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FOREWORD

The NSS, in its silver jubilee year, identified women's development and gender justice as one of its thrust areas. The need was no doubt perceived as a result of increasing atrocities against women, their pervasive marginalisation and restricted development. Women suffer from poor health, widespread illiteracy; lack productive skills, receive low wages, and undergo exploitative work conditions.

The NSS as a concerned agency decided to sensitize the youth to these issues and involve them in the process of building a gender just society. The NSS network covers the entire country and is the world's largest youth organization. It has a membership of 1.2 million and covers 6500 colleges and 150 universities throughout India.

The NSS, as an agency, directly interfaces with the educational system and the larger community. The teachers and the students, both have the potential to intervene in the family and the community. Therefore, the youth so sensitised have a potential to mobilise the larger community. In this context it was decided to produce a manual on Women's Development and Gender Justice to:

i) Check gender bias (if any) among the programme officers themselves.

ii) Strengthen the programme officers' understanding to impart awareness to N.S.S. volunteers.

iii) Sensitise the youth vis-a-vis the functioning of the gender system and its unfavourable effects on women.

iv) To familiarise the programme officers and NSS volunteers with viable strategies that could assist them in enhancing women's development and combating gender injustice at the grassroot level.

The manual on Women's Development and Gender Justice is a comprehensive and relevant contribution towards sensitizing the society on gender issues. This was particularly needed for N.S.S. programme officers to socialise the youth into an egalitarian society.
The manual shall be utilised by NSS Programme Officers to sensitize NSS volunteers to gender issues and facilitate their effective intervention in the field. The manual provides information on issues of gender concern and highlights the processes that maintain and perpetuate gender discrimination.

The correct strategy for the NSS volunteers would be to understand the various dimensions of the gender framework and sensitize the community to issues pertaining to deprivation, discrimination and atrocities that women face. In other words, the community may then be fully equipped to identify and remedy situations on its own as and when they emerge.

It may be difficult to intervene directly on gender issues. This may invite community reaction and defeat the very purpose of intervention. The need is to integrate gender issues with other programmes. For instance, NSS volunteers may promote other programmes such as primary health centres, social forestry, income generating scheme to which issues of gender could be integrated.

The emphasis should be to adopt participatory methodology of interaction with the community. This will ensure minimum risk of social reaction and high return in terms of social transformation in the long run. The manual has listed various methods and techniques facilitating participatory interventions.

Any attempt to change the existing conditions must involve both men and women and undermine the assumptions of patriarchy - stereotyped male and female roles, norms and values that advocate male child preference and male dominance, practices like dowry, sex determination tests, unequal access to resources etc.

It is hoped that this manual shall sensitize the youth to the need for having a holistic perspective rather than indulging in fragmented diagnosis and prescribing piecemeal solutions.

PRADEEP K. SINHA
Joint Secretary,
Department of Youth Affairs
Government of India
Gender justice and women's development is a much discussed subject, but sensitization about this issue is grossly neglected at the grassroot level. This is evident from the largely held belief that men are anti-women and women are the main propagators of women's rights. On the contrary, it is also believed that a large section of women are the main violators of women's rights and many men are the protectors of these rights. Both these versions are the result of fragmented diagnosis resulting in partial understanding of the reality. In fact, these views are within the patriarchal framework. The right perspective is to highlight the fact that the persons who indulge in gender injustice are under the influence of patriarchy, irrespective of their sex, caste or religious placement. This perspective has guided the formulations and analysis of the contributors to this manual.

A pertinent question arises. Is it possible to transform the ways of thinking and the categories of social placement without demolishing the reality of patriarchy? The answer to this question at the manifestation level shall be influenced by the nature and extent of pervasiveness of the norms, values and beliefs relating to gender injustice in each specific context. A strategy capturing the manifestations and attempts to transform the conditions of patriarchy and simultaneously changing the ways of thinking and cultural categories has to be initiated. In other words, unless the basis of patriarchy is questioned directly or through its various manifestations, the need for changing the conditions responsible for gender injustice and women's under-development may not even be felt.

Therefore, the foremost need is to question some of the basic assumptions like "manly man and womanly woman" and counter them. Interestingly, this assumption constitutes the central thrust of the revivalist movements and even some of the identity assertions. These movements emphasise that the survival of cultural groups is based on the purity of women, therefore, women have to defend their chastity to keep the religious and cultural tradition pure. These notions are widely accepted and therefore, it is imperative to:

(a) make gender injustice more visible and mobilise people to counter visible forms of human experience like wife-beating, dowry, eve-teasing etc.;
(b) make role allocation fluid rather than stereotyped and not make them the basis of differentiation, discrimination and exploitation;
(c) consider women productive wage earners rather than merely income augmentors;

Along with these, there are built-in prejudices and biases which first need to be made visible and then countered. The underlying thrust of this manual is to emphasise more on gender justice rather than mechanical equality of the genders. It is also pointed out that corrective justice may not ultimately result in gender justice. Therefore, the major emphasis in this manual is to highlight the need for identifying such interventions which can promote the framework of justice.

In the preparation of this manual, the contribution made by various social activists, policy planners and experts during the course of workshops and also other individuals was valuable.

The coordinator of the manual, Ms. Rainuka Dagar, has not only provided perspective and content to the manual but also made a valuable contribution in making it logical. The contributions made by her were useful and meaningful. We are thankful to Mr. Jai Chandra for his sketches which are simple, are yet a forceful portrayal of the written content of the manual.

We are also thankful to Dr. S.Y. Querishi, the then Joint Secretary, Department of Youth Affairs and Sports, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India, for sponsoring this manual. We acknowledge the encouraging response received from Mr. Gautam Guha and Ms. Amarjit Kaur, Deputy Secretaries and Mr. S. Purty, Under Secretary in the Department of Youth Affairs and Sports, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India, for the preparation of this manual. We are also thankful to Sh. Pradeep Sinha, Joint Secretary, Department of Youth Affairs, Government of India for facilitating the completion of the manual.

Finally the concerted efforts made by members of the IDC faculty and staff are acknowledged with thanks.

PRAMOD KUMAR
Director
Institute for Development and Communication
Chandigarh.
The youth in N.S.S. have been actively involved in the process of social transformation. The various development oriented activities in which the youth have been involved exposes them to situations pregnated with opportunities as well as constraints. Their inability to appreciate these potentials may either neutralise the opportunities or multiply the constraints. Therefore, there is need for equipping them with the skills to identify, harness and regulate these opportunities and constraints.

The major challenge of contemporary times is to ensure distributive justice irrespective of sex, ascriptive or class distinctions. Interestingly, all these distinctions are reflected in gender based social formations.
In other words, gender based issues are intermeshed with the dominant social ethos and therefore, remain largely invisible from the people in general and the youth in particular. Thus, there is need for sensitizing the youth to these issues.

The NSS has an advantage of being integrated into the education system which can help to disseminate knowledge free from the gender bias. In this the NSS programme officers can play a crucial role by imparting awareness on gender issues and by providing strategies and tasks to build a gender just society.

**Note:** The manual focuses on women's unfavourable conditions, drawing attention to the issues and processes that have an impact on women's situation. Women, as a group, are one of the oppressed, exploited and disadvantaged people among others like the poor, the lower castes and people from the backward regions. Since the scope of the manual is limited to women and gender issues, it may seem that women in every situation and context are the only and the most disadvantaged group. This is not so.

- All women do not undergo the same unfavourable conditions. These vary according to their caste, strata and social placement.
- Neither men nor women by themselves can be blamed for women's unfavourable conditions.

**Do the NSS programme officers need such a manual?**

The need for an accurate, comprehensive and systematic understanding of gender issues by NSS programme officers becomes imperative not only because they have to impart awareness and sensitisation on this issue to NSS volunteers, as well as strengthen and re-examine their own understanding of women's development and gender justice.¹

¹ With a view to obtaining NSS Programme officers sensitivity to gender concerns schedules were administered to programme officers from the states of Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana and U.T. of Chandigarh.
The following are some of the important issues in women's development and gender justice along with the perceptions of the NSS officers sampled. The findings underline the need for such a handbook.

**VISIBLE AND INVISIBLE ASPECTS OF GENDER INJUSTICE**

The gender differentiating ideology is frequently identified only at the level of the gender system's impact on women. The impact pertains to the manifestation of gender ideology in women's illiteracy, exploitation, economic dependence, early marriage, wife-beating, dowry demands etc. These are the visible aspects of the gender system. However, attention also needs to be paid to the invisible aspects of the process and the ideology which gives origin to this situation. Stereotyped roles, lack of access to productive education and jobs, gender oppressive practices like male child preference, restricted social mobility, and dowry exchange are the more invisible manifestations of the gender differentiating system which need to be undermined.

- **Findings from Study of NSS Officers**

  As reflected by the following table, NSS programme officers were well versed with some of the visible manifestations of the gender ideology. However, mention of the invisible aspects was substantially low.

| PERCENTAGE OF NSS OFFICERS IDENTIFYING THE PROBLEMS |
|----------------|-----------------|
| Visible aspects | Invisible aspects |
| Illiteracy      | 78              | Subjugative social customs | 19 |
| Economic dependence | 35          | Dowry | 7 |
| Inequality/inferior status | 48        | Restricted social mobility | 4 |
| Dowry demand / harassment | 40        | /Purda |
| Early marriage | 21              | Handicapped participation in Panchayats | 8 |
| Wife beating    | 26              | Limited decision making | 13 |
| Sexual harassment | 16           | powers |
| Physical insecurity | 54          | Dual role | 21 |
DOES WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT MEAN INCREASING WOMEN’S ACCESS TO AND PARTICIPATION IN EXISTING OPPORTUNITIES?

The conditions of women's underdevelopment need to be changed for availing the existing opportunities. Invisible societal values, patriarchal assumptions and the idea of women's roles need to undergo a change to allow access and participation which can lead to women's empowerment. Otherwise women will remain only income augmenters by marketing household skills, being educated in skills with a poor market value such as home science rather than being productive earners and continue to face atrocities.

Findings from study of NSS officers

The need for raising women's educational level was expressed by 79 per cent and income generation for women was mentioned by 17 per cent of the participants. However, the nature of education and employment, the quality of participation and the context of these opportunities (i.e. the ideology of the gender system) remained invisible and unattended to.
DOES GENDER JUSTICE MEAN THE SAME RIGHTS FOR WOMEN AS AVAILED BY MEN?

The same treatment for men and women is not possible due to biological sex differences. Maternal needs require specific treatment such as maternity leave, benefits, health care etc. These differences need to be recognized, rather than providing blanket equality such as the same employment rights to men and women. On the pretext that providing women with maternity benefits is inequality since no benefits are provided to other people with temporary disability, employers deny women maternity benefits. Moreover, not all men have the same rights - differences of strata, caste, religion etc. exist. Thus, taking the existing male rights to be the parameter for individual rights would not be just.

❑ Findings from study of NSS officers

The demand for equal rights for men and women recognizes that discrimination exists against women, as opined by 31 per cent of the NSS officers. However, the concept of equality needs to be endorsed in the frame of justice to take into consideration the biological sex and situational differences.

ARE ATROCITIES ABERRATIONS?

If only the visible atrocities are perceived then the extent of the atrocities prevalent in society are perceived to be negligible and the perpetrators are believed to be only a few deranged persons.

❑ Findings from study of NSS officers

The common belief was that rape, dowry harassment and wife-beating occurred only in cases of a few maladjusted and inhuman persons. Thus the extent of the perceived atrocities remains substantially below the reality. This is more so because the atrocities are not reported or because the atrocities are invisible - only physical brutality is understood to be an atrocity.
DEMARcation BETWEEN CONCEPT AND MANIFESTATION:

❑ Inter-related aspects of the gender system

Deprivation, discrimination and different forms of atrocities are all linked to one another and are manifestations of the gender ideology. The fact is that only some women may be raped, or only some may face wife-beating but such incidents are the fall-out of women's status in general. Specific roles and situational context that individual women are placed in may result in rape of one and beating of another.

❑ Integrated Strategy

Combating the gender system involves an integrated strategy where discrimination deprivation and different forms of atrocities would be addressed through a holistic rather than segmented approach in which only the specific impact like illiteracy, income augmentation or dowry harassment is sought to be redressed. As such, anti-dowry campaigners would also automatically campaign against wife-beating and eve-teasing etc. Thus the state on its own, only through legal remedies, policies and schemes, would not be in a position to combat the social malaise of women's underdevelopment.

❑ Finding from study of NSS Officers

Dowry, manifesting as dowry harassment and dowry death, was perceived to be a problem by many programme officers. Dowry exchange as a practice, which did not involve dowry demand, was not perceived to be an issue. However, in order to combat demand for dowry, the very concept of dowry needs to be contested. Subjugation and intimidation may not be visible as physical brutality, but these do operate as subtle and latent pressures. These pressures are blatantly expressed as the cause of preferring sex determined pregnancies. A common saying is that spend Rs. 500/- now on a sex determination test to save Rs. 50,000/- later on a daughter's dowry. Moreover, forceful and better laws were expected
to uplift women's situation, according to 37 per cent. Another 18 per cent opined that the strategy should be focused on raising women's awareness about government schemes.

**PERPETRATORS AND VICTIMS FRAMEWORK :**

- **Male or Female perpetrators**
  Separate understanding of different atrocities (dowry, rape) and segmentation between women's access, participation and atrocities results in attributing the perpetrator status first to individuals (rather than the social process or practices) and secondly, to men in some spheres and to women in others.

- **Findings from study of NSS Officers :**
  In dowry harassment, mothers-in-law and sisters-in-law were blamed, for rape, men were blamed. No doubt, the act is committed by men in one situation and by women in another. However, the point is that these men and women are only enacting their role placements. Home is the domain of the women and as the 'patriarchal woman', the mother-in-law promotes the prevailing values of society. The perpetrator may be an individual woman, but the sanction is given by the larger society. Even in individual homes tacit acknowledgment of specific behavior is provided by all members of the family. The problem arises when dowry harassment is seen as a specific incident rather than the result of an on-going societal process.

- **Burden on Women**
  Since women faced problems and were also perceived to be perpetrators of other women's subjugation, the focus of the NSS officers' strategy was to make women aware, raise their social consciousness and target them for redressing women's situation rather than involve the community on all these fronts.
Recognizing women's unfavorable status and the need to increase women's access to opportunities, the attempt is to make visible and combat those conditions which continue to restrict women's opportunities to attain a favourable status.

The gender system needs to be combated not only through its instruments of which men and women are both a part, but also through various institutions (family, education, religion, politics etc.), norms, values, practices of the gender system which propagate elements such as child preference, male inheritance, masculinity, female chastity, the dowry system etc. These features of the gender system have to be understood along with their linkage with one another so that women's unfavourable conditions may be combated. Partial comprehension of women's conditions restricts their problems to issues such as illiteracy, lack of economic autonomy or physical insecurity. This in turn leads to a strategy where literacy for women, legal measures, laws or social awareness in themselves are expected to improve women's situation. Therefore, incomplete and ideologically biased understanding, will no doubt lead to an ineffective strategy.

Therefore, the main focus of the manual is to lay down parameters for a holistic, correct and historical understanding of the gender issue.
The manual is divided into three parts.

The introduction deals with the scope and the need for the manual.

- Section I discusses the gender ideology and raises issues and concerns of gender justice and women's development.
- Section II deals with the impact of the detrimental gender system on women.
- Section III provides strategies for intervention in the field.

Each module represents an aspect of the issue and technically each can be implemented separately in the field. However, the manual represents a perspective which requires a holistic, integrated and interrelated approach. Thus each module acquires importance in the context of the others.

The manual provides for a two-fold implementation - first in the context of sensitizing NSS youths to gender issues and ideology (in detail) to aim for a gender just society (section I and II).

2. Secondly, determine the NSS unit perspective (read module on NGO intervention).

3. Then, understand/survey the locality of intervention (read tentative NSS strategy) by interacting with the community to determine specific areas for intervention and the nature of the strategy to be used. (refer section III)

Context specific needs of particular NSS units, such as sensitization on sex determination, encouraging women’s participation in local political processes etc. would determine the specific training module and associated programme schedules for each unit

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2 Trainers can also refer to other available manuals such as The Gender trainers manual prepared by Shakti sponsored by Ford Foundation and Gender Trainers manual prepared by OXFAM, U.K.
Format of the Modules

1. Each module starts by listing the objectives of the module. These are the concerns to which both the NSS youth and the larger communities have to be sensitized.

2. Participation methods and material to be used have been identified. However, the facilitator may rely on other participation methods and tools to initiate the participant’s involvement. Similar methods and tools can also be used in the locality. These can be referred to from pages (11 TO 18).

3. A facilitator’s note at the beginning of each module identifies the thrust the facilitator can adopt and includes pointers to disseminate information.

4. The concept being discussed is explained, its existing situation debated, in the context of women's development and gender justice. The prevalent strategies dealing with the issues are also mentioned. Along with this a strategy and role of the NSS youth in the context of the specific issue are given.

FACILITATING DISSEMINATION OF MODULES

PARTICIPATORY METHODS

In order to involve the participants and even members of the larger community, the facilitator can use some or all of the participatory methods mentioned. Though each method is listed separately, the facilitator should use them in combination for maximum impact. For instance, the issues raised in role plays need to be highlighted through a lecture discussion. Then the emerging relevant concerns can be put across through slogans and exhibitions, to generate awareness among other members of the educational institution, the panchayat and the community.
Short Lecture and Discussion

The facilitator introduces the issues in short. These issues are then discussed by raising questions or giving opinions. The facilitator then concludes the discussion by summarising the important points.

Discussion

Specific information can be provided and the issue solved by discussion within the group. Care should be taken to focus the discussion on the related topic and linkages should be built to dovetail the specific issues of the module with other modules.

Group discussion

For full involvement of the group, an issue can be debated in smaller groups. Group conclusions can then be presented by the group leader to the larger gathering, which can then be debated or discussed in the full house.

Debates

Debating is a method to provide the participants with a detailed and perceptive proficiency in the issues. This should be encouraged not only among the NSS volunteers but also among other students and thus promote an environment of gender sensitization.

Role Play

Through this medium the participants are provided with roles to enact in a prescribed setting. Discussion is then held on the issues thrown up by the situation and not on the characterization or the enactment of the roles. The facilitator is only to create the character roles and a situation, which the participants will enact according to their understanding e.g. a case of dowry harassment brought for settlement before the Panchayat. The roles needed may be various panchayat members (landlord sarpanch, an illiterate Harijan woman, an old lady from the land-owning class, a trader and a Scheduled Caste labourer), the victim of dowry harassment, and a couple of family members etc. The dialogue and scenes would be decided by the participants themselves.
Case study of an incident, personality and experience

In order to put across a point, case studies can be presented by the facilitator. Attention should be drawn more to the issues such as the strategy adopted for attaining the goal, than to the narration.

The participants can also be encouraged to present case studies which can then be discussed by the group.

Slide/film Viewing

The facilitator can also suggest films or show slides to put across a certain concern e.g. film "Manthan" can provide an experience on dairy co-operatives and self-employment.

Questions and answers

The trainer can also initiate discussions by raising certain controversial questions such as “sex determination is a useful method of population control” to evoke a response from the participants.

Involvement of eminent personalities

Certain sections/issues can be highlighted by inviting people well versed in specific fields e.g. information on schemes or laws can be provided by a government official or a lawyer respectively, or dowry law can be discussed by inviting someone who is fighting a dowry case in court.

Slogan/Exhibitions

Participation and involvement can be improved by giving the participants tasks such as coining creative slogan or holding exhibitions on issues.

Exercises

Such as jotting ones views, brain storming i.e. verbalizing immediate thoughts on an issue, etc. help to pinpoint perceptions and to involve all the participants.
Communication tools are a medium that make presentation of information concepts and processes effective by maximising assimilation through the senses: seeing, hearing, touching. Communication tools help people to see, understand and remember information. The inclusion of sensory communication is more effective than verbal communication alone in training and teaching. For instance, it is estimated that in verbal communication alone, 90 per cent of the message is misinterpreted or easily forgotten. The addition of proper sensory means to verbalisation, increases attention to approximately 50 per cent, whereas with participation retention increases above 70 per cent. A basic understanding of instructional material assists the facilitator to determine and select tools that will give the best results in presenting certain ideas, concepts and messages.

### Communication Tools

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<td>□ Charts</td>
<td>□ Flipcharts</td>
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<td>□ Graphs</td>
<td>□ Flannel board</td>
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<td>□ Pictures/Photographs</td>
<td>□ Blackboard</td>
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<td>□ Bulletin board display</td>
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<td>books, manuals, syllabi,</td>
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<td>□ Sound slide sets</td>
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<td>□ Television</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ Motion picture</td>
<td>□ Interactive computer programmes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Enhancing the effectivity of communication tools**

1. The presentation should be simple. For instance in a poster a single sketch may be used along with a sentence containing the message, rather than a complexity of sketches.
2. The lettering and visuals should be simple yet large enough to be viewed by the entire audience.
3. When using these tools, the presenter should be facing and talking to the group and not facing the board or the poster.

4. The facilitator should be careful not to block the view of the material presented.

5. Communication tools should highlight the messages to be conveyed, and not become the centre of attention themselves. Thus if a film is shown, its message should be discussed and made clear rather than letting it be an item of entertainment only.

6. Focus on communication tools (posters, flip chart) when a specific message conveyed by them is discussed.

**Communication Tools Aid in**: 

1. Presenting information

2. Persuading and suggesting

3. Drawing attention

4. Dissuading

5. Advertising ideas and concepts

**Communication tools discussed here are**:

1. Black board.

2. Flip chart.

3. Posters.
4. Flannel board

5. Visual media (Slides, T.V., film)

**Blackboard**

The chalkboard is a well-known and widely used teaching aid. It has become a permanent fixture of classrooms, and is almost always available as the basic means of presentation. It supplements and blends well with all other forms of visual material.

Uses of a Chalkboard

1. Writing lists, summaries, figures, formulas, and key words or ideas.
2. Presenting drawings, sketches, maps, diagrams, or graphs.
3. Displaying ready-made visuals, pictures, notices or announcements.

**Flipchart**

It consists of a series of visuals drawn on large sheets of paper/card-board fastened together at the top. These are turned over or "flipped" one at a time as the presentation is made.

**Using the Flipchart**

The idea or topic to be conveyed should be sequential (i.e. process, steps, procedures, directions etc.).

Intervening in the community (module on tentative NSS strategy) can be depicted through a flip chart. Besides the wordage, sketches, catchy phrases etc. can be used in a flip chart series. The first flip chart can contain the message to be conveyed i.e. method of intervening in the community: or organizing the community. (Page 349).

The second flip chart can contain information on defining the community. Subsequent flip charts can provide the following information:

1. Initial survey of the community/locality.
2. Identifying the community leaders
3. Familiarity with the community
4. Identifying community concerns

5. Listing community resources

6. Initiating intervention (Refer to module on tentative NSS strategy)

Thus the major points of intervening in the community need to be identified and divided into a sequence. Each sequence contains one part of the idea.

**Material Required to create a flip chart**

Brown paper or any similar material. Colours, water colour brushes, ruler, pencil, eraser, scissors, mounting material, i.e. screws with bolts, wooden slates, tape; wire rings, etc. lettering aids, i.e., leroy lettering set, transfer types, etc.

**Constructing a Flip-chart**

1. Assemble the sheets/pages in proper sequence and fasten them together with staples.

2. Choose any of the following methods to bind the flip chart.
   a. Stitch with binding cloth or masking tape
   b. Wooden slates with screws and bolts
   c. Wire rings or cord.

**Posters**

It is a method of communicating an idea, message, or instruction to a mainly mobile audience. It is a visual combination of a bold design, colour, and a message which is intended to catch and hold the attention of the passer-by long enough to implant a specific impression. Effective posters must convey their messages fast and direct to the intended audience.

**Effective Poster**

1. It is focused on one main idea or message. For instance, providing a message on the impact of religious extremism on women. A poster may only focus on the impact of multiple child births on the women's health. This should not be confused with other spheres of maternal health such as unhygienic practices, lack of infrastructure/services etc.

2. The poster should be forceful and clear.
3. The message should be well identified and simple.

4. A vivid and colourful image will help to convey the idea quickly.

5. The headline should be concise and direct to the point. Catchy phrases can be used.

![Flannel Board Image]

**Flannel Board**

It is a large piece of flannel stretched over a board such as plywood or heavy cardboard and pinned or stapled at the back.

Mounted pictures, letters, and other visual material that has strips of sandpaper at the back can be attached to the flannel board.

Making a flannel board is a relatively simple process. Inexperienced trainers or even trainees can participate in the construction of the flannel board. The material needed in its construction is readily available and can be easily acquired in the locality.

The utility of a flannel board is that it uses readily available and indigenous material. (For instance, providing women some skills for generating income such as rope making or
handicrafts. This material can be shown to the audience in its various stages of completion by sticking it on the flannel board.

**Material used for constructing a flannel board.**

Plywood or heavy cardboard, flannel in a light or dark shade, stapler, knife, or a pair of scissors, coarse sandpaper, art material such as cartolina, colored paper, pental pen, tempera colors, lettering guides, glue, masking tape, pictures, newspapers, and magazine clippings.

**Visual Media**

Visual material such as slides, films and videos are among the effective methods of communication. The NSS unit may not be able to prepare any of these on its own but all this material is available from certain NGOs (AVAHI in Mumbai, environment societies in Chandigarh, Shimla etc. various Government departments). Films such as Damul, Lekin can be borrowed from video shops. Before the viewing of these films, the facilitator must provide a short introduction to the theme and the message that the visual medium will convey. After viewing, the facilitator can hold a group exercise as included in module II where the audience may be asked to write their opinions and a discussion should be initiated in accordance with the aim which is sought to be achieved.
SECTION I

GENDER IDEOLOGY AND ITS PRACTICE

This section deals with issues relating to women's development and gender justice. It discusses the underlying assumptions of the gender system. The main assumption of the gender system is to take biological differences (male-female) to be the criterion for male-female role allocation, access to resources and ideologically determined power position.

Thus roles allocated to people - husband, wife, mother-in-law, etc.; values such as chastity, fidelity etc. and institutions such as family, religion, mass media etc., all promote the socially accepted gender differentials.

Social and political processes influencing gender issues refer to religious, ethnic and caste matters that use female placements in society to further their own influence. Religious fundamentalists stress on sexual control of the female (chastity) so that purity of the religion can be maintained. Similarly, in a region where casteism is well entrenched sexual exploitation of lower caste women by upper caste men may be well accepted and a means to subjugate the lower castes.

Any attempt to change the existing conditions must involve both men and women and undermine the assumptions of patriarchy - stereotyped male and female roles, norms and values that advocate male child preference and male dominance, practices like dowry, purda etc. that maintain patriarchy.

Thus the gender system manifesting either as patriarchy or matriliney shaped by caste, religion, conflicts has to be undermined in its totality.
ISSUES IN WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT AND GENDER JUSTICE

OBJECTIVES

• TO PROVIDE AWARENESS REGARDING THE FUNCTIONING OF THE DOMINANT GENDER IDEOLOGY
• TO SENSITIZE THE PARTICIPANTS TO ISSUES AND CONCERNS THAT AFFECT WOMEN’S DEVELOPMENT

METHODS

Discussion, Debates, Lectures, Brain-storming, Debating, Popular Cinema.

MATERIAL

Blackboard, Transparencies, Projector and Video

FACILITATOR’S NOTE

This module raises some of the core issues that need to be addressed, before women’s unfavorable placement in society can be redressed. These issues provide the basis to all other modules. For instance, socially assigned male-female stereotyped roles determine male-female access to education, health, employment etc. Similarly it is the role of a wife to be subservient to her husband and the in-laws. These roles, supported by institutions such as the family, media and religion allow practices like wife-beating to

Contd..
be accepted as normal, since a woman must be tolerant and abiding and a husband manly. The following material can be used as the basis to hold debates and group discussions to create awareness and sensitization to women’s unfavorable conditions. Discussion can be initiated through the group exercises given. Then the material given in the text can be used for sensitization and also for raising the relevant concerns.

WHAT ARE THE CONCERNS REGARDING WOMEN’S DEVELOPMENT?

- Nutrition and health status, especially reproductive and maternal health
- Literacy levels and nature of education
- Employment: access and productive earnings
- Political participation: nature and extent
- Decision-making both in the home and in society.
- Atrocities that women face, such as rape, eve-teasing, wife-beating, dowry harassment/death, female foeticide.
- Women’s burden of fetching fuel, fodder and water.
- Spread of HIV.

WHAT ARE THE ISSUES INVOLVED IN WOMEN’S DEVELOPMENT?

- **SHOULD WOMEN HAVE EQUALITY WITH MEN?**
  
  Can women and men be equated?
  
  “After all each has separate and different biological and social functions to perform.”

- **HOW CAN WOMEN BE EMPOWERED?**
  
  “Will increased access to resources and increased participation in politics and employment enable women to be empowered.”

- **ARE MEN TO BE BLAMED FOR WOMEN’S INFERIOR STATUS?**
  
  OR are women their own worst enemies?
THE CONTEXT

Our society is organised around some given parameters and aims, the functionality of which is ensured by a set of systems and institutions. For instance, marriage and family life are ingrained aspects of the Indian society. Girls and boys get married and start their own families, living within the prescribed norms that determine choice of marriage partner, their roles, code of conduct (fidelity, chastity, girl’s subservience to her husband and in-laws), lifestyle and practices (such as purda, male inheritance, dowry etc.) One of the most pervasive and widespread codes of organisation that affects all aspects of social functioning is the gender system. It is patriarchy that provides the life force to the unfavourable conditions that women face.

WHAT IS THE GENDER SYSTEM?

- Male-Female differentiation

  The practice of male-female differentiation forms the core of a gender-based system. Biological sex differences which are real, are extended to be the criteria for social placement.

- Allocation of roles

  In any organisation or society roles are attributed for specific functions. In a patriarchy, roles are allocated not only in accordance with the biological functions (procreation), but are misappropriated according to the values prescribed to males and females. Within patriarchy dominating and controlling social functions are prescribed for the males whereas supportive functions are the preview of the females. Thus, by birth, the males are inheritors of resources, performing the functions of earners and by birth the females are family caretakers, performing the functions of child nurturing and running the household.

Contd..
Gender-based hierarchical placement

Along with role allocations, certain norms and values, along with practices and beliefs, further promote the male-female superior-inferior hierarchy. In fact, in certain communities, women are not even expected to go on pilgrimages since they should not aspire to go to heaven. In other words, a superordinate-subordinate hierarchy is established on the basis of sex differences, whereby males have access to land holdings, inheritance, skills, productive employment and the associated high status. Women, on the other hand are denied even life (female infanticide/foeticide), receive poor nutrition and medical care, inferior education and suffer atrocities such as eve-teasing, rape, wife-beating etc.

ELEMENTS OF THE GENDER SYSTEM

♦ Role stereotyping

The female biological functions of reproduction are extended to rearing of children and catering to household work. On the other hand the role of the male is to provide for the family.
Accordingly, both sexes are socialized to these predetermined but separate roles. The given roles become fixed. Even in a society where both men and women are called upon to earn, the primary roles associated with social values have remained unchanged. Thus even if women earn an income, their responsibility towards household chores remains undiminished.

♦ Inheritance and descendancy on the basis of sex

Under the value based hierarchical sex differentiation in patriarchy, the male is the recipient of the family lineage and inheritance. Thus, sons ensure continuance of the family since descendancy is through the male and since the responsibility of earning for the family rests on the male, he is justifiably the inheritor of family resources - both financial and in terms of property.

♦ Child preference on the basis of sex

In the existing patriarchal system the male child is preferred to the female child. Not only does the family draw its lineage from the male, society endorses inheritance to sons only. The corresponding social status availed by the male due to his being the inheritor, the protector of
the family and its interest, the “doer”, a male child is valued. Moreover, it is the sons who are an old age insurance for the parents, since the daughters get married and leave the family. Besides, daughters imply expenses such as dowry. Thus a male child is preferred by society. In fact, male child preference is so strong that in certain areas a wife who does not produce a male child is called ‘Kulachani’, destroyer of the family, since the family name will not be carried forward.

**HOW DOES THE GENDER SYSTEM FUNCTION?**

The gender system finds social acceptance and practice due to the following:

1. **The assumptions of the gender system are taken for granted.**

The biological sex differences are accepted as the correct indicators for differential male-female access and participation in society. If girls have to bear and thus rear children, they should remain within the home and learn skills needed to run the house. If boys have to earn, they should be well educated and exposed to the outside world where they have to practice their skills.
2. The gender system has produced certain practices which reflect the assumptions of patriarchy and propagate the acceptance of the biased gender values.

There are practices such as dowry, purda, male child preference etc. These practices are perceived to be legitimate and justified in different degrees, in different communities.

3. The gender system functions through what has been described as the “anonymous social mechanism”

These are the institutions of the family, education, religion, politics etc., which through social norms and values promote and determine social functioning according to the ideology of patriarchy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FUNCTIONING OF THE GENDER SYSTEM</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IDEOLOGY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender differentiation. (In a patriarchy male superordination and female subordination.)</td>
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WHAT ARE SOME OF THE PRACTICES OF THE GENDER SYSTEM?

Practices such as purda, dowry exchange, male determined pregnancies etc. reinforce and maintain the gender system. Though on their own these practices may not seem harmful, but their cumulative impact and the ideology behind them maintain and perpetuate female subordination.
Some practices may have been diluted, yet they have promoted a gender differential hierarchy.

- **Dowry Exchange**

At the time of marriage or in connection with the marriage, gifts provided to the groom’s family by the bride’s family constitute dowry.

Traditionally, dowry provided a bride with household goods and utensils needed to facilitate the running of the home. These items facilitated the females’ stereotyped functions of home caretakers and nurtures. In recent times the scope of dowry exchange has been enhanced to include cash, consumer items like television, washing machine, scooters etc. varying from caste, strata, region etc.

Common perceptions regarding the justifications for dowry exchange need to be countered.
Popular Perception:

“Since the groom provides a house and running costs, the bride provides household items.”

Countering the perception:

- If the bride provides a home and running costs, the bridegroom is called a “Ghar Jamai” and accorded a derogatory status.
- Moreover, a bride may not be in a position to provide a house, since a girl does not get any property which is considered a social right of sons only.
- Even when the boy and the girl contribute equally to the house and its running (if the girl is earning) the bride still brings a dowry.

Popular Perception:

(i) “Since the girl is going to a new home, the dowry caters to her needs and comforts.”
(ii) “A female being a non-earner in need of protection and shelter, is a liability which the father has transferred to the son-in-law for safe keeping. Thus dowry is a show of respect to the groom and his family and a token to share the burden of looking after the daughter.”

Countering the Perception:

Such a perception promotes the notion that a daughter, being incapable of looking after herself, has to be provided for and should not be a burden on her in-laws. The need is to make girls self-dependent giving them access to skilled education and encouraging productive employment along with combating the gender ideology. Women’s education and employment does not ensure the eradication of dowry.

The perception that a woman needs shelter and must accord due respect and subjugation to her husband and the in-laws remains ingrained. In one instance, a woman well placed in a job, married her subordinate. Not only was dowry given but the woman was harassed for her pay and forced to be submissive. Thus, along with women’s access to finances, a change in the people’s attitude and thinking towards women’s placement in society is essential.
Popular Perception:

“Property is a son’s right and dowry is a girl’s share in lieu of property.”

Countering the perception:

Why is a girl given dowry? She should not only be given due access to parental property, but also made capable of handling the property and being a rightful owner.

Thus exchange of dowry:

1. Endorses women’s role within the domain of the household as caretakers and nurturers.
2. Women are seen as liabilities because the work which they perform like maintenance of household, cattle, working at the farm etc., is perceived to be non-productive and not seen as remunerative. Therefore, compensation is justified in the form of dowry.
3. Dowry exchange reinforces both the male - female typed roles where male is the earner and the women the caretaker and the ensuing superiority of the male over the female.
1. Girls are viewed as a liability - an expense and sex determination tests are undertaken for begetting male children.

2. Dowry is perceived as a right by the girl’s in-laws. Thus at times it leads to justification of dowry harassment and dowry demands.

3. Even when girls are educated and earn an income, they have to be given a dowry. Thus even achievements such as education and employment are negated by the practice of dowry - A girl continues to be viewed as a liability, undermining egalitarian efforts to enhance women’s status.

4. Dowry exchange commodifies both the bride and the groom. The grooms thus have a ‘price tag’ according to their occupation, caste and status and can be bought for the right price. Similarly, a bride can find a match on the basis of the dowry her family is ready to pay, making marriage a market transaction.

- **Specific rites performed by males**

  All last rites at the time of death, are performed by the male. Among the Hindus, according to religious beliefs ‘Moksha’ can be achieved only if the son performs these rituals. Similarly in marriage ‘Kanya Daan’ can only be done by a male. Such practices reinforce the placement and importance of the male justifying his superiority.

- **Female circumcision**

  The value of female chastity is promoted by the practice of female circumcision in certain communities. It restricts female sexual autonomy, and relegates it to the control of the husband.
Practice of purda

Is another practice that supports the value of female chastity and fidelity. Since these values are to be protected, females are restricted within the walls of the home. Due to this practice, after puberty females may no longer be sent to school, allowed to be trained in skills or even to work outside their homes. Thus work is undertaken within the home premise- both to protect their chastity and also to cater to their primary role of home caretakers. Such work falls under the realm of contracted work which is highly exploitative, brings low wages with ten to fourteen hours of work in a day and no guarantee of further work. Moreover, the practice of purda restricts women’s exposure and avenues by limiting their movement to the patriarchal home. Even access to health care may be denied to women, since a doctor (usually a male) may undertake a physical check-up.

Karva chauth / hoi asthami / lax mi mata / sheetala mata

Karva chauth : Fast is observed by the wife for the husband’s long life.
Sheetala Mata, Laxmi Mata, Hoi Asthami : Fast by the mother for the welfare of children, especially sons.
Rituals, ceremonies or fasts specific to roles (wife or husband fasting for health of spouse; mother fasting for son etc.) reinforce the social placement, functions and values of that particular role in accordance with the gender system. The woman, in keeping with her role of a nurturer to the family, undertakes fasts / rituals for the benefit of her family. Thus these fasts are dedicated to her role of a wife and mother i.e. to take care of the home, children and her husband.

Sex determined pregnancies

With the help of sex determination tests, unwanted female foetuses are aborted and male foetuses retained. Similarly, with religious blessing, rituals or quackery, efforts are made to get a male offspring. This practice reflects the male child preference and the corresponding low value placed on a girl child.

SOME VALUES OF PATRIARCHY

Along with stereotyped roles propagating the male norm, the gender system is supported by certain typical values, some of which are:

Chastity

The value of chastity pertains to the concept of female “purity” in terms of her sexual behaviour, prior to marriage. According to the norms of chastity a females associations and conduct is regulated by the kinship, religion, caste or ascriptive group as the case may be. Individual females and even males do not have autonomy vested in them to decide a marriage partner. However, the female is more curtailed and regulated in her conduct since there is a premium on female “purity” prior to marriage whereas the same condition is not applicable to men. Chastity is essential for maintaining purity in descendancy, which is a pivotal element of the gender system. Thus female chastity is highly valued, restricting women’s control over their own sexuality and choices.
Fidelity

Sexual conduct after marriage is regulated through values such as fidelity. The value of being faithful to one’s husband or wife. Though it encompasses both women and men in the context of maintaining the vows of loyalty in marriage it is normatively binding on women. A double standard is reflected in the conduct code for men and for women. A male is accepted to be ‘fallible’ to the charms of women - it is women who are perceived as the enticers - Hindu Mythology is replete with instances of women enticing men. Kings and even sages. Similarly, Islamic fundamentalists prescribe a code of conduct for women to be covered from head to toe so that no part of their body can lure a man who is perceived as biologically susceptible to female charms, thus exempt from severe control of their conduct. On the other hand a chaste female is expected to protect herself and thus be responsible for her. For women, chastity and fidelity undermine their autonomy and promote inequitable relations between spouses.

Manly men and feminine women

The manliness of men gives importance to physical power and in specific, physical
superiority over women, the exercise of which, within marriage makes for physical intimidation (beating) of the wife an acceptable norm in society. Some popular perceptions are: ‘Men are so powerful that they do not realise their strength.’ ‘What sort of man is he that he never beats his wife’. These perceptions vary in varying social contexts. Some of the traits valued in women are: to be gentle, caring, docile, and submissive. Women are expected to be the emotional anchor of the family, to absorb and endure the harshness and problems of family life, without letting it affect the children and the men. Thus, she endures all kinds of hardships within the family-wife-beating, dowry harassment, infidelity of the husband, double work burden, lack of personal resources etc., all in consonance with the stereotyped gender roles.

In addition to the elements, values and practices supporting the gender system, institutions such as the family, religion and caste predominantly discriminate on the basis of gender and provide the context within which roles, norms and values are practiced. Not only this, the systemic institutions such as legal, political education, media and cultural are also impregnated with patriarchal notions. These systems institutionalize social placements in accordance with the norms of the gender system. Therefore, there is a need to de-institutionalise patriarchal notions through gender just social transformation.

Family

The family is the premier institution of socialization whereby the gender hierarchies with their typed roles, values and practices are inducted, maintained and strengthened within the individual family members. Girls are brought up to be housewives, encouraged to play with dolls and keep house. It is in the family, that girls are taught to be good mothers, tolerant wives and submissive daughters. Boys are brought up to be adventurous, exposed to interaction outside the family life and become productive earners. Also, it is within the family that male descendancy and inheritance is practiced. Folk sayings like ‘property in a
daughter’s name is property lost’ reflect family values in which an individual is socialized. Sayings to a girl like ‘If you take butter, ghee or milk you will grow a moustache’ or ‘A girl cannot digest such food’ provide evidence of the discrimination that girls face. The family is the demarcating sphere within which the women’s lives revolve. The so-called ‘public sphere’ is outside the women’s domain. Moreover, the sanctity ascribed to the family disallows any intervention in its affairs, allowing for the continuation of wife-beating, dowry harassment and female subjugation.

- Religion

Religions also socialize members of the community to gender differential functioning. All religions support the gender typed roles where women are confined to the tasks of the household and rearing of children. Female chastity and seclusion/purda become more important where communal tensions exist for protecting religious/ethnic/caste purity, as the case may be.

- Formal education

Maintains a systematic division in male-female access to education, according to typed roles. Thus in all girl’s schools certain options such as commerce or economics may not be
available. This, in turn, restricts women’s access to and participation in skilled employment. Moreover, the educational content, instruction and environment reinforce gender values, norms and roles.

- **Politics**

Politics when it institutionalises aspects of gender system enlarges its reach and range, and also make these aspects invisible. For instance, in the infamous Shah Bano case, the Constitution was amended by the ruling party to gain political support of Muslim fundamentalists at the cost of oppressing Muslim women. Political support on the basis of religion became the issue, circumventing women’s subordinate position, thereby taking it as normal.

Even the entry of religious fundamentalist groups in politics provides them a large forum from which to prescribe conduct and dress codes for women. For instance, in Punjab the militants had prescribed that women should cover their heads, wear only salwar kameez, should have no adornments of bangles or bindis etc. Thus women’s freedom of dress was curtailed to what the militants considered desirable.

- **Caste System**

The concept of purity and pollution is central to the caste system. Women are perceived to be the vanguard of purity, both as reproducers of caste members and as nurturers who are directly involved in family activity of rituals, food preparation, fasts and festivals. These customs are maintained in the higher castes which through these distinctions and avoidance of pollution from the lower castes reflect their caste hierarchy. Women’s ‘biological impurity’ has traditionally restricted their access to higher learning and places of worship, endorsing their secondary status within the family. Widows are considered impure and are socially ostracised. They are denied participation in normal family life and restrictive norms of food, life style and conduct are imposed on them.
However, since female chastity/purity is valued both in the caste hierarchy and patriarchy, violation of women and its threat is an effective method to maintain the subservience both of women and subordinate groups.

Any violation of the norms of purity is stringently dealt with. Though both women and men violators are punished, women are dealt with more harshly, as are men of the lower castes.

- **Mass media**

With the advance of communication technology, the impact of the media has been magnified. Standardized and stereotyped patriarchal notions and values find continuous expression through the T.V., radio, newspapers and advertisements.

Current popular Hindi cinema portrays women’s bodies as commodities, yet eulogizing the roles of the subservient daughter-in-law, where errant girls become sati-savitris and family values of honour, kinship etc. are dutifully adorned by the respective roles.
The practice of male-female differentiation results in structural deprivation of the female (of life - female foeticide/infanticide - of access to health and medical services, inheritance, education etc.); female discrimination at the behavioural level (unemployment, low productivity skills, health care, public life etc.) and infliction of atrocities (dowry harassment, eve-teasing, wife-beating, rape etc.). The structural conditions affect society as a whole whereas behavioural manifestations affect individuals in specific situations.

### DEPRIVATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SPHERE</th>
<th>TYPE OF DEPRIVATION</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>- Girls may not be educated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- May be educated upto only 8th/10th class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>- Denial of life (female foeticide/infanticide).</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Medical care may be denied to women (illness may not be treated, no immunization, home deliveries etc.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>- Women may not be allowed to work and hold jobs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property</td>
<td>- Females may be denied a share in inheritance of parental property and assets.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### DISCRIMINATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SPHERE</th>
<th>TYPE OF DISCRIMINATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>- Girls may be sent to local/regional schools rather than model/English medium schools where their brothers may be studying.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Girls may not be sent regularly to school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills</td>
<td>- Girls may be encouraged to acquire home-oriented skills with little market value (home science cooking, social science).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>- Girls may be given inferior nutritional intake.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Differential maternal care for female and male children.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Females may be treated by hakims/quacks.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Medical attention may be delayed in case of females.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Employment
- Soft jobs even in professions (female I.A.S. as social welfare, cultural secretaries, MBAs in personal departments etc.)
- Wage and technology differentiation (for instance in Ludhiana, female hosiery workers work on Indian machinery with 1/5 of the productivity of the Japanese machines on which males work).
- Females may be largely contractual and unorganised sector workers.

ATROCITIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LIFE PHASES</th>
<th>TYPE OF ATROCITY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-birth</td>
<td>- Sex-selective abortion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Coerced pregnancy (for example, mass rape in war, during riots, caste rapes).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infancy</td>
<td>- Female infanticide.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Emotional and physical abuse of females.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Differential access to food and medical care for girl infants (death from malnutrition).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Girlhood</td>
<td>- Child marriage.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Genital mutilation.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Sexual abuse by family members and strangers.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Child prostitution.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adolescence</td>
<td>- Courtship violence (If the couple are from different castes, religions or strata, the male and at times even the female faces death, beating and ostracization).</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Sexual abuse in work place.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Rape.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Sexual harassment.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Forced prostitution.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reproductive/</td>
<td>- Dowry harassment and murder.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marital</td>
<td>- Abuse of women by intimate male partners (wife beating), marital rape.</td>
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<tr>
<td>period</td>
<td>- Partner homicide.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Psychological abuse.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Sexual abuse in work place.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Sexual harassment, rape.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elderly</td>
<td>- Abuse of widows (mother forced by sons to take the blame for dowry murder).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### EXISTING GENDER DIFFERENTIALS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spheres</th>
<th>Family</th>
<th>Society</th>
<th>Economy</th>
<th>Polity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Roles</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Men</strong></td>
<td>Earners</td>
<td>Responsibility to support and protect the family</td>
<td>Productive workers</td>
<td>Leaders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Women</strong></td>
<td>Nurturers, Caretakers</td>
<td>Uphold family values and cater to home needs</td>
<td>Subsidiary workers, Subordinates</td>
<td>Supporters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Practices</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Men</strong></td>
<td>Perform important rites: such as at the time of death, marriage etc.</td>
<td>Have independence, mobility in society.</td>
<td>Overtime work, Upward mobility, Get employed</td>
<td>Interest, Articulators, Rule, Adjudicators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Women</strong></td>
<td>Purda, Female Circumcision, Fasts (Karva chauth, Hoi Ashtami)</td>
<td>Are protected and movement is curtailed, Have to follow codes of conduct and dress</td>
<td>Fixed hours of work (No overtime), First to be retrenched, Part time/Contractual work, Denial of maternal leave/benefits</td>
<td>Followers, Restricted mobility and access</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Resources</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Men</strong></td>
<td>Property/assets, Education, Skill, Income</td>
<td>Social prestige and rank</td>
<td>Access to higher skills, Access to technology, Competitive wages, Access to credit, Can start business.</td>
<td>Access to power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Women</strong></td>
<td>Negligible Access to property income, Illiterate/Education in home science and related fields</td>
<td>Access to kinship resources</td>
<td>Access to Inferior technology, Skill stagnation, Low wages, Access to home based industry</td>
<td>Resources flow from male and kinship positions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Placements</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Men</strong></td>
<td>Head of the household</td>
<td>Community leaders, Community members</td>
<td>Productive Earners</td>
<td>Leaders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Women</strong></td>
<td>Extension of male members- mother, wife, daughter</td>
<td>Work and productivity remains invisible</td>
<td>Supplementary earners</td>
<td>Followers and subordinates.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
EXERCISE: RAISING ISSUES FOR GENDER AWARENESS

The aim of this module is to make students aware of the ideology of the gender system. In order to make them conversant with some of the on-going gender concerns, the facilitator can initiate debates, and group discussion sessions in which some of the well accepted premises regarding male-female positions in society are put to discussion.

Discussion among participants can be initiated by:

I. Asking the participants to think and then write, which are the roles performed by:
   (i) A wife:  (ii) A husband:  (iii) A mother-in-law:

Are these roles fair? Do they allow the same access or quality of participation to all individuals? (to money, in decision making, to earn, to health care, to move out, going to market, visiting people, to household assets etc.)

II. What values
   (a) are held in high esteem in the context of:
   (b) Should be held in high esteem in the context of:

   (i) A young woman:  (ii) A young man:

Some values are common to both but some are different. Why is that so?

Do these values restrict female access to health, skills or productive employment? (e.g. discernible female values like chastity may mean that women should remain within the walls of the home. Thus even qualified women may not be earners since they have to be home bound. Girl’s education after puberty may be stopped due to the same reasons etc.)

DEBATE

The facilitator can provide certain statements, questions, folk lore as issues of debate. Then the students can be divided into two or three groups as necessary to give arguments for their case. Some of these may be -

1. Nature ordains that women only reproduce (bear children) and only men produce (earn for the family)
2. Boys are necessary since they are an old age insurance for parents. "What good are girls - even at the time of death it is the sons who carry the body. Girls only sit and weep."
3. Can dowry exchange be practiced in society without dowry being demanded?
4. Sex determination tests are a boon to help beget male children.
5. i) Women are women's worst enemies
   ii) Men are women's worst enemies

Contd..
iii) It is the present social set-up which is harmful not only to women but also to men. After each discussion, the facilitator must sum up the main points made by each group. Then the facilitator must relate the outcome of the discussion to the issues raised in the module. Did the discussion lead to conclusions that endorsed adjustment in the existing role placements, values and practices? Stereotyped notions or roles must be questioned and their alternatives suggested. The discussions would not have much meaning unless they are placed in the context of the gender ideology and the students are made aware of how these roles, norms and practices are unfavourable to women. Sensitization must be on the core elements, socialization and practices of the gender ideology. Unless these social practices and institutions are undermined, women's unfavourable placement will continue.

FIELD EXERCISE

Further at the level of family and Village/Mohalla the students can calculate
1. The time spent by M/F on studying, on the job, doing house work, looking after siblings, cattle etc.
2. Extent of M/F access and control over resources (property, income, assets).
   Such an exercise will highlight the nature of M/F roles and associated access to skills, resources and power.

DEBATING POPULAR CINEMA

Volunteers can also be shown movies like “Dil wale Dulhaneya le jayenge”. Students should be asked to write down:
1. The values and impressions conveyed by roles of the
   (a) Hero      (b) Heroine      (c) Other lead actors.
2. Were these roles typical of the existing male-female placements? Did they convey real life roles? Do females have a ‘sheltered’ and restricted access to resources (skill, employment, assets etc.) Did the movie convey the lead female role to be eventually adjusting to the stereotyped notions of female social placements?
3. A discussion can be initiated on the above to highlight the differential male-female roles and expectations and how these are unfair in the manner listed under the impact of the gender ideology on pages 38 and 39.
SPECIFIC ISSUES FOR INTERVENTIONIST'S ATTENTION

In order to combat the gender system, not only do the interventionists need to be aware of the issues involved in the gender system but also to direct their efforts to specific spheres to combat the concrete impact of these issues. For instance, in order to undermine role stereotyping, the concept of role fluidity must be initiated and encouraged. Similarly, women need not be restricted to only being income augmentors for the family, rather by being productive earners, they can enhance their status which would also result in role fluidity.

SHOULD STEREOTYPED MALE-FEMALE ROLES BE CHALLENGED?

- **Role Fluidity**

Human biology in the existing socio-biological context has only affixed the biological function of procreation to respective sexes. All other roles are socially determined. Thus functions such as rearing children, earning for the family, performing household chores, partaking in familial, social or political decision making can be undertaken by members of either sex. Individual capacities can be harnessed according to the situation and need. Thus the roles can be inter-changeable among the people and in course of time. The role one sex performs can be shared or replaced by the other sex. Again the roles performed by individuals at one point of time need not be performed life long.

Thus role fluidity will help in combating the restricted and inferior social placement on the basis of sex. If women are to be productive earners, then they would be encouraged to imbibe market valued skills with high remuneration. Correspondingly, they will have to be provided with good health care, and nutrition, and domestic responsibilities will have to be shared.
CAN WOMEN EARN AN INCOME AND YET NOT BE PRODUCTIVE EARNERS?

- Income Augmentors v/s Productive Earners

Given the increasing economic demands, earning an income has become necessary for all individuals. However, women even upon entering the wage market, have remained restricted by the primary role assumptions of child rearing and housekeeping. They earn only to supplement the earnings of the menfolk since the burden of household chores and child care continue to be their sole responsibility.
Income Augmentation has an Effect on

- Exploitation:
  Jobs are undertaken on condition that their interference with domestic responsibilities is minimal, thus
  - *Such work may be undertaken which is home-bound (contractual work),*
  - *Jobs with fewer working hours (school teaching, part time work etc.) may be taken up.*
  - *Seasonal work (which disturbs the family set up only for a few days in a year) is preferred.*

  Jobs which are ad hoc or flexible are highly exploitative.

- Wastage of Potential

Earning only as a supplementary function, results in marketing of existing skills which are domestic in nature. If women’s potential as workers is harnessed according to their capacities i.e. they learn skills before entering the work force as part of their education like males and are encouraged to learn market valued skills then more women would join the labour force in various skilled categories with corresponding remuneration.

- Productive Workers

Women’s affiliation to the job is only to the extent of augmenting the family earnings. Professionalism, competence and satisfaction from work do not form part of the scheme. The sense of being productive builds confidence, self-esteem and self-worth. This allows for productive participation in all social spheres, and importantly, creates self-dependence.

WHY WOMEN’S SEXUAL SUBMISSION SHOULD BE CHALLENGED:

- Sexual and reproductive Autonomy V/s sexual submission

In the matter of female sexuality, women remain bound by male control. This restricts women’s autonomy, creating the following problems:
Reproduction and control remains outside the preview of women. Men decide whether to adopt contraception and the kind of contraceptives to be used. The absence of contraception leads to unwanted pregnancies affecting the health of the woman. If contraception is adopted, the choice of the contraceptive depends on the convenience of the male, rather than the suitability of the situation. Thus even if certain pills have side-effects, women are expected to take them.

In Indian society men have social leeway to have more than one sexual partners, along with controlling female sexuality. This results not only in sexual victimization of the woman, but also makes her susceptible to disease. If a man has AIDS then his wife is in no position to refrain from having sex with him. Very often, she is not even made aware of her husband's infection.

Moreover, practices like levirate marriage are common, whereby the widowed daughter-in-law cohabits with a brother-in-law and property remains within the same household.

ISSUES IN WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT AND GENDER JUSTICE

SHOULD WOMEN BE EQUATED WITH MEN? IS IT POSSIBLE AND IS IT DESIRABLE?

Biologically Determined Social roles

Given the socio-biological development, the biological sex differences which are real are misappropriated and made the determining factors in the social placement of males and females. In accordance to this perspective, males and females have separate and fixed roles in society. Male responsibility is fixed to earn and provide for the family. Thus they are the justifiable inheritors of family resources, recipients of skilled education and productive employment. Education or productive skills may be denied to women, since the roles of provider/earner do not fall in the realm of the female gender. On the other hand, women are domesticated merely to bearing and rearing children and performing household chores. The
gender system not only creates conditions for confining women to household tasks, but also provides them with opportunity to acquire skills in household management and the qualities of a good nurturer. The consequent implication is the denial of access to education, health, political power and gainful employment to women and enhanced conditions and opportunities for the males to have maximum access to resources with greater social and financial obligations and corresponding power and superiority.

Equality and Justice

Men are more favourably placed than women in their respective strata and regions due to the unequal distribution of resources. This systematic differentiation in terms of access to resources and status between men and women leads to the popular view that there ought to be equality of opportunity for both the genders. Thus the practice of gender equality/strives to provide women with the same rights and opportunities that men experience. This is problematic, for instance, equality is merely understood to mean equating women with men. This perspective in fact negates the biological differences which are real. The sex differences are real and taking them as the basis of gender differentiation and discrimination, results in role stereotyping. It is this typing of roles that restricts women’s access to resources. In every society roles have to be allocated but the roles must not be typed according to gender definitions. Therefore, these roles have to be fluid. Women can be decision-makers and implementers, men can be workers and caretakers. There are biological differences between the sexes, which need to be catered to. Women being the bearers of children, need special attention with respect to maternity care. In Canada, in one instance a police woman wanted to be transferred to a desk job from field duty, since she was pregnant. Her supervisor, accused her of wanting discriminatory treatment when employment rules demand both men and women be treated equally. When the women fell in danger of losing her baby, she filed a case against her supervisor’s ruling. She won her case, since the maternal state does require certain
safeguards. However, the moot point remains that this difference must not become the basis of gender differentiation. Equality with men may compound the belief (especially at the grassroot level) that it is in fact the biological determinism that ensures men to be the beneficiaries in the system and providing equality to women in accordance with men’s achievements is, then perceived to be discriminatory. It lends credence to the male v/s female contention for limited resources, totally belying the structural conditions and the gender system that provides the basis of differentiation on the criterion of biological attributes of sex.

Equating male opportunities to be availed of by females would not lead to gender justice on two counts. Firstly, because the gender differences have to be tackled as a system, manifesting in various forms, at different levels and degrees of which individual men and women both form part, and secondly, because men’s rights and opportunities in themselves are no parameters of human rights and development. The gender system has its basis in differentiation on biological sex categories. Differentiation on this criterion could manifest to favour or disfavour either of the sex categories. In a patriarchal society, the gender differentiating system functions with a detrimental effect on the female gender.

**ARE MEN TO BE BLAMED FOR WOMEN’S INFERIOR STATUS?**

- **Female and Male Victims**

Women are considered to be the victims of this gender system. This pertains to a two-fold popular assumption that only men are the perpetrators and only women the victims of the gender ideology. In a large number of situations, (rape, molestation, wife-beating) this may be the case, but in some cases women also are the perpetrators of the gender ideology. Mothers-in-laws and sisters-in-laws are in many cases the perpetrators of dowry demands, which result in dowry harassment and dowry death. On the other hand, men are also subjected to gender violence in situations where they are involved in flouting the fidelity or chastity of a woman,
especially when lower caste men are involved with upper caste women. Also in the context of dowry exchange, males are degraded and treated as a commodity with a price tag, to be bought with the most suitable dowry.

Both males and females are only performing roles allocated to them. The extreme form of these roles may result in wife-beating, rape or dowry harassment. The point being that both males and females are only the instruments of the gender system, and both can be the victims as well as the perpetrators, as the interest of perpetuating the gender system demands.

HOW CAN WOMEN BE EMPOWERED?

❑ Nature of Empowerment

Women’s empowerment through provision of laws of equal remuneration, property rights, one-third reservation of seats for women in political bodies and even free education to the girl
child are some of the efforts undertaken to improve women’s status. Similarly, enactment of positive discrimination within the organized sector have been incorporated to counter the handicap of female biological responsibilities and thus equate male and female workers. The question arises whether such empowerment can achieve gender justice? In other words, if empowerment means merely providing access, participation and skills within the existing gender differentiating system, it will remain a farce. Women will have increased access to education but it will be education commensurate with the demands of the gender system. Thus women will take higher education in social sciences and home science. These efforts to empower women would be subsumed under the prevalent gender ideology to appropriate women’s property rights as their dowry, women’s political representation would consist of their spokesmanship for the existing patriarchal hierarchies and absorption of female labour in the unorganized sector while being excluded from the formal sector.

Corrective v/s Social Justice

The negative fall-out of empowerment within the existing patriarchal system and equality oriented strategies is dealt with corrective and legal intervention. Therefore, it is also debatable to what extent corrective justice such as propagation of legal literacy or punitive measures contribute to women’s empowerment, achievement of gender equality and rendering gender justice. For corrective measures only address the visible manifestations of the gender ideology. Thus dowry deaths and harassment are targeted for cure but dowry exchange as an entrenched social norm flourishes and remains unquestioned.

The interventionist strategies, therefore, must have organic linkages with the intervention made at various levels. For instance, intervention made at the level of impact without changing the process in consonance with gender differentials may not create conditions for gender justice.
Case Study

MATRILINY IN KHASI SOCIETY

Note: The case study evolved from discussions “Matriliny Land Rights and Political Power in Khasi Society” by A.K. Baruah and Manorama Sharma presented in the National Workshop on Women Development and Gender Justice.

The facilitator can provide the following information on matriliny:

In matrilineal societies such as Khasi and Gharo, descent is traced from the mother (rather than the father as in patriarchy). In Khasi society ancestral property is handed to the youngest daughter of the family. The other daughters also get a small share of the property. However, the youngest daughter resides in the ancestral home and family responsibilities such as marriages and naming ceremonies, looking after the dependent members, performing religious rites are undertaken by her. She is assisted in the discharge of her responsibilities by her maternal uncles. Even property is managed and sold with the consent and counsel of her maternal uncles. Females thus have a social status drawn from their position within the family since lineage is traced through the mother and the female is the inheritor of family property. Since it is a matrilineal society, the male on marriage shifts to the wife’s home. However, the social status accorded to females provides them privilege only within the family. Decision-making in society such as in political and administrative affairs is barred to women. Though women have access to education, employment and decision-making within the home they are denied political power. Even in religious matters women only make preparations for ceremonies and the actual ceremonies are conducted by men.

Land rights and emerging trends

Besides private land, Khasi society also has community land over which there are no inheritance, transferable or saleable rights. However, these community lands can become private lands if permanent structures are constructed or if trees etc. are planted on these lands by community members. This can be done with the permission of the village. Since such construction and plantation can be accomplished by the better-off sections of society, community lands are being transformed into private lands of the rich. Moreover, when these changes in community lands are brought about with the earnings of the male members along with the nature of the
development process which encourages nuclear families, the husbands become more assertive in controlling even their wives’ ancestral property since development and control of land is done by them. Thus the husband will begin to control the property if he has either paid for it or has taken loans to acquire community lands. Women then stand not only to disinherit the land but also to lose their social status.

**EXERCISE : MATRILINY AND GENDER JUSTICE**

Given this cultural background, can women in a matrilineal society be treated on a par with women in patriarchal societies? For instance, if women have to be granted land rights in a patriarchy then women in matrilineal societies may only need to ensure their maintenance rights to property. It is believed by some that granting of joint pattas to women may be a progressive step in societies where women have no rights over land, but in the Khasi or Gharo situation it would be a retrogressive step.

The facilitator can now pose the following questions to the participants:

"Is granting of joint pattas to men and women a retrogressive step for the women of Khasi and Gharo societies in context of a gender just society?"

"Are the parameters of a gender just society different for a patriarchy and a matrilineal society?"

The facilitator must highlight that any society organised around biological sex differences, whether patriarchal or matrilineal, is unjust.

An individual’s social placement, access to resources such as property, family assets, education, participation in decision-making within the family and public participation is predetermined on the basis of:

In Matriliny

(a) Sex - The females have more access to family resources than males. The males have controlling rights over property, access to public participation which is not available to the females.

(b) Birth Order : Among the females, the youngest daughter has more rights than other daughters and sons.
In Patriarchy

(a) Sex - Males have access and control over familial and social resources such as property, fixed assets, productive education/skills, employment, political participation etc. which are either denied to women or they are discriminated against.

SOME AIMS OF WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT & GENDER JUSTICE

SOCIAL ACHIEVEMENTS

☐ Role fluidity where roles are inter-changeable among people according to the need of the situation rather than typed male-female roles.

☐ The family to be made a democratic institution where each member has full access to family resources and assets.
   i) Equal inheritance among children.
   ii) Preference of child not to be based on single sex.
   iii) Children to be valued and cared for irrespective of whether they are boys or girls.

☐ Customs, practices and superstitions unjust to women to be negated.

☐ Misuse of religion for governing women's reproduction and sexuality to be countered.

☐ The mass media to portray women as individuals, rather than women in their typed roles.

☐ Women's biological role as reproducers to be valued. Their child-bearing functions should not be made a reason for confining them to undervalued domestic work.

☐ Men and women to be subjected to the same laws. Personal laws to be justly applied to men and women.
To create an environment where women do not have to be confined to the protection of the home, remain in parda or be scared of speaking out.

**HEALTH ACHIEVEMENTS**

- Women not to be discriminated against in terms of institutional health care facilities.
- Maternal care to be facilitated.
- Nutrition and care to be equitably distributed. Females not to be discriminated against in nutritional and health care.
- Female foeticide and infanticide to be checked.
- Children to be spaced and re-productive care provided.

**POLITICAL ACHIEVEMENTS**

- Women to be active members of Panchayats/local bodies and be effective elected members.
- Women to be aware of their roles and duties as citizens.
- Women to participate in political meetings, collective action and agitations.
- Women to be part of the community forum that decides action to be taken for the community's development.
- Women to vote freely for candidates of their choice.
- Within the home, women to be active decision-makers to enhance gender justice.
- Casteism and untouchability to be questioned.
- Bonded labour and child labour not to be accepted.

**EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS**

- Children to be provided education equally. Girls not to be discriminated against in giving access to education.
- Girls to be educated to acquire productive skills.
Within a family girls and boys not to be discriminated in quality of education provided i.e. girls not to be sent to local/regional language schools while boys are sent to private/English medium schools.

Children not to be encouraged to drop out of school to take on subsistence work.

Girls not to be encouraged to take up household responsibilities at the cost of learning productive skills.

Adult education to be promoted.

**ECONOMIC ACHIEVEMENTS**

- Women's work within the household to be socially valued.
- Their contribution to subsistence work to be recognised.
- Women to be productive earners rather than only income augmenters.
- Women to be individually and collectively encouraged to take loans from banks and set up income generating ventures.
- Women's exploitation at the workplace to be combated i.e. hours of work, maternity benefits, skill upgradation, sexual exploitation etc.

**ACHIEVEMENTS TO COMBAT ATROCITIES AGAINST THE FEMALE GENDER**

- All forms of violence against women to be visible i.e. wife-beating, eve-teasing, levirate marriages etc.
- Dowry exchange to be abolished.
- Reporting of atrocities against women to be encouraged.
- Caste-based sexual harassment to be questioned.
- Sex determined pregnancies to be abolished.
- To achieve legal literacy, especially in the context of violence.
RELIGIOUS EXTREMISM AND GENDER INJUSTICE

OBJECTIVES

- TO EXPLAIN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RELIGIOUS EXTREMISM AND GENDER JUSTICE AND WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT.
- TO SENSITIZE THE PARTICIPANTS TO THE IMPACT OF RELIGIOUS EXTREMISM ON GENDER.
- TO PROVIDE AWARENESS OF THE OPPORTUNITIES TO COUNTER THESE RETROGRESSIVE FORCES AGAINST WOMEN.

Methods

Discussion, Lecture, Question and answer, group exercise.

Material

Film, Posters, Blackboard.

FACILITATOR’S NOTE

This module acquires particular significance in areas which are rife with communal tension. It draws attention to the dependence of religious extremism on patriarchal stereotyped roles, values and placement of women its maintenance and promotion. The first section of the module explains its dependence. The second section reflects the methods through which religious extremism promotes gender injustice and the mechanism through which this is achieved. The facilitator must stress that religious extremism
selective y appropriates religious tenants to harness the people's support for the gain of a few individuals. After explaining the relationship between gender and religious extremism, the participants can be shown the film ‘Bombay’ and asked to carry out the given exercise. In the ensuing discussion the manner and mechanism through which gender is appropriated to promote religious extremism and its impact on women can be discussed.

THE CONTEXT

In a multi-religious society, religious extremism survives and thrives on a state of mind of a group that a threat, real or imaginary, exists to their faith which should be combated by collective action. In an environment of shrinking opportunities, increasing competition and pauperization, the appeal of religious extremism emerges as a crucial factor promising solace and security to the people. The slow and blocked economic development and denial of opportunities reaffirm and consolidate the already existing religious and caste cleavages. Religious extremism thrives on selected misappropriation of these cleavages. The central thrust of religious extremism is inter-religious differentiation and gradation on the basis of gender and caste categories. Women are projected and perceived as the vanguard of purity. Since religious extremism attempts to reinforce the traditional purity of culture, the emphasis is on motherhood as counterpoised to womanhood and on extended reproduction rather than on sexuality. These differentiations and gradations blur the structure of the real inequalities which are economic and social in nature. Notions based on these gradations constitute social and political reality of a sort, but of a sort only. Religious extremism provides answers (partial and partisan) to the hardships faced by the common person due to the intense competition for scarce resources. The answers so provided have their basis in re-allocation of resources to help a few individuals rather than regeneration of resources. These individual benefits are presented as the benefits of the entire religious group. Further, the main focus of religious
extremism is not to disturb the patriarchal status quo which marginalises women. It is for this reason that the rejection of religious extremism and patriarchy remains ineffective because the forces of the existing power equation help in the maintenance of the existing order. The new reality of capitalism may not want religious extremism and patriarchy, but needs it.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RELIGIOUS EXTREMISM AND GENDER

Religious extremism claims to be protecting and thereby reviving some of the aspects of traditional religio-cultural practices. In this it is presumed that:

a) purity of a religious group's identity can be protected by restricting the sexual autonomy of women to reproducers for multiplying numbers;

b) women can protect religions from extinction and dilution due to the challenge posed by the process of modernisation. Women, therefore, need to be confined to the household with the assigned task of procreation and socialization of the generation.
c) Women are the symbols of a religious group's dignity, purity and status. Their conduct becomes central to the existence of the group. Any violation of this conduct is seen as pollution of religious practices and a set-back to the religious group in competition with other religions.

Therefore, women are rigorously protected from 'outside' influence, forcibly made to conform to dress codes and other codes of conduct.

Therefore, gender gradation is the bed-rock of religious extremism.

**EXERCISE : ROLE OF GENDER IN RELIGIOUS FUNDAMENTALISM**

**Debating "Bombay"**

The participants can be initiated to the relationship between religious fundamentalism and gender by showing and then debating the film "Bombay".

The following exercise can be provided to the participants individually or in sub-groups and then their opinion discussed in the larger group. Information provided in the module can be used to highlight the impact of religious fundamentalism in reinforcing and perpetuating patriarchy. Religion is an individual’s preference. Enforcement of religious practices as sacrosanct codes of conduct is tantamount to infringement of autonomy and undermines the individual’s preference.

**CONTEXT**

Practice of inter-religion interaction in society, yet inter-religion marriages are unfeasible.

**Situation (1) :**

Shailla Bano's father tells Shekhar that he cannot marry his daughter, since his blood is different.

**Comment**

Does religion determine biological constitution and therefore social behaviour?
Situation (2)
Social hierarchy within the village prescribes a higher status for Shekhar's family and a lower one for Shailla Bano's. Both family’s members subscribe to this hierarchy and corresponding behaviour. Yet Shailla Bano's father threatens Shekhar's father that there would be bloodshed if Shekhar were to marry his daughter.

Comment:
Shailla Bano's father is upset because:
Religious identity will get undermined if lineage is usurped by members of another religious group.

Situation (3)
Shekhar's father tells Shekhar: (a) that the family’s status (both as Hindus and as custodians of Hindu religion i.e. Pandits) will be questioned if he marries a Muslim.
(b) 'No one will marry your sister if you were to marry a Muslim.'
Shailla Bano's father tells Shekhar such a marriage is impossible.

Comment
Inter religion marriage pollutes the sanctity of religious identity.

Situation (4)
Shekhar's father questions Shailla Bano's father's credentials to even talk to him, when as a Patriarch he could not even control his daughter's behaviour.

Comment
Role of patriarch in controlling and monitoring the behaviour of family women.

PROMOTING RELIGIOUS EXTREMISM
Religious extremists project such values and norms as maximise the promotion of their identity through women. These processes are:
Glorification of women's typed roles and negation of role fluidity

Religious extremists eulogise the stereotyped procreative and nurturing role of women as is reflected in sayings like ‘Jannat Maa Ke Peir Ke Niche Hai’. Moreover, negative value is attributed to women's economic, political and civil rights. In some communally sensitive areas women pardhans or panches are not allowed to work independently or even to talk to people the family does not know.

The family is presented as the main domain of women's activities and correspondingly they are discouraged from specialising in other professions. Women who venture outside the home are branded as having a loose character and girls going in for education are described as unreliable and unfaithful to the family.

The value of female chastity is reinforced to define and draw the boundaries to confine women to the home.

Social codes of behaviour

Strictures on women's codes of conduct such as maintenance of Purda, control over their sexuality through the value of chastity and fidelity, exercising choices on their behalf such as
the choice of the re-productive partner, dress code, submission to religious and family authorities, non-utilisation of contraceptives etc. are some of the ways through which female submission to religious extremism is enacted.

**Restricting women's access and participation**

In keeping with the roles of motherhood and family caretakers, women's access to and participation in developmental infrastructure and resources are controlled. Thus female education after puberty is discouraged as is employment outside the home. If a woman is required to earn, then she is expected to work within the premises of her home. However, skill upgradation to enhance the income is also discouraged since it involves stepping outside the domain of the home.

The practice of Purda is carried to such lengths that women may even be denied medical treatment by qualified male doctors to save their lives since chastity has priority over life.

**MECHANISMS PROMOTING RELIGIOUS EXTREMISM**

Women's conduct, access and participation are regulated and maintained so as to be in accordance with the needs of identity through the following:

**Anonymous Social mechanism**

These pertain to institutional modes through which the ideology of religious extremism is promoted. These include places of worship, religious rituals, religious congregations, schools, family etc. that re-inforce women's roles and placement in accordance with the needs of religious extremism.

**Selective misappropriation of religious texts and practices**

Religious extremism resorts to selective appropriation of norms, roles and texts from religion itself. For instance, the notion of Sati-Savitri is projected to promote the chaste and husband-worshipping wife.
Thus a particular value which has legitimacy in one context is appropriated to another context to promote vested interests. Men are not expected to perform corresponding roles and women's identity is seen only in the context of the family and not as individuals.

**Coercion**

Forced promotion of an ideology by legalizing the ban on contraceptives to enhance extended reproduction, advocating social ostracization of individuals who marry outside the group are some of the measures which are used to keep the community and particularly women, within the norms of the group.

**Use of Violence**

Blatant use of violence is resorted to so as to enforce and ensure that the group's identity and to ensure that it is maintained. Although men are also subject to violence if they violate the norms prescribed by extremism, yet it is the women who bear the burnt since women are identified as the vanguard of the group’s identity. Thus cases of infidelity, marriage outside the group, use of contraceptives, non-adherence to the dress code may be singled out for punitive action ranging from death, to rape, to wife-beating.
Curtailed Choices

Women are deprived in terms of the choice of marriage partners, sexual autonomy, the number of children, and are restricted in their mobility. Practices such as Purda and dress restrictions further curtail women's leeway. The forces of religious fundamentalism claim control over religious symbols, myths and legends that reinforce patriarchy and the differentiation between other religious and caste groups. For instance, the Islamic fundamentalists assert that "there could be no satisfactory Mohammedan female education until a large number of Mohammedan males (have) received sound education."

Similarly, they also assert that a woman's evidence in a judicial court shall carry only half the weight of a man's testimony. Many such codes are prescribed by the fundamentalists from time to time. Similarly, the Sikh fundamentalists in Punjab recently prescribed a dress and conduct code for women in particular and the Sikh community in general. The prescribed code says that girls will cover their heads and wear salwar and kameez. Girls will not be permitted to dance on a public stage. Similarly, the Hindu fundamentalists assert that women
shall behave like Sati and Savitri. These statements were made during the Ayodhya movement. It is evident that the first victims of fundamentalism are the vulnerable sections of society, like women, migrants and children. The religious fundamentalists prescribe codes and also assign social roles.

- **Motherhood v/s Womanhood**

  The woman's role of a mother is eulogised and measures ranging from coercion to glorification are utilised to promote this role. The value of motherhood is promoted at the cost of womanhood. A woman's identity is only perceived in the context of her family and the group to which she belongs. Thus she is somebody's mother, somebody's wife or somebody's daughter. Her own potential and preferences are thus restricted to those of her role as the nurturer and home maker. Moreover, the nature of education or access to employment remain either denied or curtailed according to the requirements of the family. Under these conditions women may not be allowed to take up employment but if the family needs the women to augment the family income, then they are encouraged to take up contractual work that can be done within the home or work in a women only unit to which they are escorted to and fro.

- **Legitimizes Population Growth**

  The religious extremists always talk about multiplication of numbers rather than development of human resources. The religious fundamentalists have been issuing codes of conduct regarding the adoption of the small family norm. Both Hindu and Muslim fundamentalists have been exhorting their co-religionists not to practice family planning. In a multi-religious society, the fundamentalists misappropriate the fear and insecurity among their co-religionists and to provoke competition vis-a-vis the other religious groups. For instance, the Hindu fundamentalist conference on Hindu solidarity expressed concern at the so-called decline in the Hindu population and rise in that of Muslims and Christians, and exhorted the Hindus to boycott family planning. Further, in a pamphlet dated 16th November, 1983, the Vishwa Hindu Parishad reiterated that the Hindus would become a minority in India by 2151 A.D.
Similarly, the Muslim fundamentalists have been opposing the adoption of family planning as a norm. The fundamentalists could succeed in a situation rife with communal riots and with the sections of the population who feel persecuted.

- **Atrocities**

Women are projected to be the vanguard of group identity. Consequently, they are subjected to various controls by their own group members and are targeted by the competing groups to claim superiority. Thus a woman may be ostracized by her group if her chastity is doubted, more so if she has a liaison with a member of a counter group. Religious extremists from both Hindu and Muslim groups were outraged by the movie ‘Bombay’ since it showed a Muslim-Hindu marriage. Such was their anger that they went on the rampage in Bangalore, Bombay etc. Besides this, in a riot situation individual women are targeted. For instance, in Punjab during the militancy days, a dress code was issued for women under which they were required to wear salwar-kameez and cover their heads with a dupatta. Incidence of molestation and slapping were reported where women did not adhere to the prescribed dress code. Moreover, in such situations anti-social elements not belonging to the religious group also take advantage of the situation to molest and tease women.
Identifying opportunities to combat religious extremism

I. Distinction must be made between the spirit and tenets of the religion and the selected misappropriation by religious extremism. For instance, the evidence in support of family planning from the Quran and Hadith should be identified and pro-family planning Ulemas should be mobilised to articulate these views. Similar evidence should be extracted from Hindu and Christian scriptures.

**LEADING, ULEMA-E-ISLAM PERMITTING FAMILY PLANNING METHODS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME OF THE ULEMA</th>
<th>STATUS</th>
<th>METHOD APPROVED AND CONDITION IMPOSED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>❑ Ayatullah haji Sheikh Bahaeddin</td>
<td>Mufti of Iran</td>
<td>Oral Contraceptive &amp; other temporary methods (O and T)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❑ Haji Abdul Jalil bin Haji Hassan</td>
<td>Assistant Mufti of Malaysia</td>
<td>O and T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❑ Sheikh Abdullah al Qalqili</td>
<td>Mufti-e-Azam of Jordan</td>
<td>O and T, Abortion within 120 days (but for abortion the wife’s permission is necessary)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❑ Tuan Haji Ali bin Mohammed Said Sallch</td>
<td>Chief Qazi of Singapore</td>
<td>O and T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❑ Mohammed. Abdul fattah el Enoni</td>
<td>Chairman, Fatwa Committee Azhar University, U.A.E.</td>
<td>O and T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❑ Sheikh Abdul Masjid Salim</td>
<td>Mufti of Egypt</td>
<td>O and T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❑ Advisory Council on Religious Affairs</td>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>F.P. is allowed. No specific method is mentioned. Permission of wife is necessary. However, in a state of war or in a case of extreme poverty permission of the wife is not necessary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❑ Al-Sayyid Yusuf bin ali al-Zawawi</td>
<td>Mufti of Trengganu (Malasia)</td>
<td>All F.P. method including abortion (within three months) are allowed only for health reasons of the husband, wife and the child to be. Otherwise not allowed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

O and T = Oral contraceptive and other temporary methods

**NOTE:** The full texts of all these fatwas are given in Muslim attitudes towards family planning. The population council, New York.

**Source:** M.E. Khan, Is Islam against Family Planning? The paper published in Islam and the Marriage Vol.VI, May 1975
Religious extremism strengthens myths and dogmas that propagate inferior social placement of women.

I. Attempt should be made to create an environment conducive to social mobility by forming citizen's groups to check eve-teasing, molestation etc.,

II. Women's participation in skilled and technical professions needs to be encouraged. Greater participation of women in employment, political spheres shall help to counter religious extremist propaganda.

III. To ensure qualitative participation of women in decision-making and nation building processes.
SECTION II

ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION

In this section the extent and quality of women’s access to resources and participation in various spheres of decision-making is discussed. The deep rooted practice of gender differentiation, manifesting in women’s deprivation, discrimination and atrocities against them in specific spheres such as education, health, employment, having its basis in ideology of patriarchy has been analysed. The main focus of this section is on the transition from role stereotyping to role extension and thereby reinforcing the need for role fluidity.
WOMEN AND HEALTH

OBJECTIVES

• TO MAKE THE PARTICIPANTS AWARE OF HOLISTIC APPROACH TO HEALTH - THAT IS TO VIEW HEALTH NOT ONLY IN TERMS OF DISEASE AND TREATMENT BUT ALSO AS AN INTERPLAY OF BIOLOGICAL, PSYCHOLOGICAL AND SOCIAL FORCES

• TO MAKE THE PARTICIPANTS AWARE OF HOW GENDER BIAS AGAINST WOMEN AFFECTS THE HEALTH OF WOMEN IN ALL SPHERES

• TO STIMULATE THE PARTICIPANTS TO THINK OF SUITABLE ACTIONS TO BRING ATTITUDEINAL CHANGES IN THE COMMUNITY TO IMPROVE THE HEALTH OF WOMEN

Methods

Questions and answers, Films, Charts, Discussions and Lectures.

Material

Video, charts, blackboard, chalk.

FACILITATOR’S NOTE

The following are some pointers for NSS Programme Officers for using this module:

It may be useful to first begin with a discussion on what is health? Try to elicit the
existing beliefs and concepts of health among the participants. Then introduce the World Health Organisation’s definition of health. Let the participants discuss how satisfactory they find the approach.

Emphasize how biological and psycho-social factors are interlinked. How poverty and life in the slums are associated with mental and physical ill health, giving examples of tuberculosis, alcoholism etc. Gradually shift the topic to women and health and illustrate how gender discrimination affects the health of women, giving suitable examples from the text provided in this chapter.

It may be useful at this stage to begin the discussion on why there are fewer women in India than men. Project the sex ratio table. Let the participants discuss it. Emphasize the differences between Kerala and the northern states and link it with the attitude towards women in different parts of the country.

Gradually introduce each subsection of the module and illustrate with examples preferably from your own geographical area with which the participants are more familiar. The Hindi cinema is a good mirror of the popular culture. It is always interesting to pick up suitable examples from this medium. Indian mythology is another rich sources of social norms and can be used to illustrate attitudes towards women. Current events as reported in newspapers or magazines will also be very suitable for this purpose.

Encourage the participants to give examples from their own families e.g. who works most in the house? Who gets the best food? Who has more opportunities to go out or has more time for relaxation and entertainment? Gradually, shift the topic to inequalities between men and women in the field of education, employment and health.

Finally bring the participants to the discussion on what they feel is urgent and most important in the community in which they live. Encourage them to draw out a plan of action preferably with other volunteer groups working in their area.
INTRODUCTION

When we say "health", many of us immediately start thinking in terms of disease or its absence. As the well-known definition given by the World Health Organization reminds us, "health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely an absence of disease or infirmity." This definition also points out that the three areas of life-biological, psychological and social - are closely interrelated and a disturbance in one area often leads to problems in other areas. For example poverty, unemployment, gender discrimination are very closely associated with abuse of alcohol and domestic violence against women which in turn lead to various physical illnesses and psychological problems in the victims. Thus it is important for the students to understand that health is something holistic and it does not exist in isolation but is an interplay of biological, psychological and social factors.

The following questions are relevant in any discussion on women and health and have been discussed in this chapter.

1. How does gender discrimination affect women's health?
2. Why are there fewer women than men in India?
3. Why are families so keen on sex determination before birth?
4. Why killing of female infants still persists in many parts of the country?
5. Do girls need less food than boys?
6. Who works more in this world; men or women?
7. What is the effect of pregnancy and childbirth on the health of a woman?
8. How does violence against women affect their physical and mental health?
9. Do women have more mental health problems?
10. How can we ensure that women have equal access to health services?
Gender discrimination and women's health

There is overwhelming evidence to show that discrimination against women in various spheres of life grossly affects their health. This discrimination begins right from birth, in fact these days even before birth, when efforts are made to abort the female foetus determined by modern technology. The life and health of the girl child are threatened from the time she arrives in this world, mostly unwanted, largely uncared for, and soon to be exploited in different ways. She is given less food, even a reduced share of mother’s milk, less education and less respect. She is physically beaten and sexually harassed. In brief, society forces her to demand less and give more at every turn in life. A whole set of myths about the woman’s place in society have taken root in our culture based on misconceptions, wrong information and gender prejudice. Many families believe that rich protein food, i.e. meat, eggs or milk are not good for girls. Doctors are taught that it is normal for women to be anaemic. Employers feel it is fair to pay less to women workers. Husbands consider it legitimate to occasionally beat their wives.

The consequences of such discrimination against women are visible in many fields of health - female infanticide, high girl child mortality, maternal deaths, anemia and malnutrition, depression, mental illness and the poor quality of health services for women.
In this chapter we shall examine some of these areas of women's health and see how such discrimination operates.

**Why are there fewer women than men in India?**

This can be a good starting point for a discussion by the students. Why are there fewer women than men in India and why this situation differs from Kerala to Punjab? The following table provides some figures as compiled in the census of 1991.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STATE</th>
<th>SEX RATIO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>KERALA</td>
<td>1036</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAMIL NADU</td>
<td>974</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANDHRA PRADESH</td>
<td>972</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ORISSA</td>
<td>971</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAHARASHTRA</td>
<td>934</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PUNJAB</td>
<td>882</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UTTAR PRADESH</td>
<td>879</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HARYANA</td>
<td>865</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>INDIA</strong></td>
<td><strong>927</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SOURCE:** CENSUS OF INDIA, 1991

It may also be noted that women to men sex ratio in the population has been constantly falling in our country since independence - it was 946 in 1951, 934 in 1981 and reached 927 in 1991.

In Europe or North America the ratio between adult males and females is nearly equal. Why is this glaring contrast in India? The famous Indian economist Amratya Sen drew attention to this anomaly, in an article in 1990 under the dramatic headline" Over 100 million women are missing", he calculated that if all the women who were born in India since independence in
1947 had been allowed to live the same way as men were, there would have been at least one hundred million more women in India! Where have these women disappeared? They all have died. They were either killed as infants at birth or died of neglect through malnourishment, poor hygiene, infectious diseases, all causes that were preventable.

The importance of cultural factors and attitude toward women is further evident if we have a look at table I giving state-wise sex ratio. The only state in the country which has more women than men is Kerala, a state where literacy among women is the highest and where they enjoy a high social status. Similarly in the southern states of Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh where women have more freedom and better social status, the sex ratio is better than the national average. The worst states in this regard are Punjab and Haryana with a sex ratio of 882 and 865 respectively. It is obvious that poverty has not much to do with it because both Punjab and Haryana are among the most prosperous states in the country but these states, especially their
rural farming communities, have predominantly patriarchal values with poor female literacy and a poor social status of women.

**The curse of sex determination before birth.**

It is sad how modern technology is being exploited to the detriment of one sex. Scientifically it has become possible now to determine the sex of the unborn child in the womb of the mother even during the first few months of pregnancy. This is usually done by means of amniocentesis - or by taking a small fluid from the womb and testing it in the laboratory. In the last two decades, tens of thousands of female foetuses were thus identified and then destroyed through abortion at the clinics of doctors. The practice became so rampant especially in the big cities, that ultimately the Government had to put a ban on sex determination tests before birth. This has not completely eliminated this practice but it has been reduced and gone underground. Ultimately it is the attitude of the community and preference for the male child which encourages such practices.

**The killings of female infants**

Another terrible practice which is still prevalent in many parts of India is the killing of newly born female babies. It was reported in newspapers that there is a Rajput village in Rajasthan where the residents take pride in saying that for more than 50 years the village has never received a bridegroom's party! Obviously, no girl child was allowed to be born or allowed to survive in that village. It was considered a disgrace to have a girl child because men were the pride of the community. The parents of a girl child feel inferior and consider the girl a liability in terms of future dowry and social status.

Though the exact figures of such evil practices are difficult to compile, yet it is obvious that female infanticide is still practiced in many parts of India. In one study from Madras, out of 1250 women surveyed, nearly half of them reported killing of an infant daughter in the past.
Malnourishment and neglect of the girl child.

In Europe and North America, more boys than girls die in the first five years. In India 20% more girls die during the first five years. Why is it so? It is again the story of gender bias, neglect and deprivation.

According to the 1991 census every year, about 12 million girls are born in the country; 1.5 million die before their first birthday, another 850,000 die before their fifth birthday and only nine million are alive at the age of 15 years! The neglect of the girl child affects her health in many ways. She is given less food, at times even mother's milk, because she is "only a girl". Good food, such as milk, meat, eggs and cheese, are usually reserved for men and the growing boys. Male children are quickly taken to a doctor when they are sick while the girl child is rarely taken to a doctor unless she is very seriously ill or is about to be married. As a result of such gross neglect, 15-20% of the women do not achieve their expected height and weight in India. At the time of pregnancy, 60 to 70% women are severely anaemic.

Effect of over work and fatigue on women's health

Men often take pride in the fact that they are stronger than women and hence can do more work. While the first part may be true. Men do have more muscle compared to women, but
the second part is certainly not true. More than 70% of the work in the world is done by women. In our own country, we can see how women are doing hard manual work in the fields or at building sites or in factories or in collecting fuel and water for the household. All this is
apart from the daily cooking, house keeping, bringing up children etc. which is taken for
granted as women's job.

Overwork affects health. There is no time to relax. It causes fatigue, pain and aches, disturbs
sleep and makes one irritable and depressed. If a person is already poorly nourished as most of
the women are, the damage to health is greater.

Reproductive health of women.

Women produce children. All of us were born through our mothers but why should a mother
die while producing children? And why should it happen more in our country? Some of the
figures in this connection are really shocking. In England or the U.S.A., about 10 women die
for every 100,000 live births! In India, about 500 women die for every 100,000 live births.
The causes can again be traced to poor health of the mother, malnutrition, low height and
weight, anaemia, early marriage, frequent pregnancies, etc. Added to this are poor maternity
services, inadequate training of birth attendants, lack of hygiene leading to infection, poor
transport facilities for women who require to be taken to hospital and so on. It is a sad story
because most of these causes are preventable, provided there is adequate will and the health of
women is given priority.

Recent surveys in the villages in Maharashtra and other parts of the country have shown that
a very large number of women of all ages suffer from ailments related to their reproductive
system, like pain, infection, excessive bleeding etc. In most of the rural areas, medical services
for women are either non-existent or poorly staffed, poorly equipped and poorly supplied with
medicines.

The campaign for family planning again shows a bias against women. The decision to plan the
family is mostly taken by the husband or other elders in the family. The woman may be
desperately wanting contraception, to avoid or delay future pregnancies, but for the sake of the
husband or the family she may have to get pregnant again and again, risking her very life.
Again it is common for men to refuse the relatively simple operation of vasectomy for the fear
that "they may get weak" As a result they push their women to undergo the a more difficult operation of tubectomy or even abortion which may harm the health of the women.

**Domestic and sexual violence against women**

Another sad chapter in the life of a woman is frequent exposure to physical and sexual violence. In fact, wife beating is so common in Indian households that many families accept it as normal. But why should it be so? Why should a husband have the right to beat his wife, even if he is angry, irritated or drunk. Violence not only damages the physical health (bruises, broken bones, wounds, injury to vital organs, permanent scars or disabilities) but also leaves a deep psychological damage in the shape of constant fear, anxiety, depression, insomnia etc. Sexual violence against women including rape is another major area which badly disturbs the health of a woman, both physical as well as psychological. It is not being discussed here in detail as it has been dealt with in another chapter.
Mental Health of Women

With all the social inequalities which a woman has to suffer throughout her life, it is not surprising that it leaves a deep psychological impact on her life. Studies have shown that psychological symptoms are very common in women.

Women generally score higher than men on various mental ill health questionnaires. The prevalence of anxiety, depression, phobia, hysteria psychosomatic symptoms, etc. are generally higher among women than men who have a higher prevalence of alcohol and drug abuse. Hormonal changes in different phases of menstrual periods, pregnancy and menopause also add to the mental ill health of women.

One of the very disturbing features of mental ill-health in women is suicide, especially among young, newly married women. Harassment for dowry and ill-treatment by the in-laws are often mentioned as causes. Reports of "bride burning" regularly appear in our newspapers. Mental health experts believe that for every one completed case of suicide there are about ten other who have attempted suicide but not succeeded.

To add to the misery of the mentally ill in our country, is the fact that proper services for the mentally ill are non-existent or very inadequate, especially for women. Psychiatric services are scarce and mostly confined to big cities. As a result, the mentally ill women often taken are to faith healers who in their effort to "remove evil spirits" often beat, burn or disfigure the patients. A woman must have access to good modern mental health services just as they need access to physical health services.

Access to health services

The gender bias against women which works in many social areas works in the field of health services also. In spite of the fact that women face ill health more often, the health services in our country are organised more to meet the needs of men. The main providers of health services and decision-makers are doctors who are mostly men. They plan the services, usually unaware of the special needs of women. Medical text-books written by men have frequent
examples of bias against women. The path of a woman who seeks help in a modern health centre is often difficult and full of stumbling blocks. First of all, she does not have enough information about the available health facilities. The decisions are taken by male members. Due to the pressure of the family and children she has very little time to seek help. The services are usually far away, and the process is time consuming and costly. The final disgrace is that she has often to be examined by a male doctor without adequate privacy. No wonder, women seek alternative routes to health care than going to a government health facility.

**NSS volunteers’ role**

In the matter of women’s health, NSS volunteers can help in a number of ways as listed below.

**Sensitizing the Community**

By sensitizing the community about how gender bias affects the health of women by arranging meetings, debates and special campaigns. Attitudinal change in a community does not come easily or quickly. It takes a long time and persistent efforts. Volunteers can organise discussion groups in schools, colleges or youth clubs. One must always first think of bringing the change in one's own family. It would be advisable for the volunteers to first select one area in their community which clearly affects the health of women, and try to bring about the desired change.

**Promoting Government Programmes**

By familiarising themselves with the existing Government programmes on women and child welfare. In recent years, the Central and State Governments have introduced a number of programmes for the welfare of women. Volunteers must try to familiarise themselves with such schemes. Some of the important Government programmes are listed below :-

1. The National Commission on Women was created in 1992 to deal with women’s protection and development.

2. In 1992, the Government of India's Ministry of Woman and Child Development launched the CSSM (Child Survival and Safe Motherhood) programme which should reach all
pregnant women in the rural areas. Volunteers can play an important role in educating the rural women in

a) adequate ante-natal check-up,

b) birth attendance by trained Dais (midwives)

c) postnatal counselling for future pregnancies

3. The Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) is to have 40% women beneficiaries.

4. There are many state programmes, like Women Development Programme (SAATHINS) in Rajasthan for the benefit of women.

5. Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) provides a package of services comprising supplementary nutrition and immunization and of children of pregnant and nursing mothers. These services are provided through Anganwadis. The workers in this project are also young women drawn mostly from local villages.

**Networking with NGOs**

By associating with appropriate Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) who are involved in the issues related to women and health. The non governmental organisations are playing an increasingly important role in the welfare of women. Their number is very large; some are sponsored by the Government, some have links with foreign organisations, some are supported by political parties and some are supported by religious groups. The range of their activities is very wide - some are involved in overall rural and slum development, some are working for specific causes like women's education, street children, prohibition of alcohol etc. etc. It is important that the volunteers should become familiar with the NGOs working in their area and establish links with them to take up suitable voluntary work. In the field of health, one of the largest groups in the country is the Voluntary Health Association of India with headquarters in New Delhi. They have published some very useful material on women's health and welfare.
GENDER AND HIV INFECTION

OBJECTIVES

• TO PROVIDE AWARENESS REGARDING HIV AND THE GENDER IMPLICATION FOR WOMEN

Methods

Lectures, Film shows, Group discussions.

Material

Flip Chart, Masking Tape, Markers, Blackboard and chalks, video monitor system and tapes

Definition of HIV

H - Human I - Immune Deficiency V - Virus

HIV refers to Human Immune Deficiency virus. This is human because it is able to thrive only in human beings. It attacks the white blood cells that are vital in protecting the body against disease. It causes immunity deficiency. It is the virus that brings about the AIDS condition. Therefore, AIDS is a stage of HIV infection.

Definition of AIDS

A - Acquired I - Immune D - Deficiency S - Syndrome

AIDS refers to Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome. AIDS is an infectious disease caused by a virus (H.I.V) which spreads from one person to another through different routes.
The Trainer must emphasize the difference between HIV and AIDS

HIV is a virus, while AIDS is a syndrome. Syndrome implies a combination of different diseases which result from the break-down of the body's defence (immune) system by HIV infection.

**Modes of Transmission**

(I) **Sexual Intercourse with an HIV infected person :**
   a) Vaginal
   b) Oral
   c) Anal

(II) **Contact with HIV Infected blood through**
   a) Transfusion of HIV infected blood and blood products
   b) Organ Transplant. (Accompanied with HIV infected blood)
   c) Unsterilized or HIV contaminated syringes, needles and skin piercing instruments.
(III) Mother to child transmission (vertical transmission)

HIV can pass from the mother to the child before birth i.e. it crosses the placenta from the mother to the child, or during birth when the baby travels down the birth canal.

Prevention of HIV Infection

(I) Prevention of HIV transmission through sexual intercourse

a) Abstaining from sexual intercourse

b) having one sexual partner

c) Use of condom

d) Provision of counselling to help people make informed decisions/choices about their sexual behaviour

(II) Prevention of contact with infected blood and blood products and infected skin piercing instruments

a) Avoiding the need for blood transfusion by treating conditions like malaria in time and also anaemic conditions.

b) Avoiding treatment by unqualified medical practitioners.

c) Avoiding sharing of skin piercing instruments e.g. syringes and needles, razor blades.
(III) Prevention of vertical transmission (HIV Infected mother to child)

Options include:

a) Counselling of HIV positive men about the risks involved if their partners become pregnant and also the implications.

b) Counselling of HIV positive women about the implications of pregnancy.

FACILITATOR’S NOTE

Emphasize to the group that in the absence of a cure or a vaccine, prevention is the best way of not getting HIV infection.

After this, the trainer may show film(s) entitled:

a) "The only way", by the Department of Youth Affairs & Sports (Ministry of HRD).

b) "The Scourge", by Shyam Benegal

The films will re-emphasize what the trainer has been discussing.

Note:- Both the films are available in Hindi and English.

The Indian scenario

The first AIDS case was registered in Bombay in 1986. As of November 1995, a cumulative total of 2,097 cases of AIDS have been reported to the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare from 32 States and Union Territories. According to the NACO Country Scenario update (December 1995) it is still highly probable that the HIV epidemic continues to spread, affecting mainly the 15-44 age group. The male-female ratio of infected cases is reported to be about 3:1.

The highest number of infected cases has been reported from Maharashtra, in areas of Mumbai, Pune and other parts of the State. This State has 5% to 10% of the country's infected persons. Other areas include Madras and Vellore in Tamil Nadu. This is because of the presence of a large number of commercial sex workers. In Manipur also, a large number of cases have been reported. They are mainly drug users.
On the whole, among the 2,097 AIDS cases that have been reported since 1986 till 30th November, 1995, the majority have been infected through heterosexual relationship (78.7%). Blood transfusion accounts for 10.4% and Intravenous drug use accounts for 5.3%

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STATES / UNION TERRITORY</th>
<th>AIDS CASES (Indian)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>DADRA NAGAR &amp; HAVELI</td>
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<td>GOA</td>
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<td>GUJARAT</td>
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<tr>
<td>HARYANA</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>2097</strong></td>
</tr>
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</table>

Source: NACO 1995
HIV Transmission And Gender

Gender roles and gender relations, especially in the globally predominant patriarchal societies, tend to put all population groups at risk of HIV infection. The socialization process puts men and women on a different footing in terms of social attitudes, beliefs and practices. In relation to HIV prevalence, role stereo-typing and the socialization process, in particular, have made women more vulnerable to HIV infection as compared to their male counterparts.

Note:- Gender roles are those behaviors that are socially constituted and are learned by both men and women in society.
groups. Each group should be asked to discuss the roles and relations in society that have or may facilitate HIV infection/transmission, especially in women. The groups should also be asked to come up with strategies they think are appropriate for grassroot intervention.

Note:-- Each group should choose its own rapporteur who should present the issues to be discussed. The trainer should provide the groups with markers and manila sheets. The points discussed by each group should be displayed before the other participants. After the group discussions, the trainer can wind up the discussion by emphasizing the following reasons for the current HIV trends in women:

Specific reasons responsible for the current HIV trends in different population groups, and in women per se are:-

**Psycho-social, cultural and legal barriers**

These barriers influence the decision making power and independence of a woman. For instance, even if a woman has information on HIV and how to safeguard herself from HIV infection, she may not always be able to do so because her sexual decisions are highly dependent on the husband's decisions or choice of action. It has been reported that even in the progressive West, asking a husband to use a condom is an issue that most women are reluctant to bring up. On the other hand if a woman gets infected, society is prejudiced against her. Society hardly realizes that the probable source of infection has been her male partner, who may have brought home the infection by his indiscriminate sexual behaviour.

**Attitudes Towards Sexuality**

All over the world, society has been ingrained with the belief that women should be subservient. Therefore, even in sexual relationships, women are expected to be passive and submissive. It becomes rather difficult for them to make healthy decisions about their sexual lives, which hinders a positive sexual behaviour change and increases their vulnerability to HIV infection.
Choice of Conception.

Very often, women are subjected to sexual relations in order that they conceive a male child. Globally, most societies are patriarchal, so they have a preference for the male child. If a woman wants a male child, she might go to "greater lengths" and may end up being infected. In general, society sees the choice of sex of a child as being "predetermined" by the woman and more so it is her role to ensure male children so as to extend the ancestral lineage. Males are not held responsible for this.

In other societies, just giving birth to a child, regardless of the sex is of paramount importance for a woman's self-fulfillment and status. In seeking out to be accepted, a woman may find herself getting infected with HIV. In the case of males, society does not have great demands as regards conception and also the sex of the child.

Accessibility to appropriate Health Services.

The majority of women have limited access to health care in general, and services for sexually transmitted diseases, in particular. More so, women suffer from a symptomatic STD or have symptomatic STD for which they do not get treatment. The major reason for this is the stigma attached to an STD patient. Should a woman visit an STD clinic, she will be branded a sex worker. As regards the males, seeking treatment at STD clinics is normal because they are expected to indulge in "risky" sex and they are not stigmatized. In many societies, it is considered normal for a man to have more than one sexual partner and thus men are not branded promiscuous.

"Surveys in African countries suggest a high rate of sexual partner change; as many as 53% of the adult male respondents reported having had multiple sex partners in the preceding 6-12 months, while reports of multiple partnership among adult women range from 2% to 17%".

Note: STD's are predisposing factors for HIV infection and, therefore, this makes women more vulnerable to HIV infection.
Limited access to information

Women in general have been assigned the role of home-makers. All over the world, majority of women, spend most of their time at home. They have limited access to information on HIV/AIDS as compared to their male counterparts who are mobile. Lack of adequate and appropriate information also increases the chances of women being infected. More so, if one is ignorant about HIV one will not even feel it necessary to adopt a positive sexual behaviour change in the absence of adequate knowledge.

Limited Mobility

In some societies, many rural women have limited mobility patterns. This is because they are expected to tend only to household chores. They cannot visit health clinics to seek information, probably because of the long distances and the belief that one goes to these health centers only with a medical problem. When it comes to attending meetings, only the men go there. Yet these meetings are usually the places where information is disseminated, particularly HIV information. Most of the women miss out on this information and remain ignorant or have scanty information. This makes them more vulnerable.
On the other hand if one looks at the roles of women exclusively, HIV infection will affect their roles. As mothers, they are supposed to be the child bearers. If a woman is HIV positive, she is in a dilemma because she is expected to play the reproductive role. 20-30% of the children born to HIV positive mothers will probably be infected. Thus with time probably the mother role will be determined by the HIV status.

**Lower literacy levels**

Many women are illiterate as compared to their male counterparts. This facilitates HIV infection in that being illiterate they cannot read a message, especially a prevention message. At times many women, especially in the rural areas, apart from not being able to read, do not have access to any person who may have adequate and appropriate information³. Lower literacy levels are a manifestation of the social process which puts emphasis on the girl-child being groomed as a home maker and the boy-child as the provider. With these differences, people with limited economic resources, usually prefer to give the male child formal education to strengthen his role. This, in the long run, brings about or has brought about lower literacy levels in women.

**Lack of Economic Alternatives.**

Most women lack economic alternatives to help them have sustained behavior change patterns. Many of them stay at home and thus do not have access to any form of knowledge or skill that can help them identify viable and feasible economic alternatives and implement them effectively. Hence, some have resorted to commercial sex activity so as to be able to get extra income to sustain themselves and their families. On the other hand, most of the men have at least the basic or rudimentary skills that help them perform their roles as bread-winners. They

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also tend to have access to other viable economic alternatives, as compared to women, since they are better equipped with diverse skills and knowledge.

As wives, they will be affected, both physically and psychologically, when they are faced with transmission of HIV from their husbands.

As a caretaker, the infection will increasingly divert the duties of a woman to caring for a sick child, husband, son-in-law etc.

**Cultural Factors.**

Some cultural practices have also facilitated the spread of HIV infection in women. These vary from society to society. For instance, some cultures practice widow inheritance. Women are seen as property. Widow inheritance involves the brother or any of the closest male relatives of the deceased husband, having sexual relations with the widow. It is part of the "cleansing rituals".

**Physiological or biological Vulnerability**

Women are biologically more prone to HIV infection than men at any given sexual contact. It now seems that male to female transmission is 2 to 4 times as efficient as compared to female to male transmission. This is due to the larger exposed surface of penetrable membrane in women.

**Blood Transfusion**

Because of their reproductive role, many women are given blood transfusion, especially during childbirth. It has been reported that efficiency of HIV transmission per single exposure during blood transfusion is 90%. Considering the fact that some blood could be in the window period, this makes women more vulnerable as compared to men. (Window period refers to the time between the point of infection and the time at which the virus is detected)
The roles assigned to women and men have been affected by HIV infection in a number of ways:

- As caretakers, the infection has and will increasingly divert the role of both women and men as parents to that of probably caring for a sick child, husband, wife, son-in-law etc. Women tend to be the caretakers of the sick. In some communities, men have also taken over this role, by caring for a sick child or wife. (In some cases where both parents have the HIV infection, children, regardless of their sex have found themselves caring for their sick parents).

- As providers, the infection has pressurized women especially those who have been widowed by HIV, to take jobs outside their homesteads, so as to be able to care for their children more effectively. Some of them have to seek economic alternatives probably because the husband's health has been devastated by the infection. In this regard, the pandemic has forced many women into a situation where they find themselves as bread winners and not solely as home-makers or housewives.

- As parents, both men and women especially those who have been found to be HIV positive, are faced with the dilemma of bearing children. More so, women are expected to play the reproductive role, and men in many societies are expected to have children to prove their manhood. 20-30% of the children born to HIV infected couples or to those that are "discordant", are likely to be infected with HIV. In this regard, the "parenting" role will probably be determined by the person's HIV status, and not by the values and expectations of society, "other things being equal".

- As husbands or wives (or partners in general), both men and women have been and will continue to be affected both physically and psychologically, as they are faced with the transmission of HIV from their partners.
The trainer goes on to give a lecture on:

a) the impact of HIV on gender roles

b) Intervention measures

c) strategies for grassroot level

* The trainer may present after the lecture the film "Positively Women" by Nalini Singh. It is available both in Hindi and English.

INTERVENTION MEASURES

In the absence of a cure for HIV infection, preventive measures that are gender sensitive should be worked out within the social and cultural contexts of individual countries. It is important to note that the prevention and control of HIV in all population groups is an urgent health priority. However, the challenges of preparing a strategy for sustained positive behavior change are considerable, since issues concerning HIV/AIDS are still discussed largely in private. But the present rate of its prevalence will force the boundaries of both social and cultural sensitivities to be stretched.

Different population groups (viz. men, women, adolescents, children etc.) have had different impact of HIV. Therefore, the social and cultural determinants of HIV infection need to be considered for each group. In working out preventive measures, it is imperative to target all these population groups in their specificity and also in their different sectors, using the multisectoral or the integrated approach.

In order to ensure a more effective implementation of the preventive measures, intervention strategies should include the creation of a supportive environment for all population groups. All individuals and groups, right from the grassroots should be encouraged to identify with and actively participate in the preventive interventions, so as to have a sustained positive behavior change in the long run.
STRATEGIES FOR GRASSROOT LEVEL

1. Sustainable behaviour change and attitudes must be determined and directed by men and women in their communities. Both men and women must participate together in identifying and addressing practical needs to change and improve their lives. This can be facilitated by:

   a) Integrating and linking HIV/STD prevention programmes into the already existing interventions or community groups e.g. economic intervention such as agricultural extension services for women farmers, health intervention e.g. maternal and child health facilities etc. In this way the existing structures will be used as channels through which information and services on HIV/AIDS and related implications can be addressed, rather than setting up independent programmes. This will encourage the community and women per se, to participate without being censured or stigmatized.

2. Another strategy is that opinion leaders or community leaders should be sensitized and made aware of the negative implications of some of the traditional stereotypes. Since many of these are seen as role models in families and communities, they also have a major role in influencing community opinions and ideas. Nevertheless, the communities should take the initiative in implementing the conducive ideas.
**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

GENDER DIFFERENTIALS IN EDUCATION

OBJECTIVES

- TO DRAW ATTENTION TO
  - DIFFERENTIAL NATURE OF MALE - FEMALE EDUCATION PATTERNS
  - IMPACT OF RESTRICTED EDUCATION ACCESS TO WOMEN
- SUGGEST ALTERNATIVES TO COMBAT THE EXISTING GENDER BIAS PRACTICES IN EDUCATION

Methods

Question-answer, Discussions, Debate, Case study

Material

Charts, Posters, Black board

FACILITATOR'S NOTE

The facilitator may start the session by making the volunteers conversant with the national, regional and local level;

(i) differences in male and female literacy rates;
(ii) inequality between urban and rural areas;
(iii) male-female education levels in different states and
(iv) differential nature of education available to males and females. Examples of these variations can be taken from the given tables.

Contd..
The facilitator must draw attention to the following:

(i) Why males are better educated than females.

(ii) Why do males go in for skills with better remuneration.

(iii) To what extent does better education and skills enhance the status of a person?

The facilitator can then discuss some of the social factors and practices that restrict women's access to education. The perceived need for giving education to females would be different for different groups and with some groups there may be no felt need for educating girls. Thus, some people may want to educate their daughters so that they can be self-dependent or aware or capable of earning an income. For others, education may be more a status requisite for getting married. It is only after understanding the peoples' perception for the need for education that intervention for improving women's access to education and the quality of this education can be made. By addressing these problems, the facilitator can propose an alternative strategy.

**MALE-FEMALE DIFFERENCES IN EDUCATION**

**General Trends**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Spheres</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Literacy Rates</strong></td>
<td>64 per cent</td>
<td>39.3 per cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level of Education</strong></td>
<td>Minimum Metric: to enable employment</td>
<td>Up to 8th class; Up to the age the girl reaches puberty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Educational Institutions</strong></td>
<td>English medium; best institutions to which family has access</td>
<td>Local schools within the vicinity of the home: irrespective of the quality of the school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Perceived need for Education</strong></td>
<td>To earn remuneration, wages To acquire social status To enhance decision making capacity</td>
<td>No perceived need Education in keeping with the family status As a requisite to marriage To earn supplementary income for the family</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Education: Its existing status**

The literacy rate in the country is 52.21 per cent. However, male literacy rates are substantially higher than those of the females. Sixty-four per cent of the males are literate whereas only 39.3 per cent of the females are literate. **Thus for every 100 literate men only 62 women are literate.** Though these figures have been improving over the decades, in all the states male literacy rates are higher than female literacy rates. Even in states like Kerala where most people are educated 93.62 of the males are literate whereas in comparison only 86.14 of the females are literate. In states like Rajasthan this difference is much wider, only 20 per cent of the females are educated while 55 per cent of the males are educated.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STATES</th>
<th>TOTAL POPULATION</th>
<th>MALES</th>
<th>FEMALES</th>
</tr>
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<td>38.48</td>
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<td>CHANDIGARH</td>
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<td>INDIA</td>
<td>52.21</td>
<td>64.13</td>
<td>39.29</td>
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</table>

**Source:** Census of India, 1991
The table below provides a comprehensive reflection of the educational status of the girl child in some states of India.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>KERALA</td>
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</table>

SOURCE: NATIONAL FAMILY HEALTH SURVEY, 1992-93

Besides the differences in the education rates among males and females, there are some other dissimilarities. In the urban areas the literacy rates are much higher and 64.05 per cent of the women in the urban areas are literate as compared 30.16 per cent in the rural areas. Disparities also exist from state to state.

The state of Kerala has the highest literacy rate for women where 83.9 per cent of them are educated. On the other hand, states like Rajasthan and Bihar have very poor female literacy rates of 20.8 and 23.1 per cent respectively.
Differential Education

Males and females are provided access to different types of education. In accordance with the male role of earners, they are given education and skills which have remunerative value. Females, on the other hand, attain education and skills relating to child care and housekeeping. Thus, most of the males go in for business management, accountancy, engineering etc. For instance, more boys join courses such as commerce and science whereas girls are predominant in arts, social science and home science. For instance, the available data for 1995 for the state of Punjab shows that 99.7 per cent of the students in agriculture related skills, 67 per cent in manufacturing, 75 per cent in engineering and architecture were male students. In comparison, in food related spheres (such as cooking and catering) 100 per cent students were females.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STATES</th>
<th>RURAL POPULATION</th>
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<td>INDIA</td>
<td>44.69</td>
<td>57.87</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SOURCE:- CENSUS OF INDIA, 1991
Socio-cultural Milieu

Social attitudes, beliefs and norms reflect on women's poor access to education. Differences in male-female literacy levels, differences in urban and rural female literacy levels and varying literacy levels in different states do point out that within the available educational infrastructure females face social discrimination - both in access to education and in the quality of education available to them. Social norms revolve around a woman’s role as the nurturer of the family. Thus, restricted access to female education is furthered not only by the family (a girl is a "paraya dhan"; educating her is a waste of money), but also by the community (if you educate a girl she will run away. What is the need for educating a girl - has the family stooped so low as to live on a girl's earnings). Even religious practices demand that a girl must remain chaste and protected. Thus if exposure through education can ruin a girl's character then education must be avoided. Movies also promote this idea when college going girls are shown to rebel against their parents and find their own marriage partners. A combination of these factors determine the socio-cultural atmosphere that restricts female access to education.
Perception regarding the use of Education for females

The need for education for males and females is perceived in the context of the roles they are expected to play. For women these roles revolve around the home and child care. For males, the breadwinner is the prototype. Socialisation process and corresponding practices, attitudes and behaviour support these functions.

(i) NO PERCEIVED NEED FOR EDUCATING FEMALES:

In many sections of society, educating girls is not perceived as a social family and economic need. Since a female’s role is perceived as being restricted to household activity, education in itself may not be valued. Thus, a girl is not given education. Instead, she may look after her siblings and household chores, to prepare herself for the role of a nurturer.

(ii) STATUS:

a) Girls’ education as a fall-out of family status

b) As a requisite to marriage
Education, rather the "optimal level" of education for girls is visualised in keeping with the status of the family and as an eligibility factor in the context of marriage. A family of status provides education to its girl children. In such a context education itself is considered a value. Moreover, an educated girl has a status, the demand for which varies from area to area, in accordance with the stratum, caste, religion and other social factors. Accordingly, in the rural middle/upper strata, girls may need a certificate of 8th pass. In the urban areas girls may be educated up to the graduate level or as required by eligible marriage partners. In other contexts, education may provide an economic status in addition to the social status for enhancing eligibility for marriage. Thus girls may be educated up to matriculation or put in IT so that they could take up jobs if so desired by their in-laws. For instance, if a girl has passed the 10th class, she can learn type-writing or be eligible for a Gram Sevika's post. Thus a girl can earn an income, if her family situation so demands, yet it remains secondary to her role as a family nurturer.
(III) EDUCATION EQUATED WITH LITERACY AND EMPLOYMENT:

Education equated with literacy and employment and correspondingly, the importance given to educating her relates to the requirements of her marital home. The popular notion is that education provides literacy and is a pre-requisite for employment. Perception of education as a medium of awareness, information or exposure remains stunted. Education is not visualised as a means to attaining a progressive mind, and creating a capable and confident human being. Given such limitations with which the need for education is understood, its utility for girls is seen to be negligible. In fact, local sayings such as "Ladki kya padkar patwari/munim banegi?" emphasise the role ascribed to education, where the role of an earner is not only denied to women but also made fun of. Girls are primarily educated to attain literacy. Once that is achieved, no further need is visualised since girls are not expected to undertake the role of earners.

Factors restricting Female Education

I. Stereotypes in education

Supporting the logic of patriarchy that girls have different social roles, their conduct and values are governed by norms such as chastity, femininity and purda, which restrict women's access to education. Some of these stereotype beliefs and practices are:

(i) Education provides exposure to girls which "spoils" them:

Girls, after puberty which means on reaching the middle school level, are restricted to the confines of the home. It is commonly believed that girls, if not kept under constant supervision and check, and allowed to mix freely with boys, may even elope or lose their chastity. The value of chastity which restricts mobility has predominance over education i.e. containing women within the patriarchal norms is perceived to be more important than making them self-reliant.
Exposure and interaction with the outside world may even result in loosening of control of the parents. It can result in the girls' questioning the parents' actions or wanting to have a greater say in matters concerning their lives. For instance, the type of boy she wants to marry or where she wants to study. It may even be the type of dress the girl wants to wear. All these stereotype practices relate more specifically to girls who have attained puberty. Again such practices curtail the women's freedom subjecting them to the control of subjugating norms and values of patriarchy.

**Girls are feeble minded**

One of the popular notions which is used to explain girls' dropping out of school or not sending them to school at all is that girls are biologically and mentally inferior and incapable of being educated. Such beliefs are convenient to restrict the girls to the confines of the house and at the same time initiate them to running a household.
Girls have no interest in studies

Parents may say that they want to educate the girl further but the girl herself is not interested in studies since she keeps failing in her examinations. The reasons for her failure or the so-called feeble mindedness may be that she is constantly embroiled in household chores or is herself the victim of the ideology that the family is her domain and she is not expected to earn an income thus there is no need for study.

Educating girls is a waste of time and money

Since girls are not expected to undertake jobs, educating them is thought to be a waste of time and effort. Instead, they are encouraged to be well-versed in home life, specialise in running the household. Such beliefs are directly related to the stereotyped role of female nurturers and caretakers.

II. Practices

Supporting the stereotypes and ideas on girl child education there are certain practices which either hinder the education of the girl child or further the biased nature of education available to her.

Some of these practices are:

Codes of conduct

Children are socialised into acceptable behaviour where attitudes and conduct are in tune with patriarchal norms. For instance, girls are expected to go to school and come home directly. Buying things from vendors, staying back for games or extra curricular activities etc., is not an acceptable behaviour. Education does not become a way of life and remains only a necessity for becoming literate.
Dress codes

Dress is reflective of the conservative and decorous behaviour corresponding to patriarchal norms. Even in colleges, a standardised appearance is advocated for fear that girls do not get singled out for attention. Similar rules may not apply to boys who have greater freedom and choice even in their outward appearance. Such conduct sub-consciously advocates the different socialisation patterns of males and females. It restricts female choices even on such mundane matters as appearance, where even education re-emphasizes the norms of purda, chastity and desirable character of women.

III. Social barriers

Besides the ideology and the corresponding beliefs and practices that are prevalent, there are some hindrances to women being educated. Some of these are:

- Creating an imbalance in the male-female hierarchy

Given the existing gender system, male partners are expected to have higher skills and better educational qualifications than their spouses. If the female is more exposed or educated then
she may question her husband or become a better decision-maker. The fear of an ‘over-educated’ girl not finding a husband limits the education available to women, emphasising their subordinate position.

- **Avenue for eve-teasing and molestation**

The patriarchal environment does encourage harassment of girls. Confining and restricting them to the home avoids such complications to a great extent. If a girl has to attend college regularly or even go to work, then, to that extent, she is exposed to male advances.

- **Sibling caretaker and household chores performer**

Within the home, the girl child is required to perform various household chores and also to look after the children. Since paid help may not be available or desirable, and assistance from male members is not forthcoming, women perforce have to rely on young girls for help. Moreover, since the girls are expected to perform these functions all through their lives, they are inbred to these roles. Thus education may become a burden to the young female.

### IMPACT OF DIFFERENTIAL EDUCATION ON GIRLS

1. Girls may be denied education
2. They may be provided with some education (till the 8th or matriculation standard)
3. The quality of education provided may be poor (girls studying in regional schools or provided with poor quality education)
4. The nature of education given to them relates to their domestic functions such as home science, child care, nutrition etc.
5. Even in the sphere of education, girls are restricted to lower market value options such as social sciences. There are fewer girls in commerce or science.
EXPLAINING: THE NEED FOR EDUCATION

Losing even after a win: Shabana was elected Sarpanch of Kabulpur village. The post was reserved for women. Shabana was illiterate and not familiar with village politics. The opponent Nusrat was not only literate but also clever. One day Nusrat cornered Shabana alone and requested her to put her thumb impression on a paper, which she said was an application for a loan. However, Nusrat had got Shabana's thumb impression on her resignation as Sarpanch, which she then submitted to the Panchayat officials. Poor Shabana, even though she had won the election, she lost her seat.

The burden of illiteracy: Shankar, an educated youth was married to Nirmala who was illiterate. Shankar and Nirmala started a family. Shankar was keen to educate his children. However, Nirmala was unable to comprehend the importance of education.

Contd..
She would not send the children regularly to school or even on time, saying even if the children did not go every day or went late, the school would remain where it was, the children would eventually get educated.

One day after a fight with Shankar, Nirmala walked out of the house in a huff with her two children. At the bus stand Nirmala was unable to read and locate the bus that would take them to her parents. She did not ask anyone, both out of shame and anger. Making a guess she boarded a bus. After 20 km. when the conductor asked her for a ticket, she said she wanted to go to Raipur. The conductor told her that Raipur was in the other direction, this bus was going to Ranchi. Poor Nirmala got stranded in the middle of the way. If only she knew how to read and write!

### FACILITATOR’S NOTE

*Keeping in mind that any successful intervention needs a correct comprehension of the problem before the problem can be dealt with effectively, the facilitator must encourage a discussion on field-level problems, the stereotyped practices that hamper women's access to and equality in education. It is such bias that must be addressed in order to combat restrictions on women and the inferior position accorded to them. The facilitator may start by discussing the existing strategies implemented by the state. In response to problems both perceived and actual, an alternative strategy can be discussed.*

### Existing Strategy

The Government has continuously stressed the importance of education and also adopted measures to increase literacy among women. In fact, education has been considered a vehicle to bring about a basic change in society and the status of women. Strategies such as 'Operation Blackboard', free education for girls, Navodya Vidyalyas plus specific projects in different states such as Shiksha Karmi project in Rajasthan have been introduced by the HRD Ministry with special emphasis on women's development. Other programmes such as the
District Primary Education Programme (DPEP), Total Literacy Campaigns (TLC), National Literacy Mission (NLM) have also been introduced. Mahila Samakhya Programme or women's equality through education has also been launched. The thrust of these strategies has been:

1. Universalisation of education, where enrollment of all children in schools and re-enrollment of drop-outs have been encouraged. Education for girls has been made free up to the primary level and in some states up to higher levels.

2. Adult Education Programme catering to older people has also been stressed upon.

This strategy aims at increasing the educational infrastructure and thus the people's access to education. However, social aspects such as socialisation patterns, disregard for educating girls, restricted female mobility etc., need to be combated, if universalisation of education is to be achieved.

**Role of NSS Volunteers**

NSS volunteers must counter the stereotyped practices and values that restrict female access
to higher and qualitative education. It is only by questioning these social norms that universalisation of education can be made a reality. Moreover, NSS volunteers must aim at removing the differential nature of male-female education (boys learning remunerative skills and girls learning skills pertaining to the household).

NSS volunteers can adopt a strategy both within their college and in the community selected for intervention to provide awareness and hold discussions on these issues.

**Thrust of the NSS Strategy**

1. NSS volunteers must sensitize the target group that differences in:
   a. male-female access to education varies;
   b. males are provided a better quality of education than the females (boys go to better schools i.e. English medium and private schools whereas girls may be sent to government and regional schools);
   c. the nature of education given to boys and girls is different;

Volunteers should link good quality education with increased awareness among the students that education should create the capacity to be self-reliant both through the nature of skills learnt and increase in awareness and self-confidence. Capacity to earn a productive wage leads to a better status.

**EXERCISE: IDENTIFYING M/F DIFFERENTIALS IN EDUCATION**

That can be undertaken in the target area:

(i) Find out the number of boys and girls who are enrolled.

(ii) Education levels of girls and boys who have some education.

(iii) Do girls and boys attend different schools? List the schools to which girls go, schools to which boys go. List the regional or local schools, schools with English medium and with better facilities.

(iv) The courses that boys and the girls have joined after the tenth class.
2. The volunteers must stress that women are already productive beings. It is a fallacy to think that women are liabilities and sayings such as "girls do not need education since they are not going to become earners like Patwaris or Munims" are untrue since a large number of women are already working, though only 23 per cent of the women in India are listed in the census as earners. A vast majority of women work even though they are not paid a wage. In fact in India women undertake:

* work also at the home on an average of seven and a half hours a day.
* women are engaged in agricultural operations for 10 hours a day on an average.
* in dairying operation 85 per cent of the labour is done by women.

The point being that women are engaged in labour but may not be in a position to earn a wage. Thus if women are already working then they can earn better wages by being more educated and skilled.

3. Even when women do not work in farms or help in household manufacturing etc., education becomes a pre-requisite to fulfill their duties better not only as citizens and workers and but also as parents. A more aware and informed individual is more capable of providing direction and guidance to his or her children.

**Activities that can be undertaken by NSS Volunteers**

- **Information on Government Scheme**

In order to enhance enrollment and education levels among the females, NSS volunteers can provide information to the people regarding various Government schemes that promote female education. Most people are unaware of schemes that provide free education to girl children, scholarships and books to certain sections (Scheduled Castes), adult education etc.
Provide Adult Education/Non Formal Education

NSS volunteers can themselves take up the task of providing adult education to a group of women.

For initiating these schemes, NSS volunteers can contact the primary school teacher, principals and Government education functionaries. (Also refer to module on Government Schemes)

Awareness Campaigns:

The NSS Volunteers can generate awareness in the community and within their educational institutions by initiating discussions. Topics for discussion could be:

1. The importance of education for women.
2. Is education for girls a degree for marriage, employment or self-reliance?
3. Do all girls become "characterless" if they get exposed to educational institutions?

Discussions, exhibitions, posters, street plays can be organised to highlight the importance of qualitative education for women and to bring out how at present they are being discriminated against.
EMPLOYMENT, WORK AND GENDER ISSUES

OBJECTIVES

• TO SENSITIZE THE YOUTH IN INDIA TO GENDER ISSUES IN EMPLOYMENT
• TO EXPLAIN HOW ENTRY INTO THE WORKFORCE IS RESTRICTED BY GENDER STATUS
• TO IDENTIFY THE AREAS OF WORK IN WHICH WOMEN ARE DISCRIMINATED AGAINST

Method

Lecture-cum-Discussion

Material

Photographs, slides, video-films etc.

FACILITATOR’S NOTE

The facilitator can initiate the discussion by providing a context. The meaning of work and employment must be differentiated and explained. Statistics can be used to emphasize women’s overall low employment and most of their employment is in the informal sector. The facilitator can follow the given format to discuss and sensitize the youth on the given issues.
WORK AND EMPLOYMENT

For satisfying the basic need of food, shelter and clothing, work both domestic and work for money, is essential.

Domestic work such as cooking food, washing clothes and utensils, taking care of the children and elders etc. does not bring ‘money’ into the household and, therefore, it is not perceived as ‘work’. Since ages, these tasks have been performed by women but their work has never given them the status of being ‘employed’.

It is common that when a housewife is asked “Are you working?”, she replies, "No, I am not, I am a housewife."

She might be working day and night, but her work does not bring money into the family. The domestic work of women remains 'invisible' in most of the societies.

WOMEN IN EMPLOYMENT - THE INDIAN SCENE

In India, a patriarchal society by and large, women workers have generally been engaged in the unorganised sector due to the low level of their skills, training and expertise and the cultural impediments.
**FEMALE PARTICIPATION IN INDUSTRY**

In the household industry:
* 20.95 per cent workers are female and of these females,
  - 57.12 per cent are family workers,
  - 34.72 per cent are single workers and
  - 8.10 per cent are employees.

Females constitute the largest proportion among 'family workers' (A family worker is a member who works without receiving wages in cash or kind, in an industry, business, trade or service).

In the non-household industry:
(Trade, business, profession or service)
- Females account for only 10.14 per cent of all the workers.
  * Of these 65.50 per cent are employees,
  - 27.73 per cent are single workers and
  - 9.45 per cent are family workers. In the urban areas, the proportion of employees is higher than the other two classes.

### MALE - FEMALE MAIN AND MARGINAL WORKERS

(Percentage of total population)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total Workers</th>
<th>Main Workers</th>
<th>Marginal Workers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>36.7</td>
<td>34.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>51.6</td>
<td>52.6</td>
<td>51.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>22.3</td>
<td>19.7</td>
<td>16.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>40.1</td>
<td>38.8</td>
<td>35.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>52.6</td>
<td>53.8</td>
<td>51.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>26.8</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>18.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>30.2</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td>29.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>48.9</td>
<td>49.1</td>
<td>48.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Excluding Assam and Jammu & Kashmir

Source: - census of India


**FEMALE WORK PARTICIPATION RATE IN SOME STATES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>States</th>
<th>Female work participation Rate</th>
<th>Rank in 1981</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manipur</td>
<td>38.96</td>
<td>39.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arunachal Pradesh</td>
<td>37.49</td>
<td>45.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Himachal Pradesh</td>
<td>34.82</td>
<td>31.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madhya Pradesh</td>
<td>32.68</td>
<td>30.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamil Nadu</td>
<td>29.89</td>
<td>26.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rajasthan</td>
<td>27.4</td>
<td>21.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kerala</td>
<td>15.85</td>
<td>16.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uttar Pradesh</td>
<td>12.32</td>
<td>8.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haryana</td>
<td>10.76</td>
<td>10.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punjab</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>6.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>India</strong></td>
<td><strong>22.27</strong></td>
<td><strong>19.67</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Census of India 1991

**PRE-EM PLOYMENT GENDER DIFFERENCES**

**WHAT ARE THE TASKS THAT A GIRL IS TRAINED FOR FROM HER CHILDHOOD?**

- Washing: Cleaning the house
- Cooking: Taking care of younger brothers/sisters
- Fetching water: Sewing and stitching etc.
- Making beds

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Whenever she is studying, normally she is told:
"Be quick and go and help your mother. You are not to get employment, so, why spend so much money and energy on education?"
The boy, on the other hand, from his childhood is given the best of food, clothes and toys because he has to `work' and become the 'earner' and 'protector' of the family.
Such an attitude comes even from:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parents</th>
<th>Kinsmen</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Neighbours</td>
<td>School curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teachers</td>
<td>films etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Consequently, many girls even if they are admitted to school, either stop on their own or are stopped by others from going to school.

JOINING WORKFORCE: GENDER DIFFERENCES

When the time to enter the field of employment comes, the males are better equipped than the females since, by and large, they have been given better skills, training and competence. Normally, a carpenter would pass on his skills to his son, so that he gradually starts earning. Similarly, a shopkeeper would make his son help him in the shop from a young age. As a result, he grows up as a shopkeeper. Every male child is provided with some kind of training or skill which helps him get into the workforce smoothly. On the contrary, girls are normally not brought up with the same intention. When suddenly the family feels compelled, she is "pushed" into the workforce.

What happens in such a situation?
(I) Uneven distribution of men and women in organized and unorganized sector

As a result of the above tendencies, the following trends have emerged:

i) A majority of women are employed in the 'unorganized' sector, i.e. jobs which are not covered under planning by the Government;
ii) Women workers get lower wages even if they work as much as men;

iii) Female workers are often sexually exploited by the employers and bosses, because in the absence of expertise, they are not in a position to resist and end up 'unemployed';

iv) They can be thrown out of job whenever desired by the employer;

v) Most of the employed women in India work as agricultural labour and do the most menial kind of jobs;

vi) Because of their concentration in the unorganized sector, female workers are not provided with facilities such as maternity leave, child care centers etc.

(II) Employment: a double burden

Employment puts a women to a double disadvantage. One would often find women working in the fields - in transplantation or harvesting work - with small infants in their laps, or infants tied on their backs. Women working on construction sites, leave their infants on the roadside. Even if a women works as a lawyer, doctor, teacher, stenographer, peon or engineer, she often leaves her work for the sake of her children, husband or family and thus sacrifice her career.
Before going to work, a woman has to complete several tasks, e.g. cooking, preparing the children for school, sending the husband to work, washing clothes, setting the house in order and so on. While she is in office, she often keeps worrying about things that need to be done urgently at home. The moment she comes home, she again starts her domestic work.

Does employment make life easier for a woman?

The group can debate this question. Before the start of the discussion visual aids of the kind described should be shown. The youths may be shown photographs or documentaries showing women as construction labourers, carrying infants on their backs, women employees, hurriedly completing their domestic work to reach the workplace on time and then again rushing back home in the evening.

Women and efficiency

Very often women are shown in films, and jokes in day-to-day life as less efficient, uncommitted, non-serious and idlers. It may be a common practice for men in banks, post offices etc. to sit idle, enjoy tea and jokes, and neglect the customers. But if the same is done by a woman worker, the normal comment would be:
"Oh! women will never take their work seriously!"

Actually, women workers may be equally or even more committed, yet they have to exert much. Obligations often make women more concerned for and dedicated to the family and children than their male colleagues to be recognized as efficient workers. All this results in a concentration of women workers in low ranking jobs, both in the organized as well as the unorganized sector.

It is common to hear complaints from women bureaucrats and women police officers that they are not given important assignments which ultimately ruins their careers.

The agony faced by an efficient woman officer in such a situation is presented beautifully in the TV serial 'Udaan' in which a young IPS Officer (female) struggles to prove her efficiency in most challenging situations.

**CONSEQUENCES OF GENDER BIASED SOCIAL PRACTICES**

When girls and boys from the very birth, are prepared for different kinds of roles, how can they be expected to show a similar output in employment? The gender-bias often extends to the workplace - industry, school, university, professional institutions and so on.
Even if a large number of women especially in the villages, work outside the house and bring in money, they are seldom treated as "workers" on a par with men. At no point is a woman treated as an individual, with abilities similar to those of a man.

Consequently, even employment has not granted women an independent status. "Work" has an altogether different meaning in the case of female employment, her first priority being the "home". At the workplace, she is, time and again, made to realize by her superiors, colleagues and even juniors that she needs protection.

### Visual Aids

Respondents here can be shown slides projecting women workers in the organized sector as private secretaries, stenographers, typists, nurses etc., who can be easily exploited by men sexually and otherwise. Hindi movies such as 'Pati, Patni aur Woh' and 'Dil ka Doctor' can be shown to them, explaining how society enjoys projecting a working girl in a highly disrespectful and humiliating manner.

### Societal Implications

Such practices within the family and beyond, lead to compartmentalisation of gender roles. Society not merely accepts the hierarchical arrangement, but even encourages it. Instead of granting facilities for child care to pregnant and lactating mothers, women in the unorganized sector are often kicked out, once they get married or get pregnant. This practice is being adopted even by the multinational corporations in our country. Thus, the biological 'qualities' are often turned into biological 'handicaps'. To cite an example, one of the leading companies, has a norm according to which both husband and wife cannot work in the same company. The MNCs similarly have a clear preference for unmarried attractive girls. At places, young women have to enter into a contract agreeing to leave the job if they get married.
Are the acts of motherhood, reproduction, lactation, child rearing etc. physical handicaps for which a woman must be penalised?

Let the young boys and girls answer this question. Also ask them to give reasons for their response. The discussion can be guided, keeping in mind that though roles in society are a must, these, must not be typed. Increasing inflation and increased needs demand that men as well as women earn money. If women have to earn then society should prepare them from the onset to acquire skills that can fetch maximum money and also create an environment for women to be able to work. Simultaneously women's typed domestic work can be reallocated within the family, rather than restricted only to the females.

Once we agree that women are 'different' from men and that these differences are not naturally 'hierarchical', we have to look for remedies for gender inequality in employment.

REVIEW OF EXISTING REMEDIES

Major efforts to tackle the question of gender inequalities in employment have been made in India by -

i) Government and

ii) Voluntary women's organisations

i) Government

By and large, the induction of women into skilled and professional jobs, political bodies etc. has not made any significant dent in their traditional image as housewives. Most of our employed women are concentrated in low paid, semi-skilled and unskilled jobs. Those who have secured unconventional roles as engineers, doctors, police and defence personnel are usually assigned tasks which are less challenging. For instance, our women ministers would normally get the portfolios of health, family welfare, education, environment, cultural affairs etc.
From the very beginning, the Indian Government has adopted a welfare approach to women's problems. A shift to more fundamental reforms was reflected in the recommendations made by the National Commission on Self-employed Women and Women in the Informal Sector (Govt. of India 1988-89). The report suggested the following objectives to improve the plight of women in the unorganized sector:

(i) to ensure for them fuel, fodder and water,
(ii) to ensure better employment, support may be granted to them in areas of skill, training, credit and marketing.
(iii) to protect their employment which is falling prey to technological development.
(iv) to create new employment opportunities for them.
(v) to protect women from exploitation by contractors, employers etc.
(vi) to provide maternity and child care facilities to women.
(vii) to ensure effective implementation of the existing laws.

Unfortunately, these efforts do not underline the need for redefining gender roles and making them gender neutral, especially in the field of employment.

However, the above objectives can be adopted in micro situations by NSS volunteers. For instance, in areas where fuel and fodder shortages exist, social forestry programmes could be initiated. Camps for awareness generation and for providing assistance to utilize the existing employment schemes for women can be undertaken.

ii) Voluntary Organisations

Legislation in isolation may not improve the plight of employed women. A major role has been played by women's organizations in ensuring better working conditions for women workers. Some of the most notable examples are - Working Women's Forum (WWF), Self-employed Women's Association (SEWA) etc. These organisations have concentrated their efforts on securing credit facilities, undertaking family planning and health programmes. These associations have focused on identifying the critical problems of working women in the informal sector. They have mobilized these women to demand their political and social rights and to improve their skills. They have also helped women in demanding facilities such as
toilets, child care centres, health and family planning etc.), to increase the visibility of women as workers, to secure higher wages for them.

**FACILITATOR’S NOTE**

The trainer must emphasize that women’s organizations which take care of employed women’s problems do exist in our country. WWF is covering the following women workers: agricultural labourers in Madurai district, fisher women in Tamil Nadu, beedi workers in Tamil Nadu, aggarbatti workers in the slums of Bangalore City, lace-makers in Andhra Pradesh, rural non-agricultural workers in Karnataka, silk weavers in Tamil Nadu, chikan embroidery workers in U.P., and night schools for migrant workers in U.P. SEWA organizations exist in Delhi, Bhopal, Patna, Bhagalpur, Jamshedpur, Ambala, Imphal etc. affiliated to the main organization in Ahmedabad. But local rural women, accompanied by their men, must organize themselves and take up issues such as exploitation, lower wages, lack of facilities etc.

**GLOBALIZATION AND WOMEN’S EMPLOYMENT**

Since women's resource position is inferior to that of men, they have greater chances of losing out to men in the field of employment. Multi-national corporations have been found to prefer female workers because they are cheaper than male workers. These MNCs again show a conformity to patriarchal society when they induct female workers as swift assembly line workers who are docile and submissive.

Women are the last to acquire skills which fall outside the traditional skills allotted to them. Also with the increased competition for unskilled jobs, globalization is likely to throw unskilled women workers in fierce competition with men. Consequently, women who are the last in the
household to enter the workforce, happen to be the first to be thrown out in the event of market contraction. Hence, the urgent need for intervention to safeguard and improve women's employment conditions.

**PROPOSED STRATEGY**

The strategy, therefore, in the direction of gender justice in employment must have the following broad objectives -

a) a sensitization and recognition of 'work' extending to domestic work.
b) Treatment of an individual worker as a 'worker' irrespective of the gender status, thereby ensuring equal wages for equal work.
c) Provision of skills and upgrading the skills of women also in view of the newly emerging jobs and employment.
d) In view of the biological function of women workers, they must be provided with facilities such as creches, maternity benefits etc.
e) Combining legislative measures against gender discrimination among workers with a change in the attitude of the community towards employment of women.

These objectives may be achieved with the help of the following strategies :-

(i) Identifying the NSS unit - a village, a slum etc.- to be adopted.

(ii) Identifying the working groups, e.g. Mahila Mandals, women’s NGOs, etc. in the adopted unit.

(iii) Identifying some leaders from within the unit so that the objectives are achieved through people's participation and self-help.

(iv) Forming small groups of young boys, girls, teachers and parents and holding group discussions on the benefits of women's employment to the family and society.

(v) Showing interviews with successful women professionals, home based producers, entrepreneurs, recently inducted women in the Indian Army and the Air Force, Police
Officers, film actresses, engineers, scientists and professors etc. - to boost the morale of young girls as well as their parents.

**Visual Aid**

The TV serial 'Udaan' may be shown in which a girl from an ordinary agricultural family in a village achieves the status of a police officer and makes the family and the village proud of her. Parents and youths must be convinced how employed women can improve the quality of life of the whole family.

(vi) Volunteers can expose potential women workers in remote rural areas to different training schools being run by the state as well as voluntary groups to impart skills to women.

(vii) Women and girls finding it difficult to join the workforce, can be provided with information regarding the activities they can take up in their houses. For sensitizing them, photographs, slides and documentaries on self-employed women may be shown.

(viii) In order to sensitize rural women about the significance of their coming together, they must be informed about the 'women collectives', the formation of which can fetch them credit facilities for various kinds of business.

(ix) Both men as well as women workers in the unorganized sector have to be convinced that they must fight gender discrimination at the workplace. Instead of gender based unions, workers' unions have to be gender neutral.

(x) Finally, mass education in the direction of changing the attitude towards women's employment has to be undertaken from the very first level of schooling.
FEMALE PARTICIPATION AND POLITICAL RIGHTS

OBJECTIVES

- To generate awareness regarding the importance of women's political participation for women's development and gender justice
- To provide awareness regarding the rights and duties of a citizen
- To suggest a strategy to encourage women's participation in politics

Method

Discussion, case study, role play, group exercise, lecture etc.

Material

Blackboard, chalk, video system, film, etc.

FACILITATOR'S NOTE

The facilitator can start by discussing what political participation means, why it is desirable, its importance and its relation with women's development. The facilitator must stress that political participation is not restricted to only participation in elections but ensuring active participation in decision-making. This may be the exercise of power within the constitutional provisions - a woman panch passing a resolution for utilisation of Shamlat land for social forestry to generate fuel for the poorer sections of...
the village, or a woman moving the court against discrimination at her place of work. However, women can also exercise power outside the constitutional provisions - such as protest against a price-rise, demand for change in laws etc.

The details of constitutional provisions can be discussed with reference to the 73rd Amendment and the constitutional rights provided under it by highlighting the constraints on women's participation.

The facilitator can initiate a discussion on for increasing women's access to and exercise of power by asking the participants to undertake the exercise provided in the module.

Political Science popularly categorises political participation through the process of:

1. Interest articulation - Formulation of demands.
2. Rule making - Formulation of rules by the political system.
3. Rule application - It involves application and enforcement of rules.
4. Rule adjudication - This refers to the restraints and applications as laid down by the law.

Women: marginalised political participation:

Issues of gender concern and women's development do not find the requisite articulation either by well-established structures, (political parties, the media, the state etc.) lobbies or by women themselves. However, specific protests and agitations have been witnessed in which women have participated to press specific demands. For instance, women were mobilised in large numbers and they agitated with rolling pins against the increasing inflation in the nineteen seventies. The Samyukta movement during 1956-60, Nav Nirman agitation in Gujarat during the 1970's, the Chipko movement in Garhwal district in 1980. The Assam agitation with housewives squatting in the streets are some examples of women being politically active. However, women's participation, specially at the grassroot level to articulate their demands...
and to convert them into policies or rules for governing the community, has been negligible. Women remain systematically marginalised in the sphere of politics.

I. Interest Articulation

Three components can be examined in this context:

1. Presence of interest groups
2. Nature of demands
3. Channel of communication

Traditionally, gender concerns do not form part of any institutional interest group such as the political parties, the bureaucracy, the legislature, etc. However, recent developments do indicate that women, as a group, are transcending political affiliations, social gradations and regional placements to register certain demands. The demand, for reservation of 1/3rd seats in
Parliament for women, raised by women legislators belonging to various political parties in the Lok Sabha is an example of this trend. The need for the emergence of such groups at the grassroots level is essential to check the breaking down of women as an oppressed group on class, caste, religious or regional lines and there is need to build their united front with other oppressed groups also. Women do not even form members of associational interest groups such as the sugar lobby, the trade unions, or religious groups through which they can identify and articulate their concerns. In fact, women's presence in Panchayats is not encouraged by the larger social setting. In an incident a husband was fined by the Panchayat because his wife dared to speak out in the Panchayat. Though women's representation has become mandatory through the 73rd/74th Amendments, women's presence and participation in the Panchayats remains negligible. In the socially powerful Samajik Panchayats such as the Meham Chaubisia, the Sangwans, Sheorans etc., women are not allowed even entry. These panchayats are not governed by the state and follow their own rules thus, no legal intervention on its own can change the traditional outcasting of women. Unless interest groups emerge, interests cannot take shape and be consolidated for articulation. Unless gender concerns become social concerns or form a part of the political agenda, it will not be possible to bring qualitative change in women's status.
Nature of demands

Gender issues as articulated in politics largely remain within the framework of women's stereo-typed roles in conformity with the existing gender differentials which advance women's existing placements. For instance, a large part of the charter of demands concerning women remain child centered revolving around their role of a nurturer. Thus education and health for children constitute an agenda for the active women panchayat members. If a school exists in the area then the demand may revolve around a separate school for girls. Even when the need for income augmentation is articulated, these revolve around home-centered activities, utilizing household skills and encouraging women to remain within the home, allowing women to perform their typed role of looking after the home and children. Thus demands or protests do not give any priority to enhancing women's skills, or in assisting women in becoming productive earners or attaining an identity other than that of a mother or a wife.

Channels of communication

Impact and nature of demands also depends upon the channels through which these are communicated. Women's demands are generally articulated through patriarchal and kinship relations. Thus even Panchayat members are represented by their male members in taking decisions or forwarding demands and resolutions. Laws, rules and regulations negating patriarchy or kinship structures would be diluted or even face resistance from those expected to implement these. For instance, in Santo Majri village in Punjab, a social activist woman panch, along with other women, was demanding the closure of a liquor vend in the village. The woman panch was supported by her husband who had clout and respect in the village. However, when the women's protest began to affect the sales of the liquor shops the owner along with others could influence the woman panch's husband. He controlled his wife's activity and the demand to shift the vend was successfully scuttled.
The channels of communication exert considerable influence in prioritising the interests and in identification of the forum of interest articulation. Thus even if women's interests are shaping up, unless and until these are communicated among themselves and in the larger community, these may not get transformed into organised concerns.

II. Rule making

This pertains to both legislation and normative rules that govern society.

Women are not active rule makers since their roles do not encompass spheres outside the home and the family. These restrictions limit the scope of intervention. Even functions within the family are socially determined where individual women have relatively less autonomy as compared to their male counterparts to transcend the rules reinforcing the roles.

- Bias Legislation

The Shah Bano case is a classic example of the penetration of the gender ideology in the rule making system. Parliament legislation that a Muslim husband is not under any legal obligation to provide for a divorced wife is an evidence of bias in the rule making system detrimental to women in general.
Lack of Legislation

Not only is legislation detrimental, but non-legislation in certain spheres of social and familial functioning also perpetuates discrimination against women. This amounts to giving tacit consent to the detrimental gender functioning.

For example, there is no law to check wife-beating nor one that takes into consideration rape in marriage.

Again women in most states of India do not have the right to ancestral property since they are not a 'Karta' in the family. States like Maharashtra amended this law as late as 1995.

However, it is not to say that if women were members of the rule making system then things would have been different. The system promotes gender differential, typed roles and different norms for males and females, maintaining the detrimental placement of women. Women are very much part to this differential system. The 73rd and 74th Amendments reserve 1/3rd seats in the local bodies for women. Women as participant panches promote women's existing roles. They encourage dowry exchange, male child preference, skilled education for boys and property control in male hands.

III. Rule Application

Refers to the enforcement and application of rules through the delivery system such as the panchayats, the administration, caste and kinship heads etc.

Bias Application

In the context of the gender system, even when laws are judicious, their applicability may reflect the biases of a gender differentiating society.

For instance, property laws provide that both sons and daughters are equal heirs to parental assets. However, women do not have access to property since it is considered a social right only of sons. Thus property laws are easily circumvented.

Moreover, the application of social rules is practiced predominantly in the case of women and lower castes. In cases of violation of chastity and fidelity, involving an upper caste woman and
a lower caste man, punishment, especially to the man, is severe. The man may be thrown out of the village or even killed. However, upper caste men have tacit social consent to sexually exploit lower caste women.

❑ Rule application remains silent

Legal enforcement on issues which have social sanction remains bypassed. For instance, dowry demand and harassment cases are ignored as crimes. Rather than registering cases of dowry demand or harassment, panches may even be arbitrators in settling the quantum of the dowry to be given.

At times certain rules may not be applied, leading to perpetuation of injustice. For instance, dying declarations in dowry death cases may not be recorded, allowing the cases to escape trial as dowry murders.

IV Rule Adjudication

Rule adjudication involves rule invoking in the context of a conflict or contention, implementation of laws by formal courts, Panchayats or recognised social power wielders.
 Bias in adjudication
Many a time laws are implemented in favour of the existing gender hierarchies which promote women's inferior placement.

Case Study

GENDER BIAS IN COURT

The Punjab and Haryana High Court witnessed a case where the judges passed an order that the concept of Stridhan stood abolished and as such a divorced woman had no property of her own, since her property by virtue of her marriage becomes joint property with her husband. It negated the concept of Stridhan whereby a woman has right over gifts (including dowry) given to her and property which she has acquired. Though, the Supreme Court reversed this order, this case reflects that even judges function within the prescribed and dominant norms. In this instance the High Court judges thought that a wife could not have any property and assets different from her husband’s.

Lack of adjudication

At times rule adjudication may not be possible due to lack of evidence. In cases of rape or molestation, the victims prefer to avoid getting justice, since, raising this injustice means publicity. Due to the social stigma and the fear of ostracization, these issues remain unreported and unaddressed by social forums. Social mobilization and organizations on these gender concerns could provide both visibility to these issues and support to combating stigmatization, injustice and the continued seclusion of women’s issues from decision-making forums.

IMPACT OF WOMEN'S MARGINALISATION IN POLITICS

Lack of organisation to voice women's concerns

Women’s interests remain dormant since there is no platform to articulate these demands.
Detrimental placement of women remains unquestioned

In fact there is acceptance and promotion of the prevailing gender system. Women's existing roles limited to the family allow no scope for questioning, directing or changing the existing norms and rules. Thus women remain tied to the prescribed regulations.

Restricted Access to Facilities

Continuance of restricted placement marginalises women from access to infrastructure such as health, education, employment, property etc.

Invisibility of women's marginalisation in society is enhanced

Lack of participation of women and women's concerns in the sphere of rule formation and application restricts even the comprehension of the deprivation, discrimination and violence that women face.

Case Study

WOMEN REPRESENTATION IN PANCHAYATS

A study on Punjab in 1995 found that among the 300 women Panches sampled only 10 per cent received regular notices for Panchayat meetings and while 43 per cent did not ever receive the notifications for Panchayat meetings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WOMEN PANCHES ACCESS TO POWER / POSITION</th>
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<tr>
<td>Notice Received For Meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Meetings Attended</td>
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All figures are in percentage
Source :- Field Survey 1994-95, I.D.C.

The number of women panches who attend meetings further diminished. Women's participation in the so called public sphere is not appreciated within the existing gender system. This is reflected by the percentage of women who regularly attend these meetings.
meetings which is 7 per cent. Even the occasional attendance by 26 per cent of these women is more due to some specific undertaking rather than an involvement in Panchayat proceedings i.e. one women panch had only been to a meeting to pass a resolution regarding re-allotment of her deceased husband's land in her favour rather than her step sons.

A large majority of 67 per cent of women panches have not attended a single Panchayat meeting. All decisions are taken at the behest of the male patriarch.

In fact there were instances of women panches who did not even know that they were standing for the Panchayat election until election results were declared. Given these trends, it is not surprising to have inferior quality of women participation in the Panchayats.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>WOMEN PANCHES QUALITY OF PARTICIPATION</th>
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<tr>
<td>Resolution proposed in Panchayat</td>
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<tr>
<td>Resolution passed In Panchayat</td>
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</table>

All figures are in percentage
SOURCE :- FIELD SURVEY 1994-95, I.D.C.

Only 12 per cent of women panches had ever proposed a resolution in the Panchayat and a negligible 3 per cent of the resolutions proposed were passed by the Panchayats. These include resolutions passed by women panches, who are sarpanches and are maintainers of the fiefdom of absentee power wielders who happen to be their kin.
DEBATING ROJA

The participants can be shown the movie "Roja" and asked to comment on the following:

**CONTEXT**

In Kashmir all around Roja, nationalism is the central issue to which even her husband Rishi is committed. However, her interests revolve around her role of a wife, irrespective of her role or identity of a citizen. Women's role in society is encouraged to be restricted to the family rather than to wider humanitarian, nationalistic or democratic participation.

**Situation**

Roja, thanks Kashmir God for a good husband, yet is oblivious to the conditions around her "Is it a crime to break a coconut in Kashmir?"

**Situation**

Her appeal to the Army Colonel to release Wasim Khan and get her husband back (Even if Wasim kills other innocent people).

**Situation**

Her belief that irrespective of terrorists and their conflicting national interests she will find a sympathizer in the terrorist camp who will help her to locate her "husband".

**Situation**

Liyaqat's sister is involved in her brother's activities yet she is compassionate towards another's husband/brother rather than the national interests to which Liyaqat and other men around her are committed.

**Comment**

On the nature of Roja's and Liyaqat's sister's interests. Do they flow from stereotyped female roles where interests revolve around family matters and relationships? Are national and political interests not supposed to affect women? Do stereotyped roles limit women's interests to only family life, excluding them from decision and rule making in
public life? Is a female only a protector of family interests and not a protector of the nation?

**CONTEXT**

Exercise of power possible in stereotyped male-female roles.

**Situation**

Roja's sister is to be married to Rishi according to her parents' choice, when she already has selected her life partner. She asks Rishi to refuse her hand in marriage so that she can marry the man of her choice. Rishi does so by saying he wants to marry the intended bride's sister. Rather than the male (Rishi) being reprimanded for going against social norms, Roja is reproached for attracting his attention.

**Comment**

(i) On female's decision making powers. In which sphere and to extent can women exercise decision making openly.
(ii) Extent to which a female/male can transcend given social roles.

**PANCHAYATS AND GENDER**

The participants can be asked to provide the following information from either the area of intervention or their area of residence. The first three questions are to be addressed to women panches and the other questions can be addressed to any informed panch.

1. (a) What is the role and duty of panchayats:

   i) These include, making plans and budget for the development of the panchayat area
   ii) Spending the money received for development purposes according to various schemes of the Government.
   iii) Collection of taxes
   iv) Use of panchayat resources for income generation
   v) Solving quarrels and disputes within the panchayat area
   vi) Providing the minimum basic necessities and other welfare measures

Contd..
(b) What are the Government schemes available to panchayats, especially women.

2. How many panchayat meetings have been attended by them

3. Issues in Panchayat:
   (a) Have they raised any issues at the meeting?
   (b) If yes, what were they, list
   (c) (i) Are these issues gender centered?
       Did they relate to increasing female access to
       - qualitative education
       - productive employment
       * provisions for increasing female panches’ participation in panchayat activities.
       * steps undertaken to check violence against women, etc.

   (ii) Are these issues reinforcing the existing power relations? (refer to examples in Q. 6)

4. Have resolutions on issues concerning gender been passed? If not, why?

5. What gender concerns have been addressed to by the panchayat in the past five years?

6. What incidents involving women have been brought to the panchayat for resolution (e.g. wife-beating, dowry harassment etc.) What action was taken? Was the action according to
   - legal provisions
   - Did it take into consideration the status and affluence of the people involved
   - Did it question or endorse the existing gender hierarchies? (e.g. - dowry to be given according to the status of the two parties. wife-beating a husband’s right as long as bodily injury is not sustained by the woman or is not a regular occurrence, property settlement only (mostly) in favour of males.)
Refer to module II for details of detrimental gender system.

The above exercise can provide an idea of both, the nature of female political participation and the extent to which gender concerns find articulation in the political fora, the extent to which rule application and adjudication is favorably or unfavorably meted out to women. Gaps thus identified in the exercise of power on gender issues can then be addressed by using the subsequent strategy.

**STRATEGY**

The following strategy can be adopted by NSS volunteers

1. Awareness to constitutional rights
2. Gender sensitization of the community
3. Organizing women
4. Role models
5. Dovetailing

1. **Awareness to Constitutional Rights**

These rights are already granted to every citizen of India. In women's context these become important since women are largely unaware of these rights and, therefore, are unable to exercise or demand them.

The state aims to ensure freedom, equality and justice to all citizens. The Constitution informs the citizens about their rights and duties. These rights are protected by the law. Thus if a violation occurs it can be legally remedied.

Information on these rights becomes important for women, since within their groups they are the most downtrodden and exploited.
(a) Right to Equality

According to this right, no citizen can be discriminated against on the basis of religion, caste, sex or place of birth. For instance, in a village every citizen has equal right to "chaupals", "dharamsalas", "wells" etc., which have been constructed by the Government for public use. Similarly Government hospitals, schools or colleges are open to all citizens. Women are specifically prevented from participating in the panchayat, Scheduled Caste women may not have access to services such as the health centre, Anganwadi or Mahilla Mandal etc. Under the right to equality, every citizen who possesses the qualifications is entitled to employment in administrative or non-administrative jobs. Thus women are entitled to be employed by the Government. They cannot be discriminated against by denying them jobs, perks or a raise. Now women have also started joining the armed forces; they also fly planes. Thus opportunities of all kinds of employment are available to women.

(b) Right Against Exploitation

Our society is embedded with various kinds of exploitation. The lower castes, women, children and other weaker sections are subjected to several types of injustice. The law does not permit any citizen to exploit another citizen. Exploitation includes bonded labour, sexual harassment,
prostitution and the sale of children to force them into beggary. The exploiter has to face severe punishment.

Many a time young girls are forcibly pushed or sold into prostitution. The law is particularly severe (10 years' imprisonment) if the girl is a minor. Even if the parents sell their child, they are liable for punishment. These practices can be eradicated if women as a group are organised and made aware of the state's measures to check such exploitation.

(c) Right to Freedom

Under this right, a citizen enjoys different kinds of freedoms.

- A citizen can visit or live in any state. People from the villages can go to the cities for work and live there permanently.

- A citizen can adopt any profession of his or her choice. No one can say that a cobbler's daughter cannot get education and become a teacher or a woman from a Pandit's family cannot trade in leather bags and goods. It all depends on a person's own liking, effort and ability. Similarly, there is no compulsion on women to be restricted only to domestic work. If they want, they can work in factories, or get education and occupy high posts.
- Nobody has the right to take anybody's life or take the law in his or her own hands. Sometimes parents or villagers force others to follow a path that they consider right. For instance some people do not permit inter-caste marriage. Such people are dealt with sternly. Sometimes the boy or the girl are beaten up, even killed. Such events take place with the consent of the villagers but such activity is against the law and even if it is done by members of the family, they are legally punishable.

\[\text{(d) Freedom to religion}\]

This right entitles citizens to follow the religion of their choice. Women have the right to live according to the rules and principles of their religion. Sometimes there are Hindu-Muslim or Hindu-Sikh marriages. According to social custom, the woman has to adopt the religion of her husband. But there is no such legal compulsion. This right entitles every person to adopt a life-style of his or her choice. In this context newspapers and the TV have given a good deal of publicity to the case of a family where the father is a Hindu and the mother is a Muslim. But the parents do not want to associate the name of their son with any religion. They maintain
that when he grows up he will choose his religion after due consideration and thought. They have named him Sunny, which does not associate him with either of the two religions.

(e) Cultural and Educational Rights
These rights are applicable more to the minorities. Under this, every community can promote its culture.

(f) Right to Constitutional Remedies
The Fundamental Rights are conferred on the citizens by the Constitution. If any of these rights is violated, the citizen can approach the Supreme Court for the protection of his or her rights.

One-third Representation of women in local bodies
The 73rd and 74th Amendments to the Constitution provide that women form 1/3rd of all representation in local bodies. Thus it is mandatory for women to exercise their rights as panches and municipal members. Women, by organizing themselves and forming groups, can make these provisions of the Constitution a reality. Legal rights in themselves are not sufficient to determine social behaviour. The need to exercise these rights must emerge from the community itself. Women must first be aware of their situation, that they are socially deprived, discriminated against and face violence specific to gender. Once people are sensitized to women's conditions and women come to the forefront to articulate their interests, evolve rules and exercise their rights, gender concerns will emerge and form part of our social interests. Moreover it is only women who are capable of exercising power, who will be able to discharge their fundamental duties towards the state. Thus women should also be in a position to promote communal harmony, maintain the unity of the country and its sovereignty. The fundamental duties require the citizens to preserve and promote the country's culture, the value of fraternity, protect the environment and develop a scientific temper. The following are the fundamental duties that each citizen of India must strive to perform. It is the exercise of both rights and responsibilities that define citizens' participation.
Fundamental duties

- Every citizen of India must

  (a) abide by the Constitution and respect its ideal and institutions, the National Flag and the National Anthem;
  
  (b) cherish and follow the noble ideals which inspired our national struggle for freedom;
  
  (c) uphold and protect the sovereignty, unity and integrity of India;
  
  (d) defend the country and render national service when called upon to do so;
  
  (e) promote harmony and the spirit of common brotherhood among all the people of India transcending religious, linguistic, regional or sectional diversities; to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women;
  
  (f) value and preserve the rich heritage of our composite culture;
  
  (g) protect and improve the natural environment including forests, lakes, rivers and wild life, and to have compassion for living creatures;
  
  (h) develop a scientific temper, humanism and the spirit of inquiry and reform;
  
  (i) safeguard public property and abjure violence;
  
  (j) strive towards excellence in all spheres of individual and collective activity so that the nation constantly rises to higher levels of endeavour and achievement.

II. Gender sensitization of the Community

The NSS volunteers can raise the community's awareness to

  (a) gender deprivation (of access to health, education, property etc.),
  
  (b) discrimination against women (in employment, nutrition, education etc.) and
  
  (c) violence that women face (dowry harassment, dowry death, rape, wife-beating etc.).

Sensitization to these would provide a momentum to demands for a gender just society.

(Refer to Module No.2)
III. Organising women

The primary task of any intervention is to mobilise and organise the community, in this instance more specifically women. It is the group which can identify group needs, preferences, and identify their concerns to evolve a strategy to raise their living conditions. Thus organizing a group involves:

(i) An initial survey to identify group/community leaders, concerns and resources.
(ii) Identifying the perceived problems of the community or the group regarding women and their adjustment with broader gender concerns.
(iii) Initiating intervention through nodal groups such as Panchayats, Mahila Mandals (GROs), teachers etc.

(Refer to modules on NSS strategy and NGO intervention)

IV. Role Models

Organisation of women and their mobilisation on specific issues can be initiated by quoting case studies and role models. For instance, women's agitation all over Haryana has led to the enforcement of prohibition. Now women in Punjab, Himachal Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh have also picked up clues from the Haryana agitation. Moreover, women's participation in the anti-price rise agitation was effective in providing relief. Similar examples can be picked up from local and regional areas to explain the power of organised protest.

V. Dovetailing

Women's participation and representation in political spheres may be difficult to achieve in an outright manner. It may be easier to encourage this by dove-tailing issues of women's concern. For instance, in certain areas where drinking water is not easily available, women can easily be organised to make representations to the Government, involve the community in the effort to get water through watershed management, building of small dams etc.
GENDER AND PROPERTY RIGHTS

OBJECTIVES

- TO RAISE AWARENESS AND KNOWLEDGE ABOUT PROPERTY RIGHTS OF WOMEN
- TO RAISE THE INFORMATION LEVEL OF THE PARTICIPANTS ABOUT VARIOUS LAWS GOVERNING PROPERTY RIGHTS OF WOMEN
- TO ENABLE THE PARTICIPANTS TO UNDERSTAND THE LINKS BETWEEN GENDER INEQUALITY AND PROPERTY RIGHTS
- TO APPRISE THEM OF THE NEED FOR SOCIAL ACCEPTABILITY OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS TO PROPERTY
- TO MAKE THEM AWARE OF THE FACTORS THAT IMPEDE OR OBSTRUCT WOMEN FROM CLAIMING OR BEING ABLE TO EXERCISE EFFECTIVE CONTROL OVER THEIR SHARE OF PROPERTY
- TO SUGGEST MEASURES THAT WOULD STRENGTHEN THEIR ABILITY TO OVERCOME THESE OBSTRUCTIONS

METHODS

Lecture, Discussion, Role play.

MATERIAL

Blackboard; Chalk; Charts; Paper; Pens.
The trainer should introduce the issue briefly, focusing on two things -

(i) Women have very little effective rights to property

(ii) How subordination of women is linked with their lack of control over land, property and other productive resources.

For conceptual clarification, the following issues may be addressed by the trainer.

(i) How property has been distributed between men and women both inside and outside the family?

(ii) To understand not only who owns property but also who controls it.

(iii) In addition to understanding the legal position of women in relation to property rights, to know the social recognition of these rights.

(iv) To understand the prevalent gender ideology and its effect on property rights of women. To know the assumptions about women's work, role, needs etc. In other words the norms and values of society which significantly determine women's access to property or may go against them.

(v) Those who control the means of production and property resources exercise considerable influence on many institutions in society, e.g., education, media, religious establishments etc., which in turn shape ideas in society. These ideas may promote gender equality or may go against it.

(vi) To understand Government policies and how these have helped or arrested the process of achieving gender equality in the ownership of productive resources. For example, whether the policies of land reform and land distribution have helped to achieve the objective of strengthening women?

In order to understand the above, the trainer must know the legal position regarding women's property rights in different communities. The trainer may provide this information through small booklets on legal rights or by preparing his/her own printed material. The following information may be relevant in this context.

Resource persons can be invited to give information about the laws and Government policies.
Inheritance or property laws existing in India are primarily governed by religious and personal laws of different communities (Hindu, Muslim, Christian and Parsi). In addition to these, there are customary laws embodying substantial gender inequalities. Besides, inheritance laws in India are limited in their applicability especially in the area of land rights. This is due to the fact that devolution of tenancy rights in respect of agricultural holdings continues to be the subject of state level tenurial legislation and/or custom.

**Property rights in Hindu law**

Property rights of Hindus are governed by the Hindu Succession Act. (HSA) of 1956. The Act makes women absolute owners of property and daughters are recognised as class I heirs of the father's property on a par with sons. But with the retaining of Mitakshara Coparcenancy, women continue to be excluded from being heirs to ancestral property. Daughters are also given very limited rights in the father's house. A daughter cannot ask for partition of the house.
and has only the right of residence in case she is unmarried, divorced or is a widow. Women's rights to land as property have been severely restricted by keeping agricultural land out of the purview of Hindu Succession Act. This has led to the formulation and continuation of multiple tenancy laws which have resulted in giving recognition to customary and personal laws. The right to make a will included in the HSA has also contributed to disinheriting women due to the prevalent social and gender biases.

**Property rights of Christian women in India**

Christian women are governed by a variety of laws with respect to property. For instance, Christians from Goa are governed by the Portuguese's Civil Code, those in Cochin and Travancore until recently by the Christian Succession Act of 1921 and the Travancore Christian Act of 1916, those in Punjab, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh by the customary laws and the rest by the Indian Succession Act of 1935. Of the above, Cochin and Travancore Acts were challenged on grounds of gender inequality in 1986 in Mary Ray case. As a result of the judgment in this case, sons and daughters in Christian families are given equal share in the father's property. But the judgment has evoked a lot of protest from Kerala Christian communities and the Church. Pressures have been exerted so that the Act is not made effective with retrospective effect. Open efforts have been made by the Church to help draft wills to disinherit female heirs.

**Property rights of Parsi women**

Unlike most other communities in India, Parsis have more gender egalitarian rules of succession. With the passage of the Indian Succession (Amendment) Act, 1991, the difference in succession between the males and females has been removed among the Parsis and sons and daughters have been put on an equal footing.
Property laws governing Muslims

The Muslim Religious Law is derived from the Koran and the Koran provides a set of heirs who take their specified share and the remainder of the property is distributed among the pre-Koranic heirs. There are two principal schools of Islamic law- the Hanafir and the Zithan-A-Shari Shiite school.

The Islamic rules of succession are very sophisticated but a general principle that discriminates against women is that if there are female and male heirs of the same degree i.e., daughter and son or sister and brother then the female heir gets half the share of the male. In general, all schools of Islamic law recognise Muslim women's inheritance rights in immovable property although unequal to those of men.

These rights also have some type of protection from testation. However, in practice, there has been considerable historical divergence between scriptural texts and local customs with regard to Muslim women's inheritance rights. Custom has deviated from the textual rules in two ways.

Except a few regions in north-west India, in the rest of the country many Muslims appear to have followed the customary practices of inheritance similar to those of the patrilineal Hindus. In the north-west regions some Muslim communities practice matrilineal inheritance.

In addition to this, like the Hindu Succession Act, Muslim Personal Law (Shariat) Application Act, 1937, also explicitly excludes agricultural land from its purview.

Thus, in many states strong customs governing the devolution of agricultural land prevailed prior to the Act and these still govern the inheritance of land. Under these customs, male lineal descendants in the male line of descent are typically the first order heirs in the inheritance of agricultural land.

Therefore, severe gender inequalities continue to characterise succession among the Muslims in relation to the most important form of property in the countryside.
Customs and Property rights

Customary laws and practices, mostly with regard to land prevalent in both tribal and non-tribal communities, also entail serious gender inequalities. In some parts of the North-East and the South, women do have a better position because of matrilineal or bilateral inheritance. But even in these communities the actual control of land by women gets limited as the management of property and overall authority rests with the men of the family.

Thus, legally in relation to men today women in almost all the communities in India have highly unequal access to immovable property in general and to agricultural land in particular. In addition to this, women do not enjoy any legal rights in the marital home and property. Legal attainment of such rights is just one battle won as there still will remain many obstacles that prevent women from effectively using these rights.

This means that gaining social acceptance for these rights is even a more important arena of this struggle.

There is also a need for bridging the gap between the making of gender equal laws and their implementation.

EXERCISE: ISSUE OF WOMEN’S PROPERTY RIGHTS

The trainer may ask the participants what in their view are the constraints that limit the realisation of property rights of women. Particularly they may be encouraged to relate their experiences in their families, their perception of the problem or they may be asked a direct question: Why do they think women need to be given independent rights to property?

They may be provided with the following information about the social constraints and gender biases which in addition to legal handicaps, affect the realization of women's inheritance rights.
Social Acceptance, Practices And Values Related To Issues Of Women's Property Rights

A major handicap in the realisation of women's property rights is that their claim enjoys little social legitimacy. In typically partrilineal communities, it is only in the absence of sons that daughters may inherit parental property. And in such cases too, women get these rights only via their sons or husbands. It means that effective control in terms of taking decisions on how to use the property does not rest with them. This is because the concept of male lineage
is very deeply rooted in the cultural and religious practices of most of the communities. It is also believed that sons look after their parents in their old age and so they are rightly the heirs to their property. In some communities girls are completely forbidden to acquire any property e.g. the Gaddis of Himachal Pradesh. Thus, the normal pattern is that only men inherit property to the exclusion of women.

(I) Voluntary giving up of claims in order to maintain good relations with brother

Very often women give up their claims to family property in favor of their brothers. The normal explanation for this is that the brothers and the parental family provide critical support, social, economic and physical, in cases of ill-treatment in the marital home or at times of marital break-up. In the absence of other support systems and limited avenues of independent economic survival because of their poor educational background, inadequate training and skills as well as gender biases in the labour market, her immediate support base is the parental home. Brothers provide a vital link to the natal home after the parents' death. Thus, a woman's access to natal house would depend on her relationship with her brothers. The result is that her own insecure position and social pressure push her to creating further dependence on her brothers to maintain a lifelong relationship, as a security for times of crisis. There are, of course, instances when brothers help their sisters but the picture is mixed. Instances of neglect and deceit are more often found. Many a time, the help that is forthcoming is quite insignificant.

Specially in cases of desertion, marital break-up, divorce or widowhood when a woman may need long-term support from the natal family, she may be treated as a burden. Some control over property whether in the form of house, shop or land would definitely provide some sort of economic security and may also reduce the risk of destitution in poor and middle class households. Here, we also find that both the legal position of her rights and social pressures work against her. For example, a Hindu daughter has only right to residence in her father's
house in case she is unmarried, deserted, divorced or is widowed. She is not the owner of that portion of the house in which she is residing. Legally she cannot ask for the partition of the house though otherwise she is a Class-I heir to her father's property. Thus she becomes unwelcome and a stranger in her own house. Such a situation is prevalent in north and north-west India. Though in other regions too, dependence on the male kin of the family is a usual norm.

(II) Keenness to keep Property within patrilineal family control

Families are also very much concerned about keeping their immovable property under their control. Daughters are not considered part of the family, Paraya Dhan, who would eventually
go to their husband’s homes. Thus, there is considerable hostility to passing property to the daughters and sisters as then the property would move out of partrilineal descent. Many practices are encouraged to prevent this from happening. For example, in certain parts of northern India, widows are forcibly married to their brothers-in-law or made to adopt the son of their husband’s brother so as to keep the property within partrilineal control. In case a widow does not adhere to these norms and marries someone outside the family, she forfeits her claim to property.

Such norms also put pressure on women to produce sons as it is only through them that partrilineal descent can be preserved. Instances of desertion of women by their husbands on account of producing only daughters abound.

(III) Intimidation and use of direct violence as a means to deter women from claiming their rights

In cases where daughters and sisters do not voluntarily give up their claims to property, instances are found of force or violence being used to get their acceptance. Thus beating of women, threats to kill, murder by accusing them of witchcraft are known to have occurred. Other means are also used to disinherit women which include making of wills giving all the property to the sons. Many times forged wills are produced, throwing women in long and expensive litigation. Single women whether deserted, divorced or widowed who most often fight such cases and are actually in need, give up or are forced to give up in the face of such harassment.

(IV) Attitudes of village bodies and government officials

Strong gender biases impinge on the functioning of village councils, the administration and even the judiciary. While officials are sympathetic to the claims of a widow, in other cases, even sarpanches are found putting pressure on daughters to sign away their rights.
Independent land titles are not given to women just because there has been no such precedent. Thus it does not strike them that land should be given to women nor do they feel the need for doing so.

(V) Dowry v/s Inheritance

Another argument that is commonly advanced against the daughter's right to parental property is that she gets dowry and, therefore, has no claim to property. We know that dowry basically is a marriage transaction which itself devalues woman. Dowry is given in the form of payment to the bridegroom’s family and women have very little control over it. Cases of dowry harassment and dowry murder abound.

(VI) Post-marital location and land fragmentation arguments

It is argued specially in case of immovable property that since daughters after marriage move out of the parental families and many times to distant places (particularly in the rural areas)
there are difficulties in managing such property. In the case of landed property, it is argued, that inheritance to women would reduce the farm size, increase fragmentation and thus adversely affect agricultural output. This argument can well be applied to sons.

(VII) **Family peace argument**

Gender bias is also evident in the argument that property rights to women can pose a threat to family peace and stability. This argument clearly links the stability of the family to the maintenance of unequal status of men and women in the family. This also ignores the fact that family break-ups take place even when women do not inherit.

**IMPACT OF EXISTING PRACTICES ON WOMEN**

(i) The participants may be asked what they think is the impact on women of the absence of rights or restricted rights to property, coupled with social customs that bar their claims. After a little discussion, the points may be summarised in the following manner:
(ii) Reduction in the bargaining power of women in the family.
(iii) Increasing dependence on the male members of the family and the community.
(iv) Women normally face a lot of violence within the family. The absence of a support system and independent economic security reduces the possibility of getting out of an oppressive and violent life situations.
(v) It lowers the self-esteem of women.
(vi) Women get no place in the decision making processes of the family.
(vii) The whole system puts pressure on women to produce sons. New technologies are being used to get rid of girls even before they are born. This attitude also leads to ignoring the basic minimum needs (nutritional and health) of girls. The result is that mortality rate
among girl children is very much higher than that among the boys. Male-female ratio in India is 927 females to 1000 males.

(VIII) The absence of ownership rights also affects women's position in the labour market. Many times women are not granted loans as they have no security to offer.

(ix) Control over resources also leads to control over skills and technology. Women are pushed to low paid jobs since they lack in both.

(x) Woman-headed households are increasing due to the migration of men to distant places in search of jobs. In such cases while the women work on land, poultry farms or tend the domestic animals, control of the proceeds and decisions to manage them do not rest with them. It is not a matter of chance that woman-headed households have been found poorer than male-headed household.

The participants should be encouraged to find links between violence, poverty and low self and social esteem of women with their severely limited ownership of productive resources. They may be enabled to understand the need for women's property rights in relation to the work they do all through their lives both in the parental and marital homes. This may be done in the following manner.

**STRATEGIES**

In the background of the social and legal barriers, the foremost need is to wage an ideological struggle to establish social legitimacy of women’s claims so that there is greater acceptance of the idea. Assumptions about women’s work, roles and needs etc. need to be challenged. Initiating awareness campaigns and rallies to demand that the Government give land titles to women in their land redistribution programmes.

Demand for reform in property laws, should be initiated so that women should have equal access to property.
One common element in the lives of all women in both industrial and agricultural societies is that the responsibility of running the household and caring for the children, old and the sick in the family falls almost exclusively on women. This is always in addition to the role of supportive or main earner of the family. In agrarian societies their life is harder since women usually have to take the sole responsibility of the drudgery of the house work and care for the children and the old in addition to long hours of work in the fields as agricultural labourers. Household labour in rural areas involves not only routine cooking, washing, cleaning, but also a lot of subsistence work like basic food processing, involving grinding, hand pounding of paddy, fuel and fodder collection, fetching water, sometimes growing vegetables, picking up left-overs of the harvest for food and fuel for the family. If the family has poultry, goats, cows or other animals, looking after them also falls on the women. This extremely strenuous work may involve up to 16 hours a day or more. Women are expected to keep up this pace all through the life, with little or no rest even in old age, in the face of inadequate nutrition and with the severe physical demands of frequent pregnancies, child birth and other health problems.

No matter how much they work, their work is greatly undervalued in economic terms. This is due to the retracted definition of economic activity as well as the notion of value itself. For the purpose of economic valuation, value is synonymous with market value. Within this definition, all the household services that women render are not marketed, hence these have no market value.

It is important to link the contribution of a woman to the upkeep of the family and its survival, with her rights and share in the power structure and economic resources of the family and ensure her control of money and its use. Her contribution to the family and the country in the form of her unpaid labour is the strongest basis for her claim to property. By enacting role plays the facilitator can emphasize the impact of discriminatory property practices on women. By raising awareness, efforts can be made to reduce the gap between gender inequalities and between the law and its practice.
ROLE PLAY

Participants may be given a situation and roles so that they enact a play or skit highlighting the problem of women's resourcelessness. The participants can act according to their own understanding e.g., a woman is deserted or is widowed and thrown out of her marital house. She comes back to her parents' home, where she is unwelcome. She wants to live independently and finds she has no resources and skills to put her life together and so on. This can be one effective way to highlight women’s plight.
ENVIRONMENT AND GENDER ISSUES

OBJECTIVES

• TO SENSITIZE THE YOUTH OF INDIA TO GENDER ISSUES IN ENVIRONMENT
• TO IDENTIFY AREAS IN WHICH WOMEN ARE DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY AFFECTED AND HAVE TO SUFFER AS A RESULT OF ENVIRONMENT DEGRADATION
• TO EXPLAIN WOMEN’S ROLE IN PRESERVATION AND IMPROVEMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT

METHODS

Lecture, Discussion, Exhibitions.

MATERIAL

Slides, Video films, Photographs and Posters.

FACILITATOR’S NOTE

The facilitator can organize an exhibition, film show or invite specialists (from Environment Society etc.) to initiate volunteers into environment concerns. After such an activity it would be easier to discuss the given issues. Though environment protection is applicable to all sections of society, the specific concerns of gathering fuel, fodder and water that affect women directly need to be stressed. After raising awareness on these aspects, the facilitator can delegate some specific tasks to volunteers for immediate attention. General strategies for the NSS unit are given at the end of the module.
State of Environment

- Physical environment including air, water, soil, vegetation, energy, etc. is important to human life. The natural balance of the environmental elements has been upset over a period because of man's anxiety to over-exploit some of these for his betterment or progress.

- Industrialisation, urbanisation and agriculture have reduced the natural forest cover and resulted in the pollution of the atmosphere. Degradation of the environment has been going on for a long period and has reached the stage where it is posing a danger to human and other life on earth.

- The greenhouse effect is getting stronger, pollution levels in air and water are increasing, climatic cycles are getting disturbed, natural resources are being depleted, the development process itself is becoming hazardous, old diseases are staging a come-back, new diseases are posing a threat to mankind and human beings are faced with new pressures of mental and physical health. All this because the environment is threatened in many ways.
- Time is not far when the planet will suffer the full consequences of acid rain, global warming, ozone depletion, widespread desertification and species loss, if nothing is done urgently and effectively to reverse the process of environmental digression.

- Environmental stress has been seen as the result of the growing demands on scarce resources and the pollution generated by the rising living standards of the relatively affluent. But poverty itself pollutes the environment, creating environmental stress in a different way.

- According to the World Commission on Environment and Development, those who are poor and hungry will often destroy their immediate environment in order to survive. They will cut down forests, their livestock will overgraze grasslands, they will overuse marginal land, and in growing numbers they will crowd into congested cities. The cumulative effect of these changes makes poverty a major global scourge.

- On the other hand, where economic growth has led to improvement in living standards, it has sometimes been achieved in ways that are globally damaging in the long run.

**Indian Context**

- India is a poor country, faced with disappearance of much of its forest wealth, expanding desert and depletion of much of its plant and animal species. It is in the process of

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COUNTRIES</th>
<th>Percentage of population with access to safe drinking water</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INDIA</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JAPAN</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.K.</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INDONESIA</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAKISTAN</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHILIPPINES</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAUDI ARABIA</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BANGLADESH</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SOURCE:** CENSUS OF INDIA 1991
industrialisation and urbanisation and adding to the pollution levels in the country.

- Almost all rivers in India are polluted, about 70 per cent of its surface water is polluted and not fit for drinking. Very few of its towns have sewage treatment plants and sewage is going into rivers and other water sources. More than half of the major industrial plants in the country do not have facilities to reduce pollution capacity and to treat their effluents.

- The number of motor vehicles in India is ever increasing and the air in urban centers is already polluted beyond safe limits.

- Additional irrigation and chemical manure and pesticides are upsetting the soil structure.

- Construction of hydel projects uprooting residents of the affected area, need for work for a livelihood and vanishing forests where tribals lived are resulting in migration of large populations.

ENVIRONMENT AND WOMEN

- Environment degradation affects the entire population and that includes women. They are affected directly or indirectly. In many ways, women are affected much more than men. It is particularly so in developing countries like India. Most of India still is rural and environmental destruction affects the poor village women more than any other section of the country's population.

- The woman may be old, young or pregnant, the essential household needs have to be met and it means long march by the woman for fuel, fodder and water. As the ecological situation worsens, the march becomes longer and more tiresome.

- Biomass is crucial for survival of most rural people. It includes food, fish, fuel including firewood, crop wastes, cowdung, fodder, fertilizer for farms (cowdung, organic manure, green mulch and forest litter), building material like timber and thatch and medicines like herbs.
Drinking water

Water is crucial for human survival. If biomass disappears, water sources also dry up except during the rainy season. All these things are collected from around the villages. This collection is done most of the time and in most of the cases by women. Biomass has got scarce and distant as a result of urbanisation, industrialisation and the growth of a cash economy. This makes the task of women more difficult and hard. Fetching water in the villages and the poorer localities of the cities is an important task for women. If ecological degradation makes water sources distant, the women's problem becomes more serious. Scarcity of good drinking water leads them to fetch water from unclean sources in turn affecting the health of their families including themselves. Being the primary carriers of water, they are most vulnerable to diseases caused by polluted water. Disease affecting other members of the family adds to the workload of women. Children are also affected a lot by water borne diseases. Child care is the job of women only. Many women are forced to look for work at relief projects adding to their
physical burden and endangering their health because this work is in addition to their other normal work to run the household.

Sometimes irrigation programmes for more productive agriculture create problems. For instance, deep tubewells will further lower the water level for drinking purposes. Expansion of the desert area will make fetching water more difficult.

Tackling the problem

1. Spread awareness regarding local water sources to be cleaned by chlorination (bleaching powder etc.)

2. In extreme situations (after a flood or highly polluted water), use of solar water heaters can be encouraged to boil water.

3. Initiate preventive measures against water born diseases.

4. Initiate campaigns for access to clean drinking water.
Awareness and assistance to obtain material (bleaching powder, ORS etc.) is available at health departments, PHCs and under schemes like Youth Action Goal 2000 - Health for all, Education for all, being implemented in U.P., Haryana, Bihar etc.

**Fuel Collection**

In villages, fuel collection is the most tiresome work for women. To give just one example, a woman in a particular village studied, collects 1.74 tones of fuel every year, makes 172 trips in a year and each trip is about 8.54 kilometers. Now, if firewood becomes distant, it is going to add to her strain. It is much harder in the hills and deserts where scarcity conditions prevail. In these areas, cowdung and crop waste is scarce and cannot supplement fuel. Incidentally, shortage of fuelwood has a side effect on women, that is, malnutrition. Shortage of cooking energy reduces the food intake and the woman's share is affected the most.

**Tackling the problem**

1. Awareness and participation in social forestry programme is a must. Social forestry brings forests nearer and distance and time in collecting fuelwood is saved.
2. The community should also be initiated in programmes of regenerating forests which should be taken as a continuous process. The community can be made aware and encouraged to use alternative fuel such as bio-gas and solar energy cookers etc.

3. Liaison with the related Government departments can be established to facilitate such activities (refer to module on Government Schemes)

4. The community should also be encouraged to economise on fuel.

**Fodder for Animals**

In addition to spending long hours in search of fuel and water along with performing household work like cooking and child rearing, women may also undertake agricultural work and care of animals such as cattle, camels, goats etc.

Destruction of grazing lands and shortage of fodder as a result of environmental degradation makes it harder for women to look for fodder. Not only sources of fodder get farther from their homes, it takes more time to collect it from varied sources. The problem is acute in the arid and semi-arid areas. Migrations from such areas take place for the sake of animals' survival and this adds to the woes of the women of such families.

**Tackling the problem**

1. The community can be encouraged to replenish grazing lands. At times some section of Shamlat land is allotted as grazing land. These, along with other common lands such as roadsides, temple and school areas, can be used to grow fodder by the community.

2. Information regarding better and faster growing crops can be provided. This can be achieved through liaison with the Agriculture Extension staff.

3. At times of drought and severe fodder shortage, a campaign can be initiated for the supply of fodder. Such ventures have been undertaken by the Government to halt the flow of migrating population in search of grazing lands.
Health Care

One reason why environmental degradation affects women a lot is the health problem created by it for them. Women in India, particularly in the poor families, are often malnourished. One study shows that, in the village of study, energy spent by women is about 2505 calories daily against 2473 calories spent by men. As against it, if the food intake is compared, men get 800 calories more than what they spend while women get 100 calories less than what they spend. Bad drinking water which causes worm manifestations among the rural people reduces the real amount of food intake as these parasites take away about one-fourth of the total food intake. Whether it is villages or towns, women have less access to health care for various reasons including shyness and over-work. Smoke in the kitchen, dust in the fields while collecting fuel or fodder, exposure to polluted water while washing clothes or even bathing, work in mines, construction sites and other work places with poor environmental conditions are some other health hazards for them for which no special care is available.

Tackling the problem

1. Generating awareness in the community regarding women's poor nutritional intake and the importance of nutrition for women, specially during the reproductive period.

2. Organising special campaigns for deworming.
Women's Role in Environment Protection

It has been seen that women have taken to environment preservation and improvement movement in more active ways than men. Whether it is the Chipko Movement to save trees in Garhwal, or resistance to mining in Almora, plantation camps in Uttarkhand, or demonstrations and rallies in support of environmental causes, women have been in the forefront. They can also mould children, the citizens of tomorrow, in the spirit of environmental preservation and improvement. They also are closer to our cultural heritage -- which had environmental protection as a way of life -- than most men and can be natural crusaders for environment.

STRATEGY FOR NSS VOLUNTEERS

Collection of data

1. Feedback from common women in the villages and under-privileged areas of towns about the problems and difficulties faced by specific and general cases of environmental degradation should be gathered. This information should be provided to relevant Government schemes.
2. There should be sustained research and study of women's problems regarding environment. At present very little data on it is available. The NSS can collaborate with Environment Departments of universities and help them with field studies.

**Creating Awareness**

1. Men should be encouraged to share some of the women’s workload. It has been remarked that if men were fetching water from miles every day, more villages would have had drinking water supply by now. Male volunteers of the NSS can demonstrate this at rural camps and invite local men to join them.

2. Holding environment awareness campaigns;

3. Arranging group discussions among different age groups in the villages and their educational institutes on the subject;

4. Arranging interaction between men and women where the latter acquaint the former of these issues;

5. Demonstrating uses of some innovations which make the work of women less tiring and easier. For instance, solar cookers and smokeless chulahs can be shown and popularised.

**Networking**

The above can be achieved by collaborating with

(i) Related departments to generate awareness on environment issues, provide information and access to methods for environment protection such as smokeless chulahs, bio-gas, solar energy etc. (refer to module on Government Schemes).

(ii) Environment societies such as in Chandigarh, Shimla, Nahan etc. can be contacted for holding workshops, exhibitions and film shows.

(iii) The Ministry of Environment, Government of India, and the State Environment Department could also be contacted for distribution of free posters and for borrowing films.
**VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN**

**OBJECTIVES**

- To sensitise society and make violence against women visible
- To mobilise the community to combat violence against women

**Methods**

Lectures, Discussions, Case study, Role play, Exercises.

**Material**

Projector, Blackboard, Charts etc.

**What is violence against women?**

The UN declaration against violence against women can be used for the purpose of this module.

According to the U.N., violence against women consists of "any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life. Violence against women shall be understood to encompass but not be limited to:

Contd.
physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in the family and in the community, including battering, sexual abuse of female children, dowry-related violence, marital rape, female genital mutilation and other traditional practices harmful to women, non-spousal violence, violence related to exploitation, sexual harassment and intimidation at work, in educational institutions and elsewhere, trafficking in women, forced prostitution, and violence perpetrated or condoned by the State.”

N.B. Thus this section only deals with the atrocities that women face and not the deprivations and discriminations that the female gender undergoes.
The facilitator can start the discussion on violence against women with case studies pertaining to the local area. These may be dowry harassment, eve-teasing, wife-beating or other incidents. The facilitator should draw attention to the extent and the nature of the atrocity (physical, mental torture undergone by the victim), the response of the family, intervention by the community, the media, the police and opinion-making sections. To draw attention to the nature and extent of atrocities against women the facilitator can ask the participants to undertake the given exercise. In fact the participants can go to the field (locality of NSS intervention or village/mohalla of participant residence), get the required information, before debating the issues involved in violence against women. The facilitator can then discuss the salient features that allow violence against women to continue. (The given information can be used to make the group acquainted with the problem.)

### GROUP EXERCISE: ATROCITIES AGAINST WOMEN: LISTING NATURE AND EXTENT

Group should list the atrocities against females during the last 5 years with the following information from target area.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LIFE PHASES</th>
<th>TYPE OF ATROCITY</th>
<th>NUMBER OF CASES</th>
<th>WHO WAS THE VICTIM</th>
<th>WHO WAS THE PERPETRATOR</th>
<th>WHAT ACTION WAS TAKEN (IF ANY) ON THE INCIDENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prebirth</td>
<td>(e.g. female foeticide)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infancy</td>
<td>(e.g. Malnutrition)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Girlhood</td>
<td>(e.g. child marriage)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adolescence</td>
<td>(e.g. eve teasing)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reproductive Marital period</td>
<td>(e.g. Dowry harassment)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elderly</td>
<td>(e.g. Abuse, maltreatment)</td>
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Refer to page 38 and 39 for list of atrocities in each life phase.
Intervening to combat violence against women presents a dual problem. At one level violence against women remains invisible, rather accepted as part of the patriarchal functioning. At another level, the problem flows from this social acceptance of patriarchal norms. Thus, the number of unreported incidents of visible violence remains high due to social ostracization, subjugative patriarchal consequences, financial constraints etc. Such restraints lead to an overwhelming dependence on legal intervention to rectify the atrocities against women.

**Problematic features in combating violence against women.**

1. Invisibility: Acts of violence not viewed as gender unjust
   
   (i) Accepted as part of societal functioning
   
   (ii) Visibility in accordance with the brutality of the violence.

1. Non-reporting

2. Segregation between public and private life.

3. Excessive dependence on legal measures.

4. Violence against women as a reaction.

5. Financial compulsions

6. Changing forms of violence

The facilitator should exemplify these issues of violence against women by quoting local instances of specific violence. By being able to relate to the incidence, the students will be in a better position to comprehend the complex issues of violence against women.

Discussion can also be initiated by raising the questions included in the module relating to the various problematic features in combating violence against women and the offered solutions.
**PROBLEMATIC FEATURES**

**Is gender violence different from other violence?**

According to popular opinion, any perceived abuse is unjust and is violence. Thus gender violence is a specific category of violence only because it is directed against women. However, a specific type of violence has a specific nature and specific causes. Thus in gender violence, not only women face violence but even men may face abuse. The norms and values of patriarchy are the factors that determine gender violence. Thus wife-beating is an acceptable norm. Chastity is a desired value of patriarchy. If this is undermined, then both the woman and the man involved are perceived as perpetrators and may face violence. The point is that if gender violence is not perceived as a specific kind of violence then abuse caused by the gender system such as dowry death is only perceived as murder but to combat dowry deaths the causation must be understood, which lies in patriarchy. Thus, unless patriarchy is perceived to be the causing factor, this violence cannot be rooted out.

**Invisibility:**

*Why is some violence against women not perceived?*

**Accepted as part of societal functioning**

Due to socialisation of the norms and values of patriarchy (male superiority and female subordination - refer to module No. 2) certain acts of injustice against women are not perceived as gender abuse. Wife-beating is generally considered to be normal and accepted as part of family life. Similarly, sex determination test may not be perceived as an abuse by certain individuals, yet to others these may constitute abuse of the female gender. Moreover, certain behaviour may be perceived as abuse in one context, yet in another the same behaviour
is viewed as normal. For instance, eve-teasing by college youths may be seen as an interactive behaviour of the young. Yet eve-teasing by persons from the lower strata may be perceived as an affront. When an abuse is not perceived to be an abuse, apparently it ceases to be a problem, consequently it becomes difficult to combat that abuse.
Some violent practices which are an accepted part of social functioning are:

1. Why is Dowry Exchanged?
At the time of marriage, the bride's family gives certain gifts to the groom and his family. These gifts constitute household goods, at times cash and even property. Men are perceived to be holding financial responsibility towards the family. Since women are not perceived to contribute financial resources, they are considered a liability and correspondingly dowry substantiates this liability. Thus dowry exchange, suggestive dowry requisitions, squabbles and ill-will on account of dowry between the in-laws are accepted in the preview of routine.

2. Is wife-beating normal?
The dominating role of the husband corresponds to the 'manly' behaviour on the part of the husband. Under this manliness, manhandling or occasional beating of the wife is a well accepted practice and even advocated to establish the newly donned husband and wife roles. According to a respondent who happened to be a teacher, a newly married wife needs to be occasionally slapped and browbeaten to adjust her into the family setting. Panchayats and NGOs intervene only in cases of severe wife battering where the husband or the in-laws are advised restrain and the woman is told not to provoke the husband.

3. Can caste be a basis for sexual exploitation?
The caste system is a well established hierarchy in our society and is promoted through the concept of 'purity' and 'pollution'. It is the 'purity' of the upper caste women which is to be protected from being 'polluted' by lower caste men. This norm maintains the established demarcations between the castes. Thus the acceptance of upper caste hegemony along with male dominance in society makes invisible certain acts, especially of sexual abuse of lower
caste women by upper caste men. In fact, both the victims and the perpetrators may not consider this exploitation to be abusive since this is ingrained in the societal fabric and has been historically practiced.

4. Male child preference
In a male dominated society where resources, both material and non-material such as skill and status, reside with males, the male child preference is very strong. In fact, the desire for a male child is so profound that even practices like female foeticide and female infanticide are accepted and widely prevalent in many areas.

Is only brutality perceived as violence?
At times only extreme forms resulting in physical brutality are perceived as abuse. Milder forms of the same violence remain acceptable. Thus dowry demand may be acceptable while dowry death is not. Interestingly, the condemnation of dowry death is more an unacceptance
of murder, rather than unacceptance of a specific form of brutality against the female gender. Thus, even the convicts in dowry death cases, mention the death of the victim as unfortunate but do not consider the demand and pressure for dowry to be an abuse.

In fact in a society where patriarchy is well entrenched, deprivations such as female foeticide which deny the female gender access to life remain the most invisible. In comparison discrimination such as differential male-female health access, are more visible. However, it is the atrocities such as rape or dowry deaths which are the most visible violence.

1. What constitutes wife-beating?

Physical intimidation by the husband, practiced by an occasional slap or physical force does not normally constitute wife-beating. It is wife-bashing involving battering with physical damage to limb that is perceived to be wife-beating. In certain sections of society, wife-beating (the slap variety) is seen as a reflection of the husband's masculinity. As eulogized by a woman
from the lower strata - if a husband does not beat his wife, what kind of man is he?. It is only the extent of physical damage that leads to a grievance or is judged as undesirable behaviour

2. **Does dowry exchange lead to dowry deaths?**

Dowry exchange is widely practiced. Dowry demands are adjusted and only dowry deaths are condemned. Even dowry harassment may remain unperceived as an abuse in many sections of society. In fact, Panchayats and people who act as go-between in settling marriage alliances intervene in cases of dowry harassment to settle the demanded amount to one that the girl's side can pay.

3. **Is evoking God's blessing, resort to hakims, tonas or Jari-Buti to beget a male child any less unjust than female foeticide?**

The utilisation of sex determination tests to acquire a male child at the cost of aborting.
a female foetus is readily denounced by certain sections of society. Such practice is termed derogatory as it involves killing of a foetus. However, resort to religious bigotry (tonas-totkas, hakim concoctions), pilgrimage by the God fearing, fasting and other rituals to invoke the Almighty's blessing for a male child are regular preoccupations in many Indian homes. But these are never suspect of a derogatory bias. Both practices (sex determination tests and religious bigotry) emerge from the same urge the desire to beget a male offspring. One is perceived to be socially undesirable and the other not even visible as a discriminatory act. One has legislation banning it yet the other draws no attention, because one is scientific and involves elimination of the foetus and other is only a blessing clothed in religious sanction.

4. Are Eve-teasing and rape comparable?

It is rape, the violation of a woman’s chastity, that is viewed as an outrage. Eve-teasing, which is a milder form of the same violence, may not be viewed in the same perspective. For instance, in urban areas ‘appreciation’ of the female form "by word or gesture" may be accepted as normal.

The point is that eve-teasing does not involve physical violation and thus is viewed with considerable laxity.

When violence against women remains invisible, not only does society remain unaware of subscribing to unfair or abusive practices, but also the extent of gender violence prevalent in society remains unknown.

For instance, rape is not thought to be very common, specially in Mohallas or areas where one is residing. However, these perceptions are belied by facts.

Some facts on reported crime and extent of reporting are presented in the following table.
SOME FACTS ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Reported Crime
These are 1993 figures and only constitute the reported cases.

* 31 women are raped every day in India.
  5% of these are girls below 10 years of age
* 16 women become dowry death victims daily.
* Every 15 minutes a molestation case is reported.
* 230 cases of crime are reported against women daily.

Extent of Reporting
In a study in Punjab 1995, it was found that only

* One out of every 68 case of rape is reported.
* One dowry death out of 27 is reported;
* One out of 374 molestations are reported;
* Every 299th case of dowry harassment is reported.

Reported Crime
Compiled by the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee, 1990.

* A women is raped every six minutes
* Every 18 seconds a women is beaten.
* 3 out of 4 women will be victims of at least one violent crime during their lifetime.
Besides the phenomenal number of crimes against women that remain hidden, the patriarchal structures further impose restrictions on intervention in incidents of violence against women.

**Why are incidents of violence against women not reported?**

Another problem which is faced while dealing with atrocities against women is that even when an atrocity is accepted as violence, it still may not be voiced. Even when violence against women is perceived it may yet remain confined within the home or in the minds of the victims. This is because:

1. **Social ostracism**

   Certain types of violence have a stigma attached to them. In the non-familial context, molestation and rape are some such forms. If a female is sexually abused she and even her family may not voice the injustice that has been done to her due to the stigma attached to it.

   In fact, in such cases, the victim herself is treated like a criminal. The victim is perceived to have undermined the family honour by not upholding the esteemed value of chastity. Since female chastity is highly valued in a patriarchal society, any damage or undermining of this...
chastity results in social ostracism of the victim and invites social action not against the occurrence of this crime but against the voicing of these crimes.

Within the familial context, a female is socially ostracised, if she voices family matters in public. The sanctity of the family is expected to be maintained at any cost. Since wife-beating is normative, any wife raising her voice against this in public is seen as going against the norms and privacy of the family.

2. Subjugative Patriarchal Structures

The status of females in our society is inferior to that of males. Subjugative and oppressive situations for women are normal in society and are accepted by all, even the women themselves. Thus, even if a woman reports an abuse to her friends, the community, the panchayat or the police, she many a time is perceived as the wrongdoer. In wife-beating or bashing incidents, the woman may be told that she provoked the husband and, therefore, she got what she deserved. Even in cases of rape or eve-teasing the woman is blamed for inviting the situation on herself, either by dressing in a provocative manner or moving in dark or lonely places alone etc.
3. Lack of Legal literacy

Another reason for not expressing felt injustices is that people are not even aware that the State has made certain laws for redressing these injustices. Pressures of family subjugation and social ostracism are so strong that many times people are unable to conceive that they have rights given by the State to deal with these injustices.

For instance, a rural widow was fighting for a share of her property from her husband's second wife. The Panchayat also felt that she deserved a share and had tried to allot her some land, but she was facing stiff resistance from the husband's second wife and progeny. All concerned, including the Panchayat, were unaware that bigamy is unlawful and, therefore, the second wife and children had no rights either to property or the inheritance of the man. With this information, the woman with the help of the Panchayat and a lawyer could regain her property. Bigamy being an established practice specially in the rural areas of North India was not perceived to be unlawful. The lack of legal literacy was allowing misappropriation of ancestral inheritance.

4. Financial compulsions

Most women are unable to support themselves financially, and along with social ostracism and exploitation of women in society, they also accept injustices within the family. Thus, any intervention that aims at combating violence against women must also aim at providing women with alternative and independent sustenance.

Segregation between public and private life

Violence against women occurs in every sphere of society. Certain kinds of violence occur within the home setting while others are more prone to occur in the wider society. In India violence against women can be categorized as:
Context of Violence Against Women:

**Familial context**
- Dowry harassment and dowry death
- Wife-beating and wife-battering
- Sexual abuse
- Female foeticide
- Levirate Marriages

**Non-familial Context**
- Eve-teasing, molestation and rape
- Caste based sexual exploitation
- Trafficking in women and girl child prostitution

**Should abuse within the family continue?**

Family life is considered private and outside the realm of societal intervention. This demarcation between public and private life:

- Limits the scope of intervention
- Increases the invisibility of the abuse within the family.

Family matters are not shared with people outside the family. Moreover, the family has primacy over the individual. Thus family honour is maintained even at the cost of individual inconvenience and, at times, individual abuse. Thus, when a women is raped, the first concern is to conceal it from society. Maintaining the aura of female dignity and chastity takes precedence over medical treatment of the victim.
In matters of husband-wife relationship, there are still more constraints on intervention. Thus, in cases of wife-beating even the victim believes that it is only a matter between the husband and the wife, and under the norms of patriarchy female subjugation is normal. Wife-beating thus becomes acceptable.

However, the question arises whether family life should remain outside the scope of justice, even when abuse against women such as dowry deaths, female foeticide, infanticide and wife-beating continue.

**How effective can legal measures be in combating gender violence?**

Even when a problem is perceived, for instance the increasing menace of dowry demand, the common view is that the state must intervene to rectify the social problem. Laws and punitive measures are expected to rectify social attitudes and norms which actually have their origin in social structures. Legal measures can only be effective when a certain behaviour is perceived as socially unjust. Then the law can intervene to regulate what is socially desirable. When dowry exchange is socially acceptable, how can the laws against dowry be expected to be
Law acts as a deterrent to socially unacceptable behaviour and its utility is in checking aberrations.

Case Study

**DOWRY DEATH CONVICTS OF PUNJAB**

A case study of dowry death convicts, can be used as an example to verify the proposition that without social sanction, laws have little effect.

Eighty per cent of the women convicts were of the opinion that dowry should be exchanged but there should be no (visible) demand for dowry. Thus the extent of their crime and not the crime itself, is perceived to be the problem. Whereas, 10 per cent even felt that the practice of dowry, with all its manifestations, was a worthwhile custom.

"We collect dowry to give to our daughters and the daughter-in-law has to bring dowry with her."

One woman even said: "demands by the in-laws are made only when parents deny the daughters what can be easily spared."

Another woman further justified her demand for dowry, saying that her daughter-in-law's father was a regular traveller to Singapore, yet he could not provide his daughter with sufficient dowry.

Thus, even when convicted of dowry related offenses, the women were of the opinion that dowry exchange was a justifiable practice.

Moreover in one instance a women had been sentenced to six years’ imprisonment for her involvement in the dowry death of her daughter-in-law. After her release she got her widower son married again but was again found guilty of being involved in the dowry murder of the new bride.

Contd...
The study thus revealed that:

1. The validity of dowry remains embedded in minds even against legal sanctions.
2. It is only the extent of the crime and not the crime itself that is perceived to be an act of injustice.

Violence against women as a reaction

Given the patriarchal nature of society, at times, violence against women may not occur as a direct result of subjugative structures (such as wife-beating or dowry harassment) but women may become the victims as a target of other social and political processes. For instance, in caste rivalries women of one case (lower caste), may be targeted by men of another caste (upper caste) in an attempt to suppress caste uprisings. In periods of communal or ethnic strife, women become the targets in these conflicts. Mass rape and vandalising of women is many a
time used as a strategy to undermine the position and status of the opposing group. Thus, women become the victims of the situation. Eradicating such violence involves a long period of gender sensitization when women would not be perceived as targets or as the means to achieve an aim.

**Nature of intervention**

At times, the interventionists may themselves perpetuate the existing situation. For instance, intervention at the village level is many a time made by the Panchayats which are themselves part of patriarchal and caste-ridden politics. In such instances, the Panchayat may intervene to favour and perpetuate caste rape and exploitation, and support dowry exchange even while condemning dowry death. Interestingly, at times even NGOs working to help women victims of violence, tend to support those very causes that lead to violence. For instance, the Punjab Istri Sabha provides relief and legal assistance in cases of dowry harassment and dowry death. Raising peoples awareness against dowry is also on the organization's agenda. Yet, in its income generation programmes, young girls are encouraged to learn stitching and with the money earned collect items for their dowry. Thus at one level, the practice (dowry exchange) is abetted, while at the level of impact (dowry harassment and dowry death) it is sought to be challenged.

**Changing forms of violence**

The need for holistic intervention also becomes imperative since certain forms of violence become subsumed, yet give rise to other forms which may be invisible as violence. For instance, female infanticide has been replaced by female foeticide which in comparison to infanticide may not be perceived as a brutal act or as an act of violence. Thus the strategy to combat violence must be comprehensive and aimed at undermining the very causes of gender violence.
The facilitator can initiate some role plays among the NSS volunteers to highlight the practices that lead to atrocities against women. Some of these would be:

1. A family setting depicting a marriage and exchange of dowry, and how it degenerates into dowry demand and harassment.

2. Women discussing wife-beating:
   (i) One woman lamenting her husband's habit of drinking and how, if the Government imposed total prohibition, she would no longer have to face the beating.
   (ii) An older woman, mentioning how her son has to beat his newly married wife so that she behaves 'respectfully' towards her mother-in-law, and at the same time commiserates with the alcoholic's wife.
   (iii) Another woman suggesting a tantrik who can help control the second woman's wayward daughter-in-law. She says the tantrik has been very effective in helping her daughter control her son-in-law who used to beat her daughter. Now, the son-in-law listens to her daughter and behaves well with her.

The facilitator can now discuss wife-beating and the ambiguities in people's perceptions that at one level they expect tantriks and prohibition to check wife-beating, yet at another level encourage wife-beating to control a daughter-in-law. Also a debate can be initiated on wife-beating.
The need is for intervention to combat the acceptance and non voicing of violence in order to check violent practices against women. Is wife-bashing different from wife-beating.

Should one be allowed, and the other checked? Is it possible?

After the discussion the facilitator must stress on the following strategy.

INTERVENTIONIST'S STRATEGY

Given these circumstances and problems, the following are the types of intervention that can be made by NSS volunteers.

Launching of a campaign

NSS volunteers may launch a campaign against violence that women face. Such a campaign can be targeted to provide awareness within their educational institutions, community in which they live and the adopted villages/towns by holding camps and other activities. Awareness can be generated by holding debates on issues like why are rape victims treated like criminals; need for dowry; is male child preference justified; is wife-beating acceptable in society? They can organise exhibitions reflecting the extent of violence by highlighting case studies of local areas providing statistics on violence against women, and also hold poster competitions and exhibitions to give importance to the issue and make people think about the violence that occurs in society, thus making violence visible and getting people to react to violence by exemplifying local incidents.

Educational institutions can hold awareness weeks where they can hold regular programmes like these and call eminent people, NGOs working in areas of women violence etc. to share their experiences.
Organising the Community

For holistic intervention in the community, NSS volunteers need to mobilise and establish network in the community where gender sensitization is to be focused on. (Refer to module Strategy for NSS.)

Action Oriented

Another course for NSS volunteers is to intervene directly in cases of atrocities. For instance, eve-teasing is rampant in colleges, bus stands and market places. Around the college premises, any incidence of eve-teasing can be taken up and the culprits can be paraded in the college, and publicity given to their behaviour. Also in cases of dowry demand or wife-beating, the NSS volunteers can provide guidance i.e. whom to approach, how to get legal aid, counselling etc.

Tasks can also be undertaken in regard to specific atrocities.

A. To sensitize women and the community on issues relating to gender justice and women's development

1. To make visible the invisible violent acts

The strategy of intervention should focus on sensitizing women to all forms of atrocities. For instance, wife-beating does not invite intervention and only wife-bashing is projected as an atrocity. Similarly, eve-teasing is not considered unlawful and only rape is seen as legal violation. Further, dowry exchange is socially approved and only dowry death is condemned.

TASKS

(I) To launch an awareness campaign to make the invisible violent acts visible.
(II) To document and publicise the nature and extent of atrocities on women.
2. To shift from role stereotyping to role fluidity.

**TASKS**

(I) To build a consensus for role fluidity and not role extension. (Refer to page 43)

(II) To campaign for amendment in the labour laws to provide women with greater access to job opportunities in the organised sector.

(III) To change people's attitude so that they are able to see women as productive beings rather than merely income augmentors of the family. (Refer to page 44)

(IV) To sensitize the community to the productive contribution of women to society. (Number of household chores performed by women and time spent by them in performing these chores such as fetching water, fuel wood and fodder, looking after the cattle, working on the farm etc. (Refer to pages 45)

B. To mobilize women and sensitize society to check atrocities on women

1. DOWRY

**TASKS**

(I) To sensitize the community to the linkage between dowry exchange, dowry demand, dowry harassment and dowry death. In other words, to highlight that it is not possible to eradicate dowry deaths without countering the concept of dowry itself. (Refer to page 27)

(II) To make people aware of the existing laws on dowry exchange, dowry demand, dowry harassment and dowry death. (Refer to page 271 and 278)

(III) To impart awareness regarding the procedures, rules and institutions which are relevant to checking these abuses. For instance, it is necessary for them to know the relevance of the dying declaration of a dowry victim etc.

(IV) To identify and undermine folk cultural forms such as folklore, songs, traditions, which are taken as a normative justification for dowry.

Contd..
(v) To inform people about the initiatives taken and the schemes launched by the Government.

(VI) To debate the meaning of dowry exchange and its negative consequences on both the male and the female population. (Refer to pages 27 TO 30)

(VII) There is wide acceptability of the notion that property inheritance is the right of a son and a daughter gets her rightful share in the form of dowry. This should be rejected. The right to property should be granted in actual practice and conditions should be created to ensure that she is able to exercise control over it.

(VIII) Dowry and right to property should not be seen as isomorphic. There is need to oppose dowry-exchange and ensure grant of property to women.
2. WIFE-BEATING

Tasks

(I) It is necessary to sensitize society that wife-beating cannot be justified by referring to stereotyped roles. In other words, the notion that wife-beating is a symbol of manliness and it has social acceptance should be countered. Infliction of injury or harm in the `privacy' of the family is a violation of human rights.

(II) To demystify the meaning of wife-beating which is understood as wife-bashing. Moderate forms of wife-beating are, therefore, accepted as normal. In other words, wife-beating is given a license.

(III) To mobilise people to demand a separate law on wife-beating.

(IV) To document and disseminate information about the unreported incidents of wife-beating. This will help to question the social acceptance granted to moderate wife-beating.

(V) To identify the normative justifications for wife-beating from specific cultural traditions of various regions for working out counter ideological, scientific and logical rationale.

(VI) The victims of recurrent wife-beating should have access to counselling so as to regenerate their confidence, and to employment so that they gain economic independence. (Refer to Module on Counselling)

3. SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Combating sexual harassment: rape, molestation, eve-teasing

Tasks

(I) Eve-teasing has the least visibility because it is not seen as a danger to female chastity. Eve-teasing continues to remain invisible. There is need for generating public opinion against incidents of eve-teasing in public places, educational institutions and public transport.

(II) To seek intervention of the law enforcing agencies to generate awareness that this is also an unlawful act. For instance in U.P., the police had started...
(III) ‘Majnu Pinjaras’—cages to parade eve-teasers and simultaneously deter would be eve-teasers and make the community aware that such practice is punishable.

(IV) To hold declamation and painting contests in schools and colleges to generate awareness among the students about different aspects of eve-teasing, molestation, rape, and also familial violence.

(V) To generate awareness regarding the legal consequences of molestation and eve-teasing. (Refer to pages 266 and 268)

(VI) To display the identity of eve-teasers in educational institutions and other places which are more prone to such acts.

(VII) A consistent and rigorous campaign against the opinion that a victim of rape is a social undesirable.

(VIII) To break public silence on incidents of rape and to initiate a dialogue and debate on the various consequences of rape.

(IX) To provide special counselling facilities, legal and medical help to rape victims.

4. CASTE BASED SEXUAL HARASSMENT

To build public opinion against caste-based gender violence and empower the lower caste women.

**TASKS**

(I) There is need for initiating gender-based assertion rather than caste-based reaction, because these acts are seen as victimisation in terms of caste and not gender.

(II) Sexual abuse of Scheduled Caste women has to be countered at two levels, i.e. first to generate consciousness within these women to oppose any violation of their rights, and second, to make caste rape visible.

(III) Social upward mobility among the Scheduled Caste population is also introducing new forms of exploitation of women which are imbibed from the upper castes. For instance, levirate marriages are now being practiced by the Scheduled Castes without any social normative sanction. These practices should be checked.
5. SEX DETERMINATION TESTS

Combating the utilisation of sex determination tests

**TASKS**

(I) To generate awareness regarding the functioning of the male norm and the social cost and benefit of male child preference. (refer to sex determination module)

(II) To project the act of female foeticide as murder in order to make it visible.

(III) To inform people of the Government initiatives and schemes to counter the spread of sex determination tests.

(IV) To remove liabilities attached to a girl child by educating the people that individuals - male or female- can perform the same productive tasks if similar access and participation is ensured.
C. NSS volunteers can Liaise with Panchayat and Mahila Mandals:

i) To form special groups to check atrocities on women with the active involvement of the community.

ii) To start awareness programmes of literacy especially for women.

iii) To document the extent and magnitude of gender violence.

iv) To launch an ideological movement against the gender system rather than merely providing relief to the victims. Their approach should be preventive. (Refer to Module II - issues in women’s development and Gender Justice and to module on NSS strategy)
**SEX-DETERMINATION AND PRE-SELECTION**

**OBJECTIVES**

- To draw attention to the growing misuse of modern technologies for purposes of sex determination or pre-selection to avoid the birth of a female child
- To underline the injustice implied in pre-selection practices which reinforce the gender bias in society
- To emphasise the social problems which will follow if these practices continue to be resorted to
- To impart knowledge about the legal position on the issue
- To enable the participants to evolve strategies for dealing with the problem

**Methods**

Discussion cum lecture; Questions and answers; Slogan writing/ songs; Film shows; Role plays.

**Material**

Black board; Chalk; Charts; Paper; Pens.
The trainer may begin with a reference to the practice of female infanticide and relate it to the prevailing prejudice against the girl child. This aspect of social prejudice may then be linked to the more modern practice of using sex determination tests which are used to selectively abort female foetuses. A brief reference may be made to the practice of sex determination tests made possible by pre-natal diagnostic techniques and the ongoing research on pre-selection methods. It should be emphasised that although these technologies are meant to detect foetal abnormalities and to facilitate intervention at the appropriate time if there is something wrong, in the Indian context it has served to reinforce social prejudice and gender discrimination.

In the end the facilitator may stress that the participants can play a very effective role in keeping a watch on their neighbourhood and effectively intervene by mobilizing others who would support them. They can thereby create a climate where social prejudice against the female does not become a source of profit for those in control of certain technologies. Social prejudice itself needs to be countered by exposing the vested interests which perpetuate the prejudice, and by altering the social, economic and political structures which sustain it. The youth must put an end to practices which sustain or further the gender bias in society and promote discrimination in the matter of birth or otherwise.

Notes are provided to initiate discussion

Some parts of India have for long seen the inhuman practice of female infanticide. This involved killing the girl child soon after birth using methods like poisoning or starving her to death. For years social reformers and political activists have endeavoured to stop this practice. They did succeed in considerably reducing its extent. In recent years, however, this discriminatory practice has re-emerged in a far more threatening form. New medical
technologies have developed which enable detection of the sex of the child before birth itself. Important among these are the prenatal diagnostic tests such as ultrasonography, amniocentesis, chorine villi biopsy etc. Some new methods of pre-selection of the sex of the child are also being developed by researchers and may become widely available soon.

These new technologies are intended to help the detection of foetal abnormalities and application of the necessary therapy, wherever possible, at the appropriate time. In India, however, these have been used not only to detect the sex of the foetus but also to opt for abortion of a female foetus. The practice is worse than female infanticide. It furthers sex-based discrimination, yet its violation of justice does not even become visible. And it is not confined to some remote areas or to the uneducated sections of society. Even educated and seemingly modern people have resorted to it to prevent the birth of a girl child.
This should be followed by a discussion on the grounds on which these tests need to be opposed. It is important to effectively counter the reasons which are generally offered by those who support the practice. Many misconceptions about the advantages of selection of the child
of the desired sex need to be removed. The following material may be used for the lecture-
cum-discussion, involving the participants by raising questions and answering them to
remove these misconceptions. It may be useful if some films which challenge gender bias and
discriminatory practices in society, community and households are cited, or, if possible, some
of these films are shown. One may also make use of some regional language films.

**Reasons and implication**

Traditional Indian desire for a son in the family continues to influence the attitudes of the
people. Many doctors and quacks have made huge profits by exploiting this preference for a
male child. They have encouraged people to make use of pre-natal diagnostic tests and ensure
that they do not get unwanted daughters. They advertise their services as if they were there on
a great mission to save the people from the burden of daughters. They make it appear that
those who do not use these facilities are fools. This has further devalued the female of the
human species, and increased discriminatory practices. Many arguments are given in support
of the practice, especially by those who provide the service. It is important to understand the
real implication of these arguments as well as the practice which is being used so widely.

? **Will sex-determination tests help women**

It is argued that women are faced with the burden of producing children till a son is born.
With sex-determination tests they can avoid repeated pregnancies and yet produce a son. It is
important to realize that this implies treating women only as machines for producing children
of the desired sex. And for that they can be forced to undergo repeated abortions, even if it
adversely affects their health.

A more sensible response to the problem of repeated pregnancies imposed on women is to
counter the son-preference. Sex-determination tests only reinforce the prejudice against the
girl child.
Is sex-determination the right answer to social problems like dowry?

The existing socio-economic practices such as dowry have been advanced as reasons for the promotion of sex-determination and female foetus abortion. Advertisements of the facility suggest that one should spend a small amount now (for the test to avoid the possible birth of a daughter) rather than spend much more money later (by way of dowry).

One would have wished that the demeaning practices which lead to evils like dowry were attacked. One should try to improve the status of women in society and the family rather than accept the existing evils as unchangeable and, therefore, propose an end of womankind.

Is selective abortion the same thing as abortion?

Selective abortion after sex determination is justified as being similar to general abortion. It is presented as a useful method of family planning and having a small and balanced family. In fact sex-determination related abortions pose a major threat to the social system.
With an increase in the number of selective female foetus abortions a serious threat is posed to the demographic balance in society. The number of female births is declining in proportion to male births. At present there are only 927 women to every 1000 men. This is despite the fact that under normal circumstances, the female of the species is stronger than the male and in most of the developed countries the ratio of women to men is higher not lower.

Will the reduced number of women improve their status

Some people think that if the number of women goes down, their value would increase and so their status would improve. Unfortunately, this is not a realistic understanding of the problems of women’s status. Even at present when the number of women in India is less than that of men, women's status is poor. How then would it improve if their number goes down further? In fact, history shows that whenever the number of women has gone down sharply, women have been exposed to an increased possibility of crimes such as rape, abduction and forced polyandry. And all kinds of restrictions have been placed on their movement and social activity.
Will sex determination tests or sex pre-selection help the human race

It is argued that if the birth of the unwanted girl child is avoided, there will be a definite improvement in society and women would be able to live with dignity. In effect, the opposite is likely to happen.

It is very important to reject practices like sex-determination or even sex pre-selection, if humankind is to be saved. Selective abortion of female foetuses only devalue humanity, promote unjust attitudes towards women, threaten the very existence of womankind and with that the survival of the human race.

**EXERCISE : COUNTERING FORCES OF SON PREFERENCE**

The participants may be asked at this point to suggest some slogans or small songs which they may have heard or which they may themselves write to counter the malpractice of sex-determination. This should be followed by a discussion on possible strategies to counter the practice of sex-determination and its ideological as well as structural basis. The participants may be told about the legal provisions in this regard. They may also be suggested other strategies which involve community mobilization, protests, organizing processions or demonstrations outside the clinics or laboratories that provide this facility and raising slogans to counter the practice. These should be directed at countering the forces which strengthen son preference in society, and thereby promote such practices and gender bias.

**LAW AGAINST SEX-DETERMINATION**

Recently, a Central law has been passed banning the practice of pre-natal tests for sex-determination leading to abortion of female foetuses. Earlier, the states of Maharashtra, Haryana, Punjab and Rajasthan had passed laws to ban such tests in their territories. Now, all states are supposed to create an implementation machinery for putting the Central law into effect.
Does the law ban pre-natal diagnostic tests completely?

The new Central law does not completely ban pre-natal diagnostic techniques. It permits their use under certain conditions: if the age of the pregnant woman is above thirty-five; if there is a history of two or more spontaneous abortions or foetal loss; if there exists a family history of mental retardation or physical deformities such as spasticity or other genetic disease; or if the pregnant woman is exposed to potentially teratogenic agents such as drugs, radiation, infection or chemicals. Under the present law, the use of pre-natal tests is considered justifiable only for the detection of five types of abnormalities: chromosomal abnormalities, haemoglobinopathies, genetic metabolic disorders, sex-linked genetic diseases and other congenital abnormalities. The doctors or others who come to know the sex of the child, however are not supposed to disclose it to the woman or her relatives in any other conditions.

Can any practicing doctor use pre-natal tests for the purposes specified by law?

Only registered genetic counselling centres, genetic laboratories and genetic clinics are permitted to carry out pre-natal tests for permitted reasons.
• **What if the doctors break the law?**

In case they break the law, their license can be cancelled or suspended for a specified period by the appropriate authorities to be set up by the States (or the Centre in case of Union Territories). An appeal against these can be made to the State Government (or the Central Government in case of Union Territories).

• **When can the court intervene and who can complain to the court?**

The court will take cognizance of an offence when approached by the appropriate authority or any officer authorized in this behalf by the Central or the State Government, as the case may be.

Any person or social organization can also make a complaint to the court but after giving a notice of not less than thirty days in the prescribed manner to the appropriate authority. Only a metropolitan magistrate or a judicial magistrate or a first class magistrate can try an offence punishable under this law.

• **What is the punishment for providing sex-determination tests?**

The name of the registered medical practitioner convicted by a court can be removed by the State Medical Council from its register for two years for the first offence and permanently for a subsequent offence.

The law also provides for imprisonment of up to three years and a fine of up to Rs. 10,000/- for the first offence and imprisonment up to five years and a fine of up to Rs. 50,000 for a subsequent offence.

• **Will the user be liable to punishment?**

Both user and provider of the facility are liable to punishment. The woman who undergoes the test will be considered not guilty unless the husband and relatives can prove their innocence in
the matter. But if the latter can prove themselves to be innocent, the woman will be punished for having undergone the test.

Every care needs to be taken to prevent this law from becoming a method of double victimization of women, first by the husband or the family who may force them to go for the test and then by the law for having done so, if the family can prove itself not responsible. One must see to it that women are not forced to accept responsibility under pressure from the family.

**SOCIAL INTERVENTION**

- **Is there need for mobilizing the community or citizens for generating public pressure**

There certainly is an urgent need for doing so. The practice is more likely to become clandestine due to the law that bans it. The challenge, therefore, will lie in operating at the level of the people and helping them to avoid becoming the victims of profit-seeking doctors or technicians who discreetly offer them the facility.

There is an urgent need for mobilizing the people in local areas and generate pressure against such practitioners on the one hand and likely users on the other. Without such pressure it will not be easy for the law to serve its purpose.

- **What should be the focus of such mobilization exercises?**

It is essential to focus such mobilization on uprooting the son preference itself rather than simply resort to legal provisions against sex-determination tests. Even pre-selection methods which are not covered by the law and which may not be based on scientific techniques, including *tonas and totkas* or effective and tested medicines, or even religious bigotry should be attacked not on grounds of their being real or fake but on grounds...
of their role in reinforcing the son-preference and by defining the principles of equality and justice.

Gender justice is the foundation of all other kinds of justice in society. It is important that all energy is put in this direction. Effort needs to be made to ensure dignity to womankind and to fight all discriminatory practices both within the family and in society at large. It is significant that conscious efforts are made to provide equal rights and dignity to all human beings irrespective of their sex.

**ROLE PLAY**

After the discussion, the participants may be asked to do some role plays. They may be given an urban or rural setting depending on their context. They may be given a situation where they have to help a woman who is being pressured by members of the family to go for a sex-determination test. They may play the role of a doctor, woman going for the test, her husband, relatives, neighbours, or some other roles in the neighbourhood, for example Mahila Samiti members or some activist groups in the area, the police officer, the judge etc. They may be asked to think of ways in which they can intervene. In an alternative situation they may be asked to prevent a doctor in the area who they know is providing sex determination facility against the law. They may be asked to think of ways which involve immediate action through community support using procession or protest and pressure as well as legal action. They should use their knowledge of the issue and its problems as well as ways of dealing with it.
SECTION III

STRATEGIES AND INTERVENTION

This section focuses on the perspective of intervention. It highlights the need for a collective interactive evolutionary approach to sensitize and mobilize community. Specific intervention strategies like legal literacy, protest and social movements, income generating schemes are discussed in context to a gender just society. Also case studies of existing NGO intervention have been included to reflect the impact of their strategies on empowering women. In conclusion a range of strategies under the perspective of undermining the detrimental gender system have been suggested for the NSS.
NGO INTERVENTION

OBJECTIVES

• TO MAKE THE PARTICIPANTS CONVERSANT WITH NGOs’ ROLE IN SENSITISING AND MOBILISING THE COMMUNITY.

METHODS

Discussion, Debates, Lecture, Case study.

MATERIAL

Charts, Posters.

FACILITATOR’S NOTE

The module discusses the perspective of intervention. The NSS as an intervening agency in its identified locality can adopt this given perspective and blend it with the specificities of the NSS perspective on gender issues (Module on Strategies for NSS) The facilitator can start by discussing the existing perspectives of intervention (patronage, dole, Participatory Rural Approach (PRA) and the need for a collective interactive evolutionary approach). The facilitator must assist the participants to attain critical thinking. Steps to achieve this have been mentioned in the module. Also examples in the context of gender have been cited. However, the facilitator must discuss and encourage the participants to give examples of critical thinking from their field situations. It must be stressed that critical thinking combats
prejudice, bias and the invisibility of injustice. The NSS volunteers can then initiate critical thinking among members of the locality and among other NGOs etc. The facilitator must stress that though interaction with community members may result in a consensus, this may yet by-pass fundamental problems, which unless arrived at through critical thinking may only promote the existing inequalities.

The specific role of an NGO has also been elucidated to assist the NSS unit in focusing its efforts. Though these have been exemplified in the context of gender issues, these roles can also be undertaken by the NSS in other spheres such as promoting communal harmony, environment, or AIDS awareness etc.

THE CONTEXT

Societies have traditionally been made up of self-supporting communities. Almost every rural settlement has been taking care of its own needs while sustaining its environment, besides supplying the necessities to the neighbouring towns. The social order was, no doubt, hierarchical but social and other problems were resolved within the village community itself. In other words, the village communities used to look after their own needs and even resolve their problems themselves. With development, the autonomy of the rural communities has been curtailed but without creating an adequate substitute to take care of their social needs and problems. Therefore, there is need for restoring a degree of autonomy of the communities, especially the rural communities to ensure that they help themselves.

PERSPECTIVE OF INTERVENING AGENCY

Historically most of the interventions took the initiative away from the people and reduced them to being mere beneficiaries, clients, recipients etc. The relationship between the government and other change agents and the community took the following forms.
(a) Relationship based on patronage
(b) Dole giver and dole receiver syndrome.
These approaches reduced the welfare programmes of the Government to a kind of patronage to be given to the people. The first in a way, was a modern version of the traditional "Mai Baap - Riyaya" relationship. With the penetration of capitalism, there developed a partnership between the change agents and the beneficiaries, which took the form of a dole-giver and dole-receiver relationship, in which sharing the dole became central, rather than the responsibilities.

Social welfare measures of the Government in particular, and those of some NGOs have been implemented in such a framework. When the community perceives itself to be the recipient of a 'dole', it only consumes the benefits without using them productively. For instance, education is perceived as a dole where children may or may not attend school or attend school only for the sake of uniforms or scholarships.

Education is not perceived as a productive value. Similarly, loans for income generating schemes such as IRDP are many a time "consumed" for building a house, daughter's dowry or to tide over bad times, rather than putting them to productive use to generate an income.

Under such an approach, a superior position and knowledge is attributed to the 'external' interventionist whereas the community is reduced to the position of a recipient and beneficiary, undermining the community's:
In response to this approach, a number of well thought-out strategies have been evolved. Popular among these is the Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA).

The main emphasis in PRA is to make the producers of knowledge i.e. the community, the users of knowledge. The approach has been evolved in response to the failure of the Government to provide relief and welfare to the people. Consequently, the Government, and recently even the NGOs, have started abdicating their responsibilities to and in favour of the people at the grassroot level. In fact, catch phrases such as power back to the people are being bandied about to cover-up their inability to perform various functions.

The need is, however, for a collaborative relationship based on comparative advantage and effective division of labour between Government officials, NGOs and the community. Also an integrated approach is required where short-term and medium-term needs are met through welfare and relief schemes such as old age, widow pension, flood relief etc., which are linked to long-term growth-oriented needs such as development of infrastructure and transformatory intervention which seeks to change the people's lives by changing their outlook towards these issues. In short, the NGO perspective needs to be interactive with the various components of the larger community (i.e. members of the locality, NGOs, Government officials, politicians, Grassroot Organisations (GROs) etc.) to collectively evolve development measures for overall growth.

**COLLECTIVE INTERACTIVE EVOLUTIONARY APPROACH (CIEA)**

According to this approach, the community is a collection of various sections, with varying levels of knowledge, felt needs, attitudes and preferences. These sub-strata of the community continuously interact with one another to identify and deal with their problems and to attain higher levels of development.
The NGOs or Government officials are not external facilitators. They actively participate along with the community to identify the areas of intervention.

The CIEA recognises the community to consist of members of a locality, GROs within the community such as panchayats, youth clubs; active members such as teachers, social activists; various levels of NGOs which may or may not be members of the locality, government officials ranging from line departments such as health and Anganwari workers to senior officials. Moreover, the inhabitants of a locality will have various sections within themselves belonging to different strata, religions, occupations, people with different perspectives, marginalised groups, such as women, the Scheduled Castes etc. Thus each section of the community will have different concerns, different levels of information and different ideas for promoting community development.
Evolving areas of Intervention

It is therefore, collective interaction which will help evolve a plan of action reflecting a consensus, not only on visible, but also on invisible aspects. Local knowledge regarding local resources, perceptions, felt needs along with the knowledge of the NGOs regarding skills and techniques; development perspectives plus inputs from Government officials regarding state efforts and concerns need to be pooled to evolve the development and regeneration of communities.

Constraints in evolving consensuses on invisible aspects

(i) Bias and prejudices including gender, communal, caste, ethnic.
(ii) Pre-conceived notions regarding status, role, social placement.
(iii) Cultural inhibitions.
(iv) Efficient and effective utilisation and mobilisation of resources
(v) Lack of physical and infrastructural resources.
Methods to overcome these constraints
Uncovering built-in prejudices

A large section of the community may have biases, built-in prejudices and pre-conceived notions, and constant interaction between various sections of the community including NGOs and Government officials can uncover these invisible biases. For instance, biases in regard to caste and gender are predominant in most sections. These become more invisible since caste groups or women themselves are the victims of these prejudices. To illustrate, most members of the community hold the opinion that men and women have different biological and social roles. Women are seen as rearers of children and are consequently confined to the four walls of the household whereas men are socialized as earners for the family and consequently empowered to take every decision within the family. There is almost an agreement on these pre-conceived notions in society. Therefore, an approach relying only on the members of a locality themselves to identify the problem areas particularly relating to women, the Scheduled Castes and the minorities may find it difficult to uncover the invisible prejudices. This can be true for the NGO's and government officials also.
However, critical collective thinking on these issues is imperative and training on issues of critical thinking needs to be imparted.

**STEPS IN CRITICAL THINKING**

1. **DETERMINE THE CAUSE-AND-EFFECT RELATIONSHIP**

A dialogue among the people, the NGO’s and government officials on possible causative factors for the emergence of a phenomenon may throw up a number of causes, which can be hierarchised. For instance, if an attempt is made to identify the causes of dowry deaths, these may be attributed to

- a) Greed
- b) Practice of dowry
- c) Inferior placement of women etc.

These can be further prioritised by the community

2. **VERIFICATION OF INFORMATION**

Information gathered must be verified from more than one source. It is easy to ensure the reliability of quantifiable data, but qualitative information is often exaggerated.

3. **IDENTIFY BIASES AND PREJUDICES**

The recognition of the possibility of existence of biases must precede analysis. Therefore, perceptions should be converted into questions for further examination. For instance:

- Are women really unproductive?
- Are girls really feeble minded?
- Will exposure to education make a girl disobedient?


Contd..
4. RECOGNIZING PARTIAL AND INCORRECT REASONING: SOME EXAMPLES

A. Spurious cause - effect associations

'Women invite rape by their dress and demeanor. Thus to avoid rape, women should be covered from head to toe, avoid males and remain confined to their homes.'

B. Over-reliance on statistical information

'One-third representation of women in Panchayats/Lok Sabha has empowered women.'

C. Erroneous analogy

Comparison carried too far, or comparison of things that have nothing in common. 'It is better to spend Rs. 500 on sex determination tests, rather than spent 50,000 on a girl’s dowry.'

D. Over simplification

'Women's education is the solution to their problems.'

'Implementation of law will check the menace of dowry harassment.'

E. Stereotyping

'Women are soft and emotional.'

'Women are women's worst enemies.'

'The role women perform best is that of nurturing children.'

'A man is not manly if he cannot browbeat his wife.'

F. Erroneous Generalization

'If girls are sent for education, they will elope with some one.'

'Girls cannot digest milk and milk products, therefore they are not given the same amount of milk as is given to boys.'
5. **DIFFERENTIATING BETWEEN FACT AND PERCEPTION.**

A fact is an empirically verifiably observation, whereas perception is an attributed value. 'Majority of girls don’t go to school (fact). 'Majority of girls are molested in schools’ (perception). Are girl children really not interested in studying - or are they too busy looking after siblings and performing household chores?

6. **MULTI INTERACTIVE SKILLS.**

Comparing and contrasting information and points of view. This helps to identify facts and draw conclusions more readily.

7. **DEVELOPING SKILLS TO ENHANCE REASONING AND INFERENCE.**

8. **MAKING ANALYTICAL JUDGMENTS AND DRAWING LOGICAL CONCLUSIONS.**

If women can run a home efficiently, can they not be efficient workers when employed?

Consensus : Promoting invisibilities?

Consensus or near consensus on problem areas is not synonymous with solving the problem. For instance, all sections of the community may be of the opinion that certain manifestations or certain aspects of a problem are the actual problem and may target that for correction. To illustrate, one of the manifestations of the existing gender system-dowry deaths-may be perceived to be a problem by members of the locality, Panchayat members and even by the NGOs and other intervening organisations. Targeting dowry deaths by asking for stringent laws, creating vigilance committees to check occurrence of dowry or spreading legal literacy would not eradicate dowry deaths. Dowry deaths may be curbed to some extent but cannot be rooted out unless its various causes are dealt with. Hierarchical causes which question the practice of dowry exchange, male child preference, subordinate women's placement, considering women a liability, role stereo-typing etc. need to be countered if dowry deaths...
are to be eradicated. Problems which are not perceived as problems such as stereo-type male-female roles, male child preference, subjugation of lower castes, will be overlooked if only a consensus approach is followed to solve the problems of the community. Besides democratic participation and visible consensus on issues, it is imperative to evolve a consensus through critical thinking. Sensitive and informed inputs which question some of the well accepted norms of society need to be included.

The invisibility factor is more pronounced in gender issues, the Scheduled Castes and the minorities and it is in fact these marginalised sections whose problems need to be addressed to in a more sensitive and systematic manner.

**Nature of participation**

Eliciting participation of community members cannot be synonymous with people's empowerment, on two counts:
(i) Encouraging participation per se provides an opportunity to the already existing hierarchically superior members of the community. Thus it is the more equal among others who dictate their priorities. The marginalised groups such as those belonging to the lower strata, the lower castes, migrants and women may not be able to articulate their interests and priorities. A collective interaction thus demands participation of people from all walks of life.

(ii) The participation of the hierarchically dominant members may even result in the perpetuation of the existing power relations. For instance, women Panches or Mahila
Mandal leaders are assured avenues of participation without corresponding opportunities. At the same time, they may be under the influence of gender stereotypes like male-female roles, belief in practices such as dowry exchange, even though condemning dowry deaths; are proponents of male child preference and believe that women's role is to run an efficient home. Participation of such ideologues furthers the existing unequal power relation between the genders. Thus, participation must flow from critical thinking, a sensitive and informed input. Members of a locality, the NGOs and even Government officials would need constant training to break the barriers of the existing power relations, especially in the context of gender, the caste system and other under-privileged groups.

Case Study

THE CIEA IN OPERATION: IN MEWAT

The Collective Interactive Evolutionary Approach is a democratic way of transforming the existing power equation in the long run. For instance, interaction between religious priests like pujaris, Maulvis and the NGOs, Government officials, Panchayat members and the larger community has the potential to produce a new equilibrium different from the existing one.

This methodology has been adopted in the Mewat area and it has helped to bring around the Maulvis and Mullahs to respond to programmes like girl child education.

The support of traditional religious heads to the programme is already witnessing increased acceptability to girl child education. Efforts are also being made through this interactive approach to convince the Maulvis and Mullahs to be the propagators of the family planning programme among the Muslims.
The NSS can intervene in the community to perform the following functions:

1. **Facilitating Grassroot organisations**

The grassroot organisations which were formed in the early years of independence have been marginalised by the process of development (Panchayats, Mahila Mandals, Youth Clubs etc.). With greater thrust on decentralised planning and ensuring greater participation of the people in various programmes, it has become necessary to provide the requisite skills to the grassroot organisations (GROs). The NGOs can assist in the growth, organisation and effectiveness of these organizations. The new role of the NGOs is to equip themselves to train the grassroot organisation. The NGOs must:

1. Harness their own potential to identify the relevant problems and generate corresponding information and data;
2. Develop their own capacity and skills to assist the GROs in project formulation, implementation and resource mobilisation;
3. Acquire specialised skills and knowledge to advise the GROs on development activities;

**Critical Issues:**

Given the wide range of functions that the grassroot organisations have to perform, the moot question regarding the capacity of the members of the GROs to implement the programmes remains unanswered. The capacity of the GROs is limited because:

1. The general literacy and information level is low. Orientation to work in collaboration with the NGOs and the Government is inadequate. Their understanding of finance, accounting and record keeping procedures is at best sketchy.
2. They have an inadequate idea of development programmes, their planning and implementation.
3. They have scant orientation to mobilise the villagers, local resources, the NGOs for development.
Skill Development of GRO's

A) FUNCTIONAL LITERACY : Functional literacy of all members of the community is a necessary condition for people's empowerment. Without the minimum capacity to read and write participation and intervention in decision making and collective action may not be possible.

B) COORDINATION AND NETWORKING : To equip members of the GROs with skills to improve their coordination with Government departments and officials assigned the task of implementing various programmes.

C) REGULATION : To impart skills to regulate various grassroot institutions like primary schools, health sub-centres, Anganwadis, cooperatives etc.

D) ACCOUNTANCY : To acquaint members with financial, accounting and record keeping procedures through specifically designed packages.

Contd..
E) ORGANIZATIONAL PROCEDURES: To familiarise them with the rules of conduct of business and procedures of the GROs (i.e. Panchayats, Mahila Mandals, Youth Clubs).

F) COMMUNICATION: To equip the community with interactive skills to ensure community participation, collective decision making and evolving consensus on issues of common concern.

G) IMPLEMENTATION OF SCHEMES: To disseminate and upgrade the level of people's information and understanding of development programmes and schemes, especially those meant for the weaker sections.

H) MONITORING AND EVALUATION: To provide the community with skills to monitor and evaluate various programmes of rural development.

I) SENSITIZATION TO VULNERABLE SECTIONS: To improve the GROs' skills of working with the weaker sections such as the Scheduled Castes and Tribes, women and children.

II. Generate Data:

1. Feasibility studies to ascertain the income generating ventures that could be undertaken in the community such as availability of raw material, nature of people's skills, marketing network, transportation and communication facilities etc.

2. To identify community resources such as shamlat land, watershed management, forests, community building etc. that can be used to facilitate community interests.

3. Collecting data on specific issues: This could relate to atrocities against women such as the number of rape, eve-teasing and dowry harassment cases that have occurred in the identified community during a time period. Quantifying the atrocities can assist in making visible the extent of crime against women which is pervasive in society. Normally people believe that atrocities are rare and occur to others and do not affect their lives. So insensitivity and invisibility to violence remains. The NGO could also collect data on other issues such as environment: The distance women covered to gather fuel, fodder or water. Such facts could
help in identifying the problems of the community which often are overlooked as normal and remain invisible

III. Organising the community:
Grassroot organisation or specific members of the community should perform the task of organising the community. The effectiveness of any programme depends on the organisation and the nature of participation of the community in that programme.

Organising the community involves:
An initial survey of the community. This would help in:
- Identifying community leaders
- Gaining familiarity with various sections of the community
- Identifying concerns of the community
- Identifying other NGO’s and Government functionaries active within the locality
- Locating the nodal point for initiating intervention.

IV. Training:
A cohesion to the collective community interaction needs to be provided through training.
Training needs to be imparted, not only to community members but also to the larger community of affiliated NGOs/GROs, line officials and other Government functionaries. The aim of training is to promote a comprehensive strategy to regenerate the community. In specific, training needs to be imparted on issues such as gender sensitisation, interaction with marginalised groups such as the backward castes, migrant labour etc.
Training is also needed for resource mobilisation and enhancing the capacity to use local resources, time and resource management, promoting sustainable development etc.
Training can be imparted through preparation of manuals and holding of workshops for which NSS volunteers can collaborate with resource persons.
The strategy adopted by NGO’s to communicate their message can help the following aspects in mind:

- The choice of theme must be made keeping in view the level of social development, cultural sensibilities and felt needs of the group.

For instance, initiating a campaign with abortion as the theme will be counter productive in a group where even the right to choose a marriage partner is not granted.

- The campaign must be
- anchored by those members of the group who are committed to the cause propounded,
- targeted at those who are torn between pragmatic acceptance and social inhibition, and
- through them directed at those who need a total attitudinal change.

Pre-Campaign Strategy

To prepare a positive environment, a meeting of the following sections to discuss the strategy should be organised.

- NGO's, Panchayats, Mahila Mandals
- Teachers
- Youth (student and non-student) of the area.
- Women (house-workers and other workers)

Communication Need Assessment

(i) Situational analysis:

It is imperative to make an in depth analysis of the social, economic and cultural context and to ascertain segment-wise perceptions of the diverse sections of society.

In this it is necessary to include the felt needs of the people, to make a correct assessment of local resources, to have an in-depth study of facilitating factors and resistance points.
Target Audience

A) Strata-wise perceived felt need assessment study

Given the diverse socio-cultural context, it would be necessary to evolve a communication strategy capturing the various responses of the people. Broadly, this population can be categorized as under;

i) The large segment of the population which submits to the traditional ways of life.

The communication strategy should aim at bringing about a total consciousness and transformation with a multi-pronged methodology. It is in this context that the convergence of poverty alleviation, education and skill upgradation with initiative for a change in the socio-cultural value and belief systems has to be achieved.

ii) Population which has information about the various programmes, but may not have the necessary skill and confidence to translate this information into action.

The communication strategy has to bring about a change in individual attitude through family, kinship and community involvement;

iii) The strata of population which are responsive. They have to be motivated to act as agents of change;

Target groups should be identified according to their spatial location.

Source of Message

An areawise inventory of agents of change should be prepared, keeping in view their credibility and their sphere of influence.

Channel of Communication

Identification of target group-wise channels of communication and communicators. This will include shaping the message according to the needs and interests of the audience and the source and channel of the message which have the confidence of the people.
Modes of rallies, melas, slogan writing, exhibitions, camps, seminars undertaken to create awareness should be evaluated. Their evaluation should be achieved through:

a) Measuring the extent of utilization of these modes which should be verified through checklists conducted on target members. Also the effectivity of each mode should be determined through an interview schedule.

b) A content analysis of the material used by the agents of change in the campaign should be undertaken.

c) Case study and on-the-spot survey should be made to study both the process and the impact of specific activities such as legal literacy drives, anti-dowry campaigns, awareness melas, etc.

An impact evaluation of the communication strategy should be undertaken in a two-fold manner:

a) Content analysis of the messages received by the target members.

b) Conducting interviews with target members regarding the impact vis-a-vis each goal.
SCOPE OF INTERVENTION: TOWARDS SOCIAL REFORM

OBJECTIVES

- To provide awareness regarding the scope of protest movements
- To provide a strategy to transform protest movements into social reform movements

METHODS

Question and answer, Case study, Lecture, and Discussion.

MATERIAL

Posters, Black-board.

FACILITATOR’S NOTE

The facilitator must highlight that a protest movement is not sufficient to bring about social change. This can be exemplified by discussing alcoholism and prohibition. Notes provided in the module can be used to provide a focus on their wider impact. Initiating the participants to this module can be undertaken with the group exercise. The trend of increasing alcoholism, its impact on the alcoholics’ dependents, their families and the larger society reflects that alcoholism is not confined to a few individuals but is a social malaise. A protest movement helps to provide relief to a victim but a social reform movement brings change in society. Strategies for initiating a protest movement and thus mobilising the community for social reform are provided in detail.
THE CONTEXT

Increasing practice of drinking has resulted in the collapse of the basic fabric of the family, increasing atrocities against women and disrupting the social order. It also affects the functions of the brain, such as learning, remembering, making judgment.

EXERCISE: UNVEILING THE IMPACT OF AND MYTHS ON ALCOHOLISM

The participants can be initiated in a discussion on alcoholism by asking them to list the impact of drinking. Their views can then be corroborated with the following:

A. Increasing incidence of eve-teasing, rape and wife-beating.
B. Wasteful expenditure, particularly in poor households, on alcohol, neglecting the education, health and other social needs of the children and other members of the family.
C. Increasing road accidents by drunken drivers, often killing or injuring non-drinkers.
D. Higher expenditure on marriages where liquor is served.
E. Lower productivity at the workplace.

Contd..
F. Greater health hazards faced by the alcoholics and, therefore, greater burden on the public health system.

G. More disputes in alcoholic families in which women are the main victims.

Also the participants can be asked to mention the myths regarding drinking.

**Some of the myths regarding drinking:**

- Women drinkers are projected as persons of 'loose character'.
- Male drinkers are seen as social persons and their drinking a symbol of friendship.
- It is projected that men drink to relieve tension, women drink to have a sexual liaison.
- Men drink to socialise, women drink to escape social responsibilities.
- Men drink to overcome social inhibitions and articulate suppressed desires, women drink to entice men.

In the ensuing discussion there is a need to explode these myths - if consumption of alcohol is desirable for men, why it is undesirable for women. Is it ethical to have
double standards? If it is justifiable for men to consume alcohol if they are overworked, under tension, then why it is prohibited for over-worked women? Therefore, it is necessary to understand effects of alcoholism on society, family and the economy rather than understanding it in terms of gender placement. The following information can be used to inform the students about the reasons of about increasing alcoholism, calculating the impact of alcoholism on society, relevance of a protest movement and how to transform it into a social movement.

BACKGROUND

Development has its own dualism. On the one hand, it provides greater access to opportunities such as employment, education, infrastructure, technology etc., and on the other it produces distortions such as excessive consumption, commodification and exhibitionism. If the economy is becoming competitive, it has also become accumulative and consumerist. If politics is producing normlessness, it is also throwing up social and political activists committed to preserving norms. If society is becoming consumerist it also reinforces the need for austerity. Since the crisis is deep it has to be matched by positive interventions made by a few individual do gooders. Frustration and cynicism is taking over. The moving away from the massification of politics, increasing intolerance and insensitivity have resulted in decreasing reliance on peaceful methods and a mad race for consumerist existence. In such a situation people start finding escape routes for their frustration. Drinking is one of the many distortions of this increasing culture of consumption and the practice of commodification and exhibitionism. Affluence and poverty both act as contributory factors for the people to opt for conspicuous consumption and drinking.

The culture of over-consumption provides the much needed social acceptability and status to drinking as an escape mechanism.
Why is Alcoholism becoming a problem?

Alcoholism is becoming a problem because it is increasingly being taken as an escape route. In other words, problems thrown up by the process of development like inequalities, increasing competitiveness, distress, anxiety and alienation provide the necessary basis for distortion to persist. Having not been answered in a rational, logical and scientific manner by the political, social, cultural, religious and economic system, these problems result in increased reliance on distortions like alcoholism, drug addiction and violence.
Why is alcoholism increasing?

- Mismatch between people’s material and non-material attainments like wealth, prestige, status etc.
- Glaring inequalities in terms of land, assets and income.
- Disequilibrium as reflected in high education and skill level and low income, high political participation and low social status like the Scheduled Castes.
- Trends in familial existential reality for individual and self-centered living in contradiction with the social need for either maintaining the existing kinship, caste and primordial identities or replacing these with new social identities like class.
- Increasing competitiveness, mistrust, insecurity, anxiety and alienation.
- Increasing poverty and limited access to recreational activities the lower-middle and poorer strata have been gripped by the need for quick relaxation.
- The absence of critical thinking, the spirit of inquiry and even access to knowledge. Questions thrown up by the existing nature of development, remain unanswered. Unanswered questions build a culture of fatalism, of which drinking is one offshoot.

**CATEGORIES OF DRINKERS**

- **Alcoholics or habitual drinkers**
  These are individuals who are consistent in their intake of alcohol to an extent that it causes harm to the drinker.

- **Escapist drinkers**
  Escapist drinkers are those who drink to find an escape from the miseries of human existence. Not only this, they also find drinking to be a good way to celebrate their achievements. In other words, they escape not only sorrows, but also happiness.

- **Socialites or fashionables**
  With increasing exhibitionism, the number of those who take to drinking to socialise and to be counted among the fashionable is multiplying.

- **Adventurists**
  This section is mainly drawn from among the youth who have a desire to be different from the others and an urge to be known as adventurists.
The impact of alcoholism should be seen in the context of the following:

(a) Social and economic costs of alcoholism borne by the families in terms of health services for the alcoholic, loss of education to the children, poor family health etc.
(b) Loss of income to the family due to the diversion of funds, and loss of productivity to society (drinkers are more frequently absent from their jobs and are less efficient than their occupational associates,
(c) An assessment of the divorce rate in families where one of the spouses is an alcoholic as compared to non-alcoholic families.
(d) Number of accidents, brawls and sexual harassment due to alcoholism and the accompanying cost suffered by the individual, society and the state.

**NATURE OF INTERVENTION**

**Women's Protest Movements**

The prevalence of alcoholism and its consequent effects on the family in general and women in particular, contributes to the emergence of women's protest movements. This has happened in several states, for instance Andhra Pradesh, Haryana etc. A protest movement is directed against a particular distortion in the context of alcoholism, such as impoverishment of the family and wife-beating due to excessive drinking.

**Case Study**

**PROTEST MOVEMENT AGAINST ALCOHOLISM**

A protest movement against alcoholism was launched in the rural areas of Haryana as a reaction to improvishment of the family and increasing wife-beating. The immediate causes were the increasing atrocities on women within the household and in society, rise in social crimes, disintegration of the family and other social risks.

The movement relied heavily on the socio-cultural reservoir predominantly against the consumption of liquor. Further, the older generation provided support to this movement because of their puritan values. Conspicuous consumption caused by affluence, had influenced the younger male generation, which took to excessive drinking.
Given the patriarchal context, women were allowed limited freedom and were forced to suffer male assertion including physical assault. The spread of education among women and awareness of their rights made the participation of young educated women possible.

The main factors which contribute to the emergence of a protest movement are

(a) Identifiable victims who will act as main mobilisers. In other words, victimisation is the cause and the victims are potential protesters in these protest movements;
(b) Increasing familial and social crimes;
(c) Excessive drinking resulting in the violation of the basic social code of conduct and behaviour;
(d) Impoverishment of the family.

Organisation of the Protest Movement

The protest movement was spearheaded by the victims and, therefore, remained centered around the impact on women, family impoverishment and excesses against women. In this case the women victims started organising themselves and demanded closure of liquor vends in
the villages or at least shifting of these vends to the periphery of the village. The following course was adopted by the movement;

(a) Staging dharnas before the liquor vends;

(b) Punishment to the drinkers such as parading them in the streets, wearing ghaghras, garlands of worn out shoes etc.;

(c) Incentives for giving information about persons consuming liquor to the organising committee;

(d) Networking with the media, political activists, Panchayats etc.

**Limitations of a protest movement**

(i) The protest movement remains sectional.

(ii) Issues are reduced to that between the perpetrator and the victim and thereby sight of the larger social implications is lost.

(iii) Remedies, if confined only to the victim and the perpetrator, leave the root causes of the problem unattended.

If the remedies provided cover the entire social domain, these are resented by the people who do not fall in the victim - perpetrator categories.

**SOCIAL REFORM MOVEMENT**

Social reform movements are a collective effort to bring about attitudinal changes and willing involvement of the community as a whole, to change the social context so as to sustain the desired goals.

A social reform movement is:

(a) a total strategy to ensure the involvement of diverse sections of society. To illustrate, in a protest movement it is merely the victims who rise against men drinkers and the community as whole is not mobilised around social causes.

Contd...
(b) directed towards inter-related issues. For instance, to check excessive drinking it will not merely rely on drug de-addiction centres and counselling, but also on awareness generation, access to education, health, employment opportunities etc.

Steps to transform a protest movement into social reform movement, exemplified in the context to alcoholism.

1. To initiate a dialogue in society on the causes of social evils in general and the drinking culture in particular.

2. Emphasise on health, education, employment issues and the impact of alcoholism on them.

3. Awareness of the community regarding the following:

   (a) it affects all sections of society, particularly the non-alcoholic population. This can be done by generating data on:
(i) the number of non-alcoholic persons injured or killed in accidents caused by drunken drivers;
(ii) the number of children of non-alcoholics who take to drinking;
(iii) Increase in the percentage of crime against non-alcoholics caused by alcoholics;
(iv) cost-benefit analysis of reducing the pressure on hospitals of diseases caused by excessive drinking.

(b) its linkage with larger cultural predispositions such as the Arya Samaj;
(c) the impact of alcoholism on individual families and society in monetary terms.

Therefore, a social cost benefit analysis to counter economistic interpretations should be undertaken.
(d) its interconnection with other social evils such as dowry, rape, social crimes etc.

Further the preventive measures at the administrative level should be integrated with punitive efforts at the level of the community. For instance, the N.S.S., Panchayats and the NGOs should work to create awareness, change the attitudes and mobilise the community to act as a cushion between the community and the law enforcement agencies. Mere reliance on legislation like prohibition in the absence of a social reform movement may result in:

(a) the possibility of drug inflow to the interiors of the prohibited areas like Haryana. Increase in the inflow of drugs like amphetamines, mandrax, opium, morphine, ganja, charas, etc.
(b) the emergence of a liquor mafia. It has been noticed that in Gujarat and Andhra Pradesh a mafia consisting of smugglers, corrupt policemen, enforcement staff and disgruntled politicians has emerged. In other words, the revenue lost by the state starts filling the pockets of this mafia.
(c) illicit distillation resulting in 'hooch' deaths.
(d) legislation takes away people's initiative.
Combating alcoholism through social reform

Rather than depending on only legal enforcement, a democratic anti-alcohol movement would need to focus on the following aspects in an integrated manner for achieving social reform:

1. Community led social reform and renaissance
2. Social and peoples policing
3. Social fencing
4. Targeted and discriminatory approach
5. Building forward and backward linkages with developmental activities
6. Inter-relating gender justice and women’s development with the menace of increasing alcoholism.
7. Communication with and awareness of the community

The NSS unit could initiate a democratic anti-alcohol movement in its adopted community such as a slum or village from where a momentum could then be built and spread.

I. Community led social reform and renaissance

The community should be encouraged, motivated and involved in the implementation of the programme as social reformers rather than as informers or controllers of alcohol distribution.

The social reform movement needs to ensure the involvement of diverse sections of society. To illustrate, in a protest movement it is the victims who rise against drinkers and the community as a whole is not mobilised.

On the other hand, a social reform movement is community-based and is a total movement directed at inter-related issues. For instance, to check excessive drinking it relies on
generation of awareness, increasing access to education, health, employment opportunities etc.

II Social and peoples policing

The concept of social policing means to encourage members of the community to participate and control the causes and symptoms of alcoholism within their localities. A group of law enforcing civilians can primarily function to provide guidance to erring individuals, protect society, maintain social codes and individual integrity.

III Social fencing

Rather than encouraging a physical fencing to block the porous state border, efforts should be made to initiate social fencing with the support of NSS volunteers, NGOs and social activists from across the communities borders. Social pressure to curtail drinking needs to be encouraged and could be activised with the help of the NSS and NGOs.

IV Targeted and discriminatory approach

This approach shall identify the target groups and areas for intervention. For instance, intervention may vary from deterrence to welfare to councelling to awareness.
Anti-alcoholism needs to be targeted at those aspects of alcohol intake which lead to either creation of social nuisance, such as increase in crime or harassment of women; tackling the harmful effects of alcoholism to the individual and undermining the conspicuous consumption of alcohol that creates a culture of drinking.
In other words, anti-alcoholism is targeted to undermine the alcohol dependence of some individuals, abuse resulting from alcohol whether in the confines of the family or in society at large, checking the social nuisance factor of drunks and checking the rise of potential violation to the above three.
Thus anti-alcoholism is targeted as a specific type of alcoholism which has a negative impact either on the individual, the family, the society or the state.

**IMPLEMENTING A TARGETED AND DISCRIMINATORY APPROACH**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TARGET AREAS</th>
<th>FOCUS AREAS</th>
<th>SUPPORT STRUCTURE</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| I. Areas and people prone to liquor consumption | 1. Direct enforcement  
2. Drug de-addiction and counselling facilities  
3. Community mobilisation | 1. Social policing  
2. Human resource development  
3. Awareness generation  
4. Gender justice and women’s development |
| II. Moderate incidence of liquor consumption | 1. Social policing  
2. Human resource development  
3. Community mobilisation | 1. Awareness generation  
2. Gender justice and women’s development  
3. Drug de-addiction facilities  
4. Enforcement support |
| III. Soft areas and occasional drinkers | 1. Awareness generation  
2. Human resource development  
3. Gender development  
4. Community mobilisation | 1. Social policing  
2. Drug de-addiction  
3. Enforcement assistance |

**V Building forward and backward linkages with developmental activities**

A. People have to be made aware of the material cost of alcoholism borne by society, the family and the individual and the extent to which it deviates resources from education and human resource development. Similarly, forward linkages could be built by providing health education, etc. Human resource development needs to be the main thrust which would undermine the culture of habitual drinking. The strategy would include calculating the economic costs of alcoholism borne by the families in terms of health services for the alcoholic,
loss of education to the children, poor family health etc., the loss of income to the family due to
the diversion of funds, and loss of productivity to society.

Such a strategy, therefore, is not restricted only to providing relief to the affected family from
abuse within the family or from society. The participation of the community on this issue is
not only of persons drawn only from identifiable victims of alcohol consumption, but from
society as a whole since the negative effects of alcoholism are degenerative and are borne by
the entire society.

VI inter-relating gender justice and women's development with the menace of increasing alcoholism

Awareness needs to be built in society regarding the social cost and impact of alcoholism as
borne by women. What is most visible is the physical assault either in the guise of wife beating
or social molestation and even the household burden borne by women with meager income.
Aspects that remain invisible are the burden of earning income which fall on women,
deprivation of family needs such as health and education of children. These issues could be
linked up with developmental activities related with women issues.

VII communication with and awareness of the community

The community has to be mobilised on various fronts by generating awareness of the social
cost of alcoholism, its related effects by drawing support from the existing cultural
predispositions and by creating others.
(a) Creating awareness that alcoholism affects all sections of society, particularly the
non-drinking population. This can be done by generating data on:
   (i) the number of non-drinking persons injured or killed in accidents caused by
drunken drivers;
   (ii) the number of children of non-drinking parents who take to drinking;
(iii) increase in the percentage of crime against non-drinking caused by drinkers;

(iv) cost-benefit analysis of reducing the pressure on hospitals of diseases caused by excessive drinking.

(b) Its linkages with larger cultural predispositions such as the Arya Samaj, etc.

(c) The impact of alcoholism on individual families and society in monetary terms. Therefore, a social cost benefit analysis to counter economistic interpretations should be undertaken.

(d) Its interconnection with other social evils such as dowry, rape, social crimes etc.
LEGAL RIGHTS OF WOMEN

OBJECTIVES

- TO PROVIDE INFORMATION ABOUT WOMEN'S LEGAL RIGHTS
- TO EVOLVE A STRATEGY FOR THE EXERCISE OF THESE RIGHTS

Methods

Lecture, Discussion, Role play, Case studies.

Material

Charts, Posters, Blackboard, Chalk

FACILITATOR’S NOTE

The facilitator can start by explaining the importance of the rights of women. There are legal rights available to all citizens but women have been given some special rights. This has been done because over the ages women have been subjected to injustice, discrimination and atrocities such as bigamy, denial of inheritance, rape, prostitution etc. The State has made these laws in the interest of women. There are some special laws with regard to marriage which in fact, apply both to men and women, but these are more significant for women. Our society is dominated by men and women have been given a low status. On this account, they have to face considerable difficulties and ill-treatment.

Contd...
Discuss these rights in relation to family and non-family matters. 4

Within the family: Polygamy is illegal but it is practiced in our society in one form or the other. For instance, social custom permits only men to remarry after the death of his wife. If a man has more than one wife, he gets social acceptability. Very often, he marries his wife's sister with the wife's consent. These levirate marriages are quite common. But all these customs are illegal and go against the rights of women.

The custom of dowry also violates women's rights. According to marriage customs, large sums are given to the groom in the name of dowry. A woman is considered a burden even when she does all the housework, tends the cattle and helps the men in the fields. She often earns for the family. Still society places woman below man and she remains in a weak position.

In the non-familial context for instance, women are exploited in the labour market. They are paid low wages and face sexual harassment both at the place of work and in society. It is essential for interventionists to be well-versed in women's legal rights and the manner in which the state protects the dignity of each individual. The need is to spread awareness, provide information and guidance to protect women's legal rights and to help combat discrimination and violence.

These laws can be explained either through a street play enacted by the participants or by putting to discussion the various scenarios. The facilitator should present a scenario allowing the NSS volunteers to work out their own solutions and strategies to deal with the situation. Only after that, the facilitator may intervene and explain the legal position. This method can also be used by NSS volunteers while communicating the laws to the community.

THESE LAWS CAN BE EXPLAINED TO WOMEN UNDER THE BROAD CLASSIFICATION OF:

I  Marriage related laws:
   - Child marriage
   - Marriage by consent
   - Illegal Marriage
   - Bigamy/Polygamy
   - Divorce and Maintenance

II  Laws pertaining to sexual and physical violence
   A) Sexual Abuse
      - Rape
      - Molestation
      - Eve-Teasing
      - Indecent Representation of women
   B) Physical violence
      - Wife Beating
      - Dowry related (Harassment and Death)
      - Sex determination and female foeticide and female infanticide.

III  Labour And Property Laws
    - Equal Remuneration for equal work
    - Maternity Benefits
    - Inheritance
Child marriage

Scenario Kesar Ram is getting his 18 year old daughter, Nirmala, married to a tailor in a nearby village. The tailor has a younger brother and the family is keen to get the other daughter, 14 year old Sheela, married to the younger brother. However, Sheela is studying in Class VIII and wants to complete her 10th class. The teacher approaches the parents, urging them to reconsider the marriage plan for Sheela. How can the teacher persuade Kesar Ram?

Facilitator’s Pointers

Child marriage is an old custom in our society. Now a new custom is being added to it. If one grown up girl is getting married and she has a small sister, then both the sisters are married off together. The family thus tries to save expenditure on one marriage but this is against the law if the girl or the boy is below age.

Boys and girls are not fully developed, physically as well as mentally, before attaining the age of maturity. They are unable to stand on their own feet and are dependent on their parents or others. If girls are married off in their childhood, it hampers their physical growth, particularly when they become pregnant.
Therefore, the Government has made the marriage of boys below 21 and girls below 18, a legal offence.

**Penalty**: In case of violation of this law, the parents as well as the priest who performs the marriage can be punished. This punishment can be 15 days in jail or a fine of Rs. 1000 or both.

**Marriage by consent**

**Scenario** Sunita is working as a stenographer and wants to marry her co-worker David. Sunita's parents are against this inter-religion marriage. Will Sunita be able to marry David?

**Facilitator's Pointers**

A major girl has the right to marry a boy of her choice and liking. The boy can belong to any religion or country. A divorced woman or a widow has the right to remarry and for this she need not seek anybody's permission.

Our country has different marriage laws for different religions, such as Hindu Marriage Law, and laws with regards to Muslim and Christian marriages. There is a special marriage law for persons belonging to different religions. They have the right to get married before a magistrate in a court.
**Illegal Marriage**

**Scenario**
Kamlesh was married to Pali Ram in a Temple without any witnesses. She thinks she is a legally wedded wife but later learns that Pali Ram only wants to co-habit with her and has a wife and a child back in his village. What can Kamlesh do?

**Facilitator's Pointers**

Sometimes men go to cities for work and again get married there, declaring themselves to be bachelors. The law does not recognise a marriage performed in a temple or by putting a vermilion mark on the girl's forehead. No marriage is complete without the presence of witnesses. Such a marriage is considered a fraud and can be contested legally. It is also an offence if a man deceitfully convinces a woman that she is lawfully married to him and then makes her cohabit with him.

**Penalty:** The man can be imprisoned for ten years and also fined.
Bigamy / Polygamy:

Second Marriage a legal offence (Second marriage with wife's consent is also illegal)

**Scenario**
Urmila's husband, Bhagay Narayan, goes to a town to work in a factory. A few months later Urmila stops getting any money from her husband. She learns that he has married another woman. She wants some financial help for her child and is willing to accept her husband’s second wife. Is this possible?

**Facilitator's Pointers**

*It is a legal offence to take a second wife in the presence of the first wife. If the first wife wants, she can register a complaint at a police station or in the court of a magistrate.*

**Penalty:** The husband in such cases can be punished with a jail term of up to seven years and a fine. If he is employed with the Government, he can be removed from service. The second marriage is not valid in the eyes of the law.

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The second wife in fact enjoys no rights. She is not entitled to maintenance, nor has she any claim on the husband's property.

*If the first marriage is kept secret from the second wife then the second wife can sue the husband for deception. She can also claim damages. Children born out of such second marriage will get all the rights to the father's property which legitimate children enjoy.*
Divorce and Maintenance

**Scenario**
Anne has a turbulent relation with her husband Stephen. At times he beats her and she also suspects that he is being unfaithful to her. Anne thinks of taking a divorce. But she has no income of her own. Should she stay married to Stephen or should she divorce him?

**Facilitator’s Pointers**

Sometimes a woman wants divorce from her husband. The reasons can be many like torture or other circumstances. In such a situation she can demand a maintenance allowance from her husband. If there are children, she can also demand their custody.

Divorce can be granted in the following circumstances:

* Physical or mental torture.
* If the husband marries another woman.
* If the husband has relations with another woman.
* If the husband has changed his religion.
* If the husband has been untraceable for seven years.
* If the girl is married but is below 18 years of age.
* If the husband is insane or suffers from an incurable disease.

If divorce is obtained with mutual consent, then the wife is not entitled to any maintenance allowance. In all other cases, the court determines a maintenance allowance, considering the husband's income.

Laws pertaining to sexual and physical violence

(I) Sexual Abuse

Women have to face several difficulties within the family such as harassment for dowry, discrimination in comparison with boys and denial of their property rights. In addition to these
difficulties, there are several other kinds of harassment that women have to suffer. These cruelties are mainly physical. In India, 31 women are raped every day. There is a report of physical molestation after every 15 minutes. These figures relate only to the reported cases. In many cases no report is lodged. For instance outrage against low-caste women or teasing of girls of one village by boys belonging to another village generally go unreported. The law does not permit such behaviour and very strict laws have been framed to protect the rights of women.

Rape

**Scenario**

1. Barkha has gone out with her college friends, both male and female, and under pressure also consumes alcohol. She does not remember what happened next but finds herself physically abused. She was raped and would like to report the case. What would be her legal position?

2. Krishna has had a lot of illness in her family because of which neither her husband nor her sons have been able to earn their daily wages for some time. The landlord entices her with regular employment in his fields. He later abuses her and then intimidates her to prevent her from telling anyone about it. This situation continues for some time. Krishna does not want to be abused. What can she do?

**Facilitator's Pointers**

*The charge of rape can be leveled when a man has sexual intercourse with a woman:*

* against her wish,

* without her consent,

* by intimidating her or by tempting her with money, foodgrains or employment,

* by putting her under some kind of intoxication.

* If a girl is below 16, even her consent is not valid and it becomes rape.*
Penalty: A man can be sent to jail for seven years or for life.
If a Government employee on duty violates a woman during his duty hours, he can be
sent to jail for ten years or for life. Such a person can be anyone, a constable or an S.P.
or a Government watchman.

Trading in girls and prostitution

Scenario: Abdul Rasheed is passing through the village of Mehrampur. He meets a poor
labourer Hari Ram and says he has work for young girls as domestic servants in the nearby
town. He tells Hari Ram that he can earn a substantial amount by allowing his daughters to go
with Abdul Rasheed. Initially Hari Ram accepts some money but doubts Abdul's intentions and
approaches the Sarpanch to help him out. What can the Sarpanch do?

Facilitator's Pointers

It is a crime to put a girl below 18 in the flesh trade or to purchase such girls. Any one indulging
in such activity, whether man or woman, can be sentenced to ten years in jail. Sometimes girls
are lured into this trade on the promise of marriage or employment. People should be on guard
against such evil elements.
Many times women are taken away from their homes with incentives like getting them married,
getting them jobs or they may be simply kidnapped and forced into prostitution. Prostitution,
whether voluntary or forced, is illegal. In case of minors (girls below 18), the punishment is
even more severe.

Penalty: Selling or buying minors is punishable by ten years in prison and a fine
can also be imposed.

Molestation

Scenario: 1. Aarti is returning home in the evening after buying some vegetables and is
attacked by two youths of her colony, Ranganathan and Venketramanan. Though she manages
to escape, she is scared that such an incident can occur again if not with her with someone else. How can she try and prevent such incidents?

2. While Satinder was collecting feed for her cattle in the fields, she was assaulted by some young boys from the neighbouring village. Satinder complaints to her Panchayat member Kulwinder Kaur but the Sarpanch says that since no bodily harm has been caused, no case can be registered. Is this true?

**Facilitator’s Pointers**

*When a man tries to outrage a woman by assault or criminal force, it is called molestation.*

**Note:** Refer to case study on Rampur village and module on violence against women.

**Penalty**: The law punishes such acts with jail up to two years.

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**Eve-Teasing**

**Scenario** Gopal Reddy witnesses some girls of his college being teased by some boys of his college. He find such behaviour unbecoming and would like young girls not to face such harassment. What can he do?
Facilitator's Pointers

If a man teases a woman or behaves with her in an undignified manner by insulting her modesty by uttering any word, sound, or makes a gesture or exhibition intruding on her privacy he is liable for punishment. People in general are not aware of this law but the need for this is increasing day by day. Girls are teased in schools, colleges, at bus stands and in villages. If this law is enforced, there can be peace in the villages and women will have a sense of security.

Penalty: Imprisonment up to one year and a fine can also be imposed.

Indecent Representation of women

Scenario

Ram Nagar Mohalla Committee has called a meeting to discuss the deluge of posters plastered in their Mohalla depicting the female form provocatively for a movie advertisement. The committee finds such depiction untasteful and dangerous, especially since cases of eve-teasing have increased in their locality. The committee would like to take a strong stance. What possible measures can it take?

Facilitator's Pointers

Many advertisements, movie posters, paintings etc. at times offend the viewer with their depiction of the female form or reference to it. Such indecent representations are not legally
allowed and one can file a case against those who are involved in such depiction. In one instance, an advertisement by Air India in regard to Goa was perceived to be indecent and a case was filed against the company. The advertisement had to be withdrawn.

**Penalty**

- For the first offence, the sentence can be for two years, along with a fine up to Rs. 2000/-. In the event of a subsequent conviction, the term of imprisonment can extend to five years with a fine from Rs. 10,000/- to Rs. 1 lakh.

(II) Physical Violence (Familial)

Wife/female beating

**Scenario**

Sudesh has reached her parents home, saying she has left her husband since he frequently beats her. Her mother urges her to return to her husband. Though, Sudesh herself would not like to be separated from her husband, she cannot bear the beatings. How can the situation be handled.

**Facilitator's Pointers**

Wife-beating is rampant in all sections of our society. In fact, it is so common and widespread that till now no need has been felt for a direct law to meet this injustice. However, if the beaten up women wants to resort to legal means to remedy the situation, then the general laws regarding injury, hurt, or grievous hurt have to be invoked. The penalty for beating depends on the extent of injury caused to the person in this case the wife. Hurt is defined as bodily pain or infirmity caused to a person. Grievous hurt refers to injury to limb or body where, for instance, there may be permanent disfigurement of the face or fracture or dislocation of a tooth or any hurt which endangers life or causes severe body pain of 20 days or more.

**Penalty**

- For causing hurt, the prison term can be for one year with fine up to Rs. 1000. In case of grievous hurt a person can be jailed for seven years and also fined.
**Dowry**

**Facilitator's Pointers**

According to tradition, several kinds of articles are given as dowry, such as TV, video, cycle, cooler, grinding machine, other articles of household use, jewellery, cash etc. The girl's parents collect dowry with great difficulty, sometimes even by borrowing or mortgaging their house or other property. All parents give dowry to their daughters according to their capacity and social status, but the trouble starts when dowry is demanded and the bride is harassed to bring more dowry.

It is worth noting that society does not decry the custom of dowry. Only when there is a demand or harassment, people take recourse to the law. When it is the matter of making a deal, and the price of the boy is determined on the basis of his occupation and property, then dowry takes the form of business commission. When there is dowry, there will also be demand for dowry. Considering this, the Government has passed laws against dowry.
**DOWRY LAWS**

Dowry Exchange - An offence

- It is an offence to accept dowry.
- It is an offence to help in the giving or taking of dowry.
- It is an offence to demand dowry.

Penalty for the giver or taker of dowry

- Imprisonment up to five years.
- Fine upto Rs. 15000.
- If the amount of dowry exceeds Rs. 15000, the fine is equal to the amount of the dowry.

Penalty for demanding dowry

- Imprisonment for at least six months and fine.

**Dowry Harassment**

1. Venu Iyer got his daughter married with great pomp and show. He gave her a T.V., a Scooter, bedroom furniture and a washing machine besides 21 sets of clothes along with some gold for his son-in-law. He spent his life's earnings on his only daughter's marriage. But now the girl's in-laws are demanding money to start a small business. He has learnt that his daughter is being beaten, harassed and constantly pressurised to get money from her father. Venu Iyer is in a dilemma. His educated and employed daughter is being harassed. Even if he manages this money now, what guarantee is there that the in-laws will not ask for money later. What can he do?

2. Sangeeta has been married for four years. Her family believed that she was living a happy married life till they received a letter asking for her share of the property, so that she could pass it on to her in-laws and be safe from mental and physical torture. Though the father is ready to give money to ensure her happiness, he finds it difficult to deprive his sons of their traditional prerogative to ensure his daughter's happiness.
**Facilitator's Pointers**

At times, the in-laws, with or without the involvement of the husband harass the bride for more dowry. It could be a direct demand for money or goods, or indirect hints that she has not brought anything from her parents, along with ill treatment. According to the law if a husband or any of his relatives is cruel to a woman on account of dowry, they can be sent to jail for three years and can also be fined. The following information will be helpful in understanding the meaning of cruelty:

*Willfully beating the woman, subjecting her to torture that can endanger her limb or health. Cruelty does not mean only beating.*

*Any treatment that forces the woman to commit suicide amounts to cruelty. Cruelty can be both physical as well as mental.*

*If a woman, after her marriage, is compelled to bring money or other property and is ill-treated, it amounts to cruelty and such action is punishable.*

*Harassing a relative of a woman to give money or property is also cruelty for which the law prescribes a punishment.*

**Penalty**: Harassment for dowry or ill treatment due to dowry is punishable with up to 3 years of imprisonment.

**Dowry Death**

Shakuntala's parents are informed of her sudden demise and cremation. Her parents suspect foulplay since her in-laws had been throwing hints for more dowry. Even the neighbours inform the parents that Shakuntala was being harassed for dowry. Shakuntala's father was keen to register a case. But Shakuntala's mother feels that Shakuntala's sisters have also to be married and if they register a case it may create ill-will in the community and hamper her other daughters' marriage. Since Shakuntala is already dead, how can registering a case help?
Facilitator's Pointers

If a woman is given cruel treatment for getting dowry and she meets with an unnatural death within seven years of her marriage, her husband and other in-laws will be held responsible for her death. They need not be proved guilty. All that needs to be proved is that some time before her death the woman was subjected to cruelty over dowry.

Penalty: They can be given at least seven years in jail with a maximum of twenty years. The court will presume that the death has been caused by the in-laws.

Sex determination of foetus and female foeticide

Scenario: Samata and Shubhendu have one daughter and are keen to have a son. With the help of sex determination test they feel their wish will soon be fulfilled, even though Samata has already undergone two abortions. Moreover, Samata has been advised by friends that sex determination tests are illegal. What should Samata do?

Facilitator's Pointers

Our society favours sons. Women adopt several means to beget a male child. They go to hakims, quacks and midwives for help. In many families the status of a woman rises when she
gives birth to a son. In the event of not begetting a son, she is treated with cruelty. There was even a reported case of a woman being killed by her brothers-in-law for giving birth to a daughter. It is for this reason that people get the sex of the foetus determined during pregnancy. The pregnancy is terminated if the foetus happens to be female. Such tests are technically intended to check if the foetus is suffering from some serious malady. But this facility is being abused. Such abuse is a legal offence. The effort should be to eliminate the discrimination between boy and girl.

(Refer to module on sex-determination and preselection test)

Female Infanticide

**Scenario** Ramaya gives birth to yet another daughter. She has had four daughters in the hope that the next offspring will be a son. She has no desire to feed and bring up the fourth girl and thinks it will be better if she dies. What advise can she be given?

**Facilitator's Pointers**

Even today a girl is considered a burden in our society. In many states there is a custom to poison or strangulate or consign to water a female child as soon as she is born. Our law does not permit this.

To kill a girl or any child is a crime. The custom of sacrificing a child soon after birth or within a few days of its being born also amounts to infanticide.

**Penalty**: According to our Constitution, criminal proceedings can be instituted against persons indulging in such practices.

**Labour and Property Laws**

Apart from laws that deal with physical excesses, there are laws pertaining to the economic sphere, meant exclusively for women. One aspect relates to working women and the other to inheritance.
Equal Remuneration for Equal Work

Scenario

Madan Lal has both male and female workers in his small chappal making unit. Though the men and the woman do similar kind of work, he pays the men more since he feels that they are hardworking and can work longer hours. Is he discriminating against women workers?

Facilitator’s Pointers

At times men and women undertake the same work such as accountants, clerks, knitters etc. Yet women may be paid less than the men. Legally both men and women are to be paid the same wage, if the work is the same. Low pay for women amounts to discrimination against them. According to the law, it is the duty of the employer to pay male and female workers the same wage for work of the same nature. Employers cannot discriminate between men and women while recruiting workers also.

Penalty: In case of the first offence the employer can be fined Rs. 10,000 to Rs. 20,000 or even imprisonment from three months to one year. For subsequent offences, the imprisonment can be up to two years.

Maternity Benefits

Scenario

Revathi works in a small assembly unit. She is expecting her first child and she knows she will have to leave the job as per the contract she has signed with the employer. But she would like to continue after a short break if possible even though looking after her child would be a problem, because her family will need the money. Is there any provision for her to take a break and continue work?

Facilitator’s Pointers

These specifically refer to maternity conditions for which the State provides women some relief. Pregnant women cannot be asked to undertake hard work. They are provided with
leave of six weeks immediately after a delivery or miscarriage. The employer is supposed to pay women a maternity benefit pay when she is on maternity leave. During pregnancy women get three months leave with pay in a year. Women are allowed time twice a day to feed their children.

**Penalty**: The employer is liable for imprisonment for a period of three months to one year and a fine of Rs. 2,000 to Rs. 5000.

**Other laws concerning women workers**

Given the nature of women’s biology and also the existing social predicaments, women are provided with certain facilities at their place of work. In factories, these include provision of crèches and separate toilets. Women cannot be asked to lift heavy weights.
Inheritance

**Scenario** Raj Bala has voluntarily signed away her property to her brothers. She feels her parents have spent a lot on her dowry and land traditionally belongs to the men. Thus she has no right to the inheritance. Is she right in thinking so?

**Facilitator’s Pointers**

The law gives equal share to the daughter, the widow, the mother and sons in a man's property. A widow has every right to live in the house of her in-laws. But in reality, a woman does not get her due.

Several sections of the Hindu Succession Act, 1956, give women the right of succession.

The following information will be useful in explaining these right to the girls.

* The first claim to the property of a deceased is of his sons and daughters, his widow and his mother.

* If a woman dies within the life time of her father, then her children have a claim on their grandfather's property.

* An unmarried, widowed or divorced daughter has the right to live in the house of her father.

* A woman's right to her property is absolute. She is free to sell, mortgage or even give away her property.

* If a widow marries again after receiving her share in the family property, she retains the property.

* After the death of a man in service, the insurance money or the amount due from the employer goes to the widow and not to the parents or brothers and sisters.

* This is the law. Traditionally girls do not claim their share in their father's property.

But now girls' in-laws have started demanding their daughter-in-law's share.
# Punishment for Crime Against Women

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Crime</th>
<th>Punishment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Demanding Dowry</td>
<td>6 months to 2 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Ill-treatment or Harassment for Dowry</td>
<td>3 years</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Giving or Taking Dowry</td>
<td>5 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Causing Death for Dowry</td>
<td>7 years to life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Rape</td>
<td>7 years to life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Molestation</td>
<td>2 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Eve Teasing</td>
<td>1 year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Prostitution</td>
<td>10 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Marrying a Second Time When First Wife Is Alive (Bigamy)</td>
<td>7 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Marrying Through Deception Without Legal Ceremony. (Fraudulent Marriage)</td>
<td>7 years</td>
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Laws in isolation cannot be expected to improve the situation of women. The social context within which these laws function has to be taken into consideration before expecting the laws to be applicable. For instance, no wife would like to report her husband to the police for wife-beating. There may be hesitancy in reporting cases of sexual harassment due to the ostracism involved. Thus even when the laws are known, these may not be invoked. Therefore, it is imperative that NSS volunteers provide an environment in which the laws can be effectively utilized to improve women's situation.

STRATEGIES TO MAKE LAWS EFFECTIVE

Organising a community

(1) It is difficult for a single person to tackle the problem without any support. Within the community, certain concerned or responsible individuals should be identified. They may be members of the Mahila Mandals, Panchayats or any other organisation with local support. It is these organisations that should be the nodal points to mobilize the community.

(2) Sensitize the community to the needs of women's legal rights: The community at large should be made aware of the specific rights of women.

(3) Initial intervention should be on issues where there is certain community support.

(4) In incidents of rape or wife-beating, the community may be initially resistant to any external intervention either by the NSS volunteers or even by community members. In cases of eve-teasing or girl child prostitution, the community could be very supportive to efforts undertaken to curb these tendencies. By taking up these issues, the NSS volunteers along with nodal community groups establish their legitimacy within the community. Once this group is accepted within the community as a concerned, just and effective
organisation then other sensitive issues such as dowry harassment can be taken up. Issues which emerge from the community itself such as income augmentation, health and child welfare may also be areas where initial intervention would be well responded to. After achieving success in these areas the nodal group can intervene in the areas of family (wife beating and dowry harassment) and other socially sensitive spheres such as rape.

**Case Study**

**MAHILA MANDAL OF RAMPUR VILLAGE**

Rampur is a village in Punjab. The Mahila Mandal of this village consists of active and concerned women with who have been making efforts to provide the weaker sections of the women with income-generation avenues (such as giving loans for dairy, making detergent powder, candles, papars etc.). At the same time, the Mahila Mandal has involved itself in providing justice in incidents of violence against women.

In one incident of eve-teasing, some boys from this village teased girls from another village at the bus stop. The Mahila Mandal took the initiative and called the parents of the boys. Since the Mahila Mandal President is also a member of the Panchayat, the Panchayat members were also called. In front of these local authorities the women explained to the parents that they must check the activities of their boys. The parents were also warned that if the situation continued, the boys could be reported under the eve-teasing law and be jailed. The news of this incident spread to the whole village. The community pressurised the boys to correct their behaviour and on the other hand, the community at large got cautioned that such injustice would not be tolerated.

In another incident, the Mahila Mandal intervened in a wife-beating case. A villager was in the habit of beating his wife. The beating used to be severe because of which the villagers also knew of the situation. The woman also found it difficult to tolerate the beating but she had nowhere to go. Mahila Mandal women cautioned the man that he had no right to beat his wife and that he should control his temper. For some time, the man controlled himself, probably because of the embarrassment that the Panchayat/Mahila Mandal had to intervene in his family matter. However, he started beating his wife again and one day fractured her arm and threw her out of the house. At this stage, the Mahila Mandal approached the police for assistance. The law for inflicting a grievous injury on another person can result in a jail term of one year.

The police, because of the intervention of the Mahila Mandal, registered a case (they
are generally hesitant to intervene in family matters). The police kept the man in the lock-up for two days and admonished him in their own way. He changed his behaviour towards his wife and what is more important, other people in the village got the message that they should not ill-treat their wives since action could be taken against them.

In another significant event, the Mahila Mandal took recourse to the law and got persons involved in a dowry death arrested. A girl of the village was married at a place ten miles away. There had been demands for dowry and one day the news came that the girl had been killed. The Mahila Mandal decided to reach there before the body was cremated so that the police could register a case. A lone person could not have been able to do much but when the people of the village learnt that such a grievous wrong had been done, they arranged two trucks, for members of the Panchayat, Mahila Mandal and other village residents who reached the spot and did not let the body be cremated until the legal formalities for a dowry death case were completed. This incident became a topic of discussion in the area. It was realised that the Mahila Mandal of Rampur could get justice and security to women. Now whenever an excess is committed, people from the neighbouring villages also approach this Mahila Mandal. The point is that the laws will remain ineffective until the community provides some support. Even when the laws are not invoked, the legal information can be used as a warning to control abusive behaviour and allow local leaders to become more responsive.

(5) Not only the Mahila Mandal but also the entire village could emerge as a focal point for intervention in areas of injustice (related to both women and the community) where they can emerge as a pressure group to which even the thana and other local functionaries would have to respond to.

Legal Literacy

Other than organising the community, NSS volunteers can also spread legal literacy. Information on legal literacy itself may not be effective in implementing the laws but at times information can be a deterrent to injustice.

Many times not only the individuals concerned but even the community is unaware of the fact that the State has made laws for the protection of rights especially of vulnerable sections like women. For instance, people are largely unaware that eve-teasing which
includes even a whistle or a comment is legally punishable by imprisonment up to one year.

NSS volunteers, by providing guidance can make the laws effective. Many times people are not only unaware of the laws, they are also not aware of the many legal formalities. For instance, people may not know where to approach the lawyer, may be unable to find their way in courts or find the court procedures confusing. NSS volunteers can tie up with NGOs or lawyers who are concerned with helping the people. Many women's cells are also functioning where women needing legal assistance can be guided.

**Evolving Laws**

At times existing laws may not be sufficient in their scope of dispensing justice. For instance, the provisions for a uniform civil code (UCC) could be made law. Of course the demand for the UCC should encompass not only the same personal law for women across religious and communities but must also be just in their treatment of women vis-a-vis men. Ground for divorce should be the same for any partner in the marriage, whether male or female. NSS volunteers can provide awareness in this regard and organise a campaign within the community to demand reform in the existing laws and for evolving new laws.
GOVERNMENT SCHEMES FOR WOMEN

OBJECTIVES

• TO KNOW THE GOVERNMENT UNDERSTANDING WITH WHICH SCHEMES FOR WOMEN HAVE BEEN EVOLVED
• TO PROVIDE INFORMATION ON SCHEMES FOR WOMEN TO MAXIMIZE THEIR UTILISATION
• TO DRAW ATTENTION TO THE SUCCESS AND DRAWBACKS OF THE SCHEMES, TO ASSIST IN THEIR IMPLEMENTATION.

Methods

Lecture, Discussions, Question and answer.

Material

Blackboard, Chalk

FACILITATOR’S NOTE

This module provides a background of the government approach to women’s development and the corresponding schemes. Information on a number of relevant ongoing schemes has also been provided to assist NSS volunteers to initiate these schemes in the community. Utility of this module would be enhanced if these schemes are used as part of a wholesome intervention by the NSS unit. Thus, if education is a priority with the community then the modules on education, issues in women’s development and the tentative NSS strategy in combination with schemes relevant to education can be used. Information on schemes can be given through a talk and the portion on schemes can be
Historical View of Government Strategy Towards Women’s Uplift and Development

During the freedom struggle it was recognised that economic development must include women. Gandhiji encouraged women to actively participate in the freedom struggle. However, once the first generation of women who were actively involved outside the home had reached a certain level of employment, it was felt that women had started becoming part of the development process automatically. It was only in the 70’s, when the economic crisis around the world deepened and the problems of mass poverty, malnutrition, unemployment, imbalances in socio-economic development came into the limelight that attention was focused on the unfavorable status of women. After years of efforts for women’s development, women, in India are still marginalised and it is important to analyse why these schemes were framed or why these have been partially successful.

Community development programme

In India, most of the programmes for women have been aimed at rural women. It is assumed that rural women are more disadvantaged than the urban. Also because 80% of our population lives in rural areas, the thrust of development programmes should to be in the rural rather than the urban sectors. The Community Development Programme which came into existence soon after independence in 1952 was a by-product of the U.S. Technical Cooperation Mission. The Ford Foundation provided the funds and training and at least 50 pilot projects were totally financed by it. Women’s schemes under this programme seem to have emerged from the experience of women workers who discovered that village women needed as much help as did the men. The programme was first introduced basically as a home management programme. Since the programme was funded by the Ford Foundation, the model adopted was also the
American Home Extension Service. The objective was to help the village woman become "a
good wife, a wise mother, a competent housewife and a responsible member of the village
community" (Parimal Dass, Director, Women's Programme 1959), despite the fact that the
Indian National Congress Sub-Committee on Women had emphasized the multiple role of
women, particularly in traditional agriculture and non-agricultural production (e.g. cattle
rearing, weaving, embroidery etc.) These recommendations were totally ignored under the
notion that it was necessary to teach women better home management because with
improvement in the standard of living at home, the standard of living outside the home would
also improve. According to Parimal Dass, "the level of standard of living at home is determined
by the efficiency with which the woman runs her home, the kind of food she prepares and the
degree of knowledge and skill with which she promotes happiness and fulfillment in the
house". The result of this point of view was the launching of the Mahila Mandal scheme which
was devised to integrate women into the Community Development programme.

**Mahila Mandals**

The Mahila Mandals were supposed to bring women together to exchange ideas and skills.
That these have totally failed to do so, has not diminished the importance given to the mandals
in schemes devised by the Central and State Governments. Only such Mahila Mandal, that
promote economic activities and give access to various services provided by the Government
have been successful.

The rest have become more or less social clubs where the wives of the rich and high caste
farmers dominate and the Mahila Mandals fail to affect in any way the lives of the poorer
sections of women. The Mahila Mandals failed because these were based on a middle class
moral perception of welfare. It was assumed that village women would have the time to
participate in the Mahila Mandal's activities which included programmes such as bhajan
singing, entertainment etc. That failed to grasp the reality of the existence of poor women who work long hours both outside and within the house and have no leisure at all.

India's is, after all, a subsistence economy and the first step in development is to provide the necessities of life like food, clothing, shelter, health care, education etc. The Mahila Mandals did not address themselves to these vital tasks of development. The services offered were totally irrelevant to the needs of the people.

**Department for Women and Child**

The 1967 declaration by the UN General Assembly for the elimination of discrimination against women was a vital encouragement for the Indian Government to take stock of women’s status in the country.

In September, 1971, the Department of Social Welfare appointed a committee to study the status of women which in 1975 submitted 52 recommendations. In September 1976, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi announced the constitution of the National Committee on women, an advisory body under her own chairmanship to provide better facilities for women. A few
months later, the Ministry of Industry also appointed a working group on self-employment of women. The Government felt that an improvement in the living conditions of society reflected an improved status of the poor and the disadvantaged. Thus women would automatically be advantaged as a result of development. It was also perceived that an improved financial status would bring about improvement in living conditions. No independent schemes for woman had been conceived. It was only in the late 70s that it was felt that women must be brought under the umbrella of economic schemes and various State Governments began setting up women’s corporations under the aegis of the Central Government. During the 80s, such corporations started functioning in different states but again the emphasis was on rural women with a small provision for loans for economic activities. Women were given funds for activities such as masala making, knitting, stitching, embroidery or similar handicrafts. Women entrepreneurs also found mention for the first time.

In 1984, the Government of India set up a Department for Women and Child under the Ministry of Human Resource Development. It was felt that women should not be treated as objects of welfare. (Strangely though the Department has been sent back to where it originally belonged i.e. the Ministry of Social Welfare.) The growth of women’s movement in India also increased the pressure for special programmes for women. The Department of Women and Children was manned almost completely by women administrators. The State Government also tended to post women as Directors/Secretaries of the Social Welfare/Women and Child Development departments. Consequently the appreciation of problems faced by women increased.

Women can no longer be ignored. With the U.N. Decade for Women and now the Girl Child Decade being observed internationally, women themselves have begun to feel conscious of their rights and even in the rural areas a change is visible.
Though successive Governments have from time to time set up committees to determine why women are still not part of the mainstream, yet very little action has been taken on these reports and studies. Even before independence, the Indian National Congress Sub-Committee on Women had prepared a very realistic report on women and their role in development, but this report was ignored while framing the first scheme under the Community Development Programme.

Given the current scenario, how could women be organised to take part in the development process? It is a recognised fact that unless women themselves come forward and form pressure groups, they will continue to be marginalised. In order to acquire access to power, they must have access to education which in turn would lead to access to income. Income itself leads to status and status leads to empowerment. Thus the basic necessity is education, not just formal education but development of skills as well. As mentioned earlier, the current skills being taught to women are of an inferior kind and do not ensure adequate income and independent status. It is estimated that 30% of the families are headed by women, and most of them belong to the low-income group. Women also produce and process the bulk of the food supply. Therefore, for programmes relating to agriculture and animal husbandry, skill upgradation is extremely necessary. Ila Bhatt has identified three sets of problems which keep women from acquiring skills and which lead to long hours of work, unhealthy work conditions and a low level of remuneration in jobs set aside for women. Women do not have access to science education and technology mainly because of the high drop-out rate and strong preference for courses in arts, humanities and home science.

The second factor that deprives women of the fruits of development is the lack of mechanical aids for carrying out various economic activities resulting in hazards and longer hours of work. Thirdly, wherever more opportunities occur because of technological progress, the tendency is to keep men workers on machines and to relegate women to the less automated jobs. Thus, an increase in technical equipment often results in loss of temporary or part time jobs for women.
Access to technical knowledge and information needs to be improved through non-formal and educational channels. Technologies of bio-fertilizers, bio-gas, post harvesting techniques should be taught to women in the rural areas. An increase in their overall literacy level is a must.

**GOVERNMENT SCHEMES**

The government schemes can be broadly divided into three sections:

1. **DEVELOPMENTAL:** These assist in enhancing the infrastructure facilities, creation of clubs (Mahila Mandals) which in turn provide welfare or income generation along with increasing awareness and improvement of the quality of life.

2. **INCOME GENERATION:** The aim is to provide facilities for enhancing income levels.

3. **WELFARE:** such as old age pension, provisions for the handicapped, widow pension, hostels etc.

All schemes may not directly pertain to women such as the integrated rural energy programme or the rural sanitation programme but they affect women substantially. Provision of latrines may check molestation and rape cases which occur in open isolated fields.

**DEVELOPMENT SCHEMES**

**Mahila Mandals**

**Aim:** Implementation of women and child specific development and welfare programmes.

The main function of the institution is to impart skills to women, so as to enable them to augment their earnings.

**Modus Operendi:** The Mahila Mandals, with the help of volunteers, are to give an integrated thrust to the services provided by a number of agencies. These services include balwadi craft centres, maternity services etc. The staff for each centre consisting of a Gram Sevika, a craft instructor and dai, is under the supervision of a Mukhya Sevika. The
component of income generation through poultry, dairy, handicrafts etc. also comes under the Mahila Mandals. In order to strengthen the financial position of the Mahila Mandals and to infuse the spirit of self-participation, it has been made compulsory for the Mahila Mandals from 1994-95 to contribute 1/3rd of the seed money to be provided by the State Government. These institutions take up various activities such as manufacturing of durries, preparation of washing soap, leather purses and bags, shuttlecocks, pullovers, garments and embroidered articles etc.

Some of the Mahila Mandals have taken a step forward and are engaged in socio-economic activities such as renting out shamianas, utensils etc. Office-bearers of the Mahila Mandals are given training in setting up Balwadis, kitchen gardens, poultry units, mother and child care, and adult literacy.

**Target Group:** Each village is encouraged to form a Mahila Mandal. Its committee includes a woman Panch, and two members of the Scheduled Castes are necessary for the Mahila Mandal to be recognised by the Government.

**Drawbacks:** The Mahila Mandals seldom take the initiative to start any scheme. Members of the Mahila Mandal come largely from the old village society and represent the interest of the dominant groups in the village. Welfare or income generating schemes which are mainly addressed to the lower socio-economic groups may not receive much attention from these Mahila Mandals.

**Applied Nutrition Programme**

**Aim:** To provide a supplementary feeding programme for children, pregnant women and lactating mothers.

**Modus Operendi:** The programme provides nutritional feeding, educational assistance in food production through demonstration and preparation of nutritious foods and enhances
**Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS)**

**Aim**: To improve the maternal and child health status and also enhance child development through pre-school education.

**Modus Operendi**: The ICDS provided a package of services which include supplementary nutrition, immunization, health check-up, referral services, non formal pre-school education and health education. It is an integrated programme conceived to avoid wastage and maximise the impact of individual services provided through different sectors and through different groups. ICDS functions through the network of Aanganwaris. The delivery of ICDS packages is done by Aanganwari workers supported by a helper and also the support provided by a women helper.

**Target Group**: In general the scheme provides maternity care to all sections of the population and child health up to 6 years of age in both rural and urban areas. Specific programmes of the schemes are targeted on the malnourished and those having a lower socio-economic status within the target group.

**Rural Sanitation Programme**

**Aim**: To improve the hygienic conditions to control morbidity in the rural areas.

**Modus Operendi**: The state shares 50 per cent of the expenditure on the construction of sanitary latrines, 25 per cent of the beneficiaries of which belong to the general category and 75 per cent to the Scheduled Castes.

For proper implementation of this programme, it has now been decided that the programme would henceforth be executed through the panchayats for direct implementation by the beneficiaries.

**Target Group**: Rural population.
**Individual water borne latrines in rural areas**

**Aim:** To provide hygienic sanitation.

**Modus Operendi:** The scheme provides water borne latrines in the houses of the poor who cannot afford to spend from their own resources. In specific, women especially aged women, and children face difficulties in the rural areas, as they have to go out in the fields for defecation (many cases of molestation and rape occur as a result). Such latrines are also necessary to prevent epidemics which can result from unhygienic conditions. The scheme is implemented at the district level. The villages are approved/selected by the District Planning Board on the recommendation of the District Welfare Officer. The selection of beneficiaries/households is the responsibility of the District Welfare Officer. The scheme is executed by the Panchayats or according to decisions taken by the District Planning and Development Boards.

**Target Group:** Rural and economically weak Scheduled Caste population.

**Family size biogas plant**

**Aim:** To provide cooking energy by re-cycling organic waste.

**Modus Operendi:** Re-cycling the organic waste available in the village not only provides cooking energy in the form of bio-gas but also gives bio-manure and noticeably improves the
environment. The Central Government provides assistance as a grant-in-aid for running these plants at the optimum level. It is essential to provide technical support to complete the plant which is provided by the State Government

**Integrated rural energy programme**

**Aim:** To provide energy for cooking, heating and lighting to the weaker sections and also to generate employment.

**Modus Operendi:** The scheme utilizes locally available energy resources to the maximum extent. The provision of energy as critical input for economic development in the rural areas is expected to result in the creation of employment, increased productivity and income by promoting sustainable energy technologies. The programme includes popularisation of pressure cookers, energy efficient fluorescent tubes, solar cookers, SPY lights, solar water heating systems, portable chulahs, energy efficient kerosene stoves etc.

**Target Group:** The entire rural population, specially the weaker sections.

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**INCOME GENERATING SCHEMES**

**Integrated rural development programme (IRDP)**

**Aim:** To eradicate poverty in the rural areas by providing income generating assets to families below the poverty line.

**Modus Operendi:** Under this programme, capital subsidy to the extent of 25 per cent to small farmers, 33.3 per cent with a ceiling of Rs. 4000/- to the general category and 50 per cent with a ceiling of Rs. 6000/- to the Scheduled Castes and the handicapped is provided by the State and Central Governments on matching basis while loan for a particular venture is arranged from institutional financing agencies.
**Target Group**: Families which are yellow card holders in the rural areas. One-third of all IRDP beneficiaries are women.

**Trysem**

**Aim**: To provide training to enhance skills that would lead to self-employment.
Modus Operendi: This programme is a sub-scheme under IRDP. Training is imparted by different institutions such as Gram Sewak Training Centre, Agricultural and other Universities, I.T.I's and other State and Central organisations. An important mode of training at present is through local service establishments, industrial units, master craftsmen, artisans and skilled workers. The scheme provides for payment of a stipend to the trainees and an honorarium to the trainers and expenses on tool kits, raw material etc. The duration of the training varies from six months to one year depending upon the nature of the trade.

Target Group: Rural yellow card holders, 1/3rd of all beneficiaries are to be women.

Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DW CRA)

Aim: The aim is to provide opportunities of self-employment on a sustained basis.

Modus Operendi: The need for a special programme designed exclusively for women was felt as it was noticed that women members of IRDP families were not availing themselves of the benefits of this programme in adequate measure. Under this centrally sponsored scheme, assistance is provided to women, organised in homogeneous groups, at the rate Rs. 25000 per group to take up economically viable activities together with a provision for support services and child care facilities.

Target Group: The scheme exclusively focuses on women members of rural families below the poverty line.

Nehru Rozgar Yojana

Aim: To generate employment in the urban areas.

Modus Operendi: It is a centrally-sponsored scheme which is implemented through the local bodies (municipal committees), The urban poor are given loans up to Rs. 20000/- of which 25% is subsidy for setting up urban enterprises.
**Target Group:** The urban population below the poverty line. The beneficiaries may be employed or unemployed but should fall below the poverty line.

**Jawahar Rozgar Yojana**

**Aim:** Significantly increasing employment opportunities in the rural areas.

**Primary Objectives**
Generation of additional gainful employment for unemployed and under-employed persons, both men and women, in the rural areas.

**Secondary Objectives**

i) Creating productive community assets of direct and continuing benefits to the poverty groups and strengthening the rural economic and social infrastructure for a rapid growth of the rural economy and a steady rise in the income levels of the rural poor.

ii) Improving the overall quality of life in the rural areas.

**Modus Operendi:** Most of the funds (both State and Centre) are transferred to the Gram Panchayats. It is presumed that the distribution of resources to the Gram Panchayats will result in extending the reach of the programme to all rural areas and also ensure total participation of the people in its implementation.

**Target Group:** Thirty per cent of employment opportunities under the Yojana will be for women below the poverty line.

**Mahila Samridhi Yojana**

**Aim:** To provide rural women with some economic autonomy by encouraging the habit of saving.

**Modus Operendi:** Under this scheme women are encouraged to open a savings account in the post office in their village. The account can be opened with a minimum of Rs. 4/- and a maximum of Rs. 300/- in a year. The Government contributes 25 per cent of the deposited
amount on completion of 12 months for each deposit. Deposits that remain in the post office for 30 days are given an incentive at the rate of 12 per cent per annum. The scheme is a continuous one. However, the deposits mature after one year. If the money exceeds Rs. 300/-, then it can be transferred to another normal account. The depositors can also withdraw a minimum of Rs. 20/- before the completion of 12 months, but only twice in a year.

There is no need for a woman to obtain any certification by the village Sarpanch or Patwari regarding her age or place of residence. She can indicate this while filling the application form.

For further information, the Postmaster, the Aanganwari workers or the Gram Sevika of the village can be contacted.

**Target Group:** All rural women over the age of 18 years.

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**WELFARE SCHEMES**

**Hostels for girls in schools and colleges**

**Aim:** Providing hostel facilities especially to Scheduled Caste girls.
**Modus Operendi**: The hostels under this scheme are constructed for middle, secondary, college and university level students.

**Target Group**: For Scheduled Caste girls with 10 per cent seats reserved for non-Scheduled Castes.

Other welfare schemes pertain to granting old age pension, widow pension, shelters for women, for instance to escape domestic violence and even provision of hostels for working women.

**Grants to scheduled castes**

**Aim**: To assist students in their education by giving them grants, free books etc.

**Modus Operendi**: Under this scheme, a special grant is given to Scheduled Caste students studying in medical and engineering colleges, the income of whose parents from all sources does not exceed Rs. 24000/- P.A. The rate of the special grant is Rs. 125/- per month for day scholars and Rs. 250/- per month for hostlers, boys and girls.

**Target Group**: Members of the Scheduled Castes who are financially weak and cannot afford to join professional courses such as medical and engineering.

**Widow/Old Age Pension**

**Aim**: To provide some income to the aged or widows.

**Modus Operendi**: A specified amount, is disbursed to the target group. This scheme may not be applicable in all states.

**Target Group**: Old people, widows, especially in rural areas.
WOMEN IN ANTI-ALCOHOLISM MOVEMENT
A CASE STUDY

OBJECTIVES

- TO EVOLVE A STRATEGY ON GRASS-ROOT ASSERTIONS AGAINST INJUSTICE FACED BY WOMEN
- TO TAKE COGNIZANCE OF THE ACHIEVEMENTS AND THE DRAWBACKS FOR OF THE AGITATIONS.

Methods

Lecture, Discussion, Role play.

Material

Projector, Blackboard, Chalk etc.

FACILITATOR’S NOTE

The facilitators can use this case study to evolve strategies to tackle specific problems. The problem and context has been described. The strategy would have to be evolved, keeping in mind the aim of the participants, extent to which they can be mobilised and directed, resources (material and human) that could be used as effective intervention and the probable sources of resistance and how they can be tackled.
IDENTIFIED PROBLEM

Alcoholism in men leading to familial violences, wife battering, ill health and squandering of limited household finances.

Situational context

A collection of eight to nine villages of Kurukshetra district, formed the focal point of the agitation. These villages are approximately 12 to 18 km from the town of Kurukshetra and are situated on the main road. Bhor Sadan, the nucleus of the agitation, is inhabited mainly by Sikh peasants, who migrated to the village after 1947. But the other villages which took the lead are inhabited by the Hindu Jat peasantry. The focal village also had a liquor vend on the main road.

Participant Group

The binding force of these women was the prevalence of alcoholism in their men. The men regularly squandered a major part of the family income on liquor. Not only did this affect the
men’s health since illicit liquor was frequently consumed, little money was left to run the house. In many cases, it resulted in severe wife-battering. It was also left to the women to find a way to sustain the family needs.

Essentially the movement can be said to have attracted middle-aged and older women. This can be explained partly by the fact that in rural societies younger women normally hesitate to come out in the open. This is because they are new to the village in which they have been married and it takes some years to adjust themselves to the new environment and become acquainted with other women in the village. This phenomenon of younger women not being actively involved in the community can also be traced to the household chores they have to perform, besides rearing children. As women get older, sons get married and the daughters-in-law share the household burden, thereby leaving the older women with some free time. In Barna village, for example the most assertive and forthright woman was about 60 years old. Besides, there were a few young girls, who were educated at Kurukshetra University and who belonged to one of the villages concerned. That actually transformed the
agitation into a cohesive movement. Some others who participated in it were political activists belonging to other parts of the state.

With regard to income and primary occupation, most women were involved in agriculture related work, domestic, animal husbandry etc., but not one could cite any income of her own. The majority of the women who actively participated belonged to land-owning families. Land holdings varied from 1 to 3 acres per family to 30 acres. In some cases, the wives of men employed in government service also participated. This fact is highly valued in the rural society because of the fixed and assured nature of their income.

**Why the agitation started and had large involvement of women?**

It is essential to acknowledge the fact that even though the agitators were prompted by certain politically active persons, yet most of the people who actually participated in the movement did so because they considered liquor to be a curse, both socially and economically, for the family.
Some explained how the money spent on liquor by a person could be better utilized for the benefit of the whole family. It needs to be mentioned that a few of the others, (say less than 15%) did not participate not because they opposed the social reform, but because they had personal problems.

Many of the women were from families that had serious alcohol problems among the male members. Most of them, therefore, seemed to have got involved for this reason, hoping that the agitation would result in the closure of the vends. The basic conclusion one draws from this is that but for the active organization prompted by a few politically active persons, the agitation would never have materialised, even though each participant was personally affected. The main focus of the agitation was on the closure of the liquor vends in the villages or at least shifting these liquor to the periphery.

**Immediate causes for the assertions**

Prohibition rules were being enforced by the Gram Sudhar Samiti formed by some of these villages for enforcing total prohibition.

The campaign which was initially started by some women of Barna village, about 15 km from the town, gradually picked up momentum and people began participating whole-heartedly.

Initially about 20 persons including some women could be seen staging a dharna in front of the liquor vends daily to demand their closure. The campaign also spread to other villages where the women had started holding dharnas.

**Organization and Growth of the agitation**

The Gram Sudhar Samiti formed by the villagers to run their campaign had drafted its own code of conduct to enforce prohibition. Anyone giving information about persons consuming liquor or offering liquor in the village was awarded Rs. 200/- while a penalty of Rs. 500/- was imposed on the defaulter for the first offence. The penalty for the second offence was increased to Rs. 1000/-. For the third, to the fine of Rs. 1000/- was added parading in the streets of the village wearing a Ghaghra and a Garland of worn-out shoes. Similarly the rule provided a
fine of Rs, 100/- for a person caught for the first time selling liquor while for the second time the defaulter was given the punishment prescribed for a drunkard. The women who were spearheading the agitation in most of the villages, most of the time sat on dharna in front of the liquor vends. Most of these women felt that liquor was the cause of most fights in the homes and also the cause for spoiling the youth of the village. The influence of the T.V., which is now a universal household item in Haryana’s rural areas, on such activities is also important. When urban women agitate against high prices, violence against women or other issues affecting them, the rural women are motivated to fight for causes effecting them.

**INTERVENTIONS**

**Girl Students**

The activities and the process of the agitation were essentially influenced by a few young educated girls who planted in the minds of the rural women the possibility of such an agitation.
**Mahila Sanskritik Sangathan**

This NGO contacted women from house to house and mobilized them to joint the agitation.

**Political Appropriation**

At the same time it was observed that most of the women had been mobilized by one political party or the other. Each party was trying to get the maximum mileage from the event by standing up for a social cause. In fact some of the women leaders who belonged to a particular party but called themselves ‘Social Workers’ were mainly responsible for persuading the women to join the agitation. A major problem here was the attempt of the activists of a particular political organization to claim all the credit for organising the agitation, hoping to secure some recognition and perhaps converting the sentiment into votes. The fall-out of the politicization was that the Government machinery got what it was seeking - an opportunity to convert the agitation into a law and order problem, thereby diminishing the positive impact the agitation might have had. The Government and the overzealous political activists are in their own manner responsible for diluting the positive social impact of the agitation.

**Attempts to gain personal mileage by Aspiring locals**

Young political leaders of the villages attempted to influence the women. Every village in Haryana has a fair number of unemployed graduate and post-graduate youths whiling away their time and waiting for some gainful employment. In the meantime, they use their half cooked knowledge in hypothetical political gossip. Agitations of any kind is a boon to such elements. It was such youth who attempted to hog the limelight and even put words in the mouths of ordinary, illiterate women who participated in the agitation.

**Media Response**

The media chose to sensationalize the issue continuously, and in the process ignored the ground realities.
Gram Sudhar Samiti

Formed by a group of 8-9 villages, it also helped in collecting both men and women to agitate against alcohol.

Resistance Points

(a) VESTED INTERESTS

Opposition from powerful vested groups was one of the most difficult obstacles that were encountered. Powerful groups such as merchants and contractors use their might to keep the women away from the agitation. They also disrupt and attempt to destroy any organising effort and openly demonstrate their hostility.

(b) family and community

Women in such a situation are surrounded by restrictions and obstacles not only from the community but also from their families. If a woman wants to do something unusual like going to a meeting, she usually has to obtain the permission of the males in her household. And often this permission is not forthcoming. A man may feel his authority threatened, and he may even resort to violence to stop her. In some cases, the man may restrain his wife because of external pressures on him. When women challenge the status quo, powerful groups, instead of directly dealing with the women, may approach the men and order them to put pressure on their wives and daughters. Men are sometimes more vulnerable to such pressures as their employment or safety may depend on these powerful groups.

Some of the resistance came from men who were themselves drinkers. Some other men were unwilling to give the women any freedom. In other cases, heavy pressure was applied on the men by local politicians and village leaders who did not want the women’s strength to grow, particularly against liquor vending from which they gained much power.

Present status of the agitations

The issue of prohibition had been sidelined and not much attention was paid to it, apart from some small protest against it in other parts of the state i.e. Rohtak. But now in the 1996
elections, the issue has become alive once again and women are pledging their votes to the political party which promises to enforce prohibition. So, in the context of closure of alcohol vends the agitation has so far been successful. In fact, after the elections of the State Legislative Assembly, the State Government has enforced prohibition.

**Evaluation Of The Agitation**

Remained a strategy, did not become a movement. As a strategy it was problem centered.

**FACILITATOR’S NOTE**

A role play can be undertaken by volunteers, as to how they would intervene in a situation where grassroot assertions already exist and how they could enlarge its scope to refer to gender injustice, referring to laws, government schemes, evolving an organization which would mobilize the community, utilize the media and counter the resistance. Highlight the visible problems of wife-beating, squandering of household money. However, combating alcoholism would not eliminate deep rooted atrocities like wife-beating which are based in patriarchy, and remain invisible until the norms of patriarchy are questioned. Also women are not equipped to earn incomes since their patriarchal roles only demand mother and wife roles and catering to household functions. Need for financial avenues or economic autonomy is only felt in adverse times.
MICRO EXPERIMENTS IN SEARCH OF MACRO SOLUTIONS

OBJECTIVES

• TO MAKE NSS VOLUNTEERS CONVERSANT WITH DIFFERENT NGO APPROACHES AND THE IMPACT OF THEIR STRATEGIES ON WOMEN’S DEVELOPMENT AND GENDER JUSTICE
• TO HELP THE VOLUNTEERS IMBIBE POSITIVE EXPERIENCES AND STRATEGIES WHILE CAUTIONING AGAINST THE IMPEDIMENTS

Method

Case Studies, Group Discussion

Material

Black Board, Chalk

FACILITATOR’S NOTE

This section contains four case studies of NGOs working in the area of women’s development. Each NGO has a different perspective and corresponding strategy with which intervention is made at the grassroot level. The facilitator can explain each approach and then initiate a discussion on each NGO’s strategy - highlighting the extent to which it caters to women’s needs and what are the gaps in the strategy, to enable adoption of a suitable strategy by the NSS unit in accordance with the unit’s approach to the issue of gender justice and women’s development. (Refer to module on NGO Intervention)
Location:
Kodambakkam and Saligram in Tamil Nadu.

Strategy:
a) To provide the beneficiaries with a one-time grant either for buying productive assets or to build a house if they happened to own a site.
b) To impart income augmentation skills to the women of the identified families. The one time grant is often given for buying equipment for running a business. For example if the beneficiary undergoes a course in tailoring, she is given the money to buy a sewing machine.
c) To provide foster parents for one of the children primarily to educate the child. This help is rendered only for five years.

The aim of the organisation is to alleviate the poverty of households by imparting income generating skills to women to make them self-dependent. Efforts are also made to provide education to a child from among these households as an effort towards long-term poverty alleviation.

**Organisational Network:**
The Sewa Samaj is a voluntary organisation. It has a wide area of coverage and substantial manpower and material resources.

**Target Group:**
The poorest households are identified and targeted for support.
Impact Evaluation

Achievements
♦ Beneficiaries acquire productive skills.
♦ Financial resources are made available for assets.

Implementation Failings
The training provided is inadequate for the beneficiaries to acquire proficient skills for income augmentation.
The loan provided is perceived as a grant. Therefore, efforts for being productive to repay it are lacking. Also being viewed as a dole, the money is misused for daily needs.

FACILITATOR’S NOTE
A group discussion can be initiated on how the target group can be made a participant in the strategy.

Gaps in strategy
Productive skills are imparted, but marketing of the skills and the produce is overlooked.
Resources of money and skills are provided at a single point of time.
The expectation that the beneficiaries will be able to sustain the input once the initial assistance has been provided is unfounded. Even the withdrawal of the foster care for a child after five years has resulted in continuing illiteracy of the child since the household remains unable to meet the expenses.

Method Evaluation
The approach remains isolated from inter-related issues, with the result that the unfavourable status of the vulnerable section continues and is perpetuated.
Location

Madras, Tamil Nadu.

Strategy

a) Welfare Activities

The organisation provides welfare services to women in need. These include adult education, child care and, health care programmes, legal aid and home for deserted women.

b) Income Augmentation Activities

YWCA encourages women enrolled in the adult education programme to become self-employed. The NGO assists many of them to get loans from banks. Women who have acquired loans are engaged in activities such as preparing snacks (Idli), piece good selling (mainly clothes), board making, fruit vending etc.
Organisational Profile and network

Slowly and gradually through continuous dialogue the women enlisted for welfare activities are prepared for identification of their problems, corrective action and self-propulsion. Thus battered women are provided with an alternative shelter and can leave their homes. They are simultaneously encouraged to become financially self-sufficient by acquiring a loan and starting a small enterprise like vending of goods.

Target Group

YWCA is an organisation that exclusively caters to women. Majority of the women belong to the poorest sections.

Impact evaluation

Achievements

♦ Destitute women are given a helping hand as immediate relief.
♦ Access to child care, health and legal aid is provided to the under-privileged women.
♦ Assistance in procuring loans and providing avenues for small-scale employment ventures is provided.

Implementation failings

Monitoring of self-employment ventures is not done and many beneficiaries become destitute again.

Method Evaluation

The strategy is targeted at individual women who are needy due to extreme poverty and family conditions. These women are provided with relief to alleviate their situation. Short-term success of this assistance is large though it may not result in life-long improvement as no change in the individuals or societal circumstances and structures is achieved.
**ECONOMIC AUTONOMY TO EMPOWER WOMEN:**

**WORKING WOMEN’S FORUM**

**Location**
Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh

**Strategy**
a) Through credit an entry point is provided for the organizing women.
b) Conscientisation and grassroot group cohesiveness among women is promoted to empower them economically.

**Organisational network**
The Working Women’s Forum (WWF) is a grass-root organisation of poor working women which has grown out of another voluntary organisation 'Vidya Bharati Trust'.

A group of political activists felt the need for women to have a share in policy making and implementation as well as percolation of the policies to the grassroot level.

WWF stimulates ten or more women to come together and form a group to avail themselves of loans from nationalised banks. The group system provides for group guarantees to help the loanees. A leader representing the group enables the members to avail themselves of the loans and ensures repayment as per schedules. The already enrolled members are asked to spread the message, since many women are ignorant of the possibilities of credit with the backing of WWF.

Some of these enrolled women have been employed as promoters to carry out the main function of conscientisation. The main aspect of the organisation is the neighbourhood concept, creating a group of members for credit assistance and leading to group cohesiveness.

Within a group, grassroot leadership is promoted, i.e. one of the individuals concerned is encouraged to take the responsibility of implementing the activities at the grassroot level. Potential new members are offered a one-week 'Awareness Creation Programme' which once
again activates the grassroot level. The programme coordinator is a person who comes from
the same deprived section of the community as do the potential members.

Only she has made use of the help extended by the WWF and succeeded in achieving self-
sufficiency. So she gains credibility among the new members. She narrates her experiences of
existence before and after becoming a member of the WWF, and explains how she has gained access to productive resources. For instance, because of her economic independence, she has made her husband who used to be a drunkard, a changed man. For the rest of the week in the Awareness Creation Programme, the potential new members listen to the experiences of senior members of the WWF, coming from deprived sections of the community, who are now engaged in all sorts of trade. It is made clear to them that irrespective of their caste, women can come forward and avail themselves of credit if only they become members of the WWF and tackle individual women's problems as a group.

**Target**

Women from the economically backward strata

**Impact Evaluation**

**Achievements**

♦ It has helped many women to avail themselves of loans which as an individual they would not have got at all.

♦ The concept has also evoked a feeling of solidarity and oneness with which the women can face the problems at home. Ill-treatment by the husband or by the in-laws is now being challenged. A women derives strength from the 'group concept which provides the necessary inner strength and /or the mental courage to face and tackle the deprivations suffered at home. Since the group leader is one among them the members feel free to approach her for any help and the leader is also sympathetic to the needs of the members.

**Implementation Failings**

(a) The organisation is often seen as an anti-family movement and many non-members express apprehensions about the hostility which they may have to face in the family if they become members of this organisation.
(b) After having availed themselves of the benefit, the members are required to take part in rallies and meetings which they find difficult. This, in turn, has an impact on potential entrants.

**Gaps in Strategy**

Though the agency works at the grassroot level and aims at promoting the neighbourhood concept it is directed at women and alienates group members from their families and others.

**Method Evaluation**

It attempts to solve individual problems with group effort.
**Location**

Pollachi in Coimbatore district.

**Strategy**

Through community participation to evolve

a) Community resources like youth clubs, community centres, sanitary latrines etc.

b) To encourage utilization of government schemes.

Community participation is elicited through conscientisation of people, so as to fill certain immediate needs such as imparting skills, training, employment opportunities and provision of welfare such as health and education and promotion of co-operative societies. It also creates the groundwork for community interaction and assistance.

**Organizational Network**

The entry point for the organization is the creation of Madar-Sangams (Mahila Mandals) and youth clubs through which women and youths are identified for training programmes. Training is imparted under both, the government sponsored training programmes like TRYSEM and those funded by foreign organisations. After training some participants are absorbed in on-going production units and assisted in setting up self-employment ventures while others have to seek employment on their own.

Besides these income augmentation activities, the organization promotes health and hygiene programmes, education and even housing facilities for Harijans. Such activities have created bonds within the community. These are maintained through meetings and functions organized by the community centre where people are encouraged to identify and resolve the felt needs of the area through open discussions and consensus.
Target

The community forms a broad target context within which specified targets of unemployed women and youth are the focus of this organization.

Impact Evaluation

Achievements

♦ Skills for earning income have been imparted not only to women but also to youths.

♦ Some of the skilled beneficiaries have also been provided with employment opportunities.

♦ Welfare in terms of children's education, creches, health facilities, sanitation and even housing facilities has been provided to the community.

♦ Participation of the community at the formulation stage of the programmes, in the construction of the community hall and sanitary latrines is an index of the participatory action and achievements of the programme.
**Implementation Failings**

The activities of the organization are not continuous due to lack of funds. Activities have been suspended, even employment of people have suffered breaks. Inspite of the huge foreign funds permanent production units which can even be self-supporting have not succeeded. The beneficiaries feel that the money spent on immediate but non-tangible services such as health camps and awareness camps should have been spent on production units.

**Gaps in Strategy**

Training was provided to the beneficiaries with no on-going evaluation or feedback. Similarly other programmes were also one-time schemes rather than regular activities in the community.

**Method Evaluation**

The strategy is aimed at providing employment opportunities along with some welfare measures for the community. It only aims at fulfilling the felt needs rather that fulfilling actual needs that could make the community a self-sustaining egalitarian unit.

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**FACILITATOR’ S NOTE**

*A group discussion on the different approaches followed by these organisations is necessary to evolve a new strategy combining the merits of the different strategies. The NSS volunteers should be asked to reflect on each micro experiment and analyze the reasons for ineffectiveness or failure of the NGO programme and explore the possibility of replication of successful experiments in their areas.*


COUNSELLING AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

OBJECTIVES

- TO INTRODUCE THE PARTICIPANTS TO THE BASIC COUNSELLING ISSUES AND SKILLS
- TO MAKE THE PARTICIPANTS ACQUAINTED WITH THEIR ROLE AS COUNSELLORS

METHODS

Lecture, Group discussion, Role plays, Brainstorming.

MATERIAL

Flip Chart, Marker, Newsprint, Masking tape, Blackboard and Chalk, Transparencies and overhead projector.

FACILITATOR’S NOTE

The trainer should open the session by explaining the objectives to the participants. The objectives should be written on newsprint, flipchart or blackboard. If possible, transparencies and an overhead projector should be used. The trainer then continues the session by defining the key concepts in the form of a lecture-cum-transparencies show.

Defining Key Concepts

Counselling

This is a helping relationship to enable a person to cope realistically with some aspect of his/her life.
It is a process that aims at empowering a person to understand and face the problems or situations and to reduce their negative impact or to solve them.

**FACILITATOR’S NOTE**

*Emphasis should be laid on the following issues at this point:*

(i) *Counselling is not a one-time process. It is usually an on-going and long-term process, as it has to ensure consistent support.*

(ii) *There is a difference between counselling and advice. Counselling is a helping and empowering relationship. The counsellor and the client discuss the problems and options that are realistic and appropriate to the client's situation. The client comes out with a realistic workplan for implementation. As regards advice, the counsellor (adviser) takes total responsibility and control of the feelings and actions of the client (advisee). There is hardly any discussion.*

**Who should be counselled?**

a) Persons already identified as victims of atrocities e.g. wife-beating, wife battering, dowry harassment, rape etc.

b) Family members of the victim of atrocities.

*Note:-* The counsellor should ensure support or consent from the client before counselling the family members.

c) Persons who inflict these atrocities e.g. husbands and other family members who are involved in different forms of harassment, etc.

d) Those seeking help because of past experience or a current situation involving harassment e.g. if a woman is infected with HIV because of a previous rape etc.

**Why is Counselling Important?**

a) To provide psychological support to persons who have been the victims of any form of harassment or infection, as well as their families.
All kinds of harassment tend to have a negative impact, physically as well as mentally. For example the counsellor may be faced with a woman who has been infected with HIV, probably as a result of being raped.

b) To promote positive behaviour change among individuals, especially those who are involved in acts of harassment.

c) To impart skills to individuals and families on how they can deal with various forms of harassment and their implications.

**Forms of Counselling**

Counselling may take the form of: -

**Inter-person discussions**

**Group discussions**

**Inter-person Discussion**

This is a one-to-one discussion i.e. between the counsellor and the client. This form of counselling suits people who want to remain anonymous or who feel that the counsellor is the best confidant they have.
Group discussion

This usually involves discussion between the counsellor(s) and more than one individual. It may comprise a session between the counsellor(s) and the peers or between the counsellor(s) and members of a family.

GUIDELINES WHEN CONDUCTING A GROUP SESSION

1. **Sex**: It is usually preferable to have single sex groups i.e. either all male or all female.

2. **Age**: It may also be helpful to have members of a similar age group.

3. **Language**: It is important to establish that all the members are fluent in a common language.

4. **Numbers**: It is necessary to limit the number of group members so as to ensure maximum participation (8-12 members is an appropriate number).

5. **Initial Consent**: Before carrying out a group discussion it is important for the counsellor to first get initial consent of the group members i.e. whether one has preference for inter-personal discussion or the converse.
The points below should be re-emphasised for group sessions
a) The counsellor as the group leader should always be in control of the group.
b) The counsellor should attend to all group members.
c) Helpful discussion should be encouraged among the group members and the counsellor should protect the group member(s) from the criticism of other group members.
d) The counsellor should control domineering group members and encourage the quiet and shy members to participate in the discussion. Every group member should be actively involved in the discussion.

NOTE:--
a) There are many more group work skills. But these are brief guidelines.
b) Counselling may also acquire other dimensions. Some of these, which the trainees should be aware of, relate to HIV/AIDS situations. A counsellor may face clients who think that they are probably infected or have already been diagnosed as HIV positive.

Dimensions particular to HIV/AIDS counselling

Pre-test counselling

Definition :- This is the counselling offered to a person before taking an HIV antibody test or before a diagnosis of AIDS is revealed to the person.

Aims of Pre-test counselling
a) It helps a person take an informed decision whether he or she wishes to have an HIV antibody test.
b) It helps a person to prepare himself or herself for a positive or negative HIV antibody test result.

Issues involved
a) Provision of accurate information about HIV/AIDS.
b) A person is encouraged to consider positive changes in behaviour to prevent transmission of HIV.
c) All the possible implications of a positive or negative test result are discussed.
Post-Test Counselling

**Definition**: This is the counselling offered to a person after he or she has known of the result of an HIV antibody test or has been informed that he or she has been diagnosed as having AIDS.

**Aims of Post-Test Counselling**

a) It provides emotional support to help the person cope with the news/result of the test or diagnosis.

b) It provides a forum to discuss the prevention of HIV infection.

**Issues involved**

This type of counselling provides a person with the opportunity to:

a) Share worries and concerns;

b) Find out more about HIV and AIDS;

c) Consider what his or her HIV status means emotionally and socially, and also to start planning accordingly.

Ongoing support counselling

**Definition**: This is the counselling offered to a person after pre and post-test counselling to help the person try to live positively with HIV infection and cope with any problems or situations he or she may face.

**Aims of ongoing counselling**

a) To empower people with HIV to maintain control over their lives and to develop healthy coping skills.

**Issues involved**

a) HIV infection can lead to a lot of problems - medical, psychological, practical etc. (These problems may also arise in other forms of harassment)

b) Ongoing counselling can help a person to deal with problems as they arise.
c) Ongoing support may play an important role in helping the person live with the responsibilities and implications of being HIV positive, in terms of prevention and re-infection.

d) When offering ongoing support, the counsellor always places the person in the context of his or her family and community, often with the person’s consent. The counsellor provides counselling services and support to the family to help them cope with the impact of HIV and support the infected person in the family.

**FACILITATOR’S NOTE**

- The trainer should re-emphasize the fact that all forms of harassment need counselling as a component of treatment so as to empower the client to make positive choices about his or her life.

- Counselling is an empowering process. It is not a problem solving service. Therefore, the counsellor should not feel guilty if a client does not make a positive choice.

**GROUP EXERCISE : COUNSELLING FOR PSYCHOLOGICAL ADJUSTMENT**

In order to break the monotony of the lecture methodology, the trainer may facilitate a brainstorming exercise for the participants, centering on these questions and scenarios.

a) Imagine yourself as a victim of wife-beating. How would you feel?

Contd..
b) Two years ago you were raped by a stranger. Recently you start falling sick (have bouts of unexplained fever). The doctor takes a number of tests including one for HIV/AIDS. If the result shows that you are positive, what would be your reaction.

c) Your sister got married recently. She keeps on writing to you about harassment by her husband and in-laws who want more dowry. Eventually she returns home mentally and physically battered. How would you feel?

These are some examples of questions and scenarios. The trainer may create more. Involve all participants. Write down their reactions on a flipchart or board (Alternatively, you could also request a participant to write down the reactions).

After the brainstorming exercise the trainer may have to highlight the following issues on psychological adjustment. The trainer may use transparencies and overhead projector or any other convenient aid.

**Psychological adjustments**

When individuals or families are faced with some kind of harassment suddenly or eventually their outlook may be negatively impacted. This usually manifests in a number of reactions. These are:- **Anxiety, Shock, Depression, Anger, Suicidal tendencies**

**Anxiety**

This starts off usually after a traumatic event

**Physical symptoms**

- Muscle tension leading to chest pain, headache and backache.
- Nausea and vomiting
- Dizziness
- Skin flushes/blemishes/rashes.

**Other symptoms**

- Restlessness and nervousness
- Being worried about too many things at a time.
- Difficulty in sleeping
- Sudden mood swings/changes
- Difficulty in concentrating and remembering things.
- Taking excess of drugs, alcohol and other strong additives.

**Counsellor's role**

- Help the person realize that the problem can be dealt with.
- Help the person talk about the causes/sources of the stress in relation to the problem.
- Discuss the probable options that the client(s) have in dealing with the problems. These may include referral centres e.g. legal centres, health centres etc.

**Shock**

Sudden forms of harassment may cause shock to the victim:

**Physical signs**
- Shaking
- Difficulty in breathing.

**Other responses**
- Being unable to control crying or laughing
- Feeling numb; not being able to think constructively.
- Speaking in a confused and incoherent manner.

**Anger**

It is only natural that one feels annoyed when one is mistreated. It is humiliating to realise that someone has treated you with disrespect. Also the family of the victim may share the anger.

*Anger may be directed to :-*

- **Self**: Probably the woman feels that she was herself responsible for the assault.
- **Others**: They may include the culprit(s) in the assault e.g. husband, in-laws etc.
**Counsellor's role**

The counsellor should help the persons express their feelings and opinions and also help the clients deal with their anger constructively.

**Depression**

This usually arises when a person feels utterly helpless in dealing with the situation, and at the same time see the situation seemingly worsening.

**Physical symptoms**

- Loss of energy, lethargy
- Slow responses e.g. slow talking
- Loss of appetite
- Loss of weight
- Disturbed sleep.

(for other symptoms refer to those of anxiety)

**Other Indications**

- Low self-esteem
- Loss of self-confidence
- Difficulty in thinking constructively.
- Withdrawing from others.
- Suicidal thoughts and statements.
Counsellor's role

(i) Help the person to talk about issues that are worrying the person.
(ii) Help the person to consider realistic options open to him or her.

Note:- By dealing with and working out one small problem you often help the person regain a sense of control.

Suicidal Tendencies/Ideas
These are usually responses to life threatening news. People who are harassed time and again, may be more prone to committing suicide. This is because they cannot face the consequences of the harassment. These are usually physically and mentally painful experiences. Some of these may also cause body deformation and mental impairment.

Note:- Suicide may be active when someone does something that rapidly ends his or her life.
-Suicide may be passive when somebody does not care about their condition. Somebody may refuse to take medicine when sick; another person may refuse to take food.

Counsellor's role

(i) If a person talks about committing suicide, the counsellor should take this seriously, sometimes talking about committing suicide is a cry for help.
(ii) The counsellor and client should discuss options other than suicide

Note:- The implications of suicide should be discussed very carefully. The counsellor should talk about positive alternatives to suicide, besides the negative ones. The negative alternatives tend to increase the client's sense of self-blame and worthlessness.
(iii) The counsellor should arrange to see the person frequently, as one wishes.
(iv) The person may be encouraged to seek other help such as legal help, medical help etc.
Counselling someone with suicidal tendencies can be very stressful. Remember that you as the counsellor are not responsible if somebody eventually commits suicide. Committing suicide is ultimately one's own choice.
- To promote and sustain behavioural and attitudinal changes regarding the different forms of harassment, the counsellor needs to work intensively with the affected individual as well as with other family members or people who matter to them. This is part of the supportive environment.
- The counsellor will also have to be sensitive to those issues and attitudes, in the individual's environment which may inhibit positive behavioural and attitudinal changes.

**Networking/referral system**

Some of the issues that may arise from counselling may have to be referred to other places that provide specific services and expertise. The counsellor should, therefore, be knowledgeable about these places. For instance, someone may need legal advice or medical advice/treatment. They counsellor should be able to give basic information regarding these services and their availability.

**Communication skills**

There are four major communication skills. These include :-

- **Listening**

  This involves :-
  
  a) **Paying attention i.e.**
  
  R - relaxed
  O - open
  L - lean forward towards a person
  E - eye contact
  S - sit near a person

  b) **Nonverbal communication**

  - Body language

  c) **Silence**

  It has to be used constructively.

  It is important not to interrupt.

- **Checking that we have understood.**

  This involves
  
  a) Repeating what the person has told you.
  b) Summarising what the person has communicated.
  c) Identifying feelings.
- **Asking questions**
  a) It helps a person to explore his or her problems more fully.
  b) It helps the person to think more about the situation.
  c) It helps the person explain what he or she already knows about the situation.
  d) Questions can help the counselling session to move.
  e) Questions help to prioritize the problems.

**Note:**
- Use open-ended questions. These are questions that invite the persons to explain or to talk e.g.
  - "Can you tell me about..."
  - "What do you want to do about...'
  - *use simple language*
  - *Do not ask many questions at once.*

- **Answering questions**
  People may ask questions for various reasons:
  a) For advice
  b) For information
  c) For the counsellor's opinion

**Note:**
- Behind most of the questions, there is a story or a problem.
- Give only accurate information.
- To some questions there are no answers.
- Answer questions in simple language.
- When you give information, check that the person has understood.

**TYPES OF COMMUNICATION**

- **Aggressive communication**
  Force your desires or opinions on others without considering their feelings or opinions.

- **Passive communication**
  - No Communication
  - Not communicating one's ideas or feelings.
c) **Assertive Communication**

Communicate by clearly stating your thoughts and feelings with confidence, but also respecting the views of others.

**Note:** In counselling, assertive communication is the best mode of communication.

**Positive Attitudes**

- **Confidentiality**

  As a counsellor, one must not reveal anything that a person has told the counsellor.

**Note:** However, if we are doing good counselling, we can help people we are counselling to consider and plan how and what they themselves should tell others.

- **Caring**

  We show that we care by being approachable, interested in each person we are offering help, and also by our readiness to give time to talk. We can also show warmth and concern.

- **Empathy**

  We try to imagine what it is like to be in the situation of the person we are trying to help.

- **Accepting**

  A counsellor accepts the person being offered help as the person is. A counsellor is neither a moralist nor a judge.
1) The trainer may wind up the session by drawing the following conditions:
   a) Good counselling entails good communication skills and positive attitudes.
   b) If a counsellor has good communication skills, but poor attitudes, the counselling will not be effective.
   c) If a counsellor has poor communication, but positive attitudes the counselling will not be effective.
EXERCISE:- USING COUNSELLING TECHNIQUES

The trainer divides the participants into groups. The trainer requests each group to discuss one of the following scenarios and thereafter act it out for the rest of the participants. For each role play the trainer emphasizes that there should be a counsellor and client(s). The trainer tells the class that the major reason for these role plays is to develop inter-personal skills, communication skills, decision-making skills as well as observation skills.

The rest of the participants (who are not acting) are requested to identify the following in the role play :-

1. Positive attitudes
2. Communication skills
3. Decision-making skills
4. Inter-person relationship

They are requested to note the strong and weak points that come out. After the role play, the trainer initiates a discussion on the issues that are highlighted.

Role Play

1. Meena is a young woman from the city. She decides to visit her grandmother in the village, during her college break. While in the village, she dresses up in shorts and fancy outfits. Many a time when her grandmother sends her to the market, young men jeer at her. She does not understand why. She feels very uncomfortable and angry about the whole trend of events and yet she fears to disclose this to her grandmother. She comes to you for counsel.

2. Monica is a newly wedded woman. She has been married for one month. She is unhappy in her marriage because her husband and mother-in-law are always pester her for more dowry, and are also beating her. She fears going to her parental home because her father advises her that "soon things will change", as he hope to fulfill the demand of her in-laws. Soon Monica feels that even after the demand for dowry has been met, there is danger in staying with her husband and her mother-in-law. She comes to you for counsel.
OBJECTIVES

- TO ENABLE EFFECTIVE GRASSROOT INTERVENTION

Methods

Discussions, lectures, exercises, case study

Material

Flip Charts, Blackboard, Posters

POINTERS FOR NSS

- The aim of an NSS unit would be to gender sensitise an identified community, a pre-requisite for which is the long term establishment of the NSS unit in a particular community. This would ensure that the community identifies itself with the NSS unit of a particular college or school, even though the volunteers in that unit keep changing continually.

- Intervention need not be restricted to only gender issues. Dovetailing of the gender issue with other thrust areas of the NSS, such as environment, communalism and nationalism, can simultaneously be used as an avenue to impart gender sensitisation and can represent the total NSS strategy encompassing other areas.

- Networking by identification of resource persons and organizational groundwork may also be required to facilitate the strategy. If an income generating scheme is to be started, Government officials from the respective departments, bank...
Before intervening in the field, certain resource material would need to be organised. This would depend on the specific strategy identified by the unit (relief, curative, welfare or ideological - refer to pages 336 to 340). Needs as identified by the community or specific to the area will also influence the resources to be generated. For instance, the NSS unit may want to raise the community's awareness level on only one issue at a time. Some members of the community may be troubled over the increasing incidence of sexual harassment. Thus the unit may organise the community to combat eve-teasing, molestation and rape. Thus details of the relevant laws, instances where these laws have been successfully used, the law courts to be approached, the process of registering an FIR etc. should be explained. It could entail collection of details of certain schemes, laws or material according to the strategy decided by the NSS unit.

NSS units must incorporate gender sensitization in their regular programmes such as annual camps.

**PREPARATION FOR ENTRY INTO THE FIELD**

Before intervening in the community, NSS volunteers will need to be equipped with the following:

- **Awareness of the gender system**
- **Modus operandi of the gender system.**
- **Awareness regarding the high degree of acceptance of the patriarchal structure within the community and, therefore, the high invisibility of the detrimental effects of the gender system.**
The NSS must function within a predetermined perspective with a specific approach, even though its strategies may only uncover the functioning of the detrimental gender system and not provide alternatives. For instance, an NSS unit may only find it feasible to provide legal advice to the community on gender issues, or may only take up issues of gender atrocities while providing relief or curative measures, but the framework must remain within the preview of gender justice, thus while promoting legal literacy linkages with gender justice must be provided, thus providing relief in individual cases and spreading awareness in the community. In other words, a specific strategy is only a cog in the larger process and not an end in itself.

In this module, the NSS perspective, approach and methods of intervention are discussed.

PERSPECTIVE OF NSS

While intervening in the community, the NSS must function within two perspectives, one of gender sensitization and the other of collective interactive evolutionary approach. Gender sensitization specifically pertains to combating deprivation, discrimination and atrocities that women face. Generating self-help in communities refers to the broader perspective. A successful intervention would be one which terminates the need for successive interventions. In other words, the community would be fully equipped to identify and remedy problems on its own as and when they emerge.

1. Gender sensitization

In order to promote gender sensitization members of the NSS must themselves be aware of how the present gender system functions and comprehend that this system is detrimental to women. It hinders women’s access to resources and infrastructure (such as health, education, skill,
property etc.) and restricts women’s productive participation within the development process (by limiting women’s political participation, encouraging low/unskilled employment, restricting women’s decision-making to the household domain etc.) It also results in atrocities against women such as dowry harassment/death, rape, wife-beating etc. Furthermore, to combat any aspect of this detrimental system, even enhancing women’s education and skills or providing unrestricted access to health, the gender system in its totality will have to be combated. Of course, the NSS focus areas may be few, yet these must operate in the context of undermining the total gender system. (Refer to module No. 2 ‘Issues in Women’s Development and Gender Justice’)

2. Community with a collective interactive Evolutionary Approach

The long-term aim of the NSS unit should be to enable a collective interactive evolutionary community. (Refer to module on NGO intervention) Once awareness and sensitization to the gender system has been created, the community should be able to tackle the manifestations of the gender system as and when they arise, with involvement from NGO’s, government agencies and officials, GRO groups (Panchayats, Mahilla Mandals, Youth Clubs etc.). For instance, as the practice of sex determination tests spreads, sensitive communities (sections/members) could protest, generate a public debate, raise the consciousness level and question the practice of sex-determined pregnancies. NGO’s specialising in checking sex determined pregnancies could assist in providing a focus, information on new laws, and government enforcement agencies with the collaboration of locality members could make enforcement effective.

NSS APPROACH

Broadly, the NSS approach can be two fold - to involve the community at all levels of intervention and network with the existing local organisations to maximise their effectiveness and efficiency.
1. **Elicit community participation**

The success of any programme in a community to a large extent is determined by the extent of the community’s involvement, its identification with the programme and willingness to share responsibility and the benefits.

Community participation involves the community in the following components of a scheme or programme:

1. Decision-making
2. Implementation
3. Sharing benefits
4. Evaluation and improvement of the programme.

(All the four activities must be initiated for both problem identification and problem resolution. Refer to pages 352 to 353)
(a) Need for community participation

◊ Incorporates local knowledge/perceptions to make the programme more productive.

For instance members of the community may themselves point out local practices that discriminate against girls, thus making visible the taken-for-granted invisible practices. Clear identification of the community’s felt needs and resources ensures the community’s effective participation in the programme and the achievement of its goals.

◊ Wide reach

It has a wide reach and applicability involving different sections and views, hence a larger impact.

◊ Democratic functioning

Makes the community self-reliant and self-determined not only for a particular programme but also for other community activities.

(b) Problems in involving the community

◊ Lack of awareness among the community members.

◊ Illiteracy

◊ No felt need

◊ Cultural handicaps

◊ Casteism

◊ Groupism

(c) How to involve the community?

◊ Generating awareness and sensitization

By generating awareness and creating sensitization to the specific goal (gender justice), the impact of the existing situation (data on health, literacy rates, nature of employment, atrocities etc. (see relevant modules) and various practices and beliefs that are detrimental
to women (Refer to module II) becomes visible. Thus not only is awareness generated, but felt needs also surface simultaneously, combating some of the handicaps of illiteracy.

◊ **Participation in decision making and goal identification**

These increase the involvement of the community. By identifying minimum common needs and aspirations of the entire community, the impact of groupism or casteism can be combated. For instance, if the entire community feels that dowry harassment should be checked, an income generating or social forestry programme initiated, or prohibition legalised, then factionalism on such issues may not surface.

◊ **Involvement in implementation**

Continuous interaction with the progress and hindrances faced by the programme ensures involvement of the community.

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(d) **Maximizing Community Participation**

◊ **Set Achievable goals.**

It is imperative to identify goals with the consensus of the entire community. Gradually initiate the convergence of the community’s perceived needs on the real issues as identified by the intervening agency. (Refer pages 349 onwards)
◊ **Tasks to be identified objective-wise**

For each objective, specific tasks, work allocation and tactics should be identified.

◊ **Defined functions with responsibility**

Functions should be defined and allocated within the community with clear responsibility.

◊ **Knowledge of community**

Before intervening in the programme to elicit community participation, the intervening agents must be well acquainted with the community set up, its preference, needs, attitudes, local resources, problem issues etc.
By coordinating with the NGOs, the NSS can increase the outreach of this programme by utilizing and extending the community support of the NGOs and at the same time become conversant with government schemes and government departments.

Experience gained from working with different types of NGOs should be exchanged by NSS units in the local area.

2. Networking with local organisations: NGOs

Besides the Government’s efforts to provide women with services, a number of NGOs are active in providing socio-economic uplift. Some of the well established organisations are SEWA, Working Women’s Forum, Annapurna Mahila Mandals and a number of small and local organisations. Their approaches can be broadly classified in providing the following kinds of intervention:

(a) Relief oriented

Under this approach, the attempt is to correct individual aberrations in social conduct. In response to violence, intervention may be done in cases of wife-beating, dowry demand, dowry
death etc. Individual cases are taken up for solution through the law, counselling and even punitive measures to be levied by the panchayats. Other relief oriented work would pertain to one point interaction with the community as in the case of floods or other natural disasters.

**NSS volunteers’ role**

During the NGO activities, the NSS volunteers could be involved in the following manner:

1. Familiarise themselves with the community leaders, various sections, local concerns, issues and resources.
2. To identify other resources both human and material, for lending support to community activities. These could be other NGO’s, government departments or professionals such as lawyers, activists, counsellors etc.
3. The volunteers could assist in the on-going activities of the NGOs and lend them a helping hand.
4. Once the NSS unit’s credentials are established in the community, the unit may branch out in other types of intervention (such as welfare, curative or ideological) or broad-base it’s area of work (from one village or community to the neighbouring areas).

**(b) Welfare Measures**

These interventions attempt to provide women with a greater share of the existing opportunities. These may relate to health, maternal care, access to government schemes etc. Under such efforts, the NGOs attempt to increase the reach of the existing programmes like those of the Government or aid agencies like UNICEF, WHO etc. For instance in U.P. UNICEF aided Nehru Yuva Kendras are being organised to provide the community with better health and education. These also cover the Government’s schemes like ICDS, empowering of women through Mahila Mandals, Mahila Samridhi Yojana, IRDP, social forestry programme etc.
NSS volunteers’ role

NSS volunteers can obtain first-hand information on various government schemes, becoming conversant with the functioning of line departments. Activities of relief and curative agencies can also be undertaken along with.

(c) Curative Efforts

Under this approach, organisations target only specific problems within the gender issue such as campaign against dowry exchange, or income augmentation of women or providing women with legal literacy. Such work will expose the volunteers to constant interaction with the community, officials, and the media. They will also learn how to tackle resistance points both from the community and from individuals.

NSS volunteers’ role

Since these campaigns are on-going activities, the NSS unit can liaise with the NGO over a long period. They may not restrict themselves only to these activities and utilise the community
support created by the NGO to launch other activities for women’s development and gender sensitizations. Relief work could also be provided by the NSS unit.

(d) **Ideological Intervention**

Such intervention is targeted to increase women’s access to and participation in various spheres such as education, employment, political activity, health care etc. by combating the very conditions that restrict their access and participation. Thus issues relating to women’s status, empowerment and development would be addressed. Such an organisation would tackle issues of women’s deprivation, discrimination and the atrocities faced by them. The attempt would be to make the existing gender system visible and undermine the norms of patriarchy. The activities of the organisation may be rather broad-based and may involve trade unions, women activists and academicians.
NSS volunteers’ role

The NSS volunteers may or may not be associated with all the activities of the organisation. Thus their activity can be restricted to providing only relief or curative measures or involvement in other spheres of the NGO’s activity by lending a voluntary hand when necessary.

FACILITATOR’S NOTE

The central point that NSS volunteers must keep in mind is that the community must be involved at all levels of the intervention. Once the locality has been identified (specific mohalla, village), the need is to pinpoint gender related problems as perceived by the community. Again, resolution of the identified problem needs to be undertaken with community interaction. However, initially the NSS volunteers, with the help of the community members, need to gather certain basic information regarding the community (identifying community leaders, issues of concern, available resources within the community etc.) for which an initial survey needs to be conducted.

At times direct intervention in areas related to gender question may not be feasible and would need to be dovetailed with other problems such as generating income, welfare measures, environmental programmes etc., according to the situational context. Thus, the facilitators can discuss the method of intervention utilising the given pointers.

INTERVENING IN THE COMMUNITY

1. An initial survey of the community

Identify community leaders

Who are the people the community turns to in times of need, whose support it expects and whom it looks up to as role models or listens to.
- **Familiarity with various section of the community**

  Communities may be divided on lines of strata, caste, religion, occupation etc. Within the larger community, different sections may have different perceptions on issues of concern or their leaders.

- **Identify concerns of the community**

  The community or a section of the community may be concerned with issues such as income augmentation, alcoholic-drugs, education of children, moral code of behaviour, provision of amenities such as water, sanitation etc. Also gender related concerns such as molestation, dowry harassment, employment for girls must also be studied.

- **Listing community resources**

  This may be both material and human:

  1. Resources available with the Panchayat: This can include Panchayat revenue from Shamlat, shops etc., from specific schemes and their funds.

  2. People with community concern: There may be individuals active in certain aspects of the community -- maintaining hygiene, putting moral checks on eve-teasing etc., encouraging education and so on.

- **Identify NGOs, Government functionaries and other active organisations within the locality.**

  They will be able to provide support to NSS volunteers and can be tapped when required.

- **Locating the nodal point for initiating intervention**

  A nodal point must be established in the community through which dissemination of information and participation of the community can be organised. Broadly, the nodal point can be:

  Panchayats

  School teachers

  NGOs’ workers in the field
Mahila Mandals. 

The nodal group can be identified through its concern, if any, for women or its concern to provide benefit to the community. If no such organisation exists, then the need would be to form a new collectivity. Where even Mahila Mandals do not exist, the NSS volunteers can tap the felt needs of a group within the community to launch its gender sensitization and women’s development programme. This group may consist of economically weaker sections of women who would respond to income generation programmes. This will benefit individuals and the impact of such a programme would be perceived by the entire community.

**EXERCISE: IDENTIFYING TARGET GROUP AND STRATEGY**

Group discussion can be initiated by the facilitator to identify a target group in the locality and the NSS strategy in the field.

1. **Selection of target group**
   
   Will they be:
   
   - Poor households
   - Illiterate children
   - Adolescent girls
   - Youth club members
   - Slum community etc. etc.

2. **Criteria for the selection of target group** *(essential to be conversant with the field area)*
   
   - to initiate a poverty alleviation scheme.
   - To initiate a scheme for sanitation in the slums (construction of latrines)
   - Provide legal literacy etc.

Contd..
2. Identifying community perceived problems regarding gender issues

(a) Problem Identification

The NSS needs to ascertain the extent and level of the problem as perceived by the community before attempting to achieve the organisational objective of gender development.

For instance, the aim of the intervening agency could be to sensitize the community to gender bias against women. However, the community may perceive one of the manifestations of the gender system, dowry harassment, per se to be the problem.

Exchange of dowry may be a well-accepted practice. Thus the volunteers must intervene at the level of dowry harassment. A direct attack on dowry exchange or women’s inferior status may not be very effective. The volunteers must identify the felt need of the larger community. Some sections may be of the opinion that only dowry harassment is the problem.

Yet others may not perceive think successive levels of this practice such as dowry exchange and male child preference, to be problems, rather well accepted practices.

(b) Resolution of problem within the specific grassroot context:

This involves three steps:

1. Identification of the community’s perceived problem
2. Setting the NSS unit’s target i.e. the gap between the perceived problem and the actual problem.


Once the gap between the problem perceived by the community and the problem as identified by the intervening agency (NSS) is established, the intervening agency must resolve the problem in the context of the perceived problem, aiming at the actual resolution of the issue. If dowry harassment is the perceived problem then the NSS can intervene immediately by providing relief i.e. resolving the individual case of dowry harassment and setting norms for the resolution of such cases. By building community support against dowry harassment, efforts could be directed towards curative resolution i.e. tackling the problem of dowry exchange.

Once the community questions the practice of dowry, then the next level of prevention can be taken up by making the community aware of the male child preference, discrimination against the girl child and other manifestations of the gender system such as wife-beating, rape, discriminative practices against the girl child etc.

In different communities, or different sections, different levels of problems may be identified. For instance, in a certain community dowry death can be a problem but dowry harassment may not be perceived as a problem, rather taken as normal interaction with the daughter-in-law. In another community or a section of the community, even dowry demand or exchange of dowry may be perceived as a problem.

Thus, resolution of a problem would depend on the identification of the problem as perceived by the community and not by the intervening organisation.

Moreover, the NSS should intervene in spheres of community consensus - the entire community may be against dowry death, but not all sections may be against dowry exchange itself. Thus an anti-dowry death campaign could have the support of all sections.
Identifying the level of community concern for gender justice?

Broadly, the following parameters can be used.

Is the community or a sections of the community or a few individuals

(1) aware of
(2) not in favour of or
(3) dissent;

1. Physical brutality

This involves the issue of abuse against women such as rape, wife-beating, dowry harassment etc. Does the community feel concerned only when such incidents occur?

2. Discrimination

Female discrimination such as sending girls to regional schools, and boys to English schools; providing boys with better health care, directing girls towards household skills through home science courses, and boys towards vocational education; not involving women panches in panchayat meetings; unequal distribution of money and assets between sons and daughters etc. Is the community aware of such discrimination?

3. Deprivation

This includes denial of facilities to women such as health care, encouraging home births, lack of immunization or lack of health care facilities, not sending girls to school, denying women the right to property etc.

Have there been any incidents in the community questioning these? According to the large community response/awareness on the above, the NSS strategy can be organised.
(c) **Intervention supports**

**Credibility:**

Establishing the organisation’s credibility with the community for intervening. The NSS must not only be relevant but also establish its legitimacy within the community.

◊ **How to become credible?**

1. By associating and working with other NGOs.
2. By being involved in work which is perceived as relevant to the community. Thus if dowry exchange is not perceived to be a matter of concern by the community but girl child education is then efforts should be made to promote girl child education.
3. By providing relief to community members at the time of their need.

3. **Utilising Legal and institutional support**

NSS volunteers can use legal and institutional measures to spread legal literacy, resolve cases or provide schemes for the people as the need may be. For this, assistance from the related government department may be sought (Refer to module on laws for local interventions and module on government schemes for institutional support). The point of intervention must be one, on which community consensus has been achieved.

4. **Dovetailing gender issue with other programmes**

Initially a community may not be responsive or sensitive to gender issues. However, it may respond to an entirely different area of concern i.e. construction of latrines. This issue can be used to gain entry into the community and acquiring credibility. NSS volunteers may promote other programmes such as health centres, primary education, development works within the village (roads, sanitation under Jawahar Rozgar Yojana), social forestry, income generating schemes etc. to which issues of gender can be attached as and when the response is forthcoming.
Highlighting through role models

People among the community who are gender sensitive and practice some aspects of women’s development and undermine the gender system should be taken as role models. For instance, a family may be educating their girls with a view to giving them gainful employment. These girls may be traveling to a nearby town, facing hardships such as eve-teasing, long hours of work and other inconveniences. However, irrespective of other people’s views or deterrence, the family continuous to educate or provide skills to its daughters.

Communities which have taken to gender issues or agencies such as Mahila Mandals or NGOs that have effectively combated some gender related problems should be referred to as role models. (See case study of Rampur, page - 280)