of gender analysis and action.

We welcome your feedback and comments. The sharing of experiences by users will enable us to update and modify newer editions of the Resource Pack.

Geeta Sharma  
Programme Executive  
UNNATI

Deepa Sonpal  
Programme Coordinator  
UNNATI

# HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE PACK

## OVERVIEW

The Resource Pack has been divided into 11 thematic sessions. These are:

1. Starting the Workshop: Some Choices
2. Understanding Gender and Gender Stereotypes
3. Understanding Women's Subordination
4. Gender and Socialisation
5. Institutions of Patriarchy
6. Building Gender Awareness
7. Violence against Women
8. Single Women: Issues and Challenges
9. Gender and Disability
10. History of Women's Movement
11. Evaluation and Consolidation

## ACTIVITY

### 7.1. Understanding Violence against Women (VAW)

**TIME:** 1 hour 30 minutes  
**METHOD:** Structured Experience; Case Study

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**MATERIALS**

- Flipcharts
- A4 sheets/paper
- Handout 7.1
- 'Moena's Story' pages on 907 OR Handout 7.1
- 'Moena's Story' page 908

**OBJECTIVES**

- 1. Participants understand the types of violence that women face in their lives
- 2. Participants understand how cultural rituals and beliefs are used to perpetuate women's subordination
- 3. Participants learn about the coping mechanisms that women facing violence use

**PROCESS**

1. Divide the participants into small groups of five to six persons.
2. Give Handout 7.1/Moena's story to the participants. Read out or narrate the story to the participants twice.
3. Give the participants the following questions to discuss in their sub-groups and write their answers on flipcharts:
  - (i) What is Moena communicating about herself?
  - (ii) Do you know of other 'Moena's'? Have you or other women faced a similar situation?
  - (iii) What are the other ways in which women face violence?
  - (iv) What may be some of the ways in which women perpetrate the violence? Why is it that Moena's mother-in-law is a woman, also behaving like a man?
  - (v) What coping strategies do you or your friends use when faced with violence?
  - (vi) How can you change this situation, even if it is in a limited way?
4. Ask the first group to present the key points of their discussion over to you and the other groups can add on any additional points they may have.
5. Debrief and consolidate the discussion.
6. Show and distribute Handout 7.1 on 'Facts and Magnitude of Violence Against Women' and Handout 7.2 on 'Violence Against Women Types, Forms and Consequences'. Make a presentation of Handout 7.1 containing 'Some Vital Data on the Status of Women in India'.

Source: S. Adigun, *From OCEAN Gender Training Manual (2004)*  
WORLD BANK GROUP WORKING PAPER 113

Each session has a **set of activities**. Some of these will help the participants achieve similar objectives. These activities can be used in different permutations and combinations to suit the needs of the group you are working with, based on the cultural context, composition of the group (mixed or single sex) and the time available. Ideally, at least three days would be required for a beginners' group. A suggestive workshop design has been included as reference.

## HANDOUTS

**HANDOUT 1**

### Personal Assessment: Caselets

**Instructions:** You have 20 minutes to respond. First read through the caselets. Circle the response that you think is the closest to what your own would be in the given situation. You do not have to agree fully with any statement, but give the one that is closest to your own.

**1** Ina and Moena are a married couple with a two-year-old daughter. And in a very long time, Ina has another child, probably a boy. During the first few months, Ina and Moena had a difficult time and her health has not been good lately. Also, she has to take up some part-time work to earn as her child is old enough to go to pre-school. She is, therefore, not keen to have another child. And has been getting more and more quiet since her husband and it is not meeting their arguments on the house. In this situation what would you advise?

- A. Moena should stick to her stand. It is her body that has to bear and raise the child.
- B. Moena should give in, otherwise the tense atmosphere will continue, and to have no children is not recommended.
- C. They should seek advice from friends and their family doctor.
- D. They should postpone the decision for about two more years.

**2** Ina and Moena are a married couple living in a joint family. Moena's parents are retired. Recently Ina has had a hard time in another city and, before meeting them, they want to buy a house. Moena wants to buy one near her factory but it is on the edge of the city and there are no shops and schools near by. So Ina wants to buy one nearer the city where she can do shopping and send the children to school easily. Moena's parents tend to side with Ina. What should happen in this situation?

- A. The majority view should be taken.
- B. As Ina is the breadwinner for the whole family, his considerations are more important.
- C. The family should sit together to discuss it, giving equal weightage to both Ina's and Moena's views.
- D. Ina should take an adamant stand for what she wants.

**3** You are project officer for a funding agency. In one of the projects you cover you have found that the project holder is abusing and mistreating his women staff members. The project has a strong emphasis on working for women. In this situation what would you do?

WORLD BANK GROUP WORKING PAPER 113

Some activities have **Handouts** that will be required to be distributed to the participants. These have been included at the end of the particular activity for which they are intended. In a few cases, additional notes, meant to serve as reference material for the facilitator, have been highlighted and included under the Facilitator's Notes. Readings have been included at the end of some sessions to serve as reference and background material. The readings are short and focus only on the key points for a particular theme. These may also be used for sharing with

the participants. These are starters to provide an overview of the subject. If the group is at an advanced level of understanding, additional reading materials mentioned in the Select Bibliography may be referred to.

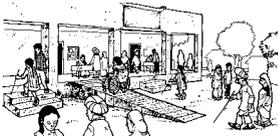
It is important to read the Facilitator's Notes given at the end of each activity in advance as some of them may require preparation by way of acquiring materials, reading background materials and making photocopies of Readings and Handouts. If the group has some basic understanding of the theme being introduced, you may equip yourself with additional information. Films are an effective medium of communication. In a training/workshop session, there is an added advantage of using them to consolidate the learning. If a film needs to be shown as an add-on to a theme, it would need to be reviewed before the session and the key points for initiating a discussion should be noted down.

Some of the sessions will help the participants to address specific issues such as violence against women, issues of single women and women with disabilities (Sessions 7, 8 and 9). These issues are important for any organisation working with women or desirous of integrating gender in its programmes. Helping the participants to build an understanding of these will enable them to address the needs and rights of the most marginalised groups. Activities given in these sessions may be selected based on the nature of the group and the workshop objectives.

Most of the activities included here can be used with rural groups as well; examples have been included in some sessions of how this can be done. Some of them may need to be adapted based on the specific context.

If there is no access to materials such as charts, cards, etc., locally available materials such as blackboard and ordinary paper may be used.

## READINGS

<p><b>Role of Community-Based Organisations (CBOs) in Mainstreaming Disability</b></p> <p>Globally the needs of all human beings are the same. Every human being, disabled or not, has the need for shelter, family, love, education, recreation and the ability to support one's family. Contrary to popular belief, a very small percentage of persons with disabilities requires specialised care and services. Most can function reasonably well in their own communities, provided they are recognised and included in the community development programmes that seek to reduce poverty and vulnerability. A separate development programme for them will only reinforce the feelings and reality of exclusion, which already exist. In this process, it is important to be aware of the higher vulnerability of girls and women with disabilities. Inclusion requires that linkages are established with the local disability rehabilitation institutions, government departments and other NGOs.</p> <p><b>What are the first steps to make a CBO interested in mainstreaming disability?</b></p> <p>These will depend on the activities of the organisation and the kind of resources it has. Ongoing projects implemented by development organisations have the potential for including persons with disabilities. Based on the activities generally carried out by CBOs, some suggestions are given below on where one can start. The list is only indicative. Generally, CBOs are addressing issues related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Human rights</li> <li>• Employment/ income generation</li> <li>• Education/ vocational training</li> <li>• Building/ shelter construction - accessibility for persons with disabilities</li> <li>• Health and prevention of disability</li> </ul>	<p><b>1. HUMAN RIGHTS</b></p> <p>All citizens in India have their basic rights enshrined in the Indian Constitution. In 1995, an Act relating to the rights of persons with disabilities was enacted, i.e. the Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995. All people have the right to demand their basic rights, and persons with disabilities are more likely to be denied their rights. If we wish for human rights, we must ensure that we are aware of persons with disabilities and the extent of their vulnerability. Some of the first steps that can be easily followed are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access and circulate a copy of the Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995 (PWD Act). Integrate this information in your regular training on rights/ legal issue, or as a separate session.</li> <li>• Whenever you do a survey for a programme, identify persons with disabilities in your work area. This is the first step for any information that you may need to enable. Ensure that names of girls and women with disabilities are recorded.</li> </ul> 
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## THE ACTIVITIES

As shared above, there are a total of 11 thematic sessions in this Resource Pack. Some sessions have more than one activity. Each activity has the following components/subheadings, as shown in the layout here:

**Title and number.** The title and number includes the session title and activity number.

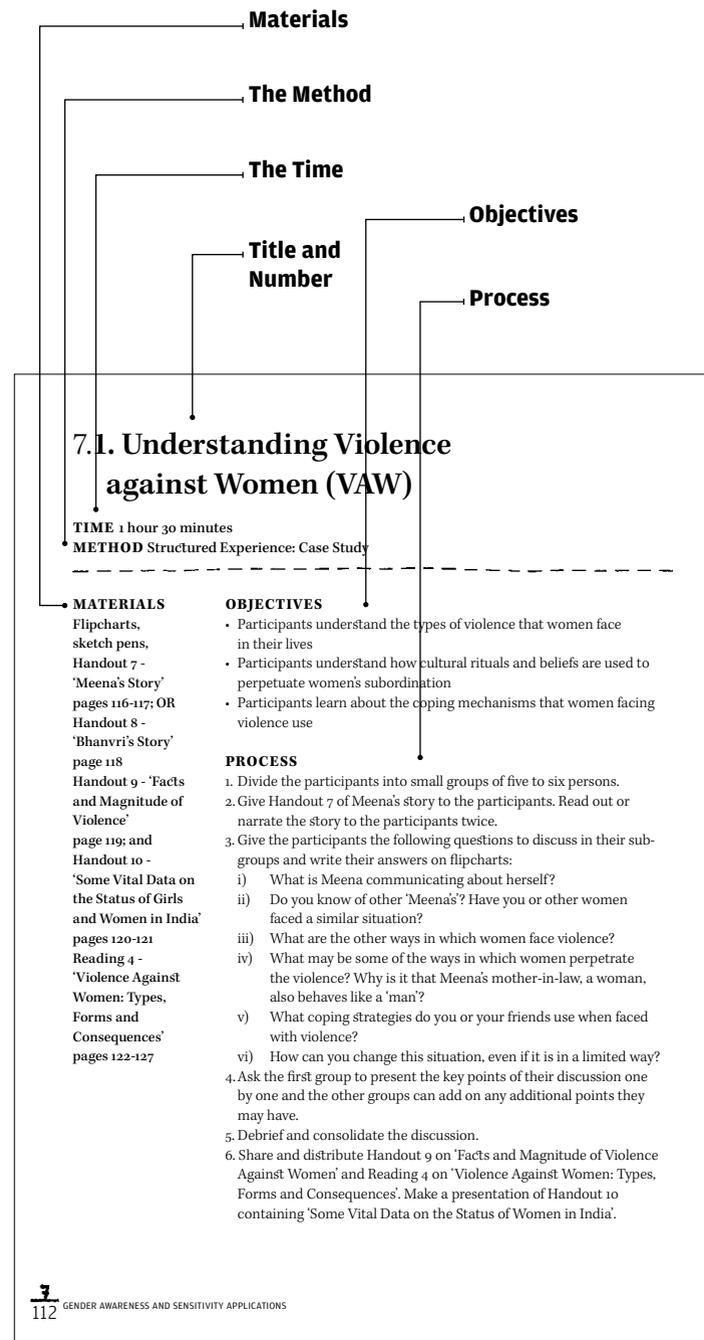
**The time** is indicative of the approximate duration that the activity would take for a group of 25-30 participants. This may vary with the number of participants, their level of understanding and exposure and their participation.

**The method** refers to the methodology to be used for the activity.

**Materials.** This includes a list of all the materials required for conducting the activity – stationery, handouts and readings, if any. For some activities, you may require specific materials like wheelchairs, blindfolds, a film, etc.

**Objectives** specify the expected outcome – what the participants would have done during the activity and what this will lead to by way of an increase in their knowledge and understanding, exploration of attitudes or acquisition of skills.

**Process** The process includes step-by-step instructions for conducting the activity. The activities provide the participants with an opportunity to either experience or reflect on their personal beliefs, attitudes and behaviour. There is an emphasis on collective learning. Based on their experience or reflection, the participants can be enabled to generalise and relate to the larger reality. Wherever relevant, they may be encouraged to use this new understanding to explore how it can be specifically applied to their work.



**Debriefing.** This contains questions or pointers that the facilitator can use to guide the discussion to achieve the objective of an activity. The activities in Session 1 and Session 11 do not require any debriefing as these are meant only for starting and evaluating the workshop. In some activities, the process includes questions that the participants would be asked to discuss. In such cases, the same questions have been repeated under the Debriefing section. In other activities, where the process does not include discussion on specific questions, the debriefing questions may be used to draw out and consolidate the observations and learnings of the participants. Only in a few sessions, the questions for discussion included in the process are different from those under Debriefing.

**Facilitator's Notes.** It includes points that the facilitator may need to bear in mind while working with different kinds of groups. It also includes possible responses and hints on how the discussion may be handled, key points that need to be highlighted and the preparation that the facilitator may need for doing so.

## ANNEXURES

The following annexures provide additional information related to the module:

**1** Select Bibliography of manuals/books that can be referred to for more information on the themes covered in this Resource Pack.

**2** Select Documentaries that may be used to substantiate the sessions. This will assist you in selecting the film, based on the language of the participants, the time available, the messages that are desired to be communicated and in locating the source of the film.

**Debriefing**

**Facilitator's Notes**

**DEBRIEFING**

1. What is Meena communicating about herself?
2. Do you know of other 'Meenas'? Have you or other women faced a similar situation?
3. What are the other ways in which women face violence?
4. What may be some of the ways in which women perpetrate the violence? Why is it that Meena's mother-in-law, a woman, also behaves like a 'man'?
5. What coping strategies do you or your friends use when faced with violence?
6. How can you change this situation, even if it is in a limited way?

**FACILITATOR'S NOTES**

- This exercise will yield best results when done with a same sex group, since the issue is sensitive and requires a certain degree of comfort before it is discussed.
- The purpose of this exercise is to discuss the different forms in which women face violence in society. Consolidate the discussion to emphasise the kinds of violence faced by women through a life-cycle approach (refer to Reading 4). Also, encourage the participants to share examples of coping mechanisms or strategies that they have used or know of.
- You may also bring out the concept of misogyny (contempt) here. The importance of recognising the role of socialisation and conditioning to break this cycle of woman perpetrating violence against woman is very important.
- Use this opportunity to discuss how facing violence on a continuous basis makes us insensitive to it and accept it as normal. If the group is ready and willing to do this, you may get them to list what they see as violence against women and what they do not see as violence. The listing can help facilitate a discussion among the women about violence and also ways to deal with it.
- An optional case study from the rural context has also been provided as Handout 8 – 'Bhanvri's Story' on page 118. You can choose whichever is appropriate for the group.

SOURCE: Adapted from OXFAM Gender Training Manual (2002).

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN (VAW) 7  
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**Session Name**

**Session and Page Number**

# Suggested Workshop Design



## Session 1: Starting the Workshop: Some Choices

### A. WELCOME AND SHARING OBJECTIVES OF THE WORKSHOP

#### B. INTRODUCTION

##### Activity 1.1: Seed Mixture

**DURATION:** 45 minutes – 1 hour, depending on the number of participants

**OBJECTIVES:** 1) Participants become familiar with one another 2) Participants begin to think of socialisation and its differing impact on women and men

**MATERIALS:** 1) A mixture of any 2-3 kinds of nuts – there should be enough so that each participant can take as many nuts as there are participants. For example, if there are 25 participants, you should have at least  $25 \times 25 = 625$  nuts 2) A bowl for keeping the nuts 3) Enough space for the participants to move around and meet one another

**{ OR }** -----

##### Activity 1.2: Bicycle chain

**DURATION:** 40 minutes

**OBJECTIVE:** Participants become familiar with one another

**MATERIALS:** Enough space for people to move around

**{ OR }** -----

##### Activity 1.3: Buses

**DURATION:** 30 minutes

**OBJECTIVES:** 1) Participants become familiar with the group composition 2) Participants mix with others based on their common characteristics

**MATERIALS:** Enough space for people to move around

### C. EXPECTATIONS OF THE PARTICIPANTS

#### Activity 1.6: Expectations

**DURATION:** 30 minutes

**OBJECTIVES:** 1) Participants share their expectations from the programme 2) Facilitators adapt the workshop design, if necessary, to include expectations of participants 3) Participants get space to voice their concerns that are likely to affect their learning

**MATERIALS:** Cards/slips, sketch pens, chart with workshop objectives



## Session 2: Self Assessment

### Activity 1.5: Pre-Workshop Evaluation

**DURATION:** 15 minutes

**OBJECTIVE:** Participants assess their understanding of gender linked concepts before receiving inputs at the workshop

**MATERIALS:** Handout 1

## **Session 3: Understanding Gender**

### **Activity 2.1: Understanding Gender**

**DURATION:** 1 hour

**OBJECTIVE:** Participants understand the difference between sex and gender

**MATERIALS:** Flipcharts, markers, Reading 1

## **Session 4: Understanding Gender and Gender Stereotypes**

### **Activity 2.3: Gender Biases in Cultural Traditions**

**DURATION:** 1 hour

**OBJECTIVE:** Participants understand the gender biases in traditional cultures and customs

**MATERIALS:** Flipcharts, sketch pens

**{ OR }-----**

### **Activity 2.4 Gender Stereotypes in Cultural Traditions**

**DURATION:** 1 hour

**OBJECTIVE:** Participants examine the ways in which our own traditions and culture express beliefs about women and men and reinforce stereotypes

**MATERIALS:** Flipcharts, paper, pens, sketch pens

**{ OR }-----**

### **Activity 2.5 Stereotypes of Gender Roles and Attributes**

**DURATION:** 1 hour 30 minutes

**OBJECTIVES:** 1) Participants explore how individual perceptions of gender roles and stereotypes are formed 2) Participants become aware of their own perceptions about women and men

**MATERIALS:** Ball, flipcharts, sketch pens or blackboard and chalk, Handout 2

## **Session 5: Understanding Women's Subordination**

### **Activity 3.1: Understanding the Power Equations between Men and Women**

**DURATION:** 1 hour

**OBJECTIVE:** Participants experience the difference between the powerful and the powerless

**MATERIALS:** Pins and balloons, string, flipcharts, pens

## **Session 6: Film Show**

### **Activity: Film on Gender**

**DURATION:** Based on choice of film

**OBJECTIVE:** Learning during the day is consolidated and reinforced

**MATERIALS:** VCD, LCD Projector, DVD player, Film synopsis given in Annexure 'Select Documentaries'

# Suggested Workshop Design



RECAPITULATION OF PROCESS AND  
LEARNING OF DAY 1

## **Session 1: Gender and Socialisation**

### **Activity 4.1: Understanding the Process of Socialisation**

**DURATION:** 2 hours

**OBJECTIVE:** Participants discuss and analyse how we are socialised into being men and women and the impact that socialisation has on our lives

**MATERIALS:** Flipcharts, paper, pens, sketch pens, Reading 2



## **Session 2: Institutions of Patriarchy**

### **Activity 5.1: Understanding the Institutions of Patriarchy**

**DURATION:** 1 hour 45 minutes

**OBJECTIVE:** Participants understand how the different institutions of patriarchy influence and contribute to the subordination of women

**MATERIALS:** Flip charts, paper, pens, sketch pens, Reading 3



## **Session 3: Building Gender Awareness**

### **Activity 6.1: Exploring Attitudes**

**DURATION:** 1 hour 30 minutes

**OBJECTIVES:** 1) Participants examine their own and the groups' attitudes 2) Participants recall their emotions and ideas about gender

**MATERIALS:** Handout 3, flipcharts

**{ OR }** -----

### **Activity 6.2 Assessment of Personal Beliefs**

**DURATION:** 1 hour

**OBJECTIVE:** Participants explore and become aware of their beliefs about gender and understand what constitutes gender sensitivity

**MATERIALS:** Flipcharts, markers, Handouts 4 and 5

**{ OR }** -----

### **Activity 6.3 Examining Personal Assumptions**

**DURATION:** 1 hour 30 minutes

**OBJECTIVES:** 1) Participants understand the impact of gender-related attitudes on behaviour 2) Participants understand how a change in behaviour can affect the respondents' response

**MATERIALS:** Handout 6 (on separate sheets for each actor)

**Session 4: Violence Against Women****Activity 7.1: Understanding Violence Against Women**

**DURATION:** 1 hour 30 minutes

**OBJECTIVES:** 1) Participants understand the types of violence that women face in their lives  
2) Participants understand how cultural rituals and beliefs are used to perpetuate women's subordination  
3) Participants learn about the coping mechanisms that women facing violence use

**MATERIALS:** Flipcharts, sketch pens, Handouts 7 OR 8, 9 and 10; Reading 4

**Session 5: Film Show****Activity: Film on Gender – Socialisation or Patriarchy or Violence against Women**

**DURATION:** Based on choice of film

**OBJECTIVE:** Learning during the day is consolidated and reinforced

**MATERIALS:** VCD, LCD Projector, DVD player, Film synopsis given in Annexure 'Select Documentaries'

# Suggested Workshop Design



RECAPITULATION OF PROCESS AND  
LEARNING OF DAY 2

## **Session 1: Single Women: Issues and Challenges**

### **Activity 8.1: Understanding the Vulnerability of Single Women**

**DURATION:** 2 hours

**OBJECTIVES:** 1) Participants understand the definition, situation and issues of single women  
2) Participants become familiar with ways of mainstreaming issues of single women

**MATERIALS:** Board, chalk, markers, chart paper, Reading 5



## **Session 2: Gender and Disability**

### **Activity 9.1: Barriers Faced by Persons with Disabilities**

**DURATION:** 2 hours

**OBJECTIVES:** 1) Participants are sensitised to the needs and barriers faced by persons with disabilities, with a special focus on women  
2) Participants explore their attitudes towards persons with disabilities

**MATERIALS:** Box on 'Tasks for Simulation Exercise on Disability', flipcharts, sketch pens, markers, blackboard and chalk



## **Session 3: Gender and Disability**

### **Activity 9.3: Understanding the Handicap Creation Process**

**DURATION:** 1 hour

**OBJECTIVES:** 1) Participants understand the handicap creation process in the lives of women with disabilities  
2) Participants understand the factors leading to the exclusion of persons with disabilities, especially women, from the development process  
3) Participants appreciate the role that development organisations can play in promoting the inclusion of persons with disabilities, with a gender focus

**MATERIALS:** Handouts 12 and 13, flipcharts, sketch pens, markers/blackboard and chalk, Reading 6



## **Session 4: History of Women's Movement**

### **Activity 10.1: Understanding Women's Contribution to Development**

**DURATION:** 2 hours

**OBJECTIVE:** Participants are familiar with the history and issues of women's struggles in India

**MATERIALS:** Flipcharts, sketch pens, Reading 8



**Session 5: Evaluation**

**Activity 11.1: Post-Workshop Evaluation**

**DURATION:** 30 minutes

**OBJECTIVE:** Participants assess the difference in their perceptions and beliefs before and after the workshop

**MATERIALS:** Handout 1



**Session 6: Consolidation**

**Activity 11.3: Developing an Action Plan**

**DURATION:** 45 minutes

**OBJECTIVE:** Participants develop an action plan and identify some examples of what can be done by them at the personal, community and/or organisational level

**MATERIALS:** Flipcharts, sketch pens

1

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Starting the  
Workshop:  
Some Choices

---

Starters in trainings/workshops are used for the introduction of participants, for clarifications on the participants' expectations and workshop objectives. These are usually conducted after the initial welcome address and an overall sharing of the purpose of the workshop. They are useful in helping the participants to share information about themselves and getting to know one another. They are intended to create a basic trust and familiarity that can lead them to open up, feel safe and comfortable to participate during the rest of the workshop. This is especially important in workshops which are based on the use of participatory methodology.

The facilitator may select an activity from among the choices provided here based on several factors such as the familiarity of the participants with one another, professionally or personally, the purpose of the workshop and how important it is, therefore, for them to know one another or their organisations.

# 1.1. Seed Mixture

**TIME** 45 minutes to 1 hour, depending on the number of participants

**METHOD** Group Activity

---

## **MATERIALS**

A mixture of any 2-3 kinds of nuts—there should be enough so that each participant can take as many nuts as there are participants. For example, if there are 25 participants, you should have at least  $25 \times 25 = 625$  nuts

A bowl for keeping the nuts

Enough space for the participants to move around and meet one another

## **OBJECTIVES**

- Participants become familiar with one another
- Participants begin to think of socialisation and its differing impact on women and men

## **PROCESS**

1. Keep the bowl with mixed nuts ready beforehand.
2. Ask 3-4 participants to count the total number of people in the room which should include the participants and facilitators. Ensure that the number is accurate.
3. Tell the participants that you are going to play a game which will help them to introduce themselves and get to know all the others in the room.
4. Announce the total number of people present in the room. Tell them all to come near the bowl and count and pick up as many nuts as there are people in the room. Tell them to hold all the nuts they have in their left hand.
5. Indicate that each greeting and introduction should take roughly 1-2 minutes. Ask them to move around meeting each other one by one. When they meet a person, they should give one nut to him/her and take one from the other person. Ideally, they should eat the nut they get. For some reason, if they do not want to do so, they can hold the nut they receive in their right hand.
6. After exchanging the nut, they should tell each other about:
  - their name
  - region (if there are more than one regions represented)
  - their organisation and the work they do
  - one thing they generally like doing but cannot do because of being a man/woman and
  - any other thing that they may want to share.
7. In this way, they should move around and meet everyone. If they have finished all the nuts (except one which is for them) they had picked up, that would mean they have met everyone in the room.

## **FACILITATOR'S NOTES**

- This exercise can be used for a group ranging between 20 and 35 participants. For a larger group, this is likely to take too much time.
- As a facilitator, you should observe how much time people are taking to talk to each other. Remind them to move on, if they are taking too long.
- If the group has both men and women, then it may take the group a little time to open up. Encourage the participants to share at least the basic details about themselves.

SOURCE: *Adapted from  
Participatory Workshops,  
Robert Chambers (2003)*

## 1.2. Bicycle Chain

**TIME** 40 minutes

**METHOD** Group Activity

---

### **MATERIALS**

Enough space for people to move around

### **OBJECTIVE**

- Participants become familiar with one another

### **PROCESS**

1. Ask the participants to form two lines facing one another. Each person in one line must form a pair with the person standing opposite to him or her in the other line facing them.
2. Announce that each pair should greet one another and tell a little about themselves – their names, their organisations and the work they do and anything else that they may want to share.
3. Once they finish talking to their partners, they must move on and repeat the process with the next person facing them. Like a bicycle chain, the two lines of participants must move in the opposite direction to each other. If line one is moving to its right, then line two should also move to its right with the two lines meeting at each end.
4. Ask the lines to keep moving till everyone has met every one else.
5. Remind the participants to keep moving so that there are no queues lined up next to them. This can happen as people may take different amounts of time to introduce themselves.

### **FACILITATOR'S NOTES**

- This exercise helps any number of participants to meet one another quickly and informally. You would require enough open space for the chain to move freely. This activity can also be done outdoors.

SOURCE: *Adapted from Participatory Workshops, Robert Chambers (2003)*

# 1.3. Buses

**TIME** 30 minutes

**METHOD** Group Activity

---

## **OBJECTIVES**

- Participants become familiar with the group composition
- Participants mix with others based on their common characteristics

## **MATERIALS**

Enough space  
for people to  
move around

## **PROCESS**

1. Tell the participants that you will call out a few attributes/ characteristics and that they will form groups based on those applicable to them. At times they may be required to move around and look for the participants who share that attribute or characteristic.
2. See the box below for some ideas for forming and debriefing on clusters. Call out the first option for forming clusters. Once the participants have formed their clusters, you may draw their attention to specific aspects of the group. Other ideas for cluster formation may be evolved based on the need.

## **FACILITATOR'S NOTES**

- This is a good exercise for the participants to open up, move around and understand the group composition. It is a useful activity, especially if all the participants are from the same organisation; it brings out dimensions that they may not be aware of despite having worked together for years.
- You would require sufficient space for the participants to move around for doing this exercise. You may also choose to do it outdoors.
- Invite observations and comments on the groupings, their size, the reasons for the variations that are apparent, so that participants can reflect on them.
- The timing will vary depending on the number of categories you choose for forming groups and the discussion that is initiated after each cluster is formed. You may decide on the sequence of clustering depending on the group and generate your own categories on the spot – some of these can be used mainly for helping the participants

to enjoy and have fun. Try to avoid categories that may embarrass the participants and obstruct their participation.

---

## **IDEAS FOR FORMING CLUSTERS**

**1 • Common initial of first name:** Some participants may like to associate themselves with the names they are generally known by; in this case, it may also mean their surnames. You may insist on clustering according to their first names. Using surnames for forming groups may highlight the caste, religion, and ethnicity of the participants which may inadvertently lead to biases and subtle discriminatory behaviour.

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**2 • Region they belong to:** This provides a general idea of how many regions are represented and the region-wise representation.

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**3 • Sex:** This can help highlight which group is in a minority. If the entire group is from the same organisation, you may discuss whether the ratio is reflective of the larger organisation and why participants think this is so.

---

**4 • Experience:** Specific categories may be used, eg. less than 5 years, 5-10 years, 10-15 years, etc. This may be asked in relation to experience within their current organisation or experience in the development sector. If the entire group is from the same organisation, you may discuss how the more experienced can add value to the discussions as they would have the historical perspective of the changes in the organisation and evolution of programmes; similarly, the newer staff can bring in fresh ideas to the debates during the workshop and even outside it.

---

**5 • Exposure to gender training:** This will help the group and the facilitator to understand how many participants have received exposure to gender training and how many times. This can be useful information to understand the level at which the facilitator needs to pitch. Those who have already some exposure can be a useful resource during the workshop.

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**6 • Type of organisation that the participants are associated with:**

This is useful where the participants are from diverse and multiple organisations.

---

**7 • Type of programmes (technical/non-technical; community based/non-community based, travel linked/non-travel) that the participants are associated with:** The programme-based clusters can help to highlight the gender divide in specific programmes. The reasons for this composition can be discussed.

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**8 • Team-wise clusters:** This can be done if the programme is being conducted for a single organisation.

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**9 • Marital status:** Some may have been engaged – you can let them decide whether they want to join the group of the married or the unmarried.

---

**10 • People who are grandparents:** Usually this will be a small group. This can be used to address the normal perception that the participants who have reached this stage in life ‘know it all’. The new set of qualities and skills that the present generation has can be highlighted to emphasise that each generation brings with it different perspectives, skills and information and that together, this diversity can enrich the discussions.

---

**11 • People who have taken their children along to work:** You can get an idea of the gender divide on this and ask them about the reasons for having done this.

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**12 • Knowledge of languages:** This cluster can be formed based on the number of languages the participants know. The specific language expertise in the group can become apparent. This can come in handy where some participants are not familiar with the local language and when translation is required for certain participants.

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SOURCE: *Adapted from Participatory Workshops, Robert Chambers (2003)*

# 1.4. Pre-Workshop Evaluation

**TIME** 15 minutes

**METHOD** Reflection and Self-assessment

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## **MATERIALS**

Handout 1 –  
'Workshop  
Evaluation  
Questionnaire'  
pages 34-35

## **OBJECTIVE**

- Participants assess their understanding of gender linked concepts before receiving inputs at the workshop

## **PROCESS**

1. Give the 'Workshop Evaluation Questionnaire' (Handout 1) to the participants. Ask them to fill it out in 10 minutes.
2. Tell them that this is not a test and that they can keep their questionnaire with them until further instructions.

## **FACILITATOR'S NOTES**

- This is a tool that has been used in gender workshops to help participants assess their responses to gender-linked concepts before receiving any inputs. The same questionnaire should be administered at the end of the workshop to assess changes in their understanding and review the new information/analysis that has led to the change in their response. The appropriate answers and explanations are given in the box below:
- 

## **WORKSHOP EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE: APPROPRIATE ANSWERS AND EXPLANATIONS**

The correct answer to each statement and the accompanying explanations for it are given below. Ask the participants to share and discuss why they chose a specific answer, before sharing these. You may discuss these answers at the end of the workshop after Activity 11.1.

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**1 • B. Feminists are people who struggle for equality of women with men.** Historically feminism was started by a group of women who dared to defy existing societal barriers to seek equality with men. They were often seen as 'radical women' because they challenged the traditional male bastion of power and supremacy. Women who dressed or spoke aggressively also attracted such labels. Feminism

is not about how women look or behave but essentially about the questions they pose. These questions address issues of injustice and discrimination that breed inequality between men and women and oppress women by giving them less respect, privileges and opportunities than men. These issues are not merely supported by women but have found strong defenders in some men as well who have joined these women (often their daughters, wives or sisters) in their struggle for equality. There are several instances where men have played an important role in this struggle. Thus, feminism is not about radical women or women alone struggling for women's rights. It is about people who understand the suffering of women and join in the struggle for equality.

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**2 • C. Gender is a way of looking at things.** Gender is a way of looking at things. It is a socially constructed phenomenon through the process of socialisation, cultural and religious practices and beliefs. Gender identities of men and women are acquired through division of labour and assignment of differential roles and responsibilities. Being gender sensitive implies understanding the factors that contribute to the unequal power relationships between men and women and responding appropriately to this reality.

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**3 • A. Women face oppression due to male dominance.** Women face oppression due to male dominance, which is explained by the concept of patriarchy. Herein all institutions are male dominated/controlled, so are women's labour, sexuality and mobility. Both consensus and coercion are used to make this control possible. At best women agree and follow the norms of this set-up and at worst they are oppressed and follow the norms. Even fear of ostracisation is used to get women to follow and perpetuate male dominance.

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**4 • B. and C. Males tend to dominate because of socio-cultural conditioning and societal structures.** Historically, there has been a tendency to attribute women's subordination to their anatomy. Research indicates that for every 120-150 boys that are born, there are only 100 girls born. However, there is a higher incidence of miscarriage

and stillbirths of male children and more deaths among them due to birth trauma and injuries. Despite the higher life expectation of girls at birth, the sex ratio, both among children and adults, is in favour of boys. Girls' biological superiority is overshadowed by social and cultural inferiority. The domination is a socio-cultural phenomenon. The 'Oppressor-oppressed' attitude is a result of social conditioning.

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**5 • A. Historically, women have always played a subservient role to men.** The power equations between men and women have always been the same. However, because gender is socially constructed, the manifestations of the power equations between them vary across time periods, cultures and societies.

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**6 • C. There are more men than women in senior positions in most organisations because women have to spend more time looking after their families.** If there are more men than women in senior positions, it is not because the latter are less qualified or non-competitive by nature but because they have to spend more time looking after their families. Gender research shows that most of the work women usually do out of personal choice or because of the socially defined expectations is 'reproductive' in nature; whereas the work performed by men is mostly 'productive' in nature. Reproductive services are not directly linked to income generation and, therefore, taken for granted. These services do not have a tangible value. Making a bed, cooking or looking after the children or the cattle cannot be quantified in terms of money earned or income generated. These jobs are consequently not valued by society.

---

**7 • None of the statements mentioned below is true.**

**A. Targeting benefits for the family unit will automatically benefit women.** Targeting benefits for the family unit does not automatically benefit women. For instance, when a government scheme was introduced to encourage gherkin plantation to help rural families make some extra money, it was found that the girl child had dropped out of school to help the family in its harvesting. The project had failed to bring benefit to the girl child of the family even when it raised the family income.

**B. Stressing the conflicts between men and women at village level will weaken group organisations.** Stressing conflicts will bring greater awareness. Next comes the question of how it is managed; depending on this it could make or break the group. Whether this will weaken the organisation depends on which conflict is being stressed and how.

**C. Any project intervention will affect women.** Most project interventions will affect women. However, any project intervention does not automatically affect women positively. It has to be designed that way to be women specific to affect them positively. To strengthen their situation, positive discrimination may be required. If a project is positively affecting men, the more powerful group, it will make the relative position of women weaker.

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**8 • Responses will vary based on the participant's understanding.**

You may ask some of them to share their responses.

---

**9 • Responses will vary based on the participant's understanding.**

You may ask some of them to share their responses.

---

**10 • C. Gender awareness helps find solutions to the conflicts between men and women.** Gender awareness brings the current conflicts between men and women to the fore. The socialisation process in mainstream societies is such that everyone follows the norm and status quo is maintained. In such circumstances when the socialisation process is analysed and understood to be subordinating women, the subordinated group will be dissatisfied. It will bring the conflict which had so long been brushed under the carpet to the fore.

---

**11 • C. Gender is an urban concept and is not relevant to the rural context.** There can be no doubt that this is not a true statement. Gender may have been conceptualised by urban, educated 'elite' women and men but is very much based on the experiences of all women and men, urban as well as rural. Inequalities in the power relations have always existed transgressing cultural, social and regional boundaries but the manifestations keep changing.

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# Workshop Evaluation Questionnaire

To be filled in at the beginning and at the end of the workshop.

**Your Name/No:**

• **Instructions** •

Circle the answer that is closest to your own understanding, eg. A (B) C.

If you think some statements are equally correct, you may circle more than one answer.

**1 • Feminists are:**

- A Radical women
- B People who struggle for equality of women with men
- C Women who are struggling for women's rights

**2 • Gender is:**

- A An ideology
- B A branch of feminism
- C A way of looking at things

**3 • Women are oppressed because of:**

- A Male dominance
- B Historical reasons
- C Women who are struggling for women's rights

**4 • Males tend to dominate because of:**

- A Biological (hormonal) and physical differences from women
- B Socio-cultural conditioning
- C Societal structures

**5 • Historically women have played a subservient role to men:**

- A Always
- B Sometimes
- C Mostly

**6 • There are more men than women in senior positions in most organisations because:**

- A Women are less qualified.
- B Women are non-competitive by nature.
- C Women have to spend more time looking after families.




---

**7 • Circle the the letters in brackets for the statements that you think are true.**

- A Targeting benefits for the family unit will automatically bring benefits to women.
  - B Stressing the conflicts between men and women at village level will weaken group organisations.
  - C Any project intervention will affect women.
- 

**8 • I think the organisation I work for treats women equally and fairly:**

- A Fully agree
  - B Disagree
  - C Mostly agree
- 

**9 • I feel comfortable discussing and raising gender issues with:**

- A Persons of the opposite sex
  - B Persons of the same sex
  - C Both men and women
- 

**10 • Gender awareness:**

- A Leads to conflict between men and women
  - B Brings the current conflicts between men and women to the fore
  - C Helps find solutions to the conflicts between men and women
- 

**11 • Gender is an urban concept and is not relevant to the rural context:**

- A Totally agree
  - B Somewhat agree
  - C Do not agree
- 

SOURCE: *Developed  
by Barry Underwood,  
Development Professional*

# 1.5. Expectations

**TIME** 30 minutes

**METHOD** Individual Exercise

---

## **MATERIALS**

Cards/slips,  
sketch pens,  
chart with  
workshop  
objectives

## **OBJECTIVES**

- Participants share their expectations from the programme.
- Facilitators adapt the workshop design, if necessary, to include expectations of participants.
- Participants get space to voice their concerns that are likely to affect their learning.

## **PROCESS**

1. Distribute four or five cards/slips to the participants.
2. Ask them to write down their expectations from the workshop, one on each card.
3. Get the participants to assemble or form a circle. Ask any two or three participants to put their cards in the centre. Ask the others to club those that they have in common with the ones on the floor. Once all the cards have been placed, ask the participants to sort them in categories.
4. Discuss which of these will be covered in the workshop and which ones cannot be included.
5. Share the objectives of the workshop through a chart prepared in advance. This can be displayed in the room until the workshop ends.
6. Explain that the workshop is designed to be participatory wherein they will do some group exercises, share and discuss. It will seek to engage in reflection and mutual learning. Emphasise the importance of participation to share and clarify what they do not understand.
7. Then ask them in the large group if they have any apprehensions about the workshop. Reassure them by sharing how some of these can be overcome.

## **FACILITATOR'S NOTES**

- Some hopes that have been shared by participants at earlier workshops include things such as understanding what gender is, where it originated, why we are talking about it, ways of reducing inequalities between men and women, how it can be used in the field, etc.
  
- The participants' apprehensions may relate to:
  - a) The language to be used in the workshop: There will always be some participants whose fluency of the language used in the workshop can be utilised to help translate certain terms/phrases used.
  - b) Inability of some participants to write/see: Cooperative learning and mutual help can be solicited to compensate for inadequacies.
  - c) Limited experience and therefore inability to contribute: Regardless of professional experience, all the participants bring in their personal experience which is a useful resource for developing understanding on gender.
  - d) Arrangements in case of sickness: Information on medical kits and where they will be located must be shared at the outset.
  
- There may be many other apprehensions as well which need to be addressed so that the participants are not unduly preoccupied with them during the workshop. Some apprehensions may not be expressed upfront and these need to be gauged and addressed.

# 1.6. Setting the Ground Rules

**TIME** 20-30 minutes

**METHOD** Brainstorming and Listing

---

## **MATERIALS**

Flipcharts,  
markers

## **OBJECTIVES**

- Participants develop common norms of behaviour for the workshop
- Participants understand their roles and responsibilities during the workshop

## **PROCESS**

1. Share with the participants the need to develop some common norms and rules of behaviour.
2. Ask some participants for suggestions and get a group consensus on them.
3. Write on a flipchart the norms that have been agreed upon and put up the chart at a prominent place in the room.

## **FACILITATOR'S NOTES**

- The participants are usually quite familiar with this step and suggestions are forthcoming. If some have not been covered, you may suggest them and get the group to comment. If there are any norms that the workshop venue owners have, you may include them as well.
- Some common ground rules usually observed are:
  - \_ Timings decided by the group must be adhered to
  - \_ One person to speak at a time
  - \_ Respect others and their experiences
  - \_ Listen to others and also contribute
  - \_ Maintain confidentiality of the matters discussed during the workshop
  - \_ No personal remarks
  - \_ Mobile phones to be switched off



# 2

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## Understanding Gender and Gender Stereotypes

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People are born either male or female with certain organs that determine their sex. These biological or physical differences are created by nature and are the same in every family, community or country. The other differences between men and women like their clothes, behaviour, roles and responsibilities, attitude of society towards them are all social or cultural, not natural. These social and cultural definitions of men and women are called gender. They are taught by society, are learnt by and vary across families, communities and countries, and can also be changed.

The way we are brought up and nurtured influences and affects men and women, leading them to play different roles, develop different needs and face different constraints. The gender differences learnt and internalised very early in life are continually reinforced in various ways. The cultural expressions and practices like sayings, folklore and symbols that men and women are expected to wear not only reflect the gender based inequalities but also reinforce them. Any digression from the socio-cultural norms for both sexes is unacceptable to and frowned at by society.

# 2.1. Understanding Gender

**TIME** 1 hour

**METHOD** Group Exercise

---

## **MATERIALS**

Flipcharts,  
markers,  
Reading 1 –  
'What is Gender?'  
pages 56-59

## **OBJECTIVE**

- Participants understand the difference between sex and gender

## **PROCESS**

1. Divide the participants in groups and get each group to draw an image of a boy and of a girl on two separate charts. Tell them to include all characteristics that they associate with the two sexes.
2. Ask each group to present its image and the differences that they have attempted to highlight between the boy and the girl.
3. List them under the headings of male and female. Participants may mention long hair, softness, caring for girls/women, and independent, strong and authoritative for men.
4. Use the debriefing questions given below to facilitate the discussion on the images. Highlight the points mentioned in the Box 'Difference between Sex and Gender' on page 44 and the reading 'What is Gender?'

## **DEBRIEFING**

1. What are the differences that you see in the images of the boy and the girl?
2. What other characteristics can you think of as associated with boys/men and girls/women that are not visible here?
3. Which of these are noticeable at birth and which ones are learned?
4. If one were to compare over a period of past two to three decades and across regions (rural/urban), cultures and regions, have these differences been constant? If not, what are some of the changes that you know of?
5. What impact do you think such images have on boys/men and girls/women?
6. Do you think such images can be changed and, if yes, how?

## **FACILITATOR'S NOTES**

- This is the starting point for any sensitisation on gender and it is important that the group begins to understand the basic differences between sex and gender. Hence, you may want to reiterate certain points, use examples from real life and substantiate your arguments.
- For debriefing Question 1, depending on what the participants draw, highlight that they are linked to dress, attributes and roles and responsibilities. If all these differences are not represented in the images, then they can be drawn out through Question 2.
- For Question 3, highlight that except the difference in the reproductive organs, there is no other difference between boys and girls at birth. All other differences are learned and society teaches us these. These are reflections of the perceptions of society about boys and girls. Provide factual information (eg. girls are actually born stronger than boys, their survival rate between the age of 0-5 years is higher than that of boys) but biological superiority is overshadowed by social and cultural inferiority.
- For Question 4, get the participants to share the differences in the dress, roles and attributes that they have observed over a period, across cultures and regions. They may also be asked to share some differences within their own family across generations. Explain that variables cannot be explained by constants (gender has changed over time, cultures and regions)
- For Question 5, highlight how expectations of specific attributes and roles of boys and girls can:
  - \_ Reduce the importance of women as a group
  - \_ Create unrealistic and artificial expectations of both sexes
  - \_ Limit options and choices in life for both sexes
  - \_ Put pressure on both sexes to conform to established norms and may force them to do things that may be against their basic personality

- For Question 6, encourage the participants to share how these changes can be brought about at home through conscious efforts to change the way boys and girls are raised and at the workplace through efforts to move beyond the stereotypes of roles and responsibilities.
- You may also use a variation of this activity. Put up two posters, one with the image of a boy and another with the image of a girl that correspond to the images that society usually has of boys and girls (eg. the girl could have a bindi (dot) on her forehead, a bangle on her forearm, long hair, long frock and the boy could be wearing shorts, short hair, etc.). They could also be shown engaged in activities that are usually associated with boys and girls.

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### **DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SEX AND GENDER**

<b>SEX</b>	<b>GENDER</b>
<b>Is biologically determined</b>	<b>Is socio-culturally determined</b>
<b>Is natural and a given - refers to differences in sex organs of boys and girls and related differences in procreative function</b>	<b>Is created by society and hence is taught and learnt</b>
<b>Is static and remains the same at all places</b>	<b>Is dynamic and changes/varies through time, across cultures, families, etc.</b>
<b>Is non-hierarchical</b>	<b>Is hierarchical</b>
<b>It cannot be changed easily</b>	<b>It can be changed</b>

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*SOURCE: This activity has evolved during various training programmes conducted by UNNATI and other organisations.*

## 2.2. Gender Stereotypes

**TIME** 1 hour

**METHOD** Game: Voting with Cards

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### **OBJECTIVE**

- Participants understand gender stereotypes and their impact

### **PROCESS**

1. Distribute a pair of blank cards of two different colours to all the participants. Ask them to choose one colour for 'men' and one for 'women'.
2. Explain that you will be calling out a word or a phrase. A list of words is suggested below.
3. Tell the participants that they should raise their respective cards for men or women based on whose image comes to their mind on hearing the particular word. Tell them to respond without spending time to think or without any discussion with the co-participants. If they think the word characterises both men and women equally, they should raise both the cards.

### **LIST OF WORDS**

tailor	beautiful	strong	gynaecologist
chef	caring	stitching	receptionist
head of family	nurse	farmer	teacher
brave	talkative	pilot	gossiping
crying	rational	submissive	dominating

4. Call out the first word. Count the number of participants who raise the cards for 'men', for 'women' and for 'both' separately and write the score on a flipchart/board alongside each word. An example is indicated in the table given below.

### **SAMPLE CHART OF RESPONSE SCORING**

WORDS	SCORE		
	Men	Women	Both
beautiful	3	21	1
head of family	24	1	-
brave	22	3	-

### **MATERIALS**

Cards of two different colours, flipcharts, pens, list of words, Reading 1 – 'What is Gender?' pages 56-59

5. Continue with all the other words on the list in the above manner, maintaining a fast pace in eliciting the responses to the words.
6. Debrief and discuss the responses and their implications.
7. Distribute a copy of Reading 1 'What is Gender?' pages 56-59 to all the participants.

### **DEBRIEFING**

1. What do the patterns on the chart indicate?
2. Why have certain words been associated more with men or with women?
3. Is there a difference between our responses and reality?  
What are some of the contrary instances that you know of?
4. What impact can such images of men and women have on our work?
5. Do you think such images can be changed and, if yes, how?

### **FACILITATOR'S NOTES**

- In an all-women group, explore the reasons for the difference in the responses of women to the same word. Link to the differing patterns of socialisation. With a mixed group of men and women, you may want to consider the number of men and women who share a similar response. Indicate this on the chart while scoring the responses. Explore the reasons for the differences by asking the participants why they chose the stand that they did.
  
- Explain that society differentiates between men and women in terms of their attributes/qualities, roles and responsibilities and their rights. Highlight how these images have developed over the years and the relationship between gender and images, viz. socio-cultural determination. Certain qualities are attributed to women (caring, emotional, nurturing) while others (brave, strong) are attributed to men. Similarly, society promotes different norms for the kind of roles and responsibilities that men and women should shoulder. Women

are expected to perform the caring and nurturing roles in the confines of their home while men are expected to do all the outside chores. Where the work involves remuneration, men are expected to perform them and women are expected to perform tasks that do not have an economic value attached to them. These differences result in varied opportunities and rights that men and women enjoy.

- Share that we are born as male or female but learn to behave as man or woman based on our sex and the respective masculine or feminine roles that society determines for us. Many of the images that we have conjured about men and women are not really true. Some stereotypes are no longer relevant in the current reality as the world is changing. Even where the stereotyped differences seem to be true, we need to question why this is so.
- Ask the participants to share examples of the division of roles and responsibilities in their own organisation and how these may be linked to stereotypes. Highlight how these may affect the opportunities that are made available to men and women in an organisation, their professional growth and the behaviour of men and women towards each other.
- Share examples of how organisations have attempted to break some stereotypes.
- If the group is not literate, then instead of using cards, you could also put up three charts/photographs/pictures of a man, a woman and both together in different corners of the room and ask the participants to move to the corner that is appropriate to their response.

*SOURCE: This activity has evolved during various training programmes conducted by UNNATI and other organisations.*

## 2.3. Gender Biases in Cultural Traditions

**TIME** 1 hour

**METHOD** Small Group Discussion

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### **MATERIALS**

Flipcharts,  
sketch pens

### **OBJECTIVE**

- Participants understand the gender biases in traditional practices and customs

### **PROCESS**

1. Divide the participants into small groups comprising six to seven members each. Give each group the following five questions. Ask them to discuss the answers and write them down. If the participants are mainly from the rural areas or are non-literate, you can ask them to use sketch pens/rangoli colours to draw on flipcharts/the ground, their responses for Questions i, ii, iv and v. Question iii can be discussed.
  - i) If you went to a party/fair/theatre, how would you distinguish between who is married and who is single?
  - ii) What are the symbols that married women use in your culture/area where you live in?
  - iii) Why, do you think, are these symbols dictated and enforced by society for women and not for men?
  - iv) Besides symbols, what are the other rituals that women are expected to observe? Are these also expected of men?
  - v) What would happen if you decided not to observe the symbols or perform the rituals expected of you?
2. Ask each group to share its main points with the larger group.
3. Debrief, summarise and consolidate the discussions.

### **DEBRIEFING**

1. What are the key points that emerged from your discussions?
2. How did you feel during this discussion?
3. Do you think the practices of yester-years are relevant even today?  
If yes, why? If no, why not?
4. What would you like to do about it?

## **FACILITATOR'S NOTES**

- While the participants are sharing their responses, you could organise and tabulate them by listing (a) all symbols and rituals that men and women observe (b) reasons that force women to behave as per expectations, and (c) repercussions for not behaving as per norms.
- Make sure that all the insights are listed and shared. Some important insights would be:
  - \_ All the rituals are designed mainly for women
  - \_ She is the one who is supposed to ensure that she devotes time and energy to care for others, even symbolically, through keeping fasts and observing rituals
  - \_ Many of the rituals are designed to show that the man is superior, that woman is somebody's property and thus she needs to be protected from the outside world, and
  - \_ A woman who defies the norms is not being proper and needs to be punished.
- Highlight how rituals reinforce stereotyped roles. In order to create an equitable society, we need to ask many questions and deconstruct many stereotypes.
- Providing some time for airing feelings would help women in the group sort out the issues that might arise. This is necessary for them to be able to start questioning the relevance of it.
- It is important that you do not impose your own views and let the participants arrive at their own understanding. Since questioning our own beliefs is not a usual practice that we indulge in, this exercise is likely to result in feelings of anxiety and discomfort. These feelings may immediately be transferred on to the facilitator if he/she is seen as being pushy.

*SOURCE: This activity has evolved during various training programmes conducted by UNNATI and other organisations.*

## 2.4. Gender Stereotypes in Cultural Traditions

**TIME** 1 hour

**METHOD** Group Discussion

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### **MATERIALS**

Flipcharts,  
paper,  
pens,  
sketch pens

### **OBJECTIVE**

- Participants examine the ways in which our own traditions and culture express beliefs about women and men and reinforce stereotypes

### **PROCESS**

1. Divide the participants into small groups comprising 6-7 members each.
2. Ask each group to write down traditional and modern sayings/ proverbs and songs which are linked to the characteristics and roles of women and men.
3. Ask them to discuss what images/stereotypes do such culturally embedded expressions reinforce.
4. Let each group present these in the plenary. Explain that there need not be any comments or discussions at this stage. Lists could be put up on the wall and the participants can take a look at it.
5. In the large group encourage the participants to discuss the meaning and implications of these on women and men.
6. List the responses for men and women on separate flipcharts. Read them out at the end of the session and let the group reflect for a few minutes on what it means to them and what it tells them. Try and put the group feeling in one line or a few words.

### **DEBRIEFING**

1. What are the messages that such cultural expressions convey about men and women?
2. Do you think that the stereotypes reinforced by these cultural expressions are natural and accurate?
3. How do these make you feel about yourself and about men/women in general?
4. Do you find that men and women behave according to the beliefs that society has about them?

5. What are the other mediums through which such stereotypes are reinforced?
6. How do you think these affect them in their choices/decisions?
7. Are these relevant today?
8. If not, what can you do in your work to change and reinforce the images/beliefs?

### **FACILITATOR'S NOTES**

- This exercise will help the participants to see the role of the socialisation process in constructing gender roles and how deep-rooted these roles are. Beliefs reinforced by such cultural expressions address key issues relevant to a particular society, they dictate how men and women should behave and why. These are learnt at an early age and thus have a lasting impression. We do not usually analyse the meanings that these beliefs have and people will be surprised to discover the implications and the impact of these beliefs on men and women.
- Sayings, proverbs and songs may have the following impact:
  - \_ They not only put pressure on women but also on men to behave normatively and create unrealistic and artificial expectations of both sexes.
  - \_ As a group women are undermined.
  - \_ They limit options and choices in life for both women and men.

*SOURCE: This activity has evolved during various training programmes conducted by UNNATI and other organisations.*

## 2.5. Stereotypes of Gender Roles and Attributes

**TIME** 1 hour 30 minutes

**METHOD** Group Discussion

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### **MATERIALS**

Ball,  
flipchart,  
sketch pens or  
blackboard and  
chalk, Handout 2 -  
'Common Gender  
Stereotypes',  
pages 54-55

### **OBJECTIVES**

1. Participants explore how individual perceptions of gender roles and stereotypes are formed
2. Participants become aware of their own perceptions about women and men

### **PROCESS**

1. Ask the participants to stand in a circle with one person at the centre, holding a ball.
2. Tell the person at the centre to call out "Women are..." or "Men are..." at random and while doing so throw the ball to someone in the circle. The person who catches the ball immediately calls out a word (spontaneously) which describes men/women based on what the caller at the centre has said. This person should then return the ball to the person at the centre and step out of the circle.
3. Ask a volunteer to note the responses as they are called out on a flipchart in two columns under the headings "Men are.." and "Women are ..."
4. After all the participants have had their turn, distribute Handout 2 on 'Common Gender Stereotypes'. Ask the participants to spend a few minutes comparing this list with the responses their group has given. They can be asked to assemble in front of the flipchart while doing this.
5. Using the questions below, debrief and summarise.

### **DEBRIEFING**

1. Are the words and expressions used for men and women relevant?
2. Who influences these decisions about how men and women should or should not be?
3. Do women and men behave as if these stereotypes were true?

4. What are some of the consequences of these stereotypes for men and women?
5. What can you do in your work to change the images/beliefs that are not relevant today?

### **FACILITATOR'S NOTES**

- This exercise will help the participants to see the role of the socialisation process and of the multiple ways in which gender roles are constructed and how deep-rooted these roles are. Stereotypes influence how men and women should behave and why. These are learnt at an early age and thus have a lasting impression. We do not usually analyse the meanings that such stereotypes have and the participants will be surprised to discover the implications and the impact that these have on men and women.
- Stereotypes may have the following impact:
  - \_ They not only put pressure on women but also on men to behave normatively and create unrealistic and artificial expectations of both sexes.
  - \_ As a group women are undermined.
  - \_ They limit options and choices in life for both women and men.
- As a variation, you could ask women and men to list down what their culture expects of them or what they must do in their specific gender role. Also, ask them to list, if they were the opposite sex, what additional activities they could have done. For debriefing and guiding the discussion, the points given above can be used. To consolidate, ask all the participants to write what they wish/want to do as a human being.

*SOURCE: This activity has evolved during various training programmes conducted by UNNATI and other organisations.*



# Common Gender Stereotypes



## **WOMEN ARE**

dependent

weak

incompetent

less important

emotional

implementers

housekeepers

supporters

fragile

fickle

fearful

peace makers

cautious

flexible

warm

passive

followers

subjective

soft-spoken

nurturing

gentle

cooperative





**MEN ARE**



independent	aggressive
powerful	adventurous
competent	focused
more important	self-reliant
logical	active
decision makers	leaders
breadwinners	objective
leaders	outspoken
protectors	assertive
consistent	strong
brave	competitive

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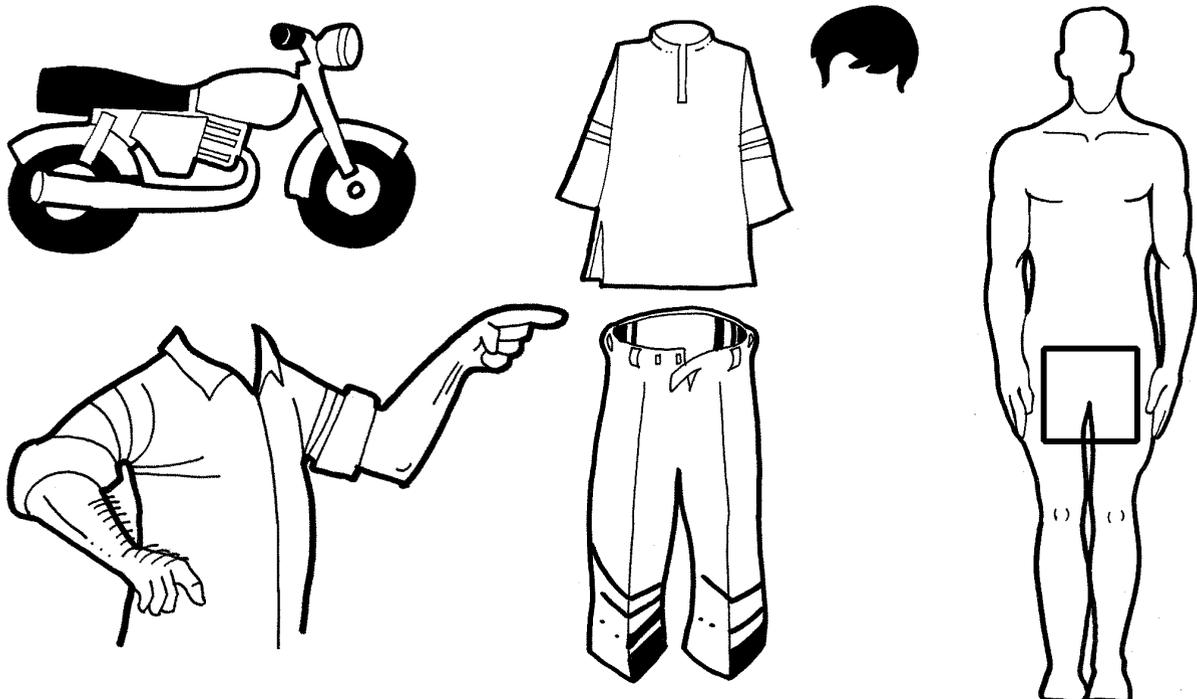
SOURCE: *Adapted from Men and Women: Partners at Work (1990), Crisp Publications Inc.*



# What is Gender?

People are born either male or female with certain organs that determine their sex. Every boy is born with a penis and testicles and grows up to become a man. Every girl is born with a vagina and clitoris and grows up to become a woman who has a uterus and breasts. A child forms in her body and she gives birth and breastfeeds the child. Other than these few biological differences, men and women are not different. Only their sexual and reproductive organs are different. This biological or physical construction or difference is called sex. These biological or physical differences are created by nature and are the same in every family, community or country. Thus, biologically, a boy is the same anywhere in the world and the girl is the same anywhere in the world. In rare cases, there may be variations due to some physical abnormalities; for example, a woman may not have a uterus or a man may have only one testicle.

The other differences between men and women like their clothes, behaviour, education, attitude of society towards them are all social or cultural, not natural. That is why these social or cultural differences are not the same in





every family and every society. For example, some women may have long hair and some short; in some families men may help in the household chores and in others they don't. Some women work within the house and family, while others go out to work. These social and cultural definitions of men and women are called gender. For example, it is society that teaches that men should be strong and carry heavy weights while women are fragile. Society also emphasises that women should have long hair and that men keep their hair short. These gender differences have not been created by nature. Nature produces males and females whereas society turns them into men and women.

We need to understand the differences between sex and gender to be able to realise that the way we are brought up and nurtured, i.e. socialised in different cultures, influences and affects men and women, leading them to play different roles, develop different needs and face different constraints.

In majority of societies, men are considered to be head of the family, breadwinners, owners and managers of property. They are active in politics,

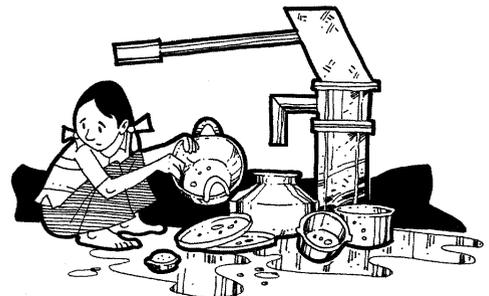




religion, business and professions. Women are socialised and trained to look after the children and the home, to nurse the infants and the old and do all the household chores. This division of roles and responsibilities determines their socialisation at the family and society levels. Because men are given the role of earners and managers of property, they tend to wield power whereas women play subordinate roles. These social roles and responsibilities get translated into discriminative behaviour of families towards men and women, girls and boys. It reflects in our educational, religious and social system. It also reflects in the sex ratio of our country. We have fewer women than men in our country. Ideally, by the rule of nature, this should have been the reverse. Some of the obvious discriminative behaviours we observe are:

- girls are fed less than boys.
- women usually eat last and the least.
- boys are encouraged for higher education whereas girls are encouraged to get married and take the responsibility of family.

It is gender which creates inequality between men and women. It is society that decides that man is powerful and that woman is powerless. Nature does not create inequalities. Nature only provides different organs for reproduction. That is all that nature does. Inequalities, hierarchies, customs are created by society, which means by all of us. The discrimination between





the rich and the poor, Brahmins and Shudras, men and women has been created by society, not by nature or God. Instead of encouraging similarities between men and women, societies and cultures have been emphasising differences. It is these inequalities that have caused so many tensions and conflicts between men and women.

Unconsciously people live their life without questioning these differences. They accept, repeat and perpetuate them. Questioning these differences will help initiate change. Because gender is social, created by all of us, we can change it if we want to by creating new definitions of men and women. We can create a society where being a girl does not mean being inferior or weak and being a boy does not mean being harsh or dominant. The truth is that men and women can dress, play, study and work any way they want and grow up as they choose. Having a woman's body does not teach you household work or caring for others and a man's body does not ensure fearlessness, intelligence or strength. All these qualities are acquired. It is one's upbringing that determines how one grows and what one becomes.

If we so desire we can create a society where roles, responsibilities, qualities and behaviour patterns are not determined and imposed by gender, caste, class or race, a society where everyone has the right and freedom to choose roles, develop talents and to lead a life of one's choice.

REFERENCE:

Bhasin, Kamla (1997):  
*What is a girl? What is a boy?* Jagori, New Delhi.



# 3

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## Understanding Women's Subordination

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Historically women have always played a subservient role to men. Men are not born to dominate women; the 'oppressor-oppressed' attitude comes primarily from social conditioning. Men and women are conditioned socially to believe that they are different - that women are soft and weak and men are hardy and strong. Various socio-cultural beliefs and practices reinforce the subordinate status of women. This leads to unequal power relations between men and women.

In any unequal relationship, the more powerful has a tendency to exploit and pressurise the less powerful to succumb to their control. Various coercive means are used by men to maintain control and this extends through the woman's life cycle and in all spheres of life. Women, on the other hand, accept and even perpetuate their own subordination. Since this inequality is socially constructed, it is possible to change it. It requires a change in the mindset of both the powerful and the powerless.

# 3.1. Understanding the Power Equations between Men and Women

**TIME** 1 hour

**METHOD** Structured Experience

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## **MATERIALS**

Pins and balloons,  
string,  
flipcharts,  
pens

## **OBJECTIVE**

- Participants experience the difference between the powerful and the powerless

## **PROCESS**

1. Distribute pins to half the participants and balloons to the remaining half.
2. Take the group with the balloons aside and ask them to blow their balloons and tie them with a string. After doing so, they should move around the room with their balloons but make all efforts to protect them.
3. Similarly, take the other group with the pins aside and tell them to use their pins in whatever way they want in the next five minutes.
4. Ensure, in both the cases above, that the instructions are given separately to each group.
5. Thereafter, ask the participants of both the groups to share their experiences. While they do so, you could record their responses on flipcharts.
6. Debrief and summarise.

## **DEBRIEFING**

1. Encourage the group with the pins to reflect and share:
  - a) How did you feel when the pins were given to you?
  - b) Why did you think of piercing the balloons?
2. Ask the group with the balloons to share:
  - a) How did you feel when the balloons were being attacked?
  - b) What worked in protecting the balloons and what did not work?
3. How else could you have used the pins and balloons?
4. What parallels can you draw in real life?
5. What kind of behaviours does being in a position of power or being powerless induce?
6. If you had the chance to socialise, what would you do differently?

## **FACILITATOR'S NOTES**

- Explain to the group that in this exercise, balloons were symbolic of softness (femininity) while pins were symbolic of strength and power (masculinity). The perceived image of a pin was to prick even though a pin can be utilised in many other productive ways, eg. to keep a bunch of papers intact, hang objects around it on a softboard, to make creative designs on paper or to mark places on a map, etc. Similarly, we are conditioned in our society to see women as balloons at the mercy of pinpricks from all.
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### **Key Points for Debriefing**

- 1 • Men and women are conditioned socially to believe that they are different – that women are soft and weak, both physically and mentally, who succumb to pressures very easily whereas men are strong like pins; hence men are able to pressurise and exploit women in the way they want to. Superstitions, purdah, restriction on mobility, division of labour, discriminatory practices, reward and punishment are all used for socialising girls such that they accept their subordination and even perpetuate it.
- 2 • Men are not born to dominate women but have been conditioned to do so. The 'oppressor-oppressed' attitude comes primarily from social conditioning. Historically women have always played a subservient role to men.
- 3 • Women who oppose such systems and practices are branded and ostracised. Because gender is learnt through the process of socialisation, hence it is important to accept these images but only if these images do not result in inequalities and the images are used constructively.
- 4 • It is possible to change the perceived images of women that reinforce discrimination. A gender perspective promotes equal participation of men and women and emphasises that their roles and attributes should not be saddled with each other and that they do not act as obstacles in their individual growth.

*SOURCE: This activity has evolved during various training programmes conducted by UNNATI and other organisations.*

4

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Gender  
and  
Socialisation

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At a very tender age, even before the physical differences between boys and girls begin to manifest themselves, they receive messages that they are different. This is communicated by the family through the differences in the food they are fed, the opportunities for education, type of toys they receive, freedom of mobility, the attention they get and the kind of things that they are encouraged for/discouraged against.

Most differences, therefore, between boys and girls are learned. These messages keep getting reinforced by different institutions such as the school, community and marriage. They impact the attitudes and behaviour of boys and girls and determine the relationship between them. The inequality in this relationship which begins early continues through life. Any change in the gender based inequality has to begin with a change in the socialisation process and practices.

# 4.1. Understanding the Process of Socialisation

**TIME** 2 hours

**METHOD** Small Group Activity

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## **MATERIALS**

Flipcharts,  
paper,  
pens and  
sketch pens,  
Reading 2 –  
'Socialisation and  
Gender Roles'  
pages 70-75

## **OBJECTIVE**

- Participants discuss and analyse how we are socialised into being men and women and the impact that socialisation has on our lives

## **PROCESS**

1. Share that not only in this session but also throughout the workshop, the participants will be asked to share personal memories and experiences related to gender, and that these memories and experiences may at times be painful or difficult to discuss. Emphasise that the success of this session depends on the willingness of the participants to share, but that no one will be required to share if she or he does not feel comfortable doing so.
2. Ask the participants to divide themselves into pairs of their own choice to ensure that they are with a person with whom they feel comfortable sharing personal experiences.
3. Tell them to try to recall, individually, as early in their past as they can, and think of when they first experienced that they are a boy/a girl. Ask them to recall:
  - i) What was the message that led to this realisation?
  - ii) What was the age at which they received the message?
  - iii) Who communicated it?
  - iv) Where was the message communicated?
  - v) What impact can this have on us as boys and girls?
4. Clarify to the participants that they should discuss about the first time they realised that they are a boy or a girl as we are not born with this perception but we come to this realisation because of something someone does, or says or gives to us. Each person is to think of himself or herself individually and not generalise.
5. Ask the participants to note these points down under the respective headings given above (the message, age, by whom, where and the impact).

6. Ask for a pair to volunteer to share their points for the first heading, viz. 'What message did they receive?' and the facilitator should note these down on a flipchart. Then ask the other pairs to share their points for this heading. Use a tally to indicate the ones that are repeated and add on the remaining points.
7. Follow the same process for the remaining headings, viz. 'What was the age at which the message was received?', 'Who communicated it?', 'Where was the message communicated?' and 'What impact can this have on us as boys and girls?'
8. Keep all the flipcharts on the board for use in Activity 5.1 for the session on 'Institutions of Patriarchy'. Distribute Reading 2 'Socialisation and Gender Roles' pages 70-75 to all the participants.

## **DEBRIEFING**

Synthesise the outcome of the discussion around the five questions:

1. What was the message that led to this realisation?
2. What was the age at which they received the message?
3. Who communicated it?
4. Where was the message communicated?
5. What impact can this have on us as boys and girls?

And finally ask, if this is how socialisation process works, can it be changed? If so, how can we change this to a more egalitarian/ equal set-up?

## **FACILITATOR'S NOTES**

- Through the first question 'What was the message that led to this realisation?' highlight the different messages for girls and boys and how these different messages lead to the social/socio-cultural differences (as opposed to biological) between men and women. From the responses on the previous charts, draw out the key ways in which we are socialised, e.g.

- \_ Restriction on movement for girls, freedom for boys
  - \_ Different clothes
  - \_ Different toys to play with
  - \_ Preference in education to boys
  - \_ Preference to boys in quantity and type of food
  - \_ Discouragement of boys to cry or show other soft emotions
  - \_ Encouragement of boys to play strenuous sports
- (These are given here only as examples; there may be many others that the participants may have pointed out).

- Share that we are born with certain biological differences and more come in at puberty; this is different from the social differences, which are layered on this, especially in the growing years and reinforced even later in life. These differences are a function of the culture of society. Draw the attention of the participants to observe that very few of the points have a biological basis, eg. menstruation, childbirth, breastfeeding. Most are sociological, i.e. society expects girls and boys to behave in certain ways and communicates this to them in different ways. Use some of the examples from the chart to explain.
- Through the second question, ‘What was the age at which they received the message?’ highlight the tender age at which we become aware of gender differences and its subtlety; and how this goes on during the entire course of one’s life.
- Through the third and fourth questions ‘Who communicated it?’ and ‘Where was the message communicated?’ highlight that it is none other than our own near and dear ones - parents, grandparents, siblings, other relatives, teachers, friends and neighbours, who communicate this message to us all through our lives. All institutions of society like the family, the school and society communicate this message to us. Hence this is really insidious and all pervading; it makes it very difficult to challenge and reverse.

- Through the fifth question, share the long-term implications these can have on the lives of men and women. Examples:
  - \_ Boys learn social communication skills and skills of competition, business negotiation, etc. These skills may give them an advantage over women in later life, at school and at the workplace.
  - \_ Girls learn domestic skills and artistic communication skills more than boys.
  - \_ Boys learn to hide their softer emotions and to become aggressively competitive and are, therefore, seen as strong.
  - \_ Girls are not discouraged to show their emotions and are, therefore, seen as externally soft.
  - \_ The games that boys play and the food they eat encourage the growth of stronger bodies in the case of boys than in the case of girls.
  
- Most of what we are as men and women is socially determined. If we think these differences are unfair and unnecessary, we can change them. Only biological changes are unchangeable. If we are working for a just and equal society, we have to work on the socialisation process to bring the social status of men and women at par.

*SOURCE: This activity has evolved during various training programmes conducted by UNNATI and other organisations.*

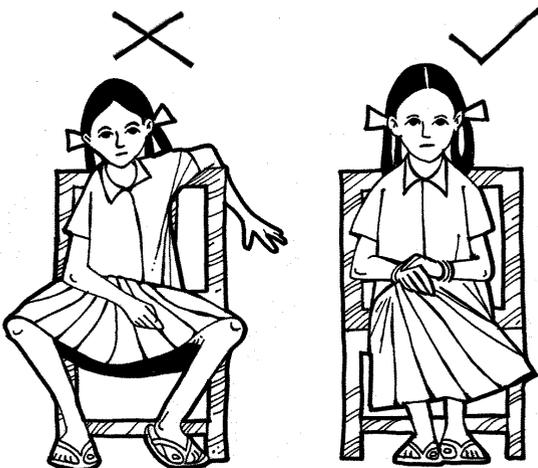


# Socialisation and Gender Roles

Socialisation is the process whereby people learn behaviour, beliefs and attitudes that prepare them to function effectively as a member of society. Gender socialisation, therefore, is the process whereby people acquire the rules, beliefs and attitudes appropriate to their particular gender (girl/woman and boy/man).

Gender is learnt through the process of socialisation and through the culture the society concerned. A child's early experiences are very important in shaping his/her self-perception. The baby right from childhood interacts with various family members and relatives, who demonstrate, teach and guide the child to perform the expected roles. They learn how they should behave in order to be perceived by others and themselves as masculine or feminine throughout their lives. This is reinforced by teachers, peers, textbooks, rituals, cultural beliefs, the media, literature, rituals and common sayings.

Over the years, society has formed and maintained several stereotyped images of human beings through the process of socialisation. Across the world, one finds that there are different norms prescribed for boys and girls, men and women. There is a saying that gender socialisation gives girls roots and boys wings. In other words, girls are socialised to stay at home and boys are socialised to have adventures!





Certain codes of behaviour are imposed on girls right from childhood. There are restrictions by parents and relatives on the way a girl carries herself, her mobility and sexuality. Along the way she talks, sits, moves and interacts with others, especially the male members of the family. A girl is supposed to walk with short soft steps, be soft-spoken, gentle and handle things delicately. Jumping, running about, long big strides and hopping are considered as masculine behaviour and do not befit girls, the more so because they may bring certain features of their body into prominence which would attract people's undesirable attention. All these restrictions are imposed on girls, right from birth through lullabies, songs, sayings, punishments and rewards by the parents, relatives and teachers, within the family, kinship and the outside environment.

In many cultures, boys are encouraged in the acts considered to display male traits through the toys given to them, the kinds of disciplines pursued in the course of their study and the jobs or careers in which they might aspire.

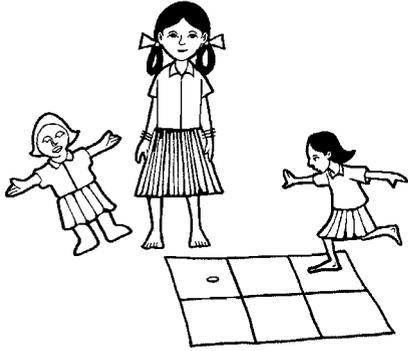
Boys and girls who perform the roles that society expects them to perform are appreciated and accepted by society. Most of us are also familiar with examples of how society reacts when girls and boys do something that is not expected of them. For example, you may not find it difficult to imagine the reaction that the following situations may evoke:

- a) a girl wants to play with a gun and a boy wants to play with a doll;
- b) a boy wants to learn cooking as a subject in school;
- c) a girl wants to learn rifle shooting/archery.

Most boys and girls would not even think of digressing because society demonstrates its reservations so strongly that they are forced to follow the path laid down for them. However, we all come across some rare examples of boys and girls who have decided to pursue their decisions regardless of the reactions they have received.



Parents teach and reinforce gender roles through different actions:



**PARENTS ENCOURAGE SEX-TYPED PLAY ACTIVITIES:** Research shows that there is a significant difference with respect to the encouragement of sex-typed activities. Parents tend to give toys like dolls to girls and guns and hammers for boys. In addition, boys are encouraged to play games that involve physical action and strength (kabaddi, kushti, weight lifting, etc.) more than girls. Also, it is seen that parents give more positive non-verbal responses to their young babies for picking up toys when the selected object is sex appropriate. When they pick up and play with objects that are associated with the opposite sex, they receive more negative responses.



**PARENTS ENCOURAGE SEX-TYPED EVERYDAY ACTIVITIES:** Children are differentially encouraged (with smiles, praise, etc.) for the kinds of activities traditionally associated with their sex. Girls are positively equipped for activities such as dancing, dressing up, assisting with domestic tasks while boys are encouraged for doing jobs outside the home, and those involving more physical strength and involvement.



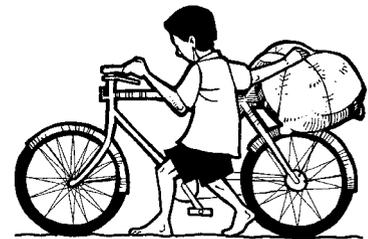
**PARENTS DRESS THEIR CHILDREN DIFFERENTLY:** This is a visible reminder that parents feel gender is important. Why are infant girls dressed differently from infant boys? Facially and behaviourally, it is often very difficult to tell the different genders apart, but you can usually tell at least in some way from the clothes the child is wearing (Jackson, 1992).

**PARENTS FOLLOW DIFFERENT RULES FOR THEIR CHILDREN:** If a family can educate only one child, preference is almost always given to boys. Girls may be educated up to a certain level if the family has the economic resources but beyond that they usually are forced to discontinue education. Girls are more often escorted back from school by an adult or are instructed to come straight home.



There is extensive evidence that parents organise children's environments, appearance and activities with gender in mind and hence much of everyday life of boys and girls is also highly determined by their sex.

In adult life, gender organises itself and takes different forms depending on the context of the relationship between men and women. Certain positions are assigned to the male and female members within the kinship and marriage which demands certain roles to be played by its members (husband and wife, brother and sister, mother and son, etc.), eg. a wife is expected to be self-sacrificing, patient, and dutiful and cater to her husband's sexual and other needs. Since the man enjoys greater freedom and authority and is the head of the household, he takes all the major decisions.



Some common sayings that reinforce gender stereotypes:

### ● GUJARATI SAYINGS:

*Jahan mare char chotla, tyan bhane ek opla*

(When four women meet, a home is sure to break)

*Nari dhoor ri dagli*

(A woman is like a heap of dust)

*Dikri ane gai, dore tyan jaye*

(Girls and cows will go where led)

*Zad, jameen ane joru - traune kajiya naa choru*

(Wealth, land and women - all three lead to fights)

*Dholku, Kholku Ane Bairu - thodu thodu tapaarta raho to saru chale*

(Drums, baby donkey and women - all need a little tapping for them to function properly)





● **HINDI SAYINGS:**

*Aurat ki akal aidhee mein hoti hai*

**(A woman's wisdom is in her heels)**

*Nari ki chanv pade to andha ho bhujang, kya ho us purush ka  
jo rahe nari ke sang*

**(If a woman's shadow falls on a blind person, he will lose his  
arm; one can well imagine what would be the plight of a man  
who lives with a woman)**

*Zad, jameen aur joru – sab ladaiyon ke karan*

**(Wealth, land and women - all three lead to fights)**

*Billi ke pet me ghi khate to lugai ke pet me bat khate*

**(Like the cat cannot digest clarified butter,  
women cannot keep secrets)**

*Beti ko palna aur padosi ke paudhon ko pani dena saman hai*

**(Bringing up a daughter is like watering your neighbour's plants)**

*Jahan char aadmi baithte hain wahan sudhar ki baat hoti hai,  
jahan char auraten baithte hain wahan bigar ki baat hoti hai*

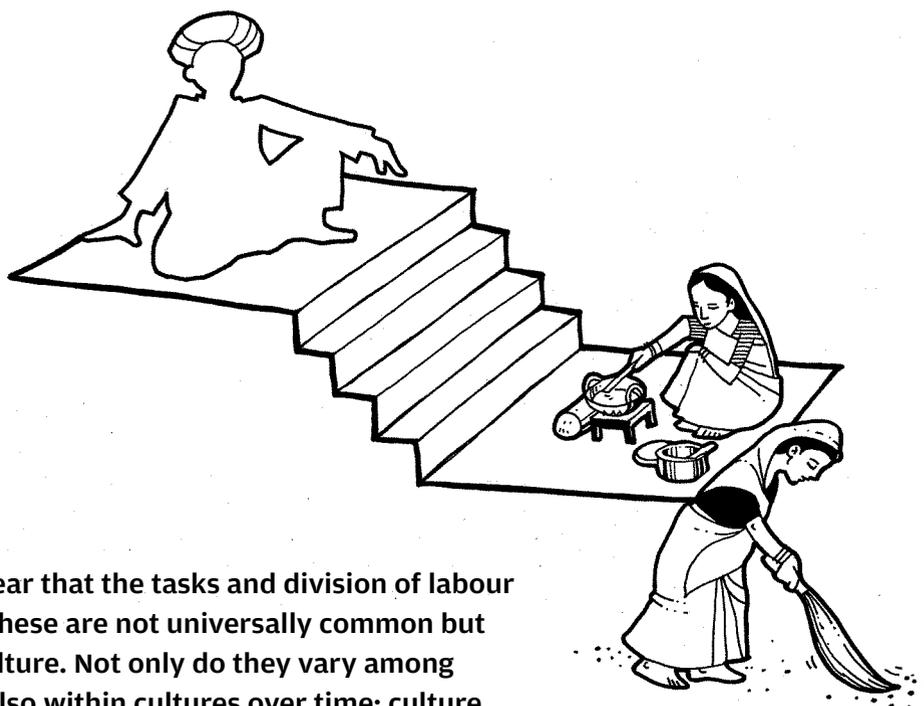
**(When four men sit together they talk about change and improvement;  
when four women sit together it only leads to disaster)**

*Dhor ganwar shudra pashu nari, Ye sab tadan ke adhikari.*

**(Drums, rustics/uncouth people, the untouchables, animals  
and women - all of them deserve to be beaten)**



Outside the sphere of the family, kinship and relatives lies the area of the community and wider society. Gender plays a significant role ascribing differential behavioural patterns and expectations from men and women, eg. even in making career choices you find women are expected to take up jobs which reflect their nurturing qualities; doctors are predominantly men, while nurses are mainly women. In technical education women are encouraged to take up tailoring, garment making while men mainly study computers, mechanical engineering, etc. In organisations, men are mainly managers, executives, foremen, decision makers while women are assigned secretarial jobs. A UN study in 1991 shows that, “Everywhere women do most household work and everywhere cooking and dishwashing are the least shared household chores”. So gender pervades different aspects of our lives and affects the differential access to resources between men and women. The gender division of labour in the family affects and impacts the division of labour outside the home.



From the above, it is clear that the tasks and division of labour are socially assigned. These are not universally common but vary from culture to culture. Not only do they vary among different cultures but also within cultures over time; culture is not stable but evolves. As societies become complex, the roles played by men and women are determined not only by the prevailing culture but also socio-political and economic factors.

# 5

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## Institutions of Patriarchy

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**Patriarchy refers to the power relationships by which men dominate women and to a system that oppresses and subordinates women in both the private and public spheres. This subordination begins very early within the family which dictates the do's and don'ts for girls and boys; these continue to be reinforced by all forms of institutions/systems, be it the school, peer group, community, caste groups, the judicial system or religious orders. The subordinate status of girls/women is internalised by both the sexes through the process of socialisation.**

**The attributes/qualities that a culture associates with both sexes and the way it divides the roles and responsibilities between them gets translated into discriminative behaviour of families towards girls and boys, women and men. A patriarchal system affects the productivity, reproduction, sexuality, mobility, property and other economic resources of women. The nature of patriarchy differs in different classes in the same society; from society to society and from time to time - because it can be changed through strategic interventions.**

# 5.1. Understanding the Institutions of Patriarchy

**TIME** 1 hour 45 minutes

**METHOD** Group Activity

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## **MATERIALS**

Flipcharts,  
paper,  
pens and  
sketch pens,  
Reading 3 –  
'What is Patriarchy?'  
pages 80-87

## **OBJECTIVE**

- Participants understand how the different institutions of patriarchy influence and contribute to the subordination of women

## **PROCESS**

1. In the large group ask participants to brainstorm the main institutions of society. List them down on the chart from the previous session (Activity 4.1) on which you had noted where the messages get communicated from. Some of these may include the school, *panchayat*, marriage, media, judiciary, caste groups and workplace.
2. Divide the participants into groups of four or five. Allocate two institutions to each group and ask them to discuss the following questions for these institutions:
  - i) Where are men and women placed in the hierarchy of these institutions? Why is this so? Has society always been ordered in this way in India? What are the examples of when this was different?
  - ii) How do these institutions treat/control women?
  - iii) What is the correlation between the position of women in these institutions, their treatment at the hands of these institutions and their position in society?
  - iv) What are some examples of your experiences of dealing with these institutions?
  - v) How can a change be effected in some of these institutions?
3. In the plenary ask them to present their analysis and not focus only on examples.
4. Synthesise the presentation and discuss the importance of changing the patriarchal structure to usher in a more just and equitable society.

## **DEBRIEFING**

1. Where are men and women placed in the hierarchy of these institutions? Why is this so? Has society always been ordered in this way in India? What are the examples of when this was different?

2. How do these institutions treat/control women?
3. What is the correlation between the position of women in these institutions, their treatment at the hands of these institutions and their position in society?
4. What are some examples of your experiences of dealing with these institutions?
5. How can a change be effected in some of these institutions?

### **FACILITATOR'S NOTES**

- Using the chart prepared by the participants in session 4 'Where was the message communicated?', share that it is in the family that we first learn about these differences. The other important institutions which reinforce these messages are the school, peer group, neighbourhood, marriage, the media, the judicial system, caste system, panchayat system, police, bureaucracy, hospitals and workplace.
- Highlight that all these institutions are male dominated. Men are in decision-making positions and women have limited entry to the lower echelons. They mainly carry out the decisions taken by others. By heading these institutions over a period, men have gained control over women's labour, reproduction, sexuality, division of labour, income and other economic resources and mobility.
- Thus, as a group, women's position is subordinate to that of men in most societies and the structure is a patriarchal structure which leads to a patriarchal system.
- It is difficult but imperative to change this patriarchal structure which exploits women's labour, sexuality and dignity. It requires long-term changes which are strategic in nature.
- Use the participants' examples of the changes in the hierarchy of these institutions to highlight that change is possible.

*SOURCE: This activity has evolved during various training programmes conducted by UNNATI and other organisations.*



# What is Patriarchy?

The word ‘patriarchy’ literally means the rule of the father or the ‘patriarch’ and originally it was used to describe a specific type of male-dominated family – the large household of the patriarch which included women, young men, children, slaves and domestic servants all under the dominant rule of the male. Now it is used more generally to refer to male domination, to the power relationships by which men dominate women and to characterise a system whereby women are kept subordinate in a number of ways. Linked to this social system is the ideology that men are superior to women, that women are and should be controlled by men and are part of men’s property. This thinking forms the basis of many of our religious laws and practices and explains all those religious practices that confine women to home, and control their lives. The term patriarchy refers to the system that oppresses and subordinates women in both private and public spheres.

The subordination that women experience at a daily level, regardless of the class they might belong to, takes various forms – discrimination, disregard, insult, control, exploitation, oppression, violence – within the family, at the place of work and in society. Anyone who has experienced even subtle discrimination, bias or non-acceptance, feels and knows it, even though she may not be able to name it.

Some examples that women share will illustrate the forms of discrimination faced and a particular aspect of patriarchy.

“I heard my family was unhappy when I was born as they wanted a son.”  
(son preference).

“My brothers could demand food. They could stretch out their hands and take what they wanted. We were told to wait for it to be given. We sisters and our mother had to make do with whatever was left over.”  
(discrimination against girls in food distribution)

“I have to help my mother with household work, my brothers don’t.”  
(burden of household work on women and young girls)

“It was a struggle to go to school. My father thought it was not necessary for us girls to study.” (lack of educational opportunities for girls)



“My brothers can come back at any time but I have to be back before dark.”

(lack of freedom and mobility for girls)

“My father used to often beat my mother.” (wife battering)

“Because I was not willing to give into the demands of my employer, I was thrown out of my job.” (sexual harassment at work)

“I have to submit my body to my husband whenever he wants it. I have no say. I fear sex.” (male control over women’s bodies and sexuality)

“I wanted my husband to use family planning methods but he refused. He also did not give me the permission to get operated on.” (no control over fertility or reproductive rights)

“I have no share in my father’s property. My husband’s property is also not mine.” (lack of inheritance or property rights for women).

**ORIGIN OF PATRIARCHY:** When people first started inhabiting the earth, everything that a tribe had was owned in common. All the resources like food, water, land and animals were equally shared. There were no class





divisions and hence no ruling class and there was no State. The men hunted large animals while the women gathered edible plants and small animals. As the women stayed longer in a place, they were able to develop their knowledge about many things: planting (which led to agriculture), domestication of animals and identifying poisonous and medicinal plants.

The children were the greatest asset of the tribe (not possessions since private property had not yet evolved). Children would grow to add strength to the tribe in its battle for survival against nature as well as against other tribes. Only mothers knew who their children were since sex was not a one-to-one relationship. The children were traced through their mother's generation line and not their father's, whom they did not know. This was called **Mother Right** and this set-up of society was **matrilineal**. This form of society still exists in many parts of the world like tribes of African countries, Khasis and Garo tribes of Meghalaya, Nairs and Mappilles of Kerala, etc.

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#### **DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MATRILINEAL AND PATRILINEAL SOCIETY**

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##### **MATRILINEAL SOCIETY**

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An individual is considered to belong to the same descent group as his/her mother.

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Property is transmitted through female line and held by them.

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Children of the male child cannot be members of their mother's family as they cannot take the family name of their father.

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Usually husband lives with wife in his in-laws' home.

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##### **PATRILINEAL SOCIETY**

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An individual is considered to belong to the same descent group as his/her father.

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Property is inherited through male line and held by them.

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Children of the female child cannot be members of their father's family as they cannot take the family name of their mother.

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Wife lives with husband in her in-laws' home.

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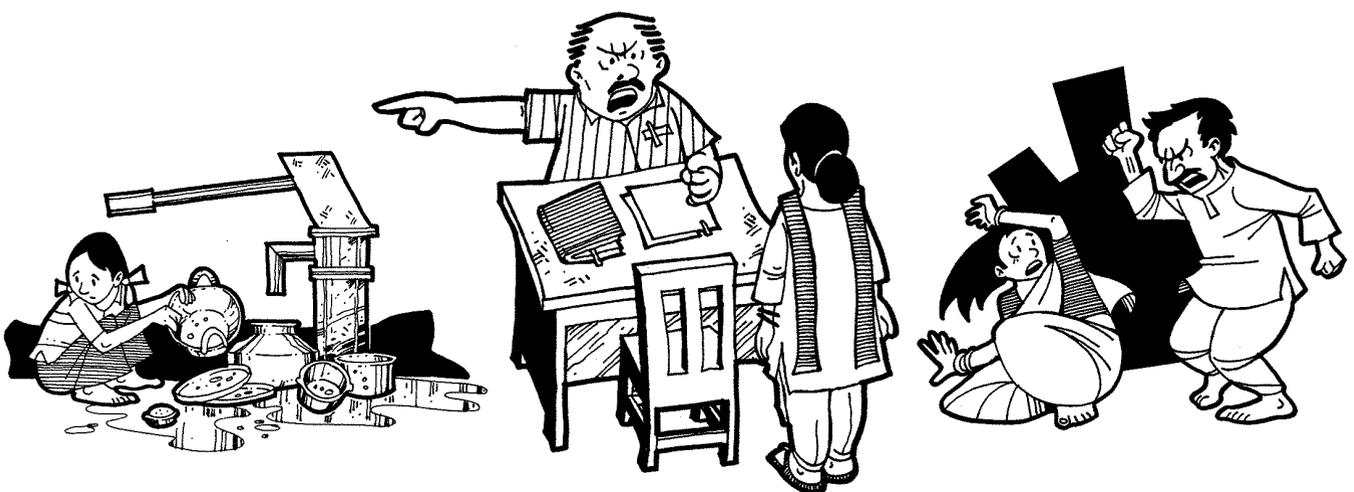




Mother Right made men and women equal. Having developed the ability of planting and the breeding of animals, people began to generate surplus, that is more produce than could be consumed by the family alone. At the same time, the concept of the institution of marriage evolved. One-to-one marital relationships were established. Hence men came to know who their children were. A whole new set-up arose. Surplus gave rise to the development of classes, i.e. those who got more surplus became the masters and slave owners, and those who had none became slaves. Private property evolved. Slaves and tools became the most sought after possessions since they produced the surplus. More surpluses were produced as higher technology was developed in agriculture and animal husbandry.

Since men had seized the slaves and produced the tools, they maintained their hold over these assets. Since they already knew their children, the system of handing down their possessions to their male offspring began. As this developed, the right of the father was established: the right of inheritance, the right to hand down and receive and the right to decide within the family. Through this process, our society shifted slowly from being equitable, where men and women lived life on equal terms, to one where men began to command more access, power and say in the decision-making process. The women acquired a subordinate position and gradually, through generations of oppression, their status in society became unequal.

**IMPACT OF PATRIARCHY:** The feeling and experience of subordination destroy self-respect, self-esteem and confidence and set limits on the aspirations of women. Every courageous act that they perform to assert themselves is condemned as 'unfeminine'. They are called *beparda* (shameless) as soon as





they try to step out of their defined spaces or roles. Norms and practices, which define them as inferior to men, which impose controls on them, are present everywhere in our families, social relations, religion, laws, schools, textbooks, the media and workplace.



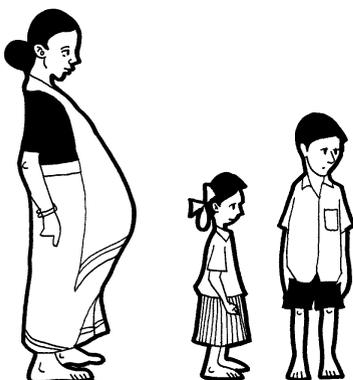
Subordination is not the fate of a few women; women face a system of patriarchal domination and superiority, of male control in which they are subordinate. Even the words used for husband '*swami, shauhar, pati, malik*' all mean 'lord' or 'owner'. It is important to understand that men and women are not assigned different roles because of their biological differences but because of this social system that defines what men and women should be doing.

The nature of patriarchy differs in different classes in the same society; from society to society and from time to time. What is common is that patriarchal forces are in control but the nature of this control may differ. For example, the nature of patriarchy in our grandmothers' time was not the same as it is today; it is different for tribal women and for upper caste women, Hindu women, for women in India and elsewhere.



In a patriarchal system normally the following areas of a woman's life can be said to be under the control of a patriarchal structure:

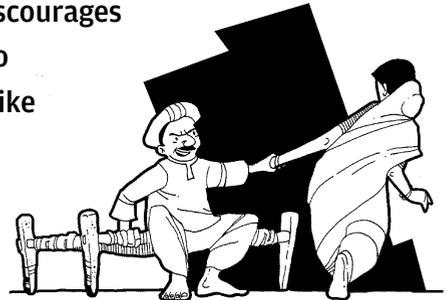
- **PRODUCTIVITY OR LABOUR POWER** • Women's productivity, both within the household and outside in paid work, is controlled. At home, women provide all kinds of free service to their children, husbands and other members of the family throughout their lives. Their back-breaking, endless and repetitive labour is not considered work at all and housewives are seen to be dependent on their husbands.



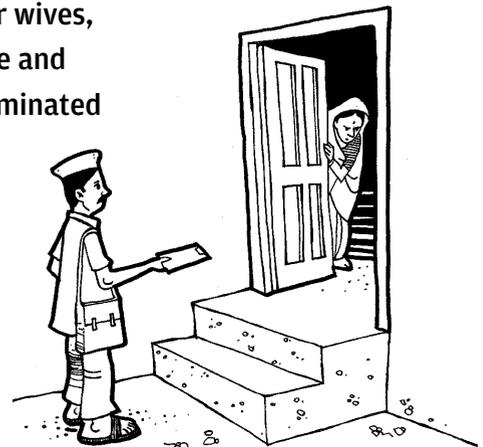
Women's labour outside the home is also controlled in several ways. Women are forced to sell their labour or they may be prevented from working. Their earnings may be taken away from them. Women are excluded from better paid jobs; they are forced to work at very low wages or work within the home on what is called 'home-based production', a most exploitative system. This control over and exploitation of women's labour means that men benefit materially from patriarchy and they derive concrete economic gains from the subordination of women.



• **REPRODUCTION** • Women's reproductive power is controlled in several ways. In many societies women do not have the freedom to decide how many children they want, when to have them, whether they can use family planning methods or terminate a pregnancy. Apart from individual male control, male-dominated institutions like the church or State also lay down rules regarding women's reproductive capacity. For example, in the Catholic Church, the male religious hierarchy decides whether men and women can use birth control methods. Based on the population growth rate and what the State decides as the required rate, it actively encourages or discourages women to have children. In India, there has always been a policy to control the population growth rate while in some other countries like Sweden, where birth rates are very low, incentives are given to women to have children.



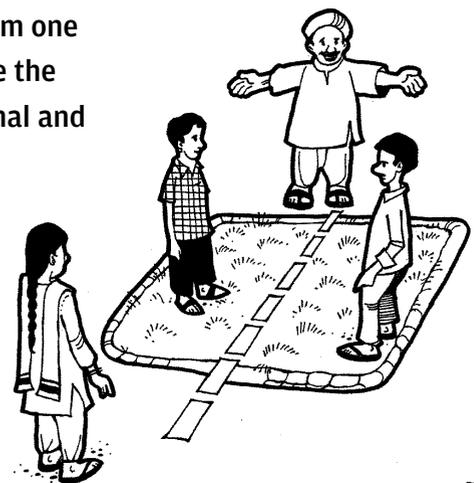
• **SEXUALITY** • Women are obliged to provide sexual services to their men according to their needs and desires. Women's sexuality outside marriage in every society is a taboo whereas a blind eye is turned towards male promiscuity. In some situations, men may force their wives, daughters and other women in their control into prostitution. Rape and the threat of rape is another way in which women's sexuality is dominated through an invocation of 'shame' and 'honour'.



• **MOBILITY** • In order to control women's sexuality, production and reproduction, her mobility needs to be controlled. Women are subjected to constraints in their mobility in ways that men are not subjected to, eg. using *purdah*, limits on interaction between the sexes and restrictions on when they can leave home and for what.

• **PROPERTY AND OTHER ECONOMIC RESOURCES** • Most property and other productive resources are controlled by men and they are passed from one man to another, usually from father to son. Even where women have the legal right to inherit such assets, a whole range of customs, emotional and social pressures prevents them from acquiring control over them.

An analysis of the family, religion, educational system, the media and the law also shows that they are male dominated. In a family, the man is considered the head. This is where a child learns the first lessons in hierarchy, subordination and discrimination.





Boys learn to assert and dominate, girls to submit and to expect unequal treatment.

Most modern religions define male authority as supreme. All major religions have been created, interpreted and controlled by upper caste and upper class men; they have laid down the duties and rights of men and women and the relationship between them. Laws pertaining to family, marriage and inheritance are very closely linked to the patriarchal control over property. Courts, judges and lawyers are mostly, patriarchal in their attitudes and the way in which they interpret law. Almost all political institutions at all levels are male dominated. The percentage of women in Parliament has never and nowhere been more than 10 per cent in South Asia. There is a greater emphasis on educating boys than girls. In textbooks, the roles of men and women are portrayed the way in which society has laid them down thereby reinforcing them. In the media, messages about male superiority and female inferiority are repeated constantly; violence against women is shown very often, especially in films. Women's issues are not given sufficient coverage and there are biases in reporting and advertising.

In the patriarchal system, there are a few women who have crossed the boundaries set for them by society and have been in positions of power. But the majority have learnt to abide by the system and accept it without questioning and there are still a minority of women who are learning to assert themselves and assume new roles. Those who accept the systems also perpetuate it; for example, women often treat their sons better, deprive their daughters of education and restrict their freedom. A rural woman explained this very graphically. She said, "Men in our families are like the sun, they have light of their own (they own resources, have income, they are mobile and have the freedom to take decisions). Women are like satellites without any light of their own. They shine only if and when the sun's light touches them. That is why women have to constantly compete with one another to have a bigger share of sunlight, because without this light there is no life".

Men, almost everywhere, enjoy certain privileges as men. But they too face some disadvantages of patriarchy. Like women, they are also expected to perform certain roles and behave in a certain way. Men who are gentle and non-aggressive are harassed; those who share with their wives work



that only 'women' are expected to do are laughed at. Men, too, do not have the option of stepping out of the choices that society has made for them; they can very rarely give up the roles of earning and protecting the family. However, this experience cannot be compared with the subordination of women as a group. Men are rarely, if ever, discriminated against and do not face the consequences that women face.

We need to understand here that it is not only men, but women too are operating under the clutches of this patriarchal order of society. That is why many times women tend to behave like men and are also unconsciously the perpetrators of patriarchy. Many times we come across incidences of mother herself discriminating between her son and daughter as mentioned above or, in cases of female infanticide, it is mostly a female member of the family who probably undertakes this act of sacrificing the girl child. In several instances, it is the mother-in-law who is engaged in harassing the daughter-in-law, under the cover of patriarchy, probably to gain a better position in the family.

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**THE EFFECT OF PATRIARCHY CAN BE SEEN IN MANY WAYS,  
SOME OF WHICH ARE AS FOLLOWS:**

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- Women, on average, earn just 74.9 per cent of men's wages.
  - While women do more than 60 per cent of the hours of work done in the world, they get 10 per cent of the world's income and only one per cent of the world's property.
  - While the number of women in higher education has increased, women occupy only 14 per cent of managerial and administrative posts.
  - Women work mostly in jobs where wages are low, there are no leave, pension and other social security benefits; job security is low and conditions of work are difficult and poor.
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## REFERENCES:

1. Bhasin, Kamla (1993): *What is Patriarchy?* Kali for Women, New Delhi.
2. Women Studies and Resource Centre (1986): *A Primer about Women and for Women*, Philippines.

6

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Building

Gender

Awareness

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In the process of building gender awareness, it is important to understand one's personal positions (values and beliefs), listen to others' points of view and re-examine one's position to understand its impact on one's life and work. There is a need to understand the importance of questioning the established position for effecting a change. This is the first step in evolving an action plan for change at the personal level, both attitudinal and behavioural. This can lead to discomfort that is likely to vary from person to person, depending on how they respond to their new awareness/consciousness and how difficult they perceive a change to be.

Using different methods that allow participants to respond to real-life situations, and receive peer feedback can be effective ways to bring about a consciousness leading to modification and behavioural changes.

# 6.1. Exploring Attitudes

**TIME** 1 hour 30 minutes

**METHOD** Spot game

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## **MATERIALS**

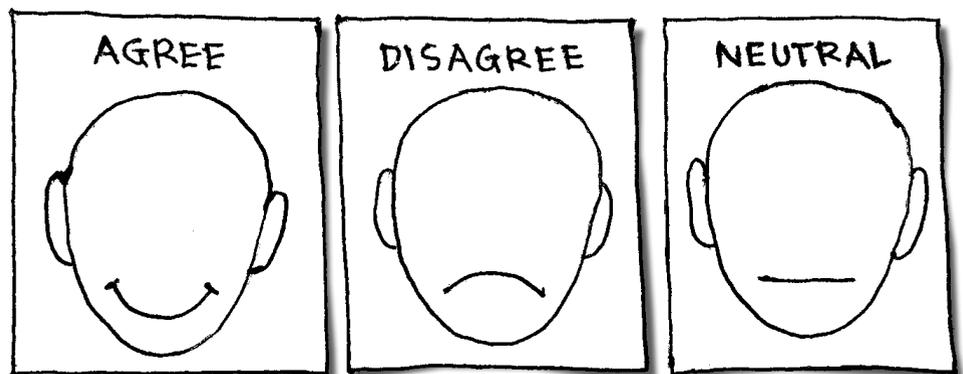
Flipcharts,  
Handout 3–  
'Statements for  
Building Gender  
Awareness' page 96

## **OBJECTIVES**

- Participants examine their own and the groups' attitudes
- Participants recall their emotions and ideas about gender

## **PROCESS**

1. Before starting this activity, draw the three faces given below for 'Agree', 'Disagree' and 'Neutral' separately on three different sheets of flipcharts.



2. Pin up the sheets, one each on three sides of the room.
3. Explain to the participants that the faces represent three options: Agree, Disagree and Neutral.
4. Tell them that some statements will be read out, one at a time. After each statement has been read, they should choose the face which most closely represents their feelings or views and stand next to it.
5. Ask all the participants to stand at the centre of the room. Read the first statement from Handout 3 on page 96. Wait till the participants decide their option.
6. Ask each group standing in front of the three faces to discuss its reasons for its decision or choice. Tell it to choose a spokesperson who, at the end of the discussion, would share the key ideas of the group with everyone in the room. Tell the group that its aim should be to present such strong arguments that it can convince

the members in the other groups to join their group. You may need to discuss the rules for sharing the group's views at the beginning, viz. listening while a participant is sharing or raising one's hand to share if one is not the appointed spokesperson for a group.

7. Give enough time for discussion on each of the statements to bring out strong views.
8. After the discussion on each statement, explain what aspect of gender awareness is addressed (Refer to the box on pages 92-95 for debriefing on the statements).

### **DEBRIEFING**

1. How did you feel when you heard the other group's views?
2. For those who changed their position, what was it that persuaded you to switch groups?
3. If you want to change other's views/position, what do you need to do?
4. As a persuader, what do you think worked and what did not work?

### **FACILITATOR'S NOTES**

- The exercise is likely to generate a lot of heated discussion and if members know each other well, the discussion may also tend to assume a personal tinge. Stress that participants should not question or raise personal issues and focus only on the arguments.
- If all the participants have the same position on any given statement, they could be asked to share in small groups their arguments and share these with the larger group.

*SOURCE: This activity has evolved during various training programmes conducted by UNNATI and other organisations.*

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## **DEBRIEFING FOR STATEMENTS**

**1 • Men and women can never be equal because they are biologically different.** Men and women are different but that does not mean they are unequal. On the basis of the different biological roles played by men and women, socio-cultural norms are set in each society, most of which enforce a subordinate position for women. Patriarchal and to a certain extent matrilineal societies are the exceptions to this rule. This unequal socio-cultural relation is not natural or given but learnt and taught and hence can be changed.

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**2 • All this talk about gender brings conflict to the family and so should be discouraged.** Any discussion on trying to understand unequal relationships is likely to cause conflicts initially, but that does not in any way justify being silent about them. Awareness among women of how they are conditioned to believe and accept their subordination can cause them discomfort; similarly it can cause resistance among men when they understand how they have been conditioned to believe that they are superior and perpetuate these socially created inequalities. However, the realisation has also been found to result in conscious efforts to work towards making relationships more equal. Concerted and positive measures can effect a positive change; hence it is important that these sensitivities are built.

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**3 • Domestic violence is a private issue and NGOs should not interfere in such matters.** For many years, actions within the household were considered a private issue and any efforts by an outsider to intervene were considered as interference. Domestic violence was one such issue where despite its adverse effects on the woman and ultimately the family, there was very little public reaction or response. There was a gradual understanding that domestic violence is perpetuated to control women's sexuality and reproduction in patriarchal societies. Around the '70s, the feminist groups recognised that dividing issues affecting women into public/private worlds can create a safe haven for their oppression by preventing governmental regulation of activity in the private sphere. This led to the now popular slogan that 'personal is political and

political is personal'. This was an attempt to link political action to relations of power that operate in all human relationships that are unequal and demand the extension of state power into the so-called private sphere to address problems like domestic violence. It was felt that it is very difficult to deal with these issues on a one-to-one basis within the family. Hence there is a need to treat it as a structural problem and make strategic interventions to deal with it for better gender relations. NGOs work for vulnerability reduction and often seek to address gender inequalities through their programmes. Hence, they have an important role to play in addressing domestic violence in their work.

---

**4 • Women should have the choice to decide about their own fertility and reproduction as they have to face the problems associated with childbirth.** In patriarchal societies, by and large, men control sexuality, fertility and reproductive choices and rights of women; whereas the bodies are those of women, these bodies bear the brunt of carrying the child for nine months, giving birth and then nurturing the child over a number of years. Hence women should have the final say on this issue.

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**5 • Having an abortion is a woman's right.** Ideally, if the decision to conceive is taken jointly, the decision to abort should also be mutually arrived at. However, this is generally not the case. It is the woman who bears the brunt of unreasonable demands for sex, pregnancy, childbirth, and nurturing, hence the right to decide whether she wants a child or not should be hers.

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**6 • Boys and men should not cry.** The socialisation process of any society works on the biological difference between a boy and a girl to convert them into social beings. This process teaches them that boys and men are supposed to be tough, unemotional and should not cry. This is not a given, it has been taught by most societies, and is not true for all societies. This expectation takes away the choice from boys/men of expressing their emotions to a situation and places undue pressure on them to put up a brave, macho front.

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**7 • In mixed community-based groups, women cannot play an active role in the discussions and decisions.** The same socialisation process discussed above says women should not, which is different from cannot, play an active role equal to men in their presence. Women are taught to be submissive, accept a subordinate role and maintain silence even in cases where the decisions taken are likely to impact their lives adversely.

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**8 • Motivating women to become members of committees and encouraging them to be present in some meetings is the maximum participation that one can achieve.** Women and men have been socialised into believing that women belong to the private sphere – their home and the family – while the public sphere belongs to men. Women’s entry into the public sphere is relatively new. Due to the limited opportunities they have had in performing public roles, the participation in many cases may be limited to mere presence. However, this is not because they cannot participate but because they have not participated in such forums. Attempts to do so are also not encouraged. There are several examples of women in *panchayats* and in community-based organisations who have taken the initiative to participate and bring about changes in their community.

---

**9 • Gender equality is an urban concept and is not relevant to the rural scenario.** Urban or rural, rich or poor, gender inequalities exist in all patriarchal societies. The concept is urban but the experience is universal. Rural women understand and associate with these concepts as well, if not better than women in urban societies. Matriarchal and matrilineal societies do not face the same extent of gender inequality seen in patriarchal societies, but such systems are on the decline.

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**10 • Women invite eve-teasing by their provocative dress and behaviour.** Indian men wear very revealing clothes like *lungis* and *dhotis* with *angavastra*, they also go bare-chested yet are not teased, whereas women are teased on one pretext or the other; sometimes her dress sense, her behaviour or some other things are blamed. In reality this is just a means to define and control her sexuality

in a patriarchal society. Research initiated to examine this belief indicates to the contrary that many girls/women have been found to be victims of eve-teasing or rape even when they were not 'provocatively' dressed. It is important for both men and women to dress appropriately, especially while appearing in public places.

---

**11 • Women are less successful than men because they are by nature less competitive than them.** In a patriarchal society, usually men define success. So the norms and definition of success are also suited to the male identity. Women find it more difficult to fit in with these norms and definition of success. Secondly, women are socialised into being less competitive because of their reproductive/nurturing role.

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**12 • NGOs need women functionaries to be able to mobilise women as men cannot do this work.** Again, due to the socialisation process which has sex-wise segregated public spaces, it is easier for women to organise women in our societies, especially in the initial phases of work. If there are gender-sensitive men, they too can do this task and it is already being done at several places.

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**13 • By targeting family as a unit, development benefits reach all the members.** Targeting a family as a unit is easier as it does not recognise and address the inequalities within the family. These inequalities are very complex and difficult to handle, yet are essential to manage.

By targeting the family as a unit, the development benefits do not reach all the members equally. As we have seen, gender, age, marital status, disability, etc. define one's power within the family. A mother-in-law is more powerful than the daughter or daughter-in-law, a widowed mother-in-law is not. Similarly, a disabled mother or daughter-in-law would be less powerful than a non-disabled one and so on. Those who are more powerful corner the larger share of the benefits and then the rest percolates down again to be cornered by the one who is second in line and so forth. Hence targeting the family as a unit does not benefit all equally.

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# Statements for Building Gender Awareness

- 1.**  
Men and women can never be equal because they are biologically different.
- 2.**  
All this talk about gender brings conflict to the family and so should be discouraged.
- 3.**  
Domestic violence is a private issue and NGOs should not interfere in such matters.
- 4.**  
Women should have the choice to decide about their own fertility and reproduction as they have to face the problems associated with childbirth.
- 5.**  
Having an abortion is a woman's right.
- 6.**  
Boys and men should not cry.
- 7.**  
In mixed community-based groups, women cannot play an active role in the discussions and decisions.
- 8.**  
Motivating women to become members of committees and encouraging them to be present in some meetings is the maximum participation that one can achieve.
- 9.**  
Gender equality is an urban concept and is not relevant to the rural scenario.
- 10.**  
Women invite eve-teasing by their provocative dress and behaviour.
- 11.**  
Women are less successful than men because they are by nature less competitive than them.
- 12.**  
NGOs need women functionaries to be able to mobilise women as men cannot do this work.
- 13.**  
By targeting family as a unit, development benefits reach all the members.

## 6.2. Assessment of Personal Beliefs

**TIME** 1 hour

**METHOD** Self-assessment using caselets

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### **OBJECTIVE**

- Participants explore and become aware of their beliefs about gender and understand what constitutes gender sensitivity

### **PROCESS**

1. Distribute the 'Personal Assessment: Caselets' (Handout 4 - pages 100-102) to all the participants.
2. Ask them to read through each caselet carefully and decide which of the four response options at the end of each caselet is the closest to what their own response would be in the given situation. Tell them to circle this option and insist that only one option be circled. Mention that they do not have to agree fully with any statement but should choose the one that is closest to their possible response to that situation.
3. Tell the participants to complete the task in 20 minutes.
4. Distribute the 'Personal Assessment: Scoring Grid' (Handout 5 - pages 103-105) to the participants. Ask them to score their responses, based on the instructions given. Alternatively, you may collect the sheets from them and score their responses and discuss them in a subsequent session.

### **DEBRIEFING**

1. Have you encountered such situations yourself or in your immediate neighbourhood/family?
2. How did you feel when you were responding to the caselets?
3. What factors did you consider while responding to a situation?
4. What impact do you think your response would have on the woman in a given situation? (Discuss this with the help of a couple of responses that the participants have given to one or two situations).

### **MATERIALS**

Flipcharts,  
markers.  
Handout 4 –  
'Personal  
Assessment:  
Caselets', pages  
100-102.  
Handout 5 –  
'Personal  
Assessment: Scoring  
Grid', pages 103-105

## **FACILITATOR'S NOTES**

- You may refer to the box below 'Explanation of the Grid and Key Learnings' for explaining the scoring patterns that emerge. Share that this is an instrument that has been developed mainly for urban audience and has been tested with several groups to understand one's personal gender position. It is not meant to preach what should be done but helps to understand our personal position in different situations that can have significant implications for women and men.
- Explain each response (W, X, Y, Z) and what each of these signifies. 'Z' indicates gender blindness and is not desirable; 'X' indicates rationalising and ideally, one should not have more than one or two responses of this type as this stance does not have scope for attitudinal change; 'Y' indicates absconding from issues and not taking a position; 'W' indicates a gender-sensitive stance and ideally a gender-sensitive person would have three to five responses in this category.
- In a mixed group check if women participants have scored more 'Ws' than men. If not, share that since both are socialised in the same society and are given similar messages, both need to be sensitised to gender issues.
- People who rationalise (Xs) or who abscond from issues (Ys) can over time become gender blind and move to the position of Z.
- The assessment can help gauge the change that is required to become gender sensitive and can help evolve action plans at an individual level.

- If this exercise is being done in an all women's group, explore with the participants the reasons for the difference in the responses of women to the same situation. Link to the differing patterns of socialisation.
- This exercise may lead to feelings of discomfort for some participants who realise that they have been accepting a subordinate position without necessarily being conscious of it. Trainings have a limitation in sustaining such discomfort, which is a pre-requisite for any form of change in action.

SOURCE: *This activity was developed by Barry Underwood and his colleagues during his tenure in OXFAM and AKRSP (India).*

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## **EXPLANATION OF THE GRID AND KEY LEARNINGS**

- The extent of blind acceptance of a social role has led to a large percentage of people to being either totally 'blind' to discrimination that exists practically everywhere in our everyday life, or to 'rationalise' these traditional roles into accepted mores of life.
  - Women have always suffered in society and gradually learnt to internalise their problems over the years without questioning their plight and subordination. Men, on the other hand, have started enjoying this power play and accepted for a fact that women should suffer and be the martyr. Both men and women, who argue that women were meant to suffer, fall in the second category.
  - There are still others who perceive discrimination as an unavoidable phenomenon and are simply 'confused' with no idea of how to change the situation.
  - In a predominantly male-dominated patriarchal system the only way to address or redress discrimination is to take a 'pro-female' approach to life, where men and women need to be feminists and understand the problems of women from their relative standpoint.
  - Both men and women can be rational/gender blind.
  - All women are not pro-female.
  - Some men are pro-female.
-



## Personal Assessment: Caselets

• **Instructions** • You have 20 minutes to respond. First read through the caselets. Circle the response that you think is the closest to what your own would be in the given situation. You do not have to agree fully with any statement. Just give the one that is closest to your own.

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**1** Anil and Meenu are a married couple with a two-year-old daughter. Anil is very keen to have another child, preferably a boy. During the birth of her first child Meenu had a difficult time and her health has not been good lately. Also she is keen to take up some part-time work as soon as her child is old enough to go to pre-school. She is, therefore, not keen to have another child. Anil has been getting more and more upset over Meenu's refusal, and it is causing many arguments in the house. In this situation what would you advise?

- A** Meenu should stick to her stand. It is her body that has to bear and rear the child
- B** Meenu should give in, otherwise the tense atmosphere will continue, and to have two children is not unreasonable
- C** They should seek advice from friends and their family doctor
- D** They should postpone the decision for about two more years

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**2** Smita and Varun are a married couple living in a joint family. Varun's parents are retired. Recently Varun has found a new job in another city and, before moving there, they want to buy a house. Varun wants to buy one near his factory, but it is on the edge of the city and there are no shops and schools near by. Smita wants to buy one nearer the city where she can do shopping and send the children to school easily. Varun's parents tend to side with him. What should happen in this situation?

- A** The majority view should be taken
- B** As Varun is the breadwinner for the whole family, his considerations are more important
- C** The family should sit together to discuss it, giving equal weightage to both Varun's and Smita's views
- D** Smita should take an adamant stand for what she wants

---

**3** You are project officer for a funding agency. In one of the projects you cover you have learnt that the project holder is abusing and misusing his women staff members. The project has a strong emphasis on working for women. In this situation what would you advise?



- A Stop funding the project immediately**
  - B Not do anything. A person's private life has to be seen separately from the work**
  - C Not take any action as it is too delicate an issue**
  - D Call a separate meeting with him and the women involved to discuss the issue**
- 

**4** Sheelu and Rajan are recently married, and both have full-time jobs. With their double income they can afford to employ domestic help. However, Rajan wants home cooking only. He likes his idli in the morning, and a tiffin for lunch, and expects Sheelu to cook the evening meal. Sheelu finds this too exhausting and wants to employ a cook. They have been arguing about this for weeks and Rajan feels it would be better for Sheelu to take up a part-time job so that she is not too tired. He feels they really don't need two full salaries, as he is paid quite well. In this situation what would you advise?

- A There is no need for Sheelu to work. She should stay home and do the housework**
  - B Sheelu should demand that Rajan should take up a part-time job, and do some of his own cooking**
  - C They should sit together and try to work it out**
  - D Sheelu should explain that her work is important to her, give him the choice of either helping equally with the cooking or employing domestic help**
- 

**5** Pammu and Johnny are a married couple. Johnny works in a factory as a fitter where he gets only a modest salary. Pammu does the housework, which includes washing Johnny's dirty and oily clothes every day. She gets no time for her recreational pursuits though she would love to resume dancing classes, as she did before getting married. They have saved some money in the bank, and now Johnny wants to buy a motorcycle for travel to work. Pammu, however, wants to get a washing machine so she doesn't have to spend so much time washing and can then go to dancing classes. In this situation, what would you advise?

- A They should buy a small two-wheeler and use some of the savings to employ domestic help to do the washing or send the clothes to the laundry**
  - B It is more important for Pammu to be able to pursue her own interests. They should buy a washing machine**
  - C Both have valid reasons for their choices, they should sit together and discuss**
  - D As Johnny is the sole earner, they should buy the motorcycle first, then save up for the washing machine**
-



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**6** Shiney is a Project Officer (PO) in an aid agency. She often has to travel to projects with her manager, Raju, an older man. One day while on a stopover in Udaipur, Shiney discovers that Raju has booked them into a double room at a hotel. Shiney objects and says she wants a separate single room. Raju explains that as a PO, she has an allowance for only Rs.120/- per night, while a single room costs Rs.150/-. He also rationalises that while at projects, they often share a room. In this situation what would you advise?

- A If they often share rooms at projects, there is no reason why they should not share a hotel room**
  - B They should agree to share the room this time, but agree to bring up the issue of allowances back in the office**
  - C Shiney should insist on a single room, and that her organisation should pay for it**
  - D They should try to find a cheaper hotel where they both can stay, and agree to bring up the issue in the office**
- 

**7** Dipti's parents want to arrange her marriage with Narayan, who is of the same caste and similar educational background. Dipti quite likes him, but is worried because Narayan expects her to be a housewife and not pursue a career. Dipti has another marriage partner in mind, Yusuf, who says that he would help and encourage her to pursue her career. Dipti's parents, however, are very opposed to him, and think a mixed marriage will not work. In this situation what would you advise?

- A Dipti should try to change Narayan's stand**
  - B Dipti should abide by her parents' choice, as they have the maturity of understanding in these matters**
  - C Dipti should explain to her parents her reasons for preferring Yusuf, and get them to talk with him**
  - D Dipti should disregard her parents and go in for a civil marriage with Yusuf**
-



# Personal Assessment: Scoring Grid

• **Instructions** •

1. Opposite the case study numbers put a cross in the box under the answer you have given. e.g. (if you had circled 'B')

	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)
•1	W	<del>Z</del>	X	Y

2. Total the number of Ws, Xs, Ys and Zs you have crossed.

YOUR RESPONSES

CASELETS

	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)
•1	W	Z	X	Y
•2	Y	Z	X	W
•3	W	Z	Y	X
•4	Z	W	Y	X
•5	X	W	Y	Z
•6	Z	Y	W	X
•7	Z	Y	X	W

Ws =

Xs =

Ys =

Zs =



Now put the totals in the appropriate W, X, Y, Z circles in the picture sheet to see the combination of types you are !

RATIONAL तर्कसंगत	BALANCED संतुलित
MAY SIDE WITH TRADITIONAL VIEWS AT TIMES कभी कभी परंपरागत विचारों के पक्ष में होना	
X: ○	

AVOID ISSUES मुद्दों को टालना	TIMID काशर व संकोची
CONFUSED अलझा हुआ	FRIGHTENED OF CHANGE बदलाव से डरना
Y ○	



UNBALANCED VIEW  
असंतुलित विचार

PRO FEMALE  
महिला की तरफदारी  
करने वाला

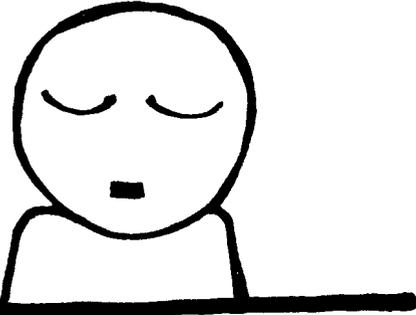


MAY DOMINATE/BE AGGRESSIVE  
हावी या आक्रामक होना

W O

TRADITIONAL  
परंपरागत

GENDERBLIND . PRO MALE  
पुरुष की तरफदारी करने वाला



DOMINATING (MALE)  
PASSIVE (FEMALE)  
हावी (पुरुष) / उदासीन (महिला)

Z O

## 6.3. Examining Personal Assumptions

**TIME** 1 hour 30 minutes

**METHOD** Role play enactment and discussion

---

### **MATERIALS**

Handout 6 –  
'Role Plays'  
pages 108-109

### **OBJECTIVES**

- Participants understand the impact of gender-related attitudes on behaviour
- Participants understand how a change in behaviour can affect the respondents' response

### **PROCESS**

1. Ask for as many volunteers from among the participants as there are characters in the first role play.
2. Cut the strips for each actor for this role play.
3. Take the volunteers outside the room and give them their individual role descriptions. Do not add any other details to what has already been written.
4. Explain to the observers that the purpose is to learn and that they must agree to keep the details of this session confidential and not misuse them under any circumstances against an actor/discussant. This is especially important if all the participants in the group belong to the same organisation.
5. After the role play has been enacted, ask the participants to share what they observed.
6. Summarise, based on the observations, and highlight the key learning in each situation.
7. Follow the same process with the other role plays.

### **DEBRIEFING**

1. What did you observe about the role enacted by each participant?
2. What did it communicate?
3. How can the behaviour of the different actors be changed? If necessary, you may ask the participants to re-enact their roles based on the understanding that has developed during the discussions. This can help highlight how a change in the behaviour can affect the respondent's response.
4. What effect did the changed behaviour have on the responses of the actors?
5. What are the pre-requisites for a change in communication that hinges on preconceived gender stereotypes, roles and attitudes?

## **FACILITATOR'S NOTES**

- The role plays in Handout 6 have been designed using different contexts within an organisation. The purpose is to highlight the gender aspects in relationships in different situations. The role plays have also been designed to be non-directive; the role is assigned without necessarily providing clues as to how the person should respond or behave. This is intentionally done so as to elicit spontaneity in the responses. Other role plays may also be devised to make them more context-specific for the group.
- It helps to involve as many participants in the enactment of the role play as possible. Learning is maximum and long-lasting when they experience the situation. If some participants wish to join voluntarily, they may be allowed to do so as long as they do not take over.
- It helps to do the role plays towards the end of the day, as that will provide the participants space and time to reflect on the experience/observations.
- Through the discussions it can be highlighted that our behaviour is guided by our attitudes and the preconceived gender stereotypes that we subscribe to. Very often the lack of adequate information from us, incorrect representation of our purpose or the way we behave or respond leads to a response from the listener that makes us uncomfortable and sets in motion a chain of reactions that are gender biased. A positive change in the behaviour of one party can favourably affect the response of the other. Highlight the importance of constructive feedback for a change in behaviour.
- Link the learnings that emerge to the specific work roles of the participants and elicit/suggest ways of using the role-play method in their work.

*SOURCE: This activity has evolved during various training programmes conducted by UNNATI and other organisations.*



# Role Plays

## **Role Play 1 • Director (Male)**

You are the Director of a large development organisation. You are attracted towards a young woman colleague who is a Programme Officer. She has taken an appointment to meet you.



## **Role Play 1 • Female Colleague (Programme Officer)**

You are working with the organisation for the last two years. You are known for your hard and efficient work. You have just prepared a project proposal and given it to the Director for his feedback. You are in need of some money to cover the medical bill of your ailing mother. You have taken an appointment with the Director to get a salary raise. You know that the Director is attracted towards you. You are confident that you will make him agree to a salary raise.

## **Role Play 2 • Male Colleague**

You and one of your female colleagues have come to attend a meeting at the Secretariat. You arrive at the hotel to check in.



## **Role Play 2 • Female Colleague**

You and one of your male colleagues have come to attend a meeting at the Secretariat. You arrive at the hotel to check in.



## **Role Play 2 • Hotel Receptionist (Male)**

You are a hotel receptionist. You have the authority to give up to 20 per cent discount.

## **Role Play 3 • Young Girl**

You are working in a government office in the state secretariat. You received a telegram that your mother is sick and you are rushing back home. At the station, you do not get a confirmed ticket. You purchase an ordinary ticket but because you are unable to get into the jam-packed general compartment, you decide to board the reserved compartment.



## **Role Play 3 • Travelling Ticket Checker-TTC (Male)**

You are a middle-aged man. You are on your routine ticket checking.




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### Role Play 4 • Female Supervisor

You are a very strict Water and Sanitation Programme Supervisor. You have four clusters. You know that some of your colleagues are not giving you full field-level information, rather they are trying to give wrong reports.



### Role Play 4 • Field Staff no. 1 (Male)

You are cluster in-charge covering five villages. You do not go to the field regularly but in the report provide a good picture.



### Role Play 4 • Field Staff no. 2 (Female)

You are cluster in-charge covering five villages. Recently you have been abstaining from the field work as your small child is repeatedly keeping unwell. You know that you will not get leave, hence in your report you provide a picture that all field areas are visited and there is no problem.



### Role Play 4 • Field Staff no. 3 (Female)

You are cluster in-charge covering five villages. You know that you have better qualifications than other field staff members. You often help in the report preparation of your supervisor on the computer. You know that even if you don't do full field work, your supervisor will not be angry with you. Recently you have almost stopped going to the field.

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### Role Play 5 • Sarpanch (Female)

You have been a *sarpanch* for the last three years. You are illiterate.



### Role Play 5 • Talati (Male)

You are an experienced *Talati*. Today you have come to meet the *sarpanch* to get her signature on a budget statement for which no discussion has been held at the *panchayat* or the *gramsabha*. The second agenda is to get the signature on three caste certificates. You have also brought your annual performance report which the *sarpanch* has to sign and send to the Taluka Development Officer (TDO – administrative incharge at the district level).

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7

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Violence  
against Women  
(VAW)

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Violence affects the lives of millions of women worldwide. It exists in every country, cutting across boundaries of culture, class, caste, education, income, ethnicity and age. The term 'violence against women' (VAW) refers to many types of harmful behaviour directed at women and girls because of their sex. VAW is rooted in unequal power relations. It is a clear manifestation of the subordinate social status occupied by women and girls. Violence is used as a tool to reinforce and maintain gender roles and to punish women who refuse to follow them. Throughout their life, women are prone to violence in different forms. Women with disabilities and women who face other disadvantages of caste, class, etc. are more vulnerable.

Also, younger women, married women and women with more children are at a greater risk. Women use different coping strategies to deal with violence. It is important to understand these to make appropriate interventions to enable them to counter its effects.

# 7.1. Understanding Violence against Women (VAW)

**TIME** 1 hour 30 minutes

**METHOD** Structured Experience: Case Study

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## **MATERIALS**

Flipcharts,  
sketch pens,  
Handout 7 -  
'Meena's Story'  
pages 114-115; OR  
Handout 8 -  
'Bhanvri's Story'  
page 116  
Handout 9 - 'Facts  
and Magnitude of  
Violence'  
page 117; and  
Handout 10 -  
'Some Vital Data on  
the Status of Girls  
and Women in India'  
pages 118-119  
Reading 4 -  
'Violence Against  
Women: Types,  
Forms and  
Consequences'  
pages 120-125

## **OBJECTIVES**

- Participants understand the types of violence that women face in their lives
- Participants understand how cultural rituals and beliefs are used to perpetuate women's subordination
- Participants learn about the coping mechanisms that women facing violence use

## **PROCESS**

1. Divide the participants into small groups of five to six persons.
2. Give Handout 7 of 'Meena's Story' to the participants. Read out or narrate the story to the participants twice.
3. Give the participants the following questions to discuss in their sub-groups and write their answers on flipcharts:
  - i) What is Meena communicating about herself?
  - ii) Do you know of other 'Meenas'? Have you or other women faced a similar situation?
  - iii) What are the other ways in which women face violence?
  - iv) What may be some of the ways in which women perpetrate the violence? Why is it that Meena's mother-in-law, a woman, also behaves like a 'man'?
  - v) What coping strategies do you or your friends use when faced with violence?
  - vi) How can you change this situation, even if it is in a limited way?
4. Ask the first group to present the key points of their discussion one by one and the other groups can add on any additional points they may have.
5. Debrief and consolidate the discussion.
6. Share and distribute Handout 9 on 'Facts and Magnitude of Violence Against Women' and Reading 4 on 'Violence Against Women: Types, Forms and Consequences'. Make a presentation of Handout 10 containing 'Some Vital Data on the Status of Women in India'.

## **DEBRIEFING**

1. What is Meena communicating about herself?
2. Do you know of other 'Meena's'? Have you or other women faced a similar situation?
3. What are the other ways in which women face violence?
4. What may be some of the ways in which women perpetrate the violence?  
Why is it that Meena's mother-in-law, a woman, also behaves like a 'man'?
5. What coping strategies do you or your friends use when faced with violence?
6. How can you change this situation, even if it is in a limited way?

## **FACILITATOR'S NOTES**

- This exercise will yield best results when done with a same sex group, since the issue is sensitive and requires a certain degree of comfort before it is discussed.
- The purpose of this exercise is to discuss the different forms in which women face violence in society. Consolidate the discussion to emphasise the kinds of violence faced by women through a life-cycle approach (refer to Reading 4). Also, encourage the participants to share examples of coping mechanisms or strategies that they have used or know of.
- You may also bring out the concept of misogyny here. The importance of recognising the role of socialisation and conditioning to break this cycle of woman perpetrating violence against woman is very important.
- Use this opportunity to discuss how facing violence on a continuous basis makes us insensitive to it and accept it as normal. If the group is ready and willing to do this, you may get them to list what they see as violence against women and what they do not see as violence. The listing can help facilitate a discussion among the women about violence and also ways to deal with it.
- An optional case study from the rural context has also been provided as Handout 8 – 'Bhanvri's Story' on page 116. You can choose whichever is appropriate for the group.

SOURCE: *Adapted from OXFAM Gender Training Manual (2002).*



## Meena's story

From the time I grew up I was expected to be a dutiful and obedient daughter. I was expected to look after my siblings, do all the household work and eat in the end after my father and brothers had finished their meals. Although I was a bright student, I had to stop going to school as there was no secondary school in my village. I was not allowed to ask questions and was reprimanded if I ever dared to do so.

No sooner did I attain puberty than talks of my marriage began in my family. My parents began desperately to look for a husband for me as they wanted to marry me off at the earliest. I was not ready to leave home. That was an extremely difficult period for me as in our tradition during the menstrual period women have to spend their time in isolation for five days and are treated as an untouchable. The thought of spending five days per month in isolation made me feel very uncomfortable. I wished I had not attained puberty. There were more restrictions now on where I could go and with whom.

For the next couple of years, everyone in the family was preoccupied with 'finding' a suitable match for me. There were several occasions where I had to be presented to the prospective grooms and their parents, who would ask me a horde of uncomfortable personal questions. My abilities were highlighted as best as possible. There were some who found me 'dark complexioned' while others thought that I was not pretty enough. They all wanted a perfect girl – beautiful, light skinned, well behaved and one who brought with her a good dowry.

Finally, one family agreed to marry their son to me. Once this was agreed upon, the next step was discussion over dowry. They settled for an amount which was beyond our means but my parents still borrowed a huge sum to satisfy the demands put forth by my in-laws. Although, on one hand, my parents were happy to 'do their duty and lessen their burden', the atmosphere at home was tense due to the monetary aspects. I was not sure whether my marriage was after all an occasion worth celebrating. Regardless of the pressures and strain that my parents were facing, they were content and comforted themselves with the thought that they would enter heaven, now that they had donated their daughter. This is termed *kanyadaan* in the Hindu tradition and it is considered one of the best offerings to God. The daughter is thus reduced to an object that can be gifted away.



### Marriage and its Consequences

On the wedding day, I was all decked up. My husband and I were expected to walk around the fire seven times and, while we did this, the priest chanted holy verses blessing me with sons and happiness.

Once the rituals had been performed, it was time for me to depart as from now on I had to stay with my husband's family. Initially, I was mortified as I had heard all kinds of stories about how newly-wed brides were maltreated—from being beaten to even being killed by their in-laws. This did not deter me from dreaming about all the romantic moments I had been imagining all this while. At my in-laws' house, I was soon preoccupied with the multiple household chores. I also had to listen to their taunts for not bringing sufficient dowry and put up with occasional beatings. It goes without saying that with all this, I was always reminded of my duty as a wife. The Hindu scriptures also propagate the images of a woman as a secretary, slave, mother and a sensuous partner.

In our tradition we have 3000 million gods and goddesses. I was forced to observe many rituals for my husband's health and happiness and to beget a son. I prayed for a son too but my prayers were not heard. I had a baby girl and this was cause enough for everyone to mourn. My husband stopped talking to me and several weeks passed before he even agreed to look at our daughter. My in-laws taunted me for my bad luck. During my second pregnancy, I was threatened by my in-laws that if this time I did not fulfil their wishes, they would throw me out of the house and get my husband to remarry. This time I was lucky and there was celebration in the house for many days. I recalled my friend Sheela's decision to kill her daughter just after her birth. It was now easy for me to understand what prompted her to do so. When my in-laws and my husband discriminate between my son and my daughter, it makes me angry. In the last seven years that I have been married, I have realised that even if I remain weak and submissive and take all the blame on myself, I am not going to be treated well and respected. I have begun to ask myself, "Why should I not assert myself?" And if not for me, I will do it for my daughter to help her become a confident, self-assured, well-educated and independent person.

SOURCE: Adapted from *Radha's Story* (cited in *Awake – Asian Women and the Struggle for Justice, Asia Partnership for Human Development, Sydney, 1985*) from *Oxfam Gender Training Manual* (2002).



## Bhanvri's Story

**Raised in a rural background and currently a proactive and ardent *dalit* member of the *Mahila Jan Adhikar Samiti*, Bhanvri was born in Madhya Pradesh 56 years ago. Her parents belonged to the nomadic community.**

Reminiscing her childhood, Bhanvri shared, “I was branded as an ill omen for the family, as all my four brothers who were born after me did not survive. I did not enjoy the affection of my parents and, at the age of seven, I was married off to a 10-year-old boy who was afflicted with tuberculosis. I visited my in-laws only once during my childhood.

I stayed with my parents and helped them in cattle grazing. I was very keen to study and, on my insistence, my father got me some basic writing materials. Initially I picked up quite a lot but because we were always on the move, I could not study regularly. My father got some land after a family feud and he constructed a hut. We stayed put there and I was able to complete my education up to Class V.

My husband passed away at the age of 15. Once again I was considered an ill omen. My father wanted to send me away in ‘*nata*’ to another man so that his burden would lessen. At 14, he did just that and I was married off to a boy who was good for nothing. At 16, I delivered my first child. We had a big family with eight members and feeding the family was a task. My husband had become addicted to alcohol. I gave birth to four more children and my responsibilities were increasing.

I was the only literate woman in the village at the time when the literacy programme was introduced by the Government. I got a job on a monthly wage of Rs. 50 but had to struggle a lot due to caste politics. Later, I had to step out of home for training. After a couple of years I received an award. In the meanwhile, I took up another job of teaching young children. I had to face discrimination – I could not wear slippers to the village and could not touch a handpump. Gradually there were protests in the village against the discrimination towards *dalits*; in a celebration in the village my husband and daughter were beaten up and the police refused to lodge my complaint. A few days later, my 12-year-old daughter was gangraped by the *Ahirs*. People tried to dissuade me from lodging a complaint. I tried to seek police intervention but the whole community and the police were against me. Even the *dalits* did not support me as they were all bonded labourers. It became difficult to survive in the village. I sought refuge at my brother-in-law’s home in Ajmer but soon they also asked me to leave.”

**Bhanvri’s daughter who was gangraped became mentally ill. She was married off hoping for some improvement in her mental state. But her condition worsened; she gave birth to a son, and soon after, her husband expired. Gradually, Bhanvri got associated with the *Mahila Jan Adhikar Samiti* which mobilises and organises the disadvantaged groups to fight against class, caste and gender-based discrimination. Her husband’s whereabouts are not known and she is living with her four children.**

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SOURCE: *Adapted and translated from Aadhi Abadi Ka Sangharsh, Jeitali, Mamta (2006)*



# Facts and Magnitude of Violence

## SOME FACTS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

- Crimes against women have been steadily increasing over the years.
- Much of the crime against women goes unreported – hence there is very little data on this subject.
- Women and girls are more at risk of violence from their own family members.
- Sexual violence against children is one of the most unreported crimes in India.
- Although men from certain castes and class are also vulnerable to certain forms of violence such as child sexual abuse and bonded labour, the experience of violence is to a large extent determined by gender-related vulnerabilities, making girls and women most vulnerable.
- Most studies show that the prevalence of abuse among girls is 1.5 to 3 times that among boys.
- Some laws relating to the prevention of violence are such that they become a barrier in providing justice to women. The situation is even worse when people who are responsible for providing justice are not sensitive and are guided by patriarchal values.



SOURCE: *Crime Clock, National Crime Record Bureau, Ministry of Home Affairs, 2003*

## MAGNITUDE OF VIOLENCE

- Emotional and personal causes mainly drive women to end their lives.
- Suicides due to 'dowry dispute' showed a significant increase of 34.8 per cent.
- 1 suicide for every 5 suicides is committed by a housewife.

SOURCE: *Crime Clock, National Crime Record Bureau, Ministry of Home Affairs, 2007*

## AS PER THE NFHS-2 SURVEY (1998-99)

- ☞ Almost one in five married women has experienced domestic violence
- ☞ 1 in 9 women reported having been beaten up in the last 12 months of the survey
- ☞ 21 per cent of women reported having experienced violence since the age of 15 years
- ☞ 19 per cent reported having been beaten up by their husbands

The NFHS -3 Survey data (2005-06) indicates that 37.2 per cent married women have experienced spousal violence; the incidence is higher in rural areas at 40.2 per cent than 30.4 per cent in urban areas.



## Some Vital Data on the Status of Girls and Women in India



**In 1991 there were 927 women for every 1000 men. In 2001 there were 933 women for every 1000 men.**

*Census, 1991 and 2001*



**In 1991, in the age group of 0-6 years, there were 945 girls for every 1000 boys. In 2001 this ratio reduced as there were 927 girls for every 1000 boys.**

*Census, 1991 and 2001*



**In April 1999, out of every 1000 children, 72 girls and 70 boys died before reaching the age of one year. In April 2005, this number reduced. However, the number of female infants dying, i.e. 64 was still more than the male deaths, i.e. 57.**

*Sample Registration System Vol. 39 No. 1, Registrar General of India*



**Fifty three per cent of girls in the age group of five to nine years are illiterate.**

**Dropout rates increase alarmingly in classes III to V, compared to 50 per cent for boys, it is 58 per cent for girls. More than 50 per cent of girls fail to enrol in school; those that do are likely to drop out by the age of 12.**

*7th All India Education Survey, 2002*



**Of the 12 million girls born in India, 1 million do not see their first birthday. 1 out of every six girls does not live to see her 15th birthday. One-third of these deaths take place at birth. Three lakh more girls than boys die every year. Female mortality exceeds male mortality in 224 out of 402 districts in India. The death rate among girls below the age of four years is higher than that of boys. Even if she escapes infanticide or foeticide, a girl child is less likely to receive immunisation, nutrition or medical treatment compared to a male child. While one in every five adolescent boys is malnourished, one in every two girls in India is undernourished.**

*<http://smilefoundationindia.org/ourchildren.htm>*



● The reported maternal mortality ratio during 2000-2007 was 300. As per 2005 estimates, the lifetime risk of maternal death was 1 in every 70 women.

*[http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/india\\_statistics](http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/india_statistics)*

● In 1991, 39 per cent of women were literate as compared to 64 per cent males. The situation had improved in 2001 with 53 per cent female literacy as compared to 75 per cent male literacy but the gap between male and female literacy persists.

*Census, 1991 and 2001*

● In 2001, as compared to 6.6 per cent men, 11 per cent of women were employed as marginal workers – such work that does not give them any kind of formal employment or social security. The situation was just the reverse in employment in the main sector where 51.7 per cent males were employed as against 25.6 per cent female workers.

*Census, 2001*

● In 1952, the total number of women representatives in the Parliament was approximately 12 per cent (4.4 in the *Lok Sabha* and 7.3 in the *Rajya Sabha*); 50 years later in 2004, this number increased only by 8 per cent (8.2 in the *Lok Sabha* and 11.4 in the *Rajya Sabha*)

*www.indiastat.com (India Country Report)*



# Violence against Women: Types, Forms and Consequences

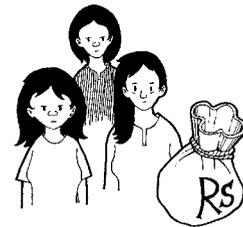
Violence affects the lives of millions of women worldwide. It exists in every country, cutting across boundaries of culture, class, caste, education, income, ethnicity and age. The term 'violence against women' (VAW) refers to many types of harmful behaviour directed at women and girls because of their sex. The United Nations defines violence against women in a very comprehensive manner and includes the following types of violence in its definition:



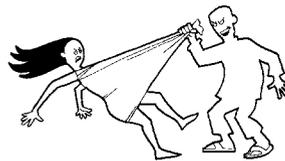
1. Acts of physical, sexual and psychological violence in the family and the community



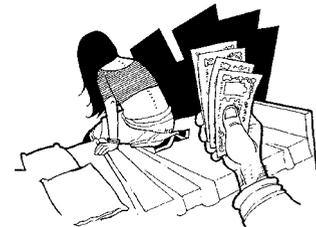
4. Dowry-related violence



8. Trafficking in women



5. Rape, including marital rape



9. Forced prostitution



2. Beating up spouse



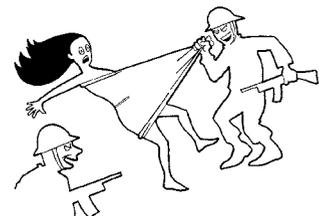
6. Traditional practices harmful to women such as female genital mutilation



3. Sexual abuse of female children



7. Sexual harassment and intimidation in school and at work



10. Violence perpetrated or condoned by the State such as rape during war



The World Health Organisation (WHO), in addition to the above types of violence, also includes the following in its definition of what constitutes violence against women:

- suicide and
- other self-abusive acts.

Violence against women and girls is rooted in unequal power relations. It is a clear manifestation of the subordinate social status occupied by women and girls. Society has created very different norms and expectations for the behaviour and roles to be performed by men and women. Women are expected to mainly perform household-related jobs and be submissive, serve others and have unending patience. Men are, on the other hand, expected to do chores outside the house, earn and protect the family. They are, therefore, expected to be powerful and strong.

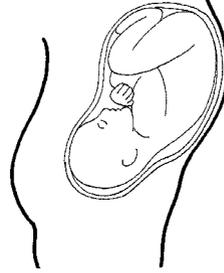
Discrimination and unequal treatment in the way boys and girls are reared and cared for, the denial of education, health care and other rights to girls and a strong preference for male children in our society make women vulnerable to different forms of violence. Violence is used as a tool to reinforce and maintain gender roles and to punish women who refuse to follow them. Domestic violence is seen as justified if women do not perform their 'motherly' or 'wifely' duties. In our society, women are seen as responsible for maintaining the honour of the family and, in many instances, rape and sexual violence are used by men to 'dishonour' families or communities.



## VAW IN LIFE-SPAN OF WOMEN:

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### • 1 • Pre-natal stage



- pre-birth elimination of female foetus
  - beating up of wife during pregnancy
- 

### • 2 • Infancy



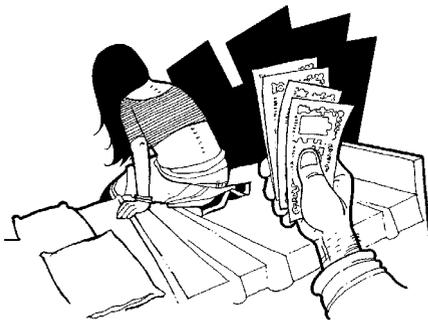
- female infanticide
  - discrimination in access to care, education, nutrition and health care
- 

### • 3 • Childhood



- child marriage
  - child sexual abuse
  - child prostitution
  - discrimination in access to care, education, nutrition and health care
- 

### • 4 • Adolescence

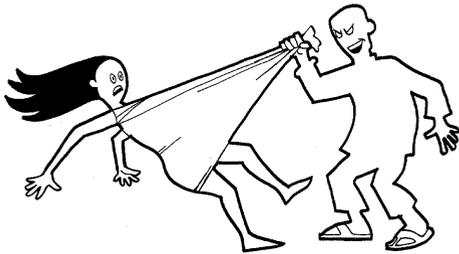


- molestation/eve-teasing
  - rape
  - incest
  - sexual harassment at the workplace
  - forced prostitution
  - trafficking
  - violence associated with pre-marital pregnancy, abortion
  - discrimination in access to care, education, nutrition and health care
  - kidnapping and abduction
-



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• 5 • Youth and Adulthood



- domestic violence
- marital rape
- dowry-related abuse and murder
- forced pregnancy
- homicide
- sexual harassment at the workplace
- molestation, sexual abuse and rape
- discrimination in access to care, education, nutrition and health care
- desertion

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• 6 • Old Age



- abuse of the elderly, widows
- threat of sexual violence
- lack of access to care, nutrition and medical facilities

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Throughout their life, women are prone to violence in different forms. Women with disabilities and women who face other disadvantages of caste, class, etc. are more vulnerable. Also, younger women, married women and women with more children are at a greater risk.

All the categories of violence mentioned may take any of the following forms:

**1. Physical abuse**

This includes punching, hitting, beating, choking, kicking and pushing, burns, throwing objects at a person and using weapons such as knife, etc. to hurt another person and is used to control another person.

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## **2. Psychological abuse**

Criticising, threatening, insulting, inciting another person to get angry and humiliate the woman making her more dependent and frightened of the abuser.

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## **3. Sexual coercion**

Rape, sexual assault, molestation and forced marriage are all ways of forcing women to have sex against their desire.

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## **4. Controlling behaviour**

As a result of the power relationship and discrimination, especially due to patriarchal norms, women are often not allowed to work outside the home, not given control over money, their movements are monitored, and their access to information is restricted.

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## **SOME CONSEQUENCES OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN**

### **A) Effect on health**

- Injuries, bruises, fractures and other physical problems
- Disability
- Psychological and emotional disorders like depression, anxiety, alcoholism, drug abuse, etc.
- Sexual and reproductive disorders, and/or
- Fatal health consequences such as suicide and homicide

### **B) Other effects**

- Loss of income for family where the woman is also earning
  - Economic burden on the woman and the family for accessing health services, legal services and other support services
  - Violence against women prevents them from accessing the benefits of development schemes as it is likely to limit their ability to move or act freely.
-



However, the beliefs, norms and culture of our society prevent women from talking about the abuses they face within and outside the family. If and when they seek help and justice, they are often confronted with further discrimination from their own families, communities and even the criminal justice system.

Over the years several laws have been passed to prevent violence against women. These include the Pre-conception and Pre-natal Diagnostic Techniques (PCPNDT) Act, the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2006, etc. (Refer to Reading 8 'Women's Movement in India: An Overview' pages 176-191 for details).

Enacting laws is not sufficient to end VAW as even the laws and the entire judicial system, e.g. lawyers and judges and the police are governed by a patriarchal mindset. Hence, often women have to go through embarrassment, humiliation and harassment while registering a case and during the trial period. It requires action at several levels. Along with the victim, the immediate family, the leaders and citizens need to jointly respond and exert community pressure. Informal social control mechanisms need to be used to punish the perpetrators to restore women's rights. Providing counselling services, shelter homes where women can go if they decide to leave their home, starting helplines, giving information and timely guidance and counselling, establishing alternative forums for resolving cases of VAW such as *Nari Adalats* and *Mahila Panch* (federations of women that mediate in cases of VAW), building public awareness among men and women and supporting youth and women's collectives are some of the positive ways in which this serious concern can be addressed.



REFERENCE:

National Commission for Women, UNFPA and CHETNA (undated): *Violence against Women: A Health System Response (A Facilitator's Guide for Medical Officers in the Public Health System)*

# 8

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## Single Women: Issues and Challenges

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Women who are forced or choose to stay single are more isolated and marginalised than other women. The number of single women is on the increase. Except widows, there is little effort to collate data on the other categories of single women. Those who have challenged patriarchal structures are not included in the development discourse. The vulnerability of this diverse group is compounded by the attitudes of the family and society towards them and the resultant barriers they face in living a safe and healthy life. Dependency on others, especially men, in diverse forms, restricts their choices and opportunities.

The State has introduced some welfare measures and begun to mainstream single women in existing schemes. NGOs are attempting to strengthen these groups by forming collectives and networks.

# 8.1. Understanding the Vulnerability of Single Women

**TIME** 2 hours

**METHOD** Structured Experience: Case Study and Group Discussion

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## **MATERIALS**

Board,  
chalk,  
markers,  
chart paper,  
Reading 5 -  
'Single Women:  
Definition, Status  
and Initiatives'  
pages 130-139

## **OBJECTIVES**

- Participants understand the definition, situation and issues of single women
- Participants become familiar with ways of mainstreaming issues of single women

## **PROCESS**

1. Divide the participants into small groups of five to six people.
2. Ask them to discuss and list their responses to the following question: Whom would you consider a 'single woman'?
3. Divide the categories of single women listed by them and ask each group to concentrate only on one or two of these and discuss: What, according to you, is the situation of this group or groups of single women in society? What do you see as their key issues?
4. Ask each group to present the key points of their discussion.
5. The points can be categorised (social, educational, economic, political, etc.). You can add any points left out by the participants.
6. Read out/share a case study on the restrictions and unfriendly practices in the family for single women or the participants can be asked to share any life stories that they have encountered to help develop an understanding of the range of issues and concerns of single women.
7. Share the steps taken by the Government and the NGOs to address these concerns.
8. Debrief, based on the questions given on the next page. Distribute Reading 5 'Single Women: Definition, Status and Initiatives' to all the participants

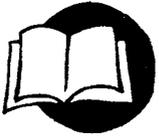
## **DEBRIEFING**

1. What are the different coping mechanisms that single women are using to deal with their situation?
2. In your experience, how is their situation more vulnerable than women in general?
3. What are the steps that your State Government has taken for single women?
4. What are the measures that you can take to address these concerns in your ongoing work?

## **FACILITATOR'S NOTES**

- It is important that the facilitator is familiar with the issues of single women and how and by whom these are being addressed currently. The reading on this will provide an overview. For more details and case studies, refer to 'Select Bibliography', pages 198-199.
- It is important to contrast the situation of single women with that of single men and emphasise how patriarchy affects the situation of single women and enhances their vulnerability. It is equally important to highlight the diversity of single women, the specificity of their issues and their strengths.
- Initiate discussion on and share ways in which NGOs can include single women in their ongoing work.

*SOURCE: This session and Reading 5 have been prepared with inputs from Sushila Prajapati, Programme Officer, ActionAid, Gujarat, and Dr. Ginny Shrivastava, Co-ordinating Director, ASTHA and Founder, Ekal Nari Shakti Sangathan (ENSS), Rajasthan.*



# Single Women: Definition, Status and Initiatives

Women, who are forced by their circumstances or choose to stay single, are generally more isolated, vulnerable and marginalised than others. The reasons for staying single have been increasing and so have the numbers who can be included in this category. Women's groups who have been making efforts to address their issues suggest that in defining 'single women', the following categories may be included:

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**1. Ever married:** includes those women who once in their lifetime were married but are not in the institution of marriage at this time - they may be deserted, widowed, separated or divorced.

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**2. Never married:** includes women who have never been married. This may be due to several circumstantial factors.

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**3. Half wives:** includes women whose husbands are missing or have disappeared over a considerable length of time. Their status in the eyes of the law is of a married woman for seven years from the day of the missing of the husband.

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**4. Institutionalised women:** living in prisons, asylums, State-run homes, religious institutions, nuns etc.

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**5. Bypassed, avoided or challenged the institution of marriage:** those who have decided not to get married, have walked out of a relationship, are in a live-in relationship with a man, have taken divorce voluntarily or are in multiple relationships without marriage (which includes *devdasis*. (a Hindu religious practice in which girls were "married" forcibly and dedicated to a deity), they may sometimes be involved in sex work).

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**6. Challenged hetero-normativity:** Lesbian, transgender, bisexual and transsexual women who are not currently within heterosexual marriage.

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The needs and rights of each of the above groups would be different, thus any progressive movement of single women would need to consider this aspect. The inter-sectionality of class, caste, physical or mental ability,



illness, sexuality, religion, motherhood (or childlessness), source and acceptability/stigma of livelihood, education, income, assets and property, inheritance, family support (or lack of it) will add to the single woman's unequal status and vulnerability. While the issues of some of these groups such as widows have been addressed, though more in a welfare mode, others who have challenged hetero-normativity are not yet a part of the development discourse.

### **ESTIMATES OF SINGLE WOMEN**

It is estimated that there are 2.5 per cent women in the age group of 25-59 who fall in the category of 'never married' and 1 per cent are divorcees. It is reported that 8 per cent of all women in India are widows (Census of India, 2001). In Gujarat, the government estimates that there are more than 11 lakh widows. There has been little effort to collate data on the other categories of single women. However, when other women living alone – those divorced, abandoned, thrown out by their husbands are added on, one could say that the numbers are at least about 10 per cent of all women in India.

### **STATUS OF SINGLE WOMEN**

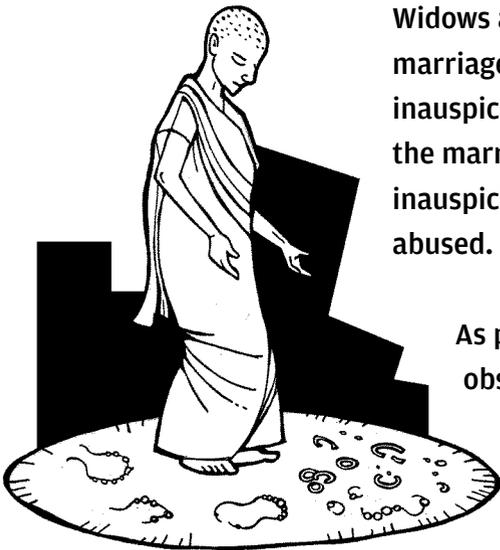
Single women are faced with several adversities and their vulnerability is higher due to the inhuman treatment they receive at the hands of their family and society. For instance, in Bengal, Bihar and particularly in Uttar Pradesh they are segregated in the cities of Mathura, Benares and Vrindavan where the facilities for them are very bare; they usually resort to begging for survival and have often to face sexual and physical exploitation. The situation of single women is largely the same in any part of the country, though there may be some variation in their numbers. Because there are very few divorced, separated, or single-parent families, minimal or little social support is available to them.

Sati, the act of widow immolation, has been practised for many years and continues despite legal provisions for curbing the practice. Women who are abandoned by their husbands or become widows are addressed by



terms such as '*dakan*' (witch) or '*rand*' (whore) that reflect the attitudes of society and the undermining of their status and presence. They are often blamed for misfortunes that strike the community.

Upon the death of her husband, a widow is forced to immediately stop donning all symbols associated with marriage, indicating that her existence is linked to her husband's and that she has no independent identity. If the woman belongs to the so-called higher caste, she is expected to shave her head; based on the customs of the particular caste or religion, she is expected to wear clothes of a particular colour only and remove all her ornaments. All these practices are guided by the belief that a widow must not do anything that will either lead to other men getting attracted to her or will activate her sexual desires. The loss of a husband leads to an overnight change in the woman's image and her lifestyle.



Widows are not allowed to participate in religious festivities and marriage celebrations because it is considered unlucky, unholy, and inauspicious. In extreme cases, they are even denied participation in the marriage of their own children. Having seen a widow is considered inauspicious and she is not only blamed for this but is also verbally abused.

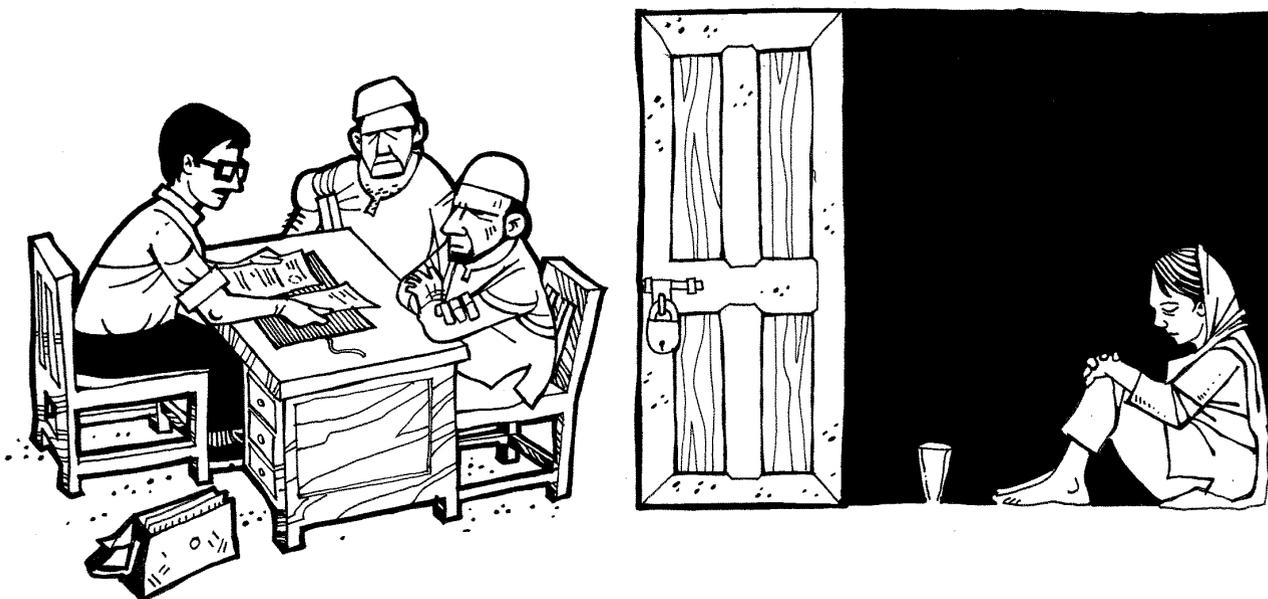
As per the Islamic norms, divorcees or widows are expected to observe *Iddat* - a period of waiting that Islam has imposed upon them, after which a new marriage is permissible. A divorcee who does not experience *haidh* or menstruation, either due to old age or some other medical imbalance, shall pass an *iddat* of three Islamic months; and a wife who was divorced while expecting a child will have to wait for the delivery of the baby before her *iddat* expires. Among the Hindus, some widows are forced to stay in a separate dark room and are totally secluded from their family; they are even debarred from leaving their small cramped space for attending to their basic needs. If they must, they can only exit in the night when no one can see them. The stipulated time for such segregation varies among communities.



It has been commonly observed that during this period of segregation, the proceedings related to transfer of her husband's property are completed, leaving her to take care of her children and herself without any assets. Although the Hindu Succession Act clearly gives wives and daughters legal rights to land owned by their husband and father, social customs reinforce their dependency by depriving them of their rights. In many communities, widow remarriage is unheard of. Among certain tribal communities, levirate marriages (in which a widow remarries or cohabits with her brother-in-law) are common practice but this does not assure her security. The desire of the woman is not accorded any value nor is she consulted in such decisions.

On the economic front, very often she is unaware of the loans that her husband has incurred during his lifetime; and additionally she also ends up taking loans for performing the last rites of her husband, which further enhances her indebtedness. She spends a large part of her life repaying these loans. In lower socio-economic households, she also performs the additional responsibility of earning and taking care of not only her children and herself but also her in-laws.

Women who are abandoned by their husbands are looked down upon by society - regardless of the reason. Even where their husbands have abandoned them after remarriage, it is the women who face the blame for the break-up of the marriage. Women who seek separation from





their husbands are also viewed with suspicion and their behaviour and intentions are often doubted. There has been little effort to understand their problems and concerns after separation. Our society considers sexual relations outside of marriage as unacceptable for women, so most divorced women experience loneliness as remarriage is relatively uncommon for them.

Remaining single and never marrying is more acceptable for men than it is for women. When a woman is not married, it is assumed that there is something wrong with her; she may be very difficult to get along with, she may be uncompromising and, therefore, she is single.

Life for a single disabled woman is fraught with multiple obstacles and challenges at every step. Unmarried women with disabilities have very few options when it comes to marriage. Families may be willing to invest resources to marry their single disabled sons and find a non-disabled partner for them but to invest in the marriage of disabled girls is rare. Usually, they are either able to find a non-disabled match from a lower socio-economic background or else a person with a severe disability.

### **DISASTER AND SINGLE WOMEN**

Single women are especially vulnerable in disaster situations, be they natural or created. In 2001, 1300 women were rendered widows during the earthquake in Gujarat and 400 women were widowed because of the communal riots in 2002. Women who are widowed during disasters or who are widows pre-disaster face several constraints in accessing relief and rehabilitation measures; they are also subjected to sexual exploitation and are tortured to the extent that they are forced to abandon their homes. During the Gujarat earthquake, several women who became disabled were abandoned by their husbands whereas men who were disabled did not have to face a similar situation. In 2002, several young girls in the relief camps were forced to marry and many of these marriages have subsequently been nullified.

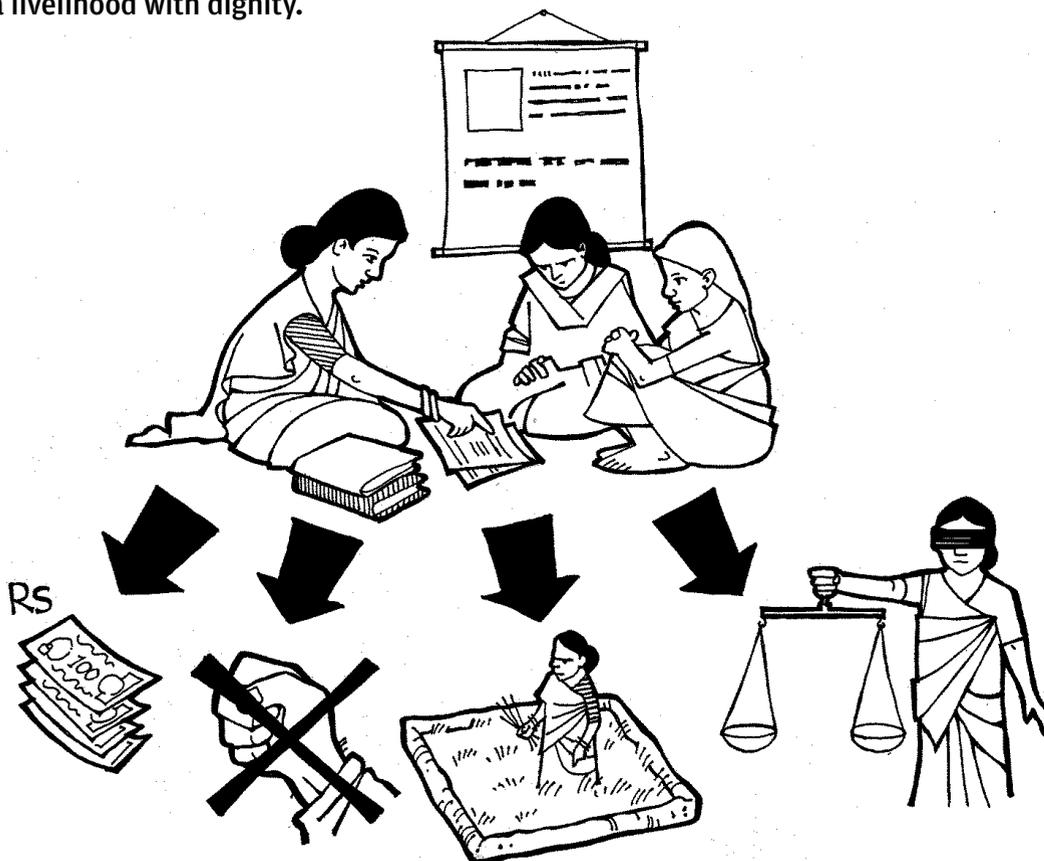
### **POLICY DIRECTIVES**

The National Policy for the Empowerment of Women, 2001 (Section 6.12) recognises the diversity of women's situations and acknowledges the



needs of specially disadvantaged groups. It mentions that measures will be adopted and programmes undertaken to address the needs of women in difficult circumstances which includes women in extreme poverty, destitute women, women in conflict situations, women affected by natural calamities, women in less developed regions, the disabled widows, elderly women, single women in difficult circumstances, women heading households, those displaced from employment, migrants, women who are victims of marital violence, deserted women, prostitutes, etc. Section 6.9 also mentions that special attention will be given to providing adequate and safe housing and accommodation for women, including single women, heads of households, working women, students, apprentices and trainees.

Some State policies such as the Rajasthan State Policy for Women recognise the isolation and marginalisation of widows, divorcees, deserted women, unmarried women and childless women. The policy specifically refers to the need to safeguard the rights of widows and provide housing/land on a priority basis to women in difficult circumstances and encourage and support non-government organisations to run training programmes for widows and single and deserted women with a view to helping them earn a livelihood with dignity.





### **INITIATIVES BY NGOs**

Focus on issues of single women is relatively recent in India. A study in the 1990's by Dr. Marty Chen, Harvard scholar, revealed that eight per cent of all women in India were widows. The first convention to talk about these issues was held in Rajasthan in 1999. It was realised that what was needed was not more ashrams, but an organisation of widows and separated women helping each other and fighting for their rights so that they could lead a dignified life. This led to the formation of the Rajasthan Ekalnari Shakti Sangathan (ENSS) in January 2000. In March 2008, the ENSS or the Association of Strong Women Alone had over 23,600 members across 27 districts of the State, and is still growing. The collective was formed to include women of all castes, religions and age groups, with a priority to widows from low-income groups.

The association engages in counselling, work for land and property rights, access to Government entitlements, advocacy, addressing sexual harassment and other problems arising out of caste-based and customary practices, awareness and training activities, media advocacy, developing new leadership and creating an 'alternative family'. The advocacy initiatives have resulted in the following positive outcomes: school fees for sons and daughters of widows and separated women have been waived, in total, in Government schools up to Class XII; the Government grant given to widows at the time of a daughter's marriage has been raised to Rs.10,000; there is now a pension for separated women and preference is given to widows for vacancies for teachers in Government schools.

In 2004, similar collectives were formed in Jharkhand, Himachal Pradesh and Gujarat under the guidance of the ENSS, Rajasthan. Based on the regional needs, the collectives seek to address the issues of widows and other single women. In Himachal Pradesh, problems of women who have been deserted by husbands migrating out of the State for economic pursuits are the focus, while in Jharkhand, the collective is addressing the problems of young tribal girls who are duped by false promises of marriage at their worksites. In several States, grass-root women leaders who represent single women have been provided intensive training to



build their capability to assume leadership and pursue advocacy with the Government. Strategies used by the collectives include using collective power, helping women access Government schemes and, in cases of land transfers, working with the administrative set-up rather than fighting cases in the courts.

A rally organised in 2004 by the ENSS, Himachal Pradesh, advocated, among other things, for the regular payment of pensions to older single women, use of fast track courts to hasten the process of settlement of maintenance and other legal cases, granting of land on a long-term lease to all the economically weak single women who are capable and eager to work as self-employed farmers and provision of free health care facilities from the primary to the tertiary level to all single women. In Rajasthan, a major area for advocacy by the collective has been the allotment of drought relief work to low-income single women.

In 2004, at a national level meeting organisations working with women in various States expressed their readiness to work on the issues of single women. However, currently, organisations in only seven states, including Rajasthan, Gujarat, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh, have included single women on their agenda. At this meeting, there were debates on whether single women's issues should be mainstreamed into the national women's movement or addressed separately. Reflections on and review of ongoing work helped decide that to mainstream their issues, single women need to be first mobilised and organised, Government and civil society groups need to be sensitised and subsequently their issues can be assimilated in the women's movement. A need was also expressed for the formation of a national-level forum/organisation for single women and it was decided that this must be steered by them. Linkages with other women's groups could be formed but, for all practical purposes, the leadership should rest with the single women. The formation of the national-level forum is proposed to be discussed and concretised in a forthcoming workshop in 2009.



The All India Democratic Women's Association (AIDWA) - founded in 1981 from the women's divisions of two of India's Communist Parties - has a new Commission on Single Women which emphasises the continuing discrimination against widows, and includes a section on "single, deserted and divorced women," articulating similarities between all single women, cutting across class and caste distinctions.

### **INITIATIVES BY GOVERNMENT**

The government has primarily made provisions for granting priority to widows in several of the mainstream schemes such as Indira Awas (for housing) and the below poverty line (BPL)/Antyodaya card but there are loopholes and lacunae in their implementation.

In the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA), they are being systematically excluded by not being issued separate job cards. This increases their dependence and chances of being exploited and restricts their chances of accessing the benefits of independence and empowerment that employment could bring. The Operational Guidelines have tried to streamline this definition and have added single-member families as also eligible to be treated as a household. However, the inclusion of dependents in the basic definition of the nuclear family in the guidelines inhibits the realisation of the category of single-member households, with women as head of the household. As most single women in rural areas are unable to secure an independent means of livelihood for themselves, they are invariably dependent on others which in most cases are the male members of their family. In practice, therefore, the current definition perpetuates the patriarchal norm of male-headed households.

In many States there is a provision for pension for the widows. The amount for this pension varies and ranges between Rs. 100 and Rs. 500 per month. Here, too, the claimants do not receive the pension regularly. Some States have adopted regressive steps and in the wake of cuts in the development sector, widows are the first ones to be adversely affected. However, in most States there is no provision of pension for 'separated' women.

Swadhar, a scheme launched in 2001 for women in difficult circumstances, focuses on the rehabilitation of sex workers, women/girls offered to



temples, destitute/young/elderly widows, displaced women, single women, women-headed households, women affected by natural calamities and other women in distress.

### **ROLE OF NGOs/CBOs IN MAINSTREAMING ISSUES OF SINGLE WOMEN**

The issues of single women are not being addressed by the mainstream movements whether it is the women's movement, dalit movement or the disability movement. Even in the NGOs working on women's issues, these are not included. There is no need to allocate separate resources for including single women in their development agenda. In whatever activities they undertake, they need to enhance the visibility of single women. For instance, if the organisation is working to promote self-help groups, it can include single women so that they can also receive support; in programmes for education, their children can be included in the activities; similarly, they need to be given priority in initiatives related to food security and land rights, considering the extent of their vulnerability. They can be supported for leadership roles in the organisation such that society is also sensitised to their needs and potential and takes the initiative to mainstream their issues. In addition, organisations which want to specifically work with this group, can also organise and mobilise single women and form their collectives as has been done by development organisations mentioned above.

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9

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Gender  
and  
Disability

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**Gender and disability are both socially constructed; hence a political process of challenging the existing power structures is required to bring about change. Women with disabilities experience the triple burden on the basis of gender, disability and developing country status. Among the disabled, a large number are women and they face a higher risk of becoming disabled through their lives due to neglect in health care, poor working conditions and gender-based violence.**

**Women with disabilities are overlooked, disregarded and neglected not only by their family and society but also as a group within feminist research, disability studies and the disability movement. Their concerns are not recognised adequately to be addressed. Sensitivity to both gender and disability is a pre-requisite to recognise, acknowledge and address the issues and concerns of women with disabilities.**

**For developing a comprehensive understanding on gender and disability, it is advisable to conduct all the 4 activities in this session in the order that they are presented.**

# 9.1. Barriers Faced by Persons with Disabilities

**TIME** 2 hours

**METHOD** Simulation

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## **MATERIALS**

See Box on 'Tasks for Simulation Exercise on Disability' pages 144-145, flipcharts, sketch pens, markers, blackboard and chalk

## **OBJECTIVES**

- Participants are sensitised to the needs and barriers faced by persons with disabilities, with a special focus on women
- Participants explore their attitudes towards persons with disabilities

## **PROCESS**

1. Divide the group into pairs. Explain that one person in each pair will have to assume a disability and perform a task given to her/him and the other will be an observer. The type of disability that a person has to assume will be specified and help will be provided to assume their new role.
2. Distribute the slips prepared before hand to each pair describing the task it has to do and in how much time. (For suggested tasks, please refer to the box 'Tasks for Simulation Exercise on Disability' on pages 144-145.
3. After all the pairs have completed the assigned task, ask them to sit in groups based on the disability that they were simulating, eg. all those who were simulating locomotor disability should form one group; others with visual disability could form another group and so on. Ask the observers to sit with their respective partners.
4. Give the groups the following questions to discuss:

### **FOR THE PERSONS ASSUMING DISABILITY**

- i) How did it feel to be a person with disability?
- ii) What were the problems you faced in performing the task? Did it have an added dimension because of gender?
- iii) What were the reactions of the observers and any other persons who may have been around while you were performing the task?
- iv) How did that make you feel?

### **FOR THE OBSERVERS**

- v) What difficulties did you experience as an observer?
- vi) How did you respond while your partner was performing the task?
- vii) Do you think your response should have been different? If yes, why and how?

5. Let the first group make its presentation.
6. List all the points under the respective questions on separate flipcharts.
7. Get the other groups to add their points one by one under the respective heads.
8. In the large group, highlight the gender dimension using the questions for Debriefing, Facilitator's Notes and Reading 6 on 'Gender and Disability'.

### **DEBRIEFING**

1. How many persons with disabilities have you known in your school, job or in your community? How many of these were girls/women?
2. What are the problems that you think women with different disabilities are likely to face on a day-to-day basis?
3. How do you think her situation would be different from a man with disability?
4. What factors do you think are responsible for this?
5. What can be done to change the situation?

### **FACILITATOR'S NOTES**

- You would need to do considerable preparation before this exercise. Based on the location of the workshop, tasks can be identified for different types of disabilities and slips prepared for distributing to participants. Try and include as many disabilities as possible. You can choose routine tasks but ensure that the task poses a challenge for the participant. A suggestive list is provided in the box 'Tasks for Simulation Exercise on Disability' on pages 144-145.
- Equipments (crutches or long pieces of cloth for folding and tying a leg, wheelchairs, blindfolds, tape, etc) and other materials required would need to be pre-arranged. Volunteers may be required to assist you in getting the participants to be ready for their roles. You must tell the observers that they should ensure the safety of their partners.
- This simulation is a very effective way to sensitise the group towards persons with disabilities – their needs, problems they face and their potential.

- Highlight through the debriefing that the key factor responsible for the situation of persons with disabilities and women among them, is not so much their limitation resulting from the impairment but the attitudes of society, their own attitudes and the resulting barriers. The observers' attitudes and responses will help highlight the attitudes of non-disabled towards persons with disabilities. Share how women with disabilities experience the triple burden of gender, disability and their socio-economic status.
- This activity yields best results when conducted through a meal. The task can be done before lunch and the participants can be asked to continue to be in their respective role of a person with disability through lunch. This may cause resentment among some participants. They need to be convinced that this will help them better appreciate the challenges faced by persons with disabilities. Encourage them to experience the disability as long as possible. If observers also want to experience disability over lunch, they could be encouraged to do so.

*SOURCE: This activity has evolved during various training programmes conducted by UNNATI and other organisations.*

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## **TASKS FOR SIMULATION EXERCISE ON DISABILITY**

**This list of tasks can be used for simulation. Notes for the facilitator have been included in brackets against the task.** Examples given here have tried to include tasks that can be given to people simulating different types of disabilities. It is a suggestive list and you can add more tasks. You may want to explore the training area and understand what tasks can be given to the participants. These can also be prepared in consultation with persons with disabilities.

**Aids and appliances required for the exercise can be borrowed in advance from any institution that provides these to persons with disabilities.**

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### **Tasks for visually impaired persons**

(They can be blindfolded using scarves, cloth, eye cover, etc. Ensure that the person cannot see after the eyes are covered).

1. Change your shirt and button it properly.
  2. Give Rs. 26.50 to your friend from the money kept in the envelope. (Ensure that the envelope contains change and it has more than the amount that you are asking the participant to hand over).
  3. Go and get a newspaper (specify the name of the newspaper) from the next room.
  4. Walk up and down the stairs.
-

### **Tasks for persons with low vision**

(You would need special low-vision glasses for this).

1. Read the article on the top of page 1 in the newspaper to your friend.
  2. Read the signboards in the area and note down what you read. (If not available, ensure that you put up a few signboards at different places around the training room. You can even use plain white paper and write names in small font on these and put up some at the eye level and others at a higher level).
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### **Tasks for wheelchair users**

1. Use the toilet.
  2. Use the phone and make a call to your friend. (Ensure that the phone is kept on a high counter that the wheelchair user cannot access easily).
  3. Cross the steps and bring the cup of tea from there. (Ensure that the person has to go down a flight of steps and that a cup of tea is kept in that area).
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### **Tasks for persons who are speech and hearing impaired**

(The person can be asked to plug their ears with cotton but also asked to consciously keep in mind that s/he is enacting the role of a person who cannot speak or hear).

1. Describe to your friend without talking that the library is upstairs.
  2. Ask your friend for instructions on how to reach the multiplex cinema.
  3. Ask your friend to inform your family that you will be reaching home late.
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### **Tasks for frame users/crutch users**

1. Go up and down the stairs once.
  2. Get a glass of water from the tap back here to the room.
- 

### **Tasks for persons who are upper limb amputees**

(Ensure that one or both arms is/are folded and tied so that the person cannot use them).

1. You are unable to use your right arm – try putting on your socks and shoes and taking them off once again.
  2. Fold this saree and keep it under the pillow/sheet.
  3. Arrange the pages of the newspaper serially.
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### **Tasks for persons who have amputated fingers**

(Fold and tie the fingers with a tape).

1. Count the change for Rs. 10.
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## 9.2. Relationship between Gender and Disability

**TIME** 1 hour 30 minutes

**METHOD** Role Play

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### **MATERIALS**

Handout 11 - 'Role Plays' pages 148-149 (on separate sheets for each actor for all the three role plays), blindfolds, cotton swabs, Reading 6 - 'Gender and Disability: An Overview' pages 150-153

### **OBJECTIVE**

- Participants experience/observe and learn the relationship between gender and disability

### **PROCESS**

1. Ask for as many volunteers from among the participants as there are characters in the first role play.
2. Take the volunteers aside/outside the room and give them their individual role descriptions. Do not add any other details to what has already been written.
3. Explain to the observers that the purpose is to observe and learn the relationship between Gender and Disability and that they must agree to keep the details of this session confidential and not misuse it under any circumstances against an actor/discussant.
4. Ask the participants to note their observations.
5. Repeat the process for the other two role plays.
6. After the role plays have been enacted, debrief, using the questions given below. Refer to the Facilitator's Notes and reading on 'Gender and Disability' to highlight the key learning in each situation.

### **DEBRIEFING**

#### **ASK THE GIRL/WOMAN WITH DISABILITY:**

How did you feel before the conversation began? Why did you behave the way you did? What did you feel about the response you got?  
How else do you think the person could have responded?

#### **ASK THE OTHER ACTORS:**

How did you feel? Why do you think you behaved the way you did?  
How else could you have responded? Would you have responded differently had the person been a man with disability?

#### **ASK THE OBSERVERS:**

What did you observe? What were the positive aspects of the role play? How could the situation be handled in a more sensitive manner? How close to reality was this situation? Do you know of similar instances?

## **FACILITATOR'S NOTES**

- During the discussions it is important to highlight that our behaviour is guided by our experience, attitudes and the pre-conceived disability and gender stereotypes that we subscribe to. Most of us have had very limited opportunities to meet and interact with persons with disabilities. This is even more true in the case of women with disabilities. The limited opportunities that persons with disabilities receive is not so much because of their limitation resulting from the disability but the attitudes of society, their own attitudes and the resulting barriers. Society and they themselves focus more on their disability and pay very little attention to what they 'can' do. Lack of accessibility to most public spaces further limits their opportunities and also adds to their low visibility in public.
- Highlight that women with disabilities experience the triple burden of gender, disability and their socio-economic status. Their exclusion is far more than that of men with disabilities. (Refer to Reading 6 for details). Use points that have emerged from the role plays to make this point. You may also use anecdotes, case stories, or participants' experiences to do so. If the role plays have helped bring out positive attitudes, highlight how this can help expand the opportunities for women with disabilities and also help alter their own response to their lives.
- Before concluding, focus on the role that the participants can play in promoting the inclusion of women with disabilities. Mention that they can begin with identification of women with disabilities in their area; assist in mobilising them; link them with local service providers and government schemes; create awareness about their potential and co-ordinate with other local service providers to enhance the access that women with disabilities have to services and entitlements.

*SOURCE: This activity has evolved during various training programmes conducted by UNNATI and other organisations.*



## Role Plays

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### **Role Play 1 • Woman with Visual Impairment**

You are a visually impaired girl, 27 years old and a graduate. You live in a nuclear family with your elderly mother. Your mother is very worried about how you will live alone after her death. You are keen to get married but do not want to marry a man with disability as you feel that it will be difficult for both of you to manage a healthy and happy life. You visit a marriage bureau to register your name.




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### **Role Play 1 • Executive at a Marriage Bureau (Male)**

You have been working as an executive at a marriage bureau for the past three years. This is your first job. You handle several cases of registration of marriages daily. Today you have a visitor, a girl who is visually impaired. You are confused about how to deal with her.

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### **Role Play 2 • Girl with Hearing Impairment**

You are an 18-year-old girl and have moderate hearing and speech impairment. You have finished class XII examination and have secured a first division. You are keen to pursue a course in pharmacy and have applied for an undergraduate course at the local college. Your name has not appeared in the list although you qualify on the basis of the cut-off point. You have received a letter from the Principal asking you to go and meet him.




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### **Role Play 2 • Parent (Father)**

You are very keen that your daughter pursues the course she has applied for and are going with her to meet the Principal.




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### **Role Play 2 • College Principal (Male)**

You have received the application from a hearing impaired girl to pursue a course in pharmacy. You have not had any such applicant in the past and are apprehensive about admitting her because of several reasons. You have decided to speak to her and her parents and communicate your concerns.

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**Role Play 3 • Woman with Locomotor Disability**

You are a widow and have three small children. You are having difficulty managing the household with the widow pension as it is very meagre and not regular. You have done dairy work in the past and want to revive it to make both ends meet. There is a dairy co-operative in a nearby village and you think you can manage to sell milk and earn for the family, provided you can get a loan from the bank to purchase a couple of cows. You go to meet the manager of the local bank to explore the possibility.



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**Role Play 3 • Bank Manager (Male)**

A woman who has a limitation in walking due to impairment in her leg approaches you for a loan to buy a couple of cows. There is a dairy co-operative in a nearby village and she wants to work in collaboration with it to start a small business. You know that she is a widow and has three small children and herself to feed. You have, however, not received a single request from a person with disability so far. Knowing her situation, you are not sure if she will be able to do this work.

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# Gender and Disability: An Overview

Intersectionality of social constructs of caste, class and religious ethnicity in the Indian context enhances oppression and exclusion. This particularly affects the status, conditions and position of women with disabilities as they experience the triple burden on the basis of gender, disability and developing country status. Both gender and disability are socially constructed; hence a political process of challenging the existing power structures is required to bring about change.

## **ACCESS TO BASIC SERVICES**

**Women in Indian society are in a subservient position and are victims of violence and discrimination. This is evident in the unequal sex ratio of 927 females per 1000 males; low preference for girl child, as is evident in the practice of female foeticide and infanticide. The health and nutrition of women is low and women and girls experience discrimination with regard to the sharing of food in the family and access to health services. In this scenario, a girl child with disability is likely to face more discrimination than a boy with disability. In many cases the parents even admit that if a girl child with disability is fed less she would die sooner. When it comes to school-going age, concerns for their safety and security coupled with limited sensitivity to their needs often lead families to become overprotective, thus restricting their opportunities to access education. These restrictions are even more if a girl has to travel outside the village to attend school.**

**Women with disabilities cannot access the benefits of government services like health, education and vocational training due to their limited mobility. But they are also refrained from taking the benefits of rehabilitation programmes even if these are delivered at their doorstep through community-based rehabilitation services, if the CBR worker happens to be a male.**

## **MARITAL STATUS**

**More men with disabilities are married and are able to find non-disabled partners while women with disabilities are more often single or married to another person with a disability from a lower family status. Neither a non-disabled, nor a disabled man voluntarily agrees to marry a disabled girl.**



Most often girls with disabilities are married in the same household as her sister's to a consecutive brother or even to the same man as marriage is likely to protect her sexuality. Persons with disabilities are often not seen as normal human beings and are considered sexually incompetent. The lack of space to understand, express and deal with their sexuality and sexual urges adds to their confusion and frustration. The social expectations that they must not have or express sexual needs impinge on their self-image and self-esteem. Women with disabilities are especially considered incapable of leading a normal family life and bringing up children.

Disability after marriage for a woman leads to conflict and hardships by way of her being treated as a domestic help, having to co-habit with a second wife or even being deserted. In many cases, she is a victim of abuse and domestic violence despite working hard. A disabled woman from a lower class and caste background is likely to be more affected; in most cases, being landless, the main occupation she must choose is agricultural labour or cattle rearing, both of which require considerable physical work. On the other hand, when such a situation occurs with men with disabilities, their wives, who may themselves be non-disabled, are found persistently adopting their multiple roles while having to perform the additional role of a care-giver. Issues and problems encountered by female family members in a family of disabled men are acute and exploitative.

### SUSCEPTIBILITY TO VIOLENCE

Disabled girls and women face different kinds of abuse and exploitation, including sexual. In some instances, relatives and neighbours supporting them in daily tasks are involved. Disabled women are dominated by all classes of people, including disabled men. The impact of violence and constraints experienced by disability type also varies, e.g. for women with a physical disability,



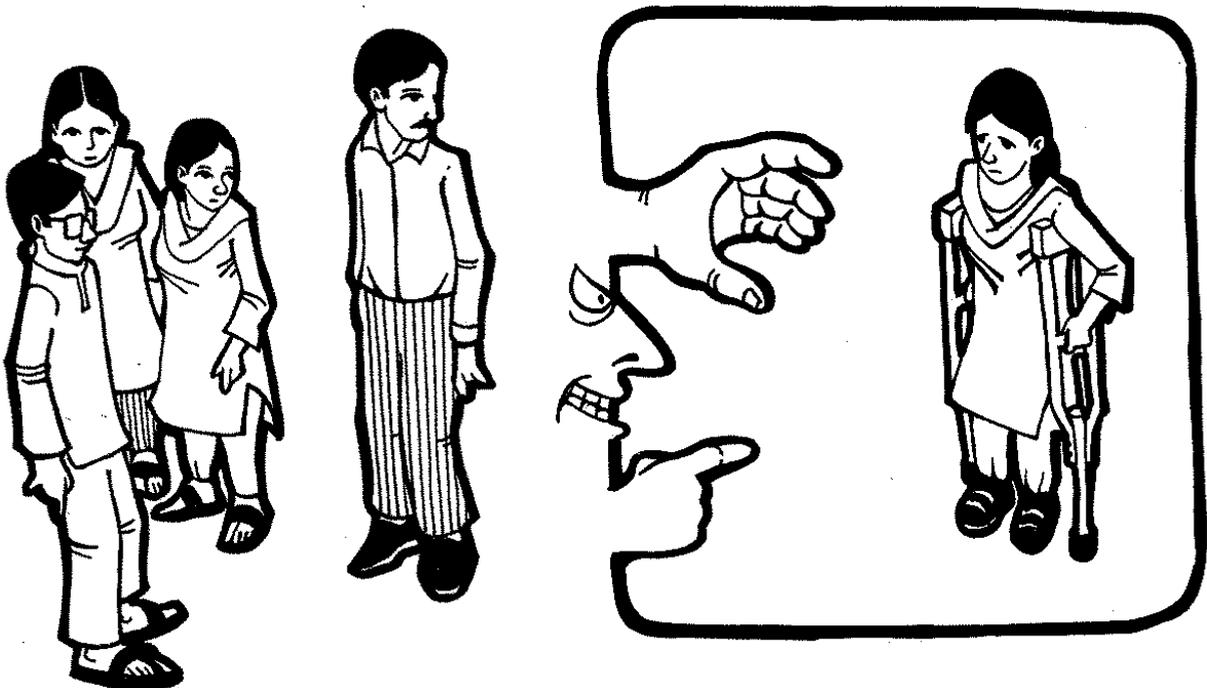


limitations in physically escaping the situation may be experienced while a woman with intellectual disability may be doubly victimised as she may face problems in communication.

### **MACRO SCENARIO**

Globally, women make up for three-fourths of persons with disabilities in low and middle income countries and between 65 and 70 per cent of these live in rural areas. Conversely, the International Labour Organization states that women are at an increased risk of becoming disabled through their lives due to neglect in health care, poor working conditions and gender-based violence. However, there is very little research carried out in developing countries to understand the condition of women with disabilities. Women with disabilities are overlooked, disregarded and neglected as a group within feminist research. Disability studies and the movement are not yet advanced enough in developing countries for their concerns to be recognised adequately to be addressed.

In a patriarchal society like India, many of the gender-related issues faced by women are experienced also by women with disabilities. The UNDP Human Development Report 1995 states that women with disabilities are twice as





prone to divorce, separation and violence as non-disabled women. Women with disabilities, especially with intellectual disabilities, are more prone to sexual violence. It has also been frequently reported that hysterectomies are forcefully conducted on young adolescent girls by families and in government-run institutions to save them from unwanted pregnancies.

For the gender and caste dimension, it would be useful to attempt to learn lessons from the dalit and women's movement and also for disabled people's movement to ally with these to gain strength in numbers. Research on the status and concerns of women with disabilities will also throw light on the realities at the grass roots. Effective strategies need to be devised where systematically undertaken research informs policy formulation. Advocacy also needs to be carried out so that existing policies can be implemented. The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) has adopted the general recommendation No. 18 on women with disabilities, requesting State parties to include reports on the violation of rights for women with disabilities but the sample survey of periodic reports shows little consistent reporting on this aspect.

#### REFERENCES:

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Mehrotra Nilika (2004): *Women, Disability and Social Support in Haryana*; Economic and Political Weekly, December 25.

Thomas Maya and Thomas M.J. (2003): *Addressing Concerns of Women with Disabilities in CBR*, UN ESCAP Workshop on Women with Disabilities, August 18-22, Bangkok, Thailand.

UNNATI – Organisation for Development Education (2004): *Understanding Disability – Attitude and Behaviour Change for Social Inclusion*.

# 9.3. Understanding the Handicap Creation Process

**TIME** 1 hour

**METHOD** Structured Experience: Case Study

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## **MATERIALS**

Handout 12 'Kamala's Story', pages 158-159 and Handout 13 'The Handicap Creation Process and its Management', pages 160-161, flipcharts, sketch pens, markers / blackboard and chalk, Reading 6 - 'Gender and Disability: An Overview', pages 150-153

## **OBJECTIVES:**

- Participants understand the handicap creation process in the lives of women with disabilities
- Participants understand the factors leading to the exclusion of persons with disabilities, especially women, from the development process
- Participants appreciate the role that development organisations can play in promoting the inclusion of persons with disabilities, with a gender focus

## **PROCESS**

1. Distribute copies of the case study 'Kamala's Story' to the participants and ask them to read it.
2. Divide them into small groups and ask them to discuss the questions at the end of the case study.
3. Get one group to present its key points for all the questions discussed. List these on separate charts, one for each question.
4. Ask the others to add on new points from their discussion.
5. Summarise and debrief. Refer Box 'Indicative Responses to Kamala's Questions', on pages 156-157.
6. Share Handout 13 on the 'Handicap Creation Process and its Management' and explain.

## **DEBRIEFING**

(Use the analysis of the following questions given at the end of the case study to debrief)

1. What do you see as the main problems in my life?
2. Who and what could have helped to change my situation?
3. As an organisation that works with poor people in my village, what can you do to change the situation of girls like me?

## **FACILITATOR'S NOTES**

In the summing up it is important to highlight that:

- Persons with disabilities have the same needs as the non-disabled. The only specific needs they have pertain to their specific disability. Women with disabilities may have additional women-specific needs and their disability may lead to increased vulnerability. If the participants are working on disability issues, you may want to have a discussion on the specific needs of women with different kinds of disabilities or get a resource person to talk to them about it.
- The handicap faced by women like Kamala is more because of their context and persons in their environment and to some extent because of their own attitudes – these are in turn reinforced by society's reactions towards them. A change in attitudes and behaviour of society can help overcome barriers in the lives of persons with disabilities.
- Persons with disabilities as a group are excluded from the development process as disability is seen as a health and welfare issue. Development organisations have the advantage to reach out to them and address their needs, organise them and provide them linkages with the existing resources, since they work in communities where persons with disabilities reside.
- The goals of poverty reduction and vulnerability reduction are addressed by most development organisations and this goal cannot be achieved unless persons with disabilities, especially women, are included in the development process as they are one of the most vulnerable groups. It mainly requires an understanding and readiness to include them in all the on-going activities rather than set up a separate programme for them, eg. sensitisation on disability can be done through ongoing capacity building activities.

*SOURCE: This activity has evolved during various training programmes conducted by UNNATI and other organisations.*

## **INDICATIVE RESPONSES TO KAMALA'S QUESTIONS**

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### **1 • What do you see as the main problems in my life?**

- Neglect and discrimination within family
  - Low acceptance in community
  - Low self-esteem
  - Limited opportunities for personal growth
  - Insensitivity to special needs
  - Limited mobility
  - No support from any other source
  - Exclusion
- 

### **2 • Who and what could have helped to change my situation?**

Family and community need to take the first steps, and local community based/ development organisations can help expand and benefit from opportunities. A change in situation requires:

- Greater acceptance by family and community
  - More opportunities for personal growth
  - Sensitivity to special needs
  - Acceptance of mobility needs
  - Positive self-esteem
-

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**3 • As an organisation that works with poor people in my village, what can you do to change the situation of girls like me?**

- \_ Counsel and motivate parents to provide support
  - \_ Raise awareness in community about special needs of women with disabilities
  - \_ Provide linkages with rehabilitation institutions for assistive devices
  - \_ Link up with departments concerned for certification and other government benefits
  - \_ Provide referrals for education, training and other opportunities for personal growth
  - \_ Include in organisation's current programmes
  - \_ Link with institutions for providing emotional support and counselling services
  - \_ Facilitate peer group support
-



## Kamala's Story

**M**y name is Kamala. I am a 17-year-old girl and I stay with my parents and two younger brothers, Raju and Suresh, in village Satlana in Rajasthan. My parents work on the farm. I was very small when I was afflicted with polio and I cannot recall that I ever walked normally. People would make fun of me, especially the boys in my village. I can recall some of these remarks very vividly.

BOY 1: "Hey, look at her, the poor cripple! Look at her walk. Who do you think will marry a girl like her?"

BOY 2: "Sshh! Don't talk like that; she will feel bad".

BOY 1: "Why should she feel bad. Is there anything wrong in what I am saying? Would you marry her?"

I have been listening to such remarks since I was very young, but now they have increased. Often I feel the urge to retort but cannot get myself to do that. Because at times I wonder if they are right!

**I**do not remember much about my early years. But I certainly cannot forget the day when the local nurse came and informed Amma (mother) that I would never be able to walk like other children. She even scolded her for not giving me the polio drops on time. She said that, that was why I had become disabled. I cannot understand why Amma did this. Why could she not get me the polio drops on time? If she had asked the nurse she would have come and given them to me. I often wonder and feel sad because I think that she does not care for me – she does not love me. Had she cared for me, she would have sent me to school with Raju and Suresh, bought me new clothes and fed me sweets like she did to them. Forget that, she even got angry with me when I told her that my crutches were too small for me and also broken and that I found it difficult to walk with them. I was sure she could also see that but you know what she said when I asked her if she could get me a new pair. She said, "Why must you always keep complaining? Where do you have to go that you need a new pair?" Do I have to get a new pair only if I need to go outside the village?

I often wanted to talk to Amma and Papa (father) about how I felt and I also wanted to tell them how others mocked at me. I so much wanted someone to understand that I felt sad that I could not do all the things that girls of my age could do. One day I gathered the courage to talk to Amma and asked her why I could not go to school or play. Amma got very angry when I asked her



this and she shouted at me and said, “You are not the only one at home. We cannot afford to send all of you to school. If something were to happen to us, it is your brothers who will take care of us, so they need to go to school, not you! We must have committed some sins in our past life to have a daughter like you.” That was the last time that I dared to speak to her about how I felt and what I wanted.

I was very fond of browsing through books. When Raju and Suresh went out to play, I would quietly open their bags and browse through their books. Not that I understood what was written but I still liked turning the pages. Papa had caught me doing this a couple of times and I told him that I too wanted to go to school. On that he would get very angry and say, “As it is, we cannot find a groom for you. If we educate you, it will be impossible.”

**W**hy do Amma and Papa get angry with me? Whose fault is it that I cannot walk? Is it wrong for me to want to do the things that girls of my age can do? I wondered about all these and more. But who would answer these for me?

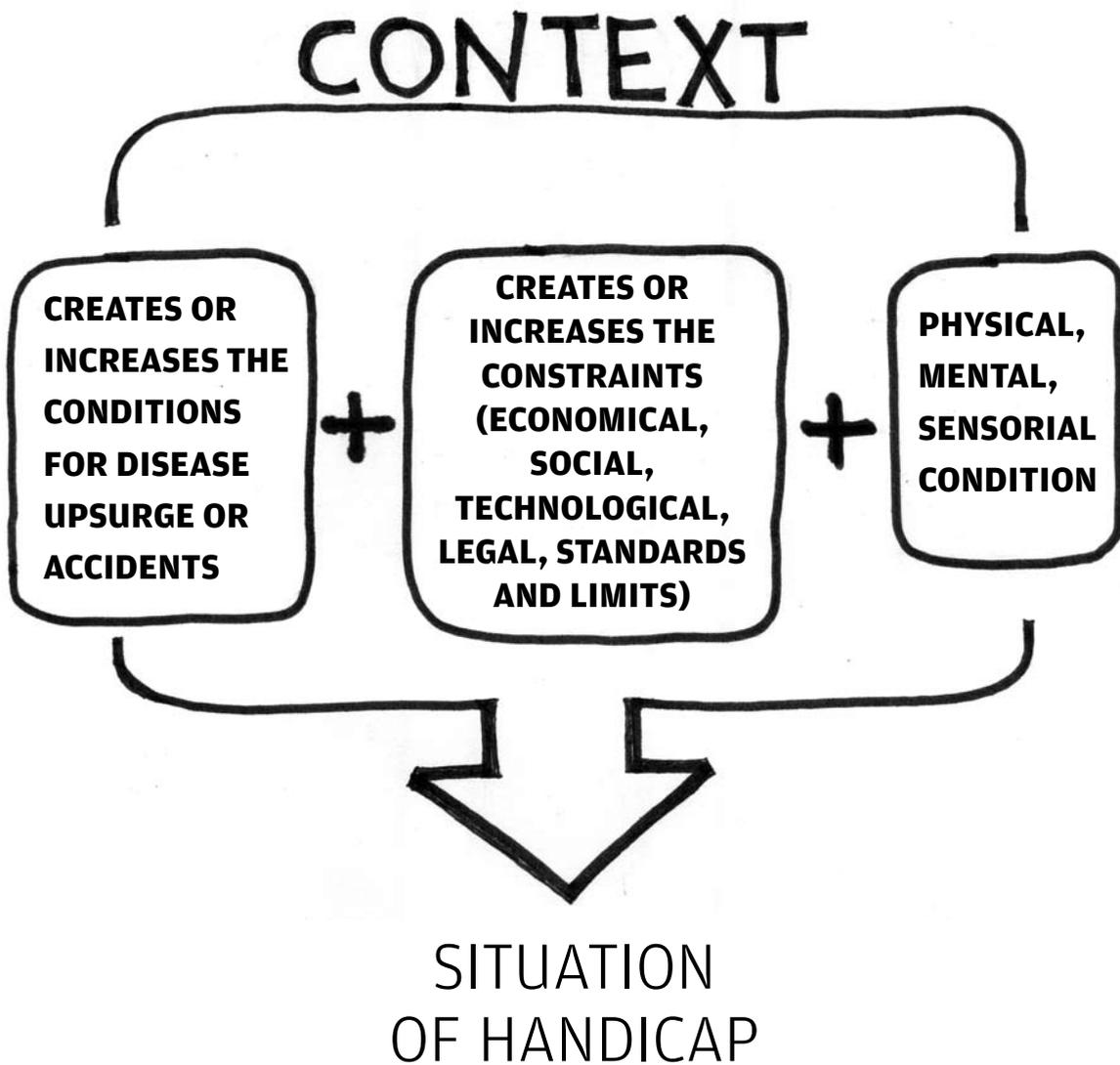
I cannot remember when I went out of my house last. Normally, I would just sit at home and help with all the house work. Earlier, my only friend Meena used to visit me and tell me all the stories about the village and the school. She would even narrate stories of films that she had watched. That was fun! I wished I could watch them too. It was Meena who had once mentioned to me about Reema who also had polio. Reema was Meena’s friend and she lived in a city. She had attended school for a few years and was now working in a small factory for a small remuneration. When she would tell me about Reema, I would often wonder if I could ever go out of my village, see new places, learn new things and work like Reema did. Whom could I seek help from?

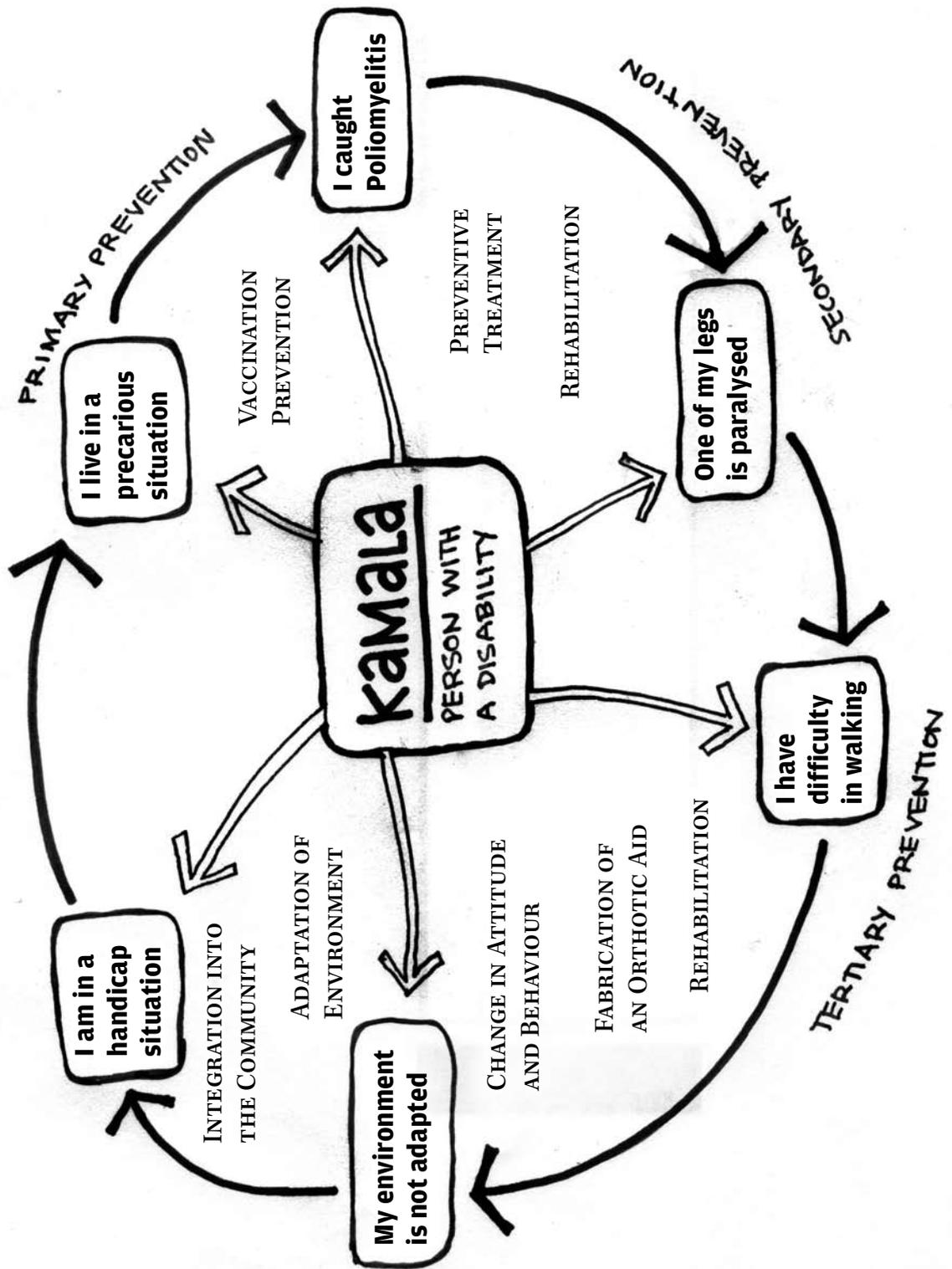
**In your group, discuss the following questions that Kamala seeks to find answers to:**

- a) What do you see as the main problems in my life?
- b) Who and what could have helped to change my situation?
- c) As an organisation that works with poor people in my village, what can you do to change the situation of girls like me?



# Handicap Creation Process and its Management





## 9.4. Role of CBOs in Mainstreaming Disability

**TIME** 1 hour

**METHOD** Group Work

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### **MATERIALS**

Flipcharts,  
sketch pens,  
markers,  
blackboard and  
chalk, Reading 7  
'Role of Community  
Based Organisations  
(CBOs) in  
Mainstreaming  
Disability',  
pages 164-171

### **OBJECTIVE**

- Participants articulate and understand the steps, methods, barriers and support required for promoting the inclusion of women with disabilities in their ongoing work

### **PROCESS**

1. Divide the participants in small groups. If there is more than one representative from each organisation, form groups based on the organisation they represent. If the participants are from different organisations, group them according to the key sectoral focus of their organisation (health, education, livelihood etc.).
2. Ask each group to list on a chart the key activities of their organisation/s.
3. Tell the groups to discuss:  
If you want to include women with disabilities in your current work:
  - a) What would you need to do?
  - b) What barriers are you likely to face and from whom?
  - c) What form of support would you require and from whom?
4. Ask each group to share the key points discussed.
5. Debrief and summarise the key learnings.

### **DEBRIEFING**

- If you want to include women with disabilities in your current work:
- a) What would you need to do?
  - b) What barriers are you likely to face and from whom?
  - c) What form of support would you require and from whom?

## **FACILITATOR'S NOTES**

In the summing up it is important to highlight that:

- Women with disabilities in India experience the triple burden on the basis of gender, disability and the developing country status.
- Since development organisations work in rural and urban communities, they have the advantage to reach out to them and address their needs, organise them and provide them linkages with the existing resources.
- The goals of poverty reduction and vulnerability reduction are addressed by most development organisations and this goal cannot be achieved unless persons with disabilities, especially women, are included in the development process as they are one of the most vulnerable groups. It mainly requires an understanding and readiness to include them in all the on-going activities rather than set up a separate programme for them, eg. sensitisation on disability can be done through ongoing capacity building activities, women with disabilities can be included in self-help groups, livelihood initiatives, educational programmes and so on.
- Refer Reading 7 on 'Role of Community-Based Organisations (CBOs) in Mainstreaming Disability' pages 164-171 to share ideas and enrich the discussion.

*SOURCE: This activity has evolved during various training programmes conducted by UNNATI and other organisations.*



# Role of Community-Based Organisations (CBOs) in Mainstreaming Disability

Globally the needs of all human beings are the same. Every human being, disabled or not, has the need for shelter, family, love, education, recreation and the ability to support one's family. Contrary to popular belief, a very small percentage of persons with disabilities requires specialised care and services. Most can function reasonably well in their own communities, provided they are recognised and included in the community development programmes that seek to reduce poverty and vulnerability. A separate development programme for them will only reinforce the feelings and reality of exclusion, which already exist. In this process, it is important to be aware of the higher vulnerability of girls and women with disabilities. Inclusion requires that linkages are established with the local disability rehabilitation institutions, government departments and other NGOs.

## **What are the first steps to make a CBO interested in mainstreaming disability?**

**These will depend on the activities of the organisation and the kind of resources it has. Ongoing projects implemented by development organisations have the potential for including persons with disabilities. Based on the activities generally carried out by CBOs, some suggestions are given below on where one can start. The list is only indicative. Generally, CBOs are addressing issues related to:**

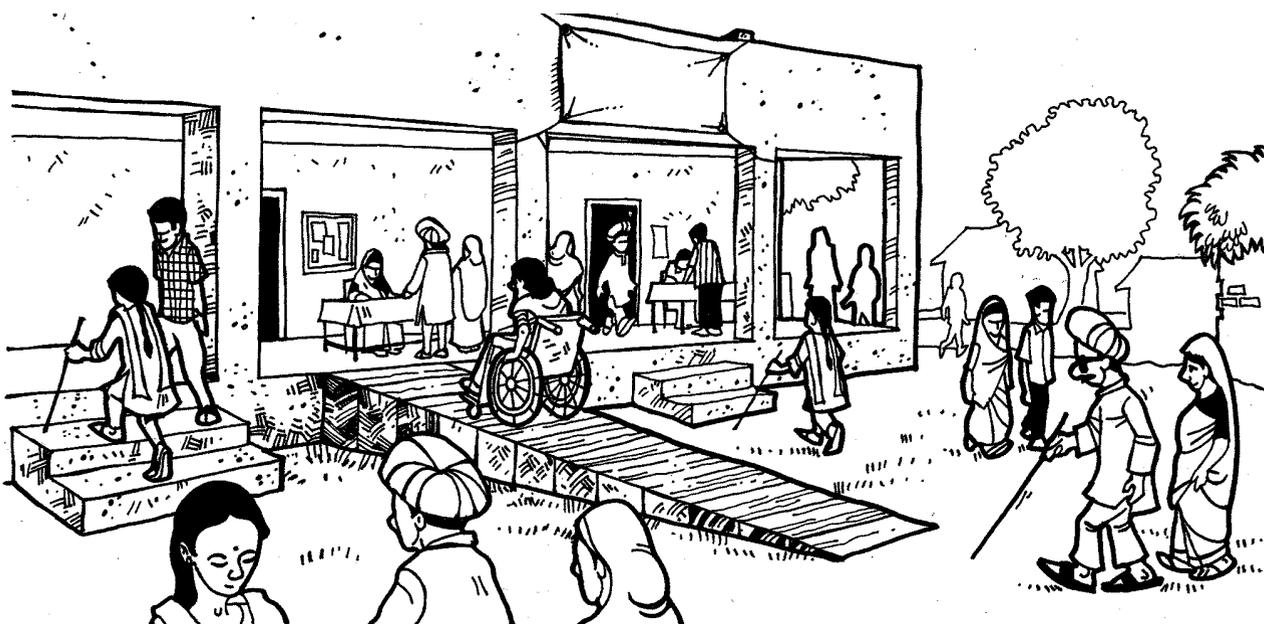
- Human rights
- Employment/ income generation
- Education/ vocational training
- Building/shelter/construction - accessibility for persons with disabilities
- Health and prevention of disability



## 1. HUMAN RIGHTS

All citizens in India have their basic rights enshrined in the Indian Constitution. In 1995, an Act relating to the rights of persons with disabilities was enacted, i.e. the Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995. All people have the right to demand their basic rights, and persons with disabilities are more likely to be denied their rights. If we work for human rights, we must ensure that we are aware of persons with disabilities and the extent of their vulnerability. Some of the first steps that can be easily followed are:

- Access and circulate a copy of the Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995 (PWD Act). Integrate this information in your regular training on rights/legal issues, or as a separate session.
- Whenever you do a survey for a programme, identify persons with disabilities in your work area. This is the first step for any intervention that you may want to make. Ensure that names of girls and women with disabilities are recorded.





- When you run a workshop on gender issues, make sure to include the particular rights of women with disabilities.
  - If you produce educational materials on human rights, consider printing copies in Braille, large print, or as audio cassettes/CD formats, ensuring simple language versions so that information is accessible to people, irrespective of their abilities. Being aware of the information channels popularly used by women with disabilities will help make appropriate decisions about how to disseminate information to them.
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## **2. EMPLOYMENT/INCOME GENERATION**

Persons with disabilities are more likely to be poor than the non-disabled. The latter may have had the advantage of some education or skill development. Women with disabilities are the worst affected when it comes to opportunities for paid work. If persons with disabilities have access to your organisation, this may help them break the cycle of poverty by earning a living and supporting their families. This will also help alter attitudes - their own and of society. Some ideas to include persons with disabilities in the employment programmes are:

- Focus on ability rather than disability, i.e. what a person can do, rather than what he or she cannot do. Consider their likes and dislikes and aptitude to help them to achieve their goals. Provide ideas, build confidence, and support, where necessary.
- Link the person with the local disability rehabilitation institution to obtain aids and appliances to improve her/his functional ability.
- Using positive experiences or success stories of employers, who have employed persons with disabilities, try and dispel myths and beliefs that exist about the abilities and potential of persons with disabilities.
- Contact the local disability rehabilitation institutions to find out the types of vocational training they provide - for men and women. You could help linking them with employers you know or by suggesting ideas for locally appropriate training. Needs and abilities of women with disabilities deserve special focus.



- You may link them with disability rehabilitation institutions so that they may avail themselves of schemes for loans, etc., employment opportunities or registration for employment.
- In any income-generating activity (IGA) that you promote, identify persons with disabilities in your area who are interested and involve them. It is important to ascertain that they are consulted and take leadership roles.
- Sensitise and encourage the leaders of self-help groups to include them.
- Create awareness about the three per cent reservation under the PWD Act for persons with disabilities in Government establishments and mainstream poverty alleviation schemes. Direct those denied employment because of their disability to the office of the Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities who is empowered to handle such cases. Some States provide an unemployment allowance and deserving persons may be assisted for this.

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### 3. EDUCATION AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING

A very small percentage of children with disabilities are able to gain access to education. Girls with disabilities face greater deprivation. Very often this is so because of the attitudes of the family, community and the school and the inaccessibility of school buildings and other resources.





All other opportunities in life can be enhanced through ensuring that they are included in the mainstream schools and are provided the little extra support where necessary. Some steps that can be taken to include children with disabilities in the on-going educational activities are:

- Find out if there are any children with disabilities in your schools/ educational programmes. If they are integrated well, use this to motivate others.
- If they are not participating in your schools/educational programmes, find out if they are going to local schools. If not, find out the reasons, try to meet their families and discuss the problems. Use local resources to address these.
- Use formal or informal ways to promote interactions and sensitise children and parents about disability to help them appreciate that children with disabilities are children first and have the same aspirations and rights as other children.
- If your organisation runs the school, then make sure the teachers are trained and supported to include children with disabilities in their classrooms.
- Progressively increase the level of physical accessibility of your buildings (especially toilets) to enable persons with disabilities to move independently and with dignity.
- Try to include children with disabilities, especially girls, in any social/ musical/sporting activities that you organise. If there is a local school for children with disabilities, run joint cultural events.
- For children who require specialised services and support, contact the local disability rehabilitation institution and provide necessary linkages or refer to special schools or schools promoting integration.
- Sensitise teachers, principals, village education committees, etc. to the need for the inclusion of children with disabilities.

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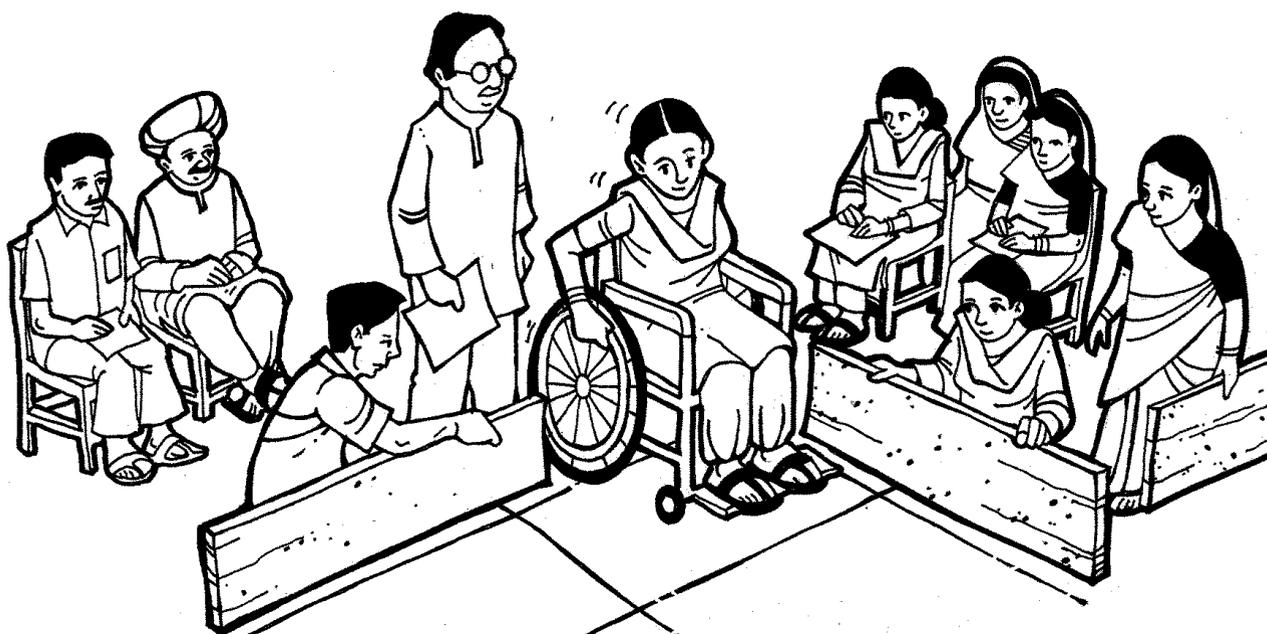
#### **4. BUILDING/ SHELTER/ CONSTRUCTION – ACCESS FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**

For many people who have difficulties in mobility such as elderly people or persons with disabilities, most public buildings are very difficult to



use. As an organisation that is promoting an equal society, we need to take steps to avoid creating or fostering barriers which already exist and exclude persons with disabilities. These barriers can be both physical – in the built spaces and mental - by way of our attitudes, beliefs and behaviour towards them. Unless accessibility is created, reservation in education and employment and creation of equal opportunities cannot be realised. Simple steps that can be easily followed:

- If you are building or looking for a new office, you may want to consider aspects such as the width of doors, lighting, signage, the quality of flooring and tactile maps/paths so that persons with disabilities and all visitors can move around independently and with dignity.
- If your organisation is involved in participatory town planning, facilitate the process of inclusion of persons with disabilities in the area in all the relevant planning meetings and make sure that they are able to get into the building and move around freely during these meetings.
- If construction is one of your major activities, ensure the engineers or architects are aware of the standard guidelines issued by the Central Public Works Department (CPWD), Ministry of Urban Affairs and Employment.





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## **5. HEALTH AND PREVENTION OF DISABILITY**

The causes of disability include a variety of factors that are largely preventable with public awareness and basic health care. If your organisation is working directly in the community, even if you are not active in the area of health care, you can act as a useful link between the community and the available health services or schemes by providing information to people on where the services are, how to access them and what costs they might incur. Some ideas on how you can provide the community with useful advice on health services are:

- Make a list of local health facilities/health care workers for referrals.
- Get a list of organisations providing services to persons with disabilities from the social defence department and identify the private institutions as well. Establish links with them and request them to inform you when they are running health camps.
- Ensure that the people you are working with have access to the services available, especially vaccination and supplementary diets, since malnutrition and lack of vaccination can cause disability.



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**SOME OTHER GENERAL IDEAS YOUR ORGANISATION CAN USE:**

- Find out what neighbouring NGOs working with persons with disabilities are doing and explore areas and ways in which you can collaborate.
- Try to recruit persons with disabilities as staff or as volunteers.
- Ensure that persons with disabilities in your area are registered as voters and that they exercise their vote during elections.
- If you are working with institutions of local governance, ensure that persons with disabilities participate in deliberative forums such as the gramsabha and their issues are addressed.
- Document and disseminate positive stories through alternative and mainstream media.
- Include disability issues in capacity building programmes that seek to build perspective on development issues.
- Use opportunities to involve persons with disabilities in decision-making forums and positions.

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The above ideas suggest how you can open up your programmes to include persons with disabilities without the need to have experts on disability issues. Knowing where to locate the expertise is useful, and information is one of the most valuable things we can give to people. If we all act together to include persons with disabilities in our work, we will come closer to our goal of sharing the world's resources in a more equitable way.

**SOURCE:**

*This article has been adapted from another article with the same title contributed to 'Mainstreaming Disability Issues: Experiences in Enhancing Civil Society Participation,' an UNNATI publication.*

# 10

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## History of Women's Movement

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When people understand that gender is socially determined, they can think of ways to change the unequal relationships between men and women. This understanding has inspired many women and men to examine and work to reduce the inequalities. Every generation derives the benefit of the struggles of the previous generations. Change requires conviction, finding support, getting one's viewpoints accepted and managing resistance to change; small victories and celebration of what is achieved. Often, the motivation for change is inspired by the stories of struggles of others. This is even more true for the marginalised groups, in this case women, who have been accepting their subordination without questioning it.

This understanding is essential for development practitioners to appreciate the role and contribution of women in the realisation of their rights so that they seek their active participation in development processes.

# 10.1. Understanding Women's Contribution to Development

**TIME** 2 hours

**METHOD** Group Reading and Discussion

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## **MATERIALS**

Reading 8 'Women's Movement in India: An Overview', pages 176-191 for all participants, flipcharts, sketch pens

## **OBJECTIVE**

- Participants are familiar with the history and issues of women's struggles in India

## **PROCESS**

1. Divide the participants into groups of five to six participants.
2. Distribute copies of Reading 8 on 'Women's Movement in India: An Overview, pages 176-191 to all the participants. Ask one person in each group to read it aloud while others listen.
3. Ask all participants to think and write down one or two things that have struck them the most that would provide them inspiration for their ongoing activities; for example, some new information they may have got which they can use or some story of a woman's struggle that they can use to organise women in their area.
4. Once they have written it, ask the participants to share it one by one. Ask a volunteer to write down the key points on a flipchart. The participants could be asked to carry it back with themselves as notes or reminders.
5. Summarise the main points.

## **DEBRIEFING**

1. What are the main landmarks in the history of women's movement? What inspired you the most?
2. What, you think, led women to change their situation?
3. Can you recall the efforts of a woman in your area whose efforts led to a change in the status of women?

## **FACILITATOR'S NOTES**

- Reading 8 will enable the participants to realise that women's contributions in the past have resulted in benefits not only for them but for all the following generations. These women struggled the way they did because they questioned the status quo and refused to accept it as a given. They displayed courage to go against the accepted norms. This causes discomfort for the individual but in the long run it leads to constructive changes. It is also possible at this time to talk about the process of change. Change requires conviction, finding support, acceptance by others of one's point of view; small victories; celebration of what is achieved; and managing resistance to change.
- If possible, you could distribute the Reading to the participants on the previous day and ask them to read it before coming to this session. If you have the time, you could also collect pictures for the Reading, put these up and get the participants to build the story based on what they have read and what they know.
- Alternatively, the participants may be asked to share a personal story of a woman they know, including themselves, where they have felt or done something to feel empowered. Through this, one can generate similar insights to those inherent in the Reading.

*SOURCE: This activity has evolved during various training programmes conducted by UNNATI and other organisations.*



# Women's Movement in India: An Overview

The word 'movement' has been used differently by social activists, political leaders and scholars who have written on 'movements'. "Some scholars use the term 'movement' interchangeably with 'organisation' or 'union'; some use it to mean a historical trend or tendency" (Shah, 1990)

**Broadly, distinctions have been made through categorising movements into social or political; and further by considering the typology of social movements, i.e. its objectives and the quality of change or the issues around which participants get mobilised or the participants who are the backbone of a particular movement. Scholars have used different definitions based on their context and purpose.**



## **SOCIAL MOVEMENTS: PERSPECTIVES**

Turner and Killian (1987), using a 'collective behaviour' perspective, define social movements as "a collectivity acting with some continuity to promote or resist a change in the society or organisation of which it is a part. As a collectivity, a movement is a group with indefinite and shifting membership and with leadership whose position is determined more by informal response of adherents than by formal procedures for legitimising authority." Charles Tilly (1984) uses a 'political process' perspective and defines social movements as a "sustained series of interactions between power holders and persons successfully claiming to speak on behalf of a constituency lacking formal representation, in the course of which those persons make publicly visible demands for changes in the distribution or exercise of power, and back those demands with public demonstration of support." (Nash, K. 2000)

The meaning given to the term 'movement' by its participants has temporal and cultural contexts. However, the objectives, ideology, programmes, leadership and organisation are recognised as important components of a movement that are interdependent and influence one another and are dynamic. A movement differs from an agitation in that the latter is based on one or more issues at a particular time.



This reading does not dwell on the theoretical framework of social movements; it seeks to share why it is important for persons working for social change to be aware of the women's movement in India, its broad course and issues. Those desirous of obtaining an in-depth understanding may refer to the additional readings mentioned in 'Select Bibliography' on pages 198-199.

### **SIGNIFICANCE OF UNDERSTANDING WOMEN'S CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIAL CHANGE**

When there is an attempt to understand historically the evolution of society, there is an effort to understand the struggles of different sections of society and the initiatives for effecting social change. It is important to understand this historical perspective to be able to appreciate the present social reality. However, in doing so, it is equally significant to understand women's roles, contribution and response, without which history is incomplete. Women's activism and contribution to issue-based movements such as those focusing on 'forests', 'civil rights' or others have not been adequately captured by social scientists. This not only leads to their historical invisibility as a group but also reinforces the myth of their passivity in political action (Shah, 1990). Over the years, women have made a significant contribution to addressing several social issues and have struggled for their rights, be it civil, political, social or economic. This has been through participation in issue-based or group-linked movements (price rise, environment, tribal, dalit, peasant and the like) or through collective response as 'women' to effect change in their situation. Women's struggles in India are not new; nor are they a reaction to the western feminist movement. They have been active as protagonists of social change for a long time, though there certainly has been a change and an evolution in the forms, nature and strategies of their response to their position in society.

It is important that development activists who are working for social change and gender equality appreciate and understand not only the



decline in women's status over time but also the initiatives that have countered the forces of patriarchal values and systems to gain freedom from them. One of the ways to do this is to understand the women's movement in the country; the issues it has raised and why; the support it has received and its reasons; women's links to other movements; strategies they have adopted, challenges they have faced and the outcome of their struggles. Historical accounts of the struggles faced by women for their own emancipation can also serve to provide inspiration to those working on development issues.

Women's movement does not merely challenge a specific issue; it challenges the entire patriarchy based socio-economic-political system that reinforces gender inequalities. The cycle of women's exploitation and oppression is not linked to a specific historical event or system; it is woven into the social fabric. Hence, it is important to understand and challenge it for moving towards an egalitarian society.



## **WOMEN'S MOVEMENT: APPROACHES AND FOCUS**

The history of women's movement in India can be broadly divided into the following periods:

1. Reform Movement: 1820 - 1920
2. Emergence of Women's Organisations and Women's Participation in Anti-colonial Struggle: 1920 - 1951
3. The 'Silent Decades': 1951 - 1970s
4. Emergence of Autonomous Women's Movement: 1975 - 1985
5. Spread of the Movement and Challenges Before the Contemporary Movement: 1990 onwards



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### **1 Reform Movement: 1820 - 1920**

India was colonised by British Empire, first through the East India Company and, after the failure of the mutiny of 1857, direct rule of the Empire. A newly educated middle class, mainly comprising upper and middle castes, was exposed to many new ideas about democracy and education. This first generation of reformers, who wanted to imitate the



lifestyle of the colonial rulers, found that the position of women in the country was an obstacle in what they wanted to do. Women's concerns remained centre-stage during this period and the reformers began to address issues like child marriage, widow remarriage, *sati* (immolation of the widow at the funeral pyre of her husband), and girls' education. Most of the reformers were men who had received education embedded in the values of the West. Their motivation for reforming the situation of women and promoting women's education stemmed from their own need for having an educated wife who could also be a better mother to their children rather than to satisfy women's need for opportunities to be independent persons.

This trend viewed women's questions as bad cultural practices, and issues of social reform rather than problems that emerged from caste, class and patriarchal structures of society. Their demand for reform was also limited by their caste and class background and hence addressed the issues faced only by the upper and middle castes and classes.

During the reform movement, another trend represented by people like Jyotiba Phule, Savitribai Phule and Pandita Ramabai was questioning both the caste and patriarchal structures of Indian society. Pandita Ramabai started the first women's organisation, initiated by women. The mainstream history of the reform movement has not made any significant mention about this trend. Currently, the feminist historians are undertaking research and unearthing facts about it.



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## **2** Emergence of Women's Organisations and Women's Participation in Anti-colonial Struggle: 1920 - 1951

In the 20th century, educated women from various communities started women's organisations with the help of the supportive male members of their families. The Bharat Mahila Parishad attached to the Indian National Congress, the Parsee Women's Circle, the Anjuman-e-Khawatin-e-Islam (Muslim Women's Association) are some such examples. These organisations provided some space to educated women and provided them experience in public work but their activities and ideas remained under the control of male leaders supporting them. When women



defined their own issues like family laws, inheritance rights or women's autonomy, they were not supported by male reformers.

The nationalist movement became a mass movement under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi after the 1920s. As the movement began to focus on mobilising the masses, more and more women participated in the struggle against colonialism. The women's movement and women's questions began to get increasingly intertwined with the nationalist movement during this phase. Gandhi's strategy of *Satyagrah* (peaceful resistance) also provided space and importance for women's participation. In fact, he argued that because of women's innate qualities, it is easier for them than men to be true *Satyagrahis* (soldiers of peaceful resistance). The women's issues, which were viewed as issues of social reform, turned into a political issue of women's rights to equality.



After World War I, three major national women's organisations were created, viz. the Women's Indian Association (WIA), the National Council of Women in India (NCWI) and the All India Women's Conference (AIWC). The AIWC was formed in 1927 and served as the most important national-level organisation of women throughout the Independence movement.

The first issue undertaken by the AIWC was women's education. It did not advocate mass education or the same education for women and men. It emphasised the role of education for women in carrying out their gender role more efficiently. Eventually, the AIWC expanded its agenda to campaign for the Sharada Act (a Bill against child marriage), Right to Vote, property rights for women and reform in various personal laws. Personal laws are civil laws, which cover laws regarding marriage, divorce, property rights, guardianship of children and maintenance of wife and children. The demand for uniform civil laws for people of all religions was not accepted and non-interference in the religious practices of minorities was the reason cited for this. The debate on the Hindu Code Bill (which affected the majority of the population) also revealed that the nationalist leaders were not keen to support women's demand for equality in the most important areas of their life.



### Women's Movement after Independence:

The transfer of power from the British Government to Indian leaders took place in 1947 and the Constitution was adopted in 1950. The Constitution gave the Right to Equality to all the citizens, irrespective of their caste, class, sex, religion and place of birth. Any discrimination was forbidden on the above-mentioned grounds. The Right to Vote was granted to all adults. However, inequality between men and women and women from different religions continued in the form of personal laws (based on religious texts of all the religions) as well as customary laws for tribals and people from the so-called 'lower castes'.

The formal equality granted by the Constitution of independent India gave a sense of achievement and contentment to the educated upper and middle caste-class leaders of the women's movement and women who participated in the anti-colonial struggle. Most of the leaders were given some kind of position of power in the implementation of various welfare schemes for women. It is remarkable to note that though one third of the women were registered as workers in the Census at the time of Independence, all the schemes for women targeted women as mothers rather than workers. The welfare approach to women viewed them as a dependent, weak section of society rather than as productive members of the Indian economy.

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### 3 The 'Silent Decades': 1951 to 1970s

There was no debate or action from the vocal and educated sections of the women in the first two decades after Independence. These decades are known as the 'Silent Decades' in the history of the women's movement in India. Though upper and middle class women got opportunities for education and could enter into all the fields which were so far considered to be men's fields, the situation of the majority of women in rural as well as urban areas was deteriorating. Capitalism had affected most poor people adversely and particularly women. During the early '70s, guided by the Women in Development (WID) school of thought, women's role in development was recognised but within the confines of the family and household. The emphasis was on their reproductive rather than their productive role.





The family was recognised as a unit for all development interventions with man as its natural head. Programmes for education, organising women's groups, issues of widows, etc. received prominence. This focus served only to reinforce the traditional social fabric of life and did not address the root causes of discrimination contributing to women's low participation in their societies.

The Women and Development (WAD) approach that evolved in subsequent years recognised the exploitation of women in development and stressed the need to address patriarchy and global inequality for equitable sharing of resources and benefits among men and women.

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#### **4 Emergence of Autonomous Women's Movement: 1975 to 1985**

Once again in the seventies the women's movement emerged centre stage in Indian politics. A combination of several factors gave rise to the new Autonomous Women's Movement in India. The three major milestones are:

##### **A) Women's Participation in People's Movements**

In the late sixties and early seventies, there was a lot of unrest and resistance among the people. The hope that Independence would reap some benefits to the poor and the working class was not fulfilled. The famous 'trickle down' theory of growth (that assumes that benefits of any development will automatically reach the poor) could not hold people in quiet suffering any more. People's movements were initiated in almost all parts of the country. The peasants and agricultural labourers' movement in several regions, the Naxalbari movement (movement by the Marxist Leninists) in West Bengal, Bihar, Orissa and Andhra Pradesh, the Railway workers' strike, the Student movement in Gujarat and Bihar, the Tribal Movement and Women's movement against the price rise in Maharashtra and some parts of Gujarat were some of the major struggles during this decade. Some of the other scattered movements of the 1970s consisted of the creation of the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) and their struggle for equal wages and the Chipko movement's efforts to raise the issue of a woman's right to land. Women participated in large numbers in all these struggles.



While participating in these common struggles, young women became sensitive about their problems as women. By their participation in these general issues, every issue became a woman's issue, which formed the basis for broadbasing the women's movement.

### **B) Report of the Committee on the Status of Women**

The government of India appointed a committee in 1971 to evaluate the status of women in India in the light of the goals provided in the Constitution. The Committee on the Status of Women in India presented its report, 'Towards Equality' which was published in 1974. The findings revealed that the situation of women was deteriorating in almost all fields. The process of development had pushed women to the margins of the economy. The percentage of women workers was declining over these decades. The sex ratio, i.e. the number of women per thousand men, was also consistently declining since the beginning of the century. The equality before the law remained on paper and political participation was also marginal. The report shook the contented women intelligentsia and they started conducting research on the poorer women and women in the informal or unorganised sector of the economy.

### **C) Celebration of International Women's Year 1975**

The United Nations declared 1975 as the International Women's Year. The first International Women's Conference held in Mexico declared 1975 - 1985 as the Women's Decade. This celebration gave an opportunity to sensitive women from various backgrounds, i.e. women activists who participated in people's movement as well as women academics, to meet and discuss their views.

A combination of all these and several other factors gave rise to the Autonomous Women's Movement in India. In 1975 the then Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi, declared internal emergency to crush all the people's movements. Some organisations like the Progressive Women's Organisation were also suppressed for the time being. Once again, with the emergence of the anti-emergency, democratic rights and civil rights movement, several autonomous organisations emerged all over India.





Autonomous Women's Organisations were a clear break from the women's organisations of the past. In the initial phase, their leadership was mainly with the urban middle class educated women. Their understanding of women's issues, organisational forms and strategies was radically different in nature.

The characteristics of autonomous women's groups were:

- Women organised and led the movement;
- The fight against oppression, exploitation, injustice and discrimination against women was the first and foremost priority of the movement and any other consideration could not subordinate women's rights; and
- The groups could not be subordinated to the decisions and necessities of any political or social groups.

Several organisations came up during this phase. All of them had a different starting point, different emphasis or way of functioning and many shades of ideology. However, there were some common points as well. They shared the belief that women were an oppressed section of society and the problems faced by them were not because of individual misfortune, urbanisation, westernisation or breakdown of the joint family system. The other shared belief was that women's oppression was not inevitable, nor a part of natural order in society and could be eliminated. They saw patriarchy as control over women's labour, fertility and sexuality and as a system of women's oppression. Sexual division of labour was not natural and must be changed. They also worked closely with groups working against class and caste oppression and exploitation, groups working for civil rights and human rights. The autonomous movement experimented with non-formal and non-hierarchical forms and structure of the organisation as well. They believed that if women were working for a more just and democratic society, their organisational forms should reflect their principles.

This period was significant for bringing into the public sphere issues which had hitherto been seen as private issues. The Gender and Development (GAD) approach during this period focused on women's empowerment and equity. Women openly began to question the historical explanation and justification of women's subordination and



their problems on biological grounds. This led to the development of the understanding that women's problems are linked to the discrimination based on gender, i.e. the social roles and relationships of men and women and the forces that contribute to the perpetuation and change in these relations.

### **Issues Taken up by the Movement**

Violence against women was one of the major issues taken up by the movement at the national level. In fact, the movement achieved its national character with a nationwide anti-rape movement. The 'Mathura rape case' was a historical milestone in the history of the women's movement in India. Mathura was a 16-year-old tribal girl of a village in Maharashtra. She was gangraped by four policemen at a police station when she was called to give a statement on a case. The Sessions Court acquitted the policemen. The High Court reversed the judgement and held them guilty. The Supreme Court, i.e. the apex court of the country, once again reversed the judgement and acquitted them on the grounds that Mathura was having an affair with another boy and had a sexual relationship with him. She was a girl of loose character and there were no marks of injury on her body to prove that she had resisted. Hence, there was a possibility that she might have consented to sexual intercourse. This judgement gave rise to a nationwide protest. Three law professors wrote an open letter to the Supreme Court demanding the reversal of the judgement. Women's organisations across the country organised protests and debates over issues like the relevance of the past sexual history of the victim and the whole issue of resistance and consent. Demands were made to change the rape law, particularly in custodial rape cases. The pressure from the movement forced the Government to make changes in the law in 1983 whereby a minimum of 7 years' imprisonment was provided for.

When it came to domestic violence, women's groups were successful in their struggle to introduce a legal provision which established this as a crime which the police were obliged to register and act upon - Section 498 A under the Indian Penal Code (IPC). Under this, violence inflicted on a woman by her husband or his family was declared a non-bailable, non-cognisable offence.



Women's groups took up dowry as an issue in the 1980s and it brought to light the extent of dowry giving and receiving and the amount of violence women faced as a result of dowry negotiations between families.

Women's groups brought to light the phenomenon which has come to be

known as dowry deaths - women who are murdered by their marital family for not bringing in enough dowry.

In 1984 and 1986, the Dowry Prohibition Act of 1961 was amended partly in response to the demands of the women's movement. One significant amendment stated that an official inquiry would be conducted if the wife died within seven years of marriage. If found guilty of dowry harassment, the husband and the co-accused would face seven years of imprisonment and fine.

Some other important decisions taken were related to *streedhan* (the gifts given to the bride by her parents, husband and in-laws).



Personal law was addressed in 1985 with the Shahbano case. It raised the issue of *talaaq* (divorce) and maintenance of Muslim women. Despite official roadblocks, the Supreme Court gave a landmark ruling. It established the right of a Muslim woman to maintenance. In 1988, the issue of *sati* came to the forefront with a case in Rajasthan which was highlighted in the media and was taken up by women's movement. Both these issues also led to confrontation between women's movement and right wing forces, which continues.

Women's reproductive rights were addressed in the campaigns against the introduction of hazardous contraceptives. Women's groups raised questions on the safety of hormonal contraceptive technologies, of the way in which clinical trials were carried out, on notions of informed consent and on general issues of women's health, especially poor women who were being addressed by the family planning programme. Further, women's health activists criticised the fact that women were only addressed by the health care system as reproductive beings, and their other health needs were not given importance.



The eighties were a time of great energy and fervour within women's movement and brought into the public domain many issues which had hitherto not been seen as political issues.

The forms of protest were diverse and ranged from protest letters to protest marches, study circles, sit-in demonstrations, street plays, wall painting and use of various cultural forms like folk songs and dances. With the increasing influence of the women's movement, political parties, working class organisations and development organisations now accepted the importance of women's issues. They were forced to respond to them and also strengthen their women's wings and women's cells within their organisations.

Around the '80s grass-root organisations also joined the autonomous organisations in furthering the discourse on women's development and emancipation. Mahila Mandals, self-help groups, savings and credit groups, women's co-operatives, water and forest users' groups began to be formed in large numbers. During this period, developments at the international level lent support and strength to these organisations. Three conferences on Women and Development - in Mexico in 1975, Copenhagen - in 1980 and Nairobi in 1985 - resulted in the allocation of funds for research on women's issues. It also led to national governments committing to espouse the cause of women's development. The UN General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1979. This document is considered to be the international Bill of Rights for women (consisting of a Preamble and 30 Articles). It defines what constitutes discrimination against women and sets an agenda for national action to end such discrimination. India has also ratified this convention.

There was a growing trend towards seeing women as agents and beneficiaries in all sectors and at all levels of the development process. The Conference in Nairobi in 1985 to mark the end of the UN Decade for Women and involve intensive deliberations among women from all over the world resulted in the adoption of the Forward Looking Strategies for Women. This conference took the main themes of the UN Decade for Women (equality, development and peace with the sub-themes of health,



education and employment) and set out the obstacles facing women in each of these areas, proposed general strategies for overcoming them and made recommendations to governments and other bodies for creating greater opportunities for equality at all levels.

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## **5 Spread of the Movement and Challenges Before the Contemporary Movement: 1990 Onwards**

By the late eighties, women's movement started reacting to every issue that concerned the people on the understanding that 'Women constitute half the world and every issue is a woman's issue'. Women's perspective was highlighted in the struggle for democratic rights, housing rights, struggle against casteism and communalism. More and more women and organisations now started considering themselves as part of the Indian Women's Movement. Women's movement in India does not have any national-level organisation or a very tight network of organisations but all the small groups are supporting participation in the National Conference held generally at an interval of three to four years. Six such conferences have been held since 1980. No large funds are accepted from any funding agencies for the conference. All the groups participating in the conference contribute towards the expenses. The number of women attending these conferences is increasing every time. About 3000 women from all the States of India and at times from the neighbouring countries attend the conference. The discussions at these conferences have covered a range of issues like violence, new economic policy, religious fundamentalism, women and State repression, struggle for survival and displacement.

Under the pressure of the women's movement in the country as well as from the changing perspective on women and development at the international level, the government's welfare approach towards women at the time of Independence underwent a change. In the late seventies and early eighties, emphasis began to be placed on including women in development. The Fourth World Women's Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995 provided a major thrust to women's empowerment and led to 189 participating Governments to include 'gender' in all their



policies and programmes. In the nineties there was thus talk about women's empowerment, at least on paper. Almost all the development organisations, popularly known as NGOs, also included 'gender' as one of the criteria in their work, once again due to the effect of the women's movement as well as due to the criteria forced on them by the foreign funding agencies. During this period, a series of conventions were held by the UN that addressed all development issues, especially women's issues, i.e. the Earth Summit on Environment and Development at Rio (1992), the World Conference on Human Rights at Vienna (1993), the International Conference on Population and Development at Cairo (1994), the World Summit on Social Development at Copenhagen (1995), the UN World Conference at Beijing (1995), and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2000.

All these developments helped highlight the economic roles of women and the need for improving their participation in productive work for poverty alleviation. The important role that women play, besides several others, in contributing to the economic management of the family led to their inclusion in the poverty alleviation programmes of the Government. This was done based on the understanding that an enhanced earning power will lead to better life and growth opportunities.

The spread of the movement was also accompanied by challenges to the movement. From 1985 onwards, identity politics and the threat of religious fundamentalism became a real challenge before the women's movement. The debate and struggle around 'Shahbano case' became a symbol of this challenge. Shahbano was a Muslim woman aged 73. She was divorced by her husband at that age and when she approached the court for maintenance, her husband's lawyer argued that under the Muslim personal law marriage is a contract which ends at the time of divorce, hence a divorced Muslim woman cannot ask for maintenance beyond the *Iddat* period, i.e. three menstrual cycles after divorce. The court did not accept the argument and in the judgement commented that Muslim personal laws must be reformed. The judgement was supported by the Hindu fundamentalists and opposed by the Muslim fundamentalists. The issue of women's right was turned into a political



issue of religious majority vs. minority. The event of '*sati*' in Deorala, Rajasthan, in 1987, created yet another confrontation between women's movement and the fundamentalist forces.

Globalisation and liberalisation also posed serious challenges for the women's movement. The situation of the working men and women was deteriorating. Domestic violence was increasing because of that. The struggle for survival, displacement of people from their livelihood, from their land, forests and water sources were major issues coming up every day. Women were in the forefront of these struggles and there was a realisation that women's movement would have to find out newer ways of fighting against these forces.

In 1997, the Supreme Court passed a landmark judgement, popularly known as the Vishakha Guidelines that provided legal recognition to the sexual harassment faced by women at the workplace. The Guidelines are applicable to all government and private sector organisations, hospitals, universities and other responsible persons, and the unorganised sector. This was passed in response to a campaign launched by women's groups all over the country to protest against the sexual harassment faced by Bhanwari Devi at the hands of men from the upper caste, a *saathin*, (a field worker in a government development programme in Rajasthan) when she tried to intervene and stop the wedding of an infant girl in a village.

This was the time to sharpen politics and strengthen the unity of women's movement by spreading among the struggling masses. But unfortunately, in the process of reaching out to more people, many groups and individuals have diluted their politics at the time when it is most necessary to sharpen it. Most of the autonomous groups or people connected with these groups have lost their initial dynamism. Taking up women's issues has become more complex because all the forces, including political parties and fundamentalist organisations, also jump into it with their seemingly pro-women slogans but anti-women politics. The existence of heavily-funded NGOs adds to the complexities of the situation because of their limited understanding of gender issues. It is not enough to understand gender issues alone but one will have to



understand the connection of gender issues with caste, class, religion and global forces.

● Today the women's movements in India are linked together through networks on different issues and campaigns. While older methods of protest and advocacy are still used, new methods of resistance and mobilisation for change are evolving, with new movements on sustainable development, regional peace movements, sex workers' movements and environmental movements joining hands and continuing and strengthening our struggles for a just society.

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11

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Evaluation  
and  
Consolidation

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A workshop that allows participants to examine their personal and professional lives from a gender perspective is likely to effect some degree of change in their understanding, beliefs and values. It is important that at the end, they spend some time examining this change and reflect on how they want to use it. This can help to consolidate the key ideas that participants have learnt about gender and the collective understanding that has been built.

Exchange of ideas about the action that they want to take to effect any change in their personal or professional lives can generate a pool of ideas that they can carry and also serve as inspiration. Facilitators can gauge the impact that the processes of the workshop have had on individuals and the group. This can provide directions for future workshops.

# 11.1. Post-Workshop Evaluation

**TIME** 30 minutes

**METHOD** Self-assessment

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## **MATERIALS**

Handout-1  
'Workshop  
Evaluation  
Questionnaire'  
pages 34-35

## **OBJECTIVE**

- Participants assess the difference in their perceptions and beliefs before and after the workshop

## **PROCESS**

1. Give the Workshop Evaluation Questionnaire to the participants and ask them to fill it out in 10 minutes.
2. Ask them to compare it with their previous responses to the same questionnaire that they had filled out at the beginning of the workshop.
3. Ask some participants to volunteer to share the reasons for the change in their responses. You may also add points included in the box 'Workshop Evaluation Questionnaire: Appropriate Answers and Explanations on pages 30-33, if these have not been already covered.

## **FACILITATOR'S NOTES**

- This is a tool that has been used in gender workshops to help the participants assess their responses to gender-related statements before and after receiving inputs. It can also be used to consolidate learnings and share some key ideas related to gender.

# 11.2. Evaluation of Workshop

**TIME** 30 minutes

**METHOD** Individual Evaluation

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## **OBJECTIVE**

- Participants evaluate the workshop and share the feedback

## **PROCESS**

1. Before starting the session, put up four flipcharts in different corners of the room. Put the following headings on the four charts:
  - a) Things that I liked about the workshop (content, design, facilitation, course materials and methodology)
  - b) Things that I did not like about the workshop
  - c) How I felt during the workshop
  - d) Suggestions for future workshops on this theme
2. Read out what is written on the four charts. Give a few cards each to the participants and ask them to write their comments and suggestions, one on each card, under the four headings and then stick them on to the respective charts. Tell them that it is important for them to give their honest opinions to enable improvement in future trainings. You could get some volunteers to read out what the participants have written and discuss them, if necessary.

## **FACILITATOR'S NOTES**

- You may ask for comments on any specific aspects that you wish to know about, based on your experience of the sessions.

## **MATERIALS**

Flipcharts,  
sketch pens,  
cards

# 11.3. Developing an Action Plan

**TIME** 45 minutes

**METHOD** Individual/Group Exercise

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## **MATERIALS**

Flipcharts,  
sketch pens

## **OBJECTIVE**

- Participants develop an action plan and identify some examples of what can be done by them at the personal, community and/or organisational level

## **PROCESS**

1. Ask the participants to think of one gender-related aspect that they see as an area requiring change in their personal life.
2. Tell them to think of one way in which they would like to work towards bringing this change.
3. Ask for volunteers to share their action points.
4. Now ask them to get together with people of their own organisation and think of one gender-related aspect that they see as an area requiring change in the community and the organisation that they work in.
5. Tell them to think of one way in which they would like to work towards bringing this change at these levels.
6. Ask each group to share its points.

## **FACILITATOR'S NOTES**

- Getting the participants to share their the action points can be one way to find out what they have understood in the workshop and how they intend to translate this into action.
- Sharing will also help everyone to get more ideas on how they can work towards bringing change.
- Ask the participants to share their action points in their internal organisational forums and these can be reviewed after a stipulated time to monitor the progress.

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# Annexures

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# Select Documentaries

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## **Ladka hi Hoga (Meena Series)**

**DURATION:** 13 minutes

**LANGUAGE:** Hindi (also available in English and Gujarati)

**SUBTITLES:** No

**PRODUCER:** UNICEF

**CONTACT ADDRESS FOR COPIES:**

United Nations Children's Fund

73, Lodi Estate,

New Delhi 110 003, India

Ph: +91-11-24690401

Email: newdelhi@unicef.org

### **Key issue/s: Preference for male child and stereotypes about girls and boys**

**SUMMARY:** The film portrays a family's attitudes towards the birth of a girl child and how families discriminate between boys and girls right from the time they are born. Using examples of how providing equal opportunity equips girls to respond to life situations, an attempt is made to counter gender stereotypes.

**SUGGESTED QUESTIONS FOR DEBRIEFING:**

1. How are the sex linked stereotypes formed and reinforced?
2. Apart from families, who else propagates/ reinforces such stereotypes?
3. How do such stereotypes affect boys and girls?
4. What are some of the ways in which we can counter stereotypes?

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## **Betiyan ki Dekhrehk (Meena Series)**

**DURATION:** 12 minutes

**LANGUAGE:** Hindi (also available in English and Gujarati)

**SUBTITLES:** No

**PRODUCER:** UNICEF

**CONTACT ADDRESS FOR COPIES:**

United Nations Children's Fund

73, Lodi Estate

New Delhi 110 003, India

Ph: +91-11-24690401

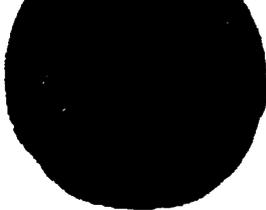
E-mail: newdelhi@unicef.org

### **Key issue/s: Gender discrimination and health care for the girl child**

**SUMMARY:** The film stresses the importance of equal opportunities for health care for both boys and girls. It shows how attitudes of family members can be detrimental to the health and growth of girl children.

**SUGGESTED QUESTIONS FOR DEBRIEFING:**

1. Besides affecting the health of the girl child, what other effects can such attitudes of a family have and on whom?
2. Why is it important to change such attitude?
3. While trying to bring about a change in attitudes, what does one need to bear in mind?



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## **Navo Chitariyo Chilo**

**DURATION:** 37 minutes

**LANGUAGE:** Gujarati

**SUBTITLES:** No

**PRODUCER:** ANANDI (Area Networking and Development Initiatives)

**CONTACT ADDRESS FOR COPIES:**

ANANDI

B-4, Sahjanand Towers, Jivraj Park Crossroads

Ahmedabad 380 051. Gujarat, India

Ph. +91-79-26820860

Email: anandi20@hotmail.com

### **Key issue/s: Gender stereotypes**

**SUMMARY:** The film depicts the role played by an NGO in organising women in the villages of Jamnagar, Rajkot and Bhavnagar. It helps to address the issues of gender stereotyping. Women are organised for construction work of toilets – an area of work traditionally associated with men in the Indian culture. It shows how such efforts can help change the mindsets of the community, especially the men.

### **SUGGESTED QUESTIONS FOR DEBRIEFING:**

1. What do you think leads to the formation of gender stereotypes?
2. Do you know of any such instances that have helped to break the stereotypes at the family and community level?

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## **Bund File**

**DURATION:** 48 minutes

**LANGUAGE:** Hindi

**SUBTITLES:** No

**PRODUCER:** PRIA – Centre for Learning and Promotion of Participation and Democratic Governance

**CONTACT ADDRESS FOR COPIES:**

PRIA (Participatory Research in Asia)

42, Tughlakabad Institutional Area

New Delhi 110 062. India

Ph. +91-11-29956908, 29960931/32/33

E-mail: info@pria.org

### **Key issue/s: Impact of socio-cultural norms and traditions on women's lives**

**SUMMARY:** The film depicts a real-life incident of a family in Kanpur. In this family, all the three daughters commit suicide because their father is unable to pay dowry for their marriage. Through interviews with the girls' father, friends, neighbours and social workers, the film portrays the adverse impact of socio-cultural norms and traditions on girls and women.

### **SUGGESTED QUESTIONS FOR DEBRIEFING:**

1. What were the key messages in this film?
2. Why did the 3 sisters commit suicide?
3. What do you feel about the father's perspective?
4. Can this situation be changed and, if yes, how and by whom?

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## **Janani (Mother)**

**DURATION:** 45 minutes

**LANGUAGE:** Bengali

**SUBTITLES:** English

**PRODUCER:** SDC (Swiss Development Corporation) and International Development Enterprise (IDE) Bangladesh

**CONTACT ADDRESS FOR COPIES:**

1. S D C

Chandragupta Marg, Chanakyapuri

New Delhi 110 021, India

Ph. +91-11- 26877819, Fax: +91-11-26873631

Email: delhi@sdc.net

Website: www.sdcindia.in

2. I D E

92/A, Masjid Road, Old DOHS

Banani 1213, Dhaka, Bangladesh

### **Key issue/s: Women's struggle for survival**

**SUMMARY:** The film describes the story of a woman and her struggle for survival. She has 3 daughters, a husband and a visually impaired father-in-law. Her husband is unemployed and does not play any role in supporting the family. The woman and her daughters take complete charge of providing and caring for the family's needs. The story depicts their innate strength in facing the daily hardships and managing the family's affairs. The film portrays the importance of women's assertion as well as its impact on their life.

### **SUGGESTED QUESTIONS FOR DEBRIEFING:**

1. Do you know of such instances around your home/workplace?
2. What are the different coping strategies that women use in such situations?
3. What role can NGOs play in supporting women in such situations?

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## **Slowly But Surely... the story of women**

**DURATION:** 30 minutes

**LANGUAGE:** English and Hindi

**SUBTITLES:** English

**PRODUCER:** Comet Media Foundation

**CONTACT ADDRESS FOR COPIES:**

Comet Media Foundation

Topiwala Lane School, Lamington Road

Mumbai 400 007, India

Ph. +91-22-23869052, 23826674, 23821893

Email: cometmediafdn@gmail.com

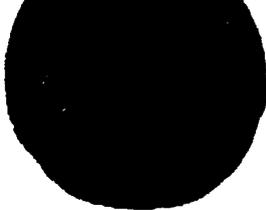
Website: www.cometmediafdn.org

### **Key issue/s: Women's empowerment**

**SUMMARY:** The film depicts the struggle of women in the Aravalli hills who earn their living from the forest produce. It shows how they are exploited at the hands of traders, revenue officials, police, landowners and customers. With the support of an NGO, the women organise themselves and collectively protest against their exploitation. The importance of their collective strength is amply highlighted.

### **SUGGESTED QUESTIONS FOR DEBRIEFING:**

1. What are the key problems faced by women workers in the unorganised sector?
2. What are the strategies that can be adopted by NGOs to support women workers in this sector?



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**Bol**

**DURATION:** 21 minutes

**LANGUAGE:** Hindi and English

**SUBTITLES:** English

**PRODUCER:** DRISHTI Media Collective and International Centre for Research on Women (ICRW)

**CONTACT ADDRESS FOR COPIES:**

1. DRISHTI Media Collective  
44, Smit-Sagar Society, Near Rahul Towers,  
Anand Nagar Crossroads, 100 ft. Road,  
Satellite, Ahmedabad 380 051  
Gujarat, India.

Ph: +91-79-26930452, 26930590

Email: drishtiad1@gmail.com

Website: www.drishtimedia.org

2. International Centre for Research on Women  
C-139, Defence Colony,  
New Delhi 110 024. India

Ph: +91-11-24654216, 26643333

Fax: +91-11-24635142

Email: info.india@icrw.org

**Key issue: Domestic violence against women**

**SUMMARY:** These eight one-minute clippings portray, through interviews with women and men, the subtleties of domestic violence and its perpetuation. The clips seek to dispel several myths about violence against women and highlight that the victims are not only women of rural or urban slum areas but also those belonging to the rich and educated classes.

**SUGGESTED QUESTIONS FOR DEBRIEFING:**

1. How would you define domestic violence?
2. What factors do you think contribute to the perceptions and behaviour of men/women on violence against women?
3. What factors can help women to oppose domestic violence?
4. Is domestic violence a private or public issue? Should NGOs intervene?
5. What are some strategies that NGOs can adopt for addressing domestic violence?

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## **Nasreen O Nasreen**

**DURATION:** 30 minutes

**LANGUAGE:** Hindi and English (mixed)

**SUBTITLES:** No

**PRODUCER:** Indian Social Institute (A SCAN HAWK Production)

**CONTACT ADDRESS FOR COPIES:**

Indian Social Institute

10- Institutional Area, Lodi Road,

New Delhi 110 003, India

Ph: +91-11-24635096, 24694602, 24611745

Email: isi@isidelhi.org.in

Website: www.isidelhi.org.in

### **Key issue/s: Domestic violence against women**

**SUMMARY:** The film is based on interviews with women from different strata of society who have suffered domestic violence of different kinds and for different reasons. These range from physical to sexual abuse by the spouse or other males in the family. It highlights the extreme sense of vulnerability of women in such situations, who for want of an option, choose to accept and suffer the violence. There are a few stories of women who have chosen to break their silence. The importance of speaking up, creating common safe spaces and finding strength in collective action are highlighted.

**SUGGESTED QUESTIONS FOR DEBRIEFING:**

1. What factors can help women to oppose domestic violence?
2. Is domestic violence a private or public issue? Should NGOs intervene?
3. What are some strategies that NGOs can adopt for addressing domestic violence?

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## **Listening to Women**

**DURATION:** 20 minutes

**LANGUAGE:** Hindi

**SUBTITLES:** No

**PRODUCER:** Xavier Institute of Communication

**CONTACT ADDRESS FOR COPIES:**

Xavier Institute of Communications

St. Xavier's College,

5, Mahapalika Marg,

Mumbai 400 001, India

Ph: +91-22-22621366, 22621639, 22622877

Fax: +91-22-22658546

Email: edita@xaviercomm.org

### **Key issue/s: Sexual and reproductive health**

**SUMMARY:** This film portrays through narratives, problems that women face related to sexuality and reproduction. It highlights some of the barriers to healthy sexual and reproductive behaviour among women. These barriers become more complex as women do not have the space for sharing and finding solutions for the day-to-day personal and sexual issues. The film concludes with a message on the importance of overcoming the barriers through concerted strategies by multiple stakeholders.

**SUGGESTED QUESTIONS FOR DEBRIEFING:**

1. How do you think the barriers that women have shared affect their lives?
2. Besides what has been shared, are you aware of other ways that such barriers have been addressed?
3. What are the informal ways in which women themselves can seek to overcome the barriers?



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## **Ab Khamoshi Kyon?**

**DURATION:** 37 minutes

**LANGUAGE:** Hindi

**SUBTITLES:** No

**PRODUCER:** India Centre for Human Rights and Law (A unit of Human Rights Law Network)

**CONTACT ADDRESS FOR COPIES:**

Indian Centre for Human Rights & Law  
(A unit of Human Rights Law Network)

Human Rights Law Network

576, Masjid Road, Jangpura,

New Delhi 110 014, India

Ph: +91-11-24374501, 24376922

Email: [contact@hrln.org](mailto:contact@hrln.org)

**Key issue/s: Sexual harassment of women**

**SUMMARY:** Through dramatization, the film portrays how women become victims of sexual harassment at workplace and in academic institutions. The film provides an understanding on what sexual harassment includes and highlights the importance of setting up committees at workplace to address this issue. It also explains some facts and dispels myths about sexual harassment and highlights the need for gender sensitivity in handling issues of sexual harassment.

**SUGGESTED QUESTIONS FOR DEBRIEFING:**

1. You saw some myths about sexual harassment in the film. What are the other popular myths that you know of?
2. What do you think prevents women from talking openly or lodging complaints about sexual harassment at workplace/institutional settings?
3. What are some of the strategies that NGOs can adopt for addressing issues related to sexual harassment?

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## **When Women Unite**

**DURATION:** 80 minutes

**LANGUAGE:** Hindi

**SUBTITLES:** No

**PRODUCER:** DRISHTI Media Collective and  
Centre for Development of Imaging Technology  
(C-DIT)

**CONTACT ADDRESS FOR COPIES:**

1. DRISHTI Media Collective  
44, Smit-Sagar Society, Near Rahul Towers,  
Anand Nagar Crossroads, 100 ft. Road,  
Satellite, Ahmedabad 380 051  
Gujarat, India.

Ph: +91-79-26930452, 26930590

Email: drishtiad1@gmail.com

Website: drishtimedia.org

2. C - D I T

Chithranjaili Studio Complex, Thiruvallam  
Thiruvananthapuram 695 027. India

Ph: +91-471-460681, 461646

### **Key issue/s: Women's campaign against liquor**

**SUMMARY:** The film is an account of real-life events based on the testimonies of women of 22 villages in Nellore district, Andhra Pradesh in South India. It recreates, through drama, the reasons and nature of the women's campaign against supply of liquor in their villages that has been adversely affecting their lives. The 'actors' are all activists and participants of the campaign. The film also raises relevant questions regarding the role of the State, especially when protests of this nature turn against the interests of the Government.

### **SUGGESTED QUESTIONS FOR DEBRIEFING:**

1. Do you know of such instances around your home/workplace?
2. What are the different coping strategies that women use in such situations?
3. What role can NGOs play in supporting women in such situations?

## ABOUT US

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UNNATI - Organisation for Development Education, is a voluntary non-profit organization registered under the Societies Registration Act (1860) in 1990. It is our aim to promote social inclusion and democratic governance so that the vulnerable sections of society are empowered to effectively and decisively participate in mainstream development and decision making processes.

It is an issue based, strategic educational support organisation, working in Western India with people's collectives, NGOs, elected representatives in local governance and the government. Collaborative research, public education, advocacy, direct field level mobilisation and implementation with multiple stakeholders are the key instruments of our work. The interventions span from the grassroots level to policy level environment in ensuring basic rights of citizens. In this, inspiration is drawn from the struggles of the vulnerable and strength from our partners. Presently, all the activities are organised around the following programme centres:

### **Social Inclusion and Empowerment**

The initiatives include:

- Dalit mobilisation and organising in Western Rajasthan in collaboration with local NGOs and people's organisations to fight discrimination;
- Educational support for mainstreaming gender at all levels—internally and for our partners;
- Promoting civic response in mainstreaming disability through educational support to agencies working with persons with disabilities and other civil society organisations;
- Facilitating formation of craft based producers' group of women affected by the Gujarat earthquake for livelihood promotion.

### **Civic Leadership and Governance**

We work in the rural and urban areas.

The activities include:

- Community mobilisation for participation in decision making forums and monitoring of basic services to ensure social justice;
- Support elected representatives especially women and dalits to promote accountability through reform in local governance institutions. The support includes capacity building for equitable implementation of development programmes, participatory planning and facilitating social audits;
- Promotion and strengthening of forums like association of women elected representatives, Social Justice Committees and Village Development Committees for facilitating collaborative action.

### **Social Determinants of Disaster Risk Reduction**

We facilitate adoption of sustainable and affordable innovations in the field and research to promote community-based practices for disaster risk reduction. The activities include action research on current community practices, documentation of best practices and research and advocacy on disaster response policies and packages.

The learning derived from our field experiences are consolidated and disseminated in print and electronic forms for wider sharing through a Knowledge Resource Centre. It is our endeavour to build an academy for community leaders, especially dalits and women, so that they can effectively address local issues.

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**UNNATI**

Organisation for Development Education

**COORDINATING OFFICE**

G-1/200, Azad Society,  
Ahmedabad 380015  
Phone: +91-79-26746145, 26733296  
Fax: +91-79-26743572  
Email: [psu\\_unnati@unnati.org](mailto:psu_unnati@unnati.org)

**RAJASTHAN PROGRAMME OFFICE**

650, Radhakrishnan Puram, Nr. Laharia Resort  
Chopasni Pal bypass Link Road,  
Jodhpur 342008. Rajasthan  
Phone: +91-291-3204618  
Email: [unnati@datainfosys.net](mailto:unnati@datainfosys.net)

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Website: [www.unnati.org](http://www.unnati.org)